

**FORM 3:** 2025 Core Survey guide for obtaining

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for administration the

*Core Alcohol and Drug Survey*

**Overview**:

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is required for research studies involving human subjects in order to protect participants’ welfare, safety, and to ensure their informed consent to participate. This approval includes student surveys.

IRB approval must be obtained prior to administering the Core Survey. As IRB committees may meet at infrequent intervals, adequate lead-in time must be included in the process based on each school’s IRB committee meeting schedules.

Under certain circumstances and by meeting specific criteria, projects may be exempted from full IRB review through an expedited process. Forms and supporting documentation must still be submitted, but the process is less extensive than that required for a full IRB review. The Core Survey is such a project that could be expected to be exempted from full IRB review; however, your own IRB office will decide whether or not to require full approval.

In order for projects to be considered for approval, IRB boards generally require the completion of their approval request form along with the following information contained in this packet. Our office is providing you with prepared guidelines and specific information that will simplify the process of submitting the required information to your IRB office.

**Basic steps in obtaining IRB approval for Core Survey:**

□ Identify your IRB contact at your school. Search your school’s website or directory to find the following information:

IRB Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

IRB Contact Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Website address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

□ Determine whether your IRB office provides an option for “exemption.” If so, obtain the necessary form and instructions for requesting the exemption. (It may be provided online for downloading and printing at the IRB website. If not, contact your IRB chair for instructions. If your institution does not have an exemption template, please contact the LaCASU office for a template.)

□ Request the schedule of fall semester IRB Board meetings or timetable of review, in order to allow ample time for submission of paperwork and obtaining IRB approval.

**Timeline:** IRB paperwork should be **submitted to your IRB office** by: **October 4, 2024.**

IRB approval should be **received by our office** by: **November 15, 2024.**

□ Follow the protocol outlined by your school’s IRB Office in order to **apply for IRB approval**. Use the documents provided by the Core Survey administrator’s office in submitting the IRB application. **Dr.** **Allison Smith**, Core Survey Administrator, if assistance is needed. She can be reached at [**lacasu@laregents.edu**](mailto:lacasu@laregents.edu) or 225-342-4253.

□ Once approval is obtained**, FAX or SCAN** a copy of your school’s approval with IRB signature to the Core Survey administrator’s office at the Louisiana Board of Regents **by Friday, November 15, 2024.**

FAX number: **225-342-9318**

SCAN to: [**lacasu@laregents.edu**](mailto:lacasu@laregents.edu)

**SAMPLE DOCUMENTS**

1. A summary overview of the entire Core Survey project along with a description of instruments to be used - *2 example summary documents are provided (****one******for online & one for paper version****)*
2. A copy of the Core Survey instrument – *See attached document or* g*o to this URL:* [*http://www.core.siu.edu/index.html*](http://www.core.siu.edu/index.html)*; select “Surveys” tab; Choose “****long form****”* ***or*** *“****short form****” to print a copy of the survey.*
3. Student invitation letter which serves as a consent form to be used for participants - *2 example letters are provided (****one******for online and one for paper version****)*
4. Supplementary information on confidentiality/anonymity assurances to include with your IRB application if you are conducting an online survey

**Description of Project**

**Core *Alcohol and Drug Survey***

(Online version)

**Overview of project**:

This survey is part of a statewide initiative to survey students at IHE’s on alcohol and drug use. Locally, it involves the administration of a secure, voluntary, online survey to a random sample of approximately \_\_\_\_\_\_ undergraduates. The survey instrument, the ***Core Alcohol and Drug Survey***, is administered nationally by the CORE Institute of the Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Website address: [*http://www.core.siu.edu/index.html*](http://www.core.siu.edu/index.html)

The **Core Survey** generally assesses the level of alcohol and other drug use of participants; it also documents and quantifies the various negative effects of alcohol and drug use through questions that assess perceptions, beliefs, behaviors, and consequences experienced. The survey has been administered nationally every year since its development in 1989. Over 800,000 students at over 1,100 colleges and universities have been surveyed using the Core Survey.

