Collection statement for the Student Retention Survey

Background and purpose

The aim of the Student Retention Survey is to better understand students' experiences at university, including their studies, support networks, and the things that make studying easier or harder. In particular, we are interested in learning about what helps students stay enrolled in their course and what supports their future studies. The outcomes of this research project will help improve our understanding of the factors that support students to continue and succeed in higher education, and what universities can do to better support students.

You have been invited to participate in this survey as you recently completed the Student Experience Survey (SES) and consented to be contacted for further research.

We are collecting your personal information for the purpose of administering the data collection for and analysis of the Student Retention Survey. We will only use the information you provide for this specific purpose.

Participation in this research is voluntary. You can choose not to answer any question. You can decide to stop at any time.

Who is conducting the research?

The Social Research Centre (SRC) has been engaged by the Australian Government Department of Education (the department) to conduct the research. The SRC will be administering the survey and collecting your responses in the survey. Researchers from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) are also working under contract with the department for this project.

Information held and collected

Similar to the SES, when you enrolled in your current course, your higher education provider (institution) collected your personal information to process and manage your enrolment.

Personal information is information or an opinion about an identified or reasonably identifiable individual. Personal information about you includes your contact details, course details, citizenship and residence status and disability status, amongst other details.

Your contact details, course details, citizenship and residence status and disability status were provided to the SRC by your institution for the purposes of administering the data collection for the Student Retention Survey.

The link provided to participate in this research is unique to you and may allow access to your responses. To protect your privacy, do not share it with anyone or copy or paste it into AI tools, search engines, shared documents or messaging apps.

As part of this research, we will collect personal information (e.g. your weekly income etc.) and sensitive information (e.g. mental health, wellbeing, current study situation).

Any comments you write in the survey may be put through a secure Copilot network by the SRC research team to remove any personal information you may have included in your comment.

Disclosure and use

After the survey data collection period, your contact details (which includes but not limited to ID, name, phone numbers and email addresses) will be removed from the data. Your responses to the Student Retention Survey will be combined with personal information (which includes but not limited to your age group, citizenship and residency status, and your disability status), course data provided by your institution (which includes but not limited to your current course you're studying, and mode of attendance), any

university study you have already done and your responses to the SES that you recently completed. This combined data will be transferred via a secure platform to the department for research purposes only. The department will then transfer your data via a secure platform to researchers at UNSW as part of this project.

All personal and/or sensitive information will be handled in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles set out in the Privacy Act, as well as additional legislative obligations for handling information collected and used in the SES under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Cth). Your responses to this survey will not be shared with your higher education provider outside the research team or affect your enrolment in any way.

The aggregated findings from this research will be described in a report that will be submitted to the department. These aggregated findings may also be published in research reports, journal papers and conference presentations.

On completion of the project, the survey responses will be securely stored by the Australian Government Department of Education. The department's Privacy Policy contains more information about how the department will manage your personal information, including how to seek access to, or correction of, your personal information and how you can make a complaint related to your personal information. To contact the department about your personal information, email privacy@education.gov.au

The SRC will retain your personal information only for as long as it is required for the administration, conduct and reporting of this research project. Once it is no longer required for these purposes, it will be securely destroyed or de-identified in accordance with the SRC's privacy and data retention requirements.

Other matters

Some questions in this survey are mandatory so that only the survey sections relevant to you and your situation are presented. Where available, you can select 'Prefer not to say' or 'Not sure'. If you choose not to participate or not answer some questions, there will be no penalty, but your feedback will not be reflected in the survey results.

The SRC fully complies with the Australian Privacy Principles and all applicable privacy legislation. Our privacy policy contains general information on how the SRC protects your privacy rights. It also contains information about how we secure your data, how you can make a privacy-related complaint, access and correction of your information, and the general circumstances under which your information may be disclosed to overseas recipients.

If you have questions about the survey, contact angela.baker@srcentre.com.au. For privacy enquiries, access information, technical queries, or complaints, see SRC's privacy policy or contact alison.eglentals@srcentre.com.au