

Student Survey Policy

2023-25



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Introduction

It is the purpose of this policy to ensure student opinion surveys are well designed, are used to effect positive change, and are compliant with relevant legislation. More specifically, that surveys will:

- be limited in number to avoid generating apathy and permit incentivisation, as well as reducing administrative burden;
- avoid overlap with other surveys which target the same students, both in terms of the point of distribution and of the content;
- conform to current and planned data protection regulations;
- be used with respect to a feedback loop;
- inform actions to be taken, which must be published to students

Referenced external documents & regulations

Conservatoires UK (CUK) Research Ethics
Data Protection Act 1998
General Data Protection Regulation

Reference internal documents & references

Survey Schedule
Survey Request Form

Equality Impact Assessment Information

Definitions

- N/A

Policy

1 Scope

1.1 A student survey is defined as a process in which individuals who are considering study with LC or have at some time applied to or been enrolled at the conservatoire (i.e., all prospective students, enrolled students and alumni) are invited to provide the opinion or information, usually using a questionnaire. For ease, prospective students, current students, and alumni will be collectively referred to as students for the remainder of the document.

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1.2 This policy governs all aspects of a survey, from recognising that a survey may be appropriate, to designing a questionnaire, to undertaking and publishing resultant actions.

1.3 All sections of the policy apply to all student surveys, with the exception of the following types of survey, which are subject only to sections 11 and 12:

- surveys run as a *necessary* part of course administration which do not collect opinion (i.e., those used in academic administration);
- surveys run as a *necessary* part of service administration which do not collect opinion.

1.4 In the context of 1.2 the word 'necessary' means that it is required for compliance with other regulations or policies.

2 Creating a survey

2.1 It is the responsibility of a department to recognise where there may be need for a student survey.

2.2 Surveys will be run only if both their purpose and target audience do not overlap with that of an existing survey; if a proposed survey serves a similar purpose, has a similar target audience, and would be best run at a similar time to an existing survey, the existing survey may be modified to incorporate the proposed survey.

2.3 A survey must have a reasonable scope, in that a survey must not include questions on aspects of the student experience that the surveying department(s) cannot affect.

2.4 A survey can either be created for a single purpose before being processed and closed, or designed to run over multiple iterations, in which case the survey must be consistently capable of collecting results that can be used to effect positive change in the student experience and/or the conservatoire.

2.5 The past performance of a survey must be considered when deciding whether a survey should continue to run (where 'performance' refers to the response rate and the quality of responses). This decision will be shared between the planning department and the surveying department.

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3 Point of deployment(s)

3.1 A Survey Schedule, maintained by the planning department, will be used to help inform the decision of when to run a survey, documenting both point of distribution and content of all surveys. The survey schedule will be made available on the department Space page for all departments to view.

3.2 Before the start of an academic year, SLT members will be asked for a list of surveys their department wished to run in the coming year. Though this list is not final, it will be used to inform deployments and the aggregation of smaller surveys into a larger one.

3.3 Where insufficient notice is given about a survey it may have to be postponed until the following year if it conflicts with an existing survey.

3.4 Surveys designed to run repeatedly (annually, bi-annually etc.) should be checked on a yearly basis or on the review of this policy document to assure that they are consistent with these conditions and that their results are being used.

4 Method of Deployment

NB: The collection methods below do not preclude the involvement of other departments in collecting survey data, e.g., a customer journey survey would be run as expected but the respondent would input their feedback in a medium which the commissioning department would not have access to.

4.1 For electronic surveys, a dedicated student opinion survey platform will be employed, accessible only to the planning department. Where possible such surveys should be sent with a personalised link to the survey so that students don't have to input their student ID.

4.2 For paper surveys, completed responses will be sealed in an envelope and collected only by the planning department, either in person or via a submission box. Instructions on this process will be emailed to relevant staff and printed on the envelopes. They must not pass through an intermediary in such a way that would

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allow the intermediary to see responses. They will be securely stored in the planning office until they have all been processed and subsequently disposed as soon as their information has been recorded in the survey database.

5 Accessibility

5.1 To ensure surveys are as widely accessible as possible, the following practices must be followed in designing the survey:

- Use of LC brand colours to assure there is sufficient contrast;
- Keep text input fields close to the relative row labels;
- Clearly label mandatory questions;
- Avoid using images as an integral part of the survey, unless they have a comprehensive caption (*see 6.5 for paper-based questionnaire images*);
- **For electronic surveys only** – Make error messages clear with defined resolutions
- **For electronic surveys only** – Make navigation buttons clear, using labels such as “Previous”, “Next”, and “Done”, as opposed to labels like “<< “and”>>”.

