



The University of Adelaide

Survey Framework

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. The Purpose of the Survey Framework	1
3. Key Definitions	2
4. Scope of Surveys	2
4.1. Surveys within the Scope of this Framework	2
4.2. Surveys outside the Scope of this Framework	3
5. Framework Statements	3
5.1. Survey Reference Group Responsibilities	3
5.2. Survey Register - Schedule of Approved Surveys	3
5.3. Access to University Populations	3
5.4. Criteria for Approval of Applications	4
6. Procedure for Scheduling Applications	4
6.1. Key Elements of the Application and Approval Process	4
6.2. Compliance with Other University Policies and Guidelines	5
6.3. Survey Approval Pathway	5
6.4. Time-Frame for Seeking Approval	5
7. Key Responsibilities	6
8. Data and Reporting	8
9. Delegated Authority	8
10. Governance and Administration	8
Appendix 1: Survey Reference Group – Terms of Reference	9
Appendix 2: Survey Approval Form	11

The University of Adelaide Survey Framework

1. Introduction

The University undertakes or participates in numerous surveys involving its students, staff and alumni, as well as community and employer groups. The University acknowledges the importance of evidence-based decision making that is assisted through the collection and analysis of survey data. However, there are a number of significant issues that arise in undertaking survey activity that are important to acknowledge, address and manage through an appropriate framework.

A survey framework for managing the conduct of surveys addresses the following risks:

- over-surveying key stakeholders - such as students, staff and alumni - for the University so that goodwill by stakeholders is reduced with concomitant effects on data quality.
- redundant data being generated through survey activity with overlapping population samples.
- quality of surveys varying considerably which can pose a risk to data integrity and to privacy and confidentiality .
- lack of clarity as to who in the University has the authority to determine whether access to student, staff or alumni populations can occur.
- risks concerning the dissemination of survey results, which might extend to unintended audiences.
- lack of coherence or accountability in reporting outcomes of surveys back to the surveyed population.

This framework responds to those issues as well as to the increasing volume, complexity, importance, and interrelationship between the numerous surveys conducted. It also outlines the conditions under which staff; students; alumni; and other stakeholders of the University may be involved in surveys, the application processes and procedures for scheduling of surveys, and the requirements for the dissemination of data and outcomes derived from surveys.

Accordingly, the University of Adelaide Survey Framework fulfils the University's commitment to ensure that surveys conducted under the auspices of the University are of the highest standard, including with respect to any ethical considerations, and genuinely add significant value to decision-making on surveyed issues.

Source material from the University of Melbourne and from Deakin University was used in constructing this framework.

2. The Purpose of the Survey Framework

The University complies with the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). All University researchers (staff, students and any associated personnel) need to be aware of, and comply with, the ethical framework governing research at the University and with institutional and regulatory requirements.

This Survey Framework has been established to ensure that surveys conducted in the name of the University of Adelaide:

- are of a consistently high standard;
- do not duplicate data collection conducted through other University surveys;
- do not compromise population samples through the overlap of surveys;

- do not over-survey the University's core stakeholders; and
- are disseminated and utilised appropriately.

Adherence to this framework will ensure that the University will be provided with robust data and analysis for its quality assurance, benchmarking and continuous improvement purposes.

3. Key Definitions

For the purposes of this document the following are defined:

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC): The University of Adelaide's Committee with responsibility to protect the welfare and the rights of participants in research; it ensures the effective consent of research subjects to participation in a research project and that any risk associated with research on humans is acceptable.

Quality Assurance: the procedures the University uses to measure the effectiveness and standards of its activities.

Survey: surveys are defined as a means of data collection using structured or semi-structured instruments that may take the form of written, oral or online modes of questioning.

Survey Reference Group (SRG): a standing committee reporting to the Vice-Chancellor's Committee through the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning and Quality) with responsibility for approving University surveys within its terms of reference and monitoring compliance with the Survey Framework.

Survey Register: the list of University approved surveys.

University: refers to the University of Adelaide.

4. Scope of Surveys

4.1. Surveys within the Scope of this Framework

Those responsible for initiating University surveys must seek advice from the [HREC](#) to determine if ethics approval is required.

