

# INSTITUTIONAL SURVEY GUIDELINES

As an institution we suggest the following guidelines be used in the design of an institutional survey instrument:

1. Use at minimum a five-point Likert scale.
2. Keep the number of different Likert scales to a minimum within one survey instrument and word the scales consistently throughout the survey instrument.
3. Arrange the scale to read from left-to-right, positive to negative.
4. When a “Not Applicable” or “Did Not Use” option needs to be included, place the option at the end of the scale (after the last negative option).
5. In a matrix style question group lists of items do not require punctuation however statements do.
6. In a matrix style question group it is recommended that the group starts with a clear instructional statement such as:
  - Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following:, or
  - Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
7. Grouping like questions together and providing group headings is recommended.

Here are the six-point Likert scales used in the Annual PNWU Survey administered to students, staff and faculty as examples.

## **Agreement**

- Completely Agree
- Agree
- Slightly Agree
- Slightly Disagree
- Disagree
- Completely Disagree

## **Frequency**

- Never
- Very Rarely
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Very Frequently
- Always

## **Satisfaction**

- Completely Satisfied
- Mostly Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Mostly Dissatisfied

- Completely Dissatisfied

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR WRITING SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Is the question biased? (bad example: Our program is consistently ranked in the top 50 in the country. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate our program?)
- Is the question too demanding? (i.e. is the question long or potentially confusing?)
- Is it a compound question? (bad example: How prepared are you for teaching, reading, and writing?)
- Does the question include a double negative? (bad example: Should students not be required to participate in field experience? Yes No)
- Are the answer choices mutually exclusive and exhaustive? (bad example: How many years of teaching experience do you have? 0-3 3-5 5-10 10+)
- Try to use consistent response formats (i.e. response options) on items in a section to keep the survey less confusing for respondents.
- Do you allow respondents the option to pass on answering? It's best to let respondents skip questions, especially if it requires potentially sensitive information
- Try to keep your survey short and as simple as possible. The longer and more complex a survey is, the higher the tendency is for respondents to get annoyed and abandon the survey before completion or to pick arbitrary answers just to get to the end.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

- Be sure to get permission to administer any survey going out to PNWU students, staff, and faculty through the appropriate channels. It is best to consult with the Office of Scholarly Activity to determine if IRB approval is required. Whether IRB approval is required or not, you must also contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to ensure that the timing of dissemination of your survey does not conflict with an already planned PNWU survey.
- Always send out an email to all respondents that alerts them that you will be sending out a survey soon. If members of the IT department are not on the list of survey respondents be sure to cc a copy of the email to them so that they are aware of the upcoming survey. The email should provide the following details:
  - Title of the survey
  - Title of the software the survey will be sent from
  - Date the survey will be sent out
  - Target respondents (all staff, faculty, and enrolled students...or all COM OMS1 students), please be specific.
- At the beginning of the survey always include a brief statement explaining what the survey results will be used for, why each respondent's feedback is important, and a statement about the confidentiality of the results.
- Always test your survey and survey questions and utilize feedback of test participants to improve your final survey instrument.
- Send survey reminders to non-responders 2-3 times per week.
- Have faculty members talk to their students about completing the survey and if possible have them give 10-15 minutes of class time to do so
- Keep your survey open for at least 3-weeks if possible.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SURVEY ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

- Before you disseminate your survey you should develop a plan for analysis. Your plan should include answers to the following questions;
  - Who will conduct the data analysis?

- Are there particular answers that analysis should provide answers to?
  - What type of descriptive statistics will be produced?
- Who is the audience(s) for the results report?
- Is there a deadline for the report to be developed and disseminated?
- Who will review the report for errors before it is disseminated to the intended audience?