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**Guidelines for External Research Requests at Bethlehem University**

These guidelines aim at enhancing the oversight of external research requests, including questionnaires, interviews, surveys, focus groups, etc., at Bethlehem University. These guidelines will accomplish the following objectives:

1. Improve the coordination, quality, and timing of these external research requests;
2. Ensure that these requests observe ethical standards in research, protect the rights of participants, and maintain a sound research methodology;
3. Create a follow-up mechanism to monitor the meaningful use of the information collected at BU and the implications of the results to BU as they are used subsequent to the completion of project.

**Procedure**

**Submitting Requests for review:**

Researchers who are not affiliated with Bethlehem University must address their requests and seek the approval of the Office of the Dean of Research (hereafter DOR) at BU to distribute and administer external research requests to BU’s faculty, staff, and/ or students. Researchers should contact Dr. Jamil Khader, Dean of Research, at jamilk@bethlehem.edu.

All external research requests should include the following items:

1. A cover letter that states the title of the research project as well as the name, institutional affiliation, address, email address, telephone number, and signature of the principal investigator (faculty, staff or student). Students must also accompany their requests with a prior written approval from the pertinent advisor or the appropriate Dean at these institutions.
2. A brief description of the research request, including its purpose, target population, the research methodology, and the way in which the data obtained will be used. Researchers should also include a brief explanation of what would be expected of Bethlehem University should the request be approved.
3. A copy of all research instruments and measures to be used in the study.
4. A consent form to be filled out by the research subjects or participants. A sample Consent Form can be downloaded from the Questionnaire Guidelines page on the DOR website @http://bethlehem.edu/4-adm/avp/res/adm-avp-res-3-2-2015-questionnaire-policy-. Researchers should describe how you will ensure the confidentiality and protect the identity of the participants.

Faculty, staff, or students at BU who receive requests to complete and/ or disseminate external research requests must consult with the DOR and seek the Dean’s approval prior to committing to the completion and/ or distribution of such requests.

**Screening and Evaluating the Request**

The DOR reviews the request and forwards the request to an expert in the field, usually a member of the Research Council or faculty specialist in the discipline at BU, to evaluate the request, focusing on the ethical principles of the study and its methodology.

The DOR will then make a decision whether or not the request can be processed and distributed to the faculty, staff, or students at BU.

The DOR contacts the researcher and coordinates the timing of the administration of the research request with the Dean of Students, to avoid over-sampling and ensure it does not fall on important and stressful university calendar dates.

The approval of the DOR is valid as far as there is no change in the procedure of data collection or modification in any aspect of the research protocol. The approval does not also replace any departmental or any other approval that may be required.

**Distribution and Administration of Research Request**

In coordination with the Dean of Students, researchers may distribute their requests in academic halls, courts, or in classrooms, provided they obtain the written consent of the participants as well as the prior written approval of the pertinent professor. If proper arrangements are made, mass emails may be sent to faculty, staff, and students to encourage them to complete the requests on online service tools, including but not limited to, Survey Monkey or Qualtrics.

**No survey may be distributed via mass outlets such as e-class and no email addresses for faculty, staff, and students may be generated for research purposes.**

**Follow-up and Monitoring**

Subsequent the completion of the research project, in which the data collected was utilized, the DOR requests a copy of the final research product, in order to monitor the meaningful use of the data collected at BU and the implications of the information on BU.

**Internal Research Requests**

Except for research requests conducted in conjunction with an academic course and under the supervision of a BU faculty member, all other requests to or from BU faculty, staff, and/or students must be submitted for the approval of the DOR and are subject to the procedure above.