Survey policy

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1. Purpose

The University of Pretoria undertakes or participates in numerous surveys involving its students, staff and alumni, as well as community and employer groups. These surveys help to provide an empirical basis for management initiatives, strategic planning, decision-making and policy reviews. To date these surveys have been conducted on an ad hoc basis within the University and no formal co-ordination of surveys or survey results has existed. The increase in the number of surveys, the importance of the correct dissemination of survey results, and the interrelationship between these surveys has resulted in an increased requirement for coordination and management of surveys by a central office and the development of a formal survey policy for the University.

The purpose of this document is to outline the policy framework for surveying staff, students, alumni and other stakeholders of the University, the procedures applicable to doing and scheduling surveys, and the policy on disseminating management information received from surveys.

This survey policy has been established to ensure that surveys conducted in the University are of a consistently high standard; do not duplicate data collection conducted through other University surveys; do not compromise population samples through overlapping surveys; do not over-survey the University's core stakeholders; and that survey outcomes are disseminated and used appropriately.

Adherence to this policy will ensure that the University will be provided with robust data and analysis for its quality assurance, benchmarking and continuous improvement purposes. Accordingly, this survey policy fulfils the University's commitment to ensuring that surveys conducted under the auspices of the University are of the highest standard, meet ethical norms and deliver results that add significant value to the strategic decision-making processes of the University.

The policy is based on survey management models used by a selection of universities abroad as well as local South African universities.

2. Organisational scope

The University's Code of Ethics for Research requires that those responsible for initiating University surveys must seek advice from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities to determine if ethics approval is required.

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The following general guideline applies. All surveys that involve respondents will require ethics committee approval. Where surveys are to be of a recurring nature, application can be made to the ethics committee for a standard operating procedure (SOP) that will eliminate the need for repeated application to the ethics committee.

If a survey proposal for an external company, individuals or entities is accepted by the Survey Coordinating Committee, the survey proposal must also be approved by the Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Humanities. In the case of a clinical study, the study must be approved by the Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

2.1. Surveys within the scope of this policy

Surveys within the scope of this framework include, but are not limited to:

- internal quality assurance surveys (e.g. surveys conducted for quality audit purposes, or by individual Faculties and Support Departments in respect of student success, learning and teaching, for the evaluation of staff, student or alumni perceptions of aspects of their experience of the University);

- surveys commissioned or sponsored by internal organisational units or external parties, including University staff and students, campus companies, government departments or agencies, other external individuals or entities;

- internally sponsored market research surveys (e.g. surveys conducted with students and prospective students, graduates and alumni in relation to consumer behaviour and purchase intent);

- internal managerial surveys in respect of staff, students or alumni to determine attitudes and opinions (e.g. satisfaction surveys, climate surveys, staff perceptions surveys);

- surveys where the University's brand and reputation are at stake;
- market quantification surveys and competitor analysis where inputs are requested from other local and international institutions and organizations.

2.2. Surveys outside the scope of the Survey Coordinating Committee

The following types of survey are considered to be outside the scope of the Survey Coordinating Committee:

- Surveys that are initiated by UP academic staff and postgraduate students for the purpose of their own academic research, except in the cases where the surveys are expected to sample a number exceeding the prescribed threshold level, which is presently prescribed as 10% of any source population; however, if UP academic staff are commissioned by management to undertake surveys, these will not fall outside the scope of the Survey Coordinating Committee (see 3.1 above);

- Surveys conducted by individual academic staff with students enrolled in their modules and study programmes as part of internal processes to assess or assure the quality of learning and teaching;

- Simple course feedback surveys with low impact (such as those soliciting feedback from participants at the end of an education programme);

- Surveys involving aggregated data collected for external benchmarking exercises within a specific functional area where the manager of the organisational unit has approved the submission of data by their staff;

- Surveys conducted on services within the University or surveys of students on effectiveness of learning management systems or for purposes of the scholarship of teaching and learning.

- Surveys that are conducted by postgraduate students or academic staff in connection with their academic research studies, where the respondent sample includes staff or students within the specific faculty only. In this case the dean of the specific faculty involved must approve the survey and the letter of approval must be submitted to the Market Research Office.