Surveys within the scope of this framework include, but are not limited to:

- internal quality assurance surveys (eg surveys conducted for quality audit purposes, or by individual Schools, Branches, Faculties or Divisions in respect of learning and teaching, for the evaluation of staff, student or alumni perceptions of aspects of their experience of the University);
- surveys commissioned or sponsored by internal organisational units or external parties including individual University staff, Government departments or agencies, other external individuals or entities;
- internally sponsored market research surveys (eg surveys conducted with students and prospective students, graduates and alumni in relation to consumer behaviour and purchase intent);

- internal management surveys in respect of staff, student or alumni attitudes and opinions (eg satisfaction surveys, climate surveys, staff perceptions surveys); and
- other surveys where the University brand and reputation are at stake.

4.2. Surveys outside the Scope of this Framework

The following types of surveys are normally outside the scope of this framework:

- matters within the normal scope of the [HREC](#), except in cases where the surveys are expected to overlap significantly with surveys covered under Section 4.1 (in which case the SRG will be involved to ensure that the survey population is not being over-surveyed and the results of the survey are available for University use); and
- surveys involving aggregated data collected in relation to external benchmarking exercises within a specific functional area where the manager of the organisational unit has approved the submission of data by their staff.

5. Framework Statements

5.1. Survey Reference Group Responsibilities

Under its terms of reference, the SRG is given broad responsibility to develop and monitor procedures around the conduct and management of surveys within its scope. (See page [9](#)) This is interpreted to include:

- criteria for approval of surveys within its scope;
- access to survey populations, particularly those for whom the University has direct responsibility, and the conditions under which the population details (such as demographic and contact details) are held and managed;
- the appropriateness of the survey instrument
- the application of privacy law and framework as it affects individual respondents to surveys;
- conditions under which external agencies contracted to the University for survey purposes operate in relation to conduct of surveys, including confidentiality and ethical principles;
- internal management of survey data and reports, including issues of access, confidentiality and intellectual property in respect of data and information gathered via surveys;
- setting reasonable limits to the volume of survey requests that the University makes of individuals or particular cohorts, and developing protocol for giving effect to this framework;
- development of procedures to monitor the numbers and types of surveys being undertaken; and
- development of procedures to collect, store and disseminate survey data and findings.

5.2. Survey Register - Schedule of Approved Surveys

The Survey Register contains a schedule of approved surveys to assist the University to keep track of the number and range of surveys under the remit of the SRG. The Register is maintained by the Strategy and Planning Section and is available from: <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/sp/>.

5.3. Access to University Populations

Access to populations requires approval from the appropriate responsible officer.

- Access to data on student populations requires the approval of the General Manager, Student Services; access to data on staff populations requires approval from the Director, Human Resources; access to data on alumni populations requires the approval of the Director, Development and Alumni.
- Applicants have a responsibility to ensure that sufficient notice is given to data providers for extraction of the required population data.
- Surveys of all staff or all student populations will not normally be approved; requests to access census populations will be considered only in exceptional circumstances, or where mandated by the Vice-Chancellor (or designate) or external reporting requirements.

5.4. Criteria for Approval of Applications

In approving applications, the SRG shall have regard to the following issues, with a view to minimizing the impact on survey populations and ensuring maximum efficiency and effectiveness where possible:

- the volume and range of surveys taking place within the relevant schedule period;
- the potential impact on the population;
- possible duplication or redundancy of information to be solicited from survey respondents;
- whether required information may be obtained from existing data sources;
- the potential value and quality of the data to be collected to the University as well as the applicant; and
- proposed methodology, to ascertain, for example, whether sufficient responses may be obtained from a sub-sample of the targeted sample;

In making its decisions the SRG shall also take into account arrangements for protection of privacy and safeguarding confidentiality of respondents in collection and reporting of data.

6. Procedure for Scheduling Applications

Applications for scheduling are subject to a single-stage process, the implementation pathway is summarised in the Survey Approval Pathway diagram presented below in Section [6.3](#) below.

6.1. Key Elements of the Application and Approval Process

- a) Survey applicants are to consult the current Survey Register to take into account other projects within the calendar when proposing dates for data collection commencement and completion.
- b) Applicants submit a Survey [Proposal Application](#) (or see the intended web-based submission form on page [11](#)) to the SRG to outline the purpose of the survey, target population and intended commencement date of the survey. Applicants are expected to give reasonable notice of their request to allow for scheduling clearance and appropriate access to population databases.

