

NON-CORE SURVEY PROCEDURE

This procedure is governed by its parent policy. Questions regarding this procedure are to be directed to the identified Procedure Administrator.

Functional Category:	Academic
Parent Policy:	Applied Research and the Promotion of Innovation Policy
Approval Date:	July 9, 2015
Effective Date:	July 9, 2015
Procedure Owner:	Vice President, Teaching and Learning
Procedure Administrator:	Dean, Academic Research and Development

Overview:

NorQuest College (college) students, faculty, staff, alumni, and key community stakeholders participate in surveys for reporting purposes, to inform planning, or as part of institutional and applied research activities. As the value of such data is increasingly recognized, the demand for surveys will grow. To meet all internal and external data collection needs, a coordinated approach to surveys is required. Further, the college must take steps to reduce the potential for survey fatigue, avoid the duplication of efforts, and manage the timing of surveys given to similar populations in order to ensure that the data collected using surveys is meaningful and that survey response rates remain high.

The purpose of this procedure is to:

- Promote good survey methodology and design
- Reduce survey fatigue by limiting the number of surveys and the length of surveys, as well as coordinate their distribution
- Maximize response rates
- Avoid collection of duplicate information
- Protect the privacy of respondents
- Encourage the communication of survey results to NorQuest College and the campus community

This procedure applies to:

- Individual faculty and staff research
- Requests from external organizations to survey NorQuest student, faculty, alumni, or staff populations
- Any surveys of students, alumni, faculty, or staff not exempted in this procedure

This procedure does not apply to:

- Participant evaluation of a college event, conducted by event organizers
- Assigned coursework or program requirements
- Feedback from clients at the time of service (e.g., a 'rate our service' form at the service site)
- Contact with alumni by Advancement and Brand & Marketing
- Institutional research surveys conducted for NorQuest College for the purpose of institutional planning, reporting and/or quality measurement as listed on the [Survey Calendar](#).

Authority to establish this procedure is derived from the [NorQuest College Board of Governors Policy No. 5](#) which delegates authority to the President and CEO to establish policies and procedures for the college's management and operation.

Procedures:

All requests for individual faculty and staff research, requests from external organizations to survey NorQuest students, faculty, alumni, or staff population and any survey of students, alumni, faculty or staff not exempted in this procedure must be submitted to the NorQuest Research Office at least one month in advance by submitting a completed [Survey Request Form](#) and a copy of the proposed survey questions. Researchers are encouraged to review the [General Guidelines for Surveys](#) prior to submitting a request.

The deliberate failure to follow this procedure in a way that adversely affects the college's ability to conduct research, violates the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Participants Policy or the Integrity in Research and Scholarship Policy, or damages the reputation of the college will be subject to disciplinary action.

The majority of the surveys that this procedure applies to will require Research Ethics Board (REB) approval before distribution. Researchers may submit a Survey Request Form for an unapproved project. However, REB approval must be secured before the survey is distributed if REB approval is required. See: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Participants Procedure

The Research Office will review all surveys and related planning for content, use of language, format, scope, mode of delivery, timing of delivery, duplication of effort, government requirements, privacy concerns, and the burden of the target population. The Research Office will advise researchers of any changes needed to reduce survey fatigue, prevent the collection of duplicate information, align the project with legislative, ethics, and college policies, and ensure the survey is not issued at the same time as a regularly scheduled Institutional Research survey.

Those persons undertaking a survey are responsible for communicating, wherever possible, the results of the survey back to the population surveyed in a format that can be understood by that population (e.g., descriptive report, results devoid of acronyms or variables that require interpretation). A copy of the survey results must also be submitted to the NorQuest College Research Office for tracking and future reference. At the Research Office's discretion, reports may be used by the college to promote awareness of research being undertaken.

US-based survey hosting:

Researchers are advised to use caution when employing US-based survey tools. Survey tools hosted by US companies are subject to the *US Patriot Act*, which allows authorities to access internet service records. These tools must be carefully configured to ensure that the information collected remains anonymous (i.e., not linked to an IP address or email address). Wherever possible, Canadian-hosted survey tools should be used to prevent third-party access.

If the researcher chooses to use a US-hosted survey tool, Red Deer College's Research Ethics Board (REB), which is the REB that reviews NorQuest research involving human participants, recommends including the following in the informed consent statement of the survey:

Definitions:
Related Information:
Related Documentation:
Next Review Date:
Revision History:

It is important for you to know that “[name of survey tool]” is a web-survey company that is located in the U.S.; this company is subject to U.S. laws and in particular, the Patriot Act, which allows the U.S. government to access the records of internet service providers. No personal identifiers will be collected in this survey but it is possible that the views and opinions you expressed may be accessed and linked to you without your knowledge or consent. In an effort to maintain anonymity, during the design of this survey, the option to collect your computer IP address has been disabled. The security and privacy policy for the [name of survey tool] can be found at the following link: [insert appropriate link]

Participant: any person who agrees to participate in the survey

Researcher: any person conducting a survey or research project

Survey: a tool that collects information from a broad sampling or census of a population

Survey fatigue: the feeling of being ‘tired’ or ‘bored’ that participants experience when they received too many surveys, when the surveys are too long, or when they are surveyed on similar topics repeatedly. Survey fatigue results in deteriorating response rates and a lower quality of data (fatigued participants may choose arbitrary answers or give up).

- [Applied Research and the Promotion of Innovation Policy](#)
- [Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Participants](#)
- [Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Participants Procedure](#)
- [General Guidelines for Surveys](#)
- [Red Deer College Research Ethics](#)
- [Survey Calendar](#)

- [Research Office Survey Request Form](#)

June 2019

July 2015: New
 August 2016: update document links
 October 2018: Update to document links