



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER EL PASO

Operating Policy and Procedure

HSCEP OP: 10.31, **Requests for Institutional Data and Internal Data Collection Processes**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) Operating Policy and Procedure (HSCEP OP) is to institute a standardized approach in the production, review, and submission of data in response to external requests for institutional information. In addition this policy establishes procedures for conducting surveys within the institution in order to monitor survey frequency and to avoid survey fatigue; ensure the safety of data collection and usage; and protect the privacy of survey participants.

REVIEW: This HSCEP OP will be reviewed by May of odd-numbered years (ONY) by the managing director of the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE) and the vice president for academic affairs or designee, with recommendations for revision forwarded to the president by July 1.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

I. Requests for Institutional Data and Information

The following procedures will ensure a more accurate and timely response to the completion of data requests and official reports requested by external entities from the institution, as well as from departments within TTUHSC El Paso.

- A. OIRE is responsible for providing all general and statistical information concerning TTUHSC El Paso in response to institutional data requests and official reports, including published reports that pertain to the entire institution. Therefore, all requests for information about the institution should be sent to OIRE for completion. OIRE is responsible for monitoring the relevant data collection processes and for report submission. OIRE will work with relevant TTUHSC El Paso offices, depending on content expertise needed, and will determine which office will submit the requested data.
- B. Data requests concerning a single department or specific to a TTUHSC El Paso school, should be managed by that department/school and are exempt from this HSCEP OP. However, when preparing reports, surveys, and internal self-studies, departments should contact OIRE for official university data (i.e. enrollment, graduation, personnel data, etc. as well as historical data). If relevant, OIRE will contact other departments (e.g., Budget Office for financial information, Financial Aid Office for student financial aid data, etc.) to assist with data collection.
- C. Student education records are protected under federal law through the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) (FERPA). As such, all transmission of student record data must adhere to FERPA regulations, including when student data is shared across TTUHSC El Paso offices for educational and operational purposes. For more information on FERPA see <https://elpaso.ttuhsoc.edu/student-services/registrar/FERPA.aspx>.
- D. OIRE will submit all reports that ask for information other than statistical data to the relevant department(s) for completion and/or review. The respective department(s) will be responsible for providing all non-statistical information for institutional reports.

- E. OIRE will coordinate the review of institutional reports with the Office of Academic Affairs and/or the Office of the President, as appropriate, prior to the completion and release of the reports.
- F. Copies of final versions of all completed data requests and official reports submitted by other departments on behalf of the institution to the State (e.g. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Legislative Budget Board), in response to federal regulations (e.g. Clery Act Annual Security Report), or as part of academic program accreditations (e.g. the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME)) shall be submitted to OIRE for storage and documentation.

Departments receiving requests for data and reports should be aware that the above procedures will lengthen the amount of time necessary to complete requests. Inter-office procedures should be adopted to ensure quick forwarding of data requests to OIRE – preferably within two business days of receipt of the request¹.

II. Internal Collection of Data and Information (Surveys)

- A. Purpose: This policy is intended to 1) ensure the safety of data collection and usage of survey data provided by members of the TTUHSC El Paso community; 2) ensure procedures that protect the identity, confidentiality and privacy of survey participants; and 3) monitor survey frequency, avoid survey overlap and redundancy, and minimize potential survey fatigue experienced by participants.
- B. Scope: This policy applies to surveys that are administered by TTUHSC El Paso personnel and/or students to groups of TTUHSC El Paso community members exceeding 300 individuals during a single survey administration. For the purpose of this policy, TTUHSC El Paso community members are defined as students, faculty and staff (including residents). Exemptions to this policy are outlined in section D. below.
- C. Definitions: For the purpose of this document, a “survey” is defined as the gathering of information through questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups to make inferences about a population. “Community” will be defined as all students, faculty, staff, and alumni.
- D. Safeguarding Survey Practices: The following procedures will ensure safe practices for conducting surveys and ensure safe handling of survey data collected from individuals within the TTUHSC El Paso community:
 - 1) General Rule: All survey activities intended to gather data from a TTUHSC El Paso population greater than 300 during a single survey administration, must be submitted for review by the OIRE. OIRE will review and consult on survey instruments and procedures, review and approve survey dates, and maintain the annual schedule of survey administrations. The office will maintain and publish a comprehensive list of approved survey activities, and provide community access to the list, as well as the anticipated delivery date of each survey.
 - 2) Exemptions: OIRE must be informed of any intended survey in advance of survey administration, except when the survey is administered for the following purposes:
 - i. To collect data from TTUHSC El Paso populations of less than 300 individuals;
 - ii. To collect data as part of an Institutional Review Board (IRB)-reviewed scholarly activity or research project (refer to section H. below);

¹ Data request procedures and forms are available on the OIRE website at <https://elpaso.ttuhsoc.edu/oire/Data-Requests.aspx>.