Required information will include:

- project aims and information sought;
- sampling population demographic information;
- method of population sampling;
- data collection methods;
- a copy of the survey instrument;

- proposed dates of data collection commencement and completion;
 - supporting documentation (such as ethics or other required approvals); and
 - appropriate procedures and contacts in the event of any complaint or other correspondence by respondents.
- c) Proposal applications may be considered by the full SRG or the Chairperson of the SRG and the relevant responsible officer for the survey population area. This will be at the discretion of the Chairperson of the SRG.
- d) Proposal approval is subject to final approval from the responsible officer for the survey population area. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that approval has been obtained from the appropriate responsible officer for access to the population.
- e) Once the project is approved, an extract from the application form will be displayed through the survey registry showing the contact details of the principal applicant and brief project details.

6.2. Compliance with Other University Policies and Guidelines

All surveys must comply with relevant University policies and guidelines including, but not necessarily limited to:

Human Research Ethics	http://www.adelaide.edu.au/ethics/human/ http://www.adelaide.edu.au/ethics/human/guidelines/
Privacy	http://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/62
Records Management	http://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/606/
Intellectual Property	http://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/1263/
Research Code of Conduct	http://www.adelaide.edu.au/rb/policies/resprac.html

It is the responsibility of survey applicants to ensure that they adhere to relevant University policies. While the SRG will provide links to these guidelines and emphasise the importance of adhering to these policies, its function does not include monitoring and policing of these practices.

6.3. Survey Approval Pathway

The pathway for gaining approval to conduct a survey is summarised in the flowchart below on Page [7](#). Key activities involved in gaining approval are:

- Determining whether there is an existing survey that can be used;
- Determining whether HREC approval is required; and
- Determining whether the proposed survey falls within the scope of the SRG.

Whether the proposed survey requires approval by the SRG, or not, the SRG will need to ensure the survey is listed in the Survey Register and that details of the completion of the survey are lodged with the SRG.

6.4. Time-Frame for Seeking Approval

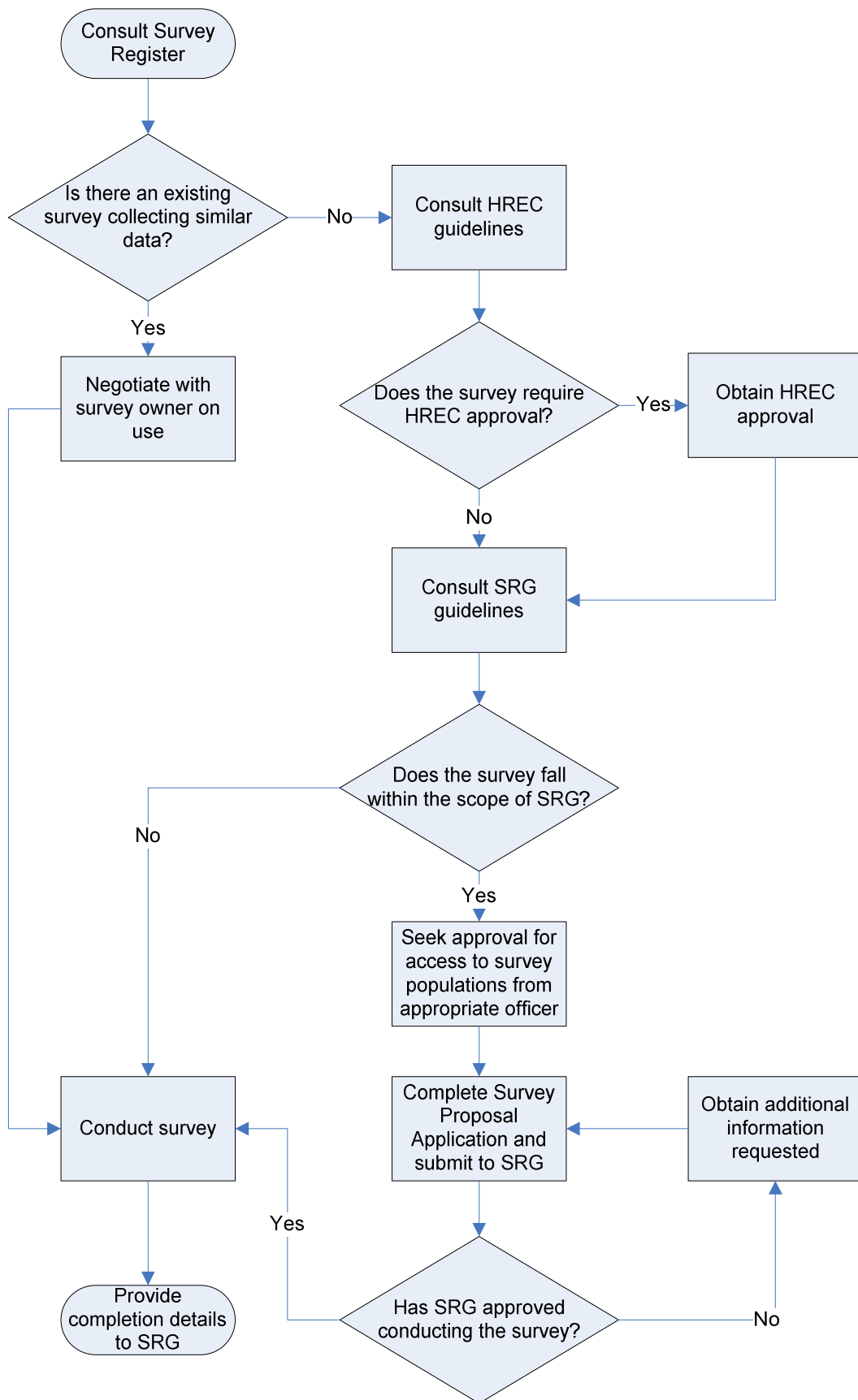
Submissions for approval of proposed surveys, where they fall within the scope of the SRG's authority, must be submitted **at least two months prior** to the intended date of issuing the survey to its intended recipients.

