

Survey Analysis Tips

Given the time we ask of participants to respond to our surveys, it is important that we extract the most out of the data for program improvement purposes. The following are some tips to help with analysis of your survey data.

1. Consider number of respondents
 - Having at least 10 respondents in each stakeholder category (i.e., students, alumni, industry, faculty) provides confidence that the data will be usable to identify trends and insights.
 - The more respondents the better to provide confidence in the data.
 - If you have fewer than 10 respondents, the data is still usable but it's important to acknowledge the low number of respondents when reporting the data. (Note: if there are fewer than 10 faculty in a program, all data collected is usable.) Additionally, in these cases, consider reporting the number rather than percent of respondents when describing the data.
2. Review demographics
 - What range of stakeholders responded to your survey, and what insights can you take from that? (i.e., if you heard from alumni from 5 different graduating years, that provides a broader range of insight than hearing from only 1 or 2 graduating years)
3. Look for patterns or trends across survey responses
 - What themes stand out? Do you notice that there are any patterns emerging from the responses that indicate issues to look into further? If these patterns emerge across different questions this may provide good insight that there is an issue worth noting.
 - You may wish to correlate data across different questions or across specific respondent demographics to gain deeper insight.
4. Look at open ended comments for additional themes/patterns
 - Open ended comments can take time to analyze, but can be rich sources of insight. In particular, if you asked questions about future needs of the industry, this can provide important insights on potential impacts on curriculum.
5. When reporting your data:
 - Ensure you indicate how many people were invited to participate and response rates (how many people responded) to provide readers a sense of what proportion of stakeholders contributed to the survey.
 - Present the data comprehensively, clearly, and objectively. Ensure you include differing perspectives on issues found in the data to present a fair picture of the feedback received.
 - Consider including some quotes from the open-ended questions that provide additional insight in support of the numerical reporting.
 - If additional data gathering was conducted (for example, follow up focus groups), ensure you indicate what else was learned on relevant issues from these subsequent data collection methods.
 - Include your interpretations of the data and potential future impacts on the program (for example, possibly leading to recommendations as part of the program review process).