**Protocol**:

Timeframe: The survey will be administered during early 2025 and will require approximately 15 minutes for students to complete the “***short form***” and approximately 30 minutes for students to complete the “***long form***.”

Target audience: Survey participants will consist of a random sample of approximately \_\_\_\_\_ undergraduate students, prepared by the Office of the Registrar or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Office. Students must be 18 or older to participate.

Survey format: Participants will access an online site and will login to a secure dedicated server to complete the survey online at the CORE Institute website: <http://www.coresurvey.com>.

Online security: All data are identified only by a code number. Secure server supports 128-bit encryption, the highest level of protection. Server is licensed by VeriSign. No names are stored in the same database or data files as those that contain survey responses. Faculty and staff will not know individual participants’ answers, nor will any participant be identified when results are reported. The anonymity of students is protected by the use of 5-digit codes as login ID’s; and the codes are basically school identifier codes only.

**Confidentiality/Anonymity:**

No student’s identity can be linked to any data on the survey. Data will be aggregated with that of all other students. Students will be informed that survey participation is voluntary and that they may choose not to answer any individual question. Extensive additional confidentiality and anonymity assurances are attached as a separate document.

**Consent**:

Students will initially receive a consent letter by email which invites them to participate in the voluntary survey, describes the process, gives an overview of the content, addresses confidentiality and anonymity, and provides a login code and URL for accessing the survey. Again, they may choose to participate or not to answer individual questions.

Consent form letter sample is attached.

**Follow Up:**

Students will receive up to 3 brief follow-up reminder emails during the month that the survey is active.

**Consent Letter for Online Surveys**

Dear  *(school name)* Student:

You are among (*survey number*) (*school name*) undergraduate students who have been randomly selected to participate in an anonymous online alcohol survey. Your participation is very valuable in assessing alcohol issues at \_(*school name*)\_\_ and in the state of Louisiana. *(Optional text*: By completing this survey, you will be eligible for \_\_\_(incentive)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.)

The **title of the survey** is the **Core Alcohol and Drug Survey**. It is a survey instrument used nationally and developed by the Core Institute at Southern Illinois University. Students at our institution, as well as students at numerous other institutions in Louisiana, are participating in this study.

The **purpose of this study** is to assess the perceptions and use of alcohol and other drugs by (*school name*) undergraduate students. Composite data from this study will be used to gain insight into beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and behavior of college students in their use of alcohol and other drugs. This information can help in evaluating current programs and prevention efforts.

The **following individuals are available** to answer any questions you might have about the survey:

(*Contact name, Title, Phone, email address*)

(*Contact name Title Phone email address*)

**Study procedures**: This is a completely voluntary survey that should take you no more than 30 minutes to complete. **You may choose not to participate or not to answer specific questions.**

**The survey is anonymous** and many of the questions ask about personal attitudes, behavior, and perceptions. The **survey is completed online on a secure dedicated server** located at Southern Illinois University, and you will login to the survey using a numerical id, provided below, that serves as a school identifier. In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years old.

**Privacy assurance and risk**: Your identity can never be linked to the answers on your survey. The results of this study may be published; however, data obtained from your answers will be combined with data from all of the other participants, and **you can never be identified** in any way in any composite results. There are no potential risks involved, as you may decline to answer any questions that you are not comfortable answering.

If you have **questions about your rights as a research participant**, you may contact (*Name of your IRB Chair*), Chair of the *(school name)*  Institutional Review Board, at *(phone number).*

*Optional text:* After completing the survey, if you should wish to speak to a counselor about any part of the survey, you may contact one at the *(name of counseling center)* at  *(phone number of counseling center).*

If you consent to participate in this study, you can complete the survey **right now, or anytime up until 11:59 p.m. on February 7, 2025** by going to:

[**www.coresurvey.com**](file:///\\tboyd-srv1\dfs\LaCASU\CORE%20SURVEYS\CORE%20SURVEY%202007%20Nancy%20files\Core%20Survey%20Process\www.coresurvey.com)

Your numerical login code is: (*numerical school code*). You will be assigned a password, and please retain it if you need to complete the survey at a later time.

