

Humber Online Survey Guidelines and Standards

Conducting Surveys at Humber	2
Survey Permissions	2
Survey Development Assistance	2
Survey Scheduling	2
Blackout Dates	3
Survey Frequency	3
Survey Development and Design	3
Survey Platforms	3
Informed Consent and Confidentiality	3
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)	4
Demographic Information	4
Target Population and Sampling	4
Research Purpose	5
Question Development Advice	5
Additional Resources	6
Appendix A – Sample Survey Invitation	7
Appendix B – Sample Demographic Questions	8
Appendix C – Sample Response Scales	10

Humber Online Survey Guidelines and Standards

Conducting Surveys at Humber

Institutional Planning & Analysis (IPA) has developed a coordinated approach to the administration of online surveys. The guidelines set forth in this document aim to achieve the following:

- minimize the occurrence of survey/ email fatigue and oversampling of entire populations or large segments of Humber students, employees, or alumni;
- ensure compliance with legislative and internal processes;
- avoid or minimize duplication in data collection; and
- ensure quality research questions and design.

This guide is intended for surveys and/or data collection conducted by any administrative office and/or service department that gathers information from Humber students, faculty, or staff that they service directly. Studies conducted by academic departments for the purposes of evaluating educational activities, programming, curriculum, or classroom management (ex., course evaluations) may also benefit from best-practice examples and standards provided.

For those conducting academic research involving human participants that is not directly related to a Humber service or administrative department, please refer to Humber's Research Ethics Board (REB) (<http://humber.ca/research/reb>)

Survey Permissions

Survey authors seeking to involve large percentages (more than 33%) of any segment of the Humber population should work in consultation with the appropriate steward. These stewards are indicated below, based on the population(s) solicited for the survey:

- **Students** – Vice President, Student and Institutional Planning
- **Academic employees** – Senior Vice President, Academic and Vice President, Human Resources
- **Non-academic employees** – Vice President, Human Resources
- **Alumni** – Vice President, Advancement and External Affairs

Survey Development Assistance

In addition to this guide and the standards provided within, those looking to conduct online surveys or use email to invite participation in any survey are welcomed to consult with Humber's Institutional Planning & Analysis (IPA) department at iresearch@humber.ca for further assistance with survey design, communications and methodology.

Survey Scheduling

Online surveys of an institutional nature (*e.g., Ontario Colleges Student Experience Survey, Humber Student Success Survey, Humber Employee Engagement Survey, etc.*) hold highest priority, followed by division/department/school-wide online surveys, and then all other surveys.

Humber Online Survey Guidelines and Standards

Blackout Dates

Online surveys involving any current students are strongly encouraged not to coincide during the following:

1. Course evaluations (Student Feedback Questionnaire at the end of every semester)
2. Exam Week
3. Annual Institution-wide surveys
 - a. Humber Student Success Survey (October-November)
 - b. Ontario Colleges Student Experience Survey (OCSES) (February)
 - c. KPI Graduate Satisfaction Survey (6 months post-graduation)

Survey Frequency

Current Humber students, employees, and/or alumni should not be asked to participate in a survey more than once in a three-week period.

Those conducting surveys (online or not) and sending email invitations to Humber students, employees, or alumni asking for their participation are encouraged to send a maximum of three e-mails (*one initial email and up to two subsequent reminder emails*).

Survey Development and Design

Survey Platforms

When at all possible, it is recommended to use online survey platforms that house their data in Canada. This ensures that your data is protected under Canadian privacy laws, such as The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA). Examples include *SimpleSurvey* and *Hosted in Canada Surveys*.

Departments and/or service areas under Student and Institutional Planning (SIP) have access to CampusLabs (now Anthology) for all online survey, registration and event log administration as well as related data analysis.

Informed Consent and Confidentiality

All research involving human participants requires informed consent. Prospective participants should be provided with enough information about the research to make an informed decision about whether or not to participate.

The survey invitation and/or the opening paragraph of the survey should let survey participants know:

- That consent is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time
- what information is being collected
- why it is being collected
- how the results will be shared/used**
- where the data will be stored
- contact information for any questions

Please see *Appendix A* for an example of a survey invitation from the Humber Student Success Survey (HSSS).

