Surveys as a Data Collection Method

IRB Guidance

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All surveys implemented at NC State must adhere to the NC State University Regulation 01.25.17 and it's standard operating procedures including registering the survey. This process is not managed by the NC State IRB office, and IRB approval is NOT permission to implement your survey on NC State's campus.

A broad definition for survey research includes measurement procedures that involve asking questions of people. A survey can range in format from a short questionnaire to an intensive in-depth survey. There are multiple types of survey modes and each mode reaches different participants and has different ethical and regulatory issues to address throughout design and implementation.

Is the survey method the "right" data collection method to use in answering your research question? As in, is it the best way to reach your participants and collect the data you need to answer your research question? If so, this guidance will help you navigate the research design process as related to the IRB regarding ethical practices and compliance.

Survey Design

Mode of Delivery

What is the proper mode of survey delivery to answer your research question and to get the information you need from your research participants? Think about your target population, sampling frame, and likely response rates. You will need to articulate in your IRB application, see Appendix A.

- The target population in your research and why targeting them answers your research questions.
- What your sampling frames are and how you have access to them, what information they include, how they are stored, how they are destroyed, and if you are using any information from the sampling frame as data for research or if you are just using the frame to identify possible participants.
- The likely number of participants and our expected response rate/N. You can use a range. This information is needed because the number of people targeted and likely respondents is considered in the review process because it affects the risks/benefits ratio.
- What mode of survey implementation is employed and all of the steps needed to enact that mode. See below for more details.

Identifying Information

- Determining if the survey is anonymous, directly identifiable, or indirectly identifiable.
- What directly or indirectly identifiable information is collected on the survey and why is it needed to answer the research question or carry out the research project?
- Use the IRB's identifiable datasets guidance (Word document) to determine the nature of identifiability in your survey.
- Decide if your survey can be anonymous or if your survey has to be directly identifiable or indirectly identifiable.

    - Reminder, If **you** or someone else at any point in time, are able to link participant identity to their data, the survey is **NOT anonymous**. This includes N size, triangulation of data points within the survey, triangulation of data sources, access to information, researcher expertise, technology employed, and uniqueness of data shared.
- Adding an optional section on your survey for participants to add their contact information (or other identifying information like username/role/job title and place of employment) makes your survey identifiable.
    - Instead, you can collect contact information on a separate survey without it connecting to participant responses. At the end of the research survey, simply provide a link that connects your participants to a separate un-linkable site/survey that allows them to input their contact information, names, and or codes for payment.

Physical Surveys

These are surveys that are physically handled by the participant (like paper) in face-to-face situations. Typically, these are distributed by the researcher (or a third party) to participants for completion and collected from participants in one setting.

Select locations and context where people can freely consent to taking the survey and where they can do so privately.

- Think about the location and context where participants will be taking the survey, is it private? Do the questions warrant a private location? Will there be unspoken pressure to participate? Are people sitting next to each other when they complete it? This must be addressed in the IRB application. See Appendix A of this guidance for more details.

Plan ways to collect the completed surveys from the participants that protects their anonymity or confidentiality.

- Will you use sealed envelopes, sending through the mail, do participants pass it to each other to turn it in or do they drop it in a box that only the researcher can access? Is it a small N and are people using different color pens where you can easily identify who was blue and who was pink? Are the consent forms with names directly attached to the surveys or are they separate? This must be addressed in the IRB application. See Appendix A of this guidance.
    - For example, giving a survey about job satisfaction to a group of teachers during a staff meeting might
        - Not be private as teachers could inadvertently see how their colleagues are rating questions
        - Provide social pressure to complete the survey
        - Imply it is a job requirement
- Physical surveys sent and received using mail services
    - Provide a return envelope with the proper address and postage.

- If trying to have the survey remain anonymous, tell participants not to write a return address on the envelope and not to write any identifying information on the survey.

Synchronous Mediums
Surveys completed by both researcher and participant when the researcher reads survey questions aloud to the participant and writes down/inputs responses

In-Person Completion Using Paper or Device
- These surveys are never anonymous because you as the researcher are directly hearing their responses. They can be considered de-identified. See the identifiable data sets guidance for details regarding the nature of identifiability.
    - Discuss the devices used for data input. We suggest using NC State University devices and not personal devices. Please see the data security guidance about devices here.
    - Discuss storage, transfer, and disposition of hardcopy papers in your IRB application.

Via Phone
- Discuss how the proper participant will be identified and verified. Discuss how you will ensure they are in a private location if needed.
- Discuss recording of data as the participant answers questions (paper or electronic) in your IRB application.
- Discuss what identifiable information is written down (such as phone number) in your IRB application.

Via Digital Conferencing
- Because this is a survey and not an interview or focus group, you will not need to video record the session. This is because you do not need the additional information that comes from body language etc. If you find you need that information, a survey is not the proper data collection method.
- Follow all suggestions in the section above about phone use.

Online Surveys
Online surveys or internet surveys are the most popular method for implementing survey research. Researchers send out the survey using survey software that allows respondents to complete the survey whenever they choose. The completed survey information is then compiled "behind the scenes" where the researcher can access, clean, and analyze it.

- Online Survey Platform: Use Qualtrics: http://www.qualtrics.com/
    - As an NC State University person, it is free for you to use. It is more reliable, more secure, and seemingly more legitimate for your participants than all other survey tools available.

    - If you want your survey to be anonymous, make sure to check the settings and ensure you are not recording any kind of identifying information like IP addresses.
        - Make sure the link type (generic or unique) that you are sending to your participants matches your confidentiality/anonymity plans.
- You cannot collect survey data via email. This means you cannot have survey participants send you completed surveys via email.
- Use of NC State University Google Drive - you can use NC State University's Google Forms and Google Drive to collect survey data.
- Other survey platforms used must be at least as secure as Qualtrics - please work with your departmental IT person regarding use of these platforms. Additionally, find out your expectations and responsibilities regarding software use from NC State University OIT.
- Please see the section regarding survey panels in this guidance.

Third Party Survey Implementation

Third party distribution and collection are situations where the researcher has someone besides the researcher distribute and collect the surveys.

- Make sure the third party does not have any real or perceived authority over the participants.
- Provide the IRB with any instructions that the third parties will use regarding survey implementation.
- Provide the IRB with any information regarding training that third parties are expected to take regarding survey administration (in some cases, this may include researcher training the third party, the third party completing online CITI training, etc.).
- Describe how the surveys get from the third party to the researcher (whether it's the individual surveys or the aggregated data, the role (if any) of the third party in cleaning the data, etc.).

Survey Instrument Development

Questions and Scales

- All response options on your survey should match the question's prompt. For example, If the question is a yes/no question, the responses should not be a scale.
- Make sure the questions you are asking, and their subsequent scales, actually measure what you are trying to measure. Testing your survey with peers via a feasibility study or completing a pilot study will help this come to fruition.
- The IRB suggests completing a feasibility study with peers and a pilot study with people in your target population in order to add validity to your survey. Please find IRB guidance regarding feasibility work and pilot studies as some require IRB review/approval before implementation.
    - You can submit pilot studies as an IRB protocol application. As the pilot changes and evolves into a survey you will implement on a larger scale, you can submit an amendment in the IRB system for approval.