5.2 At the point of distribution, respondents will be provided with the email address of a member of the planning department to contact if they have any issues in accessing a survey.

5.3 In the event a survey is found to be inaccessible by a student, the planning department will take all reasonable steps to create an alternative format or assist the student with the given format.

6 Survey Questionnaire Formatting

The question formats provided in this section are the only legitimate formats (as they cover all possible questions, i.e. both open and closed), and as such others are not permitted.

6.1 All surveys will ascertain the student’s ID with the exception of those targeted at

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students who do not have a current student ID or whose student ID may not be known to them (e.g. a prospective student or alumni from before 2000) – in these cases the survey can include questions about enrolment or application information (where relevant).

6.2 Use of control questions, whose meaning duplicates another question, are permitted.

6.3 Questions should be unbiased by avoiding strongly positive or negative words in the question – for example, rather than ‘teaching resources were excellent’ use a more middle-ground term or rephrase, i.e. ‘teaching resources were satisfactory’ or ‘teaching resources met my needs’.

6.4 Where a question seeks a closed response on student opinion, it will be formatted as ‘to what extent do you agree with this statement: *statement about aspect of experience*’, followed by the five point scale ‘definitely agree, mostly agree, neither agree nor disagree, mostly disagree, definitely disagree’ where only one is selectable. Where the questionnaire medium allows, these should be arranged horizontally.

6.5 Where possible, questions seeking closed responses that are distributed through paper forms should be supplemented with image icons to clearly show the direction of agreement.

6.6 Where a question seeks a closed response on something other than student opinion, the responses should be grouped so as to generate as even a distribution of responses as possible. For example, when asking a respondent’s age, having bins of 18-24 and 25-40 wouldn’t be useful in LC’s case as one would be much larger than the other.

6.7 Where a question seeks an open response, it should limit the response to a number of points – for example, ‘What was the best *thing* about the module’ or ‘what *two things* could have improved the course’.

6.8 In some cases it may be useful to have an open question at the end of a block of closed questions, in order to explain answers. Given that the purpose of the questionnaire is to effect positive change, such an open question should encourage explanation of negative responses – for example, ‘if you disagreed with any of the

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above, please provide a brief explanation’.

7 Response Rate

7.1 There is no set minimum response rate required for a survey to be considered quorate for processing.

7.2 Survey reporting should include some degree of analysis and consequence of the survey response rate using the equations presented at the end of this document, and should at least mention (if not present) the resultant error margin in the results; if a survey cannot fulfil its purpose because the relevant conclusion(s) cannot be drawn given the error margins, this must be stated in the report.

7.3 If a survey receives a response rate that corresponds to an error margin of more than 0.05, the design and distribution of the survey will be reassessed to improve response. If multiple iterations of the survey have generated statistically unreliable results, alternative measures will be explored, such as merging the questions with those of a larger survey

8 Anonymization

8.1 Students are asked for their ID to ensure data quality and to enable linking to enrolment and biographical information in the processing of data, which is then anonymised and published.

8.2 In the interests of transparency and to encourage understanding, all surveys will be prefaced with the following sentence ‘Your student ID is used to add enrolment information to your responses, which are then completely anonymised by the planning department so that you can’t be identified in any information released to teaching or other support staff’

8.3 By default, response data will be presented as aggregations, thus protecting the privacy of students and their personal information from being used for any other purpose than that of the surveys approved by the planning department.

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8.4 Under no circumstances will a student's ID or any other information that allows personal identification of a student be published in any form, to the department that requested the survey or beyond. Accessing unprocessed/unanonymized survey data is not permitted by anyone not in the planning department.

9 Storing Data

9.1 Survey data' is defined as the complete set of responses to a survey, including any information about the respondent collected in the survey.

9.2 All survey data will be stored exclusively in a database, the contents of which would only be directly accessible to the planning department, with the following exceptions:

- Data obtained using a different platform (e.g. survey monkey) will also be held on said platform whilst a survey is open, and deleted within a month of the survey being closed and a copy of the data moved to the aforementioned location.
- All of a survey's paper questionnaires will be kept until they have all been converted into electronic data in the aforementioned location, after which point they should be disposed of as confidential waste.

9.3 Where it is not otherwise prohibited by other policies or section 12.4, survey data (which is not anonymised) will be held in the aforementioned location for 5 years, on the premise that they are useful for charting historical trends and research.

