



Information for Faculty

What is Information Literacy and why we wish to measure it.

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) defines Information Literacy as a “set of abilities requiring an individual to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.” The University of Pittsburgh’s participation is part of a national project involving several other institutions and the Association of Research Libraries. This assessment program using this standardized instrument will allow librarians and administrators in higher education to determine students' information literacy skills, and use this knowledge to more effectively design course curriculum and library instruction.

What is SAILS?

The Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS) is an online instrument for programmatic level assessment of information literacy skills that is valid and thus credible to university administrators and other academic personnel. This survey is a tool to measure information literacy that:

- Is standardized
- Contains items not specific to a particular institution or library
- Is easily administered
- Has been proven valid and reliable
- Assesses at institutional level
- Provides for both external and internal benchmarking

When will the test occur?

The University Library System will be administering this test to seniors during the spring 2009 semester from March 1 – April 17. This is a new initiative that we hope faculty will use to evaluate the information literacy skills of graduating seniors at the University of Pittsburgh.

How Faculty can help us.

We are asking instructors to require completion of the test as an assignment. Students can complete this test outside of class time. Completion of the test can be verified by requiring students to print out and turn in to instructors a copy of the “Thank You” page at the end of the survey.

Students taking the SAILS survey should log into the university portal at <http://my.pitt.edu> . Once logged in, click the **SAILS Survey** button at the top of the

screen. A short welcome message will appear and the student should click **Continue** to begin the SAILS test.

When the student accesses the survey, s/he will be asked to read the directions and accept or reject participation in the survey. A random selection of 45 questions from a pool of about 200 will be assembled for the student to answer. The test should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. At the completion of the survey, the student will be presented a "Thank You" page. **The student should print out a copy of this page and return it to you to prove s/he has taken the test.**

Results from this test will be available for review in May 2009. **For more information regarding the SAILS test please consult the ULS Information Literacy site at <http://www.library.pitt.edu/services/classes/infoliteracy/> or contact:**

Marian Hampton, Coordinator of Library Instruction
hamptonm@pitt.edu 412-648-7770

or

Pat Duck, Coordinator of Regional University Library System Libraries
pmd1@pitt.edu 724-836-9689