

YOUR TRAINING GUIDE TO THE BOSTON AREA COLLEGES EXIT POLL

Thank you for volunteering as an exit pollster for the 2008 Boston Area Colleges Exit Poll! This simple guide provides everything you need to know to be a professional, effective pollster on Election Day. We cannot stress enough how important it is that you follow this guide's directions exactly. Even a small, seemingly innocent mistake can compromise the exit poll's accuracy, or worse, compromise your school's reputation. However, if you follow this guide with exactness, you—and those in your team depending on you—will have a great experience.

SAFETY: The most important thing at all times is to BE SAFE. If at any time you feel unsafe, do whatever is necessary. If you need to take a cab (numbers below) for safety reasons, do so; just save the receipt, and we will reimburse you, no questions asked. Bring a few extra dollars on Nov 4 for this purpose. If you need to, stay in a well-populated or well-lit area and call the hotline number below. Call 911 if need be. Be proactive here; don't be embarrassed to act.

DRESS: You must appear clean, competent, and trustworthy, so dress as follows:

- Wear slacks or dressy jeans (no holes, no stains, etc.) and a nice shirt, no baseball caps.
- Wear comfortable, but nice, shoes.
- Do not wear anything political (McCain shirts, Che Guevara shirts, pins, stickers, etc.).
- We suggest that you do not bring a bag, purse, or backpack; there may be no convenient place to put it. Definitely, you should not bring valuables of any kind..
- Above, all, DON'T BRING A LAPTOP (there will be no place to put it).
- Bring your student ID card, as well as a state-issued ID (such as a driver's license).
- Election Day may be chilly, so come prepared with warm, but nice, coats, gloves, etc.
- You'll be outside: Bring an umbrella, gloves, a hat, a scarf, and a warm coat.
- Bring something to eat; the roving officer will bring refreshments, but you may want something more, and not all of the polling locations are located near places to get food.

GETTING TO YOUR POLLING STATION:

The two most important items are that you **arrive SAFELY and ON TIME**. See above re safety. Regarding on-time arrival, and within safety concerns: **if you are late, the information that your station collects could be ruined**. Here's how to assure you're not late:

- 4-7 days before Election Day, someone will email your team captain's contact information and directions to your polling station.
- Make a plan on how you will get to your assigned polling station.
- Contact your team captain (by email or a phone call) at least three days before Election Day to discuss your travel plan.
- On Election Day, leave time to spare (the T, especially the Green Line, is often slower than expected). Many locations require a bus ride, so leave extra time for it.
- If you're in a jam, take a cab and save the receipt; we'll reimburse you.
- If you get sick at the last minute, call your team captain so we can replace you.
- Consistent with safe travel, no matter what, come rain, snow, sleet, or burning hail,

ARRIVE ON TIME.

UPON ARRIVAL:

Find your team captain and help set up the exit poll poster, organize materials, etc. Next, write your full name on a nametag and place the tag around your neck. You need to wear the tag the whole time you are polling. Check your position to make sure that your team is not interfering with access to and from the voting area.

THE QUESTIONNAIRES:

Your location will have two separate pads of questionnaires. One pad will have green and yellow pages, while the other pad will have pink and blue pages. A yellow pair of two pages is just one form (in 4 languages); same goes for two green pages, two pink pages, etc. Alternate between the two pads; that is, if the last voter got yellow (or green) two-page form, then the next voter gets a pink (or blue) two-page form. When preparing to approach your voter, place a two-page form in your clipboard. That way, voters can choose the language—English, Spanish, Chinese or Vietnamese—they are most comfortable with.

THE TEAR-OFF SECTION:

There is a tear-off mini-sheet along the bottom of the first page on each two-page form (there's a perforation so it will come off easily). You, the pollster, need to fill this out for every voter you ask to take the poll, **regardless of whether the voter accepts you or turns you down**. Be sure to tear off the mini-sheet ***BEFORE*** approaching the voter with the clipboard. If the voter turns you down, fill it out the mini-sheet immediately and discard the corresponding questionnaire. If the voter agrees to take the poll, set the voter up (see below on how to do that), then move away from the voter and fill out the mini-sheet. In either situation, once you're finished, put the mini-sheet in the manila envelope.