7. Key Responsibilities

The distribution of responsibilities for key activities in the survey approval process is summarised in the table below.

Key Activities	Responsible/Approving Body
Approval of New Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey Reference Group (where in scope)• HREC (where in scope of HREC)• Professional Bodies (for professional benchmarking)
Admission to Survey Register	Survey Reference Group
Maintenance of Survey Register	Strategy and Planning
Preparation and Submission of Survey Proposal	Proponent
Obtaining HREC Approval	Proponent
Approval of Access to Survey Population	Relevant University Officer
Conducting of Survey	Proponent
Providing Survey Completion Details to SRG	Proponent

Figure 1: Survey Approval Pathway



8. Data and Reporting

The SRG expects that reports of surveys normally will be made available to the University community, so that findings are not duplicated or redundant. Survey applicants will be asked to provide appropriate links to a report, these links will be displayed on the [SRG website](#).

The SRG encourages the appointment of designated officers at Faculty or Divisional level to ensure local knowledge and availability of relevant surveys and reports, and so that duplication of surveys can be avoided.

9. Delegated Authority

Under its terms of reference the SRG may delegate certain of its powers on operational matters to not less than three of its members acting as a group.

Initial framework advice on management and processing of all requests, and liaison with applicants, will be channelled through the Strategy and Planning Office.

10. Governance and Administration

As mentioned above, the key governance body for administering the Survey framework is the **Survey Reference Group** (see below on page 9), which is a standing committee reporting to the Vice-Chancellor's Committee through the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning and Quality). It has responsibility for approving University surveys within its terms of reference and monitoring compliance with the Survey Framework.

Administrative support is provided by the **Strategy and Planning Section**, which provides Executive Officer support for the SRG committee and also maintains the Survey Register and associated intranet resources.

Appendix 1: Survey Reference Group – Terms of Reference

When:	2008
By What Authority:	Vice-Chancellor and president
For What Period:	Indefinite

Role/Terms of Reference:

1. **Approves** applications for surveys within its scope that meet the criteria outlined in the Survey Framework.
2. **Develops** the procedures for monitoring the number and type of surveys being undertaken; and the procedures to collect, store and disseminate survey data and findings.
3. **Maintains** the University Survey Register containing the list of approved surveys.
4. **Amendments** to the terms of reference of the Group are to be approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Quality).

