



COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAM
at the HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE AT UCLA

YOUR FIRST COLLEGE YEAR SURVEY

2014 Administration Guidelines

Please contact the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA at
310.825.7079 or heri@ucla.edu with any questions

2014 Your First College Year Survey Administration Guidelines

The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Your First College Year (YFCY) survey involves active participation from both CIRP staff and you, our campus partners, throughout the administration cycle. This document provides important information necessary to participate in the 2014 YFCY Survey, including registering and placing your order, customizing your survey, survey administration procedures and data and reporting information. Procedures and relevant processes are detailed in the general order in which decisions or actions are made. If you have questions about your specific survey administration, please contact us at heri@ucla.edu or 310.825.7079.

Who Should Participate in the YFCY Survey?

The YFCY is to be administered to first-year students at the completion of the first-year of college. The YFCY is most useful as a follow-up to the CIRP Freshman Survey, although it can also be used as a stand-alone instrument. For those institutions interested in tracking students for retention, you may administer the YFCY to all students who matriculated at your institution, regardless of current enrollment status. Those students who indicate they are not currently enrolled at your institution receive a special set of questions designed to find out what they are doing now, why they left, and what they plan to be doing next fall.

Important Dates to Remember

- Register to participate in the YFCY Survey starting **March 2014**
- Survey administration ends **June 13, 2014**
- Preliminary data is updated **in real time**
- Administrative Report Form (ARF) emailed to institutions, **(ongoing)**
- Institutional Profile and final data file available for download from the CIRP Web Portal in late summer/early fall

For a more detailed timeline approximating the general activities in the YFCY survey cycle, please see [Administering the YFCY Survey](#).

Registering and Placing Your Order

Registering for the Survey

The first step in participating in the YFCY survey is to register. Registering for the survey indicates your intent to participate in the survey. Once you have registered, the next step is to place your order for the survey. You will register and place your order through our secure website. You will use this secure site to:

- Register for surveys
- Place, customize, and monitor your survey order
- Receive your data and reports

The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) and DatStat, HERI's outside survey vendor, will provide all of the necessary resources for the 2014 administration of the YFCY Survey. Copies of materials, including these administration guidelines, are available on the CIRP Web Portal, under "Guides and Forms."

In order to complete your registration, you will be asked to supply some basic information about the primary contact for the surveys (name, address, phone, email, etc.) and a billing contact. The primary contact serves as the liaison between your campus and CIRP and receives all information and communication from us regarding the survey administration, data, and results. Once you have registered, the primary contact will receive a confirmation email from us; you may then proceed to placing your order.

Survey Administration Methods

The YFCY survey is administered as a web-based survey. You can use our system to deliver the email invitations to complete the web-based questionnaire to students or elect to contact students on your own.

Placing Your Order

Once you have registered to participate, the next step is providing some basic information about your order. In order to place your order, you will log into the web portal, and after supplying your password, you will be asked to provide the following information: whether or not you would like to ask additional supplemental questions and if so, if you would like HERI to administer the questions or if you will administer them yourself; whether or not you would like to add modules; whether or not you will customize the welcome and thank you pages; whether or not you intend to use group codes, and an optional survey close date.

More detailed information about customization options for the survey appears below:

Customizing Your Survey Administration

The YFCY survey administration is designed to be flexible and allows institutions to design an administration that maximizes value for their individual campuses. Though many of the customization options are not mandatory, institutions find that taking advantage of some or all of these options greatly increases the utility of the results. Actions and decisions about customizing the survey are best made well in advance in order to allow for a smooth administration of your survey.

1. Invitation and Reminders

One of the most important ways the YFCY survey can be customized for all participating institutions is in the correspondence the students receive inviting (or reminding) them to participate. Although CIRP can manage various aspects of this process (see below), the intent is for students to understand that their college or university is soliciting their feedback. CIRP provides templates for invitation and reminder communications. Campuses should customize the invitation and reminder messages sent to students in order to maintain a tone that is consistent with campus culture. Campuses can also customize all messages so that they come from institution-designated signatories. Using an institutional logo also reinforces the idea that individual colleges and universities administer the YFCY survey.

2. Group Codes

Group codes are breakout groups that permit you to compare specific subgroups of your student sample. These breakout groups could be used to identify students in different colleges, majors, residence halls, or academic programs on your campus. Group codes allow you to identify up to 190 unique subgroups of students. For more information on adding group codes to the survey, please see Using Group Codes.

3. Adding Additional Questions to the Survey

At the end of the questionnaire, campuses have the option of adding up to 30 additional multiple-choice questions of specific local interest. Additionally, we provide the opportunity to include five **open-ended** questions. If you choose to utilize either of these options, you will want to set aside sufficient time to draft, pilot test, and incorporate your additional questions into the administration of the YFCY survey. Additionally, it is important to consult with your local IRB. Your campus may require you to submit these additional items for their review and approval. Additionally, if your campus believes an additional question to be of a sensitive nature, you must submit that question to HERI for our consideration one

month before administration. For more information, please see [Information for Campuses Using Additional Questions](#).

