Paper and Pencil Student Satisfaction-Priorities Surveys

Implementation Guidelines

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Paper-and-Pencil Surveys Implementation Guidelines

Measuring student perceptions with Ruffalo Noel Levitz surveys is a powerful way to address your students' 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 with any questions or issues you would like to discuss. Using the surveys takes some planning, but the outcome is worth the effort. These guidelines are for paper administrations of the survey. Contact Ruffalo Noel Levitz if you would like to explore online administration options.

Which SSI version should we use, Form A or Form B?

For the SSI, there are two options: The original 70+ item Form A and the shorter 40+ item Form B. You will want to select the version that is the best fit for the data you want to capture from your students and allows you to compare with the appropriate institutions in the external national comparison group. We encourage you to review the samples of the surveys and the lists of schools in the norm group to inform your decision. Contact Ruffalo Noel Levitz for more information about the options.

When to administer

The use of both the SSI and ASPS is appropriate at any time during the academic year. However, we suggest you avoid surveying during intensive testing times (e.g., mid-terms and finals), during the first three to four weeks of the term (so entering students have time to become familiar with your campus before responding to the survey items), or on the day before or the day after a school break such as Thanksgiving or spring break, when many students may be absent from class. If you are using multiple survey instruments from Ruffalo Noel Levitz, we recommend administering the surveys during similar timeframes during the academic year, or within a few weeks. This ensures that data from the different surveys, especially the combination of the SSI and the Institutional Priorities Survey (IPS) for campus personal or the Parent Satisfaction Inventory (PSI), 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.

For more information regarding the IPS, please visit our website at www.RuffaloNL.com/IPS

For more information regarding the PSI, please visit www.RuffaloNL.com/PSI

Here are additional administration guidelines:

- Fall surveying: Among the advantages of fall surveying: 1) more entering students can be surveyed before attrition takes effect, while decisions to stay or leave are still being formed; and 2) you'll have time to effect changes with the survey findings during the same academic year.

- Spring surveying: Among the advantages of spring surveying: 1) students have more experiences on which to base their responses; and 2) you can use the late spring and summer for follow-up planning.

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.

Getting started

To order paper-and-pencil versions of the surveys, all you need to know is the number of students you plan to survey.

Use the chart below to identify an appropriate sample size for your institution, but be sure to read this section completely before arriving at a final count. Ultimately, the size of your sample depends on how you intend to use the results.

Sampling guidelines for student surveys

Enrollment	Recommended sampling
499 students or fewer	100% – or all that can be surveyed efficiently
500-999	60% or minimum of 400 – whichever is higher
1,000-1,999	50% or minimum of 600 – whichever is higher
2,000-3,499	40% or minimum of 1,000 – whichever is higher
3,500-5,999	33% or minimum of 1,200 – whichever is higher
6,000-9,999	25% or minimum of 1,800 – whichever is higher
10,000 and above	20% or minimum of 2,500 – whichever is higher

As the table indicates, the paper-and-pencil Student Satisfaction Inventories and Adult Student Priorities Surveys are designed to be used with 20 percent to 100 percent of your entire student population.

To be representative, your sample should generally reflect the percentage of students that make up your student population by class level and other characteristics such as your enrollments in majors/ programs and day and evening classes.

For example, if you have a student population of 1,200 students of which 35 percent are freshmen, 30 percent are sophomores, 20 percent are juniors, and 15 percent are seniors, you will want your sample of at least 600 students to reflect these percentages. Also, if you plan to request Target Group Reports, you'll want to be sure your sample represents each identified target population adequately. Keep in mind that, in general, it is more important for your sample to be representative rather than random—especially if you are requesting Target Group Reports.

Important notes regarding the paper instruments:

- Paper surveys are shipped in quantities of 25;
- Once the surveys are shipped, they are yours to keep;
- You may use leftover surveys for future administrations.

Order your paper-and-pencil surveys

For pricing quotes or to place your order, go to:

- Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) www.RuffaloNL.com/orderSSI

  The SSI is appropriate for traditional student populations. It provides valuable data for strategic action planning, strengthening student retention initiatives, meeting accreditation requirements, identifying areas of strength for institutional marketing, charting progress toward campus goals, and improving the quality of student life and learning. The instrument is available in four-year, two-year, and career school versions. National benchmarks specific to the institution type are also provided. The SSI is available for paper and online administrations.