- If you are allowing qualitative responses in your survey and you want to maintain anonymity, add a reminder sentence in the question prompt about not sharing unique or identifiable information.
- Demographics information should only collect what information you need to answer the posed research question. Remember, triangulating demographics is one of the easiest ways to reidentify participants.
    - Your demographics questions should be relevant to your research question and inclusive. The way you ask a demographics question should not alienate participants. If your research is studying a particular group, then the language of demographics used should be inclusive of all identities in that group or allow for manual input.

Universal Design

Universal design your survey questions and scales so that the survey is accessible to all participants by:

- Use font typefaces and sizing compatible with screen readers and supportive of low and no vision participants, such as a San serif size 12-point font (e.g., Arial)
- Use high contrast colors
- Embed alternative survey question formats that do not require hearing or vision unless that it is a requirement for the study
- Allow for navigation of survey questions and data entry that:
    - Do not require the use of one's hands (e.g., individuals can navigate the survey with an accessibility tool such as a sip-and-puff device)
    - Indicate survey progress and amount of survey questions left to do (e.g. 2/10 questions complete)
- Do not use inaccessibly formatted survey questions such as:
    - "Drag and drop" and sorting questions if there is not an accessible alternative
    - Tables without tagging
    - Images and charts without alt-text
    - Videos without transcription
- Embed alternative survey question formats such as:
    - Data sonification
    - Braille
- Use a free online readability checker to ensure that your survey avoids jargon and is written at an appropriate reading level.

Risks to Participants from the Survey Design

See the NC State IRB guidance document on Risks and Benefits.

- Identifiable Nature of the Data - the identifiable nature of the survey is directly related to increasing risks to participants and is considered during the IRB review process.

Location of Survey Implementation

The location of survey implementation matters. Where the participant physically completes the survey and who else has access to the space they are in when completing it,

who can directly see responses, or who has access to devices used affects the IRB considerations regarding privacy.

- For example, if you are doing research on relationship violence, you would not want the participant completing the survey in a space where the person they are in a relationship with could see/hear/read their responses as this may put the participant at physical risk.
- For example, if you are doing workplace research about discrimination in the workplace, you would not ask the participant to answer questions about their discriminatory experiences with their supervisor while the participant is in a room where the supervisor can hear through the walls, read over their shoulder, access their computer remotely or directly.

Please also review the Data Management and Security section of this document.

Question Sensitivity

If the questions are sensitive or triggering, this may increase risk to participants and needs to be mitigated. Examples of these kinds of questions include:

- Asking about illegal behavior such as drug use, underage drinking, assault, illegal hunting practices, etc.
- Asking questions that would lead the researcher to have to report the participant. This can include animal abuse, Title IX reporting, child abuse, elder abuse, etc. These reporting obligations are usually linked to researcher responsibilities and roles.
- Asking questions that reveal private behavior such as sexual preferences and experiences, relationship violence, counterproductive work behavior, perceptions of supervisors or peers, etc.
- Asking questions that may put someone at risk due to their status such as asking people in the military about their sexual identity.

Mitigating Risks when the Data is Sensitive or Triggering

- Where triggering questions arise, at the bottom of each survey page and at the end of the survey, provide information about resources and numbers to call for help.
- Requesting a waiver of signed consent so that the participants name is not directly on a consent for or linked to data that could violate their expectations of confidentiality and privacy and lead to other risks.
- Suggest taking the survey in a private location (for example, not at work, not at the library, not at a communal computer, not during class).
- Suggest taking the survey on a device with which others do not have access.
- Suggest taking the survey using a browser in incognito/private mode before starting the survey or deleting cookies and histories once the survey is completed.
- If the researcher has real or perceived power over the participants, make sure someone else sends the recruitment email or makes the announcement or is the contact if there is an issue.
- Throughout the survey, remind participants that if they want to stop, they can simply close the browser or stop answering questions.

- In the recruitment and consent form, describe what the survey is about so participants know what to expect.

Risks Once Survey is Completed and Data About the Participant is in Existence

Once a participant completes a survey, there is now data in existence about them that did not exist before. If this data is sensitive and identifiable, there are risks to participants as noted in the NC State IRB guidance on risks and benefits. The risks associated with this data only exist because of your research and as a result, the data needs to be protected and the participant needs to be aware of this protection. Please see the data security and management and section of this document.

Data Identifiability

- The identifiable nature of the survey is directly related to increasing risks to participants and is considered during the IRB review process.

Data Sensitivity Classification

- Purple Data: Qualitative data that should be treated as "purple" data include data that will likely lead to arrest, detention, incarceration, deportation, physical injury, or death of both primary and third-party participants. Additional access and handling requirements are required for Ultra-sensitive data because it may be impossible to repair damage caused by its unauthorized disclosure.
- Red Data: Qualitative data that should be treated as "red" data include information that could lead to persecution, harassment or retaliation, information that may or likely will irreparably harm relationships, information that will likely lead to stigmatization where physical or psychological harm may occur as a result of both primary and third party participants, or any data where unauthorized disclosure or loss poses a high risk or impact to all human subjects.
- Surveys that are completely anonymous that ask sensitive questions and the survey is taken in a private location using a browser in incognito mode have vastly different risks than identifiable surveys asking the same questions. The identifiable nature of the survey has a direct impact on review level and requirements for risk mitigation through research design.

Additional Issues Related to Target Populations

Minors

When targeting minors for survey completion, you will need to make sure:

- That they have parental/guardian permission or you need to qualify for a waiver of consent.
- That if the survey is also done as a required course assignment, that you have parent/guardian permission and minor assent to use the students FERPA data (the required course survey) for research purposes. This is different from parent/guardian permission and minor assent to be in research.
- There are special considerations for Minors attending Post-Secondary Institutions

- When completing surveys with minors in a group setting, turning in a consent form at all (whether the answer is yes or no) should get the minors the same incentive.
- If the parent or guardian said no to their student being in the study, you should provide the student with an alternative activity to complete that is not used for data and they should receive the same incentive as others.
- Review the NC State regulation for programs with minors.

Individuals Above the Age of 65

When targeting people who are 65+ you will need to make sure:

- That the method of implementation is one they can use and access (some 65+ may have a hard time with technology).
- That the font for the survey is larger and easier to read for those people who are 65+ with vision impairment.
- That if compensation is given for completion, participants have the contact information for the researchers (specifically phone numbers and email addresses). Special note, the IRB office receives most complaints regarding survey completion and compensation from this population. Ensuring clear contact information for researchers and timelines regarding compensation help clarify issues for the participants of this demographic.

Contextual Vulnerability

Participants may also be contextually vulnerable based on the research question and study design. As a result, there may be population specific risks that need to be addressed on an individual study basis.

Research Design

Recruitment

Physical Recruitment

- Where are the flyers posted? What information is on the flyers? Is there a QR code or a pull tab with survey information in it?
  - Will the participant actually take the information down based on what the flyer states or does it put the participant in a revealing or embarrassing position to take the information from the flyer or have the flyer on their person?