3. Policy statement

This survey policy ensures that surveys conducted in the University are of a consistently high standard; do not duplicate data collection conducted through other University surveys; do not compromise population samples through overlapping surveys; do not over-survey the University's core stakeholders; and that survey outcomes are disseminated and used appropriately.

Adherence to this policy will ensure that the University will be provided with robust data and analysis for its quality assurance, benchmarking and continuous improvement purposes. Accordingly, this survey policy fulfils the University's commitment to ensuring that surveys conducted under the auspices of the University are of the highest standard, meet ethical norms and deliver results that add significant value to the strategic decision-making processes of the University.

4. Definitions/Abbreviations

Ethics Committees of the various faculties	All Faculty Committees with the responsibility for protecting the welfare and the rights of (human) participants in research; ensuring the effective consent of research subjects to participation in a research project and minimising the risks associated with research on humans.
Quality Assurance	The procedures the University uses for ensuring and monitoring the effectiveness and standards of its activities.
Surveys	Surveys are defined as a means of data collection using structured or semi-structured instruments that may take the form of written, oral (including face-to-face, telephone, or focus groups) or online modes of questioning and collection methods.

University stakeholders	The core group of stakeholders covered by the University of Pretoria's Survey Policy currently consists of registered students, current staff, and University alumni. Stakeholders also include members of the wider University community, for example, employers of graduates, prospective students, school staff and parents, donors as well as government, semi-government and private organisations.
Survey Coordinating Committee	A committee that oversees the management of surveys in the University and monitors the survey processes to ensure that they comply with the Survey Policy. The Committee has the power to make decisions and to steer surveys according to the strategic priorities and strategies of the University. It may not give any form of ethics approval for conducting a survey.
Survey Register	The list of approved surveys of the University of Pretoria.
Market Research Office	The Market Research Office in the Department of Institutional Planning is responsible for the internal and external market research studies amongst the major stakeholders. In addition, the office is responsible for the co-ordination of surveys in the University and acts as the single point of entry for surveys that are conducted in the University of Pretoria. The office is also responsible for the administration of the University's survey register and offers market research services and support to the support departments and faculties.

5. Responsibilities of the Survey Coordinating Committee

The Survey Coordinating Committee is responsible for determining the procedures for the approval, selection, registration and management of surveys within its scope.

This is interpreted to include:

- The determination and the maintenance of the criteria for selection, approval and registration of surveys within its scope;

- Decisions on allowing appropriate access to survey populations, particularly those for whom the University has direct responsibility,

- and the conditions under which the population details (such as demographic and contact details) are held and managed;

- Decisions on the appropriateness of a survey instrument and the platform (electronic, or paper-based);

- Applying relevant information and privacy laws to a survey instrument;

- Determining the conditions under which external agencies contracted to the University for survey purposes may operate in relation to conducting surveys, including confidentiality and ethical principles;
- Monitoring the internal management of survey data and reports, including issues of access, confidentiality and intellectual property in respect of data and information gathered via surveys;

- Ensuring reasonable limits to the volume of survey requests that the University makes of individuals or particular cohorts, and developing a protocol for giving effect to this policy;

- The development of procedures for monitoring the numbers and types of surveys being undertaken;

- The development of procedures for collecting, storing and disseminating survey data and findings which comply with the information management policies of the University;

- The approval for and registration of a survey;

- Evaluating whether the appropriate internal infrastructure and capacity exists within the applicant's department to support both the rigour of the research project (design and development, data collection and capturing, analysis and interpretation), as well as the logistical support associated with the role-out of the proposed research project.

The committee will consist of the following members:

- The Registrar (Coordinator)
- Vice-Principal responsible for Research
- Vice-Principal responsible for Institutional Research and Planning
- The member of staff in the Department of Institutional Planning responsible for coordinating market surveys in the University

The Committee has the right to co-opt additional members or to invite other staff members to participate in the evaluation process of surveys.