- Adult Student Priorities Survey (ASPS) www.RuffaloNL.com/orderASPS

  The ASPS assesses the satisfaction and priorities of adult students enrolled in undergraduate or graduate programs, including evening and weekend students, continuing education, and credit and non-credit courses. It includes survey items specific to the adult student experience and reveals what's important to adult students and how satisfied they are. The ASPS includes national benchmark data for comparison, with optional graduate and undergraduate specific comparisons. The ASPS is available for paper and online administrations.

Shipment of your order for paper-and-pencil surveys

When you place your order through our website, by fax, or by phone, we will fulfill your request within 48 hours and ship using FedEx Ground. If you prefer to receive your materials sooner than 7 to 10 business days, please indicate it when placing your order. We can add any expedited charges to your purchase.

With your survey forms, you will also receive:

- Scoring Request Form
- Implementation Guidelines
- Order Form

 It is important to verify the contents of your packages as soon as they arrive. **Please do not wait until the day before or the day of your administration to verify your package.** You will want to confirm that you have received the correct survey version and quantity.

How to administer the student surveys

You have several options for administering the Ruffalo Noel Levitz 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 to students (see instructions below), 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 everyone on campus about why you are conducting the survey so they can help encourage student participation. You may want to post flyers around campus or have faculty members make announcements during class time to build interest in completing the survey. Be sure to use social media to make students aware of the survey as well. In addition, you can post information on your institutional website.

The highest completion rates are accomplished in the classroom. Administering the survey during class time is the most effective way to achieve completion rates and to control the sample

populations. We suggest planning ahead to determine which classrooms will provide you with a representative sample when the survey is distributed.

Instructions for administering the student surveys

Please keep in mind that any type of survey administration can introduce bias into the sample of respondents. To address this issue, these guidelines will assist you with minimizing the potential for biased results. Here are five options for administering the survey:

1. Ask faculty to have students complete the inventory during a regular class period. (Typical response rates range from 75 to 100 percent depending on class attendance and faculty participation.) When requesting assistance from faculty, please see the additional guidelines in the next section.
2. Ask faculty to distribute the inventory during a specific class period and to collect it during the next class period. (Typical response rates range from 30 to 60 percent depending on incentives and faculty participation.) Again, please see the additional guidelines found in the next segment.
3. Administer the inventory during a free period on campus, in residence halls, or during a campus event that attracts a large number of students, such as chapel. If you choose a free period or residence halls, be sure to schedule several time slots so students can choose when to participate. (Response rates vary for this method but are generally less than 50 percent.)
4. Send the inventory to students via campus mail. (Remember, for scoring purposes the survey cannot be folded.) If you choose this option, we suggest you encourage students to return the inventory promptly, by a specific deadline, and that you plan for follow-up mailings. You may also wish to designate a specific method for returning the completed inventory, e.g., "Bring your completed inventory to your next scheduled advising session." (Response rates are typically much lower with this distribution method, with ranges of 10 to 20 percent.)
5. Consider a web administration instead of, or in conjunction with, a paper-and-pencil administration. To learn more about our web-based administrations, refer to the Satisfaction Priorities Survey Administrations – Implementation Guidelines for **web-based administrations** or contact Ruffalo Noel Levitz.

The amount of time to complete the paper-and-pencil surveys

For the paper-and-pencil versions, students need approximately 30 minutes to complete Form A of the Student Satisfaction Inventory, approximately 20 minutes to complete Form B of the SSI, and approximately 25 minutes to complete the Adult Student Priorities Survey.

Additional guidelines when you plan to request assistance from faculty to administer the SSI or ASPS

1. Many institutions choose to administer the SSI and ASPS with assistance from their faculty during a regular class period or during a computer lab period. To further assist you in effectively administering the surveys with faculty support, we have developed the following additional guidelines.
2. It is helpful to provide faculty with plenty of advance notice that you would like to have the survey conducted during a class period or lab period. This allows faculty to anticipate the survey, to plan for it as part of their syllabus, and to encourage student participation in the

survey. You will face less resistance from faculty for classroom administrations if you provide adequate notice.

To reach the most representative cross-section of your student body, ask the registrar's office to identify which class period/lab period has the greatest number of students. For example, on many campuses the 9:00–10:00 a.m. class meeting slot on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday is the most popular class time. Other popular times are 10:00–11:00 a.m. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and 10:30–11:30 a.m. on Tuesday and Thursday. However, if you are surveying adult students, you are more likely to reach them during an evening class period. In general, it is more important for your sample to be representative than random.

As you are choosing the best class or lab period(s) for your situation, be sure to avoid systematically eliminating certain types of students, such as student-athletes, students with internships, or students with specific majors. For example, if you plan to administer the survey during a regular class period and you assume that all science majors are taking classes on a 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday schedule, you might inadvertently eliminate them from your sample if they have a required laboratory section that meets from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. every morning.

In addition, keep in mind that you may want to select classes led by faculty members who you know will be open to administering the survey during class time (see suggestions 3 and 4 in this section).

3. To ensure strong participation and support from faculty, consider meeting with your provost, vice president for academic affairs, or dean to explain the purpose of the survey and ask for their support. It is crucial that faculty support the survey effort. A letter to the faculty involved from the senior academic administrator can help show that this is an institutional priority. In your advance communication about the survey, it is helpful to share how you intend to use the results. Examples may include gathering data for accreditation purposes, identifying key areas for improvement in order to improve retention, tracking satisfaction trends, targeting messages for recruitment purposes, and strengthening continuous quality improvement efforts. Ask the faculty to share these institutional purposes with their students when the survey is distributed.

4. During the meeting with the senior academic administrator, decide whether asking students to complete a survey during a class period/lab period is appropriate on your campus. While asking students to complete a survey during class time generates more responses, you need to respect the academic culture of your campus. Many faculty are unwilling to use class periods/lab periods for an administrative task. If this will be an issue for a substantial number of faculty, then you should not ask them to use class time for students to complete the survey. Instead, you will need to choose another method for administering the survey, such as asking faculty to hand out the survey forms to their students during one class meeting and to collect them at the next class meeting. (If you choose this method of survey administration, be sure to give faculty an extra class meeting or two to collect completed survey forms from students who forgot to return their surveys by the initial deadline.) If you are anticipating a lot of resistance from faculty, you may want to administer a web version of the survey using email invitations; you can expect a lower response rate overall compared with an in classroom administration, but you will have respected the culture of your campus.

5. To make their job easier, consider distributing survey packets to faculty in their classrooms at the start of the class period/lab period rather than sending the packets to them through campus mail. This ensures that all faculty have received the survey forms on the same day at the same time. This also helps faculty remember that they've agreed to hand out the surveys in class. To further support faculty, you can return to the classrooms/laboratories at the end of the designated survey period to collect the completed surveys. This way faculty don't have to remember to put the surveys they collected in the campus mail to return them to you.

   Another option is to have student affairs staff or even student leaders proctor the survey administration. This gives the impression that the survey is more student-centered and is not another test being given by the faculty member.

   Be sure to keep track of all of the classes that the surveys have been distributed to, so you know when all completed surveys have been returned. You will want to ensure that you have received all completed surveys before returning them to Ruffalo Noel Levitz for scoring.

How to customize the surveys

You are encouraged to use the custom sections of the SSI and ASPS, which are available at no extra charge. There are three areas of the surveys that you can customize to meet your institution's needs. They are up to you to define.

1. The first section appears after the standard items on the survey and contains 10 items on the SSI and 20 items on the ASPS. These items are rated for importance and satisfaction by the student.
2. The demographic section at the end of the surveys allows for additional customization. You may add a single demographic question (multiple choice format), with up to six possible responses on the SSI or two demographic items on the ASPS, also with up to six possible responses each.
3. An unlimited list of your specific majors/programs can be included as the third area of customization.

Important: For the paper-and-pencil versions of Ruffalo Noel Levitz surveys, it is not necessary to inform us which items you decide to include in the customized sections because results for these sections will be identified by item number only in your Campus Report. All customization is handled on a separate sheet of paper that you will distribute along with the survey instruments.

Customizing the campus-defined 10-item (or 20-item) section for importance and satisfaction

This section accommodates up to 10 campus-defined items for the SSI (or 20 with ASPS) you create. We can supply sample items upon request. The items will be rated for a level of importance and a level of satisfaction. 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 question(s)

The demographic item(s) on the inventory provide an opportunity for you to gather additional demographic information through one question (two on ASPS). 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 question(s) can be used for any purpose you deem appropriate. The only requirement is that items should be written to elicit just one response from the six or less responses available—not multiple responses (see examples below). You can use this item (or items) to collect information such as how far the student travels each day to attend class, the particular campus the student attends (if your institution has multiple campus locations), the student's native language or involvement in campus activities, etc. Note from example B below that the item you design can include up to six response options.

Example A:
I receive financial aid.
1. Yes
2. No
3. North campus
4. South campus
5. East campus
6. West campus

Example B:
I attend most of my classes at the:
1. Main campus
2. Downtown campus

Customizing the list of majors/programs

This area asks students to supply a four-digit numeric code. Most institutions using this item will want to ask students to indicate a code that identifies their major or program. The four-digit codes are ones you define to correspond to the appropriate majors/programs for your campus. Using this approach, you can then order a customized Target Group Report by major/program/department to view the data from each major/program/department separately. Many campuses indicate this is a very useful way to segment the data. You could also view the data for entire academic departments by requesting an aggregate Custom Report using multiple major codes.

A couple of notes about the major/program codes:

- The list of responses to this item is unlimited but you will want to be sensitive to the number of options your students need to read through to select the appropriate answer.

- When assigning for-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 students when they are completing the survey.

- The students cannot select multiple options. For example, they cannot select Business and then select International as a subset of the business major.

- The code must be all numeric; alpha characters cannot be used.

- Be sure to proof your list to ensure that each four-digit code is listed only once. If you are doing a combination of both paper and online, make sure the uploaded lists are the same.

How to administer the customized sections of the paper-and-pencil version

To administer the customized sections of the paper-and-pencil surveys, prepare the items of your choosing on a separate sheet of paper for your students to refer to at the appropriate time. Below is an example for SSI Form A. You will need to adjust the item numbering for other versions of the survey. Results for the customized items are automatically summarized in your Campus Report, minus national norm comparisons.

Sample SSI • Form A customization

SSI Administration—items specific to our institution

Please respond to the following additional items and record your response on the actual inventory.

1. Coursework is challenging and demands my best effort.
2. Academic requirements and policies are fair and reasonable.
3. My experience at this college is preparing me for a career.
4. Internships and other kinds of field experiences are part of my college education or plans.
5. My courses are preparing me to work effectively in teams.
6. My advisor listens attentively.
7. Tutoring is available for students needing it.
8. The career planning and placement office provides adequate opportunities for pursuing job placements.
9. Counseling services meet the needs of the students.
10. On-campus nursing and emergency care services are adequate.
11. Student services staff members are courteous and helpful.

115. Major: Enter the appropriate 4-digit code and bubble the corresponding numbers.

1010	Associate, Accounting
1020	Associate, Criminal Justice
1030	Associate, Health Science
2010	Bachelors, Business Administration
2020	Bachelors, Criminal Justice
2030	Bachelors, Health Science
3010	Masters, Business Administration
3020	Masters, Criminal Justice
3030	Masters, Healthcare Administration

116. Item requested by your institution:
Do you receive financial aid?
1. Yes
2. No

Finishing up the survey administration

Send all completed inventories to Ruffalo Noel Levitz at our Iowa address:

SPS Processing
Ruffalo Noel Levitz
1025 Kirkwood Parkway SW
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

- Consider shipping via a traceable method such as FedEx, UPS, or registered mail to ensure that completed surveys are not lost in transit—we highly recommend this.

- Do not fold or staple survey forms.

- Remove any inserts and make sure all inventories are facing the same direction.

- Include our Scoring Request Form or a cover memo with your completed inventories. Cover memos should indicate who the surveys are coming from and the estimated number of surveys you are returning. Note: If your forms do not say Form B, you can mark Form A on the Scoring Request Form.

- Package any batches you want scored separately and label them as such, so it is clear they should be scored separately.

 Note: Ruffalo Noel Levitz will prepare your results as originally ordered. You are welcome to add (extra) optional reports to your order by simply completing an additional order form and returning it with your surveys. These additional reports will be produced and delivered with your results. We will send an invoice in the mail for the additional fees.

Results

Results will be delivered electronically to you approximately 10-12 business days after we receive your completed inventories—provided you carefully follow the instructions above. Your reports will be delivered 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/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;

- 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 access the satisfaction of your campus personnel with their employment. Visit www.RuffaloNL.com/Toolkit for more information.

Accreditation Documentation:

The Ruffalo Noel Levitz items have been mapped to accreditation criteria for the regional accreditors. For more information, visit www.RuffaloNL.com/accreditation.

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.