

Survey Guidelines

1. **Research Ethics Approval** - If your survey is a research project, then please ensure that you have received research ethics approval before proceeding. If you are unsure whether ethics review is required for your survey, please contact the Research Ethics Office. More information can be found at:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/en/research/services/research-ethics/human-research-ethics/review-process/index.html>
2. **Limited Collection of Personal Information** - As a general rule, if the survey objectives can be achieved with non-personal data (anonymized), then non-personal data only should be used.

Sometimes a survey can be done in such a way that no personal information (e.g. name or email address) is ever linked with the survey responses. If you conduct a survey using Google Forms, you will be given this option. If you can do this, please do so.

If you need to collect personal information in order to achieve your survey purposes, then you should only ask the minimum amount of personal information that is reasonably required in order to achieve the survey purpose.

Example: if you need to know how old the survey respondents are in order to achieve your survey objective, you probably don't need to ask for their birthdates. You could just ask them to tell you their age – or, even better from a privacy perspective, you could ask which age range they fall within.
3. **Notification Statement to Survey Respondents** - If the survey is being conducted on behalf of the University and the employee will be collecting personal information directly from individuals in the course of the study, the employee must ensure that a POPA Notification Statement is included on all collection documents. POPA Notification Statement templates are located on the Information and Privacy and Records Management Office (IPRMO) [website](#).
4. **Limited access to survey responses** - In general, employees must not disclose personal information beyond the research or survey team (or service providers who are required in order to complete the survey). Employees must access and use personal information only for the approved purposes. Access to the personal information should be limited, on a need to know basis.
5. **Safeguards** – If the personal information of survey invitees or respondents will be collected, then employees must ensure the safe and secure storage and handling of all personal information against unauthorized access, use, disclosure and destruction in accordance with University Policies and

Procedures and, if the survey is conducted on behalf of the University in accordance with Alberta's *Protection of Privacy Act* ([POPA](#)).

Some ways to ensure that appropriate safeguards of personal information are in place include:

- a. Consider the privacy and security practices of a software provider or online service provider that will be used to collect, store or transmit the personal information of the survey respondents. A list of online service providers whose survey systems have been reviewed and approved by the IPRMO and the Chief Information Security Officer is set out as Schedule "A", attached to this checklist.

Often, online service providers offer settings options that you can use to increase the privacy of the personal information (e.g. you may be able to choose to have the information stored in Canada or Europe, rather than in the United States or elsewhere). It is good to educate yourself on the privacy settings that are available.

If you are conducting the survey on behalf of the University and you wish to use a service provider who is not listed on Schedule "A" and who will have access to personal information in the course of the survey project, you will need to request a privacy and security review of the service provider or possibly complete a privacy impact assessment. If you have questions please contact the IPRMO

<https://www.ualberta.ca/en/information-services-and-technology/security/privacy-security-review-checklist.html>

- b. Consider how the personal information will be protected when it is stored, handled and/or transmitted. As a general rule, you do not want to store the survey responses on a mobile device; however, if any personal information is stored on a mobile device, please ensure that it is password protected and encrypted:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/en/information-services-and-technology/security/encryption/faculty-staff.html>

- c. If possible, coded information should be used, so that direct identifiers such as an individual's name are replaced by a code, and the code is linked with other information relevant to the research. The coded information should be stored separately from any key that illustrates which code represents which individual.

- d. Other resources on safeguarding personal information:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/en/information-privacy-records-management/foi/p/privacy-breach-reporting/safeguards-privacy-breach-prevention.html>

6. **Retention:** Please retain the personal information for the minimum amount of time that is necessary, and anonymize as soon as possible in the process.
7. **Destruction:** Please ensure the safe and secure disposal of all personal information.
8. **Data Reporting:** As a general rule, any data reporting must be aggregated in such a way that individuals cannot be identified from the information reported.

ONLINE SERVICE PROVIDERS WHOSE SERVICES HAVE ALREADY BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED

1. Qualtrics
2. Survey Monkey - note: review the website to see how you can choose to:
 - a. Have the data stored on a Canadian server (note that some access may still be possible, as explained in the link below):
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/policy/canadian-data-centre-overview/>
 - b. Collect responses anonymously, if possible:
https://help.surveymonkey.com/articles/en_US/kb/How-do-I-make-surveys-anonymous
3. Google Forms – note: review settings when creating form; choose responses that allow survey respondents to submit without logging in, if it is possible to achieve survey objectives this way.