Humber Online Survey Guidelines and Standards

** Most often when collecting personal information and/or details, either for your survey or for the purposes of drawing prize winners, a confidentiality statement should be included so that participants are aware of the level at which their personal information will be shared. An example:

The information you have provided in this survey is anonymous and will remain confidential. Personal information provided here will only be used to identify and contact prize winners.

If personal information is expected to be used to contact students for follow-up research (ex., focus groups), please include this in your confidentiality statement.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)

Broadly speaking, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) provides a right of access to records held by public bodies and regulates how public bodies manage personal information through the establishment of rules for the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by public bodies. It gives individuals the right to access their own personal information and to correct any information that public bodies hold about them. Any Humber survey should include the FIPPA statement on the first page of the survey, found below:

In accordance with Section 39(2) of the Freedom of Information and Protection and Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.F. 31, this is to advise you that the personal information on this form is collected under the legal authority of the Ontario College of Applied Technology Act, 2002 and may be used and/or disclosed for administrative, statistical and/or research purposes of the College and/or the ministries and agencies of the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada. If you have any questions about the collection, use and disclosure of your personal information by the College, please contact the Associate Vice President Legal and Risk Management/Freedom of Information and Privacy Officer, 205 Humber College Blvd, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M9W 5L7 416-675-6622.

Demographic Information

When collecting information on your student survey population, Humber's Institutional Planning and Analysis (IPA) department may be of assistance in providing demographic information, reducing or minimizing the duplication of data collection. Information pertaining to program, faculty, credential, gender, age, first generation, Indigenous status, and residency status (domestic/international) may be available.

When asking demographic information, it is recommended that you word your questions the same as those found in our institutional surveys to make comparisons easier. For sample wording pertaining to first generation, racial identity, gender, and/or orientation, please follow the standards set in the Humber Student Success Survey (HSSS) found in *Appendix B*.

Target Population and Sampling

It is not always necessary to conduct a census of the entire target population* in order to make accurate inferences. Sampling techniques such as random sampling or stratified sampling can be employed to estimate parameters within a certain margin of error. As an example, if your target population is 1000 then your sample size would need to be 278 (+/- 5%) completed surveys, 19 times out of 20.

Humber Online Survey Guidelines and Standards

*The target population is the group of individuals you are trying to answer your research questions. It could be new students, students in a particular school or program, or a particular demographic of student.

There are numerous on-line calculators for determining the sample size for a particular margin of error when using random sampling. Links to two such calculators can be found below:

www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html

www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm

Research Purpose

Before planning or designing a survey the most important first step is to clearly define the purpose of your research. Is your purpose to make decisions about program improvement? Evaluate learning? Develop programs and initiatives? By defining this, you are able to more clearly develop the core data points that need to be developed; surveys that are too vague or attempt to do too much can be difficult to analyze and can suffer from low response rates. Good research questions come from clear research purposes, which will ultimately make all stages of your survey process from development to analysis and reporting much easier.

Question Development Advice

Developing quality questions in your survey will lead to higher response rates and higher quality data from which to draw inferences and make informed decisions. The following are a few guidelines and standards to get the most out of your survey:

- Keep your survey short and to the point - fewer questions will deliver higher response rates.
- Label each point in a response scale to ensure clarity and equal weight to each response option (see *Appendix C* for examples).
- When possible, be as precise as possible to avoid word choice confusion. Using words like “often” or “rarely” may mean different things to different people. Instead, use phrases like “fewer than three times per week.”
- Avoid asking two questions at once (double-barreled questions): “How satisfied are you with the hours and location of our offices?”
- Where applicable, include an option for “not applicable” or “don’t know”, since some people will not know or remember, and if they guess, their answer will skew the results.
- Avoid false implications – do not ask questions that you have no intention or ability to act on: “Would you like Humber to waive your tuition?”
- Ensure mutually exclusive response options. For example, if you ask respondents their age do not provide overlapping categories (15-20, 20-25).

