

2022 Institutional Guidelines for the Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey

Changes Since the Last Cycle

There are no changes since the last cycle.

The purpose of the guidelines

Since 2015, all higher education institutions are required by statute (Md. Education Article, Section §11-601) to conduct and report the results of a sexual assault campus climate survey, and to provide institution-level data on incidents of sexual assault and misconduct. The first statewide report summarizing these reports was completed in November 2016.

The following guidelines are meant to aid institutions in the administration of the 2020-2022 cycle of the survey and the preparation of the required report. These guidelines were developed in collaboration with a workgroup consisting of representatives from all segments of higher education in Maryland, and strengthened through feedback from institutional representatives. The guidelines serve to help answer questions and address concerns related to the statute's requirements in an effort to help ensure that the data from the survey can be useful to students, colleges and universities, and the public.

All Maryland institutions are required to conduct a sexual assault campus climate survey every other year. For this cycle, all surveys must have been administered within two years of the last survey cycle; the results of this survey must be submitted to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) on or before June 1, 2022. MHEC is required to compile a report on school-specific survey results and submit to the General Assembly. Along with a narrative summary provided by MHEC, the Commission will include, unedited, the institutional reports that are submitted.

Given the size and scope of assessing the campus climate, and recognizing the unique needs of individual campuses, this document should not be considered exhaustive. Campuses should rely on their institutional experts (e.g. IR staff, faculty, legal counsel) for guidance on the administration of a survey instrument and the analysis and reporting of the survey's results. This document provides guidelines and includes requirements for the narrative report.

Survey administration timeline and guidelines

All institutions of higher education in the state of Maryland are required by law to administer a sexual assault campus climate survey within two years of the last survey cycle. Results of the survey must be submitted to MHEC on or before June 1, 2022. Submissions will be submitted via Google form. This will be distributed to institutions in advance of the 2022 submission date.

The guidelines listed below seek to balance the unique needs of individual higher education institutions with the requirements of the State law. Following the guidelines below will ensure consistency and reliability in the results reported by institutions to MHEC and by MHEC to the public.

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- Institutions may administer the model survey instrument (provided upon request), an existing national survey instrument, or an instrument of their own design. Institutions may utilize internal resources or may retain an outside expert to create and administer the survey.
- Should institutions choose to use the model survey, they may make modifications to suit the needs of their campus communities. Alterations can include: adaptations of the question scales, removal or editing of questions/introduction, conclusion, clarification of definitions or terms, additions/subtractions to question options and alterations to the order of questions
- Institutions may choose among methods of survey administration, including web-based and pen and paper. Institutions may choose to use multiple methods, depending on their needs and resources.
- Institutions are encouraged to survey students 18 and older. Should institutions wish to survey minors (ages 17 and under), it is a strong possibility that parental permission will have to be sought prior to those students' completion of the survey. They should consult experts at their institutions, including IR staff and IRB personnel.
- Institutions should implement a number of measures to ensure the reliability of data. For example, the length of the instrument, the time of year and the length of time when the survey is administered, the incentives offered, and the institutional outreach and communications strategy all affect response rates and reliability of results.
- Institutions should consult their institutional research office and other experts regarding the pros and cons of various forms of survey administration and the best methods to ensure that a representative sample is obtained.
- Institutions may select the target population(s) to be included in the survey administration. The State is especially interested in the experiences and perceptions of undergraduate students ages 18 to 24, but institutions are encouraged to survey other groups, especially those institutions that serve primarily non-traditional students. Populations can include faculty, staff, and students (graduate and undergraduate). Institutions will be responsible for explaining what populations were selected for the survey, and why, within the narrative report submitted to MHEC.
- Institutions must determine if the survey will be disbursed to all members of the selected population(s) or a representative sample. Surveying a sample can be cost-effective and easier to administer but can limit interpretation of results and diminish the ability to set benchmarks. Using a census method can be cost- and time-prohibitive but allows for easier benchmarking and parsing of data regarding subgroups.
- Each institution must designate an official point of contact to work with Commission staff on submission of the survey data. These guidelines have been sent to the institutional point of contact for the previous edition of the survey; this person is presumed to continue as the point of contact. Institutions must notify the Commission immediately of any change in the identity of the point of contact. Please email Dr. Barbara Schmertz (barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov) with any changes.
- All efforts must be made to protect student privacy in the collection and reporting of data.
- The end of the survey provides respondents a list of resources they may use if they seek additional help or information. Institutions should adjust this list as necessary, tailoring it to reflect appropriate campus, local, state, and national resources.

