

## **UIW Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Council GUIDANCE FOR SURVEYS TO WIDE AUDIENCES**

### **IE COUNCIL ROLE IN APPROVING UIW SURVEYS**

The UIW IE Council (IEC) is responsible for coordinating efforts to gather data from any groups in the UIW community – current and former students, and employees. The IEC encourages the use of surveys in the “search for and the communication of truth.” At the same time, the IEC provides oversight on surveys for two important reasons. First, if we survey people too often, we run the risk of causing ‘survey fatigue’ which irritates respondents from whom we hope to learn things. Second, the IEC serves as a central authority to *schedule* large surveys and to deconflict survey time slots, in order to maximize the benefits and responses to each survey.

### **COMMON SURVEYS THAT DO NOT NEED IEC APPROVAL**

The following cases do not need IEC approval:

1. Surveys of *students in a single course section, or of faculty within a single school.*
2. End-of-course surveys where students evaluate their faculty and courses.
3. Customer satisfaction surveys that are not sent electronically (e.g., comment cards from UIW administrative offices or at UIW food services).
4. Surveys given to event participants to get feedback on that event.
5. Surveys overseen by Psychology faculty, given only to their students and sections.
6. Surveys given by Psychology faculty to their Psychology Subject Pool.

Certainly, surveys that are exempt from IEC approval might still require approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before they can be administered. A common need for IRB review is the use of survey results for public presentation or publication. The supervising faculty person or administrator needs to IRB guidance to determine if IRB permission is needed. Please see <http://www.uiw.edu/orgs/research/compliance/irb.html> for guidance.

### **FIRST STEP for All Other Proposed Surveys**

First, go to the [IR](#) or [IRB](#) web links, read the instructions, and draft an IEC Survey Request form. The information on the form replicates the basic content of an IRB application, and it helps determine whether IRB review will be required. Additionally, it clarifies details necessary for the IEC review process. Second, consult with the Research Officer in the School of Graduate Studies and Research to determine whether an IRB review is needed.

## NEXT STEPS

As soon as you determine if an IRB review is necessary, email your IEC Survey Request – or your completed IRB packet – to the IEC Chair (currently Dr. Glenn James, [gjames@uiwtx.edu](mailto:gjames@uiwtx.edu)). The chair will confer with the IEC as needed and let you know what time windows are available for the survey population that interests you.

At that point, the IEC will:

- a. Coordinate your survey start date with other planned campus-wide surveys.
- b. Provide guidance for choosing an end-date and options for email reminders.
- c. Provide guidance regarding options for other supportive advertising thru various campus media.
- d. Assure your email invitation to respondents is complete.

The IEC will add the following short endorsement to your survey and your email invitation: “This survey has been reviewed and approved by the UIW Institutional Effectiveness Council <date> under IRB Approval ## (if needed).”

IEC and the Institutional Research (IR) office will help coordinate any mass emailing. If you plan to offer incentive prizes, IEC and IR will help you coordinate with the UIW Business Office for their requirements.

## EXAMPLES where IEC has applied this policy

End of Course Student Evaluations of Faculty do *not* need an IRB. These surveys ask students’ opinions about instructors and courses, but not about the students themselves.

National Survey of Student Engagement – The IEC itself completed an IRB to allow regular use of this survey with large samples of the first-year and senior classes.

Surveys Conducted in Capstone Courses are exempt from IRB (per the published policy), where any IRB concerns are addressed at the *instructor* level, given two critical assumptions: a) the constraint that survey results will *not* be used for external public presentation or publication; and b) that surveys do not include “special populations” or “sensitive information” (See Institutional Review Board Manual). If a Capstone survey requires invitations to UIW students or employees outside the course itself, the survey author still needs to ask IEC permission to run the survey, in order to select a time window that will not impact other scheduled surveys.

Student Interest in Shared Bicycles – The Sustainability Committee asked the IEC for guidance to survey the UIW community about interest in taking part in a Shared Bike program with the City of San Antonio. Since the faculty member leading the survey was interested in using the results in research and publication, the IEC determined an IRB was needed and scheduled the survey time window to avoid other major surveys in that semester.