Reporting Line	The Vice-Chancellor's Committee through the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Quality)
Quorum	Minimum 4 members
Business Procedures	Determined by the Survey Reference Group.
Meeting Agendas	Prepared by the Executive Officer (Strategy and Planning) in liaison with the Chairperson and distributed by the Executive Officer at least seven working days prior to the meeting.
Frequency of Meetings	As required
List of Any Sub-committees	As required

Membership:

Any categories prescribed:

1. Nominee of the PVC(Learning and Quality) - **Chairperson**
2. Deputy Director, Strategy and Planning (or nominee)
3. Director, Centre for Learning and Professional Development (or nominee)
4. General Manager, Student Services (or nominee)
5. Director, Human Resources (or nominee)
6. Two Associate Deans (Learning and Teaching) or nominees
7. One nominee from Human Research Ethics Committee
8. One nominee Research Branch
9. One currently enrolled undergraduate student representative
10. One currently enrolled postgraduate student representative

How are Members Appointed?	Membership category 5 nominated by Committee of Executive Deans
Length of Terms	Membership categories 5-7 two years, student representatives annually.
Proxies	Proxies are permitted with the prior approval of the Chairperson
How is the Chairperson Appointed?	Ex officio
Administration	Executive Officer, Strategy and Planning
Attendance	The Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor are <i>ex-officio</i> members of All Committees of the University.

Appendix 2: Survey Approval Form

Requests to conduct a survey within the scope of the SRG approval process must be submitted using this form. The form should be completed by the survey proponent or their delegate. The Convenor of the SRG will evaluate the information you provide in this form against the criteria in the Survey Policy and will then make a recommendation on the proposed survey to the SRG. This recommendation may be approval to conduct the survey or a decision on approval requires discussion of the SRG.

Before submitting the survey approval form, please review the [Survey Framework](#).

Please ensure that you fill in all of the required information. If you are not sure what to enter for some of these items, please choose "other" and provide as much information as possible in the space provided for additional information (Step 4).

Step 1: Contact details

Survey sponsor:	<input type="text"/>	Who is responsible for this survey? Person completing the form, if not the survey sponsor
Your Name:	<input type="text"/>	Automatic field
Date requested:	26/11/2008 2:26 PM	Your full email address; we will use this address to contact you about your request.
Email:	<input type="text"/>	
Your organisational unit:	<input type="text" value="Drop down menu of units"/>	Your Faculty, School, Discipline, Branch.
Phone:	<input type="text"/>	Contact phone number

Next >>

Step 2: About the survey

Survey Name:	<input type="text"/>	Descriptive name that will be used to uniquely identify the survey
Administration:	<input type="text" value="Drop down menu of units"/>	Which organisational unit will administer the survey?

Aims of the survey:

Distribution:	<input type="text" value="Web-based"/>	How is the survey to be distributed?
Recruitment:	<input type="text" value="E-mail invitation list"/>	How will participants be informed about the survey
HREC approval	<input type="text" value="HREC approval not required"/>	Is HREC approval required? Has it been obtained?

<< Previous | Next >>

Step 3: Survey methodology

Population:

What is the general population of the survey?

If the survey will seek responses from a specific group within the general population you have identified, please provide details.
For example:

Target group:

- students of a specific faculty, school, course or campus
- first-year students
- international students
- students from a non-English speaking background
- academic staff only

Estimated sample size:

What is the estimated sample size for the survey?

Methodology:

What is the general survey design?

Frequency:

How often will the survey be conducted?

Survey period:

When and for how long will the survey be conducted?

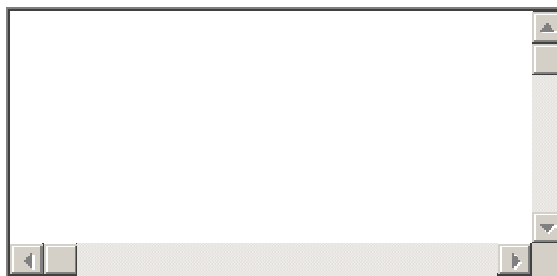
Availability of results:

How will the survey results be published?

<< Previous | Next >>

Step 4: Survey questions and additional information

Upload proposed survey questions: Browse and upload feature



Additional information:

<< Previous | Submit request