

UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA
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GUIDELINES FOR ONLINE DATA COLLECTION

Google Forms: Response Restrictions, Data Integrity and Quality Control

For Final Year Research Projects

1. Introduction and Purpose

Online questionnaires are widely used for primary data collection in final year research projects. The reliability of research findings, however, depends on the integrity of the data collected. This guideline sets out the procedure for creating a Google Form, the response settings that must be applied, the testing required before distribution, and the academic integrity rules that govern data collection.

The purpose of the response restrictions is not only to prevent duplicate entries but also to protect the validity of the research project and to allow supervisors to verify the quality of the data collected.

2. Recommended Response-Control Workflow

Students should follow the five-stage workflow summarised in Figure 1. Each stage is explained in detail in the sections that follow.

Recommended response-control workflow



*Use verified email collection only when permitted by the research ethics/consent requirements.

Figure 1: Recommended response-control workflow

3. Creating the Google Form

Students should use Google Forms to create the online questionnaire, unless another platform has been approved by the supervisor. Follow the steps below.

1. Sign in to your Google Account and open the Google apps menu (the grid icon at the top right of the Google home page).

2. Scroll through the list of apps and select **Forms** (highlighted in Figure 2).



Figure 2: Opening Google Forms from the Google apps menu

3. Under **Start a new form**, select **Blank form** (highlighted in Figure 3).



Figure 3: Starting a new blank form

4. Add the title, description and questionnaire items, and then proceed to the response settings described in Section 4.

Video tutorial: Students may refer to the following YouTube video to create a Google Form step by step: <https://youtu.be/dYGL3lxQ1TU>

4. Response Settings and Email Restriction

Students must collect responses from actual members of the target population and must not create, duplicate, fabricate, or manipulate responses to reach a required sample size. When the response limit is enabled, respondents must sign in to a Google Account, and the same signed-in account cannot submit the form more than once.

Once the Google Form has been created, students must apply the response settings described below. To access them, open the form and select Settings, and then Responses.

forms.google.com | Research Questionnaire

Google Forms — Settings → Responses

Collect email addresses
Captures the respondent's verified Google Account email.

Send responders a copy
Optional; requires email collection.

Allow response editing
Recommended for research data collection.

Limit to 1 response
Requires respondents to sign in to Google.

KEY CONTROL: Turn ON "Limit to 1 response".

Figure 4: Google Forms – Settings → Responses

5. Mandatory Student Requirements

All students must comply with the following requirements.

- Use Google Forms for online questionnaires unless another platform has been approved by the supervisor.
- Turn ON “Limit to 1 response” before distributing the questionnaire. The same Google Account cannot then submit another response to that form.
- Keep the original Google Form and the response spreadsheet available for supervisor verification.
- Before analysis, retain an untouched copy or export of the original collected data.

6. Mandatory Test Before Distributing the Questionnaire

Every student must test the questionnaire before sending it to participants. A form that has not been tested may collect data incorrectly or may not apply the intended restriction. The following steps must be completed in order.

1. Submit one test response using a test Google Account.
2. Attempt to submit the same form again using the same test account.
3. Confirm that the second submission is blocked when “Limit to 1 response” is ON.
4. Check whether the required timestamp, the email field (if applicable), and the questionnaire variables appear correctly.
5. Check the linked Google Sheet and make sure the data are transferred correctly.

7. Academic Integrity Rules for Data Collection

Students are responsible for ensuring that the collected data represent the stated target population. The following rules apply throughout the data collection period.

- A student must not ask another person to submit multiple responses on behalf of the researcher.
- A student must not invent respondents, fabricate answers, or generate artificial questionnaire records.
- If duplicate or suspicious records are discovered, they should be documented and handled according to the supervisor's instructions.
- The original response file and the collection record should be preserved so that the research process can be audited and the supervisor can check the response quality.