Via E-mail

- If the survey is sensitive in nature, you do not want the targeted recruitment to call out participants as to why they are targeted and then have that permanent link in their email.
  - For example, the subject line *should not say* "You are receiving this survey opportunity because you are a person who is undocumented and residing in the US" or "You are receiving this survey because you have recently been released from rehabilitation for alcohol abuse"

- In the recruitment message, sometimes the link in text doesn't work and you would benefit from also providing the URL.

Via Social Media Posting

- Do not post the link to a survey on individual social media profiles. For example, don't find someone's social media profile and post a comment about the survey or "@" them to call attention to the survey. Instead, post a general announcement on social media pages that target participants would want to go to normally.
  - We suggest using a study specific social media profile and not your personal profile as this adds legitimacy to the survey and privacy to your personal accounts.
  - Please also review the survey panels section of this document.

Informed Consent, Parental Permission, and Assent

Please review the IRB's guidance and templates for informed consent found on the IRB website.

- For non-exempt research, if the signature on the informed consent form is the only link connecting the person's identity to the survey, please request a waiver of signed consent in the IRB system for all non-exempt research. You do not need to make this request for research that qualifies for exemption.
- For non-exempt research, if the information on the consent form for the survey is sensitive and being associated with the study would increase risk to participants, please request a waiver of signed consent in the IRB system. You do not need to make this request for research that qualifies for exemption.

Physical Consent/Permission/Assent

- Decide if this consent form needs to be attached to the survey or if it can be completed and turned in separately from the survey or if it can just be a page of the consent with no signature.
- Can the information or writing utensil used on the paper informed consent be compared with the completed survey to re-identify the participant?

Online Consent/Permission/Assent

- You should make the first page of the survey, the consent information.
- Click "Yes" or "No" to consent
  - In many surveys, you can "click to consent". This means that informed consent is handled online and no signatures are necessary and you requested a "waiver of SIGNED consent" for non-exempt research.
    - To do this, you would make the first page of the survey the "consent form," containing necessary consent information.
    - Instead of having a line for signatures or typing out a name at the end of the form, it would direct participants to click, "I agree." If they

agree to participate, they are then taken to the next page or routed to the survey.

- Another option to obtain consent is to include informed consent information in a recruitment email alerting potential participants to your study. In this method, necessary consent information would be included in the email body, with instructions to "click the URL below to go to the survey" if participants agree to participate.
    - If you do not request a waiver of signed consent, provide a space for the participant to type their name on the consent form to take the survey.
    - If those taking the survey are minors, you can have a space on the assent form for the Parent/Guardian to affirm permission for the minor to complete the study. This is allowable in context specific studies.

Compensation for Survey Completion

Compensation must be clearly articulated in the recruitment (not emphasized) and in the consent form. Participants must know what they get compensated for, how they receive their compensation, and what might make them lose compensation (such as attention checks or completing the survey in 30 seconds total).

Physical Compensation

- Do participants get handed physical compensation at the moment they turn in their survey?
- Do participants get mailed the compensation a few days after the survey is completed?

Compensation Given Online

- Keeping the survey anonymous and distributing compensation
    - At the end of a survey, have a statement about compensation with a link to a different survey where the participants can provide their information. That way there are no direct identifiers on the actual survey data and they are separate.
    - The survey is identifiable and collecting information for compensation
        - You can collect the identifying information directly on the survey to distribute compensation.

Data Security and Management

If your survey is both identifiable and asks questions that generate red or purple data, a data access and security plan (DASP) is required. The IRB may also require you to seek a Certificate of Confidentiality if the study is health related.

If your survey is identifiable and sensitive in nature, your study may require a data access and security plan (DASP). If your survey is completely anonymous and sensitive in nature, your study will be reviewed via administrative procedures likely resulting in an exemption determination. Due to the sensitive nature of the survey, you will be required

to tell participants to take the survey in a private location, using a private device, with their browser set to incognito/private mode prior to taking the survey.

Physical Survey Data Management

- How are you collecting, transferring, storing and disposing of the surveys that you have collected once the data is synthesized? This is especially important if the content of the surveys is not harmless and if the surveys are identifiable
    - Suggestion and occasionally required based on sensitivity of data: In recruitment messages, in consent forms, and in physical set up for data collection, participants should be told that they need to or will be taking the survey in a private location.

Online Survey Data Management

- Suggestions that are occasionally required based on sensitivity of data:
    - In recruitment emails with links, announcements, and in consent forms, tell participants to take the survey in a private location.
    - In recruitment emails with links, announcements, consent forms, tell participants to take the survey using a web browser in incognito/private mode or to delete their cookies and history once the participant has completed the web survey.

- Discuss how you will compile, transfer, and/or manage data from the survey.
    - How are you transferring data from one place to another?
    - Are you using encrypted software?

- Do you plan to retain data indefinitely or destroy it after a period of time (NOT earlier than 3 years after the end of the study)?
    - If you will retain it, will you strip of any identifying information?
    - If you are retaining it longer than 3 years, why?

- If using a survey platform, make sure that the settings in the platform are properly set and that you know what information the survey platform collects aside from your questions. This must be articulated in the consent and incorporated into your IRB application or data management plan.
    - If using a survey panel make sure that you know what information the survey platform collects aside from your questions. This must be articulated in the consent and incorporated into your IRB application or data management plan.

Specialized Research Scenarios

Screening Activities

- When the information collected during screening IS NOT used as data for the proposed research, IRB approval is not required for this activity. However, it is a best practice to have it reviewed by the IRB.

    - In your IRB application you must clearly state that the screening material will NOT be used as data for research. See the Appendix A for details.
- When the information collected during screening IS used as data for the proposed research, the IRB will need to review and approve this.
    - You need to be clear in the IRB application and all supplemental materials that the screening information is used as data for the research project.

Evaluation Activities

When Research and Evaluation Overlap in Implementation of a Survey:

- Participants need to know what is required as a part of evaluation and what is voluntary as a part of research. This means you will need to be clear in the consent and recruitment regarding the differences.
    - You can use the language from this comparison chart between research and assessment, evaluation, QA, QI guidance in your IRB application and supplemental materials to match your study.
    - If you as the researcher are only completing evaluation activities and you will never use the information from the evaluation activities as research data contributing to generalizable knowledge, then you do not need IRB approval.
        - If you ever plan on using the information to contribute to generalizable knowledge like publication or presentation at a conference etc., you will need IRB approval before the survey recruitment begins.
        - If you are only completing evaluation activities for someone else, and that someone else plans on using the information from the evaluation activities as data for research, that someone else needs to get IRB approval from their appropriate IRB and ethically should do so before the survey recruitment begins.

Applicable Laws

Based on your target population, target population location, your individual role and responsibilities, and the additional reasons for data collection, your survey may be subject to additional laws.

- If you are a faculty member or a teacher and you are implementing a survey as a part of a course (such as evaluation or quiz) and your students are required to take it, the information on the survey is subject to FERPA. Please see the IRB unit standard on data subject to FERPA.
- If you are a medical provider or work in one of NC State university's "covered entities" and you are implementing a survey where the survey will become a part of the participants medical record, your survey is likely subject to HIPAA. Please see the IRB unit standard for HIPAA.
- If your participants are located in the EEA at the time of survey completion, your survey is subject to the GDPR. Please see the IRB guidance for data subject to the GDPR.
    - If your survey will reach people that reside in one of the countries within the EEA, your survey is subject to the GDPR.