9.4 After five years (the length of a student's registration period) data will be fully anonymised.

10 General Reporting

10.1 Care must be taken to ensure that the information reported is:

- Presented or analysed in such a way that it is consistent within the report (particularly axis scales, noting where they are different);
- As accurate and honest as possible, preferring precise error margins to

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precise (but singly unlikely) average points.

10.2 In the interest of transparency and where relevant, reports may also be published and/or distributed for wider public awareness, including staff and students. Guidance on the extent to which staff can publish and/or discuss results and analysis is presented in the survey specification form.

10.3 Aggregate or summary reports may be constructed from more detailed reports as required by senior management and the board of directors.

10.4 The definitive copy of all reports and relevant data will be held by the planning department.

11 Accountability [GDPR]

11.1 Although all reasonable steps will be taken to anonymise data, at the time of initial processing it could still function as personal data owing to the collection of student ID, and hence to ensure that processing is completely lawful, compliance with the GDPR is required.

11.2 The planning department shall be responsible for, and be able to demonstrate, compliance with the principles in this policy with the exception of surveys listed as exceptions in section 1.2; accountability for data processing for surveys in the latter category is the responsibility of the department administering the survey.

12 Processing of Personal Data [GDPR]

12.1 In order to lawfully collect personal data without explicitly requesting consent, processing of respondents' personal data must be necessary for:

- the performance of a task to be carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in LC, e.g. improvement of an area or service as explicitly listed in the relevant Survey Request Form;
- the performance of LC's contractual obligations to a student, e.g., the provision of teaching or services or the administration to enable such;

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- compliance with a legal obligation to which LC is subject.

12.2 Surveys can only collect data for the specified, explicit and legitimate purposes documented in the relevant Survey Request Form and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes; further processing for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes will not be considered to be incompatible with the initial purposes.

12.3 Data collected must be adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which it is processed.

12.4 In the processing of data it must be checked that it is as accurate as possible; every reasonable step must be taken to ensure that personal data that is inaccurate (e.g., duplicated or evidently false records), having regard to the purposes for which they are processed, are erased or rectified without delay.

12.5 Data which permits identification of data subjects should be retained for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed, i.e., personal data should be destroyed if it will not be used for further processing; personal data may be stored for longer periods insofar as the personal data will be processed solely for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes subject to implementation of the appropriate technical and organisational measures required by the GDPR in order to safeguard the rights and freedoms of individuals.

12.6 Data will be processed in a manner that ensures security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures, with the following conditions:

- If the survey tool used is accessible by staff beyond the planning department, other staff must not copy or review data, regardless of intention, in order to avoid propagation of personal;
- If the survey tool used is accessible by staff beyond the planning department, other staff must not copy or review data, regardless of

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intention, in order to avoid propagation of personal data

12.7 Linking personal data from survey responses to personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, declaration of disability, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation shall only be undertaken when:

- consent from the individual is actively, clearly and specifically obtained to do so;
- processing is necessary for the purposes of carrying out legal obligations and exercising specific rights of LC (whilst taking care to safeguard the fundamental rights and the interests of the data subject);
- processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes (whilst taking care to safeguard the fundamental rights and the interests of the data subject).

Procedure

1. Group or department conducting survey complete survey specification form as far in advance of the intended distribution as possible.
2. Planning check the proposal conforms to both the survey policy and schedule.
3. Planning coordinate required collaboration with other departments.
4. Planning create the survey, schedule distribution, and coordinate assistance required for distribution.
5. Department announces to students.
6. After survey period has elapsed, Planning analyse and report on data to level required.
7. Department creates actions and informs students of actions.

Responsibilities

Instigating department:

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- Recognising and proposing surveys as required;
- Drafting questionnaire;
- Announcing to students;
- Creating actions from results;
- Publishing actions to students.

Planning department:

- Assuring surveys meet the criteria in this policy;
- Coordinating collaboration as required by surveys;
- Create and schedule the deployment of surveys;
- Processing and reporting on survey data.

