



Survey Fatigue

What is survey fatigue?

Survey fatigue occurs when survey respondents become tired of the survey task resulting in the decreased availability and quality of data. Students may not take a survey or complete the questionnaire fully due to the following reasons:

- General lack of reward for the cost of time and energy involved in responding
- Lack of perceived outcomes and change as a result of their response
- Have received a number of survey invitations within a given timeframe
- Lack of motivation to respond to questions located at the end of surveys or respond to open-ended questions
- The survey is too lengthy and will require too much time and effort to complete
- Survey delivery format is not convenient (paper-based vs. mobile survey link)
- Survey is not branded with UA logo and thus unfamiliar to students

Alternative methods to assessment should always be considered before implementing a survey to avoid survey fatigue among students. Implementing strategies to circumvent survey fatigue through sampling techniques and survey distribution practices may increase response rates.

Survey Sampling Methods

Convenience sampling

Members are selected from a population due to their access and low-cost.

Quota sampling

Subsets of populations (i.e. undergraduate vs. graduate students) are considered and selected using non-random sampling methods.

Random sampling

All members in a population have an equal and known chance of being selected.

Systemic sampling

Given a list of population members, names are selected for every “N”th (i.e. 7th) record to create a sample.

Stratified sampling

Taking into consideration different subsets of a population (i.e. undergraduate vs. graduate students), random sampling is used to select a sufficient number of subjects from each subset.

Snowball sampling

Used when desired sample characteristics are rare. Due to the difficulty or cost involved with locating respondents, snowball sampling relies on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects with the same characteristics.



Click [HERE](#) to answer the following questions on sampling:

- How many survey respondents do you need? Based on your desired confidence level and known population size.
- How many people do you need to send the survey to?
- How accurate are your survey results? (e.g. What is your confidence level?)

Survey Distribution Strategies

Make it relevant.

- Solicit responses from specific student populations who have reason to be interested.
- Explain thoroughly in the email the purpose of the survey.

Help students understand the value of their response by sharing results.

- Preface survey links with an explanation of how results are being used.
- Cite assessment results when publicizing new programs/decisions.
- Publish certain results on a website, newsletter or blog.

Decrease the number of times you ask a student to complete a survey.

- Use the larger group only when necessary, such as when you need to generalize to the entire population or significantly filter results. Implement sampling methods.
- Use other methods: on-site web-based, PDAs, etc.

Use incentives.

- Consider smaller incentives with higher chances of winning (give out three \$10 gift cards instead of one \$30) which has shown to be more effective.
- Consider “immediate” incentives like coupons or printable gift certificates, which have shown to be more enticing.

Send notification at appropriate times.

- Identify when students are more likely to respond and email during those times.
- Send reminders to non-responders using Mass Mailing. You’ll see a peak with each reminder without having aggravating those who completed the survey already.

Keep survey length down.

- Tell the student exactly how long it will take them to reply.
- Include only necessary questions. Ask yourself: Would I use this piece of data?

Establish credibility.

- Send a pre-notification email asking for their participation.
- Ask student leaders/government for their endorsement and help publicizing.
- Think carefully about the “from” address. Send emails from a name students will recognize and trust.