4. Anti-Spam Procedures

To ensure delivery of your emails to your students, you will want to instruct your institution's Information Technology department to add the email address provided below to their approved senders list. This should allow emails coming from HERI's email distribution service to pass through the bulk or junk mail screening processes. Failure to do this may result in email being routed directly to bulk or junk email folders without ever reaching the intended survey respondents, and consequently affecting your survey response rate. For the YFCY survey, email will come from:

CIRPSurveys@datstat.com

DNS Name: hostmail1.datstathost.com

IP Address: 50.31.57.249

For more information see [HERI's Email Distribution Service](#).

5. Email "Spoofing"

Email notifications will come from CIRPSurveys@datstat.com unless you elect to provide an alternative "from" email address and email display name. This allows you to customize the invitation email to your participants, making the notification emails seem to come from an email address at your own institution (e.g., President, Dean, Director of Institutional Research). Emails can also be personalized with the recipient's name.

6. Customizing the "Welcome" and "Thank You" Pages

Material of your own, including additional text and your school logo, can be added to the screens at the beginning and end of the survey.

7. Displaying Your School Name

Your school name will appear at the top of the screen as a joint sponsor of the survey. It will look like this (your name will replace "Sample University"):

Sponsored by the Higher Education Research Institute and Sample University

The institution name will, by default, be the name that shows in our registration system. If you would like to alter this name (e.g., "Sample U") then please check "Change Your

School's Display Name for the Web Survey" on the "Place an Order" page in the CIRP Web Portal.

8. Pre-Populate Student ID

Those institutions opting to have HERI manage email communications will provide HERI with the email addresses and names (first name, last name) of all students to be surveyed through the web portal. Institutions may elect to include student IDs as well. If student ID is included, it becomes a permanent part of the data file. The specifications for this file are available on the CIRP web portal. If you have more than one email address for a student, you may send an identical email identification notification to the second email address, potentially increasing your response rate (note that a student responding to both email notifications will still only be responding once as the login codes will be identical).

Please note that provision of student IDs is compliant with FERPA regulations regarding how educational institutions may share student data ([FERPA 34CFR99.31\(a\)6\(i\)](#)). If an institution shares student records with HERI, HERI will:

- 1) Limit access to personally identifiable information to HERI staff who are responsible for the maintenance of HERI's research database.
- 2) Limit its use of personally identifiable information to the purpose of studies that improve higher education.
- 3) Only use student contact information for the purpose of inviting students to participate in CIRP surveys.

Additional Issues to Consider Prior to Administration

Linking the YFCY Survey with Other Data

In addition to studying a wide variety of issues based solely on data from the YFCY survey, it is also possible to use these data to build a comprehensive database using other institutional data (e.g., registrar, admissions, or financial aid data) or by linking to other CIRP surveys (such as the CIRP Freshman Survey, the Your First College Year survey (YFCY) or the College Senior Survey) to create a longitudinal database. In order to do studies based on data other than those found on the YFCY survey, it is necessary to be able to link these different data together. Thus, to maximize the utility of these data for institutional research purposes, we suggest that you encourage students to provide their student ID numbers in the grid on the first page of the survey. Note that if a student fails to provide an ID number when he or she completes the survey instrument, you will not be able to merge the YFCY survey data with data from other campus files.

Incentives

Incentives can prove to be an effective means of increasing survey response rates. Gift certificates to the campus bookstore, food, money, or an automatic entry into some type of raffle or lottery are all possibilities. If you are considering using incentives in your survey administration, please refer to [Encouraging Participation in CIRP Surveys](#) for important information on structuring your incentive strategy.

Research Approval

Many campuses have found that the documentation we receive from UCLA's North General Institutional Review Board (NGIRB) is very useful in applications to their own IRB. Our approval documentation is available at <http://www.heri.ucla.edu>.

Additionally, CIRP and the NGIRB require that an appropriate college official certify compliance through our **Research Approval Form** with the following:

1. You will abide by and comply with the CIRP administration procedures as approved by UCLA's IRB.
2. Your campus has determined if local IRB approval is required, and
3. If local IRB approval of this research is required on your campus, you will administer the survey only after you have received local IRB approval.

You further agree to the following statement:

The Higher Education Research Institute provides data files to assist institutional research activities. By receiving this data file, we agree that these data will be used only for statistical analyses and reporting of aggregated information, and not for the investigation of specific individuals. In affirming this agreement, we give assurance that use of these data will conform to widely accepted standards of practice and legal restrictions that are intended to protect the confidentiality of research subjects. We also give assurance that no survey respondent will be sanctioned based on any answer provided in the 2014 Your First College Year Survey.

Compliance with the above statements is submitted through the CIRP Web Portal. The first time you click on "Download Reports & Data/Data Analysis" from the Main Menu, you will be prompted to complete the Research Approval Form. You will not be able to receive any data or reports until the Research Approval Form is completed.

