

Survey Protocol

Section	Notes
Purpose	<p>Northern Essex Community College (NECC) participates in and administers a number of surveys that are intended to collect data from students, faculty, staff, alumni, and external partners.</p> <p>The College has developed the following protocol for survey administration and analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prevent the same individuals from being surveyed multiple times, in an effort to avoid ‘survey fatigue’. • To keep Institutional Research & Effectiveness (IRE) informed about what surveys are being administered and explore opportunities to combine existing surveys. • To provide guidance on survey design. • To protect our students, staff, faculty, alumni, and external partners. • To ensure that surveys used at NECC adhere to best practices for reliability and validity.
Forms vs Surveys	<p>Forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilized for information collection, such as personal information or registration information. You do not need permission to send out forms. <p>Surveys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilized to gather viewpoints, making them useful for research and decision-making. Review this protocol to see if you need permission to administer your survey.
Approved Tools	<p><i>Using sites like Wufoo, Survey Monkey or Google Forms goes against NECC’s Survey Protocol.</i></p> <p>The following tools are approved for administering online surveys. These are approved because they are accessible, secure, and supported by IT at NECC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft 365 Forms – easily create surveys, polls, and forms with your NECC associated account. • Qualtrics – can be used if you work with IRE. • Softdocs – create electronic forms with more complicated workflows; allows collection of digital signatures and option to send copies of submitted forms.
Program Review and Program Accreditation	<p>You can learn more about this here. You must be logged into NECC One to view this document.</p>

<p>Institutional Research and Effectiveness (IRE)</p>	<p>If you wish to have IRE assist with your survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill out this Ad Hoc Survey Request Form and someone in IRE will reach out to you to discuss. <p>IRE can assist with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing your survey: question wording, sequencing, and response format. • Distributing your survey: developing target cohort list, outreach, and ensuring good response rates. • Analyzing the survey results: tabulating results and meaning making. <p>IRE will not analyze the results of any survey in which they did not assist in the design and implementation.</p>
<p>Institutional Review Board (IRB)</p>	<p>All surveys that will be used as part of a study or research must be reviewed by the IRB if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data will be shared outside of the college. • Participants will engage in activities or be exposed to risks beyond those expected in a typical academic setting. • You are conducting this survey as part of a grant project through the college. • You will be using this survey as part of personal (e.g. non-college) research, such as for a graduate program. <p>For additional information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the IRB chair at NECC_IRB@necc.mass.edu
<p>Protocol for faculty and staff wanting to survey students</p>	<p>The only surveys that can be administered to students without working with IRE are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on your own course(s). • Feedback on attended events, workshops, and presentations that you hosted. • Please note: Deans, Department Chairs, and Program Coordinators may survey other faculty members' courses if you give the faculty member the option to opt out. <p>Some things to consider when surveying students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All surveys are optional to take and cannot be required. Keep this in mind especially for those under the age of 18, who may not be aware of their right to deny taking a survey. • You cannot make surveys an assignment or tie any grade to the completion of a survey. • In order to give out incentives that require NECC funding, you must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Have written approval from your supervisor and ◦ Have written approval from procurement@necc.mass.edu • You can write your own survey or use pre-written surveys. • You can ask, but not require students to answer demographic questions. • Surveys can be anonymous or identifiable; see last section under 'Survey Design Tips' for more info.
<p>Protocol for faculty & staff wanting to survey faculty, staff, alumni, and external partners</p>	<p>The only surveys that can be administered to faculty, staff, and external partners without working with IRE are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback forms on attended events, workshops, and presentations that you hosted. <p>Some things to consider when surveying faculty/staff/external partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All surveys are optional to take and cannot be required.

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<p>Protocol for students wanting to survey students, faculty, staff, alumni, and external partners</p>	<p>The only surveys that students can administer without working with IRE are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your survey is specifically for a research class and you have approval from your instructor (not just any NECC employee). <p>Students must submit a form to Institutional Research & Effectiveness if they wish to administer a survey at NECC, outside of their research class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Step 1:</u> Fill out this form. • <u>Step 2:</u> We will set up a time to discuss your survey, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is and isn’t allowed. ○ Potentially merging your survey questions with a pre-existing survey that NECC already administers. ○ Approved vs non-approved marketing materials to promote your survey.
<p>Survey Resources</p>	<p>Questions to consider before creating a survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose of my survey? • What question(s) am I trying to answer? • Who is the target population? How will I obtain that list? • Is the survey directly related to a decision I want or need to make? • When do I want to send this survey out? Will it overlap with other surveys? • Has a communication strategy been developed for outreach and to attain a good response rate? • How will I analyze the data to make meaning out of the results? (e.g., what is my methodology?) Do I feel confident in my ability to analyze the raw data? • Will I be sharing this data? If so, how will I share it and who is my audience? <p>Survey Design Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey introduction should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Statement explaining the purpose of the survey. ○ Approximate time it will take to complete the survey. ○ Whether or not their responses are anonymous or identifiable. Anonymous surveys may lead to more honest feedback and a higher response rate, but identifiable surveys will let you compare their responses to the existing data you have on your target population and /or follow up with them. ○ If and how results will be shared. ○ Contact information for questions. ○ Thanking them for their time.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be a specific reason you are including every question, rather than including questions just out of curiosity. Ask yourself ‘what will I do with the results of this question?’ to determine if it’s necessary to include. • Use language that is easy to understand. Do not include jargon or abbreviations. When writing surveys to students, we recommend writing questions at an 8th grade reading level. • Only ask one question per question. For example, do not ask “Was the workshop informative and engaging?” Instead, separate ‘informative’ and ‘engaging’ into two different questions. Someone might think the workshop was informative but not engaging, or vice versa. • Use multiple choice questions to decrease the amount of time it takes to answer a question and for clearer analysis. If you plan on using number values in your analysis, you must include these from the beginning in your survey. For example, 1=Strongly disagree and 5=Strongly agree. • To minimize survey bias, arrange multiple-choice response options in ascending order, either from top to bottom or left to right. For example, use "1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree," and so on, rather than starting with "5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree," etc. • Do not lead respondents to an answer. For example, do not ask “Do you agree that....” • Test your survey on a desktop and phone before sending it out!
Questions?	<p>When in doubt, reach out!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email NECC_IRB@necc.mass.edu if you have read this protocol and are still not sure about what to do or have questions.