

**Institutional Priorities Survey™ (IPS)**  
**Implementation Guidelines**

## Table of Contents

Institutional Priorities Survey (IPS) Implementation Guidelines.....	3
When to administer the IPS .....	3
Getting started.....	3
Which inventory version should we use, Form A or Form B? .....	3
Sampling guidelines.....	3
Order your IPS .....	4
Confirmation for your order for a web-based IPS administration .....	4
Administering the IPS.....	5
Instructions for administering the web-based IPS .....	5
How to customize the surveys .....	5
Customizing the 10 campus-defined items section for importance and agreement.....	6
Customizing the campus-defined demographic questions .....	6
Customizing the list of departments.....	6
Finishing up the web-based survey administrations.....	7
Results .....	7
Resources to support your efforts.....	7
The satisfaction-priorities survey from Ruffalo Noel Levitz .....	7
Also available from Ruffalo Noel Levitz.....	7
Additional questions? .....	8
A word about Ruffalo Noel Levitz .....	8

## Institutional Priorities Survey (IPS) Implementation Guidelines

The IPS measures the level of agreement and the priorities of faculty, staff, and administrators regarding their perceptions of the student experience. Used in conjunction with the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), the IPS allows you to gain a valuable understanding of where campus personnel's perception of the student experience and the student perception of their experience differ or align. This provides guidance in determining what new initiatives should be put in place, taking into account both the students' perspective and the campus personnel's perspective of the student experience. It can also assist in creating "buy in" for those campus personnel that had a different perception of the student experience, by easily showing the discrepancies.

Measuring campus personnel perceptions of students' experiences at your campus using Ruffalo Noel Levitz surveys is a powerful way to align and address campus concerns and priorities. To assist you, we've assembled this information. We are also available for free telephone consultations at 800-876-1117 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Central time. Please feel free to call or email us at [SPS.Tech@RuffaloNL.com](mailto:SPS.Tech@RuffaloNL.com) with any questions or issues you would like to discuss. Using the surveys takes some planning, but the outcome is worth the effort.

### When to administer the IPS

Use of the IPS is appropriate at any time during the academic year. In general, we recommend administering the IPS during similar timeframes as your student survey administrations. This ensures that data from multiple instruments, especially the combination of the SSI and the IPS, will be gathered from a nearly identical campus environment. You may also want to plan to survey at the same time period over multiple years for appropriate benchmarking.

We have found that there is approximately a 40/60 split between institutions that survey in the fall and those that survey in the spring. You will want to select the time period that works best for your academic calendar, your strategic planning activities, and your accreditation requirements.

You may also want to consider incorporating the Parent Satisfaction Inventory™ (PSI) for the parents of your currently enrolled students (at four-year institutions) into your assessment plan to be able to triangulate the data across key campus constituencies. You can learn more about the PSI by visiting our website at [www.RuffaloNL.com/PSI](http://www.RuffaloNL.com/PSI).

### Getting started

To order surveys for a web-based administration, you will simply need to know the estimated number of campus personnel you will be inviting to complete the survey. You can place your order by visiting our website at [www.RuffaloNL.com/orderIPS](http://www.RuffaloNL.com/orderIPS).

### Which inventory version should we use, Form A or Form B?

You will want to administer the Form A or Form B version of the Institutional Priorities Survey depending on the version of the Student Satisfaction Inventory that you are currently using on your campus. The survey items are parallel based on the corresponding survey version.

### Sampling guidelines

Most institutions invite 100 percent of their faculty, staff, administrators, and board members to complete the IPS. If that is not possible, you will want to survey at least 25 to 50 percent of your full- and part-time campus personnel. The sample should represent each personnel segment's relative size. Also, you may want to over-sample faculty and other personnel segments that interact with students on a regular basis.

Groups to consider surveying include:

- Faculty representing all majors, programs, and departments
- President, chancellor, and vice presidents
- Deans and directors
- Board members
- Advising/counseling staff
- Student services staff
- Library staff
- Registrar's staff
- Business office staff
- Bookstore/student center staff

### Order your IPS

For pricing quotes or to place your order, go to [www.RuffaloNL.com/orderIPS](http://www.RuffaloNL.com/orderIPS).

The IPS is currently only available for online administrations. (In past years, paper options were also available, but the paper survey instruments have been discontinued because the vast majority of institutions administer the IPS online only).

