

Daemen University

Institutional Survey Guidelines

Summer 2024

Survey Guidelines

Surveys are an important tool for gaining insight into many aspects of institutional functioning at Daemen University. The guidelines below are designed to help individuals and offices develop and deploy surveys in a manner that is legal, respectful, and responsible.

A companion document, "Daemen Survey Development Guide," provides some basic information about creating and deploying a survey for people who may be new to the process.

Types of surveys

- To ensure that survey results are used in a way that is legal, ethical, and beneficial.
- To identify resources to help campus stakeholders develop quality surveys.

Survey approval process

At Daemen University, there is no single point of contact for granting permission to conduct an institutional survey. Typically, the person or office interested in conducting a survey should consult with their supervisor or other appropriate institutional authority.

Certain types of surveys may require additional approval through the [Daemen Human Subjects Research Review Committee](#) (HSRRC). This committee is designed to evaluate all research activities at Daemen University involving human subjects to ensure that the safety and privacy of all participants are respected.

Any survey that includes questions of a personal or sensitive nature (e.g. sexual behavior, drinking or drug use, psychological problems or symptoms) should go through the HSRRC approval process. Similarly, any survey in which student privacy is potentially compromised without the student's express consent should go through the HSRRC approval process. Anonymous surveys on neutral topics (e.g. parking or food services) do not normally require HSRRC approval. However, when in doubt the best course of action is to consult with the HSRRC, which has a detailed [webpage](#) on the Daemen site.

Many nationally normed surveys have prior approval from an Institutional Review Board analogous to the HSRRC and therefore do not require additional HSRRC approval unless they are being administered

through Google forms. There are many online resources available to guide users through the process of creating surveys through Google forms.

Survey deployment and administration

Once a survey produce has been purchased from an external vendor, or the survey has been created in-house, the next step is to deploy the survey to the target population. For surveys with a small respondent population, you may be able to simply send a link to the survey to individual recipients through email.

For surveys with a larger respondent population (this would include most institutional surveys), it is advisable to check with the Information Technology (ITS) Office to arrange for appropriate deployment of the survey. The ITS office should be consulted in advance so that the appropriate systems are in place when you are actually ready to administer the survey.

Privacy issues

Protecting the privacy of survey respondents is of paramount importance, for ethical, legal, and practical purposes. In any survey, respondents should be advised about privacy and confidentiality issues prior to taking the survey. A few of these key issues are noted below.

Is the survey confidential, anonymous, or both?

- An anonymous survey is one in which it is not possible to connect survey responses to an individual respondent.
- A confidential survey is one in which it possible to connect responses and respondents, but in which the survey author can safely and reasonably assure that respondent identity will not be revealed for any reason to outside stakeholders (meaning anyone bey

- Common practice in presenting disaggregated survey results is to mask results when the cell size is less than five respondents. For more sensitive types of data, a higher threshold (e.g. 10 respondents) may be appropriate.

Open-ended questions

- Many surveys provide respondents with the opportunity to provide open-ended, qualitative responses. While these responses can be very useful and informative, care must be exercised in

Large incentives can be problematic from multiple perspectives.

- From a legal standpoint, randomly selecting one respondent to win a new TV can be considered a form of gambling (in effect, participation in the survey is akin to purchasing a lottery ticket).
- Large financial gifts (e.g., a \$100 gift card) may have tax consequences for the respondent and the individual and must be reported appropriately.
- Large financial gifts can compromise a student's financial aid package, or in the case of student-athletes may violate NCAA rules.

Resources

There are many online resources to help create and analyze a quality survey.

At Daemen University