



University of
South Australia

Access to UniSA students, staff and data

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Cross references

A-46 Confidentiality of students' personal information

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/policies/policies/academic/A46.asp>

C-5.0 Public statements and representation by university staff and students

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/policies/policies/corporate/C05.asp>

C-22 Acceptable Use of Information Technology (IT) Facilities

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/policies/policies/corporate/C22.asp>

Guidelines on Electronic Communications with Students

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/policies/codes/miscell/ecomstudents.asp>

Guidelines for staff on use IT facilities including email and the Internet

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/policies/codes/miscell/it-staff.asp>

Guidelines for evaluation activities involving UniSA students and staff

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/policies/codes/academic/default.asp>

Introduction

This policy provides the principles that guide approvals to access UniSA students and staff and using UniSA data for the following purposes:

1. Access to and external publishing and/or presentation of UniSA data for research purposes
2. External publication and/or presentation of UniSA evaluation data by UniSA staff
3. External publishing and/or presentation of UniSA data for purposes other than research

An external party is herein defined as any individual or organisation external to the University. A request for data to be used externally can be received directly from the external party, or from UniSA staff requesting data on behalf of an external party.

1. Access to and external publishing and/or presentation of UniSA data for research purposes

1.1 Scope

1.1.1 Data used for research purposes includes data:

- collected from evaluation activities,
- requested or extracted from existing data sources;

and that is used by UniSA staff, students or external parties in:

- publications such as a journal article or conference paper
- external presentations, and/or
- grant applications.

1.2 Principles

The following guiding principles are provided for research that requires access to UniSA data.

1.2.1 The overall research design should demonstrate methodological soundness. This could include issues like sample size and subjects covered.

1.2.2 There should be an experienced research team, with international representation where possible and broad experience across the complex issues involved.

1.2.3 Cross-institutional projects must have sufficient institutions involved such that:

- a) minimum participation should normally be five unless otherwise approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Research & Innovation
- b) participating institutions will remain anonymous, unless all agree to the release of their names
- c) all data should be aggregated such that no individual institution or subset of institutions is able to be identified.

1.3 Authorities to permit access

1.3.1 Requests for permission to access UniSA staff, students or data for research purposes should be sought according to the following levels:

- a) for access to staff or students in one school, approval should be sought from the Head of School
- b) for access to staff or students in more than one school within the same Division, approval should be sought from the Pro Vice Chancellor of that Division
- c) for access to staff or students within different Divisions, or if the University itself is the object of research, approval should be sought from the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Research
- d) approval to access information held in university databases should be sought from the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Research, who may consult with other Senior Managers as appropriate.

1.3.2 Approval to access UniSA staff, students or data for research purposes will accord with these principles and will take into consideration:

- a) Confirmation the research has ethics approval
- b) The reputational risk of the University
- c) Privacy and/or confidentiality concerns, particularly in relation to personal information of students/staff
- d) The amount of effort required to extract or produce the data versus the return on this investment of time
- e) Maintaining openness and the need to engage with the University's communities.

N.B. Ethics approval for research projects does not automatically entitle access to UniSA staff, students or data.

2. External publication and/or presentation of UniSA evaluation data

2.1 Scope

The following guidelines are to be used when staff members collect internal evaluation data which could be used for publication or presentation outside the University. For the purpose of these guidelines 'evaluation data' refers to data collected through methods such as surveys or focus groups related to teaching and learning and/or the student experience, including corporate evaluation instruments used to evaluate courses, programs and/or teachers.

2.2 Procedures

2.2.1 Evaluation which is conducted solely for the purpose of internal quality assurance and internal accreditation, and which will not be published or presented externally, does not require formal ethics approval.

2.2.2 Evaluation data gathered internally may be included in external publications and presentations *without* formal ethics approval provided:

- a) the data was gathered on-line or in writing
- b) the responses were provided voluntarily
- c) the respondents were advised of the possibility that the data could be used for such purposes (see Statement 3 below)
- d) the anonymity of the respondents is maintained.

2.2.3 The following statement is to be included on all survey instruments apart from those covered in 2.2.1 above:

Data collected through this survey will be used to inform improvements at UniSA and could also be used in external publications and presentations. Individual responses will remain confidential and no individuals will be identified.

2.2.4 Data gathered verbally (e.g. through focus groups, interviews) in which the anonymity of the respondents is compromised requires formal ethics approval in order to be included in external publications and presentations.

2.2.5 The use of evaluation data relating to more than one staff member requires written permission from all relevant staff members in order to be included in external publications and/or presentations.

2.2.6 The use of corporate evaluation data (e.g. CEI and SET) for external publication and/or presentation requires written permission from the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, who may consult with other relevant senior managers as appropriate.

2.2.7 All other research requires formal ethics approval from UniSA's Human Research Ethics Committee prior to commencement. Please note that ethics approval cannot be granted retrospectively.

3. External publishing and/or presentation of UniSA data for purposes other than research

3.1 Scope

3.1.1 The University receives requests for data to be used externally for a variety of reasons. UniSA receives requests via:

- UniSA staff for publication in media releases, brochures or other marketing materials
- State and Federal government departments

- other universities
- UniSA staff for use as part of external accreditation
- Media
- students

Requests can be considered as being in one of three categories: media, non-media and student requests.

