Updated Survey Approval Process

Two approvals are needed for anyone planning to administer a survey to Roanoke College students, parents, alumni, faculty, or staff. Prior to August 2014, two separate approval processes were used, one an administrative office review and the other a review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Effective August 25, 2014, those two processes have been merged. Only a single form needs to be completed. The form can be found on the IRB web site and should be submitted to Dr. Ryan Otto in 204A Administration Bldg. Dr. Otto coordinates both the IRB review and the review by administrative offices.

IRB web site: http://roanoke.edu/A-Z_Index/Institutional_Review_Board.htm

A note on contact lists for surveys on campus

The actual contact list to be used typically will be constructed/selected by the Institutional Research Office, based on the subject selection criteria. In most student projects for coursework that seek to survey students, a representative sampled list of students will be used. Several matched non-overlapping contact lists are available and used in rotation for different surveys, reducing survey fatigue. Representative sampled lists will be used in other cases whenever appropriate, but some use of full lists will be needed. For electronic surveys on campus, typically the Institutional Research Office distributes your survey invitation on your behalf.

Purpose of this policy

This policy establishes a consistent procedure for managing surveys on campus. Such a policy allows us to use best practices in this area, to benefit both the college and the survey users. Benefits include improved use of existing and new data, coordination of survey schedules, reduced survey fatigue, and consistent IRB protections.

Policy statement

All survey projects must be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB review ensures that appropriate protections against harming human subjects are in place, and that appropriate privacy and data security protections are used. The right of participants to be appropriately informed prior to participation is also protected.

The contact for the IRB review is Dr. Ryan Otto in Institutional Effectiveness (204A Administration Bldg.). The web site is: http://roanoke.edu/A-Z_Index/Institutional_Review_Board.htm

Anyone planning to administer a survey to Roanoke College students, parents, alumni, faculty, or staff must first obtain survey approval as part of the review by the Institutional Review Board. In addition to the human subjects protection review done by the IRB, requests to survey members of the Roanoke College community will be reviewed by several administrative offices. Surveys of external groups not associated with Roanoke College must be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), but those reviews won’t involve the administrative offices.

For all surveys, only a single review form is required. The form submitted to the IRB contains all information needed for the IRB review and for the administrative office survey review (if needed). The form is submitted to the IRB. The IRB will coordinate the administrative office review when required.
People who use student, parent, alumni, faculty, or staff contact information or demographics in a survey project must handle all information and results in accordance with Roanoke College information security policies. Approved surveys must be administered and used strictly as approved, without changes.

All surveys require review by the IRB. The administrative office review is also required whenever the survey sponsor wishes to do any of the following:

1. Use names, addresses, e-mail addresses, or phone numbers for a group that includes college related individuals not directly under his/her normal supervision.
2. Propose to survey a large group of students, parents, alumni, faculty, or staff, either with a paper survey or with an electronic survey.
3. Request information about the demographics of college related individuals in the survey population. Any such information must be specified and justified in the IRB proposal, and must be FERPA compliant.

http://roanoke.edu/A-Z_Index/Registrar/Policies_and_Information/Family_Educational_Rights_and_Privacy_Act_%28FERPA%29.htm

Examples:

1. A faculty research survey that includes all faculty, or all staff, or all students.
2. A student research survey for a class that seeks to survey many students outside the class, or seeks to survey faculty, staff, or other groups.
3. Staff supervised local or national surveys of broad groups of students, faculty or staff.

Exclusions from the extra administrative office review requirement

All research with human subjects and all surveys need to be reviewed by the IRB. That review does not always need to include the administrative office review. Some exclusions from the requirement for administrative office review appear below. Note that the exclusions do NOT apply if the results of the survey will be published or will be presented in a presentation open to the public. Surveys which may be used in public presentations and publications must be reviewed, regardless of the exceptions below.

The administrative office portion of the IRB review is not required for:

a) Evaluations of events by participants.
b) Feedback from customers at the point of service (e.g. bookstore, dining services).
c) Teaching or advising evaluation forms.
d) Surveys of a group of people who fall under the normal supervision of the person doing the survey.
   i. Faculty surveying students in their own courses.
   ii. Administrators surveying employees they supervise.
   iii. Academic administration surveying faculty.
e) Forms used to collect information for administrative purposes (e.g. scheduling, declaration of major, etc.).
f) Surveys for a course in which only students in the course are surveyed.
g) Focus groups or individual interviews. Those activities may still need IRB review and approval.
h) Surveys of prospective students by professional staff for the division of Enrollment Management, which will be reviewed and approved directly by the VP for Enrollment or his/her designee. Those surveys may still need IRB review and approval.
i) Surveys of parents, alumni, or friends of the college by professional staff for the division of Resource Development. Those surveys will be reviewed and approved directly by the VP for Resource Development or his/her designee. Those surveys may still need IRB review and approval.
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Approval criteria to be used during the administrative office review of surveys

1. The survey must have been approved or exempted by the IRB as part of the human subjects protection review process.
2. The participant list must have been approved by the appropriate college division.
3. The survey should not run at the same time as another higher priority institutional survey of the same participants. Multiple surveys using different subsets of a population can run simultaneously. Surveys related to coursework often fall in the final month of the semester, and may require some overlapping surveys.
4. The survey will not cause the total number of surveys of the target population in a given year to be excessive.
5. The survey should not seek information that is already available from other sources.
6. Any demographic information requested as part of the survey must be included in the IRB application, and must be in compliance with FERPA regulations. Ms. Leah Russell, Associate Dean and Registrar, is in charge of FERPA compliance.  
   [http://roanoke.edu/A-Z_Index/Registrar/Policies_and_Information/Family_Educational_Rights_and_Privacy_Act_%28FERPA%29.htm](http://roanoke.edu/A-Z_Index/Registrar/Policies_and_Information/Family_Educational_Rights_and_Privacy_Act_%28FERPA%29.htm)
7. The survey should be sufficiently well-constructed (clear, appropriate questions).
8. If survey software will be used, it must use federally approved data transfer security. College licensed software (Qualtrics) is available at no cost to campus users, and is the preferred choice. Contact Dr. Ryan Otto, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, for information (otto@roanoke.edu, 540/375-5249, 204A Admin. Bldg.). The paid version of Survey Monkey may also be used, but the free version may not, due to insufficient security.
9. The creation of the requested contact list information will not exceed available staff time.
10. The survey results will have perceptible benefits to the college or the members of the college community. For college-wide surveys, a copy of the final results report must be provided to the Office of Institutional Research, so results can be used by others on campus when appropriate and when allowed by Institutional Review Board policies.

Portions of this policy were informed by or adapted from:

George Washington University Internal Questionnaire Administration Policy (1)
[http://my.gwu.edu/files/policies/InternalQuestionnaireAdminFINAL.pdf](http://my.gwu.edu/files/policies/InternalQuestionnaireAdminFINAL.pdf)

University of Puget Sound Survey Policy (2)

These URLs were last verified 8-8-14.