### Confirmation for your order for a web-based IPS administration

When you place your order through our web site, by fax, or by phone for a web administration, your online account will be created and confirmation should arrive via email from [SPS.Tech@RuffaloNL.com](mailto:SPS.Tech@RuffaloNL.com) within five business days.

Here are a few things to consider as you begin preparing for a web administration:

- Determine your survey timeframe: You will want to identify when you would like the first invitation message to be sent, dates for the reminder messages, and a tentative closing date for the online account.
- Campus personnel sample: To invite and remind campus personnel via email, you will need a list of names and email addresses.
- Email messages: Dates and content for emails will be necessary for the web-based administration. Sample text will be sent to you with your online account confirmation.
- Campus-defined items: You may add 10 campus-defined items to your survey. These are rated on the same importance and agreement indicators as the standard items of the survey. Typically, the IPS items are parallel to the campus-defined items on your SSI.
- Campus-defined demographic(s): Two demographic items may be added to your survey. These are questions or statements (multiple choice format) that provide up to six response options for your campus personnel to select one answer.
- Campus-defined department codes: This is a list of departments (assigned with a four-digit numeric code) for your campus personnel to self-select their particular department.

## Administering the IPS

You have several options for administering the survey, and you will want to select the administration method that is going to work best for your campus. Depending on how a survey is presented, response rates will vary.

To achieve the highest survey response rates, consider publicizing your survey administration well in advance. You will want to fully inform campus personnel about why you are conducting the survey to help encourage participation. For example, share what actions have taken place as a result of the last administration on campus. You can make announcements during staff meetings or through email messages. You can also use your social media for these messages.

Another approach to raising response rates is to offer incentives for completing the survey. Examples include randomly drawn gift certificates, premium parking spots, or gift cards for a local restaurant. One caution: if you offer incentives to increase responses rates, be careful that you do not introduce bias by promoting incentives that have extra appeal for certain types of individuals and not others.

## Instructions for administering the web-based IPS

Typically, campus personnel are invited to complete the online IPS with an email invitation and three reminder messages, coordinated through the Ruffalo Noel Levitz online account system. You can determine the timeline for the four email messages. You may also want to publicize the survey availability through other methods on campus, such as announcements in staff meetings and cascading through supervisors and department heads. The web-based IPS administration typically yields response rates of 40 to 60 percent. Your campus personnel will be able to complete the survey on their own time, often within 15 to 20 minutes. The online IPS does not have to be completed in one sitting. Individuals who exit the survey part way through will need to start over when they access again.

## How to customize the surveys

There are three areas of the IPS that can be customized to meet your institution's needs. They are available at no extra charge. They are up to you to define.

1. The first section appears after the standard items on the survey and contains 10 campus-defined items to be rated for importance and agreement.
2. The demographic section at the end of the survey allows for additional customization. You may add two demographic questions (multiple choice format), each with up to six possible responses in which one response can be selected.
3. The final item presents a list of departments specific to your institution.

You may want to consider aligning your custom items with those asked of the students taking the Student Satisfaction Inventory or Adult Student Priorities Survey. This is especially true for the items to be rated for importance and satisfaction/agreement.

For the web-based administrations, you will be provided with directions on how to upload the custom items into your online account.

### Customizing the 10 campus-defined items section for importance and agreement

This section accommodates up to 10 additional items you create. We can supply sample items on request. The items will be rated on level of importance and a level of agreement. This section CANNOT accommodate yes-or-no questions, multiple choice, or fill-in-the-blank custom questions. One tip: be sure that every item you add is stated in positive terms. For example, write: “There are adequate remedial courses available.” Do not write: “Remedial courses are inadequate.”

### Customizing the campus-defined demographic questions

The demographic items provide an opportunity for you to gather additional demographic information about your campus personnel. Be sure to choose these items carefully because your choices will determine your access to additional Target Group Reports. Before you determine your items, be sure to review the standard demographic items that are captured on the survey so you do not repeat items.

The demographic questions can be used for any purpose you deem appropriate. The only requirement is that each question should be written to elicit just one response—not multiple responses (see examples below). You can use these items to collect information such as the location where faculty teach most of their classes or if they feel their training was applicable. Note from Example A that the item you design can include up to six possible responses.