    - If you add a statement or a screener question to your survey that restricts eligibility to people only residing in the U.S, then your study is not subject to the GDPR.
- If your participants are located in California at the time of survey completion, your survey is subjected to the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA). Please follow the IRB guidance for data subject to the GDPR and your survey will be in compliance with this law.
    - If your survey will reach people that reside in CA, your survey is subject to the CCPA and if you follow the guidance regarding the GDPR, that will take care of it.
    - If you add a statement or a screener question to your survey that restricts eligibility to people only residing outside of CA, then your study is not subject to the CCPA.

Online Survey Panels

Online panels are crowdsourcing platforms used to recruit human subjects for online research. Researchers are able to, for a fee, post their recruitment, consent, and survey on the panel platform which has a variable number of users. Users who qualify are able to take the researcher's survey and are compensated at a rate decided jointly by the researcher and the platform. Some platforms have payment minimums and participation number guarantee, while others do not. Panels are often seen by researchers as reliable and cost-effective sources of high-quality, representative data.

- **Why would you want to use an online panel?**
  There are a number of advantages to employing an online panel. Panels source data from a larger participant pool than is typical for researchers to have access to through their local community. For more niche or targeted populations for research, panels assist researchers in locating a greater N of the ideal participant they are looking for. A panel can also help qualitative researchers enrich their data with quantitative stats and can be a particular boon for academic researchers limited by the federal regulations for human subjects research that does not allow targeting students for research unless the research question seeks to develop knowledge related to a student's experience.

  An online panel format allows research to occur without the additional scaffolding and logistics that is needed for in-person research. The platform, moreover, facilitates data collection on sensitive and personal topics with greater ease than in-person research due to participants' perceptions of anonymity and platform protections that researchers can enable to reduce the number of identifiers collected from participants resulting in what, some researchers feel, is data with greater integrity.

  Many humanities and social science fields rely on online panels to facilitate their research. Data collected on the survey panel platform often allows researchers to

replicate or cross-compare data with other published research and to generate dialogue with scholars in their respective field. A particular strength of online panels is that the data collected can often be re-used for future research in ways that in-person research data can be more difficult.

- **Limitations of online panels**
  The online panel platform is not ideal for all populations and topics of research. There is limited diversity across panel platforms with the typical online survey panelist being a white, college educated individual. Some panel platforms don't verify participants and struggle to control bots while others, due to their low wages, develop and encourage semi-professional survey-takers and bias participant selection, all phenomena that can corrupt a researcher's data.

  The research design of a panel survey cannot depend on a stable environment across participants. Interactive research experiments are harder, but not impossible, on these platforms designed to function as a one-stage, asynchronous survey. To conduct multiple stages, each stage must be an individual study where the participants must be re-invited and re-consented to each subsequent task of a study, including basic tasks. For example, in an online version of the Iowa Gambling Test (IGT) a measure of psychological decision making, participants are dealt 4 decks of cards. Some of the decks have a greater proportion of advantageous cards than others. To play the game, participants must select 1 card from one of the 4 decks with a typical repetition rate of between 50 and 200 draws. On most online survey platforms, participants often have to be re-invited and re-consented after each card drawing.

  Not all online panels are openly accessible to all researchers. Some survey panels are only available to a particular field and department at a university. Other panels are available to all paying researchers but may, given their panelist members, mean that the survey data collected on the platform might be subject to additional compliance laws such as the General Data Protection Regulation (hereafter, GDPR). The GDPR applies to any individual whose data is collected while the person resides in the European Economic Area (hereafter, EEA) regardless of their citizenship status. GDPR requires that certain information be provided to the participant, including additional verbiage in the informed consent document. Please review the NC State IRB guidance on the GDPR for further details.

- **How do online panels work?**
  Each panel functions slightly differently, as you'll see below, but the gist is that the researcher contacts the platform, outlines desired participant numbers and inclusion and exclusion criteria, provides recruitment, consent, and survey material to the platform or links out to the material, and pays a fee to the platform. The platform then facilitates recruitment of qualified participants to complete the surveys. In some cases, the platform pays participants directly from the upfront

fee the researcher paid the panel; in others, the researcher pays participants individually through the platform after a participant has submitted a survey and the data has been verified for integrity.

- **Which panel should I use?**
  There are many options to choose from. The NC State IRB does not have a preference which one you select. Consult with your colleagues on which panel might be best for you. Here's a brief overview of four popular survey panels NC State researchers typically use:

    - **Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk)**
        - **Service Overview**
            - **Target Researchers:** Both academic researchers and commercial companies.
            - **Platform Fees:** Researchers pay a task fee to workers; no separate platform use fee for the basic service.
        - **Panel Details**
            - **Population:** 500,000+ claimed users, though only about 7,500 are verified (per 2015 data).
            - **Age:** 88% are between 18 and 49 years old.
            - **Gender:** 51% male-identified, 49% female-identified.
            - **Race:** 77% white.
            - **Education:** 87% have attended or graduated from college.
            - **Income:** 74% have a household income of $75k or less (lower than the US average).
            - **Geographic Reach:** US and non-US panels available.
        - **Key Features**
            - **Strengths:** Widely used in social sciences and very inexpensive (often less than half the US minimum wage).

- **Drawbacks:** Financial exploitation of participants; high risk of professional survey-takers and survey bots affecting data quality.
- **Important Note:** The worker algorithm is unpublished (demographics are questionable). At NC State, all MTurk contracts must be processed through sps@ncsu.edu before IRB approval.

MTurk caters towards both market and academic researchers. This platform is typically the cheapest with comparable, replicable, and publishable data results. The platform offers researchers a great deal of latitude in survey design and compensation with no minimum thresholds for either. MTurk researchers can, for an additional fee, pay to filter MTurk workers to include only those with a high survey acceptance rate. MTurk workers must state during their registration that they are at least 18 years old to participate in surveys.

After participants register, they can search for recruitment messages (i.e., HITs) that appeal to them and that the participant qualifies for. The consent and survey can be embedded in Amazon's platform or linked out to a site such as Qualtrics. Hosting an MTurk survey on Amazon allows the company to retain participants' survey data with identifiable information of the participant on the survey. Embedding a survey on Qualtrics for MTurk workers to access allows researchers to retain sole access and control over the survey data and limits the amount of participant identifiers that are being used and shared in the research process, serving as a privacy protection for participants. This should not, however, be considered anonymous survey data because an Amazon MTurk WorkerID is the same alphanumeric code of a Worker's personal Amazon shopper account (Lease et al, 2013). Personally identifiable information such as name, profile picture, recent purchases, and all MTurk tasks performed (though not the survey responses themselves) are all included on individual Amazon profile pages so if the researcher is collecting or accessing MTurk IDs, the survey data is not anonymous (ibid).

As you design your survey, please review MTurk's most current terms of use, user guidance, and participation agreement to ensure that what you state in your recruitment and consent materials matches MTurk's own policies and procedures. The MTurk clickwrap agreement is also not pre-approved, so please consult with the NC State Department of Software and Licensing prior to IRB approval.

