



Service Level Agreement

PURPOSE

The purpose of the service level agreement (SLA) is to ensure quality and efficiency of services provided by clearly defining scope of services, documenting the ad hoc research request process, establishing service expectations, and articulating customer responsibilities. The agreement, which represents a shared understanding between the Office of Institutional Research (IR) at Santa Monica College and its customers, provides a framework for effective delivery of core IR services. In the context of this agreement, the term “customer” represents faculty, staff, and managers who have authorized access to IR services.

The IR office and a group of power users of IR services worked collaboratively during the Fall 2018 semester to draft the SLA detailing mutual responsibilities.

The SLA will be reviewed annually to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the campus community and provide the most efficient and effective services to IR customers.

IR SERVICES PROVIDED

IR provides the following services to its customers:

1. Survey development, administration, and analyses support;
2. Compilation and analyses of historical and longitudinal data housed within the student information system;
3. Qualitative research support (focus groups, interviews, observations, etc.)
4. Analyses of original data collected by the customer;
5. Facilitation of one-on-one, small group, and department-level discussions describing the findings of a research study or data findings;
6. Training on data and research topics and tools;
7. Develop and maintain data dashboards using data visualization tools to support broad college planning and evaluation processes;
8. Publish and maintain a historical fact book about the college, including enrollment trends, student demographics, and student performance;
9. Support grant proposal and evaluation activities related to data and research;
10. Provide technical advice about data and research topics;
11. Maintain a content repository of previously published reports;

12. Serve as the intermediary between the MIS department and customers for data requests related to transactional data (current or future semesters);
13. Troubleshoot issues with survey software (Survey Gizmo) and data visualization and reporting tools (i.e., Tableau, Precision Campus);
14. (*Limited scope*) Data entry for survey data already collected by customers; and,
15. (*Limited scope*) Conduct a review of existing research literature on a topic.

The list of services is limited to the direct services provided to customers and do not represent the range of other functions of the office (for example, responding to accountability mandates).

SERVICES NOT PROVIDED

IR does not provide the following services:

1. Compilation and analyses of transactional data (current or future semesters) (see 12 above);
2. Data entry for information other than surveys (i.e., administrative);
3. Assistance with personal research projects (i.e., dissertation, class project) or work assigned to a customer as part of their contract (i.e., scope of work as a principal investigator of a grant); and,
4. Troubleshoot technology issues (with the exception of Survey Gizmo, Tableau, and Precision Campus).

AD HOC RESEARCH REQUEST PROCESS

In order to ensure a timely and efficient response, IR provides a single point of contact for all data and research support requests. Requests can be made by using the online research request form (<http://smc.requestresearch.sgizmo.com/s3/>) or by emailing research@smc.edu.

Requests will be assigned to an IR team member based on workload, availability, and/or subject matter expertise. We will make reasonable efforts to accommodate requests for specific team members to be assigned to your project; however, we cannot guarantee that your request will be met.

Emergency data requests: Call (310) 434-4556, M - F 7:00 am - 5:00 pm.

Senior administration can request data or research assistance by directly contacting the Dean.

REQUEST PRIORITIZATION

All requests are prioritized based on a combination of several factors:

- Requested date
- Project deadline or level of urgency
- Scope of work
- Impact on college-wide goals, priorities, grants, or initiatives

OUR COMMITMENT

IR is committed to delivering excellent customer service by:

- Responding to all ad hoc requests for data or research support with an emailing acknowledging receipt of request (including project number and team member assigned) within 2 business days;
- Provide an estimated timeline for request resolution/project completion (when appropriate);
- Provide timely communication about projects (within 2 business days);
- Respond to follow-up questions and requests for follow-up data within 5 business days;
- Publish and maintain a college research agenda with input from the Research Advisory Committee and key stakeholders;
- Publish and maintain a calendar of annual campus-wide surveys with input from the Research Advisory Group and key stakeholders;
- Provide a comprehensive research and evaluation plan for key grants and college-wide initiatives (i.e., Title III HSI, AB 705, Adult Education Program); and,
- Automatically disaggregate all requested quantitative data by ethnicity/race (all other student variables need to be requested).

IR's explicitly is committed to the following for racial equity data requests:

- Provide a bullet pointed summary of the key findings of data analyses describing racial equity outcomes and gaps to assist customers with data interpretation;
- Frame the summary using an equity-minded framework;
- Invite customers for a one-on-one or small group meeting to discuss the findings and answer questions about methodology, analyses, or interpretation; and,
- Provide coaching for disseminating or presenting the data findings to larger groups (department meetings, Flex, etc.).

CUSTOMER RESPONSIBILITIES

To ensure you receive timely and quality service from IR, please:

- Prior to making a new data or research support request:
 - Review the research agenda (to avoid duplicate requests);
 - Check existing self-service data tools to ensure data that is being requested does not exist elsewhere (to avoid replication of efforts);
- Consult with department chair, program leader, or manager prior to making a request (only department chairs, managers, program leaders, and committee chairs are able to make a request);
- Be flexible as the specific details of a request may be modified based on the availability of data and tools and the principles of effective research and evaluation methods;
- Provide sufficient time when determining requested due dates;
- Respond to communication about a request in a timely manner (within 5 business days);
- If necessary, request follow-up data within 5 business days of receipt of deliverable (report, data). Requests for follow-up data past the 5 business days will be treated as a new request;
- Provide justification for repeat requests; and,
- Track the due dates for repeat projects and prompt IR for assistance each time.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

IR will measure and monitor the following metrics to ensure delivery of efficient and quality services:

- Number of ad hoc requests fulfilled
- Average time to start project (number of business days between request date and project start date)
- Average time to complete project (number of business days between project start and end date)
- Customer satisfaction

FORMAL FEEDBACK PROCESS

The IR office will provide a virtual suggestion box on the IR website. The feedback will be reviewed on a monthly basis.

Reviewed by a group of IR power users on November 19, 2018.

Reviewed by Senior Staff on January 29, 2019.

Edits approved by the Research Advisory Committee on April 23, 2020.