

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can my college administer *SENSE* 2021 online?

If possible colleges should administer the paper-and-pencil version of *SENSE*. Colleges can administer *SENSE* 2021 online if it is the best option to reach their students in the fall of 2021.

2. How can my college register for the online version of *SENSE* 2021?

During [registration](#), colleges will indicate if they intend to administer the in-class paper-and-pencil survey, the online version, or if there is not enough information available yet to make a decision. Please e-mail surveyops@cccse.org with questions about your college's administration modality.

3. My college is offering in-person classes in fall 2021, but we would rather administer the online survey. Can we?

For colleges offering in-class instruction, the Center strongly recommends in-class administration. With an in-class administration, colleges are more likely to obtain representative data.

4. How long does the online survey take to complete?

The survey takes most students about 20 minutes to complete.

5. What are the risks associated with administering the online survey?

Historically, online versions of Center surveys have yielded lower response rates than the paper-and-pencil, in-class surveys; however, this does not mean data collected through an online survey administration will not be useful. It is imperative, though, that colleges encourage all eligible students to complete the survey and send reminders as needed to improve response rates. College contacts will receive a procedure guide for the online survey on May 3, 2021, that will include sample communications from the college president to faculty about the survey, sample communications from the college president to students about the survey, reminder message templates, graphic examples for communicating about the survey through social media, and tips for increasing the online survey response rate.

Prior to the administration, Center staff will host a webinar describing the recommended survey processes as well as examples of promotional strategies that have been used by other colleges.

6. What can our college do to increase the number of students who respond to the online survey?

The Center believes communicating the importance of the survey to students and faculty is critical to the success of the administration. The Center's goal is for colleges to receive adequate data for making informed decisions when thinking about redesigning the student experience, and the efforts undertaken by colleges during the survey process can help this happen.

Colleges can encourage faculty who teach developmental courses, first-level English and math courses, and student success courses to include targeted messages about the survey on their learning management system course pages. Those who lead online orientation for new students can promote the survey in that space. Tips such as these as well as communication templates will be included in the procedure guide that is sent to the college contact.

Prior to the administration, Center staff will host a webinar describing the recommended survey processes as well as examples of promotional strategies that have been used by other colleges.

7. Can colleges implement processes to encourage participation in the survey beyond what is recommended in the survey administration materials?

While the Center does not endorse a particular promotion process beyond what is described in the procedure guide and other materials, some colleges may decide to implement additional processes locally as they align with their institutional policies.

8. How does the online *SENSE* differ from the paper-and-pencil version of the survey?

The items in the online version of *SENSE* are the same as those on the [paper-and-pencil counterpart](#), except the online survey will incorporate skip patterns for items where this is appropriate. Both the online and paper-and-pencil surveys will include a special-focus module on [Students in Need](#), unless colleges opt to add two fee-based modules.

9. If the online version of *SENSE* is essentially the same as the paper-and-pencil version of the survey, are the items applicable to students taking classes in the online environment?

The items on the *SENSE* instrument measure entering student engagement, which is a proxy for student success. Colleges can use the information gleaned from an online administration of the survey to determine if their entering students are being engaged at the same levels in the online environment as they are in face-to-face classes. Please contact data@cccse.org if you would like to discuss this further.

10. What type of reporting should my college expect if we administer the online survey?

Colleges will receive the same reporting as for the paper-and-pencil administration. By March 1, 2022, college presidents and college contacts will receive access to raw data files, standard reports (including the Executive Summary of Results), and custom reports via the *SENSE* online reporting system. Learn more about *SENSE* reporting [here](#).

11. Who should receive the online survey?

The online survey should be sent to all entering students at the college. Alternatively, the survey could be sent to all students in developmental education courses, first-level English and math courses, and student success courses. The college should communicate with these students in advance of the survey being sent and throughout the survey administration process. The Center will provide communication templates for these targeted messages.

12. How is the survey sent?

Each participating college will receive a unique survey link. Each survey eligible student must enter a unique access code to gain entry into the survey. Access codes should be submitted to the Center by participating colleges, and they should be something students know, such as an ID or e-mail address. The College will be responsible for delivering the online survey link and access code instructions to students. The Center will not collect student IDs on the online survey. Colleges will need to track which students receive each access code in place of tracking students through IDs. The Center will provide a responder tool that the college contact can use throughout the survey administration process. The tool will list access codes that have been used so that the contact can match unused access codes with students who have not responded to the survey and send them targeted reminder messages. The Center will provide reminder message templates to the college contact.

13. Can the online survey be administered to students taking face-to-face classes?

If some courses are meeting face-to-face, the college may want to consider setting aside class time to allow students to complete the online survey. Each student will need a smartphone, tablet, or computer with Internet access. The person administering the survey can distribute the survey link and access code instructions to the students in the face-to-face classroom. In order to avoid confusion, it may be prudent to withhold sending invitations to the students enrolled in face-to-face classrooms if the online administration will happen in those classrooms.

14. What is a reasonable response rate goal for my college?

Response rates for online surveys will be lower than the typical paper-and-pencil version of *SENSE*. The size of your college also has a big impact on how many respondents are needed for the data to be “useable.” For example, if your college has an entering student population of 5,000 students, a 25% response rate would be 1,250 respondents; a 10% response rate would be 500. Under either scenario, representativeness would have to be evaluated; while a higher percentage response rate increases the probability that the respondents will be representative, it does not assure that. Research suggests that a response rate of 5%, or possibly even lower, could be useable. However, representativeness would still need to be evaluated. For more information, please send you questions to data@cccse.org.

15. What is the deadline for students to respond to the online survey?

The survey response deadline is November 5, 2021. The campus contact will be reminded of the deadline as it approaches.

16. What is the cost of administering the online survey?

The cost is the same as for the [in-class survey administration](#). Colleges will receive the same level of service and reporting with the online survey as with the paper-and-pencil administration.

17. Can we include a special-focus module with the online survey?

Colleges participating in the online survey will have the exact same [special-focus module options](#) as those administering on paper.

18. If my college decides it is unable to administer the online survey after registering for it, what is the cancellation policy?

If a college withdraws at any time after the college distributes the survey link to their students, there will be a cancellation fee equivalent to 25% of the total base membership fee. If payment has already been made, the college may elect to have the appropriate amount refunded or to have the remaining balance applied as a credit toward future services. If payment has not yet been made at the time of withdrawal, the college will receive an invoice for the appropriate amount, as stipulated in this policy.