The majority of complaints that the IRB receives regarding online survey completion come from participants and researchers using MTurk. The IRB suggests that if using MTurk you are clear about compensation restrictions, include attention checks, communicate expectations of time to completion, and set the eligibility criteria for MTurk Workers at a high rating such as Master Workers. The IRB also suggests that unless international populations are needed, that researchers require only US participants be eligible when MTurk is used as this limits ethical issues and applications of international law.

- **Academic Prolific (Prolific or ProA)**
  - **Service Overview**
    - **Target Researchers:** Specifically geared toward academic researchers.
    - **Platform Fees:** Researchers pay a platform use fee plus a mandatory hourly worker minimum.
  - **Panel Details**
    - **Population:** 75,000 verified panelists.
    - **Age:** 72.95% are between 20 and 40 years old.
    - **Gender:** 42.57% male-identified, 57.43% female-identified.
    - **Race:** 72% white.
    - **Education:** Most have attended or graduated from college.
    - **Geographic Reach:** Predominantly international. Over 50% of panelists are from the UK or GDPR member states, though US-based filters are available.
  - **Key Features:**
    - **Strengths:** High task "nativity" (quality) due to better pay. All participants are verified, which eliminates survey bots. It features a pre-approved NC State clickwrap.
    - **Drawbacks:** More expensive than MTurk. GDPR regulations likely apply (and EU AI Act if AI will be used as part of the research design), which adds complexity to IRB applications and researcher obligations.
    - **Important Note:** The platform allows users under 18 to register; you must explicitly set exclusion criteria to avoid minors if they are not part of your study.

Prolific is a platform exclusively dedicated towards academic and scientific researchers. Panelists from the platform are invited to a survey only if they qualify. The platform demands transparency with participants that the surveys are for research, disclosure of how much the minimum hourly wage is for the survey, and how much time it will take participants. The platform also validates the researcher's time estimate for a survey with actual participant responses so that participants are not underpaid. Researchers can on this platform offer additional bonus payments to participants beyond the initial rate as an incentive and set the parameters within the survey which will register on the platform. The bulk of Prolific users are outside of the United States, adding contextual diversity to the data pool.

The Prolific platform allows a researcher to filter participants through survey acceptance scores and to pre-screen participants, but you do have to pay for the pre-screening activity. Pre-screening can filter individuals out from surveys if prior survey activity would mess with future survey results. Researchers can also block participants from multiple submissions. At the same time, the platform allows researchers to create a list of individuals that they would like to invite for future studies with no indication to the participant that the researcher. For longitudinal studies, the researcher can indicate that the study is a simultaneous experiment panel.

Prolific has a response rate comparable to MTurk with greater diversity and naivety of tasks (Peer et al, 2017). The researcher is not obligated on Prolific to pay participants who let the study time out, not complete it, or return the study, thus revoking their consent to be in research unlike some other platforms. Participants are paid through PayPal regardless of the participant's country of residence, with the platform using the daily exchange rate to pay participants the equivalent compensation amount in the participant's local currency. The cost of a Prolific panel varies widely and depends on the participant numbers, inclusion criteria, and complexity of survey questions and tasks.

A nice advantage of the Prolific platform is that the clickwrap agreement is fully approved by NC State Department of Software and Licensing and the platform fully compliant with GDPR law. You will, however, need to comply with the NC State IRB guidance on the GDPR for IRB approval.

- **Qualtrics Panels**
  - **Service Overview**
    - **Target Researchers:** Geared toward academic researchers.

- **Platform Fees:** Researchers pay the platform, and the platform handles participant payment. Costs increase as you add more specific criteria.

- **Panel Details**
  - **Population:** Size is not reported. Participants are sourced from 20 different panel platforms.
  - **Demographics:** Varies significantly because it is sourced from multiple providers; can be tailored to specific needs for a fee.
  - **Geographic Reach:** US and non-US panels available.

- **Key Features**
  - **Strengths:** Seamless integration with the Qualtrics Survey platform. Offers high geographic diversity and implied (though not always strictly evidenced) demographic diversity.
  - **Drawbacks:** High rates of survey bots can compromise data. It is generally the most expensive option.
  - **Important Note:** The more specific your participant criteria, the more expensive the panel becomes, as it is harder for the vendor to source your target population.

Qualtrics Panels solicit participants from a number of survey platforms to generate a robust participant pool for researchers, who can be market or academic researchers. There is no flat rate pricing for these panels as researchers must propose the project in entirety to receive a quote. The basic panel packages start between $1,500 and $5,000 depending on complexity and population targeted. The advantage of Qualtrics Panels is its library of stock questions, abundant survey set-up tutorials, and regular, rigorous data security both by Qualtrics and an independent third party. The Qualtrics Panels clickwrap agreement is not pre-approved, so please consult with the NC State Department of Software and Licensing prior to IRB approval.

- **SONA Systems**
  - **Service Overview**
    - **Target Researchers:** Exclusively for NC State University academic researchers within the Psychology Department.
    - **Platform Fees:** No cost to researchers.

  - **Panel Details**

- **Population:** Approximately 585 unique participants per semester; most are new to the panel.
- **Demographics:** Primarily undergraduate psychology students at NC State. Detailed demographics (age, race, education) are not tracked by the SONA platform.
- **Geographic Reach:** US-only (Local to NC State).

- **Key Features**
  - **Strengths:** Participants have a higher awareness of psychological concepts, which can add nuance to data. Reliability is high because participants are motivated by course credit.
  - **Drawbacks:** Very limited diversity; the pool is restricted to a specific student demographic.
  - **Access Note:** This is not an open-access panel. As of March 2020, only NC State psychology faculty/grad students can use SONA for data collection, and only NC State psychology students can be research participants.
  - **Important to Know:** Researchers wishing to use SONA Systems must be careful to explain in their IRB application why the SONA platform is the most appropriate method for answering their research question given the power dynamics and pre-existing relationships between faculty researchers and their students who comprise the panelist pool. Researcher convenience is not an acceptable justification. Researchers must also explain their plan for mitigating the potential for coercion into research and questionable participant consent in their SONA study.

SONA Systems is a limited access academic survey panel. It's free to use, but one must be a member of a SONA-participating academic department. Depending on the policies of the individual department utilizing SONA, participants can be students from the department, university students campus-wide, or a mix of students and community members. SONA panels provide researchers with panelists that have particular expertise in the department's subject area and the ability to do highly focused, subject specific, and nuanced research. The Psychology department is the only department at NC State with access to SONA Systems currently.

Appendix A: IRB Application Language to Use

Survey as Screening Tool
The survey will be used as a screening tool to find participants. Information from the survey <insert one: will OR will not> be used as part of the research data.

Survey as Sampling Frame
Potential participants will be identified via <name of sampling frame>. We have access to this sampling frame through <insert name of person/institution granting access> because <insert information> .We have permission to access this list because <insert reason for access> and use it for research participant recruitment. The information from this list <insert one: will OR will not> be used as part of the research data.

Survey as Research Procedure
This research project uses surveys for data collection.