Humber Online Survey Guidelines and Standards

Additional Resources

There are numerous resources available to help you to develop high quality online surveys. If you have not found what you are looking for in this guide, please refer to the following links for additional information and advice:

Humber Assessment Training:

<https://humber.ca.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Sessions/List.aspx#folderID=%2259b8336d-555d-45ce-a668-ad3c01474468%22>

Humber Policies (under 'Research'):

<https://humber.ca/legal-and-risk-management/policies.html>

CampusLabs/Anthology Resources (Data Collection):

<https://baselinesupport.campuslabs.com/hc/en-us/sections/200909695-Data-Collection-Other>

Qualtrics (Building Effective Surveys):

<https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/10-tips-for-building-effective-surveys/>

Survey Monkey (10 Best Practices):

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/survey-guidelines/>

Humber Online Survey Guidelines and Standards

Appendix A – Sample Survey Invitation

Hi {FIRSTNAME},

This is your personal and confidential invitation to the Humber Student Success Survey.

Please take 5 minutes to provide your input and you will be entered into a prize draw for one of three \$1,000 Amazon E-Gift Cards*.

This survey was developed in consultation with students to help us plan services and programs that support your success. The questions focus on:

- your experience at Humber,
- your academic and career goals,
- the challenges you may be facing while attending college.

We also ask demographic questions to help us understand and promote equity, diversity and inclusion at Humber.

Your responses will be kept confidential, however they may be combined with others in a summary form for administrative, statistical, or research purposes of Humber College. Your individual responses will not be shared.

If you have any questions about this survey, contact Jelena Dukic, Associate Director, Institutional Research at jelena.dukic@humber.ca or 416-675-6622 X4914.

Instructions

Thank you for your participation and best wishes for continued success,

Ian Crookshank
Dean of Students, Humber College

*Complete the HSS Survey and click the submit button to be eligible to win one prize of a \$1,000 Amazon E-Gift Card. Contest closes November 6, 2020. Skill testing question may be required. Odds of winning depend on the number of entries received. Contest is open to all Humber College students in full-time programs who reside in Canada, excluding Quebec. For complete rules, visit <http://bit.ly/HSSSurvey2020>.

Humber Online Survey Guidelines and Standards

Appendix B – Sample Demographic Questions

First Generation *(from HSSS)*

What is the highest level of education your parent(s)/guardian(s) have completed?

- ☐ Less than high school
- ☐ High school
- ☐ Some college or technical school (no certificate or diploma)
- ☐ College or technical school graduate (e.g. certificate or diploma)
- ☐ Some university (no degree or diploma)
- ☐ Undergraduate degree (e.g. BA, BSc, etc)
- ☐ Professional degree (e.g., law, medicine)
- ☐ Graduate degree (e.g., Master's, PhD)
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____
- ☐ Don't know / Not applicable

Has either of your parent(s)/guardian(s) ever attended a university or college?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Racial Identity *(from HSSS)*

Which of the following BEST describes your racial identity?

- ☐ North American Aboriginal (e.g., First Nations, Inuit, Metis),
- ☐ South American Indigenous (e.g., Mayan, Quechua, Aymara)
- ☐ Asian - East (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean)
- ☐ Asian - South (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi)
- ☐ Asian - South East (e.g., Malaysian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Burmese, Cambodian/Kampuchean, Thai)
- ☐ Black - African (e.g., Ghanaian, Kenyan, Somali)
- ☐ Black - Caribbean (e.g., Jamaican, Trinidadian, Vincentian, St. Lucian, Grenadian, Antiguan)
- ☐ Black - North American (e.g., Canadian, American)
- ☐ Indian-Caribbean (e.g., Guyanese and Trinidadians with origins in India)
- ☐ Latin America (e.g., Argentinean, Chilean, Costa Rican, Cuban)
- ☐ Middle Eastern (e.g., Egyptian, Iranian, Israeli, Palestinian)
- ☐ Mixed background (please specify) _____
- ☐ White - European (e.g., English, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Serbian, Spanish, French)
- ☐ White - North American (e.g., Canadian, American)
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Humber Online Survey Guidelines and Standards

Gender *(from HSSS)*

What is your current gender identity?

