



## Inclusive and Functional Demographic Questions

Survey instruments often include questions that allow respondents to self-decribe various aspects of their personal and academic identities. Such questions and response items should be:

- Purposefully included based on an intentional rationale (e.g., monitor trends over time, disaggregate responses based on identity, distribute information) and;
- Designed in a way that acknowledges the scope, complexities, and contextualized nature of social identities (ACPA, 2013).

Demographic questions which exclude identity options where students are unable to select or are unable to select more than one category may result in unintended negative outcomes for respondents (Sanchez, 2010; Townsend, Markus, & Bergsieker, 2009). Rankin and Garvey (2015) discuss this as a balancing act of demographic survey questions which supports intersectional theory, inclusiveness, and quantitative methods. The following statements and survey questions are examples of how one might intentionally support this balance and honor students' fluid and intersecting identities.

## Demographic Questions

*The following questions about your identity and background will be kept private and secure. Responses will be used to better understand and serve all students at the University of Arizona.*

*Note: If possible, demographic questions should be optional for respondents to answer, as opposed to required. This allows respondents to continue taking the survey while skipping questions they may not feel comfortable answering at the moment.*

### What is your academic class standing?

- First-year
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate or Professional

### What is your enrollment status?

**Skip logic:** If "First-year, Sophomore, Junior, or Senior"

- Part-time (Fewer than 12 credits)
- Full-time (12 or more credits)

### What is your enrollment status?

**Skip logic:** If "Graduate or Professional"

- Part-time (Fewer than 9 credits)
- Full-time (9 or more credits)



**What is your student residency as declared by the University of Arizona?**

- Out-of-state student
- In-state student
- International student

**With which race/ethnicity do you identify? (Select all that apply)**

*Skip logic: If "Out-of-state student" or "In-state student"*

- African American or Black
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian American or Asian
- Hispanic or Latino
- Middle Eastern
- Multiracial
- Pacific Islander
- White or Caucasian
- An identity not listed, self-identify\_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Consider using "Latinx" as a gender-neutral alternative instead of "Latino"*

**We realize that the racial/ethnic category you selected encompasses many different nationalities. If you are interested in sharing more, please describe your nationality (i.e., Armenian, Puerto Rican, Vietnamese):**

- Open-ended text box

**With which gender do you identify? (Select all that apply)**

- Woman
- Man
- Transgender
- Non-binary
- Genderqueer or gender nonconforming
- An identity not listed, self-identify\_\_\_\_\_

*Note: For a more detailed gender and sexual orientation response item options, consider using suggested response items by the [Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource](#)*

**With which sexual orientation do you identify? (Select all that apply)**

- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay
- Heterosexual
- Lesbian
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Questioning or unsure
- An identity not listed, self-identify\_\_\_\_\_



**Which best describes where you currently live?**

- Fraternity/sorority housing
- Off-campus housing (within 5 miles of campus)
- Off-campus housing (farther than 5 miles from campus)
- Living at home with family
- Residence hall
- No stable residence

**Do you identify as someone with a disability or impairment?**

- Yes
- No

**Have either of your parent(s) or guardians earned a bachelor's degree or higher?**

- Yes
- No

**Do you identify as an active member or veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces, Reserves, or National Guard?**

- No
- Yes, veteran
- Yes, active duty

**Did you receive a Federal Pell Grant as part of your financial aid package?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

*Note: Pell grant eligibility is one way to assess if a student is from a lower socio economic status. Adjusted gross income and asset information from the student's FAFSA are used to calculate an Estimated Family Contribution (EFC). Full-time students with an EFC below ~\$5,200 are awarded a Federal Pell Grant as part of their financial aid package.*

**Are you employed?**

- Yes, 20 hours or more each week
- Yes, 19 hours or less each week
- No

**Is your place of employment on-campus?**



Skip logic: If "Yes"

- Yes
- No



**Which of the following most accurately describes your background?**

- My parents/legal guardians and I were born in the U.S.
- I was born in the U.S.; one parent/guardian was not
- I was born in the U.S.; both of my parents/guardians were not
- Foreign-born naturalized citizen
- Permanent legal resident
- Foreign born on student visa
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipient
- Refugee status
- Prefer not to answer

**What is your preferred religious identification?**

- Agnostic
- Atheist
- Baha'i
- Baptist
- Buddhist
- Catholic
- Church of Christ
- Christian (non-denominational)
- Eastern Orthodox
- Episcopalian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Latter Day Saints (Mormon)
- Lutheran
- Muslim
- Pagan
- Presbyterian
- Quaker
- Seventh-Day Adventist
- Spiritual but not religious
- United Church of Christ/Congregational
- An identity not listed, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**In which academic college is your major at UA?** (Select all that apply if more than one major)

