Spit for Science: The VCU Student Survey

Survey Content Submission Guidelines

Who May Submit a Proposal to Add Survey Items to Spit for Science Questionnaires:

Any VCU faculty member or researcher from another affiliation/institution may submit a proposal. Trainees who are interested in submitting proposals for the addition of survey content must be sponsored by a faculty member, who will assume responsibility for the trainee. The overarching goal of the Spit for Science initiative is to understand how genetic and environmental factors contribute to college behavioral and emotional health outcomes and to use this information to inform prevention/intervention policy and programming, in ways that promote student success. In addition to the basic research aims focused on college behavioral and emotional health, Spit for Science seeks to provide innovative learning opportunities for students and outreach activities related to raising awareness about topics relevant to Spit for Science. Proposals for content items that apply to any of these project goals will be considered. The Spit for Science Steering Committee, an interdisciplinary group of faculty with interest and relevant expertise in college behavioral and emotional health, will make decisions about survey content.

Limitations to Consider:

New survey items will be incorporated into current Spit of Science questionnaires. To maintain a high level of student participation, the time required to complete the full Spit for Science questionnaire must be approximately 15-30 minutes. Investigators are encouraged to consider item length when developing proposals. It is easier to find space for a smaller number of items. Longer or more burdensome measures are more challenging to include. We encourage investigators to use factor analysis and other data reduction techniques to create the smallest meaningful number of items that can assess a construct of interest. Content areas that have been added in the past generally consisted of 1-6 items. Alternatively, an investigator may add a screening item(s) to identify potential Spit for Science participants for a spin-off study. There is a separate review process for spin-off study proposals, to inquire email [spit4science@vcu.edu](mailto:spit4science@vcu.edu).

Protocol Submission:

Investigators seeking approval to add survey items to Spit for Science questionnaires should submit a brief proposal using the *Survey Item Proposal* Form to the Spit for Science Project Coordinator for review by the Spit for Science Steering Committee. Decisions about survey content inclusion will be made based on existing funding and/or potential for funding, proposed use of content, item burden, and other areas as delineated on the *Survey Item Proposal Form.* All investigators should review the Spit for Science Codebook prior to submitting a proposal. Codebooks can be requested by emailing [spit4science@vcu.edu](mailto:spit4science@vcu.edu).

How To Submit a Proposal:

Each semester, the Spit for Science Steering Committee will hold an official call for survey item submissions. Interested investigators must submit a detailed proposal (*Survey Item Proposal Form)* and their CV/biosketch to [spit4science@vcu.edu](mailto:spit4science@vcu.edu) for review. Decisions will be made by weighing the alignment of the proposed survey items with the overarching aims of the Spit for Science project. The number of proposed survey items will also be considered. Additional information may be requested to make a final decision.

After a Proposal is Approved:

The Spit for Science project aims to enhance interdisciplinary collaborations among researchers at VCU and the broader scientific community. In that spirit, all approved items and their data are considered a part of the Spit for Science project and will be deposited into the Spit for Science Registry. Researchers who have approved survey items must demonstrate how their items were used (e.g., outreach, student teaching, publications, etc.) in order for future proposals to be considered. Researchers will also be expected to attend periodic meetings of all scientists involved in working with Spit for Science data. They may be asked to present their findings at these meetings.