

Online survey retention

Guidance for staff and students

This guidance takes you through what you need to do to comply with timeliness principle of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in relation to online surveys and removing personal data from them.

Unfortunately, online survey platforms do get hacked from time to time, but if you have cleared out the data from the platform, there will be no data protection breach that we have to report. This has happened with one online platform, so this guidance comes from that experience.

Remember that personal data is anything that identifies or is identifiable about a natural living person. So even if you haven't asked for name, there may still be identifiable data within a survey.

What is the timeliness principle?

The timeliness principle is one of the six data protection principles. This principle requires us to delete data when it is no longer needed. You may need to keep survey data long term, but should store it somewhere more secure than the online survey platform you created it on.

Retaining data on an online survey platform

While you are collecting the data, that is while the survey is live, obviously there is no need to delete it from the platform. However, once you have finished, you should:

1. Decide on whether you need to download the data for further processing and if so, follow the platform

instructions for doing so. Save the data in a secure place e.g. an encrypted laptop, your OneDrive or SharePoint.

2. If you have already downloaded the data or have been able to process it on the platform, you should then delete it. For example on Qualtrics, once you have opened the data in Data and Analytics, you can click on Tools, then Delete Data, then All Responses to delete all the responses to your survey.

You are required to delete survey data:

- When you have collected special categories personal data like health, ethnicity, relating to sexual life, political party or trade union membership, or religious belief
- If you have requested particularly identifying data like passport numbers, national insurance numbers etc.

Review schedule

Review interval	Next review due by	Next review start
3 years	31/03/2025	1/03/2025

Version history

Version	Date	Approved by	Notes
1	19/03/2019	Information Governance Committee	
1.1	11/3/2022	Information Governance Management Board	One minor revision

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Communications and Training

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Will training needs arise from this policy	Yes/ No
If Yes, please give details	