ALLEN COLLEGE – UNITYPOINT HEALTH
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Supersedes: 5/17, 4/21

No: 2-S-100-04
Last Review Date: February 2025
Required Review Date: May 2029
Administrative Unit: Evaluation & Study Committee
Approved By:

Jared Seliger, PhD, CNMT
President

SUBJECT: Conducting Surveys

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to provide quality control procedures and standards for developing, conducting, tracking, and storage of surveys and survey data conducted by faculty, staff, and students at Allen College.

EFFECTIVE FOR: Students, Faculty, Staff and Administration

POLICY:

Allen College regularly participates in a variety of surveys conducted by faculty, staff, and students to collect data necessary for accountability and planning efforts. With the increased number of survey requests, it is necessary to define a policy and procedure for their administration to minimize duplication, maximize response rates, encourage appropriate survey design and methodology, standardize formatting, maintain confidentiality, and minimize survey fatigue by limiting the number and timing of surveys specific to certain groups.

Coordination of College survey initiatives by Allen College faculty, staff and students is the responsibility of the Coordinator of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (CIRE).

DEFINITION:

For this policy, a survey is defined as a request by an Allen College student or team member for information that is submitted to Allen College students, faculty, or staff, or individuals external to the College, via mail, telephone, or other electronic technologies or person-to-person modalities. Surveys may include but are not limited to questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups (e.g., Student initiated surveys may be information gathering activities related to a student organization). Surveys conducted as part of a course or degree requirements for project/research related data, which are under the purview of course and/or project faculty and the IRB as appropriate, are excluded from this SOP. However, course and/or project faculty may refer students to the CIRE for survey review.

PROCEDURE:

Survey Approval

Faculty, staff, and students seeking approval of a survey will send the survey to the CIRE via e-mail or by providing online access. The CIRE shall acknowledge receipt of the survey via e-mail and provide an estimated timeframe for review.

All surveys and requests for surveys, whether developed by faculty, staff, students, or external constituents, and regardless of intended scope and audience, should be routed through the CIRE. Approval is necessary for all surveys and shall include the following criteria:

1. Timing of the survey;
2. Design of the survey, including formatting, scope, and mode of delivery;
3. Clarity of purpose and explanation to prospective participants;
4. Actions to be taken to assure confidentiality;
5. Extent to which multiple surveys can be combined; and
6. Extent to which existing data from other sources meets the requirements of the survey.

Approval does not replace IRB review required for research and evidence-based practice/quality improvement projects.

Survey Design and Distribution

The CIRE shall provide oversight for the design and distribution of the survey tool in consultation with the person or group requesting the survey.

Timeline

Review, approval, design, and creation of surveys will be completed as quickly as possible, although a variety of factors play a role in the process, including the length of the survey, the number of revisions, and the workload of the CIRE. A minimum of 2 weeks should be expected for review.

Results

All data collected with surveys administered by Allen College are presumed to be confidential. If the survey is not confidential, it must contain a statement indicating that individuals may be identified by their responses and an explanation of how confidentiality of survey responses will be protected. Results of all surveys will be reported only in aggregate form, ensuring that identification of individuals is not possible. Respondents who choose to include identifying information in their responses forfeit claims of confidentiality. All survey data are considered the property of Allen College and can be used to inform decision-making at the College.

Collecting and Storing Data

The CIRE provides oversight for the secure storage and use of data collected with surveys administered by the CIRE. Data containing participant names, identifying information, e-mail addresses or other confidential information must be saved in password protected locations accessible only by Allen College personnel.