

CROS Survey – Activity Checklist

Based on past experience of CROS we have drawn up a list of issues that you may want to consider in running a survey.

This list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. It is provided only to give guidance or make suggestion of things you *may* want to do.

Before Survey Launch

1. Formulate a CRS working party, chaired by a senior academic and including researcher representatives
2. Agree the working party's remit, budget, reporting line, frequency of meeting, reporting and so on
3. Ascertain who are the research staff in your institution.
4. If not in place establish an email list to contact all researchers. Email contact will make a BIG difference in achieving high return rates.
5. Agree person or persons who will be responsible for the survey (contact survey-help@bristol.ac.uk to give them the name of the prime contact)
6. Ensure the person(s) responsible are comfortable with the survey software (more information will be provided).
7. Consider whether you need to add institution-specific questions to the survey. The survey is preloaded with 'core questions' so in considering additions ask yourself the following:
 - Is the question relevant to researchers and in particular their employment and career development?
 - Is the information returned useful (is it just "nice to know" or can you act upon it)?
 - Should it be a mandatory or optional question?
 - If it is mandatory question, can all researchers answer it? You might need to add an option such as "Not Applicable" or "Don't Know".
 - Are the possible responses to your questions consistent? i.e. don't mix possible responses such as "Very good", "good", "Not very helpful", "Not at all helpful"
 - Try to ensure consistency in use of upper and lower-case i.e. Do not have as a response "Very good", "Good", "Not Very Good", "Not good"
 - You may want to avoid an odd number of possible responses to a question as people will tend to pick the middle one.
8. Ensure key people are aware of the intention to survey, the reason and the benefits. Possible contacts:
 - Vice chancellor
 - Registrar
 - Deans
 - Heads of Academic departments
 - All in Personnel and Training
 - All in Careers departments

- All in Research 'support' departments
 - Unions
 - Researchers
9. If you have a dedicated Web site for your researchers
 - Use it to promote the survey. Add a link to the survey's web address (URL).
 - Make sure that ALL contact with researchers (posters, footers of email, letters, payslips, induction and review documents) include the survey URL.
 10. Decide how long to run the survey for. We suggest a minimum of 2 weeks and a maximum of 4.

At survey launch

1. Launch the survey using BOS (this requires no technical know-how and only a few minutes work - further instructions will follow)
2. Contact ALL researchers, ideally via email. Include the following
 - **DOUBLE-CHECK** that the URL for the survey matches the URL you have placed in your email to researchers. You will lose a lot of potential returns if an inaccurate URL is sent out – many potential respondents will not give you second chance.
 - Background and reasons for the survey (repeat what you've said before if required)
 - Stress that the survey is not just being run in your institution but across the UK
 - The time period the survey will be open for
 - How and ideally when they will find out results
3. Consider writing to heads of departments to ask them to encourage their researchers to complete the survey.

While the survey is open

1. Via the BOS administrative screens check response rates as often as possible but at least weekly.
2. Send out email reminders on a regular basis (after week 1, week 2 and so on). Include statistics on completion rates (e.g. 25% have completed the survey)
3. A few days before close send final reminder
4. Field any queries from your researchers in a positive manner
5. Any problems or difficulties with the software or questions you can not answer from survey respondents – contact survey-help@bristol.ac.uk

After the survey closes

1. Send an email to researchers. Include the following:
 - A big thank you for taking time to complete

- Statistics on completion rate
 - Information on what will happen next
 - Information on how they can find out results
2. Analyse the results as quickly as possible (you can do this online using BOS in-built reports or download results into Excel or SPSS)
 3. Report results to the Working Party (you will be able to set-up other people in the CROS software to view reports for your institution)
 4. Highlight areas of poor performance
 5. Review summary of UK wide results to be produced by Vitea.
 6. Develop an action plan to improve performance in poor areas
 7. Use the CROS data to make the case for further funding to implement your plans
 8. Communicate your action plan to researchers and the University. Where applicable stress the value of CROS data in ensuring action is taken. Evidence of action will encourage higher response rates in subsequent years.

The following year(s)

1. Reissue CROS survey
2. Evaluate the performance of your action plan by highlighting a change in results
3. Report results to Working Party and/or Senior Managers, Heads of Departments, researchers, Unions, and others
4. Check your performance against other institutions
5. Amend your action plan as required.