

Project Title: Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE): *Description of Processes and Procedures*

The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) is designed to measure several aspects of instructional staff life: 1) perceptions and expectations of how often students engage in educational activities empirically linked to high levels of learning and development; 2) the importance that instructional staff place on various areas of learning; 3) the nature and frequency of instructional staff-student interactions; and 4) how instructional staff members organize their time, both in and out of the classroom.

FSSE is administered annually to instructional staff who will teach at least one undergraduate course in the current academic year. Each institution is asked to provide the names and emails of all instructional staff selected to be surveyed, as well as to designate one or more people on their campus to be the signatory on the invitation letter soliciting participation if they choose to have FSSE staff send recruitment emails. We expect signatories to come from Provosts, Deans of Faculty, Directors of Centers for Teaching and Learning, Directors of Assessment, and Directors of Institutional Research. Completing the survey is voluntary for all instructional staff, and they are notified of this through the communications they receive. A fuller description of these communications is included in the next section.

FSSE Survey Administration

In general, we try to limit our contact with instructional staff members while encouraging higher response rates. We will contact instructional staff members four times. A survey link is assigned to each survey participant in order to reduce unnecessary instructional staff contacts, eliminate duplicate responses, and to allow instructional staff respondents to save their response and return to the survey. This allows us to automatically cease e-mail invitations to instructional staff who have already logged into the survey. Using the contact information provided in the messages, instructional staff may also request that no further messages be sent. If requested, we will provide individual, private survey links to the institution so that they can send their own messaging. This will prevent issues with our emails being blocked, going to spam folders, or faculty doubting the message is coming from a trusted source. Although institutions will send their own messages, they will still be unable to identify specific faculty as faculty identities will remain confidential to the institution.

Optional Institutional Announcement Message

In line with good survey practices, we advise participating institutions to inform their instructional staff of the nature of the FSSE project, notify them of their institution's upcoming administration of the FSSE survey, and to alert them to the forthcoming invitation to participate. To help guide this process, we provide participating institutions with a template that they may use to draft this optional pre-survey announcement. We encourage institutions to make this contact prior to the start of the survey administration.

Invitation to Participate Message—First Message from FSSE

Using the messages and email addresses provided, our FSSE staff contacts instructional staff up to four times. The first of these is an invitation to participate. It introduces the survey's purpose and provides a rationale for instructional staff to complete it. The messages also includes a unique URL that instructional staff may click on to enter the survey, as well as instructions to log in manually. After the invitation email, instructional staff can choose not to receive additional messages regarding FSSE.

Follow-up Message—Second Message from FSSE

The follow-up message will be sent by FSSE staff to instructional staff who have neither started nor opted out of the survey. This message is sent approximately one week after the Invitation.

Second Follow-up Message—Third Message from FSSE

The follow-up message will be sent by FSSE Staff to instructional staff who have neither started nor opted out of the survey. This message is sent approximately three days after the Invitation.

Final Reminder Message—Fourth Message from FSSE

The final reminder message is the last message FSSE staff will send regarding completion of the FSSE survey. It is sent approximately two weeks after the second Follow-up. As with all contacts after the Invitation, instructional staff who have completed the survey, explicitly refused participation, or been designated ineligible by the institution will not be contacted again.

Instruments Used

Two versions of the surveys (one for U.S. institutions, one for Canadian institutions) are available. They are identical with the exception of two questions: Canadian instructions are not given the US citizenship question or the race/ethnicity question that both appear on the US instrument.

1. U.S English Version
2. Canadian English Version (identical to 1, except the two items asking about US citizenship status and racial/ethnic identification are removed)

Extra Items

During each administration, participating institutions have the option to select a set of extra topical items that will be added to the end of the FSSE survey and asked of their instructional staff members. These extra items pertain to a topic that is of interest to instructional staff members. However, participating institutions may opt out of having these extra items asked of their instructional staff respondents. Extra item topics are:

1. Academic advising
2. Civic Engagement
3. Experiences with Writing
4. Inclusiveness and Engagement with Cultural Diversity
5. Teaching Professional Development
6. Transferable Skills, Career, and Workforce Development
7. Scholarship of Teaching & Learning

These topics are subject to change. Finalized extra item topics will be publicized prior to the start of the 2024 administration.

