

**Johnson University**  
**Survey Distribution Approval Policy**  
**September 2022**

**Policy**

Survey projects where the target population includes the entire population, sub population, or sample of members of the Johnson University (JU) community, including students, faculty, staff, administrators, and/or alumni should be reviewed and approved for distribution on the JU campus and to the JU community by the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) office.

**Rational**

The policy is designed to protect both the University and the survey users. Due to the small size of the JU population, it is necessary to protect anonymity and the perception of anonymity; reduce survey fatigue; and ensure that the survey distribution to the JU community is in the best interest of the University. Institutional Effectiveness may refuse a request to distribute a survey, suggest the elimination of survey questions, revise survey questions, and combine surveys and/or schedule surveys to minimize the burden on the to the JU community.

**Institutional Effectiveness and the Institutional Review Board**

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the Johnson University Institutional Review Board (JU-IRB) are two separate entities with two different purposes.

The JU-IRB approves the research project of the individual researcher. It does not approve the survey distribution to the JU community. The JU-IRB ensures that appropriate protections against harming human subjects are in place, appropriate privacy and data security protections are used, and that the right of participants to be appropriately informed prior to participation is protected. The JU-IRB ensures that Johnson University students are engaged in ethical research, whether or not that research is taking place on the Johnson University campus.

The IE office reviews, manages, and approves survey distribution where the target population is the JU community (including students, faculty, staff, administrators, and/or alumni). JU-IRB approval for a research project does not guarantee the survey component of the project will be approved for campus distribution or distribution to any members of the JU community.

**Procedures**

All students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, parents, and/or external researchers who wish to conduct a survey on the Johnson University campus or with members of the JU community must contact the Director of Institutional Effectiveness for distribution approval.

**Waivers For Approval**

There are limited circumstances where approval is generally not required for surveys created by and used for the JU community. These circumstances are:

- Teaching or advising evaluation forms
- Faculty surveying students in their own specific courses.
- Administrators surveying employees they directly supervise

- Academic administration surveying faculty
- Surveys for a course in which only students **in the same course** are surveyed, provided the results will only be used to fulfill a requirement of that specific course, the results will not be published or publicized, and/or the questions are not sensitive or personal in nature. If the topic could be considered a sensitive topic (see below), JU-IRB approval is always required prior to distribution.

### **JU Faculty and Staff (Non-research)**

Johnson faculty and staff wishing to survey the entire population, sub-population, or sample of members of the JU community (including students, faculty, staff, administrators, and/or alumni) should submit the following to the IE office:

- an overview of the survey topic
- the purpose of the survey (internal or external use)
- an explanation of the intended use of results
- a copy of the survey
- the desired participant population
- preferred open/close dates for the survey

JU-IRB approval for the survey will be required if the results will be published or publicized and/or if the topic is sensitive or personal in nature. The IE office will serve as the intermediary between JU faculty and staff and the JU-IRB.

### **Students Fulfilling Course Requirements (Non-research)**

Johnson students wishing to survey the entire population, sub-population, or sample of members of the JU community (including students, faculty, staff, administrators, and/or alumni) to fulfill a specific course requirement should submit the following to the IE office:

- an overview of the survey topic
- an explanation of the intended use of results
- a copy of the survey
- the desired participant population
- preferred open/close dates for the survey

JU-IRB approval for the survey will be required if the results will be published or publicized and/or if the topic is sensitive or personal in nature. The IE office will serve as the intermediary between JU undergraduate students and the JU-IRB.

### **Graduate and Doctoral Student Researchers**

Johnson graduate and doctoral researchers wishing to survey the entire population, sub population, or sample of members of the Johnson community (including students, faculty, staff, administrators, and/or alumni) for Thesis or Dissertation research should submit the following to the IE office for distribution approval at the same time they submit a research project to the JU-IRB:

- an overview of the survey topic
- an explanation of the intended use of results
- a copy of the survey
- the desired participant population
- preferred open/close dates for the survey

The IE office will review the content of the survey in light of the institutional criteria below and make a preliminary decision regarding survey distribution. If the JU-IRB approves the research project, the internal researcher should send a copy of the final project and JU-IRB approval to the IE office for final JU community distribution approval. Please note: Due to changing circumstances, preliminary distribution approval does not guarantee final distribution approval.

### **External Researchers**

All other researchers wishing to survey the entire population, sub population, or sample of members of the Johnson community (including students, faculty, staff, administrators, and/or alumni) should submit the following to the IE office for distribution approval:

- a copy of the research project
- an IRB approval letter from the researcher's school or from the JU-IRB
- the preferred open/close dates for the survey

Generally, IRB approval from the researcher's school is adequate and additional approval from the JU-IRB is not required. However, JU-IRB reserves the right to require an additional internal review. The IE office will serve as the intermediary between external researchers and the JU-IRB.

### **Institutional Criteria**

The Institutional Effectiveness Office will review survey requests based on the following institutional criteria:

- Is there other data available that will allow the survey to be avoided?
- Can the data needs be combined with other scheduled surveys?
- Will the timing of the survey interfere with other University surveys?
- Is the survey in the best interest of the University and its students, faculty, and staff?
- Does the survey address sensitive topics that may not be in the best interest of the University?
- Does the survey adhere to sound survey methods and practices?
- Is the survey well-designed and of an appropriate length?
- Are the questions easily understood and interpreted?
- Has the survey been approved by the appropriate stakeholders involved (e.g., dean, department chair, administration, etc.)?
- Does the survey require, or has it received IRB approval?

Institutional Effectiveness may deny a request to distribute a survey based on any of the above criteria. Approval for survey distribution may be revoked at any time.

### **Distribution**

If approved for distribution, Institutional Effectiveness will work with the primary researcher to facilitate administration of the survey by distributing the survey invitation on the researcher's behalf. In order to protect the privacy of Johnson University students, faculty, staff, administrators, and/or alumni, contact lists are not distributed to students or to persons inside or outside of the University system.

### **Sensitive Topics**

Generally, research projects involving sensitive topics are reserved for Institutional Effectiveness/Institutional Research projects and purposes and are subject to further review and distribution permissions

from the University's administration. IE distribution approval for a sensitive topic survey is limited, so internal and external researchers are encouraged to identify alternative sample populations.

Topics that are considered sensitive or personal in nature include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual orientation, attitudes, preferences, or practices
- Illegal or punishable conduct, including use of alcohol, drugs, or other addictive products
- Information that could damage an individual's financial standing, employability, or reputation
- Information that could lead to social stigmatization or discrimination
- Psychological well-being or mental health, including physical or mental abuse, trauma, grief, and violence.
- Incest, rape, date rape, or sexual molestation
- Genetic information
- Religious orientation or views
- Veteran or wartime experiences
- Topics relevant to diversity and possible discrimination such as race/ethnicity, age, disability, gender, and socio-economic status.
- Immigration status

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