#### Example A:

I teach most of my classes at the:

1. Main campus
2. Downtown campus
3. North campus
4. South campus
5. East campus
6. West campus

#### Example B:

Age:

1. 34 and younger
2. 35 to 49
3. 50 to 64
4. 65 and older

### Customizing the list of departments

This area asks campus personnel to supply a four-digit numeric code on the paper-and-pencil forms or to select from a list of department titles on the web-based form. The four-digit codes are codes you define to correspond to the appropriate departments for your campus. Using this approach, you can then order a customized Target Group Report by department to view the data from each department separately.

#### Key notes regarding the department codes:

- The list of responses to this item is unlimited, but you will want to be sensitive to the number of options your campus personnel need to read through to select the appropriate answer.
- When assigning four-digit codes, **do NOT use code 0000**, since it is not recognized by our system.
- We also do not recommend codes with leading zeros (example: 0001) because they can be confusing to individuals when they are completing the survey.
- The codes must all be numeric; alpha characters cannot be used.
- Be sure to proof your list to ensure that each four digit code is listed only once.

## Finishing up the web-based survey administrations

The End Date at the Administration page marks the close of the survey and automatically notifies the Ruffalo Noel Levitz operations team you are ready for results. The close time is 6:00 a.m. on the stated day. Be sure your communications, including email messages, are clear about survey access times. Extending this ending date is an option and can be accomplished through the Administration page. Be sure to extend the survey before the current close date.

Ruffalo Noel Levitz prepares your results as originally ordered. If changes or additions are necessary, contact [SPS.Tech@RuffaloNL.com](mailto:SPS.Tech@RuffaloNL.com) anytime throughout the process and adjustments will be made. If you determine the need for additional reports, these can be requested after the standard results are delivered and reviewed.

## Results

Results will be delivered electronically to you approximately 10-12 business days after your online account closes. Your reports will be delivered to you electronically through the Ruffalo Noel Levitz secure “SafeMail” in your *myRuffaloNL* account. If you request a paper copy of your report(s), please allow an additional three to five business days for standard FedEx delivery.

Please contact Ruffalo Noel Levitz at 800-876-1117 if you would like to schedule a time to review your results. This conversation can be one-on-one, or you can gather a team on your end. We will be happy to provide you with guidance on how to best interpret your results and provide suggestions on next steps with the data. This phone consultation is complimentary.

## Resources to support your efforts

Additional resources and guidance for a successful administration can be found on our website:

- [www.RuffaloNL.com/OnlineAdminResources](http://www.RuffaloNL.com/OnlineAdminResources) includes sample formats for uploading and suggestions for ways to communicate with students.
- [www.RuffaloNL.com/SatisfactionSurveyTutorials](http://www.RuffaloNL.com/SatisfactionSurveyTutorials) has a series of 7 to 10 minute recorded tutorials on a variety of topics, including online administrations and reviewing your results.

## The satisfaction-priorities survey from Ruffalo Noel Levitz

- [Student Satisfaction Inventory](#) – for your traditional student population
- [Adult Student Priorities Survey](#) – for your nontraditional undergraduate and graduate students
- [Adult Learner Inventory](#) – for your adult students in undergraduate programs; part of the CAEL Adult Learning Focused Institution Toolkit
- [Priorities Survey for Online Learners](#) - for your students enrolled primarily in online courses
- [Parent Satisfaction Inventory](#) – for the parents of currently enrolled students at four-year institutions
- [Institutional Priorities Survey](#) – for the faculty, administration and staff at your institution; to assess their perceptions of the student experience; this instrument is directly parallel to the Student Satisfaction inventory

## Also available from Ruffalo Noel Levitz

- [College Employee Satisfaction Survey](#) – to assess the satisfaction of your campus personnel with their employment. Visit [www.RuffaloNL.com/Toolkit](http://www.RuffaloNL.com/Toolkit) for more information.

### **Additional questions?**

We hope you found this document helpful and informative. If you have questions that were not answered here or would like to have a discussion on any of the implementation guidelines, please contact Ruffalo Noel Levitz at 800-876-1117 or email [SPS.Tech@RuffaloNL.com](mailto:SPS.Tech@RuffaloNL.com).

### **A word about Ruffalo Noel Levitz**

Ruffalo Noel Levitz is a nationally recognized higher education consulting firm that focuses on strategic planning for enrollment and student success as well as fundraising management. Each year, campus executives from throughout the United States meet regularly with Ruffalo Noel Levitz to accomplish their goals for student recruitment, marketing, student retention, financial aid, strategic enrollment management and fundraising.

For more information, visit [www.RuffaloNL.com](http://www.RuffaloNL.com).

Updated May 2017