3.2 Principles

3.2.1 UniSA data will only be released for external purposes when:

- a) the publishing of the data is in the public interest; or
- b) the use of the data will benefit current or future students

3.2.2 The approving Senior Manager should only release data once they have received clear of advice of:

- a) whether or not the data will be used in the public domain
- b) the intended audience

3.2.3 For non-media requests, the University will seek agreement that the information provided is confidential and that it will not be published or divulged to any third party without written permission of the University.

3.3 Authorities to permit access

3.3.1 Permission to release UniSA data for external uses should be sought according to the following levels of approval:

- a) for all media requests, from the Pro Vice Chancellor: International and Development in consultation with any other relevant senior manager.
- b) for non-media requests for access to data related to more than one school within the same Division, approval should be sought from the Pro Vice Chancellor of that Division
- c) for non-media requests for access to data crossing different Divisions, staff within Units of the University, or if the University itself is the object of request, approval should be sought from the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic and or/the Vice Chancellor as appropriate.

3.3.2 Approval to access UniSA data/information for external uses needs to take into consideration:

- a) the reputational risk to the University.
- b) consideration of privacy and/or confidentiality concerns particularly in relation to personal information of students/staff.
- c) the amount of effort required to produce the information versus the return on this investment of time.
- d) maintaining openness and the need to engage with the University's communities.

3.4 Procedures for external requests for data for non research purposes

Requests can be considered as being in one of three categories: media, non-media and student requests.

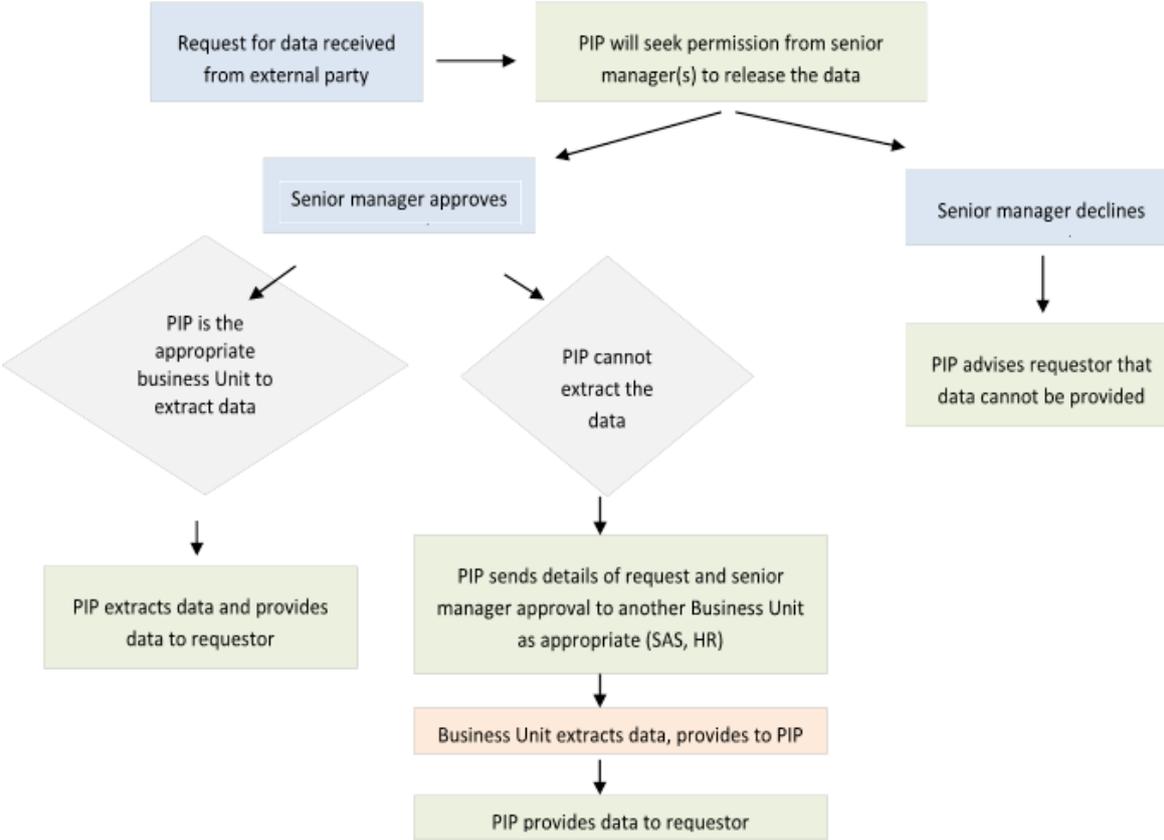
3.4.1 Media requests

The News and Media team in MDU should be the first contact point when data is requested for use in the media. If MDU require data, they will submit a request to PIP (via the VIP request for info form) who will provide them with the data. MDU will obtain approval from the PVC: International and Development, and any other senior manager(s) as appropriate, prior to releasing the data to the media.

3.4.2 Non-media requests

Requests made to PIP for data, other than for use in the media, should be received in the form of the external request for data. Diagram 1 illustrates the approval process.

Diagram 1: approval process for non-media requests



3.4.3 Student requests

Requests from students fall into one of two groups:

- 1. Research-related: refer Section 1
- 2. Non-research-related: where no ethics approval is provided, the student will be directed and guided to use publically available data sources.