Confidentiality

The YFCY survey collects personal identifiers and potentially sensitive demographic data. Student responses to these survey items make it possible to link YFCY survey data with data

from several sources such as other CIRP surveys (e.g., TFS, DLE and CSS), your campus registrar's office, other nationwide assessment instruments, and local assessment efforts.

Students' right to confidentiality as human research subjects must remain a priority throughout the administration of the YFCY survey. Please inform your students that the questionnaires are handled in a confidential and professional manner. Following are some specific points to consider with respect to the confidentiality of YFCY survey data:

- Your survey collection procedures and data storage systems must be secured (e.g., locked storage, etc.).
- Viewing student responses to questions on the YFCY survey (other than the names of respondents for tracking purposes) prior to data processing is considered a breach of confidentiality. Assure students that no one at your institution will examine individual responses to survey questions.
- Your data file will not include personal identifiers such as name, address, and telephone number, but will include student ID.
- HERI does not release identifiable data to other researchers or to other agencies.
- The Research Approval Form states that the data will be used solely for statistical analyses and reporting of aggregated information, and not for the investigation of specific individuals.

Administering the YFCY Survey

Inviting Your Students to Participate

It is important to note that YFCY survey participation is voluntary. **All students who receive the YFCY survey instrument must be informed that this is a voluntary survey.**

Please note that *compulsory participation in research is a violation of federal regulations*. Also, some campuses may consider people under 18 to be minors. If this is the case on your campus, and if your YFCY survey sample includes students under 18, you may need to seek permission from these students' parents prior to survey administration.

There are two ways to notify your students of the opportunity to complete the YFCY survey on the web:

1. An **institutional administration** is the default setting for web survey administration. In an institutional administration, your institution has the responsibility to contact students with the request to participate and the necessary information to participate.

- Campuses indicating that they are conducting an institutional administration will receive:
- A list of unique log-in codes for students to access the web-based YFCY survey instrument you will merge into your e-mail invitations to participate in The YFCY survey
 - The web address (URL link) to the survey instrument
 - An electronic version of the information sheet outlining students' rights as research subjects ("Survey Information Sheet")
 - Templates for the email invitation and reminder correspondence
2. If you select **email distribution**, HERI (and our vendor, DatStat) uses email addresses and names provided by your institution and will manage the email contact process for you.¹ When you place your order on the CIRP Web Portal, you will be able to specify dates and times at which you would like HERI to send an invitation and up to three reminder emails to those students who have not yet responded to the survey request, **but not including those students who have opted out of the survey.** You can alter the dates and times emails are sent up to 24 hours before they are due to be sent out.

Whether you elect HERI to manage the survey administration process or do it yourself, there are several important issues to take into consideration to maximize the delivery of your web survey, including opportunities to customize the web administration for your institution. Please see above section titled "Customizing Your Survey Administration."

Inviting Your Students to Participate

See [Templates for Invitations and Reminders](#) for suggested text for invitation and reminder emails to accompany initial and follow-up waves.

We strongly recommend that you use the invitation and reminder templates since they include appropriate language to meet guidelines for research involving human subjects and such language is a required element of the research protocol approved by the UCLA North General IRB, but again remind you to edit them to insert information about your school in the appropriate places.

Monitoring Your Survey Responses

Students following the link given in the email request to participate will be sent to a welcome screen that again explains the survey project and offers a way to opt out of the survey. If

¹ Both HERI and DatStat abide by FERPA guidelines in the use of student information and all personnel involved with the data collection have successfully completed a training course in human subjects research that meets NIH requirements.

students click on the opt-out button, they will not receive any further communications about the survey.

You will be able to access, through the CIRP Web Portal, a Detailed Web Response Report. This file will detail, with unique identifiers, 1) those students who have completed the survey; 2) those who have not yet responded to the web survey; 3) those students who have accessed the survey, but may or may not have entered any data; 4) those students who have accessed the survey and hit the “save and return button”; and 5) those students who have opted out. This will enable you to follow-up with non-respondents **who have not exercised their right to be removed from further contact.**

Returning Surveys for Processing

Web surveys are automatically submitted directly to our data processing center.

After Administration

Administration Report Form (ARF) Online Survey

Upon completion of your administration of the YFCY survey, it is critical that you complete an Administration Report Form (ARF). The ARF is a short web-based survey that inquires about specific institutional information needed to process your completed YFCY surveys and to prepare your institutional reports.

We will send the primary contact an email with a link to the 2014 ARF Survey at the end of your campus’ survey administration. The ARF is due by the final processing cut-off date (June 13, 2014). Please note: We may be unable to process your institution’s data until we receive the completed ARF. If we do not receive it by the processing cut-off date, your data may not be included in the comparison groups for the national data and we cannot guarantee that you will receive your deliverables in a timely fashion.

Reports and Data Files

HERI provides participating institutions with several reports that allow comparison of student responses. For more information, please refer to [Data and Reporting](#).