

RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCE SURVEY RESEARCH BRIEF: GRAPHICS IN SURVEY RECRUITMENT

KEY FINDINGS

- **48.8%** of invited students opened the RES.
- There was no significant difference in the RES response rates when a graphic (official banner) was included in the recruitment email.

SURVEY RECRUITMENT – INCLUDING GRAPHICS

The Residential Experience Survey (RES) is an annual survey administered to all students living in residential halls on The Ohio State University's campuses. The survey asks students questions about a variety of topics, including sense of belonging, diverse interactions and behaviors related to residential life. A total of 15,267 students were invited to complete the RES in 2022 and 7,455 students opened the survey, for a response rate of 48.8%.

Scholars note that as web surveys have become an increasingly popular method for conducting research about higher education environments and student outcomes (Saleh & Bista, 2017), response rates have declined (National Research Council, 2013). Therefore, it is important for higher education researchers to better understand the factors that encourage strong response rates across diverse student populations. The aim of this brief is to illustrate how Ohio State students responded to seeing an official graphic as part of recruitment for the RES.

Methods & Results

All 15,267 students selected for the experiment were randomly assigned to one of two graphic conditions, meaning each student saw the same email text, either paired with a graphic created by the Ohio State marketing team (as an email banner) or not paired with a graphic (Groups A and B; see appendix for the banner graphic). Each group comprised approximately 3,727 students. Students were not made aware of these different recruitment conditions.¹ The following table presents the different conditions as well as the associated response rates. The differences in response rate between groups was not statistically significant.

Graphic Group	<i>n</i>	%	Sig.
Group A: Banner	3,664	48.1%	
Group B: No Banner	3,791	49.6%	
<i>Total</i>	7,455		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Conclusion

Including an official graphic in the distribution email of the RES had no significant effect on students' response rate to the survey. These findings should inform future efforts concerning survey design and recruitment messaging.

References

National Research Council. (2013). *Nonresponse in Social Science Surveys: A Research Agenda*. Roger Tourangeau and Thomas J. Plewes, Editors. Panel on a Research Agenda for the Future of Social Science Data Collection, Committee on National

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APPENDIX A: BANNER GRAPHIC



Residential Experience Survey



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