

Anonymity and Data Protection in Quality Development Surveys and Polls

*Are my answers in polls and surveys anonymous?
Can any information I provide be traced back to me?*

Here you find answers to questions related to anonymity and data protection in surveys and polls conducted by the Quality Development Department.

Data Protection

The Quality Development Department is obliged to comply with all applicable laws relating to the storage and processing of personal data¹ and the [International Sociological Association's Code of Ethics](#).

Software and Data Storage

The Quality Development Department uses software by [Evasys](#) to conduct polls and surveys. The software company has its seat in Germany and thus is subject to the EU General Data Protection Regulation. Detailed [information on Data Protection and Safety of Use](#) is published on its website (German only). It is contractually agreed that survey and polling data will be stored on Academy's servers and thus exclusively remains with the Academy.

Raw Data

Raw data (or primary data) is data not yet processed for use or not yet analyzed. Here, all the answers from each completed questionnaire are stored.

Raw data remains within the Quality Development Department at all times, and employees of that department are obligated to keep any such data confidential. Raw data is not passed on to third parties.

The Evasys software used does not store the e-mail address or the name of the person filling out the questionnaire. This means that identifying a person is not possible in any phase of a survey. Online surveys conducted to obtain Course Feedback, for example, are completely anonymous.

¹ The right to data protection or the right to protection of personal data is regulated by the [EU General Data Protection Regulation](#) (EU-DSGVO) and the [Federal Data Protection Act](#) (DSG, German only).

In some surveys, the Quality Development Department asks for an e-mail address in order to be able to raffle a gift as a thank-you or to contact participants at a later date (e.g., for a follow-up interview). Such information is always voluntary, and even in this case survey answers are not linked to the e-mail address.

In some surveys, the Quality Development department also asks for personal data, such as age or gender. We always consider carefully whether asking for any such data is necessary with respect to the subject of the survey and try to collect as little personal data as possible. Any such information provided is also always voluntary. These surveys are de facto anonymous.

If personal data is collected the following applies in principle:

- The information provided is always voluntary.
- The data is only used for the purpose for which it was collected.

Special Case: Monitoring of the admission procedures (Opportunities Monitor)

For the Applicant Survey, which is conducted annually as part of the monitoring of admission procedures ([Opportunities Monitor](#)), the Quality Development Department utilizes the registration form of the [Academy's submission system](#) for applicants to the *PhD in Practice* and to the *Masters in Critical Studies*, and the registration form in AkademieOnline for applicants to the other programs. The survey is carried out in conjunction with the registration for the admission procedure and hence with the entry of personal data by applicants (e.g., name, age, previous education). The right to protection of personal data pursuant to the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Austrian Data Protection Act (DPA) also applies to this survey. Anonymous data is ensured by storing and processing the survey data in anonymous form. Conclusions about the identity of the respondents are therefore not possible.

Reports, Dissemination of Results

A pre-defined anonymity threshold applies to each report or survey. If fewer questionnaires are completed than defined beforehand, no results will be passed on. For example, if at the Course Feedback less than 3 feedback questionnaires are completed by the students of a course, no feedback report will be sent to the lecturer for reasons of anonymity protection.

Reports are always anonymized; conclusions about individuals are not possible. The Quality Development Department pay careful attention to the interests and personal rights of respondents when presenting survey results, particularly so when selecting and including personal quotations.