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- In an effort to reduce risk of revealing personally identifiable information, institutions should not report survey results on any subgroup smaller than 10 in number. In those cases where the number of students is fewer than 10, an asterisk should be placed in the cell and footnoted accordingly.

If you have additional questions or concerns regarding these guidelines, please contact Dr. Schmertz via email (barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov).

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Appendix A – Guidelines for the institutions’ narrative reports

General guidelines

Institutional reports must address all required topic areas, ensuring all prompts under each section are discussed in the report; if institutions collect data on prevalence, they are asked to briefly address the prompts in Section V. Page limits are four pages total (approximately 1800 words) for institutions reporting only on Sections I through IV. For those institutions also addressing prompts in Section V, the page limits extends to accommodate the additional narrative.

Follow the Formatting Requirements and the section approximations below for guidance on length of each section, headings, sub-headings, margins, etc.

- I. Survey Administration (approximately 400 words)**
 - A. What survey instrument was used in the 2020-2022 cycle? How was it developed or obtained?
 - B. Who received the survey and how did the institution select those participants?
 - C. How did the institution conduct the survey?
 - D. How was it administered and what was the rate of response among those who could have responded (e. g., if you surveyed only undergraduates, how many [and what percentage of] undergraduates responded)?
 - E. What steps were taken to encourage responses from the surveyed population?
 - F. How does the respondent population compare to the general population on campus (e.g., race and ethnicity, gender, age, on-campus/off-campus residents)?
 - G. What changes to the survey administration were made since the last survey cycle, if any?

- II. Perceptions of Safety and General Campus Climate (approximately 400 words)**
 - A. How do respondents perceive the safety of the campus and the general campus climate?
 - B. How have these perceptions changed since the last survey administration?

- III. Perceptions of Institution’s Readiness and Ability to Address Issues of Sexual Violence (approximately 400 words)**
 - A. How do respondents perceive the institution’s readiness and ability to address issues of sexual assault and sexual violence in such areas as:
 - a. Training and education
 - b. Support for persons reporting sexual assault and other sexual misconduct
 - c. The administrators responsible for investigating misconduct
 - B. How have these perceptions changed since the last survey administration?

- IV. Institutional Analysis and Action Steps (approximately 600 words)**
 - A. What relationship do you see between the changes in the incident data over the past three cycles and the trends you are finding in the survey data?
 - B. What have been the results of changes implemented since the last survey cycle?

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- C. What activities, services, programs, or other results have arisen from what was learned from the survey results?
 - D. What actions will the institution most likely take on the basis of the survey results?
- V. **Prevalence of Sexual Assault and Other Sexual Misconduct** (*Complete only if your institution collects these data via the survey*) (approximately 300 words)
- A. What are the rates of prevalence of sexual assault and other sexual misconduct found from the survey data?
 - B. How do these rates compare to the incident data collected and reported in this cycle?
 - C. Of those data collected from the survey, what are the rates of those who choose to report to the institution and those who choose not to? Of those who choose not to, what are the primary reasons given for not reporting the incident?

Formatting requirements

- Word document
- Document font: Times New Roman 12pt; Black font color for entire document
- Margins: 1" all sides
- Single-spaced lines
- Left-justified text
- No cover page
- Document heading (Institution name): 14pt bold, centered
- Section headings: 14pt bold, centered
- Subheadings: 12pt bold, left justified
- No boxes or borders around headings or subheadings
- No headings or footers
- No page numbering
- No section breaks
- No inserted Excel tables, but Word tables or images of table output are welcomed
- No graphs
- No logos, pictures, graphics, nor art of any kind
- No use of the footnote/endnote feature of Word -- if footnotes are needed, please manually enter them at the end of the document.
- Adhere to page and word limits outlined in the guidelines
- Report all percentages to 1 decimal point (17.1% or 15.0% **not** 17% or 15%);