

Guidelines for Consideration of Surveys at Hunter College
April 27, 2020

The Office of Institutional Research and the Provost's Office are working together to address the desire of Hunter faculty (and CUNY faculty more broadly) to survey our faculty, staff, and students. This desire comes from a genuine concern for our students and our Hunter family.

However, the increasing number and rate of surveys necessitates some coordination to avoid over-surveying our community. Even a modest number of surveys can lead to low response rates and duplication of effort, and already, there are several annual or periodic surveys that must be conducted, and on which CUNY and Hunter rely. Currently, proposed surveys on various aspects of Covid-19 demonstrate the need for coordination, and those surveys in particular will receive a heightened degree of scrutiny due to the volume. We provide this guidance to clarify the process for those wishing to survey CUNY faculty, staff, and students. This guidance does not apply to research conducted as part of departmental participant pools or surveys where subjects are recruited from outside of CUNY.

To put the bottom line up front, you must send an email to Joan Lambe, Director of Institutional Research at jlambe@hunter.cuny.edu describing the type of survey, the questions you will ask and the population you wish to survey, as well as your recruitment methods for approval before submission to HRPP and the IRB.

Review of Survey Proposals. In order to minimize the burden on our community, and especially on students during this stressful time, the Hunter Office of Institutional Research will monitor proposed surveys and make recommendations to the Provost as to their timing and feasibility. With this in mind, researchers should be aware of the considerations that will shape recommendations to the Provost:

- Sensitivity of the survey to students' personal losses or challenging family situations
- Availability of information being sought from other sources
- Avoiding duplication of effort. Are there surveys with similar aims already deployed?
- Potential for "survey fatigue" within the target population
- Potential benefits to the Hunter community
- Flexibility in regard to timing and sample size and composition
- Potential for consolidation of survey work. To make surveying more efficient, we strongly encourage collaboration to link related projects.

Assistance with Survey Proposals. Hunter College offers assistance in a variety of ways, and investigators often need information from and support of offices across Hunter College. As you plan your project, including the need for background or baseline information, please keep in mind that relevant offices should be included in the planning process. For example, you may need help with recruitment from ICIT or the Office of Communications, and Institutional Research/Assessment can provide assistance with survey design and sampling. We recommend speaking with the Director of the Office to include their staff in planning for your submission.

Recruitment strategies through Presidents, Provosts, Deans, Directors, Department Chairs, and Program Directors. Recently, we have seen an increasing number of protocols with a recruitment strategy that involves email to faculty, staff, and students from the President, the Provost, Deans, Directors, and Department Chairs. There are several important considerations for this type of recruitment, including a potential for subtle coercion; this recruitment strategy may only be used with prior, written agreement from those individuals to distribute the survey on your behalf.

Questions. Any questions about surveys can be directed to Joan Lambe, Director of Institutional Research at jlambe@hunter.cuny.edu. Any question about this change in research should be directed to Elizabeth Cohn at Elizabeth.cohn@hunter.cuny.edu.