



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

**DIVERSE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS SURVEY 2015**  
**Administration Guidelines**



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# **Diverse Learning Environments Survey Administration Guidelines**

## **Overview**

The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Diverse Learning Environments (DLE) survey involves active participation from both CIRP staff and you, our campus partners, throughout the administration cycle. This document provides important information necessary to participate in the 2015 DLE survey, including registering and placing your order, customizing your survey, survey administration procedures, and data and reporting information. Procedures and relevant processes are detailed in the general order in which decisions or actions are made. If you have questions about your specific survey administration, please contact us at [heri@ucla.edu](mailto:heri@ucla.edu) or 310.825.7079.

The DLE Survey is entirely web-based, and is designed to be completed by sophomores and juniors. Registration to participate in the survey can be completed on our registration site: <http://heri.ucla.edu/dle>.

### **Who Should Participate in the CIRP DLE Survey?**

The Diverse Learning Environments (DLE) survey is designed to assess the climate for learning at your institution with a particular focus on diversity and the transition to the major. It is designed to be administered to sophomores and juniors at four-year colleges or students with at least 24 credits at two-year colleges.

### **DLE Survey as a Complement to the CIRP Freshman Survey, YFCY, and CSS**

The DLE survey is constructed somewhat differently than other CIRP Surveys in that as an institution you can choose to participate in several optional modules in addition to the core survey. The DLE survey may be used effectively as a stand-alone instrument, or as a complement to the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey (TFS) (administered at the beginning of the first year of college), the Your First College Year (YFCY) survey (administered at the end of the first year of college) and the College Senior Survey (CSS) (administered to graduating seniors).

DLE results are most valuable to the institution when linked to relevant pre- and post-test data from the Freshman Survey, YFCY, CSS or other local baseline data. Having baseline data collected at the time of college entry allows you to assess how and why your students change over time, and to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of programs and policies at your campus. If you are using the DLE to follow up with students who participated in the CIRP Freshman Survey or YFCY survey, you may order a Name/ID report from HERI that will provide you with the names, dates of birth, and identification numbers of your respondents from those years. However, we have designed DLE modules to reach students who may not be first-time, full-time freshmen as well as to reach transfer students. You should not feel limited to administering the DLE only to previous survey respondents.



### **Important Dates to Remember**

- Register to participate in the DLE survey starting October 2014
- Survey administration opens October 2014
- Survey administration ends June 30, 2015
- Preliminary data is updated in nearly real time
- Administrative Report Form (ARF) emailed to institutions, after June 30, 2015
- Institutional Profile and final data file available for download from <http://www.heri.ucla.edu/surveys>, late summer 2015

For a more detailed timeline approximating the general activities in the DLE survey cycle, please see [Administration Timeline](#).

## **Registering and Placing Your Order**

### **Registering for the Survey**

The first step in participating in the DLE survey is to register. Registering for the survey indicates your intent to participate in the survey. You can register for the survey and manage your administration at <http://www.heri.ucla.edu/dlereg>. In order to complete your registration, you will be asked to supply some basic information (name, address, phone, email) for both a primary contact and a billing contact. The primary contact serves as the liaison between your campus and CIRP. He or she receives all information and communication from CIRP regarding survey administration, data, and results. Once you have registered, you may then proceed to placing your order.

### **Placing Your Order**

Once you have registered to participate, the next step is providing some basic information about your order. You will be asked to provide the following information:

- Whether or not you would like to add modules
- If you would like to ask additional questions in your institution's survey
- Whether or not you intend to use group codes
- Whether you would like CIRP to email your students the invitations and reminders or if you would like to do that from your institution.
- The dates you would like to send the invitation and at least one of three reminders (if you elect to have CIRP manage your email invitation and reminders)
- Whether you will customize the Welcome and Thank You pages
- If you would like to add your logo to the Welcome and Thank You pages
- A survey close date



More detailed information about customization options for the survey appears below:

### **Customizing Your Survey Administration**

The DLE survey administration is designed to be flexible and allows institutions to design an administration that maximizes value for their individual campuses. Though many of the customization options are not mandatory, institutions find that taking advantage of some or all of these options greatly increases the utility of the results. Actions and decisions about customizing the survey are best made well in advance in order to allow for a smooth administration of your survey.