- **Participation Numbers:** We will target <insert number range> people and anticipate <insert number range of actual participants> respondents across <insert number of surveys> survey(s).
- **Eligibility:** Participation is limited to <insert inclusion criteria, e.g., U.S. residents, adults aged 18 or older, etc.>. <Insert any exclusion criteria if it's different from inclusion criteria>.
- **Recruitment Methods:** Participants will be found via <insert information>. *Note: recruitment messages should be uploaded for non-exempt IRB applications.*
- **Implementation & Logistics**: The surveys will be implemented using <insert format, e.g., online, in-person, etc.> procedures, distributed by <insert information>, and collected by <insert information>. *Note: The final surveys should be uploaded to the IRB application as separate editable Word documents unless the surveys would be administered as a normal part of the class and would be done even in the research study did not occur.*
- **Survey Identifiability:** The survey(s) <insert one: are, are not, are indirectly> identifiable because <insert reason>.
- **Participant Privacy and Data Confidentiality:** Throughout collection, analysis, and dissemination of research data, participant privacy and data confidentiality will be protected by <insert information>.

Survey as Educational Requirement
<Insert one: This survey or These surveys> are completed as a required <insert one: normal course assessment OR graded assignment>. The <insert one: survey is OR surveys are> a standard part of the curriculum, subject to FERPA, and would occur even if this research study did not. We request to use them as secondary research data for this study.

Survey is a Requirement but Is Not Subject to FERPA

Participants complete <insert one: this survey or these surveys> as part of <insert name of program/activity/assessment> regardless of whether the research study takes place. The survey(s) are not subject to FERPA because <insert reason>. We are requesting to use them as secondary research data for this study.

Online Survey
This research will use <insert platform name such as Qualtrics, RedCap, etc.>. On the backend, the software automatically collects <insert information> information about participants. Under the platform's agreement, the software provider <select one: does / does not> have access to the survey data, and <select one: will / will not> use participants' data for any reason. The software <select one: can / cannot> identify participants and link them to their responses.

Panel Survey
This study will use the <insert information> survey panel because <insert justification>. This panel allows us to reach our target population because <insert information>. Participants will learn about the study through the panel via <insert information>. The recruitment panel and the implementation software <insert one: are / are not> connected. Compensation is handled by <insert information> and <insert compensation amount or, if it's a range, ranges from <insert amount> to <insert amount and explain why the compensation is variable>.

The panel software automatically collects <insert information> information about participants. Per the user agreement, the panel company maintains the following information about participants who complete the survey: <insert information>. The survey panel <insert one: can / cannot / will not> identify participants and their specific responses, and <insert one: can / cannot / will not> use any of the completed survey data.

Appendix B: MTurk HIT Template

This Appendix includes information about MTurk postings and consent information when MTurk is used.

The MTurk human intelligence task (HIT) template section includes a sample MTurk HIT template that you can use to craft your MTurk HITs. The MTurk consent form language includes information that should be include in your consent form. Please follow the directions in italics to adapt the templates for your study.

- *Make sure that you upload a clean, edited copy (no comments, editorial carets, prompt verbiage, red font etc.) for the IRB to review only if the study is not eligible for an exemption determination.*
- *The description in the HIT assumes that you're excluding international survey takers and minors. Edit if not appropriate.*
- *Make sure that your inclusion criteria are consistent with what you say in your consent form, the IRB application, and (if applicable) the exemption request form.*
- *Including individuals outside of the US may mean your study will be subject to compliance with international privacy laws, such as the GDPR, PIPL, and others. Please review the NC State IRB website for applicable policies, procedures, and guidance.*
- *A statement about surveys with attention checks is included in this example. Please delete if not applicable.*
- *Under the section regarding instructions, you must edit that to match how you set up the survey within Qualtrics.*

MTurk Human Intelligence Task (HIT) Template

This survey is being conducted by <insert name>, <insert role: student researcher, faculty, staff> at North Carolina State University. This is a study that examines <insert brief, plain language study description>.

To participate in this study, you must be at least 18 years of age or older, currently reside in the United States, and meet the following criteria: <insert additional eligibility criteria>. Anyone who does not meet these criteria <insert if relevant and complete: or matches the following criteria of <insert exclusions if relevant> is not eligible to participate in the study.

For this study, you will <describe survey activities/questions briefly in plain language>. The survey should last approximately <insert time> and you will be compensated <insert amount>. Your payment will be processed within <insert time frame>. Participants will only be compensated for completing the survey once.

Please note that you are free to quit the survey at any time. However, compensation is only offered to those that complete the survey. This study contains a number of checks to make sure

that participants are finishing the survey honestly and completely. As long as you read the instructions, complete the survey, and pass the checks, your HIT will be approved. If you do not submit a complete survey, fail the checks, or submit more than one survey, your HIT will be rejected.

By participating, you acknowledge that your data may be collected and used by Amazon in accordance with its privacy agreement. Additionally, if you are not located in the US or are under 18, please do not complete this HIT.

If you have questions about the study such as how to sign up, the study activities, compensation, or other study procedures and communications, contact <insert name of main researcher unless it is a student protocol in which case the faculty point-of-contact must be listed> at <insert phone number> and <insert email address>.

If you have questions about your rights or if you think you have been mistreated, contact the NC State University IRB office (they protect research participants) at 1-919-515-8754, IRB-Director@ncsu.edu, or complete this confidential form: https://research.ncsu.edu/administration/compliance/research-compliance/irb/irb-forms-and-templates/participant-concern-and-complaint-form/

HIT Instructions

Keep this MTurk window open while you complete the study to ensure you can enter your compensation information.

1. Click this link to open the study: **<placeholder for Qualtrics survey link>**

2. Complete the consent form and the survey on Qualtrics.

3. After completing the survey, you will be prompted to create a unique 6-digit code (any combination of non-consecutive letters and/or numbers). Return to this MTurk window, enter your 6-digit code in the box below, and submit the HIT.

4. **Enter 6-Digit Completion Code Here**:

MTurk Exempt Consent Information That Must Be Included

This paragraph is ***in addition*** to all of the normal required information such as contact information for the research team and IRB office, what the research study is about, voluntary nature of participation, eligibility requirements, research task(s), research risks and benefits, compensation details, data management/retention/sharing, use of AI tools, and (for exempt level studies) details about deception/incomplete disclosure in the research study. Up-to-date consent templates are posted to the NC State IRB website's Forms and Templates page. Please download and use the appropriate template.

- **If you are completing this as a part of a survey panel:** If you will be participating in this research via a survey panel (e.g., Prolific, MTurk), the panel will know you participated in the study, but they will not see your specific answers.

Appendix C: How to Avoid Bots in Online Surveys

1. Public survey links attract bots. Consider adding a screening component to your online survey so that only individuals who pass the screener can access your research survey.

2. Spread your demographic questions throughout the survey where possible and ask the same question twice, phrased differently, but where the participant's response should remain the same in both places. You can then review each survey for consistency.

3. Ask open-ended questions on your survey that would garner unique responses and be difficult for bot logic to answer. Review answers to these open-ended questions to flag identical or nonsensical responses.

4. Embed honeypot questions into your survey. Honeypot questions are questions that bots will see and humans cannot see. Be careful to keep the labeling of the honeypot question consistent with your non-honeypot questions to avoid alerting the bot.

