WHY ASK ABOUT DEMOGRAPHICS?

• Using inclusive language in your survey functions as a way to signal to your survey takers that you recognize and welcome that there are many different types of people in your program/class.

• When you compare responses across groups, you may find clues about how to attract a more diverse set of participants/students. In any case, you will gain insight into who is in your program and taking your survey.

• If you have National Science Foundation (NSF) funding for computing-related projects, NSF is interested in data disaggregated by the following demographics: people who identify as women, non-binary, or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Queer (LGBTQ); persons of Latinx, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska native, native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander descent; and/or those with a disability.

SHOULD A RATIONALE BE PROVIDED? YES!

Before you ask for participant demographics, we recommend adding some language that provides context and explanation. Below are three examples:

1. We respect human diversity and understand that sexual orientation and gender identity and expressions are sensitive and personal matters. To improve the effectiveness of our organization and ensure we address the needs of our entire community, please let us know the following demographic information.

   - or -

2. The following questions are for research purposes only.

   - or -

3. The following questions will allow us to compare anonymous responses across groups to ensure our program is as inclusive as possible.

   - or -

4. The following questions are asked to enable comparisons of anonymous responses across individuals and groups in order to understand the different experiences of people with different identities. We believe it is important to ask about these intersecting identities in case individuals from certain groups are having substantively different perceptions and experiences compared to individuals from other groups. We understand that because our program/class is small, responding to these demographic questions could by their nature identify individuals. Only XYZ will have access to the survey data. Data will be aggregated and presented so that no individuals will be identifiable from the results that are shared.
WHAT ELSE SHOULD I CONSIDER?
In all research and evaluation, there is a balance to be found between being inclusive and being intrusive. Consider the following:

- There is a long-held value in social science research and evaluation that holds that we should not ask for any data we cannot use. So, to be respectful to respondents and decrease survey burden, don’t ask what you don’t need.

- Anonymity can also be at stake, depending on your sample size and diversity. **You should not collect** demographic data for anonymous surveys if your sample includes fewer than about 30 respondents.

- Alternatively, not providing an opportunity for your participants to signal an identity that is important to them has the potential to be harmful. For example, if a survey asked you what your favorite color was, but only offered blue and red, some people would definitely feel left out and not valued.

- Including the opportunity for individuals to state their identity signals that you recognize and value diversity of experience.

- Add demographic questions to the end of your surveys, research has shown that **stereotype threat** can be evoked by asking gender and race questions at the beginning of questionnaires.

- When asking for sensitive information, be sure to keep surveys anonymous or confidential, and to store the data in secure ways so that no one other than the research or evaluation team can access these potentially identifying data.

CLICK BELOW TO JUMP TO SURVEY ITEMS FOR COLLECTING DATA ON:

- **Gender**
- **Race and Ethnicity**
- **Sexual identity**
- **Disability**
ASKING ABOUT GENDER

HOW DO I DECIDE WHICH OPTION TO USE?

A. Are you surveying fewer than about 30 individuals?
   Use Option 1 or 2

B. Do you want to compare responses across genders?
   Use Option 1 or 2

C. Do you want to learn the representation of various gender identities who took the survey?
   Use Option 1 or 2

D. Are you trying to understand the experience of trans people specifically?
   Use Option 3

OPTION 1 - (CLOSED-ENDED)
Which of the following gender categories best describes how you self-identify?

☐ Woman
☐ Man
☐ Non-Binary
☐ Prefer to describe: ______
☐ Prefer not to state

OPTION 2 - (OPEN-ENDED)
What is your gender identity? ________________________________________

OPTION 3 - (ADAPTED FROM BY A TWO-STEP MODEL, DEVELOPED BY SOCIOLOGISTS FOR TRANS JUSTICE)

This survey item asks for information that can be perceived as intrusive and personal, only use this in the event that you are collecting information specifically to understand the experiences of trans and non-binary participants.

What is your current gender identity? [Select one.]

☐ I identify as a woman.
☐ I identify as a man.
☐ I identify as non-binary.
☐ I have another gender identity, which is______________________________.
☐ I prefer not to disclose.

Continues on next page....
Are you transgender? That is, is your gender identity different from the gender typically expected for people who share the sex you were assigned at birth? [Select one.]

- Yes, I am transgender.
- No, I am not transgender.
- I prefer not to disclose.

If you are also needing data on intersex people, include this third question as well:

Intersex status
Which of the following describes the physical sex status you were born with? [Select one.]

- I am intersex by birth. (I was born with a difference of sex development or DSD.)
- I am not intersex by birth.
- I prefer not to disclose.
ASKING ABOUT RACE AND ETHNICITY

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I CONSIDER WHEN ASKING ABOUT RACE AND ETHNICITY?

• Race and ethnicity are asked about in many different ways, and the approaches have changed over time, even within “official” surveys, such as the U.S. Census.
  - If you are matching your data against U.S. Census data, then their distinctions may be important to you. If not, you may want different distinctions.¹

• No matter what, the race/ethnicity question(s) should always be multiple response. In other words, respondents should be able to mark as many categories as they identify with.

• The survey items should always be in alphabetical order to indicate that none is more important than the other.

OPTION 1 - (BEST FOR PAPER SURVEYS)
Which best describes your race/ethnicity? Check all that apply.

