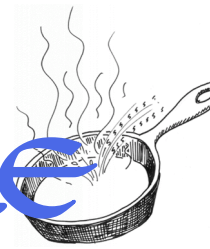




DATA IS THE NEW BACON!



Conducting a Survey? Let us Help!

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness coordinates all major surveys on campus while also providing support and guidance with other survey research conducted by our faculty and staff, particularly if the goal of the survey is strategic planning, assessment, or institutional improvement.

Surveys are a tool to help inform college decision-making processes. Institutional Effectiveness works with various campus constituents to develop and administer surveys to meet department, program, councils/committees, and student needs.

All surveys intended for distribution to members of the Allan Hancock community (faculty, staff, students, alumni, trustees, or other members) require review by Institutional Effectiveness. Our goal is to ensure that the number of surveys members from our campus community receive are limited and minimally overlap with each other and that the aim of the survey administration is consistent with the college's mission and priorities. To assist with survey administration, Institutional Effectiveness will do the following:

- Provide review and feedback on survey instruments and the questions they are designed to answer.
- Serve as a repository of survey instruments used across units and educational settings.
- Provide data analysis and report writing support.
- Maintain a calendar of survey initiatives across campus.

The following types of surveys do not require review and approval by Institutional Effectiveness:

- Faculty/student assignments and classroom assessment techniques.
- Institution elections or voting.
- Course evaluations conducted by academic departments.

In This Issue:

Surveys—

- Format
- Tips
- Sample Size



Want to try out the QR code technology?



Open your camera app or QR app and point it at the code to take survey.

Survey Format

While there are special cases in which it may be easier or more appropriate to administer your survey on paper, most surveys these days are administered electronically. This means that participants receive an email invitation or click directly on a link that takes them to an electronic version of the survey, and after they complete the survey, the data are automatically recorded and often automatically analyzed by the software program. Institutional Effectiveness has a license for Qualtrics. Surveys created in Qualtrics are administered via a link or an QR code. They are mobile friendly so participants can complete the survey on their phone, tablet, or web browser. Qualtrics provides basic reports and statistics for survey data or the data can be exported out of Qualtrics and into excel, SPSS, or other statistical software. We also do Class Climate paper scantron surveys if that suits your needs.

Tips for Successful Surveys

Every survey is a major research project, requiring time, effort, and careful thought on the part of the researcher. It is also an imposition on the community, since it asks for their time, effort, and careful thought as well. This imposition can be reduced if the survey is thoughtfully designed, respectful of its participants, carefully timed and coordinated with other surveys on campus, and — most importantly — if the survey serves an important purpose, whether it is institutional improvement or contributing to the generalizable knowledge, and the results are reported, shared, and used in meaningful ways.

The planning stage is critical. The more carefully you plan your survey project, starting with the research questions, the more likely it is that the survey will be effective and provide you with reliable, interpretable, usable results. Here are some questions to consider:

- What do you want to learn from the survey? Create a list of issues, questions, ideas, presumptions, etc. that you want to gain insight into. Ensure that this information is not available from other sources before beginning the survey process.
- Why do you want to know it? How will you use the information you collect?
- Can you get this information from another source, without conducting a new survey?
- If a new survey is needed, who will be your participants?
- What is your timeline for completing the entire project, including time for analyses and writing up the final report (so you can count back from that to when the survey should be live)? What about the best timing for your participants (e.g., not during final exams)?
- Are there other similar surveys scheduled around the same time? And if so, could you join forces and pool the questions into one longer survey, or ask the other researchers to share data with you?

Contact Us

Institutional Effectiveness

Bldg. A-400

[Webpage](#)

[Data Request Form](#)

(805)922-6966 ext.3045

Who do you contact?

Erica Biely is our survey guru.

Contact her at

ebiely@hancockcollege.edu

or ext. 3712

Should your survey be anonymous or confidential?

There is no simple answer to this question, but here are some things to consider:

- There are three main (and often interconnected) reasons to make a survey anonymous:
- The survey collects sensitive information;
- You want to encourage participants to answer honestly;
- You want to protect the participants' identities.
- In a truly anonymous survey, the responses are permanently disconnected from the participants' names, emails, IDs, or any other personal identifiers. If you are administering your survey using participants' unique email addresses, then by default the survey is not anonymous.
- Another option is to keep the participants' responses confidential, and to share and report the results only in the aggregate, without identifying individual persons.

What is a good sample size?

Before you can calculate a sample size, you need to determine a few things about the target population and the sample you need:

- **Population Size** — How many total people fit your demographic?
- **Margin of Error (Confidence Interval)** — No sample will be perfect, so you must decide how much error to allow. General guidance is +/- 5% for survey research.
- **Confidence Level** — How confident do you want to be that the actual mean falls within your confidence interval? The most common confidence intervals are 90% confident, 95% confident, and 99% confident.

Qualtrics offers a [sample-size calculator](#) that can help you determine your ideal sample size. Just put in the confidence level, population size, margin of error, and the sample size is calculated for you. For example, if we are surveying all students at Allan Hancock College and we know that we have approximately 10,000 students per term, with 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level, we would need a sample size of 370. For a survey of the AHC district we would need a sample of 385 IF the sample is random.; much less than you might expect

