Introduction and Purpose
For the purpose of this policy, a survey is defined as a gathering of information through questionnaires, interviews, etc., to make inferences about a population. The Research Analyst Office will serve as the survey clearinghouse of Great Falls College MSU (GFC MSU).

The purpose of this policy is to provide a coordinated approach to administering surveys to any member of the Great Falls College community to:

1. Avoid the collection of duplicate data.
2. Manage the number and timing of multiple surveys to the same group of respondents.
3. Achieve meaningful response rates.
4. Ensure the appropriate distribution and use of survey results.
5. Protect the confidentiality of respondents.
6. Maintain a thorough record of surveys, including the survey instruments and methods.

The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will serve as the survey clearinghouse of Great Falls College.

Policy
All surveys intended for distribution to any members of the GFC MSU community (e.g., applicants, students, faculty, staff, and alumni) must be approved by the research analyst using the procedures described herein. Approval by the research analyst is not required for (a) faculty-supervised survey research that contributes toward students' academic progress, (b) evaluation of an event by participants, (c) feedback from clients at the point of service, (d) course evaluation forms, or (e) forms used to collect information for administrative purposes (e.g., scheduling).

Approval by the research analyst to administer a survey is not a substitute for a review by the Montana State University Institutional Review Board (MSU–IRB). If a survey research project is subject to review by the MSU–IRB, approval is required before it can be administered within the college. In addition to the survey research exempted from the research analyst approval, review by the MSU–IRB is generally not required for survey research conducted to evaluate or compare programs, practices, curricula, methods, or outcomes for use solely by the institution.

Surveys may be administered using paper and pencil, phone, or electronic format. Regardless of the method used, all surveys must be approved by the research analyst before the survey can be administered except those specifically exempted by this policy.

This policy applies to all surveys intended for distribution to any member of the Great Falls College community. Any survey that does not meet an exemption outlined below must obtain approval from the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness.

Surveys exempted from requiring Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness approval:

1. Evaluation of an event by participants.
2. Feedback from customers at the point of service.
3. Polls that involve voting.
4) Administrative forms (e.g., course drop cards, course withdrawal forms).
5) Course evaluations.
6) Academic evaluative surveys conducted by instructors or clinical preceptors.
7) Feedback from stakeholders to improve a program.
8) Faculty-supervised survey research that contributes toward student’s academic progress.

Approval from the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness to administer a survey is not a substitute for a review by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). If a survey research project is subject to IRB review, IRB review or exemption is required before administering the survey at Great Falls College.

Acceptance of authorization to administer a survey establishes an obligation on the part of the researcher to use these data responsibly, including not distributing these data to others in or outside the college, unless the researcher is an authoritative source for and an authorized distributor of the data and the recipient is authorized to receive the data. In addition, a person who receives email or traditional mail addresses of survey population will be responsible for that information and must ensure it is stored securely and inaccessible to any unauthorized user. Individuals in schools or office will be responsible for that information.

Definitions
The Great Falls College community is defined as any internal or external stakeholders, including, but not limited to, prospective students, applicants, current students, alumni, former students, employees, advisory board members, etc.
A survey is defined as a means of data collection in which questions are presented to respondents through paper, electronic (e.g., email or website), or oral (e.g., telephone, interview, or focus group) format.