GRAYS HARBOR COLLEGE
Administrative Procedure

Policy Name	Survey Procedure
Policy Number	**901.01**
Date Adopted	4/11/2023
Date(s) Revised	

Applicability

This procedure applies to all surveys conducted by or on behalf of Grays Harbor College, its employees, offices, services, departments, divisions, and programs including the Associated Students of Grays Harbor College. This includes surveys conducted on behalf of the college by an external company.

The following forms of data collection are not considered surveys for the purposes of this procedure:

- Student evaluation of individual courses and instruction.
- Feedback instruments used in the evaluation of employee performance.
- Surveys conducted by faculty as part of instruction with students currently enrolled in their class or classes.
- Systems for electing students, faculty, or staff to leadership positions within College committees or organizations.
- Forms for the sole purpose of application to or registration in GHC programs, classes, workshops, or events.
- Other forms that exist for the sole purpose of the operation of particular programs or internal processes. (e.g. Change of Major form, Academic Early Warning, Assignment of Advisor, BAS in Teacher Education Field Experience Hours Logs, etc.)

If in doubt if you are dealing with a survey, form, or questionnaire, reach out to the Director of Institutional Research & Reporting at surveys@ghc.edu.

Definitions

A survey is defined broadly as any means of data collection in which questions are presented to respondents in paper, oral (e.g., interview, focus group), or electronic (e.g., email, web) format for the purpose of evaluating/assessing College programs*, functions, or services; or gathering feedback from respondents for decision-making and continuous improvement of same. Potential respondents include, but are not limited to, prospective students, current students, parents, alumni, faculty, staff, administrators, employers, and other community members. The end result of data from a survey is often analytical: The College is trying to gather information or answer a question. Examples of surveys administered by the college are the annual graduation survey, the PACE employee survey, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), etc.

A form is used to collect information as needed for a specific business process. A form would generally be filled out as needed by one student at a time. The end result of data from a form is generally operational in nature. Examples would be the college application, FAFSA/WASFA, does the student qualify for workforce funding or TRIO services, a brief post-service questionnaire, etc.

*Evaluation of the college's academic degree programs is covered by the faculty bargaining agreement which takes precedence over this procedure and related policy. If surveys or focus groups of a larger group of students than a single course will be used as part of this process, please inform Institutional Effectiveness & College Relations (IE&CR) so that we can coordinate and prevent scheduling conflicts.

Survey Approval

Any survey that will be administered by or on behalf of Grays Harbor College must be approved by someone from Institutional Effectiveness and College Relations (IE&CR), either the Director of Institutional Research and Reporting (DIRR) or the Chief of Institutional Effectiveness and College Relations (CIECR), or their designee.

Having a central point of review and approval allows for coordination of effort, sound survey design, and reduction of survey fatigue.

To start the process, contact the DIRR and/or CIECR with information on the survey you would like to run.

Survey Frequency

To combat survey fatigue, it is strongly recommended that a specific population should not be surveyed more than once per quarter. Examples of specific populations are "all current students," "alumni," "employees," "all college-level students," etc.

Preferably, a specific population should not be surveyed more than twice per year.

The GHC office of institutional research and reporting will follow these guidelines when scheduling surveys for the campus, but understands that situations may arise where more frequent surveys are needed.

Note that some populations may overlap, such as "all current students" and "all college-level students" in the examples listed above. If, for example, there were two proposed surveys one targeting "all current students" and one targeting "all college-level students," they would be considered the same group. In this example, the surveys would either need to be combined, or one of the surveys would need to be postponed to a later quarter.

By coordinating all surveys through IE&CR, survey collisions like this can be avoided, which will help combat survey fatigue and ensure good response rates and results for all surveys.

The Director of Institutional Research and Reporting will maintain a schedule of currently planned surveys.

Timing

Planning and crafting a survey can take a significant amount of time as well as back-and-forth work. GHC employees and students interested in conducting a survey should contact IE&CR at least 3 months prior to when they want the survey to go live.

There may be emergent situations that require a reduced timeframe to survey administration. Please contact IE&CR as soon as possible to coordinate.

Survey Platform

GHC does not currently have an institutional license to a survey platform.

As part of the survey review & approval process, IE&CR will discuss what platform and/or methodology would be best for the particular survey.

Questions to Consider When Determining a Platform:
- What is the population being surveyed?
- Will the survey be anonymous or confidential?
    - Anonymous – absolutely no link between answers and personal information of respondent
    - Confidential – there is a potential link between answers and personal information of respondent, but this link is protected and only available to a limited number of individuals
- Should the survey be translated into Spanish or another language? (Please allow at least 2 weeks for translation, once the survey is finalized. Invitation language/emails will also need to be translated.)
- Will you be distributing the survey electronically? Manually (physical copies)?
    - If manual, what is the plan for a) protecting respondent identity during survey collection, and b) inputting data post-collection.

Platform Guidelines:
- Google Forms and Microsoft Forms may not be used for surveys or forms related to college business processes
- Google Forms and Microsoft Forms may be used for interdepartmental and classroom purposes but may not collect a combination of personally identifiable information, such as collecting both student ID number and student name.
- Google Forms, Microsoft Forms, and other 3rd party form solutions may not be used to collect the social security number, in whole or in part. The social security number is Category 4 data (confidential information requiring special handling) under the WA OCIO data security classification and requires special handling.
- Google Forms, Microsoft Forms, and other 3rd party form solutions may not be used to collect a birthdate in combination with any other personally identifiable information, such as full name and/or student/employee ID number. The birthdate in combination with other PII becomes Category 3 data (confidential information) under the WA OCIO data security classification and requires special handling.

We understand that exceptions may arise where grants or similar may require use of specific 3rd party platforms. Exceptions to this policy require review by and written permission from some combination of the Chief Executive of Institutional Effectiveness & College Relations, Director of Institutional Research & Reporting, and the Chief Executive of Information Technology.

For further information on Data Security Classifications, please see:

- GHC IT Standard: Data Security Classifications (https://intranet.ghc.edu/sites/default/files/offices-departments/it/standards/Std-Data_Classification.pdf)
- WA OCIO Data Classification Standard: https://ocio.wa.gov/policy/data-classification-standard