



EL PASO COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROCEDURE

For information, contact Institutional
Effectiveness: (915) 831-6740

CU-1 Survey Administration

APPROVED: December 17, 2019 **REVISED:**
Year of last review: 2021
AUTHORIZING BOARD POLICY: CU

Classification: Administrative
Responsible Vice President or Associate Vice President: Vice President of Research, Accreditation & Planning
Designated contact: Director of Institutional Research

OBJECTIVE: To protect the privacy of survey participants and assure proper collection, secure storage and ethical use of data collected via survey instruments.

DEFINITIONS:

Anonymous: not named or identified. Survey responses cannot be attributed to individual persons. The researcher(s) do not have access to information that identifies the survey participants.

Confidential: not disclosed. The researcher(s) can associate the survey responses with the individual survey participants, but that information is not available to any other person.

Informed Consent: permission granted in the knowledge of the possible consequences. A document, usually signed by survey participants, that accompanies a survey and describes in detail how the information obtained through the survey instrument will be used, stored and disposed of.

Faculty: instructors, counselors and librarians.

Institutional Review Board (IRB): an administrative body established to protect the rights and welfare of human research subjects recruited to participate in research activities conducted under the auspices of the **institution** with which it is affiliated. Refer to EPCC Procedure CU-2 *Procedure for the Protection of Human Subjects Participating in El Paso Community College Research Programs*.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII): any data that could potentially identify a specific individual such as name, address, College ID, phone number, email address, medical information, personally identifiable financial information or social security number.

GENERAL:

Categories of surveys conducted at El Paso Community College (EPCC) and covered by this procedure:

1. Student Evaluation of Faculty,
2. Non-anonymous surveys where personally identifying information (PII) is collected from participants,
3. Anonymous surveys where the participants are informed that the survey is anonymous.

Categories of questionnaires not covered by this procedure:

1. Application forms and information sheets required to enroll at EPCC and/or participate in services, functions or events.
2. Evaluations of the performance of faculty and staff with the exception of Student Evaluation of Faculty.
3. Information or questionnaires required by an accrediting agency, state or federal government.
4. Evaluations of College events, services or functions.
5. Classroom assignments if the information will be used exclusively in the class.

PROCESS:

I. Student Evaluations of Faculty

If data are collected via paper survey forms, the data do not contain personally identifying information (PII) for students; therefore, no special handling is required to maintain student privacy. In order to maintain faculty confidentiality, all data are maintained on a secured EPCC server with controlled access only by full-time staff in the Faculty Evaluations area within the Institutional Research Department.

Data collected electronically contain PII data, usually the student ID. The PII data are required so that the survey can be sent to participants electronically. The software tracks individual survey participants to make sure participants complete the survey only once. Also, students may be sent reminders if the survey has not yet been completed. The identifying information (Student ID) is in the original data that are stored for each survey form completed. These original data records are kept for two years on a secured EPCC server to be available if the accuracy of the results of the evaluation of a course or instructor is questioned. Only designated full-time staff in the Faculty Evaluations area within the Institutional Research Department have access to these original records. The data are never used for routine processing and distribution of the evaluation results. At the end of a two-year period, the data with PII are purged. The survey data, without personal identifying student information, are maintained in data tables on an EPCC server that is accessible to designated Institutional Research staff. These are the data used for all reports and analyses and remain available for long-term use.

II. Non-anonymous Surveys where personally identifying information is collected from Participants

By entering PII on a survey form, a participant agrees to the use of that information in connection with the analysis and storage of the survey results. An explanation of the reason(s) for inclusion of the PII on the survey form and a complete disclosure of the intended uses of the data must accompany the form when it is distributed for completion. An informed consent may be signed by each survey participant to assure that all participants understand how their data will be used. The disclosure or informed consent must contain a plan for confidentially storing the data while the study is ongoing and a plan for safely disposing of the data when the research study is complete. The ID of each survey participant is stored with the survey results on a secured EPCC server. The data are confidential and can be used only as described in the disclosure or informed consent accompanying the survey.

III. Anonymous Surveys where the Participants must be informed that the Survey is anonymous

If the data are collected via paper survey forms, the data do not contain PII; therefore, no special handling is required, except that all data must reside on a secured EPCC server with controlled access.

Data collected electronically must contain PII data, usually the student ID. The anonymous option of survey-administration software must be used. The PII is originally obtained so that the survey can be sent electronically to participants. The software tracks individual survey participants to make sure participants only take the survey once. Also, potential participants may be sent reminders if the survey has not yet been completed. A complete disclosure of the intended uses of the data collected must accompany the survey instrument when it is distributed for completion. Once the survey has been closed and the data are validated, the PII is not retained with the data, and the researcher never sees the PII. The survey data are always stored without PII. Data with PII are never used for analysis and reporting. PII can never be used in association with the survey results of any anonymous survey.

IV. Data from Sources other than the Survey Instrument

Additional data that are not from the survey instrument are never used in conjunction with the survey results unless the participants are told in writing that additional data about them will be included from other sources besides the survey instrument.

V. Institutional Review Board Approval of Survey Instruments and Administration

All surveys conducted by EPCC faculty, staff or students or any survey where EPCC faculty, staff or students are the intended participants must have Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval prior to survey administration. Survey developers and administrators (researchers) must submit to the Institutional Research Office the *Application for Permission to Use Human Subjects and in Research* (attached), a copy of the survey questions and a copy of any disclosure or any other document(s) that will accompany the distribution of the survey instrument. Following IRB review and approval, the survey can be administered. Refer to EPCC Procedure CU-2 *Procedure for the Protection of Human Subjects Participating in El Paso Community College Research Programs*.

Questionnaires that do not require IRB approval are:

1. Applications and information sheets necessary for enrollment at EPCC and/or participation in services, events or functions where no data are collected with the intent to conduct research about the participants.
2. Information required by an accrediting agency, state or federal government.
3. Evaluations of the performance of faculty or staff.
4. Evaluations of services, functions or events provided by the College if the questionnaires are anonymous and are not used to analyze characteristics of the attendees of events or recipients of services.
5. Classroom assignments where the information will be used exclusively in the class.