5. Include advanced and complex logic inattention checks throughout your survey with advanced branch logic or coding. For example, you could write a long question and in the middle of it state, "Ignore the rest of this question and select the fourth answer" and continue to finish the question prompt and the answer options. Anything other than an option four response can be flagged.

6. Do not cluster the survey attention check questions in one section of the survey.

7. Insert CAPTCHAs into your survey. CAPTCHAs are challenge-response questions that are designed to be difficult for machines but reasonable for humans to complete. Examples of CAPTCHAs include reading distorted, misaligned text with stray marks or hearing a combination of spoken letters and numbers that are garbled and inputting the text into the question answer box correctly, image recognition puzzles where the participant selects images that match the CAPTCHA prompt, or trivia questions. There's also the "no CAPTCHA" option that allows the survey to track participant's mouse movements to determine if the user is a human or a machine.

8. If you do not need your survey to be anonymous, track IP addresses to prevent ballot stuffing so that a participant cannot complete the survey more than once.

9. Most platforms allow the researcher to track time stamps of when a participant started the survey, how long they take to answer a question, and when they finish the survey. You can then flag participants who completed the survey impossibly fast and groups of participants that all begin and finish the survey at exactly the same time down with identical answers.

10. Add in buffer time such as a 72-hour window between survey completion and compensation. This allows you time to review the integrity of the data before paying bots.

Appendix D: Survey Content and IRB Review Level

Factors affecting IRB review level of review aside from topics and data sensitivity
The context in which a survey is implemented also influences the type of review required by the IRB.

- **If the survey can be considered "minimal risk" with confidentiality protections in place**. A study that asks sensitive questions may ordinarily be considered more than minimal risk to a participant based on the information shared, but if the proper data protections are in place, this decreases risks to the participants.

- **Contractual Obligations.** Despite the IRB's assessment of the survey, a contractual obligation may require the study to be reviewed at a more conservative level. For example, if the IRB would say a study could be "exempt" but the contractual obligation requires it to be reviewed at the mid-level (expedited) review.

- **Size of participant pool and indirect identifiers collected including breadth/depth of participant pool** (International, U.S.A, State, County, School, Club, Class). This affects review level because it can lead to re-identification very easily and if it is paired with data that are sensitive, it may change requirements.

- **Federal/International Laws/Reporting Obligations.** This affects review level because the applicable law may require certain actions from the researcher that increase risk to participants or because the laws require certain things to occur during an IRB's review of a study.

- **Directly Identifiable, Indirectly Identifiable, Anonymous Data**. The collection of certain types of information on a survey when paired with the types of questions asked, affects the review level and data security requirements. If you are asking a sensitive question on an anonymous survey - there is much less risk to participants than if you asked the same questions on an identifiable survey. This is taken into consideration for the required review level.

- **Researcher Role, Access, Expertise, Type of Analysis, and Knowledge of participants**. A researcher's role, access, expertise, or type of analysis they complete affects review level because this can either lead to easy re-identification or to new information that may lead to increased risk for participants. This matters based on regulatory requirements around identifiability as well as data sensitivity.

- **Additional Modes of Data Collection** aside from survey or pairing survey data with other data. This affects review level because the additional modes of data collection may require a different review level due to type of data collection and risks associated with that data collection or the act of pairing the survey with other modes of data collection reveals new information that would increase risk to participants.

Data Sensitivity Levels
With the lens of participant protections and mitigating risks to participants, the IRB considers the following data to be "**Red**" or "**Purple**":

Purple Data
Ultra-sensitive data includes data where unauthorized disclosure or loss poses the highest risk or impact to the human subjects, university, or its affiliates or where specific data categories require special privileged access management. Examples include social security numbers, passwords, encryption keys, and biometrics (such as fingerprints and iris scans), admitted behavior that could be considered a felony. Other examples of qualitative data that should be treated as "purple" data include data that will likely lead to arrest, detention, incarceration, deportation, physical injury, or death of both primary and third-party participants. Additional access and handling requirements are required for Ultra-sensitive data because it may be impossible to repair damage caused by its unauthorized disclosure.

Red Data
Highly sensitive data includes data where unauthorized disclosure or loss poses a high risk or impact to the university, or its affiliates. Examples include driver's license, mother's maiden name, passport, and immigration number, admitted unlawful behavior that is not considered purple. Other examples of qualitative data that should be treated as "red" data include information that could lead to persecution, harassment or retaliation, information that may or likely will irreparably harm relationships, information that will likely lead to stigmatization where physical or psychological harm may occur as a result of both primary and third party participants, or any data where unauthorized disclosure or loss poses a high risk or impact to all human subjects.

For data considered "**Red**" or "**Purple**" - those data must be handled in accordance with NC State OIT standards for data protection and an IRB Data Access and Security Plan must be submitted to the IRB for review/approval. This is a mode for mitigating risk.

IRB Review Process Notes

- Expedited Review/Approval: Only surveys that are "minimal risk" where confidentiality of participants ***can*** be adequately protected ***AND*** the surveys involve minors are reviewed at the "Expedited" level. In 2023, the NC State IRB office's interpretations of the new regulations changed and some minimal risk studies that normally would be reviewed at the expedited level can be reviewed at the exempt level if they meet certain conditions. Please review the NC State IRB unit standard on exemption requests.

- When the IRB staff reviews a study as exempt with a "limited review" - we are ensuring that risks to participants are minimized, risks to participants are reasonable in relation to the benefits, selection of subjects is equitable, informed consent is sought and documented, if needed data are monitored, and there are ***adequate provisions to protect***

the privacy of participants and maintain confidentiality of the data. Because we ensure adequate provisions to protect the privacy of participants and maintain confidentiality of the data through our sensitivity assessment and the submitted data and access security plan (DASP) for red/purple data we are able to review and approve this as exempt (with some requirements) instead of requiring the survey to go through expedited review.

- If an IRB staff member determines that a survey requires convened full board review, they will consult with the IRB Chair or IRB Director before assigning it to the Board.

Survey Content Examples and Required Review Level

Required Level of IRB Review is not Directly Associated with Data Sensitivity Level and Required Data Protection

Survey Topic(s)	**Eligible for Exemption**	**Eligible for an Exemption Determination with a Limited Review**	**Requires Full Board Review** Surveys considered "more than minimal risk" because confidentiality cannot be adequately protected
Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)/Sexual Assault	Review this scenario *<insert scenario related to IPV or sexual assault>*, what do you think occurred? Why do you think it occurred? Do you agree: Consent to engage in sexual activity can be revoked by any participant in any sexual encounter at any time?	I have personally experienced *<insert topic: IPV or Sexual Assault>* in my life. *When the survey is not directly identifiable, the researcher does not seek to re-identify them and the researcher does not have more information about the participant's current relationship such as name of partner (due to NC law):* I have personally experienced *<insert topic: IPV or sexual assault>* in my current relationship. While engaging in sexual activities with someone else who has consented, I may not always stop if they change their mind about something.	*When the survey is identifiable in some way and the researcher is a mandated reporter:* In the last 3 years, I have sexually assaulted someone in my class.
Workplace Culture	When thinking about the places you have worked in your lifetime, what makes a place of employment great? What makes a place of employment uncomfortable? *When the survey is anonymous and the participant is told not to take the survey*	In my current position, I have taken office supplies home for my personal use. In my current position, while I am supposed to be working, I often spend that time on social media or doing something else.	*When the survey is identifiable in some way and the researcher has an obligation to report or is in a position of employment power:* Over the past 2 years, I have embezzled money from the company I currently work for.