### **OPTIONAL MODULES**

As previously mentioned, the DLE survey is constructed somewhat differently than other CIRP surveys. All institutions participate in a “core” portion of the survey. In addition, institutions have the option of including any of 5 optional modules that pertain to specific areas of interest. More information on the modules is outlined below:

- Classroom Climate-asks respondents about their perception of the classroom environment and the various types of pedagogical practices employed by instructors.
- Transition to the Major-asks respondents about their experiences in selecting a major. It is appropriate for students who have not yet declared a major as well as those who have declared a major. Because many institutions report student attrition at this point in college, this information may be useful to help campuses investigate difficulty at this important transition stage.
- Intergroup Relations-asks respondents about their capacity to engage respectfully across group differences.
- Climate for Transfer at 2-Year Institutions-asks respondents about practices at 2-year institutions regarding the transfer pathway and climate of support. It is designed for 2-year institutions and community colleges only.
- Climate for Transfer Students at 4-Year Institutions-asks respondents about their transitional experiences understanding the campus climate at 4-year institutions. It is designed to be administered at 4-year institutions, and it contains questions relevant to all respondents as well questions specifically for those who transferred to the institution.

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS (additional charge)**

Institutions have the option of adding up to 20 multiple-choice questions and/or 5 open-ended questions of specific local interest at the end of the questionnaire. These are institution specific questions that you will create, or adopt as part of a consortium.

If you choose to ask additional questions, you will want to set aside sufficient time to draft, pilot test, and incorporate your additional questions into the administration of the DLE survey. Additionally, it is important to consult with your local IRB. Your campus may require you to submit these questions for



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their review and approval. If your campus believes an additional question to be of a sensitive nature, you must submit that question to CIRP for our consideration at least one month in advance of your survey administration. For more information, please see [Using Additional Questions](#).

### **GROUP CODES**

Group codes are breakout groups that permit you to compare specific subgroups of your student sample. These breakout groups could be used to identify students in different colleges, majors, residence halls, or academic programs on your campus. Group codes allow you to identify up to 190 unique subgroups of students. For more information on adding group codes to the survey, please see [Using Group Codes](#).

### **EDITING THE WELCOME AND THANK YOU PAGES (free)**

You can customize the Welcome and Thank You pages with a message and/or the logo from your institution. Using an institutional logo reinforces the idea that individual colleges and universities administer the CIRP DLE Survey. If you do not customize the Welcome/Thank You page text or graphic, a generic version of the webpages will be used. You can preview these pages and download the text to edit on our website [http://heri.ucla.edu/dleoverview.php - forms](http://heri.ucla.edu/dleoverview.php-forms).

### **EMAILING INVITATIONS AND REMINDERS**

Your students will be invited to participate in the survey via an email that includes the following: 1) a short description of the survey project, 2) required information concerning human subjects, 3) information on how to opt out of the survey, and 4) a URL with which to access the web-based questionnaire. CIRP provides [templates for invitations and reminder emails](#), but campuses will need to customize all their messages.

#### *CIRP-ADMINISTERED EMAILS (additional charge)*

During the registration process, campuses choose the date that CIRP will send the invitation email to students as well as reminders to non-respondents who have not opted out of future mailings. Generic text for these emails is supplied, but should be edited to best suit your institution. Sections of the emails that cannot be edited are those required for human subjects approval at UCLA.

One of the advantages of this email option is that your institution does not need to send and monitor emails. More importantly, having CIRP administer the emails takes your institution “out of the loop.” By having CIRP administer the survey your institution is further removed from any perceived intervention.

If you elect to have CIRP manage your email distribution, you will need to provide us with the email address for each student in your sample. The specifications for this file are provided during the customization process. CIRP does not use the email addresses you provide for any other purposes.



### *SCHOOL-MANAGED DISTRIBUTION*

Schools may elect to send the notification emails on their own or administer in a proctored setting, in which case CIRP will supply a URL specific to each school. If you elect to use unique hyperlinks associated with Student IDs, CIRP will supply a file with the unique URLs. The appropriate campus representative then merges the URL(s) within their own system to create invitation and reminder emails and to monitor survey responses.

### **PRE-POPULATE STUDENT ID**

Those institutions opting to have HERI manage email communications will provide HERI with the email addresses and names (first name, last name) of all students to be surveyed. Institutions may elect to include student IDs as well. If an institution has provided Student IDs for HERI- managed distribution or has elected to use unique hyperlinks associated with Student IDs, the student information provided (Name, email address, Student ID) will be pre-populated into the survey form. For more information please see [Student Identifiers](#).

## **Preparing to Administer the Survey**

### **Linking the DLE Survey with Other Data**

In addition to studying a wide variety of issues based solely on data from the DLE survey, it is also possible to use these data to build a comprehensive database using other institutional data (e.g., registrar, admissions, or financial aid data) or by linking to other CIRP surveys (such as the CIRP Freshman Survey, the Your First College Year survey (YFCY) or the College Senior Survey) to create a longitudinal database. In order to do studies based on data other than those found on the DLE Survey, it is necessary to be able to link these different data together. Thus, to maximize the utility of these data for institutional research purposes, we suggest that you encourage students to provide their student ID numbers on the first page of the survey. Note that if a student fails to provide an ID number when he or she completes the survey instrument, you will not be able to merge the DLE Survey data with data from other campus files.