Breach of Policy

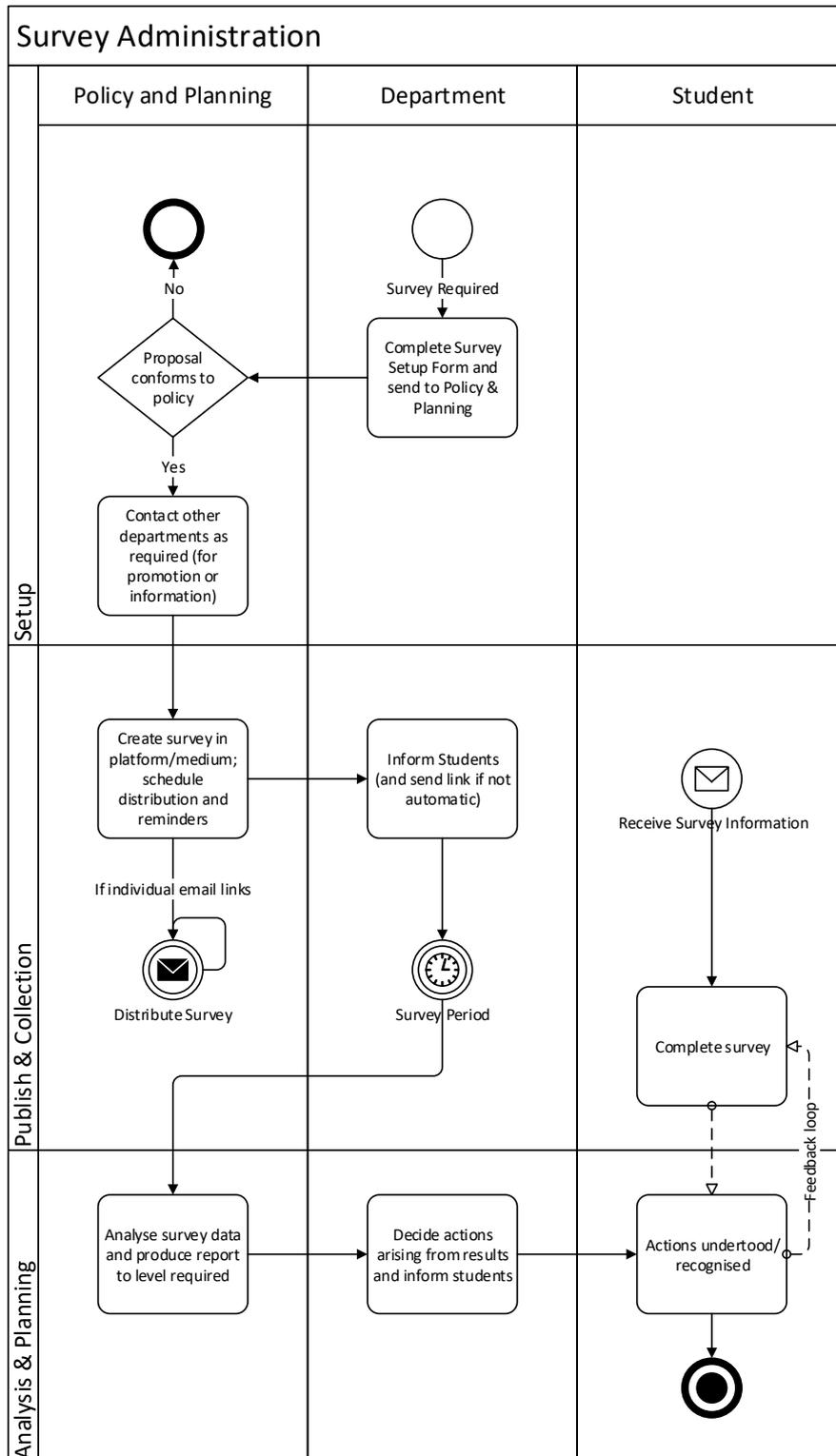
1. Group or department responsible for the survey feels that a decision or action of the Planning department does not conform to the terms of this policy:
 - Independent senior leadership team member judges validity.
2. Survey run without following the procedure (to any degree):
 - Survey terminated and relevant data or results destroyed. Target students informed.
3. Any survey that has been knowingly tampered with will be held by the planning department whilst the relevant student has been informed. The student will be given the option of removing their responses from the Survey Database and any subsequent analysis

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Appendix 1 : Procedure Flowchart



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Appendix 2 : Referenced Calculations

Where n := Sample size, θ := Agree rate, E := Error margin and N := Population size:

For calculating required sample size (prior to or during survey)

Equation 1

$$n = \frac{\frac{1.96^2 \theta (1 - \theta)}{E^2}}{1 - \frac{1.96^2 \theta (1 - \theta) - 1}{E^2 N}}$$

For calculating the margin of error after a sample size has been calculated.

Equation 2

$$E = \sqrt{\frac{1.96^2 \theta (1 - \theta) (N - n)}{n(N - 1)}}$$