Please select all that apply:

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Trans or transgender (please specify): _____
- ☐ Non-binary/gender non-conforming
- ☐ Another identity (please specify): _____
- ☐ Decline to answer

Orientation *(from HSSS)*

Do you identify as:

Please select all that apply:

- ☐ Gay
- ☐ Lesbian
- ☐ Two-spirited
- ☐ Straight/Heterosexual
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Queer
- ☐ Asexual
- ☐ Questioning
- ☐ Pansexual
- ☐ If none of the above options apply to you, please specify: _____
- ☐ Decline to answer

Humber Online Survey Guidelines and Standards

Appendix C – Sample Response Scales

Frequently Used Scales

Agreement		
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Neither Agree nor Disagree (Undecided) 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree	3 - Agree 2 - Undecided 1 - Disagree	
Satisfaction		
5 - Very satisfied 4 - Satisfied 3 - Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied 2 - Dissatisfied 1 - Very dissatisfied	5 - Extremely Satisfied 4 - Very Satisfied 3 - Moderately Satisfied 2 - Slightly Satisfied 1 - Not at All Satisfied	3 - Satisfied 2 - Undecided 1 - Dissatisfied
Quality		
5 - Excellent 4 - Above Average 3 - Average 2 - Below Average 1 - Extremely Poor	4 - Excellent 3 - Good 2 - Fair 1 - Poor	3 - Good 2 - Fair 1 - Poor
Importance		
5 - Extremely Important 4 - Important 3 - Moderately Important 2 - Somewhat Important 1 - Not very Important	5 - Very Important 4 - Important 3 - Somewhat Important 2 - Somewhat Unimportant 1 - Very Unimportant	
Frequency		
6 - Very Frequently 5 - Frequently 4 - Occasionally 3 - Rarely 2 - Very Rarely 1 - Never	5 - Always 4 - Often 3 - Sometimes 2 - Rarely 1 - Never	5 - A Great Deal 4 - Quite a Bit 3 - Somewhat 2 - Very little 1 - Not at All

Humber Online Survey Guidelines and Standards

Additional Scales

Level of Acceptability 1 – Totally unacceptable 2 – Unacceptable 3 – Slightly unacceptable 4 – Neutral 5 – Slightly acceptable 6 – Acceptable 7 – Perfectly Acceptable	Level of Support/Opposition 1 – Strongly oppose 2 – Somewhat oppose 3 – neutral 4 – Somewhat favour 5 – Strongly favour	Amount of Use 1 – Never use 2 – Almost never 3 – Occasionally/Sometimes 4 – Almost every time 5 – Frequently use
Level of Appropriateness 1 – Absolutely inappropriate 2 – Inappropriate 3 – Slightly inappropriate 4 – Neutral 5 – Slightly appropriate 6 – Appropriate 7 – Absolutely appropriate	Level of Concern 1 – not at all concerned 2 – Slightly concerned 3 – Somewhat concerned 4 – Moderately concerned 5 – Extremely concerned	Level of Familiarity 1 – not at all familiar 2 – Slightly familiar 3 – Somewhat familiar 4 – Moderately familiar 5 – Extremely familiar
Reflect Me? 1 – Very untrue of me 2 – Untrue of me 3 – Somewhat untrue of me 4 – Neutral 5 – Somewhat true of me 6 – True of me 7 – Very true of me	Level of Probability 1 – Not probable 2 – Somewhat improbable 3 – Neutral 4 – Somewhat probable 5 – Very probable	Level of Awareness 1 – not at all aware 2 – Slightly aware 3 – Somewhat aware 4 – Moderately aware 5 – Extremely aware
My beliefs 1 – Very untrue of what I believe 2 – Untrue of what I believe 3 – Somewhat untrue of what I believe 4 – Neutral 5 – Somewhat true of what I believe 6 – True of what I believe 7 – Very true of what I believe	Level of Problem 1 – Not at all a problem 2 – Minor problem 3 – Moderate problem 4 – Serious problem	Level of Difficulty 1 – Very difficult 2 – Difficult 3 – Neutral 4 – Easy 5 – Very easy
Priority Level (7-point scale) 1 – Not a priority 2 – Low priority 3 – Somewhat priority 4 – Neutral 5 – Moderate Priority 6 – High priority 7 – Essential priority	Priority Level (5-point scale) 1 – Not a priority 2 – Low priority 3 – Medium priority 4 – High priority 5 – Essential	Level of Consideration 1 – Would not consider 2 – Might or might not consider 3 – Definitely consider
	Affect on X 1 – No affect 2 – Minor affect 3 – Neutral 4 – Moderate affect 5 – Major affect	Level of Participation 1 – No, and not considered 2 – No, but considered 3 – Yes
	Level of Desirability 1 – Very undesirable 2 – Undesirable 3 – neutral 4 – Desirable 5 – Very desirable	