- College of Agriculture and Life Science
- College of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture
- College of Education
- College of Engineering
- College of Fine Arts



- College of Humanities
- Eller College of Management
- James E. Rogers College of Law
- College of Letters, Arts and Science
- College of Medicine
- College of Nursing
- College of Optical Sciences
- College of Pharmacy
- Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health
- College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
- Graduate Interdisciplinary Programs
- Undeclared

**Are you a transfer student?**

- Yes
- No

**Are you an active member of a social Greek affiliated chapter at UA?**

- Yes, Social Fraternity
- Yes, Social Sorority
- I am not Greek affiliated

*Note: Shorter surveys increase response rates. Consider asking demographic questions in this alternative format to help reduce survey length.*

**Do you identify as any of the following?** (Select all that apply)

- Member of a social fraternity
- Member of a social sorority
- Transfer student
- Part-time student
- Current or former member of the U.S. Armed Forces, Reserves, or National Guard
- Student-athlete on a team sponsored by UA's athletics department
- Emancipated foster youth
- *Add or remove response items as needed*



## Coding Demographic Questions

The process of coding survey questions is part of the “Collect & Analyze Data” step of the [Assessment Cycle](#). Coding survey questions involves making thoughtful decisions about what numeric value is assigned with the question response items. Survey software (e.g. Campus Labs) automatically code responses in an ascending numerical order (e.g. 1, 2, 3...6). However, steps need to be taken to determine if variable responses need to be recoded into different or new categories to better support the analysis of data. Once question response items are coded with appropriate numeric values, software (i.e. Excel or Stata) allows for analysis of the data to produce assessment findings and insights. Demographic questions are commonly recoded to support statistical analysis based on these four reasons:

- **Open-ended responses:** “An identity not listed, self-identify” response option produces write-in responses that need to be coded
- **Select all that apply questions:** More than one response is selected in multiple choice questions indicated by “Select all that apply” survey prompt
- **Less than five respondents:** Demographic identity response items have less than five respondents
- **Collapsing demographic responses:** Data analysis and reporting context supports the need to collapse demographic responses

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### Open-ended responses

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Responses require recoding when a respondent enters a response within the opened-ended text box (i.e. “An identity not listed, self-identify”). This option provides a respondent the opportunity to self-identify instead of being limited by inadequate preset identity options. Open-ended responses are coded using a three step process:

- 1) Write-in responses which are already listed as preset response items should be recoded to the same corresponding numeric value. For example, a respondent who writes in “man” when asked about their gender identity should be coded to the same numeric value for “Man” in the survey question.
- 2) Similar write-in demographic responses should be collapsed together creating a new category. For example, five or more students who write in a religious or spiritual identity which is not listed should be coded as a new response item.
- 3) Remaining responses (i.e. identity groups with less than five respondents) should be collapsed into “Another identity” category and coded with a numeric value.



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### Select all that apply questions

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Demographic questions which entail the option of selecting multiple response items may need to be recoded depending on the context of the question and need for data analysis.

*Example:* Respondents who mark two or more race/ethnicities may be recoded as multiracial, which may support data analysis with having one demographic variable response item per respondent. This may not always be the case if your purpose for asking a student's racial or ethnic identity is to separately understand and communicate the two or more unique identities selected.

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### Less than five respondents

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To honor confidentiality, it is common practice in survey methodology to not report on demographic response identities if the number of respondents is less than five. This practice reduces the likelihood of respondents being identified and therefore breaking confidentiality and anonymity. Survey items with less than five respondents should be recoded and collapsed into other categories or into a new one.

*Example:* "Transgender", "non-binary", and "Genderqueer or gender nonconforming" may be recoded into a new category labeled "Trans\*/Another gender identity" to uphold confidentiality.

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### Collapsing demographic responses

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Assessment of outcomes and corresponding communication of findings may require an aggregated category of student response items.

*Example:* Academic class standing may be better suited for data analysis and reporting by collapsing "First-year", "Sophomore", "Junior", and "Senior" into a new coded category labeled "Undergraduate Students".

**Contact Assessment & Research for additional recommendations on coding guidelines for survey questions using [assessmentresearch@email.arizona.edu](mailto:assessmentresearch@email.arizona.edu) or (520) 626-2784.**



References:

ACPA. (2013). *ACPA standards for demographic questions*. Washington, DC.

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