### **Anti-Spam Procedures**

To ensure delivery of your emails to your students, you will want to instruct your institution's Information Technology department to add the email address provided below to their approved senders list. This should allow emails coming from HERI's email distribution service to pass through the bulk or junk mail screening processes. Failure to do this may result in email being routed directly to bulk or junk email folders without ever reaching the intended survey respondents, and consequently affecting your survey response rate. For specific information to provide to your IT department, see [Anti-Spam Guidelines](#).

### **Pre-Contact**

In order to maximize your response rate, we suggest that you communicate with your students a week



before the first email is to be sent out, introducing the survey and asking them to watch their email for the invitation. Survey methodology research indicates that pre-notifications can substantially increase your response rate.

### **Inviting Your Students to Participate**

It is important to note that DLE survey participation is voluntary. **All students who receive the DLE Survey instrument must be informed that this is a voluntary survey.**

Please note that *compulsory participation in research is a violation of federal regulations*. Also, some campuses may consider people under 18 to be minors. If this is the case on your campus, and if your DLE survey sample includes students under 18, you may need to seek permission from these students' parents prior to survey administration.

### **Incentives**

Incentives can prove to be an effective means of increasing survey response rates. Gift certificates to the campus bookstore, food, money, or an automatic entry into some type of raffle or lottery are all possibilities. If you are considering using incentives in your survey administration, please refer to [Encouraging Participation in CIRP Surveys](#) for important information on structuring your incentive strategy.

### **Confidentiality**

The DLE survey collects personal identifiers and potentially sensitive demographic data. Student responses to these survey items make it possible to link DLE survey data with data from several sources such as other CIRP surveys (e.g., TFS, YFCY and CSS), your campus registrar's office, other nationwide assessment instruments, and local assessment efforts.

**Students' right to confidentiality as human research subjects must remain a priority throughout the administration of the DLE survey.** Please inform your students that the questionnaires are handled in a confidential and professional manner. For more information regarding confidentiality and privacy, please see [Confidentiality and Privacy](#).

## **Institutional Review Board Approval**

Although there are common federal guidelines for the use of human subjects in research, procedures may vary from campus to campus. Therefore it is critical for you to familiarize yourself with your institution's human subjects guidelines. CIRP receives its human subjects approval from the UCLA North General Institutional Review Board (NGIRB) which requires that an appropriate college official certify that:

1. Your institution will abide by and comply with the CIRP administration procedures as





- approved by UCLA's IRB.
2. Your campus has determined if local IRB approval is required, and
  3. If local IRB approval of this research is required on your campus, you will administer the survey only after you have received local IRB approval.

You further agree to the following statement:

*The Higher Education Research Institute provides data files to assist institutional research activities. By receiving this data file, we agree that these data will be used only for statistical analyses and reporting of aggregated information, and not for the investigation of specific individuals. In affirming this agreement, we give assurance that use of these data will conform to widely accepted standards of practice and legal restrictions that are intended to protect the confidentiality of research subjects. We also give assurance that no survey respondent will be sanctioned based on any answer provided in the 2015 Diverse Learning Environments Survey.*

Compliance with the above statements is obtained by completing the Research Approval Form. **You will not be able to receive any data or reports until the Research Approval Form is completed.**

Many campuses have found that the application that CIRP submits to the UCLA IRB is very useful in discussions with their own local IRBs. If you would like to obtain a copy of our approved application, please contact us.

Campus IRBs vary widely in their response time to a request for approvals, ranging from a few days to several weeks. We suggest that you begin this process as soon as possible.

## **After Administration**

### **Administration Report Form (ARF) Online Survey**

The ARF is a short web-based survey that inquires about specific institutional information needed to process your completed DLE surveys and to prepare your institutional reports.

We will send the primary contact an email with a link to the 2015 ARF Survey shortly after the final processing cut-off date (June 30, 2015). Please note: We may be unable to process your institution's data until we receive the completed ARF. If we do not receive it, your data may not be included in the comparison groups for the national data and we cannot guarantee that you will receive your deliverables in a timely fashion.

### **Reports and Data Files**

HERI provides participating institutions with several reports that allow comparison of student responses. For more information, please refer to [Data and Reporting](#).





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## **Questions and Further Information**

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