	at work, and to use a browser in incognito/private mode, and to use a private device and the N size is not small where the researcher may know the individuals or has prior knowledge of participants. In your current job, you have experienced discrimination from your direct supervisor.	In my current position, I have intentionally held back an employee from promotion because of their race. Data treated as Red if identifiable	*When the survey is identifiable in some way and the researcher has an obligation to report or is in a position of employment power:* Since the pandemic started, I have regularly lied to my current employer about my health status and have been collecting disability benefits.
Discrimination	Do you agree with this definition of discrimination <*insert definition*>? Why or why not? Do you know anyone who has experienced discrimination related to <*insert demographic of interest*> in their lifetime? I have personally experienced <*insert topic: discrimination type*> in my life. *When the survey is anonymous and the participant is told to take the survey in a private location, to use a browser in incognito/private mode, and to use a private device:* I have personally experienced <*insert topic: discrimination type*> in my daily life at work from my direct supervisor. Explain.	I have personally experienced <*insert topic: discrimination type*> in my daily life at work from my colleagues. Explain. I have personally experienced <*insert topic: discrimination type*> from leaders within my current academic program. Explain. I have personally experienced <*insert topic: discrimination type*> in my daily life at work from my direct supervisor. Explain. Data treated as Red if identifiable I have personally experienced <*insert topic: discrimination type*> from my advisor in my current academic program. Explain. Data treated as Red if identifiable *When the survey is identifiable in some way and the researcher has an obligation to report or is in a position of employment power:* As a hiring manager, in my current hiring practices at work, I will not hire people who have foreign sounding names or looks, even if they have appropriate credentials.	*When the survey is identifiable in some way and the researcher has an obligation to report or is in a position of employment power:* I was physically assaulted by my supervisor because of my <*insert topic: discrimination type*>. *Explain.* *When the survey is identifiable in some way and the researcher has an obligation to report:* I physically assaulted my classmate because of their <*insert topic: discrimination type*>. *Explain.*

Immigration	I believe that people should be allowed to immigrate easily into the United States *When the survey is anonymous and the participant is told to take the survey in a private location, to use a browser in incognito/private mode, and to use a private device:* I do not have lawful documentation and I am not a beneficiary of DACA or TPS.		*The survey is identifiable.* I do not have lawful documentation and I am not a beneficiary of DACA or TPS.
Sexual Activity and Pregnancy	What does it mean to be sexually active? I have experienced the following consensual sexual activities: oral sex, anal sex, vaginal sex. *When the survey is anonymous and the participant is told to take the survey in a private location, to use a browser in incognito/private mode, and to use a private device:* I have engaged in sexual activities while on the clock at work or in a workspace. *When the survey is anonymous and the participant is told to take the survey in a private location, to use a browser in incognito/private mode, and to use a private device AND when the participant lives in a state where there are strict laws around termination of pregnancy:* In the last year, I have sought to terminate a pregnancy.	I am 16 years old and I have engaged in the following activities: oral sex, anal sex, vaginal sex. *When the participant lives in a state where there are strict laws around termination of pregnancy and the survey is not directly identifiable and the researcher will not seek to re-identify any individual from the study:* In the last year, I have sought to terminate a pregnancy.	*Depending on age of consent laws in different states and when the survey is identifiable in some way and the researcher has an obligation to report:* As an adult, I have engaged in the following sexual activities with a minor between the ages of 14 and 16: oral sex, anal sex, vaginal sex. *When the participant lives in a state where there are strict laws around termination of pregnancy and when the survey is identifiable in some way and the researcher has an obligation to report or the research records are public (without a CoC in place):* In the last year, I have terminated a pregnancy.

Academic Experience	I think that cheating is a bad habit. If I saw someone cheating, I would/would not report them. In my lifetime, I have cheated on a test. *When the survey is anonymous, the participant is told not to take the survey at the school, and to use a browser in incognito/private mode, and to use a private device.* This semester I used a cheat sheet on a test in my ___ class.	*If the data are indirectly identifiable and the researcher has NO obligation to report academic integrity issues.* In ____ class, on the final paper I did not complete the experiment myself and I made up the results.	*If the data are directly or indirectly identifiable and the researcher has an obligation to report academic integrity issues*. In ____ class, on the final paper I did not complete the experiment myself and I made up the results.
Medical Information	Please check all health issues you may have: periodontal disease, hyperthyroid, asthma *When the survey is anonymous, the participant is told to take the survey in a private location, using a browser in incognito/private mode, and to use a private device:* Check all health issues you may have: diabetes, hyperthyroid, HIV, syphilis, COVID-19, Untreated addiction to opioids	Please check all health issues you may have: diabetes, hyperthyroid, HIV, syphilis, COVID-19, untreated addiction to opioids	*If the data are directly or indirectly identifiable and the researcher has an obligation to report.* I am a doctor and I have completed unnecessary procedures on an individual because I wanted the money.

Appendix E: Examples of Data Considered Identifiers

NC State IRB considers the following table as direct/indirect identifiers regardless of applicable laws. This is NOT an all-inclusive list.

Directly Identifiable Digital and Civil Identities	**Indirectly Identifiable** Readily Ascertainable due to Expertise, Access, and Role	**Indirectly Identifiable** Due to Content, triangulation of Content, and N size
Name	IP Address and some URLs	Zip Code
Social Security Number	Medical Record Number	Enrollment Date
Physical Address	Health Plan IDs	Admission/Discharge Date
License Plate	MTurk IDs*	Race
NC State Unity ID	Online Panel IDs	Gender/Gender Identity
Phone/Fax Number	Voice Recording*	Years of Service
Photo/Video of Faces	Rank/Title*	Personal Experiences
GPS (precise geographic location)	Precinct*	Veteran Status
Name of Parents/Guardians	Mother's Maiden Name	Sex assigned at birth
Government/Organization Identifier (ex: Campus ID, Badge Number, Licensure ID, Conference ID)	Genomic Data (or analysis where genomic sequencing occurs) where an individual can be readily re-identified	Photos containing screenshots, personal items, tattoos, birthmarks, skin patterns
Digital Identifiers (ex: E-Mail Address, Usernames and Profile Names, Personal Web Address)	Student Artifacts such as specific projects, papers, or presentations	Unique Content of Information Shared such as unique stories
	Device IDs/Serial Numbers	Ability
	Account Numbers	National Origin
	Biometrics (ex: iris scans, fingerprint)	Religion
	Biospecimens*	Age (including full date of birth)
	SONA ID*	Ethnicity
		Sexual Orientation

* The indication of a star means that there are possibilities for that type of data to move category due to context of research and researcher. Context can make it either directly identifiable or indirectly identifiable. Some data sets that include indirect identifiers can be considered NHSR if an individual cannot be readily re-identified through triangulation, researcher role/access, master list, or researcher expertise. This is usually when the dataset is composed of a larger N, or there are fewer demographics, or the researcher (and research team) didn't interact with any of the participants.