Data Collection, Use, and Distribution

Data collection starts when a participating institution sends a sample data file, containing instructional staff members' first and last names, and emails addresses, to FSSE staff. FSSE staff then sends recruitment emails to all individual instructional staff members included in the sample file, but collects their responses in a separate file, or returns the file to institutions with a unique link for each survey respondent for them to send their own recruitment messages. The respondent data file does not include any instructional staff identifying information originally provided by the institution, and both files are kept separate.

FSSE data collection is a partnership between each participating institution and the IUB Center for Postsecondary Research (CPR). Data collected using FSSE survey instruments are used for a combination of individual institutional assessment and aggregate research on instructional staff responses. Any data collected from surveys administered by FSSE through its subcontractor may be used in research initiatives. FSSE reports never identify individual instructional staff, and the only institutionally identifiable data are the reports sent directly to institutions for their use in educational assessment. All FSSE research and presentations report data at the aggregate level in a way that prevents the identification of individual instructional staff.

While demographic information instructional staff members report via FSSE will be returned to institutions, participating institutions agree not to attempt to identify individual instructional staff with this data, nor to take any action should an individual become identified through campus-based analysis.

Access to all instructional staff data is protected through the use of secure servers and back-up media stored in locked storage. Instructional staff data files are submitted to FSSE through a web based QuestionPro Dashboard software to encrypt information during transfer. Access to instructional staff data is limited to FSSE staff and authorized personnel at the Center for Postsecondary Research. Up to three individuals at each participating institution are identified each year who can access instructional staff data through our Institution Interface, and any requests for data transfer must be authorized by these individuals.

Consistent with our central research agenda, FSSE keeps files submitted by schools and our respondent database in order to accommodate analyses that schools may request. Based on past requests for files from schools, files will be kept for the following time frame before being destroyed:

Sample Files: 10 years

Respondent Database: Permanent, but this does not contain information which would allow any instructional staff to be identified once the sample and population files have been destroyed.

FSSE has entered into agreements with other institutions and individuals allowing them to adapt wholly or in part the FSSE instrument to use for other assessment or research purposes. FSSE is not involved in the collection or use of these data for any such research.

Ensuring Institutional Compliance with IRB Protocols

Staff at the Center for Postsecondary Research (CPR) work closely with schools throughout survey preparation and administration to ensure that efforts to recruit instructional staff participants adhere to guidelines for the protection of human subjects.

Survey Administration

All FSSE and CPR staff monitor phone and e-mail communications from institutional contacts and instructional staff members for implications that survey recruitment procedures do not reflect the voluntary nature of the survey. In these cases, FSSE client services staff contact schools to clarify any changes that are needed.

- FSSE staff does not supply the personal log-in information to anyone but the individual instructional staff to whom it is assigned.
- If a instructional staff member requests that their data be destroyed, FSSE staff promptly comply.

- FSSE staff replies directly to instructional staff requests/questions and do not copy school officials, nor do they forward such requests/questions on to the school.
- FSSE staff does not give instructional staff information (such as comments/criticisms) to the school contacts verbally or via e-mail.. If the FSSE staff need to forward the information to the school, they strip off any information (name, e-mail address, etc.) that can be used to identify the instructional staff member. *Exception:* Instructional staff comments may be shared with school officials in cases where an instructional staff member explicitly states this is what they want.

FSSE Internal Measures to Ensure IRB Protocol Compliance

The Center for Postsecondary Research (CPR), which houses the FSSE project, has re-organized staff duties to ensure that survey procedures comply with approved IUB IRB protocols and to verify that appropriate amendments are approved before any protocol changes go into effect. Multiple people will be involved in the development of survey protocol documentation to create better checks on thoroughness and consistency.

FSSE staff monitor the IRB continuing review and amendment processes for FSSE to confirm that paperwork is filed with adequate time for review before projects start, and to maintain consistency in protocol descriptions across projects. All protocol amendments are reviewed by multiple FSSE staff members before the principal investigator signs off on the final documents. Additionally, review of the complete IRB-approved survey protocol has been integrated into training for all new FSSE client services staff.

FSSE data collection starts in late March each year, but message templates are submitted for IRB review before the end of October to allow time for survey preparation. Amendments for changes to survey instruments are submitted before the end of January.

There are no inherent benefits that participants receive by completing the FSSE survey, other than being prompted to reflect on their teaching and the educational activities and experiences of their students. At the national level, information produced by FSSE complement other sources of information about the quality of undergraduate institutions. FSSE provides prospective students, parents, alumni, institutional officials, state policy makers, governing board members, instructional staff, and others with information about how instructional staff shape students' learning experiences and spend their time, all of which is important to improving collegiate education.