

## AUIS EXTERNAL SURVEY GUIDANCE

Many individuals and groups wish to conduct surveys of AUIS staff, faculty and students. Unstructured and unorganised surveys pose a number of risks for the University, which include:

- Disruption of communications channels with survey invitations and reminders;
- Lowered response rates due to survey fatigue, which compromises data quality;
- Duplication of effort through redundant surveys; and
- Unclear policies around contacting students and how the data may be disseminated.

### Objectives

These guidelines aim to:

- Clarify the process for approval and execution of surveys with the AUIS Community;
- Minimise over-communication and survey fatigue amongst the AUIS Community;
- Ensure surveys conducted with the AUIS Community are of a consistently high standard;
- Prevent the duplication of data collection;
- Improve the validity and response rates of surveys;
- Protect the privacy and integrity of the AUIS Community; and
- Ensure survey results are stored, disseminated and utilized appropriately.

These guidelines apply to the conduct of all surveys carried out by external parties that involve the AUIS Community. The AUIS Community includes current and past students, graduates, and current and past employees of the University (both faculty and staff.)

These guidelines do not apply to:

- Surveys sponsored by academic staff with students enrolled in their subjects or courses, as part of internal processes to assess or assure the quality of learning and or teaching;
- Surveys sponsored by AUIS service providers (such as student services, library or the careers centre) as part of internal processes to assess or assure the quality of student services;
- A short survey rendered immediately after the provision of services to a member of the AUIS Community, aimed at assessing or assuring the quality of those services.

### Survey Approval Process

1. Consult the Survey Register to take into account other projects within the calendar when proposing dates for data collection commencement and completion.
2. All applicants must have an internal AUIS partner (e.g. a faculty member, research fellow, or AUIS centre). You are responsible to identify the partner yourself and obtain their agreement before lodging the form.
3. Applicants submit the **External Survey Approval Form** (available online on the AUIS website) and email the completed form to the AUIS Survey Committee at: [rachel.gresk@auis.edu.krd](mailto:rachel.gresk@auis.edu.krd)

Required information includes:

- The objective of the study;
- Name of AUIS partner;

- Sampling population demographic information;
  - Data collection methods;
  - A copy of the survey instrument;
  - Proposed dates (block out periods will not be considered);
  - Supporting documentation (such as ethics or other required approvals);
  - Data storage methodology;
  - Dissemination of results;
  - Funding or sponsorship for the survey;
  - Appropriate procedures and contacts in the event of any complaint or other correspondence by respondents.
4. If your survey can be considered “research,” it needs to obtain approval from the AUIS IRB (in addition to, and separate from, approval by this survey governance framework).

The AUIS IRB is a committee established to promote a culture of research through the ethical review of any research activity to be conducted within the institution. The IRB ensures that the rights and welfare of human research participants are protected as prescribed by national and international regulations.

“Research” includes any activity designed to test an hypothesis, permit conclusions to be drawn, and thereby to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge (expressed, for example, in theories, principles, and statements of relationships).

If your survey constitutes research, the Survey Committee will automatically forward your survey request to the IRB for approval. Therefore, if you have existing IRB approval from another academic institution, you should include this approval documentation in your initial survey application. If the IRB requires additional information for its assessment, either the IRB or the Survey Committee will contact the applicant. Any delays in receiving the information requested by the IRB will result in delays to the survey approval process.

More information on the IRB process can be found here: <https://auis.edu.krd/about-irb>

5. Once the project is approved, an extract from the survey application form will be displayed on the AUIS Survey Registry. The Survey Registry is available to the public via the AUIS website and aims to ensure transparency and avoid the duplication of surveys. The Survey Registry will display the name of the survey, a brief explanation, the relevant dates, and the contact details of the principal applicant. It is mandatory that all survey carried out with the AUIS Community are listed on the AUIS Survey Registry.

### **Time frame for Seeking Approval**

Submissions for approval of proposed surveys must be submitted **at least one month prior** to the intended date of issuing the survey to its intended recipients.

If additional information is requested from the applicant by AUIS, any delay in receiving the requested information will result in a delay in the survey approval process.

### **Block Out Periods**

AUIS sets 'block out' periods for surveys. These are times during the Academic Calendar which the University has identified when students are at risk of experiencing over-communication and survey fatigue. These periods include student breaks and exam times, as well as the implementation dates of AUIS institutional surveys. During block out periods no communications or promotion from non-institutional surveys should take place.

### **Criteria for Approval of Survey Applications**

The Survey Committee will assess applications according to the following criteria:

- Whether required information may be obtained from existing data sources;
- Possible duplication or redundancy of the subject matter;
- The volume of surveys taking place within the relevant period;
- The potential impact on (or risk to) the survey population;
- Any association with AUIS (e.g. if a collaboration exists with AUIS faculty);
- The potential value of the data and results: to AUIS, the respondent, and the applicant;
- Methodological quality;
- Arrangements for protection of privacy and safeguarding confidentiality of respondents in collection and reporting of data.

### **Data Security and Storage**

Survey respondents need to be told if their responses will be anonymous, kept confidential, or are entirely non-confidential. Anonymous data do not include names, addresses, student identification numbers or any other personal information that would make it possible to associate a response with any given individual. Confidential data contain information that may identify an individual respondent. Files containing confidential data must be stored with great attention to data security and access.

Where the survey is conducted anonymously, data must be aggregated and can only be published if the survey has at least five (5) respondents to maintain respondent privacy. If a survey cannot achieve at least five responses, an alternate method of data collection should be considered.

All surveys must comply with the AUIS Privacy Policy.

Survey Contacts are responsible for the storage and distribution of survey data and reports. Storage and distribution of survey data must comply with the AUIS Information Management Policy.

### **Analyzing and Reporting the Results**

AUIS expects that reports of surveys will be made available to the AUIS Community, so that findings are not duplicated or redundant. Survey applicants will be asked to provide appropriate links to a report, and the links will then be displayed on the AUIS website.

### **Key Definitions**

*AUIS Community:* The AUIS Community includes current and past students, graduates, and current and past employees of the University (both faculty and staff.)

*IRB:* The AUIS Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a committee established to promote a culture of research through the ethical review of any research activity to be conducted within the institution. The IRB approves, requires modifications, and disapproves proposed research to ensure that the rights and welfare of human research participants are protected as prescribed by national and international regulations.

*Research:* includes any activity designed to test an hypothesis, permit conclusions to be drawn, and thereby to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge (expressed, for example, in theories, principles, and statements of relationships).

*Survey:* a means of data collection using structured or semi-structured instruments that may take the form of written, oral or online modes of questioning.

*Survey Committee:* A committee comprised of AUIS staff and/or faculty and responsible for assessing external surveys according to the criteria provided in this guidance note.

*Survey Registry:* The Survey Registry is available to the public via the AUIS website and aims to ensure transparency and avoid the duplication of surveys. The Survey Registry will display the name of the survey, a brief explanation, the relevant dates, and the contact details of the principal applicant. It is mandatory that all survey carried out with the AUIS Community are listed on the AUIS Survey Registry