



COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAM  
at the HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE AT UCLA

## Using Additional Questions with the CSS

### Adding Additional Questions to the Survey

Campuses have the option of adding up to 20 additional multiple choice questions and up to 5 open-ended questions of specific local interest at the end of their questionnaires. Information relevant to both types of additional questions is presented first, followed by specific information for each type of question. You may NOT add Additional Questions that ask for personally identifying information (such as name, address, student ID). Responses to any such questions will be stripped from your final data file in compliance with our Confidentiality and Privacy guidelines.

We urge you to “pilot test” your additional questions with current students. Many campuses find that students often interpret questions differently than the institution intended.

Although your campus is responsible for developing the local additional questions, CIRP staff is available to review and comment on any of these materials. We would also appreciate receiving a courtesy copy of your additional questions. Please send them directly to [heri@ucla.edu](mailto:heri@ucla.edu).

In addition to drafting, pilot testing, and incorporating your additional questions into the administration of the CSS, it is also important to consult with your local Institutional Review Board (IRB). Your campus may require you to submit any additional items for their review and approval. If your campus believes an additional question to be of a sensitive nature, your local IRB should determine if any additional steps, such as obtaining an NIH Certificate of Confidentiality (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/coc/>) are necessary. You must also submit that question to CIRP for our consideration one month before the CSS administration opens.

“Sensitive information,” according to the National Institutes of Health, includes (but is not limited to):

*information related to sexual attitudes/preferences/practices; information relating to the use of alcohol, drugs or other addictive products; information pertaining to illegal conduct; information that, if released, might be damaging to an individual’s financial standing, employability, or reputation within the community or might lead to social stigmatization or discrimination; information pertaining to an individual’s psychological well-being or mental health.*

### Obligation to Provide Referrals

If your additional questions ask respondents to provide “sensitive information” regarding topics such as drug use, binge drinking, eating disorders, sexual behavior and/or gambling, you must also provide information about referrals to mental health care programs and counselors. For example, if you were to ask about binge drinking, you should also include information about who to contact on or near your campus to address a substance abuse problem, providing an address and phone number. You will need to provide an addendum to include this information on the Survey Information Sheet (for paper administrations) or on the “Welcome” page (for web administrations).

Again, CIRP strongly encourages that you consider the appropriateness of such additional questions in a general campus climate survey and recommends against asking about these issues with this survey instrument. CIRP also suggests that you confer with your campus health officials before including sensitive questions and for any necessary referral information.

If you have questions about potentially “sensitive” items that you may be intending to ask as part of your set of additional questions, or would like more information about the process for obtaining approval to include these items, please contact Dr. Kevin Eagan, CIRP Director, or Dr. Ellen Stolzenberg, CIRP Assistant Director, at 310.825.1925 or [heri@ucla.edu](mailto:heri@ucla.edu).

## Closed-Ended Questions

Closed-ended questions may be added at the end of the paper and/or web versions of the survey. At the end of the paper questionnaire (lower portion of page 4), there is a section for the responses to the additional questions. You will need to distribute to your students a sheet containing the additional questions. Closed-ended questions will display on a separate page after the last questions on the web-based CSS. You will have the opportunity to upload your additional questions during the order customization process. Each question permits a maximum of five response options (A through E). *Students may mark only **one** response option.* Fewer than five response options may be used for any of the questions.

Responses to closed-ended questions will be included in your data file. Because the text of your additional questions and response options cannot be included in your data file or institutional profile report, we strongly suggest retaining a copy of the questions with your CSS information.

Each question that requires the student to select a response is considered a question. The numbers in **red text** below show how the questions labeled 1-3 are actually 15 items.

1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

(Response Categories: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

- (1) It will take me longer to graduate than I had planned
- (2) Faculty empower me to learn here I see myself as a part of the campus community
- (3) At least one staff member has taken an interest in my development
- (4) Faculty believe in my potential to succeed academically
- (5) Staff encourage me to get involved in campus activities
- (6) I may have to choose between financially supporting my family and going to college
- (7) If asked, I would recommend this college to others
- (8) Staff recognize my achievements
- (9) At least one faculty member has taken an interest in my development

2. How would you currently rate yourself in the following areas: Mark one for each item.

(Response Categories: A Major Strength, Somewhat Strong, Average, Somewhat Weak, A Major Weakness)

- (10) Ability to see the world from someone else's perspective
- (11) Tolerance of others with different beliefs
- (12) Openness to having my own views challenged
- (13) Ability to discuss and negotiate controversial issues
- (14) Ability to work cooperatively with diverse people

(15) 3. How would you characterize your political views?

- Far left
- Liberal
- Middle of the road
- Conservative
- Far right

## Open-Ended Questions (web-only option)

Open-ended questions will display on a separate page, after any additional closed-ended questions you may offer. They cannot be mixed in with the closed-ended questions. You have the option of using a text box (for one word answers) or a text area for longer answers. You may **NOT** add Additional Questions that ask for personally identifying information (such as name, address, student ID). Responses to any such questions will be stripped from your final data file in compliance with our Confidentiality and Privacy guidelines.

Because the text of your additional questions cannot be included in your response file, we strongly suggest retaining a copy of the questions with your CSS information.