



RESEARCH

PLANNING & INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Guidelines for Requesting and Conducting Effective District Surveys

COS

SEQUOIAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
HANFORD | TULARE | VISALIA

Guidelines for Requesting and Conducting Effective District Surveys

Are you thinking about requesting a survey? Before submitting your request, please review the following guidelines to learn more about the process and to determine if a survey is the most appropriate method to obtain the information/data you need. These guidelines serve to increase/improve effectiveness and efficiency of data collection through survey instruments.

Before Requesting a Survey

Be Aware of the IRB Rules and Other Administrative Guidelines

Some surveys require review by the District's Institutional Review Board (IRB). It is the responsibility of the IRB to evaluate each research proposal in terms of ethical standards. In particular, the Board will assess if there are appropriate measures planned to maintain confidentiality, establish informed consent, and avoid any risk to individuals. For further information, please visit the IRB web site: <https://www.cos.edu/en-us/administration/research/conducting-research-at-cos>. In addition, the COS Office of Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness may conduct administrative review for approval. The Research Office administrative approval process is intended neither to serve as, nor replace, review of a research project/proposal by COS IRB. The administrative approval process considers quality of the project/proposal, and the College's needs and priorities.

Seek Alternatives

Everyone requests surveys! Requestors are encouraged to explore alternative methods to obtain the information/data needed. Although surveys are helpful, they are but one tool that can be used. Other data collection methods include reviewing internal documents and protocols and/or conducting individual or focus group interviews. It is also important to consider if there are already existing data and/or prior research that can be used. Prior research may include both institutional research and research/studies from peer-reviewed literature. At times, requests may be made for data that have already been collected, which may require unnecessary and duplicated work. For a list of existing surveys as well as District reports, please visit the District's [Reports, Studies, and Surveys](#) website. To explore additional existing data please visit the District's [Giant Fact Book](#) and the [COS Giant Dashboards](#) websites.

Avoid Fatigue

The administration of too many uncoordinated or poorly designed surveys may cause survey fatigue among respondents, which decreases the effectiveness of surveys and the number and quality of survey responses received. To avoid survey fatigue among respondents, the Research Office oversees and coordinates District survey needs and efforts, designs high-quality surveys, and attempts to reduce the number of surveys administered in a short period. To explore the District's survey administration timeline and activities, please visit the District's [Reports, Studies, and Surveys](#) website.



Be Specific

Surveys are a helpful tool to obtain needed information, but to get the most use out of a survey it is important to have specific research questions. For example, instead of asking “How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact COS students”, ask “How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact COS students’ English/Math completion rates. Specific research questions help narrow down the focus of a survey and allow for information that is more thorough. Additionally, it is important to identify the audience that can provide the most useful and accurate information regarding the topic of your research question. For example, if you want to understand challenges students faced in successfully completing transfer level math and English within their first year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, you would only want to survey first-time students during the COVID-19 pandemic. These students would be the most knowledgeable about the topic due to their firsthand experience, while other audiences would only be able to provide secondhand knowledge or their perceptions of challenges students faced.

Information Needed to Complete Survey Requests

Please visit the District’s Research/Ad Hoc Data Request website and submit a Research Request form.

The following information should be included in your survey request in the textbox that states “Please describe your data, research, or survey request in detail.”

- Name and contact information for the responsible party for the survey
- Purpose of the survey
- Target audience (e.g. all faculty, English Faculty, all students, first-generation students)
- Survey distribution method (web link vs email invitations)
- Time-frame (Launch date, Reminder date(s), and Closing date)
- List of survey features needed (e.g. send participants confirmation email/copy of responses, allow participants to change answers until survey is closed, allow participants to take the survey multiple times, custom thank you message, specific redirect page)
- Results format (raw data, aggregate tables/charts, aggregate tables/charts with result summary, and full research report).
- Description of how results will be utilized.
- List of who will receive a copy of the results.
- Explanation of how the survey benefits the District and/or support the District’s mission.

If the survey will be distributed via email invitations, please provide the participants’ email, first name, last name, Banner ID in a CSV file.)

Standard Survey Invitations

The District uses a standard template for survey invitations. The language can be modified to fit the needs of your specific request. The standard invitation includes the following information:



- The name and purpose of the survey
- Statement that participation is voluntary
- Statement about compensation/incentives
- Statement about anonymity or confidentiality such as what data (e.g. aggregate only, de-identified individual responses or comments, or identifiable individual responses) will be shared and with who the data will be shared.
- The survey's closing date.
- Name and contact information for participants to contact if they have questions or issues
- Name and Title of the individual "sending" the survey.

EXAMPLE:

District-wide feedback is an important part of the planning and evaluation process at the College of the Sequoias. You are invited to participate in the (Name of Survey), which provides you an opportunity to reflect on your (Purpose of Survey). Please take a few minutes today to respond to this survey. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. Although your input is extremely valuable for the improvement of COS, no tangible compensation will be given for participation in the survey.

Please note that your responses will be kept (anonymous/confidential). Survey results will only be reported in the aggregate/be reported at the aggregate and individual level, but individual level data will be de-identified to ensure the privacy of the respondent is protected. The results will be analyzed by the COS Office of Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, and will be forwarded to (groups/departments/programs/individuals who will get results). The results may also be used by the appropriate COS offices and leadership. This survey will close on (date), at (time).

If you have any questions, comments, concerns, or need clarification regarding the content of the survey, please contact the (Contact Name) at (contact email).

Thank you for your participation.

Name

Title





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Office of Research, Planning & Institutional Effectiveness
College of the Sequoias
915 S Mooney Blvd, Visalia, CA 93277