STICKING TO YOUR INTERVAL:

Approach every eighth voter, alternating between the yellow/green pad and the pink/blue pad. That is, voter #8 will get a yellow form, voter #16 will get a pink form, # 24 green, # 32 blue, #40 back to yellow, and so on. **STICK TO YOUR INTERVAL**. It's better that you get refused by the right voter than obtain a response from the wrong one. So if you voter #32 refuses to fill out a questionnaire, fill out the mini-sheet (and discard that voter's questionnaire) but ***do not*** approach voter #33 or #34.

APPROACH:

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING HERE IS NOT TO OBSTRUCT THE VOTER's PATHWAY. Approach the exiting voter ONLY from the side; do not stand in front. Few items will get us in bigger trouble with local officials than blocking voter access to and from voting locations.

Here are the steps to properly prepare for and approach a voter:

- Put a form (remember, two pages of the same color) on your clipboard.
- Tear off the mini-sheet along the bottom.
- Ask the voter if he/she wants to fill out the form (see below on what to say).
- If the voter accepts...
 - Ask the voter when he/she is finished to put the form (both pages) in the cardboard box him/herself; don't offer to do that yourself.
 - Move a polite distance away.
 - Fill out the torn off mini-sheet while you wait.

- Place the mini-sheet in the manila envelope.
- If the voter declines...
 - Fill out the mini-sheet, then place it in the manila envelope.
 - Discard the two-page form you offered to the voter (meaning put it in the provided plastic grocery bag). **DO NOT REUSE FORMS!!!!!!!!!!**

WHAT TO SAY WHEN APPROACHING THE VOTER:

- Being polite and professional, begin with something like, “The students from area colleges are conducting an exit poll...”
- Then, you must quickly work in the following points:
 - “you have been randomly selected”
 - “it takes about 90 seconds to complete”
 - “this poll is non-partisan”
 - “you will remain 100% anonymous”
 - If the voter asks: “the results won’t be released until after the election is over”

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Election Day will be divided into two shifts. The morning shift is from 6:30 am to 1:30 pm; the afternoon shift is from 1:00 pm until the lines empty (usually 8:15 pm).
- There should be three pollsters per shift. You **MUST TAKE BREAKS**. You will need them to maintain the good attitude that will help you convince voters to take the poll.
- Expenses: a roving officer will arrive during your shift bringing water and some light refreshments (apple, bagel), as well as \$25. You will sign a form to acknowledge receipt of the cash. The money is to defray the cost of food and transportation.
- Even if the weather is challenging, the exit poll will go on as scheduled. Dress warmly, be tough, and smile.
- Bring something to eat; the roving officer will bring refreshments, but you may want something more, and not all of the polling locations are located near places to get food.
- Make no comments about any candidate, the administration of the vote, or the neighborhood where you are. Virtually any opinion you express will get us in trouble.
- Give no information to anyone about your interactions with voters. Let no one see the filled-out forms. Speak as little with the partisan advocates as possible.

Bring these sheets with you on election day!!! All of them!!!!

THE OFFICIAL EXIT POLLSTER CHECKLIST AND TIMELINE

- ☐ **1. Do now (if you haven't already):** Sign up at <http://www.iq.harvard.edu/election/user/register>

- ☐ **2. In the 2–3 weeks before Election Day (November 4):** Attend a training session

- ☐ **3. On or before October 29:** Receive an email with your...
 - Polling place assignment
 - Shift assignment
 - Team members
 - Team member contact information
 - Roving officer contact information
- ☐ **4. Upon receiving that email:** Be sure to...
 - Make a plan on how you'll get to your polling location
 - **Contact your team captain** and with him/her...
 - Review your travel plan
 - Verify your cell phone information
- ☐ **5. On Election Day (November 4): ARRIVE SAFELY AND ON TIME**

Exit poll hotlines (DO NOT LEAVE A MESSAGE AT ANY OF THESE NUMBERS; WAIT 90 SECONDS, AND CALL AGAIN)

- * (617) ***-**** (primary number)
- * (617) ***-****
- * (617) ***-****

If you can't get through after a couple of tries, try these:

- * (617) ***-**** (Professor Rachael Cobb's cell phone)
- * (617) ***-**** (Professor Kevin Quinn's cell phone)

Taxicabs: (all numbers begin with area code (617))

Cab Company	Phone Number 1	Phone Number 2	Special notes/limitation of service
Metro Cab	782-5500		No limitations
Town Taxi	536-5000		No limitations
Boston Cab	536-3200	536-7000	one end of the trip must be in Boston
City Cab	536-5100		one end of the trip must be in Boston
ITOA Cab	825-4000		Boston only
Tunnel Taxi	567-2700		services primarily east Boston