

Guidelines for Requests to Survey Current Princeton University Students

Original and independent research comprises a fundamental component of both the undergraduate and graduate student experience at Princeton. In seeking an accessible survey population, students may request to survey their current Princeton peers – either undergraduate or graduate students, or both – to collect original data with the assistance of the [Princeton Survey Research Center](#).

In considering these requests, the University must balance its desire to support appropriate campus research projects with the need to minimize the risk of disclosing personal student educational record information without student consent, and to safeguard students from potentially unlimited and un-prioritized solicitations for survey participation. This is necessary to ensure that research is conducted in a manner consistent with FERPA and other regulations, and that student willingness to participate as subjects in survey research does not diminish.

Academic research projects including a survey component must be sponsored or endorsed by a Princeton faculty member. Those conducting the research should then work with the Survey Research Center to develop a suitable survey sample. The Survey Research Center can manage communications with survey subjects in a manner consistent with state and federal law as well as University policy. Student access to this resource is limited to academic research projects, such as dissertation research and senior thesis projects.

Accordingly, the following guidelines have been developed for students seeking access to student populations for survey research. Students should discuss these guidelines with their faculty advisers early in the process of planning and proposing their research:

- Requests to survey the Princeton student body will be prioritized with regard to the potential significance and impact of the proposed research, for instance, as measured by the likelihood of future publication.
- Faculty research projects will normally receive highest priority in requests to survey current students, followed by graduate students and seniors conducting thesis research.
- Requests to survey Princeton students for junior independent work will be considered only in extraordinary circumstances, and will require a letter of strong support from the student's faculty adviser.
- When possible, undergraduates should consider existing, publicly-accessible datasets before proposing to survey current students.
- Requests to survey the Princeton student body should make clear why existing data cannot reasonably support the proposed research, and delineate the reasons that surveying students at Princeton, in particular, is preferable to conducting the research on another population.
- The Survey Research Center may elect to notify students about other possible sources of data, when appropriate.
- Approved proposals to survey current students will generally be limited to a random sub-sample of no more than 1000 students; requests to survey the entire student population must be accompanied by a strong methodological rationale for why this large sample size is required.
- Proposals that are unlikely to garner the required number of responses (e.g., a critical mass of respondents in particular cells) will not be approved.
- The Survey Research Center may elect to consult with the Graduate School or the Office of the Dean of the College before approving survey research with current students.