

Library User Satisfaction Survey FAQ

How will the survey be conducted?

We are using LibQUAL+, a web-based survey that is used to define and measure library service quality across institutions of higher education. It is based on a modified version of SERVQUAL which has been used by the business community for some time.

LibQUAL+ uses "gap analysis" to identify the differences between users' minimal acceptable service level, perceived service level and desired service level. It identifies the users' "zones of tolerance" and provides data about where our services fall in relation to these zones.

Who will receive the survey?

A sampling of users from the University will be surveyed, including approximately 1,200 undergraduate students, 600 graduate students, 600 faculty and 600 staff. These individuals were randomly selected from the University community. Participants may opt to sign up for a drawing for a \$100.00 Best Buy gift card, or a gas card, or a gift card for the University Bookstore.

How will students and faculty receive this survey?

LibQUAL+ is administered through a scalable web interface. We gathered a random sample of e-mail addresses and sent a message to this group asking respondents to complete the survey on the Web. We worked with the University's Office of Institutional Research to generate the random sample using e-mail addresses from our online system.

Can a user start the survey and then return to it later to complete it?

The survey cannot be saved. However, if a respondent leaves the browser window open (on a personal computer), s/he can return to the survey later in this fashion.

Can users jump ahead in the survey?

Users can answer the questions in any order they please. However, skipping too many questions will make a survey invalid and not be included in our analysis.

What stops a user from taking the survey multiple times?

There is no way to restrict multiple survey completions by a single person because we are concerned with the privacy of a user's responses. Thus we do not collect IP addresses. However, all data will be collected, but only surveys in which all core items have a response (either minimum, desired, perceived, or N/A) and a user group selected will be included in the results notebook. Surveys with excessive N/A responses and surveys with excessive inconsistent responses will not be included in the analysis.

What will we do with this data?

LibQUAL+ will give us an opportunity to identify services needing improvement, as well as providing us with data that we can use with the University administration to support requests for resources and to better plan how we use our resources.

How will LibQUAL+ benefit library users?

After receiving the results of our survey, we will work to improve services our users have identified.

We will also compare our service quality with that of peer institutions in an effort to develop benchmarks and understanding of best practices across institutions.

The ultimate goal is to improve services and surpass user expectations and to better help users reach their learning and research objectives.

How long will the survey take?

The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

Are responses confidential?

Yes, your responses are completely confidential. The responses are automatically separated from any identifying information, including the e-mail addresses of respondents. The survey responses are analyzed off-site at the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). Responses are reported only in the aggregate.

What types of questions are asked in the survey?

There are two versions of the survey, LibQUAL+ and LibQUAL+ Lite. These versions will be randomly distributed to our sample. The instrument consists of questions that address three service quality dimensions that have been found to be valid in previous assessments of library services: service affect, library as place, and information access. Each question has three parts that ask respondents to indicate the minimum service level they will accept, the desired service level they expect, and the perceived level of service currently provided. This design will permit analysis of gaps between the level of service the user expects, perceives, and will accept.

Why are some of the survey questions redundant?

Redundancy in questions allows the survey designers to analyze the validity of each service quality dimension through statistical methods. Over time, questions that are not as effective as others in measuring the specific dimensions of service quality will be discarded.

Why are reminders sent to respondents who have already completed the survey?

Reminders are sent because research indicates that the single highest predictor of response rates in web-based surveys is the number of contacts made, including reminders. Due to security and

confidentiality features, everyone surveyed will receive reminders, even those who have already responded. When submitted, survey responses and identifying information are immediately disaggregated, so we have no way of knowing who has already responded. Reminders, therefore, are distributed to everyone in the survey group.

What happens to the results?

Survey data are transmitted directly from the LibQUAL+ server to a database. The data are analyzed and reports are generated for individual libraries. Participating libraries shall also have access to summary results for each institution, allowing for comparisons among peer institutions and all participating academic institutions. This will aid in developing benchmarks and understanding best practices across institutions, and will help our University Libraries align services with user expectations. The LibQUAL+ 2010 survey results will be one of several assessment strategies we shall use in planning services and resources to best meet student and faculty needs.

Is the survey exclusively web-based, or can I complete a paper version?

Paper versions of the survey are available for anyone unable to complete the web-based survey. Send a message to Lib.Dean@memphis.edu

Have other libraries used LibQUAL+?

More than 1,000 libraries have participated in LibQUAL+®, including colleges and university libraries, community college libraries, health sciences libraries, academic law libraries, and public libraries -- some through various consortia, others as independent participants. LibQUAL+ has expanded internationally, with participating institutions in Africa, Asia, Australia, and Europe. The growing LibQUAL+ community of participants and its extensive dataset are rich resources for improving library services.

For more information on LibQUAL+, see <http://libqual.org/home> or contact Lib.Dean@memphis.edu