

**STUDENT AFFAIRS POLICY ON USING OR GATHERING STUDENT DATA FOR EXTERNAL PARTIES**

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**Category:** Student Affairs

**Responsible Office:** Student Affairs

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**Summary**

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Unit requests to conduct externally sponsored student research/assessment involving the accessing of student information and/or soliciting students for data must be approved in advance by the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and the attached procedures must be followed.

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**Policy**

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**POLICY STATEMENT**

Unit participating in externally sponsored student research/assessment involving the accessing of student information and/or soliciting students for data, for research, benchmarking, or other administrative purposes must be approved in advance by the Associate VP for Student Affairs.

- A. Approval is restricted to UB faculty, administrators, staff and students
- B. Approval is restricted to the specific purpose(s) described in the proposal – no sharing or re-use of the student data is permitted. All proposals must include a written and signed statement of agreement to this policy condition (See Form(s) attached).
- C. Approval is based on timeline of the project, purpose of request, impact of results, viability of other data collection options.
- D. Final approval is contingent upon official IRB approval, for any/all projects subject to the IRB process.
- E. Upon final approval, staff in the Office of Assessment and Evaluation for Student Affairs works with the requestor to prepare the appropriate project email list or student file. For privacy and security reasons, Student Affairs will retain ownership of any list of student demographic or contact information and may choose to administer the survey through their own survey system in order to maintain data security. In compliance with UB's policies governing the release of record-level student data, no record-level student data will be provided to the external agency.

**RELATED INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES**

Requestors are responsible for complying with policies and requirements to secure and prevent disclosure of protected student information in compliance with FERPA, HIPAA, and other legal statutes. See

<http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/policies.html> .

**BACKGROUND**

UB students are, and will continue to be, our most valuable resource. They join the campus community to learn, explore, experience, and develop both personally and professionally. It is UB's responsibility to support student growth and development by providing an environment free from unnecessary distraction and rich in opportunity, guidance, and resources.

As UB strives to provide that environment, students are an important source of information. Student feedback is essential to assessing and improving the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of both academic and academic-support events, programs, and services. The institution and its units seek student responses designed to benchmark the relevance and effectiveness of its offerings and to monitor changes in students' needs. In addition, UB and its units desire student feedback to identify and/or study barriers to student success and/or to develop and test effective prevention or intervention strategies to overcome those barriers.

UB must maintain a careful balance between the protection and preservation of student rights to a learning environment free of solicitation, and the need for student feedback/responses for administrative and/or research purposes. In addition, the availability of web-based survey software along with calls for accountability have increased the number of large-scale student surveys offered through external agencies/ businesses that are available to the institution and units to assess student needs or benchmark programs/services within various areas of the higher education experience. UB's need to conduct certain institutional level/mandated surveys, and the growing number of UB units desiring to participate in area-specific externally sponsored surveys of UB students threaten this careful balance. ***UB is experiencing a student population that is increasingly unresponsive to invitations to participate in such surveys, serving as evidence of an imbalance and probable oversaturation.***

Therefore, UB will operate under the institutional policy and procedure described below. *Note that this policy and procedure is separate and distinct from the UB IRB approval process.*

### **APPLICABILITY**

All UB units external to Student Affairs must comply with this policy.

### **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE**

Office of Assessment and Evaluation in Student Affairs

### **PROCEDURE**

Anyone wishing to gain access to UB databases for purposes of obtaining student directory, demographic and/or academic information for non-administrative purposes should complete the ***"Release of Student Information"*** form included below.

Anyone wishing to gain access to students' emails or other forms of solicitation for the purpose of surveys or other research/assessment purposes should complete the ***"Request To Solicit Students for Research/Assessment Purposes"*** form included below.

If requestor requires both sets of information, please complete both forms.

All decisions regarding the approval or denial of requests for exceptions to this policy will be made by Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and will be communicated to the requestor by the Coordinator of Assessment and Evaluation.

### **Approval Guidelines and Priorities For Survey Projects:**

Approval of requests is based on three primary factors. Listed below are the factors and associated priorities.