☐ American Indian, Alaska native or First Nations
☐ Asian
☐ Black or African-American
☐ Hispanic or Latinx
☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
☐ Middle Eastern or North African
☐ White
☐ Prefer not to say
☐ Prefer to describe: __________________

OPTION 2 - (OPEN ENDED, BEST FOR PAPER SURVEYS OR TO SAVE SPACE)
Please describe your race and ethnicity: _________________.

Continues on next page....

¹The US Census Bureau defines race as a person’s self-identification with one or more of the following groups: White, Black/African American, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, or Other. Survey respondents may report multiple races. The Census Bureau defines ethnicity as simply whether a person is of Hispanic origin or not. Individuals who consider themselves Hispanic/Latinx may report as any race(s).
OPTION 3 - (BEST FOR DIGITALLY ADMINISTERED SURVEYS)

Which of the following ethnic or racial categories best describes how you self-identify?

Select all that apply.

- African-American or Black
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Middle Eastern/North African
- Native American/Alaska Native/First Nations
- Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian
- White
- Prefer not to answer
- Prefer to describe ________________________________________________

SKIP LOGIC:

- If “Asian,” go to question set 1.
- If “Hispanic/Latinx,” go to question set 2.

QUESTION SET 1:

Which of the following groups best describes your background?

Check as many categories as apply.

- Bangladeshi
- Cambodian
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Hmong
- Indian
- Indonesian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Loatian
- Malaysian
- Pakastani
- Sri Lankan
- Taiwanese
- Thai
- Vietnamese
- Asian Not Specified
- Prefer not to answer
- Prefer to describe ________________________________________________
QUESTION SET 2:

Which of the following groups best describes your background?

Check as many categories that apply.

☐ Mexican
☐ Central American: Costa Rican, Guatemalan, Honduran, Nicaraguan, Panamanian, Salvadoran, Other Central American
☐ South American: Bolivian, Chilean, Colombian, Ecuadorian, Paraguayan, Peruvian, Venezuelan, Other South American
☐ Other Hispanic or Latino: Spaniard, Spanish, Spanish American, All other Hispanic
ASKING ABOUT SEXUAL IDENTITY

Why ask about sexual identity?

• Responses can help you understand the number of individuals with marginalized sexualities involved in your program/classroom and how their experiences compare to others.

• You can assess feelings of inclusion among individuals with marginalized sexualities or identify barriers they may be experiencing. For example, barriers may include the fear that coming out will have negative repercussions for them.

Which of the following best describes you?

☐ Heterosexual or Straight
☐ Gay or Lesbian
☐ Bisexual
☐ Pansexual
☐ Asexual
☐ Queer
☐ Prefer to describe:_______________
☐ Prefer not to share.
ASKING ABOUT DISABILITY

WHY ASK ABOUT DISABILITY?

• Disability is an important, but oft-overlooked, dimension of broadening participation in computing. To date, there has been relatively little data collected on this demographic characteristic within the computing community. The reasons for this are explored in this article from ACCESS Computing that advocates for collecting more and better data on disability.

• Like other demographics, including questions about disability can allow you to compare responses across groups, and may enable you to learn more about making sure your program/intervention is inclusive for people of all abilities.

• Here is the ADA definition of disability: Persons with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities.

• Note that some individuals may self-identify as having a disability even if they do not have an official diagnosis.

• Note that some individuals with a disability may not identify as “disabled” and/or may not choose to disclose any disability on an evaluation or research survey.

• Note that at the K-12 level, there may be data available with student records under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (e.g., IEP or 504 plans).

• If you ask about ability/disability prior to implementing your program or intervention, you can provide accommodations needed by participants. (In other words, doing so could be a program administration-related question as well as an evaluation-/research-related question.)

• As with all survey questions seeking sensitive information, it is important to ask yourself why you are collecting these data and what you intend to do with them. Also, be sure to indicate to respondents how the collected data will be used and stored.

BELOW ARE THREE OPTIONS FOR ASKING ABOUT DISABILITY ON A SURVEY.

• If your legal department or Institutional Review Board does not allow you to ask about specific conditions or diagnoses, then use Option 1. If you can ask a two-part question, and particularly if you plan to publish your data, then use Options 2 or 3 to collect the fullest information possible.

• Whichever option you choose, keep the question consistent over time if you want to collect longitudinal data. For the sake of reproducibility, in reports or articles, share the wording of your question.

OPTION 1

Do you identify as a person with a disability or other chronic condition?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to answer
OPTION 2
(Some may prefer to ask this without skip logic to enable a variety of response options.)

Q1. Do you identify as a person with a disability or other chronic condition?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to answer

Q2. How would you describe your disability or chronic condition?

Select all that apply.

☐ Attention deficit
☐ Autism
☐ Blind or visually impaired
☐ Deaf or hard of hearing
☐ Health-related disability
☐ Learning disability
☐ Mental health condition
☐ Mobility-related disability
☐ Speech-related disability
☐ Other (please specify, optional)

OPTION 3

Q1. Do you have any of the following disabilities or chronic conditions?

Select all that apply.

☐ Attention deficit
☐ Autism
☐ Blind or visually impaired
☐ Deaf or hard of hearing
☐ Health-related disability
☐ Learning disability
☐ Mental health condition
☐ Mobility-related disability
☐ Speech-related disability
☐ Other (please specify, optional)