What does it mean when a survey has been validated?

The exact process for developing a validated survey can vary. However, validated surveys are often put together by multidisciplinary groups, and are always rigorously field-tested and peer-reviewed. **They usually consist of the following steps**:

Step 1
- **Background**: What is your purpose? Who is your audience?

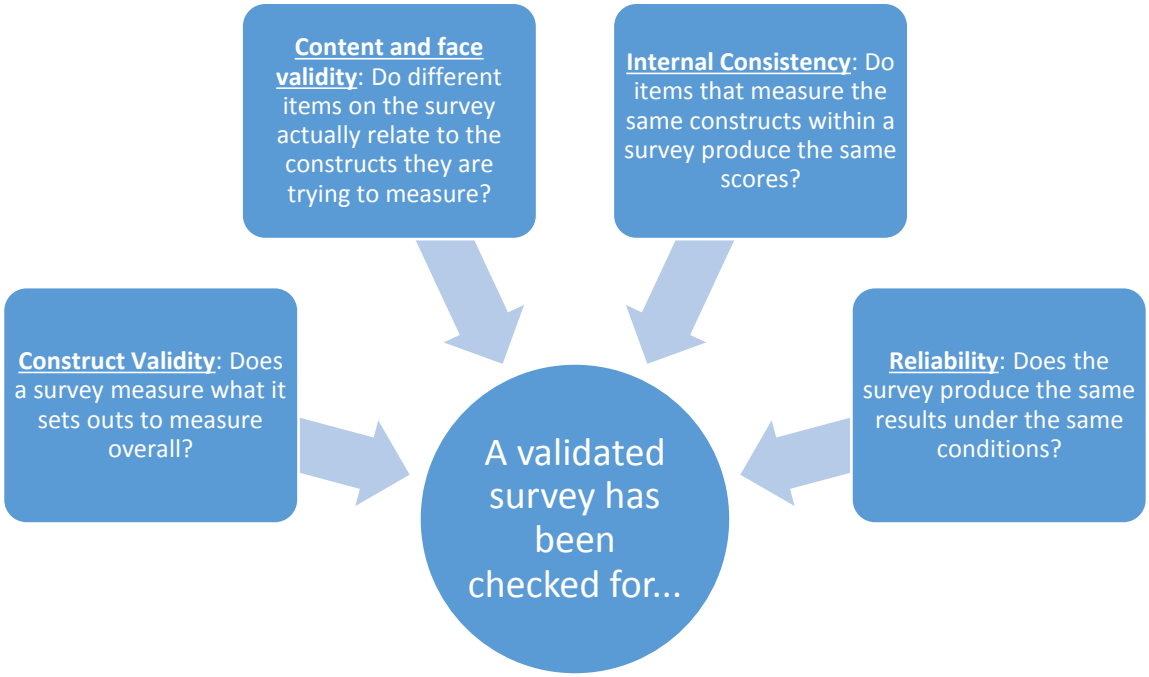
Step 2
- **Questionnaire Conceptualisation**: Use theory and literature to generate questions. Content matches what you are measuring. Questions avoid 'social desirability bias' - whereby respondents answer questions in a way that is socially preferrable (e.g. not giving true answers that might be seen as antisocial or embarassing)

Step 3
- **Format and Data Analysis**: Match questions with appropiate scales, and use both to decide on how you will analyse the data. Decide layout, font and order.

Step 4
- **Establishing Validity**: Does the questionnaire acurately measure what it is meant to measure? How much error does the questionnaire contain? Use experts, individuals and statistics to field test with subjects not in the sample. Measure readability to generate pilot questionnaire.

Step 5
- **Establishing Reliability**: Carry out a pilot test. Use appropriate reliability tests for question type. Use results to determine which questions should be deleted to improve reliability. Draft final version.

The following diagram breaks down steps 4 and 5 by giving an overview of some of the different types of validity and reliability that a survey might be tested for, and **the table on the next page goes into more detail on how each of those different types might be tested**. N.B. Sometimes people group these different types together, or use slightly different terminology to describe them.



Component	Explanation	How to test
Construct Validity	The experimental demonstration that a survey is measuring the 'construct' it claims to measure. A 'construct' is an attribute, proficiency or skill. For example, fear, well-being and employability are all constructs.	• **Differential groups study** - the results of the survey are compared for two groups: one that is known to 'have' the construct and one that does not. • **Pre and post intervention –** the performances on the survey are compared for groups before and after adminstration of an intervention proven to affect a contruct. • **Establishing convergent validity**: the results of the survey are compared with those of a previously validated survey measuring the same 'construct', by administering it to the same group. Convergent validity is established when the surveys exhibit a high degree of correlation, indicating that both surveys accurately measure the same 'construct'.
Content and Face Validity	**Content validity** is based on how well all elements of a survey measure a 'construct' according to subject experts. **Face validity** is based on how well all elements of a survey measure a 'construct' according to common sense.	• **Content validity**: Each item on the survey is given to a panel of experts, who rate every question on a scale, measuring whether it is essential, useful or irrelevant for the construct under study. These results are then statsitically analysed and appropriately applied to the survey. • **Face validity:** Non-experts – ideally participants – are asked to judge the percieved relevance of each question to what the survey is trying to measure.
Internal Consistency	A measure of whether survey items that measure the same 'construct' produce similar scores.	• **Correlation –** use of Cronbach's Alpha to measure the correlation between responses to different survey items.
Reliability	A measure of whether the survey can be administered independently under the same conditions and population, whilst producing the same results.	• **Test-retest:** The survey is completed at different points in time for the same target population, under the same conditions, but not necessarily administered by the same person / people.