

SOSE Administration: Tips for Success



How to Use this Guide

SOSE is a web-based survey designed to elicit information about the experience of community college students taking only online courses. SOSE provides information about the experiences of online students, with a focus on their engagement in effective educational practice.

The topics outlined in this guide align with the [SOSE Procedure Guide](#) and the [SOSE Survey Administration Timeline](#). All documents referred to here are also available on the [CCSSE website](#).

Pre-Administration

The college's designated Campus Coordinator has several important tasks prior to the start of SOSE administration. These include communicating with faculty and students about the survey and coordinating with the college's IT and IR departments to ensure that the college is providing the link to **online-only** students. Campus coordinators are also tasked with determining the best way to provide the survey link to those students.

Communications

The Campus Coordinator is responsible for ensuring a successful CCSSE/SOSE administration and should communicate early with students about the institution's participation in both surveys. The success of SOSE depends largely on the college's efforts to reach out to online-only students as this will maximize response rates.

To inform students about your institution's participation, you may use the [CCSSE/SOSE Participant News Release](#). The [SOSE President's Memo to Students](#) formally announces the college's participation in the survey, and should

be sent in early to mid-February.

The Center recommends utilizing different methods of communication to inform students and faculty about the survey and to encourage participation; these can include emails, Facebook posts, in-class faculty announcements, and posts to the college's learning management system and/or website.

Survey Link Distribution

As part of the college's SOSE administration, the Campus Coordinator is responsible for working internally with colleagues at your college to identify online-only students and to determining the best method for distributing the survey link to students. Many colleges distribute the survey link to the students' college email address, while others use students' personal email addresses or post the link to their learning management system or course webpage.

In an effort to track participation, some colleges opt to create and send a short link using a URL shortener and link manager such as Bitly.

Please reference the SOSE Procedure Guide for information on which courses should be excluded from participation in SOSE.

In correspondence with the CCSSE timeline, the college should distribute the survey link to students shortly after confirming the sample file.

Tips to Increase Participation Rates

- Familiarize yourself with how online students interact with the college and consider placing a link in a prominent place on that site/platform.

Reach out to students early and follow up. *Who* sends the email may be as important as the content, so try to determine the best

source and/or send from a variety of sources/ departments.

- Monitor response rates. Utilize the *SOSE* Responder Report to ensure students are being exposed to the survey.

During Administration

Verify Technology

After the survey link has been distributed, communicate with faculty to inquire if students have been able to access and successfully log in to the survey.

Please contact your *SOSE* Liaison with questions or concerns.

SOSE Responder Tool

Campus Coordinators are responsible for sending *SOSE* reminders to students.

As the Response Tool is not able to identify individual responses, please clarify that the reminder is going to all students, whether they have completed the survey or not.

Students can fill out the online survey until the survey return deadline, which is posted on the [SOSE Survey Administration Timeline](#).

Post-Administration

Deliverables

SOSE results are released electronically in conjunction with *CCSSE* results at the end of July. Member colleges will be able to access their data files and frequency report through the online reporting system.

Working with Results

The following are tips for engaging staff in discussions about *SOSE* and *CCSSE* data:

- Identify a cluster of *SOSE* items that relate to an existing initiative or concern at the college. Use results from these items to inform further

work in the area of concern.

- Sponsor a discussion series during which online students are invited to review results.
- Plan a convocation or professional development event focused on student engagement.

Comparing *SOSE* and *CCSSE* Results

Compare *CCSSE* and *SOSE* results by item using the *CCSSE/SOSE* [Crosswalk](#). (coming soon)

As you work with your *SOSE* data it is important to consider whether your sample is an accurate reflection of the college's online student population. If there is an over- or under-representation of certain students (e.g., part-time or full-time, or those from a certain department) in the college's pool of respondents, interpret overall results with caution.

It is also important to note that comparing *CCSSE* and *SOSE* results by item, while illustrative, are not entirely equivalent. *CCSSE* asks students to report perceptions and experiences in the classroom and at the college. *SOSE*, in contrast, asks students to describe their online experiences at the college.