- a. Timeline of the project: survey is set to be administered at a time that does not overlap with other large-scale projects at the University and/or at a time when there is not multiple (4 or more) small-scale projects happening at one time.
- b. Purpose of Request
  - Priority 1: Externally mandated project
  - Priority 2: Institutional project
  - Priority 3: Sponsored research project (UB faculty)
  - Priority 4: Un-sponsored research project (UB faculty)
  - Priority 5: Doctoral dissertation research project (UB student)
  - Priority 6: Master's thesis research project (UB student)
  - Priority 7: Undergraduate research project (UB student)
  - Priority 8: Third-Party projects

c. Impact of Request

Priority 1: Positive Impact on UB

Priority 2: Positive Impact on UB students

Priority 3: Positive Impact on UB Community

Priority 4: Other

d. Viability of Alternate Strategies

Priority in this factor will be given to project proposals that show convincing evidence that no other viable alternative strategies are available.

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**Contact Information**

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## Release of Student Information

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the release of student directory, demographic or academic information to University organizations and departments.

### **Criteria:**

The Office of Assessment and Evaluation must grant approval for release of student information to be used in mailings and other forms of communication. Approval will be based on the following criteria:

1. Mass appeal
2. Purpose (University business, solicitation, advertising, etc.)

Information will not be released for the use of solicitation by non-university entities. Judicial sanctions may occur if the information is used in an inappropriate manner or for reasons not detailed in the request.

### **Process:**

To request information please complete the information below. Please allow a minimum of five (5) business days to process request.

**\*\*When requesting labels a fee may be charged for the cost of this service. The amount of the fee depends on the request being made.\*\***

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Name & Title of Person Requesting Information: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Department or organization Request Information: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Address: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Phone number: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Email Address: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Has IRB Approved been obtained?  Yes (please attach approval notice)  No (please explain): [Click here to enter text.](#)

Purpose of this request, include specific reasons needed for each field below (attach supporting information as desired):

[Click here to enter text.](#)

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### **Information Requested:**

Which of the following pieces of information are you requesting? (Check all that apply)

Full time students  Part time students  Undergraduate students  Graduate students  Professional students

Email address  Local address  Local zip code  Permanent address  Permanent zip code

Ethnicity  Sex  Primary College  Commuter/Resident  Citizenship

Academic Level (specify which level(s)): [Click here to enter text.](#)

Other (please specify): [Click here to enter text.](#)

Data format will be determined on a case by case basis depending on requestor's need and data security standards.

**Information will NOT be made available for those students who have indicated that their information may not be released. Certain student data, such as GPA, is NOT released in ANY report.**

*The information will be produced for the sole use of the approved group named above and for the specific purpose stated. You may not provide it to any other person, group, or organization on- or off-campus, regardless of their relationship to the University. Judicial sanctions may occur if the information is used in any other manner or for an alternate purpose.*

Office Use Only:

Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Processed: \_\_\_\_\_ Information sent: \_\_\_\_\_

## Request To Solicit Students for Research/Assessment Purposes

### **Requestor Information:**

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Name & Title of Person Requesting Information: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Department or organization Request Information: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Address: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Phone number: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Email Address: [Click here to enter text.](#)

### **Project Information:**

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Has IRB Approved been obtained?

Yes (please attach approval notice)

No (please explain): [Click here to enter text.](#)

Why is this information needed? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Research/Assessment Type (e.g., mandated, institutional, sponsored, doctoral dissertation, master's thesis, other student research, etc.): [Click here to enter text.](#)

How will the proposed student contact impact UB/UB students/UB community? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Description of student population or subpopulation: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Timeline of research (please include number of contacts, frequency of contacts and specific dates of administration/contacts): [Click here to enter text.](#)

Viability of other options (what additional methods and/or administration methods were considered before decided to send emails): [Click here to enter text.](#)

Proposed process for keeping data secure and confidential: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Office Use Only:

Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Processed: \_\_\_\_\_ Information sent: \_\_\_\_\_