

## Guidelines for Researchers Using Questionnaires

In order to provide a consistent experience for researchers, particularly for students doing research in the context of a class, the IRB provides these guidelines. These are based on normative practices as seen in the CITI training materials, established by IRBs at other institutions (Columbia and Georgetown in particular), and also espoused by data-ousetown 0.7 (

asked in the research. Collecting basic demographic characteristics of respondents is important. However, as highlighted in the points above, researchers should *justify* why they have included demographic questions, especially if they are highly detailed, as the inclusion of such questions should not be assumed to be standard practice and could result in de-anonymizing data. That is, collecting highly detailed demographic information could result in the possibility of individual participants being identified based on those characteristics. For example, a study of college students that includes the following demographic information could potentially be used to de-anonymize students: age, sex, sexual orientation, race, nation of origin, major, and whether or not they live on campus. Some majors have very few students. Knowing that a participant is, for instance 35, male, gay, black, from Trinidad, lives off campus, and is a Sociology major may result in identifying the one student who meets all those characteristics.

Additionally, researchers should be aware that demographic categories are changing. For instance, there are a growing number of people who do not identify their sex as male or female, but may choose intersex or other. Likewise, there are people who do not identify their gender as man or woman, but as transgender or queer, among many other options. Below are suggested wordings for some basic demographic questions that are inclusive and recognize our growing awareness of human diversity. As with any item, demographic questions are optional for the participant to answer.

1) Which of the following sex identities best fits you?

- Male
- Female
- Intersex
- Other: Please write your sex identity

2) Which of the following gender identities best fits you?

- Woman
- Man
- Transgender (optional)
- Cisgender (optional)
- Genderqueer (optional)
- Agender (optional)
- Gender Fluid (optional)
- Bigender (optional)
- Androgynous (optional)
- Other: Please write your gender identity

3) What is your race/ethnicity?

- Non-Hispanic: White
- Non-Hispanic: Black
- Hispanic: White
- Hispanic: Black
- Asian
- Other

4) What is your religion, if any?

- Roman Catholic
- None (this includes atheists, agnostics, brights, freethinkers)
- Southern Baptist
- non-denominational Christian
- Jewish
- Methodist (optional)
- Presbyterian (optional)
- Lutheran (optional)
- Muslim
- Hindu
- Buddhist
- Protestant (otherwise unspecified)
- Other