

MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY

STANDARD POLICY

DIVISION: All University Colleges

CAMPUS: Downers Grove and Glendale

SUBJECT: Research Surveys of MWU Students	POLICY NO.		
APPROVED BY: 	ISSUE DATE 6/14/23	SUPERSEDES 6/25/2018 1/22/2018	PAGES 3

PURPOSE: To clarify the approval process prior to distribution of internal and external research surveys to Midwestern University (MWU) students.

DEFINITIONS: "Research" is a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. (Title 45 CFR 46.102(d)).

"Dean" refers to a college dean or their designee (e.g., an Associate Dean).

"PI" refers to the faculty member serving as the principal investigator.

BACKGROUND: All research involving human subjects must be reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) before it is initiated, which includes surveys. Researchers must keep in mind that the overall review and approval process often takes a minimum of one month and must plan accordingly. In general, the timeline for a successful survey is as follows: 1) the faculty PI and student(s), when applicable, prepare the survey and justification, 2) the PI seeks approval of the Dean(s) of the college(s) of the survey participants, 3) the Dean(s) provides written approval, 4) the PI submits a completed IRB application and the approval(s) of the Dean(s) to the IRB, 5) the IRB approves the survey, and 6) the PI distributes the survey.

POLICY: This policy applies to human subjects research-related surveys intended for students. This includes use of university emails, email distribution lists, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media methods that utilize MWU's name or resources. It does not apply to non-research institutional surveys or surveys distributed by the Office of Institutional Research and Educational Assessment (OIREA) to assess teaching or faculty performance.

Due to the number of requests for MWU students to participate in surveys, both from internal and external constituencies, MWU may limit the number of surveys sent to students, in order to prioritize federally mandated and other important institutional surveys. **Limiting the active solicitation to participate in surveys allows MWU to prioritize the importance of select surveys that are required or benefit the institution while decreasing survey fatigue among our student body.**

Surveys intended for distribution to MWU students, regardless of the method, will be brought to the attention of the appropriate Dean(s) for their approval.

Faculty Responsibilities: All surveys submitted to an IRB must have a faculty member serving as the PI. It is the responsibility of the PI to:

- Propose the timing for when the survey would ideally be distributed.
- Ensure that the survey has the support of each Dean over the college(s) in which they would like the survey distributed.
 - o This requires that faculty send sufficient information to the appropriate Dean(s) such that an informed decision can be made.
 - o If students are involved at this stage of the process, provide documentation of the PI's review and approval of the survey before the survey is presented to the Dean(s).
- Send the survey out to students once all necessary approvals have been obtained.
 - o The PI should note that students do not have access to MWU e-mail distribution lists.

Dean(s) Responsibilities: The Dean must review and approve surveys when intended for distribution to students in their college. If a Dean elects to appoint a designee to review and approve surveys, the ORSP Research Administrator must be notified of the name of the designee. The approval of the Dean signifies their support of the:

- Research project topic and the questions asked.
- Timing of the survey (i.e., that survey fatigue has been considered and that the survey appears a reasonable use of the student's time).

The Dean is **not** expected to evaluate research methodology or data analysis, but rather should focus on the appropriateness of the survey's focus/questions as it relates to the students in their college and the proposed timing of the questionnaire distribution.

If supportive of the survey, the Dean will provide an email noting their approval to the PI. If not supportive, the Dean may make suggestions to the PI providing a path to move the survey forward, or they may not approve the survey (e.g., if they believe the timing would cause survey fatigue or if they're not supportive of the topic).

If a Dean is also serving as the faculty PI of the research survey, then the CAO of the college should assume the responsibilities of the Dean if there is a request to administer the research survey to students in the PI's college.

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP): Once a survey is approved for distribution to the desired college classes by the Dean(s) and the PI wishes to move forward with the approval process, they may submit a completed IRB application along with the approval of Dean(s) to the IRB through the ORSP.

Surveys Denied for Active Distribution

When internal or external survey requests are denied for mass distribution to MWU students, the Dean of Students may approve a link to the survey to be posted through MWU's OIREA. All MWU students will be reminded twice per year by the OIREA of the availability to participate in additional surveys found on their website, but students will not be contacted through specific solicitations and/or additional reminders in any other manner, aside from those sent out by the OIREA.