

Research Procedures

Bates Technical College is experiencing a significant increase in the amount of research we are asked to undertake, and the research we undertake ourselves. It is important that we, as a College, are consistent about the quality and consistency of the research we do, and the information we provide to others. It is also important to ensure that we are collecting all of the available data and information relating to our college and the services we provide, so that we can all benefit from this information, and so that we can give an accurate representation of our efforts at continuous improvement and stakeholder engagement.

The following procedures will help you decide when and how to develop your own research activities, and how to respond to research requests you receive. There is support available in research design, collecting information, and to prepare or collect data for research that you are involved in.

Not all research will be governed by these procedures. Some examples of what is not included are:

- Surveys initiated by any employee union, or relating to union matters
- Surveys seeking your personal opinion, such as on line evaluations of courses or conferences.

If you are in any doubt as to whether the research you want to conduct, or which you are asked to provide, is covered by these procedures, contact Jon Bolas, Institutional Research (IR) at x7023, or jbolas@bates.ctc.edu and he will advise you.

Incoming surveys

When you receive a survey through the mail or via email that does not fall into one of the exempted categories above, it is important that you follow the correct procedures to determine if and how it should be completed. The college has specific sources for data and information, and survey responses need to use consistent data. It is important that the information we provide in external surveys is consistent and accurate. In addition, many surveys may ask for information, such as student demographics and profiles, that require some caution or may put you at risk of violating legislation that protects students, such as the Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

What to do when you receive a survey:

1. Call or email IR. If possible, forward the email containing the survey or survey link to Jon, or provide her with a copy of the paper request.
2. IR will determine if the survey or request should be answered by you, by another department or departments, or even if it should not be answered at all. If appropriate, IR will also notify Marketing and Communications, of the research request.
3. If it is determined that you should complete the incoming survey or provide the information requested, send a copy of your completed responses to IR for filing. If other departments will be responding to the survey, you will be informed when it has been completed and the responses submitted.

Surveys you produce for use within the college

Internal research includes surveys of students, staff, visitors to college-run events, etc. If you are developing a survey to use on another site, but with Bates students or stakeholders (such as an evaluation of an on line or contract training course) this would still be considered 'internal'.

1. Contact IR to discuss your research project and the type of research you plan to do. IR will check to see if:
 - a. The research is necessary or if the information is available elsewhere
 - b. If surveys or other instruments are already prepared that can be applied to your project
 - c. If there are any risks or concerns associated with your research
2. IR will contact you to discuss your research options, and to help you prepare any research instruments or project plans you may need. Any questions or areas of inquiry that are deemed inappropriate, irrelevant, or risk violating any legislative research guidelines will be removed. Copies of the final versions of any surveys or other instruments you develop will be kept on file. IR will provide you with any necessary documents, such as consent forms, that you may require.
3. When you complete your research, send a copy of the results to IR. IR can help you with data analysis, and with the preparation of reports.
4. A copy of the anonymized final outcomes of your research will be sent to Marketing and Communications if appropriate.
5. IR will discuss with you the wider application of your research outcomes, and if appropriate, develop a dissemination plan.

Surveys you produce for use outside the college

External research includes activities such as surveys of former students, employers, schools, etc. This is research involving people who are not employed by the college, or enrolled in courses.

1. Contact IR to discuss your research project and the type of research you plan to do. IR will check to see if:
 - a. The research is necessary or if the information is available elsewhere
 - b. If surveys or other instruments are already prepared that can be applied to your project
 - c. If there are any risks or concerns associated with your research
2. IR will contact you to discuss your research options, and to help you prepare any research instruments or project plans you may need. Any questions or areas of inquiry that are deemed inappropriate, irrelevant, or risk violating any legislative research guidelines will be removed. Any survey or research materials must be prepared according to the college's style guidelines provided by Marketing and Communications, including logos and color schemes. Copies of the final versions of any surveys or other instruments you develop will be kept on file.
3. IR will prepare for you any cover information you may need, such as email or paper instructions for respondents and information required to inform respondents of their rights with regard to the research project. If any 'at risk' groups are involved (such as students under 18 years of age),

IR will help you prepare any additional waivers, disclaimers, permission or information sheets you may need. It is important in these cases that you follow college guidance very closely.

4. Provide IR with a copy of your research sample. This is to protect our stakeholders from excessive research requests, and to keep an official record of the breadth of the College's research activities.
5. When you complete your research, send a copy of the results to IR. If IR is assisting you with data analysis, send all incoming responses directly to IR. IR can also help you with data analysis, and with the preparation of reports.
6. A copy of the final outcomes of your research will be sent to Marketing and Communications.
7. IR will discuss with you the wider application of your research outcomes, and if appropriate, develop a dissemination plan.

If you have any questions about a potential or current research project, your first action should be to contact Jon (IR) on x7023 jbolas@bates.ctc.edu. The intention of these procedures is not to limit research activity at the college, but to ensure consistent, high quality, and relevant research is conducted, and that the information learned from this research is shared as widely as possible for maximum benefit to the College.

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