

1 **Florida State University Policy** 9-3

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3 Title of Policy: Administration of Surveys to Students, Faculty, Staff, and Alumni  
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5 Responsible Executive: Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs  
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7 Approving Official: Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs  
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9 Effective Date: 08/01/2014  
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11 Revision History: Original Policy  
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13 **I. INTRODUCTION**

14 This policy helps minimize the occurrence of survey/email fatigue and oversampling of Florida State  
15 University students, faculty, staff, and/or alumni by managing the quantity of survey invitations to these  
16 audiences. This policy also defines specific permissions needed by survey authors to conduct surveys  
17 with Florida State students, employees, or alumni as participants. Additionally, this policy specifies  
18 limitations in the use of official university email accounts (or alumni email addresses on record) by  
19 those wishing to conduct surveys with current FSU students, employees, or alumni, in accordance with  
20 both federal law and FSU policies.  
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22 **II. POLICY**

23 A. Definition

- 24 1. For the purpose of this policy, “survey” is defined as: “Any instrument,  
25 questionnaire, or interview administered online or via paper that seeks to collect  
26 information on attitudes, expectations, opinions, and/or preferences and is intended  
27 for distribution to FSU students, faculty, staff, and/or alumni.”

28 B. Audience

- 29 1. This policy has university-wide application and was approved by the Provost and  
30 Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. This policy was adopted to provide  
31 reference and procedural guidelines in the operation, management and/or implementation  
32 of surveys to FSU students, faculty, staff, and/or alumni by either internal or external  
33 entities.

34 C. Scope

- 35 1. All surveys, regardless of sample size, must adhere to the following guidelines:  
36 i. Surveys involving any current undergraduate, graduate, or professional  
37 students are prohibited during the following-Administration Windows:  
38 • End-of-term course evaluations.  
39 • Windows of final exam weeks.  
40 • Windows of institution-wide surveys designated by the University  
41 Survey Review Group.  
42 ii. Current FSU students, faculty, staff, and/or alumni will not be asked to  
43 participate in a survey approved by the University Survey Review Group by  
44 email more than once in a 14 day period.  
45 iii. The initial date of invitation will be used as the starting point of the 14 day  
46 period.  
47 iv. Those conducting surveys and sending email invitations to any FSU  
48 students, faculty, staff, and/or alumni requesting their participation may

- 49 send a maximum of three (3) emails (one initial email and up to two  
50 subsequent reminders).
- 51 v. Exceptions to the frequency of administration and/or emails may be  
52 approved if deemed necessary by the University Survey Review Group.
- 53 vi. Survey authors should ensure questionnaires are appropriately constructed.  
54 For information on effective survey development, visit  
55 <http://qualtrics.com/university/researchsuite/>.
- 56 vii. Students, faculty, and staff employing online surveys for academic research  
57 are eligible to use the university's online survey software, but may only use  
58 student or employee email addresses that are requested in accordance with  
59 this policy.
- 60 viii. Survey authors using university email addresses to request the participation  
61 of FSU students and/or faculty in surveys without gaining consent from the  
62 University Survey Review Group may be in violation of Federal Education  
63 Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and FSU policy. For surveys where the  
64 use of student email addresses has been approved, the email addresses must  
65 be placed in the BCC: field for any mass mailings. (For more information,  
66 see <http://registrar.fsu.edu/ferpa/definitions.htm>).
- 67 2. All surveys conducted by individuals or organizations outside the University and  
68 distributed to any number of FSU faculty, staff, and/or alumni must first be approved  
69 by the University Survey Review Group.
- 70 3. All surveys administered by FSU units and distributed to a combination of 400 or  
71 more students, faculty, staff, and/or alumni, as well as all surveys conducted by  
72 external entities, must first be approved by the University Survey Review Group.
- 73 4. Exceptions to the review group requirement for surveys administered by FSU units  
74 include:
- 75 i. Institutional or organizational elections.
- 76 ii. Institutional Research survey projects fulfilling state or federal  
77 requirements.
- 78 iii. Satisfaction surveys, user surveys, or program/event evaluations  
79 administered one time or on an ongoing basis that (a) are administered only  
80 to individuals who have already used a given service or attended a specific  
81 program/event; and (b) are not administered to non-users or non-  
82 participants.
- 83 iv. Surveys administered by academic or student support programs for the  
84 purposes of evaluation or institutional planning to students who are direct  
85 participants in those programs (e.g. departmental surveys of specific majors  
86 within the department, University Housing survey of on-campus residents,  
87 etc.).
- 88 v. End-of-term course evaluations.
- 89 vi. Institution-wide surveys designated by the University Survey Review Group  
90 (e.g. National Survey of Student Engagement, Graduating Senior Survey,  
91 etc.).
- 92 vii. Direct Support Organization (DSO) surveys administered to DSO members,  
93 excluding students.
- 94 5. Academic research conducted by faculty or students and surveys conducted by students  
95 as part of an official FSU course assignment are subject to this policy only if the projects  
96 involve soliciting 400 or more total FSU students, faculty, staff, and/or alumni as

97 participants in a survey or as recipients of an email invitation requesting their  
98 participation in a survey.

99 D. Survey Samples

- 100 1. Requests to sample total populations or to sample more than 33% of the desired FSU  
101 population will be approved only rarely and must first receive approval from the  
102 University Survey Review Group.  
103 2. Requests for sample populations must include a statistical or logical justification of the  
104 sample size.

105 E. Approval Procedures

- 106 1. If none of the exceptions above apply, the survey author must submit the following  
107 information to the University Survey Review Group:  
108 i. Completed Survey Request Form  
109 ii. Final version of survey instrument  
110 iii. Narrative of all email invitations and reminders (if applicable)  
111 iv. Documentation of approval by the FSU Human Subjects Committee, if  
112 applicable.  
113 2. The survey request form and all supporting documentation must be submitted online  
114 – initially at [https://fsu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_cZr6SzdsE7CTCAD](https://fsu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cZr6SzdsE7CTCAD).  
115 3. The University Survey Review Group reports to the Provost and Executive Vice  
116 President for Academic Affairs and includes designees from the following areas:  
117 i. Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development & Advancement  
118 ii. Division of Student Affairs  
119 iii. Institutional Research  
120 iv. Human Resources  
121 v. University Advancement  
122 vi. Registrar's Office  
123 vii. Information Technology Services  
124 viii. Faculty Senate  
125 ix. Congress of Graduate Students (COGS)

126 F. Scheduling

- 127 1. Surveys will, in general, be approved on a first-come, first-served basis.  
128 2. Surveys of an institutional-nature (e.g. National Survey of Student Engagement,  
129 Graduating Senior Survey) hold highest priority, followed by college/school-wide  
130 surveys, and then all other surveys.

131 G. Survey Follow-up

- 132 1. An additional criterion for review of survey requests will be the plan by the survey  
133 author for dissemination of aggregated survey results to the FSU community.  
134 Sharing results through executive summaries posted online, presentations, or  
135 publications is strongly encouraged in order to communicate to future survey  
136 invitation recipients the impact and use of data collected through surveys.  
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138 **III. LEGAL SUPPORT, JUSTIFICATION, AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY**

139 A. BOG Regulations 1.001(3) (d), (f), (4), (5) (a), (8) (f); 8.016

140 B. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Provost and Executive Vice President to determine  
141 if it comports with best practice and continues to advance the interests of the University.  
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Interim Provost and Executive Vice President  
for Academic Affairs

July 10, 2014

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Date