Thank you for taking the time and thought to complete the survey. Your participation is very valuable!

**Additional assurances of confidentiality and anonymity using the online Core Alcohol and Drug Survey**

Anonymity is maintained by the fact that all students will login using the same user ID. These respondents are truly anonymous. Any incentive tracking or follow up can be accomplished by the use of a separate self-declaration: a) post card or email stating their name and that they have completed the survey; or b) pop-up page at end of survey with a link to email or website where they can declare they completed the survey.

The server maintains a single identifier for the data. The identifier is the password it assigns to the student upon initial login. This identifier is only known to the user. The identifier serves as a locator for the data. It is not linked to the user or user ID, thus keeping the data anonymous. It simply specifies the location of your data on the server.

Confidentiality prior to download is protected as follows:

* When a respondent logs in for the first time, the server assigns them a password. Without the password no one can view their responses.
* The password is known only by the student and the server. The Core Institute does not know or have access to the user passwords.
* Once the student completes the survey the server locks that survey. The correct user ID with password will no longer grant access to the survey. This protects respondents from other household members who might find the user ID and password.
* The server is a dedicated server and not used for other purposes. It is not part of a larger network where staff outside the Core Institute might obtain access to it.
* The server is independently located behind firewalls. There is a firewall between the server and the public, and another firewall between the server and the Core Institute's network. The Core Institute's own network and archived data are also protected by this firewall. Other domains cannot access the server through the Core's network.

IP Addresses

For confidentiality the IP addresses are excluded from the transaction logs. No record of a student’s visit is maintained on the server.

For security reasons most servers will not allow you to log on unless the other server has identified itself in some way. Our firewall will not allow an anonymous machine into the server as a means of protecting the data from potential attacks. If students are accessing through a LAN or Internet provider it is most likely that the outgoing IP's are dynamically linked, meaning that they are not directly associated with an individual machine. Instead the server uses an IP that is within a range of IP addresses reserved for outside connections. This is fairly standard practice as it protects the server from the users and the sites that users access. On our end all the server sees is a dummy IP address that is associated to the client server. Therefore, the students are already visiting our site in a confidential manner.

The Core Institute cannot link IP address back to the students. Your university maintains the internal IP accounts and the Core Institute does not have access to your University's IP accounts, nor would your school ever give them to us. Your university does know student’s internal IP addresses but it has no access to the Core Institute's data files or servers. We do not provide them with this information, nor could we since the IPs are not logged.

If students use DSL or a cable modem they may be directly linked. This means that the IP address seen on the web is actually the IP address of his or her machine, instead of a range of IP addresses used by a public or client server. These individuals usually have greater security concerns than persons who use a client server. However, even these individuals are protected since our server does not log IP addresses.

While we feel comfortable that the data is collected and maintained in an anonymous manner the themes within the survey can make some respondents feel a need for extra caution.

Any respondents concerned about privacy can try to utilize a company that deletes their user logs rather than use an anonymous proxy. This way they will not be excluded from the site and their confidentiality will be maintained. An alternative option is to use a public access terminal (ex. computer lab) that cannot be linked to any one individual. These two options would render any attempts to link the individual to the data useless.

The following are common instructions that should be given to students taking the survey on the web:

* Go to the Internet address: **www.coresurvey.com**.
* Follow the prompts to enter your school’s 5-digit code which is the same for all students participating at your school. Your password will be randomly assigned to you on your initial login. If you are unable to finish the survey you will need to remember your password, so you may complete the survey at a later time.
* There is no connection between your name and the generated password, so do not lose or forget it. We cannot provide it to you again. The password is the only link to your data, not your name, nor your user ID.
* Once you complete your survey it is locked out. Access is denied even with the password.
* We recommend you complete the survey in a single session to ensure the greatest level of security.