6. Survey Register - Schedule of approved surveys

The Survey Register contains a schedule of approved surveys to assist the University in keeping track of the number, range and timeframes of surveys under the remit of the Survey Coordinating Committee. The Register is maintained by the Market Research Office in the Department of Institutional Research and Planning. The register is available from the Market Research Office.

7. Access to University populations

Access to the data of the student, staff and alumni populations is only allowed through the support of the Department of Institutional Planning (BIRAP), the Registrar (in the case of students and alumni) or the Executive Director: Human Capital and Transformation (in the case of staff). In this regard the required data will only be made available after a project has been approved by the Survey Coordinating Committee and granted the necessary ethics clearance.

Applicants have a responsibility to ensure that sufficient notice is given to data providers for the extraction of the required population data.

8. Criteria for approval of applications

In approving applications, the Survey Coordinating Committee will take the following issues into consideration in order to minimise the impact on survey populations and ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness where possible:

- the volume and range of surveys taking place within the relevant scheduled period;

- the potential impact on the population;

- possible duplication or redundancy of information to be solicited from survey respondents;

- whether the required information could be obtained from existing data sources;

- the potential value and quality of the data to be collected to the University as well as the applicant;

- proposed method for ascertaining, for example, whether sufficient responses have been obtained from a sub-sample of the targeted sample;

- the importance of the he project and whether the information will provide valuable and essential input to management plans for achieving the University's strategic objectives;

- the dissemination of information – (Who will have access to the information and where will the results be published? e.g. academic journals, University publications, management documents)

- resources required for doing the survey – in-house staff, external consultants, costs, etc;

- Indication of the way in which the data obtained will be archived.

9. Procedure for scheduling applications

Applications for approval, registration and scheduling of a survey are subject to a single-stage process. The process is summarised as follows:

9.1 Market Research Office as point of departure

The Market Research Office acts as the single entry point for all the survey applications in the University of Pretoria. All internal and external survey requests must be reported at this office. The office is responsible to oversee the application process. Valid applicants will have to complete the necessary application forms and provided the necessary supporting documents.

9.2 Key elements of the application and approval process

(a) Survey applicants are to consult the current Survey Register to take into account other projects within the calendar year when proposing dates for data collection commencement and completion.

(b) Applicants must submit a Survey Proposal Application to the Survey Committee outlining the purpose of the survey, the target population and intended commencement date of the survey. Applicants are expected to give reasonable notice of their request to allow for approval, registration and scheduling clearance and appropriate access to population databases.

Required information will include:

- project aims and information sought;
- population demographic information of the survey sample;
- method of population sampling;
- data collection methods;
- a copy of the survey instrument;
- resources required for doing the survey;
- proposed dates of data collection commencement and completion;
- supporting documentation (such as ethics committee or other required approvals);
- appropriate procedures and contacts in the event of any complaint or other correspondence by respondents;
- the dissemination of information (who will have access to the information and where will the results be published e.g. academic journals, University publications, management documents);
- an indication of the way in which the data will be archived in accordance with the University's Information Management Policy

(c) If a project is approved by the Survey Coordinating Committee and ethical clearance is required for the research project institutional market survey proposals must be submitted to the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities for approval. In the case of academic research proposals the proposals must be submitted to the ethics committee in the relevant faculty.

(d) Once the project has been approved by the Survey Coordinating Committee and the Research ethics committee (if required) , an extract from the application form will be displayed in the survey registry showing the contact details of the principal applicant and brief project details.

9.3 Survey approval

The key activities involved in gaining approval to register and conduct a survey are the following:

- Determining whether there is an existing survey that can be used, or expanded/adapted;
- Determining whether Ethics Committee approval is required; and
- Determining whether the proposed survey falls within the scope of the Survey Coordinating Committee.

9.4 Time-frame for seeking approval

Submissions for approval of proposed surveys, where they fall within the scope of the Survey Coordinating Committee's authority, must be submitted *at least two months prior* to the intended date of issuing the survey to its intended recipients.

10. Key responsibilities

The distribution of responsibilities for key activities in the survey approval process is summarised in the table below.

