

COLLECT INFORMATION RESPONSIBLY

PERSONAL INFORMATION SERIES



You may send out a survey, ask someone to complete a form, or you might take down their details during a call and enter it into a database. Every time you ask someone for information about themselves or their organisation, you're collecting personal information.

The way in which we ask for information is important. Here are some suggestions on how we can design POPIA-compliant forms that are easy to complete.

- Does the form's title describe the form's purpose?**
Descriptive names help people ensure that they are completing the correct form. Don't use administrative codes as the name of a form.

- Do you need every piece of information on the form? Why?**
We should only collect information that we really need. If there are questions on the form that ask for info we do not need, delete the questions.

If the University already knows the answer, don't ask the question again. For instance, if you're sending out the survey by email, don't ask for the participant's email address. You obviously have it. If you already have someone's South African ID number, don't also ask them for their date of birth.



- Will it be clear to the person why we need their information?**
If it is not clear from the form or the privacy notice why you are asking a question, you should explain it on the form. If people do not know why you are asking, they tend to give false information or no information at all, because they feel uneasy.

- Have you indicated compulsory and optional fields?**
This is usually done by placing an asterisk (*) next to the compulsory field. You have to indicate what the effect of not providing the optional information will have – if any.

- Are you collecting information from a person under 18?**
If you are collecting information from a minor, you must obtain consent from a parent or guardian.



- Will the information you are collecting be sent to another country?**
If you are sending the information to a company in another country (for whatever reason), the Division for Information Governance (privacy@sun.ac.za) should know about it. They will be able to guide you through the process. Usually, you would have to disclose your information sharing by adding the correct privacy notice and making sure that the receiving country either has data protection laws like ours, or that you sign a contract where they promise to protect the information.

Remember! If you are using a cloud-based service (like Dropbox, Google Drive, or iCloud) you are sending the information overseas.

- Will the information be shared with someone outside of the University?**
People care about whether their information will be shared, so it is important to be transparent about it. Sometimes information has to be shared with other companies or the government. This should be disclosed in your privacy notice or on the form. You must also make sure that the University has a contract in place with these companies to ensure that they will protect the information.

This is important: There is a difference between sharing information that the University uses and collecting information on behalf of someone else. In the second instance, you are just passing the information on. If that is the case, it is better if you say clearly on the form (i.e. by branding it) that someone else is collecting the information. You will still be responsible to keep that information safe while it is in your possession.

- Are you collecting the information directly from the individual?**
Information should be collected directly from the individual, but when this is not possible, you must let the person know in the form that we will be collecting information from another source (e.g. if you are doing a credit check or getting information from a third party).



- Is the information sensitive?**
We must take extra care when we work with special personal information. Even though the information in a form may not be sensitive, the attachments could be. We should mark that information as 'confidential'. The Division for Information Governance has resources on their site (www.sun.ac.za/privacy) about personal information and what is considered sensitive.



- Does the form refer to our privacy notice?**
Include the following in your form: "For more information about why we need this information and how we use it, please read our Privacy Notice."

How you provide the Privacy Notice will depend on whether the form is going to be filled in online or by hand. If it is online, link to the Privacy Notice if you don't want to put it in the form itself. If it is being filled in by hand, the privacy notice should be printed on the form itself.

Still uncertain? Contact privacy@sun.ac.za.