- iii. To collect data strictly for internal uses (e.g. as part of continuous quality improvement efforts) within one's own department;
 - iv. To collect feedback from clients at the point of service (e.g., after a business interaction, function, program, or event), including patients receiving services at TTUHSC El Paso clinics;
 - v. To collect faculty and course evaluations, as well as workshop, training, and presentation evaluation information;
 - vi. To collect information for administrative purposes (e.g., scheduling).
- 3) Survey Consultation: Survey proposals shall be submitted for review and approval to the Managing Director of the OIRE. Approval of a survey request will be based on the criteria established below and the schedule of other planned TTUHSC El Paso surveys:
- i. Is the purpose of the survey clear, and is it explained to the prospective participants?
 - ii. Does the survey capture intended purposes and provide information useful for planning or improving services?
 - iii. Is the survey well-designed and of an appropriate length? Does it follow sound survey methods and practices? Are the questions easily understood and interpreted?
 - iv. What is the target population? Will the entire population or a sample be surveyed?
 - v. What actions are being taken to protect the identities and ensure the confidentiality of the survey participants?
 - vi. When will the survey be conducted? What is the optimal timing to ensure it does not interfere with other TTUHSC El Paso surveys and activities?
 - vii. How will the results be used and/or disseminated?
 - viii. Will the findings be disseminated to appropriate TTUHSC El Paso audiences? Who will have access to the information and will it help them make better decisions as a result?
 - ix. Can the proposed survey be combined with other planned surveys to avoid overlap and redundancy in survey administrations and/or survey data being collected?
- 4) In case any of the above listed criteria are not met, OIRE staff will consult on appropriate changes to the survey design and/or procedures, as appropriate. Please note that surveys may require additional departmental or institutional permissions before approval is granted.
- 5) Reporting of Results: Survey results must be presented in a manner that protects the identities of survey participants, and should not include any information that might be utilized - by itself or in combination with other information (e.g. by filtering school, department, gender, race/ethnicity, years of employment, etc.) - to deduce the identity of survey participants.

- 6) **Survey Calendar:** The TTUHSC El Paso Survey Calendar² should be consulted prior to the submission of a survey request. Many of the institution's longitudinal surveys occur annually at the end of the spring term; therefore, surveyors are encouraged to consider surveying during other times of the academic year. After receiving approval, OIRE will add the approved survey to the survey schedule.

OIRE will monitor survey administration to ensure that students are not over-surveyed during any one term or during exam periods.

- 7) **Data Storage.** Survey administrators must store data securely; use data only for the designated and intended purposes; per relevant TTUHSC El Paso policies for handling data. Data containing participant names, identifying information, e-mail addresses, or other confidential information must be saved in an encrypted format on computers or drives that belong to TTUHSC El Paso, and these data should be properly disposed of when the survey analysis is completed. These data must not be stored on computers or servers outside the institution.
- 8) **Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval.** This policy does not apply to surveys that are conducted as part of research activities, does not replace the necessary approval from the IRB), and OIRE is not responsible for determining whether a survey activity requires IRB review and/or approval. The primary goal of the IRB is to protect the welfare and dignity of individuals participating in human subjects' research. A secondary goal of the IRB is to assist investigators in conducting ethical research that complies with applicable regulations. To clarify whether planned survey activities constitute research with human subjects requiring IRB approval, contact TTUHSC El Paso IRB office prior to beginning the activity.

Those who administer surveys are expected to follow the guidelines outlined in this policy, understanding their obligation to protect participants' confidentiality and identities. In addition, surveyors are to comply with all legal and professional obligations per HSCEP OP 52.06³.

² The TTUHSC El Paso Survey Calendar may be accessed at the OIRE Surveys webpage at <https://elpaso.ttuhs.edu/oire/Surveys/default.aspx>.

³ HSCEP OP 52.06, *Standards of Conduct and Ethics Guide* may be accessed at <https://elpaso.ttuhs.edu/opp/documents/52/op5206.pdf>.