The University of Adelaide
Survey Framework

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1.   Introduction

The University undertakes and 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 of key stakeholderssuch as students, staff and alumni may result in a loss of goodwill 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:

- 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 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 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 (e.g. 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 (e.g. 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 (e.g. 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 Learning and Quality Support 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 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 Learning and Quality Support.

5.2   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, Alumni Relations

- 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.

5.3   Criteria for Approval of Applications

In approving applications, consideration will be given to the following issues, with a view to minimising 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 approving surveys attention will be paid to 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 Process diagram presented on Page 8.

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 Approval Form to surveys@adelaide.edu.au 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) 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 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/
Responsible Conduct of Research Policy	http://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/96/

It is the responsibility of survey applicants to ensure that they adhere to relevant University policies.

6.3   Survey Approval Process

The process for gaining approval to conduct a survey is shown in the flowchart on Page 8. 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 Survey Guidelines.

Whether the proposed survey requires approval or not, Learning and Quality Support will need to ensure the survey is listed in the Survey Register.
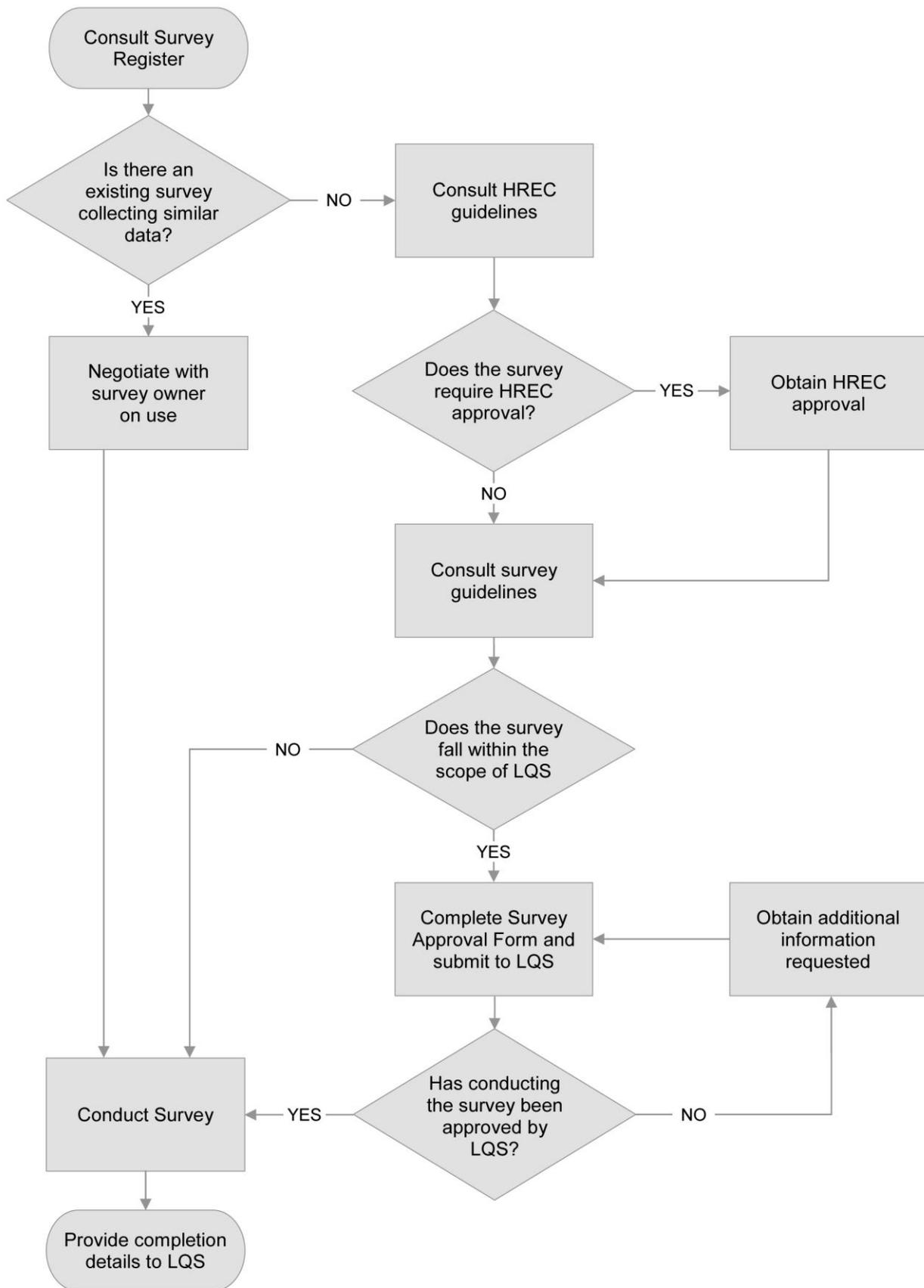
6.4   Time frame for Seeking Approval

Submissions for approval of proposed surveys must be submitted **at least one month 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	- Learning and Quality Support (where in scope) - HREC (where in scope of HREC) - Professional Bodies (for professional benchmarking)
Addition to Survey Register	Learning and Quality Support
Maintenance of Survey Register	Learning and Quality Support
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 Learning and Quality Support	Proponent

Figure 1: Survey Approval Process

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Consult Survey Register

Is there an existing survey collecting similar data? — NO → Consult HREC guidelines

YES → Negotiate with survey owner on use

Does the survey require HREC approval? — YES → Obtain HREC approval

NO → Consult survey guidelines

Does the survey fall within the scope of LQS — NO → Conduct Survey

YES → Complete Survey Approval Form and submit to LQS

Obtain additional information requested → Complete Survey Approval Form and submit to LQS

Has conducting the survey been approved by LQS? — NO → Obtain additional information requested

YES → Conduct Survey

Conduct Survey → Provide completion details to LQS

8. Data and Reporting

Learning and Quality Support 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 Survey website.

9. Governance and Administration

The Survey Framework and the Survey Register is maintained by Learning and Quality Support under the direction of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience).