

Omnibus Survey for the School of Communication (OSoC)

Application and use procedures

Eligibility

Only individuals affiliated with the OSU School of Communication are eligible to use OSoC. Specifically, the resource is available to:

- Doctoral candidates collecting data for PhD dissertations
- Faculty (any rank, prioritized based on need)

Application requirements

The omnibus survey will go into the field once a year, in January. Applications are due in the beginning weeks of the Autumn semester (typically in late August; see the Appendix for a complete timeline). The Research Committee aims to announce these deadlines at least a month in advance. There is no application form. Instead, applicants must address the following topics in 1,250 words (5 double-spaced pages) or less. Please address each topic under its own section heading, even if the response is brief. The Research Committee values *conciseness*; please address each topic as succinctly as possible.

Applications should be submitted electronically via email to OSoC@osu.edu.

- **Statement of eligibility:** Applicant must indicate whether he or she is a doctoral candidate, assistant professor, associate professor, or full professor in the School of Communication. If faculty are submitting a pooled request (see guidelines below), the eligibility of all applicants must be confirmed.
- **Statement of need:** Evidence that a representative sample is required.
- **Study purpose:** A brief explanation of the study objectives.
- **Draft questionnaire:** A document that includes all questions and clearly indicates any branching, split forms, etc. Applicants may request a single item or substantial block (see below for limits). Modest manipulations are allowed, e.g., testing question order or priming effects via a split form.
- **Estimated survey completion time with justification:** Total length for the omnibus survey is 20 minutes, so awards will typically be for considerably less time (see below for more detail).
- **Requested profile variables:** GfK also provides core demographics and 25 “profile variable” with each omnibus survey. Profile variables are collected by GfK from all panelists annually. Relevant topics include political information, technology use, media use, and health (see <http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/fact-sheets/KnowledgePanel-Profiles.pdf> for more detail). Applicants are encouraged request items that complement the proposed questionnaire.
- **Planned analyses:** Briefly describe how the data will be analyzed.
- **Relevant experience:** Graduate student applicants should briefly describe relevant training, coursework, and/or experience with proposed data collection and analytic methods. Students may also identify relevant mentors here.
- **Summary of prior OSoC or TESO C use:** Applicants who have used either of the School’s shared research resources, TESO C (the participant pool) or OSoC, are required to report this in their

application and to include copies of previously submitted completion reports (see below) as an appendix.

- Graduate student applicants are also required to request that their advisor submit a **letter of support**. As with the application, the letter should be submitted electronically via email to OSOC@osu.edu.
- **IRB approval is NOT required to apply.**

If the Research Committee asks for revisions to the proposal prior to approval, please be prepared to respond very promptly (within a week). A submitted revision must include a letter responding to the prior review and an application with changes highlighted.

Application guidelines

These guidelines are intended to ensure access to this shared resource for as many qualifying faculty and grad students as possible.

- **Max. 5 minutes of survey time per application.** The full survey will take 20 minutes. Estimating approximately 20 seconds per item, this means a maximum of about 15 items. Some types of items (e.g., grids of Likert scales) may take even less time. **Informal testing of the proposed items is strongly encouraged.** If the items exceed the awarded time during the pilot test in the field, some will have to be cut.
- Applicants are **strongly encouraged to indicate which items are essential to the research**. If multiple applications are approved, applicants may be given less than their requested time (e.g., five applicants might get 4 min. each). Knowing which items are essential will allow the Research Committee to distribute this resource most equitably.
- **Faculty applicants may pool requests** (e.g., two faculty could request up to 10 minutes of survey time in a single application), but the Research Committee will favor smaller projects, respecting the fact that this is a shared, limited resource for researchers interested in a diverse range of topics.
- **Doctoral students must apply independently**; collaborative applications are not allowed.
- **Applicant may request buying additional time at their own expense.** The total survey length cannot exceed 30 minutes, which means that one awardee could buy ten additional minutes, two awardees could buy five minutes each, etc. Awardees should work with research committee to get cost estimates.
- **Applicants may request up to 25 profile variable, but should select 10 high priority items.** Awardees will need to work with the Research Committee to agree on a common set of 25 profile variables to include in the dataset.
- **Awardees may also purchase additional profile variables at their own expense.** These items have no impact on survey length, so awardees may purchase as many as they like. They should work with the research committee to get cost estimates.
- **Awardees may buy additional respondents at their own expense.** The default survey will include 500 respondents, but much larger samples are possible. Awardees will be responsible

covering any additional costs entailed. Awardees should work with research committee to get cost estimates.

- **IMPORTANT:** Note that all awardees will be granted access to the complete dataset, regardless of the awardee's financial contribution.
- Applicants may submit **one request each year**.

Application Assessment

Applications will be reviewed by the School of Communication Research Committee at the start of the Autumn semester. When evaluating applications, the committee will consider the following:

- **Is the objective clear?**
- **Does the questionnaire support the stated objective?** Are relevant and appropriate items proposed?
- **Is there need?** Studies benefiting from a representative sample get preference. Applicant status is also used to assess need. For example, graduate students, who generally do not have research funds, are a high priority. For tenure-track faculty, the pressure to develop a strong research pipeline is a valid consideration, though access to start-up funds may reduce need. Tenured faculty who have depleted seed funds and do not have access to other money for the proposed project are also prioritized.
- **Has the applicant used the program before?** First time or light users get priority, though this is only one of several considerations. If the applicant has used either OSoC or TESO, the committee will consider: Was completion report submitted and has the project generated results (presentations within school, conference papers, publications, grants, etc.)?
- **Appropriate skills and/or training:** If the applicant is a graduate student, does he or she have training for, experience with, and/or mentorship for survey design? Experience is not required, but is preferred.

Use requirements

An approved application is necessary, but not sufficient for use of OSoC. Researchers are responsible for a variety of other aspects of the project, both prior to and following data collection. These responsibilities include:

- Awardees are responsible for **submitting their final questionnaire in September**. There should only be minor revisions from the initial application.
- **Work with the Research Committee to finalize the complete survey questionnaire.** The Research Committee will assemble questions from approved applications into a single document. Awardees may be asked to provide assistance with this process, including potentially revising items in order to reduce redundancies across applications.
- Awardees may be asked to **assist the Research Committee with an IRB amendment application in September**. The School will obtain blanket approval for the survey, but an amendment that includes a justification for the revised survey items may be required. If the awardee has proposed an experiment embedded in the survey, s/he may be required to submit a separate

IRB application. Awardees should work with the Research Committee and the IRB to make this determination.

- **Awardees are responsible for reviewing the GfK version of survey document.** This document will be the standard against which subsequent survey programming is evaluated. Although GfK makes a reasonable effort to accurately represent submitted materials, errors do occur. The Research Committee will distribute the GfK-prepared document to awardees as soon as it is available, typically in December. Awardees must communicate corrections or approval in writing to the research committee within one week of receipt.
- All awardees will receive the complete dataset, including items proposed by others. **Awardees who wish to use items proposed by other awardees *must* work with those individuals to reach an agreement about how to proceed.** Using items without explicit permission is unethical, and can be the basis for declining future applications to use OSoC or TESO.
- **IMPORTANT:** These datasets will be made available to *all* faculty and graduate students of the School of Communication academic community three years after the data are collected.
- Recipient must **acknowledge OSoC in any manuscripts, presentations, or publications resulting from this work.**

Completion reports

Eight months after the survey data are collected, awardees must submit a report to the Research Committee that describes the outcomes of the research. The report should include:

- A brief description of the data collected (what items or scales).
- A summary of works planned or produced (or of lessons learned in the event that results are non-significant) based on these data.

Appendix: Typical Timeline

Summer

- Faculty and eligible graduate students draft proposals for items to be included in upcoming OSoC

August - September

- Faculty and eligible graduate students apply to use in OSoC
- Research Committee reviews applications, notifies applicants of decisions
- Research Committee assembles questionnaire that includes all accepted items
- Research Committee submits application to amend IRB application based on new questionnaire with awardees listed as project affiliates

October

- IRB reviews amendment

November - December

- IRB amendment approved
- Research Committee submits questionnaire to GfK for programming
- GfK prepares its own version of the questionnaire document, which awardees/Research Committee must correct or approve
- GfK completes survey programming
- Awardees review survey programming, work with Research Committee (who work with GfK) to resolve problems

January - February

- Survey pretest in the field for 1-3 days
- Minor revisions based on pretest allowed
- Survey released to field
- Data collection takes at least 10 days, and is more likely to take 14-21 days
- GfK delivers dataset, codebook, etc.

October

- Completion reports due