Key activity	Responsible	Access to
Submit the market survey request • All market survey requests from both internal and external applicants must be submitted to the Market Research Office first. • The Market Research Office will assess the application and determine if the proposed survey falls within the scope of the Survey Coordinating Committee • If the survey does need approval provide the necessary application documentation to serve at the Survey Coordinating Committee	Internal and external survey applicants	Market Research Office
Survey proposal preparation • Determine if an existing survey on survey register can be used or expanded • Determine if proposed survey falls within the scope of the Survey Coordinating Committee • Obtain the required information for proposal application • Choose if survey will be electronic or paper-based	Survey applicant	Market Research Office

• Determine the intended commencement date of survey • Determine timeframe for execution of survey from Survey Register • Prepare and submit the survey proposal application to the Market Research office		
Survey proposal submission for approval • Seek survey approval from the Survey Coordinating Committee • Once approval is given for an institutional survey by the Committee the survey proposal must be submitted to the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities • In the case of academic surveys –applicants must first submit their proposals to the Survey Coordinating Committee, and only when it is approved the applicant can continue with its research proposal and seek survey approval from the ethics committee in the relevant faculty	Survey applicant	Survey Coordinating Committee
Admission to survey register • Once the survey proposal is approved by the Survey Coordinating Committee and the relevant faculty ethics committee it will be registered in the Survey Register	Market Research Office	
Support with obtaining population sample • Ask BIRAP for support on determining and preparing the population sample	Survey applicant	BIRAP
Conducting of survey • Manage survey activities • Manage survey data analysis • Send final report to Survey Coordinating Committee	Person responsible for the research	Market Research Office
Survey report • Determines whether results will	Person responsible for the research	Survey Coordinating Committee

be published • Determine where and how results will be archived		
Maintenance of Survey Register	Market Research Office	

11. Data and Reporting

The information gathered from surveys that are conducted with the main purpose of providing management and marketing information, which are used as input for specific strategic objectives, are treated as confidential and are not allowed to be published outside the University, without formal approval from the Survey Coordinating Committee.

The results of surveys that are approved by the Survey Coordinating Committee must be provided to the Committee after completion.

12. Governance and Administration

As mentioned above, the key governance body for implementing the Survey Policy is the Survey Coordinating Committee, which is a standing committee reporting to the Executive through the Executive member responsible for Institutional Research and Planning. It has the responsibility for approving, registering and scheduling University surveys and monitoring compliance with the Survey Policy. Application and administrative support is provided by the Market Research Office within the Department of Institutional Planning. This unit also maintains the Survey Register and associated intranet publications.

13. Incentives

In general incentives should not be offered for participating in surveys. If incentives are contemplated, the type of incentives and the costs involved must be presented to the Survey Coordinating Committee for consideration and possible approval.

14. Data analysis

The person responsible for each research project approved by the Survey Coordinating Committee is also responsible for the data analysis. The University of Pretoria offers data and statistical analysis support to students and staff through *Statomet*. However, this service is only available for academic research projects. In cases where support is required from *Statomet* for other surveys, an official project has to be registered with *Statomet.* The service will be rendered at a cost and the department responsible for the research will be responsible for the expense.

15. UP Intranet

Only online institutional surveys will be hosted on the University's official student and staff portals. Academic related postgraduate surveys or any other type of surveys will not be hosted on the UP student or staff portals. Online institutional surveys will only be

hosted on the UP portal after formal permission is given by the Survey Coordinating Committee.

16. Associated documents

- Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000
- The language policy
- Code of Ethics for Scholarly Activities
- Policy and Procedures for Responsible Research
- Guidelines of the various Research Ethics Committees
- Intellectual Property Policy
- The Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPI was signed into law on 19 November 2013 and published in the GG on 26 November 2013. Certain sections became effective as from 11 April 2014)
- Policy for the preservation and retention of research data

The Survey Coordinating Committee will provide links to these documents and emphasise the importance of adhering to these policies.

17. Responsibility for implementation

The Registrar will be responsible for the University wide implementation of this policy through appropriate delegation of responsibility to Faculties and Support Services.

18. Policy life cycle

The owner shall consider the policy for renewal every three years after approval, or earlier if required.

19. Document metadata

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