

Demographic Survey Questions – 2023

The Division of Student Affairs has prioritized work related to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI), including closing known equity gaps in outcomes for student populations. Part of the division’s JEDI commitment is identifying which students we are serving (or not serving), and working to understand and improve their experiences as they engage in our programs and services.

This document is intended to serve as a resource for our division and includes recommended language for survey items that may include questions related to students’ identities, as well as reporting the results. This resource is intended to provide consistency in language and reflects current “best practices” in the field of Student Affairs.

Key Assumptions:

1. We will only ask questions about student identities that are truly needed, and when the information is intended to be used to inform our work and improve our programs and services.
2. We will work to protect the privacy of our students, and to the extent possible, ensure anonymity when reporting results. Note that for some questions, student anonymity is legally required.
3. We will be transparent and forthcoming to students about why we are asking demographic questions and what we intend to do with the information.
4. We should allow students the choice to “opt out” of questions when possible.

**Note: Identity is multi-faceted, intersectional, and complex. Thus, the language we use to describe identities for the purpose of assessment and evaluation continues to evolve, and therefore inherently imperfect. This document will continue to be a work in progress and we commit to continuing to update it as we learn and understand more.*

***Special thanks to Institutional Research, USU Assessment, and the staff of DRES, the Pride Center, the Veterans Resource Center, and the DREAM Center for their assistance with developing this document.*

How do you identify in terms of Race/Ethnicity?

*(*It is preferable to allow participants to “select all that apply” if at all possible. If not, the option to identify as multi/biracial should be included)*

- American Indian, Indigenous, Alaska Native
- Asian-American
- Black or African-American
- Latinx/a/o or Hispanic

- Middle Eastern, Southwest Asian, North African
- Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian
- White
- Multiracial or Biracial (*please specify*)
- Prefer not to State

When categorizing students for reporting, [terminology used by the Cal State System](#) includes:

Traditionally Underrepresented: This group includes persons who identify with the ethnic categories: Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American/American Indian.

URM (Underrepresented Minorities): Students identified as African American, American Indian, or Hispanic.

**Note for any system/campus reporting, you may need to use the [IPEDS categories](#). Middle Eastern/SWANA is included in White for IPEDS.*

***Additionally, International is included as an option for CSUN's application with this question so you may consider including it if you need to align with campus level data.*

However, for reporting in Student Affairs, more inclusive language and preferred language to use would be Traditionally or Historically Underserved Students and Better Served Students.

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

**It is preferable for these questions to allow participants to "select all that apply" if at all possible.*

How do you identify in terms of gender?

- Man
- Woman
- Transgender
- Genderqueer
- Non-binary
- Gender Identity Not Listed (please specify): _____
- Prefer not to State

If not using all categories for reporting, the preferred language is Men, Women, Non-Binary, and Unknown.

How do you identify in terms of sexual orientation?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gay • Lesbian • Bisexual • Pansexual • Queer • Asexual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demisexual • Unsure/Questioning • Heterosexual • Sexual Orientation Not Listed (please specify): _____ • Prefer not to State |
|---|--|

If not using all categories for reporting, the preferred language is Heterosexual/Straight, GLB+, and Unknown

Definitions of First Generation [according to the CSU System](#):

First Generation of Family to Earn a Bachelor's Degree: A student with one or more parents who attended college, and neither had earned a bachelor degree or higher.

First Generation to Attend College: A student who is among first generation of their family to attend a college or university; parents did not attend college.

Level of education of my parents (or legal guardians/caregivers):

- At least one graduated from a 4-year college/university
- At least one graduated from a 2-year college
- At least one attended some college/university but didn't graduate
- Neither attended any college
- Prefer not to State

If not using all categories for reporting, the preferred language is First-Generation Students, Continuing Generation Students, and Unknown.

Veteran Status

**When room for only one question in this category, the following is recommended:*

Are you a Veteran or a Military-Connected Family Member?

- Veteran/Active Duty
- Military-Connected
- Neither (Civilian)
- Prefer not to State

When there is allowance for more than one question in this category, please use all of these questions:

Have you served in the armed forces? (Y/N) If yes, two additional items:

Which branch:

- Army
- Navy
- Air Force
- Marine Corps
- Coast Guard

- Space Force

Do you identify as:

- Active duty
- Veteran
- Reserves

Are you a dependent of a service member? (Y/N) If yes, one additional question item:

Are you:

- Married to a service member/veteran
- Child of a service member/veteran

If not using all categories for reporting, the preferred language is Veteran Students, Military Connected Students, Civilian Students, Unknown.

Immigration Status

Note: If this question will be used, please ensure it remains anonymous and does not allow the response to be traced back to the student. If somehow answers will be traced back to the student, do not include this question as there are possible legal and ethical implications. Please consult with the Assessment Office or Institutional Research.

Which of the following best describes your immigration status?

- Asylum/Refugee
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) Recipient
- Formerly undocumented
- International Student
- Legal Permanent Resident (LPR)
- Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
- U.S. Citizen
- Visa (T, U, J, or F)
- Prefer not to State
- Other (please specify) [Textbox] following best describes your immigration status?

If not using all categories for reporting, the preferred language is International Students, U.S. Citizens, Undocumented/DACA Students, Unknown

Disability Status

Note: If this question will be used, please ensure it remains anonymous and does not allow the response to be traced back to the student. If somehow answers will be traced back to the student, do not include this question, as there are possible legal and ethical implications. Please consult with the Assessment Office or Institutional Research.

Are you a student with a disability?

- Yes

- No
- Prefer not to State

If not using all categories for reporting, the preferred language is Students with Disabilities, Students without Disabilities, and Unknown.

Parental Status

Are you the parent or legal guardian of a minor(s)?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to State

Student Status

What type of student are you?

- Undergraduate
- Masters
- Doctoral
- Non-degree or certificate

Class Standing (for undergraduates):

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior

**Alternately you could ask "What was your first semester at CSUN?"*

Did you transfer to CSUN from another college/university?

- Yes
- No