

Privacy notice for Qualitative Provider Perceptions research

1. Introduction

The Office for Students (OfS) is the regulator of the higher education sector in England and has certain statutory functions set out in the Higher Education and Research Act (HERA) 2017. You can find more information about the OfS and the work that we do on our website: www.officeforstudents.org.uk

The OfS is committed to protecting your personal information and being clear about what information we hold about you and how we use it. This privacy notice tells you what to expect when the OfS collects personal information as part of the research project.

The OfS is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Our registration number is ZA309955 and you can check our entry details on the ICO's website: <https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/what-we-do/register-of-fee-payers/>.

2. Data controller and Data Protection Officer

The OfS is the 'data controller' of any personal information collected within scope of this privacy notice. Our location and contact details are below:

Office for Students

Nicholson House

Lime Kiln Close

Bristol

BS34 8SR

Tel: 0117 931 7317

Email: dp@officeforstudents.org.uk

Our Data Protection Officer (DPO) is the first point of contact for people whose information is processed. You can contact the DPO using the details above. You should note that this email address is monitored by other members of the OfS's data protection team. Therefore, please mark any correspondence 'for the attention of the Data Protection Officer'.

3. What personal information we will hold and use

The personal information we will collect and use as part of this research project is set out below:

- name

- contact details
- job title and name of provider.

4. Our purpose for using the information

We can only use your personal information where we have a specific purpose or purposes for doing so.

We will use your personal data for research purposes to explore providers' perceptions of the OfS's role and its organisational aims and functions.

The aims of this exercise are as follows:

- To understand provider perceptions of the clarity of OfS regulatory expectations.

To uncover which areas of OfS communication and external engagement are working well and where this engagement can be improved.

To compare and contrast this data with existing data to help understand whether the new engagement activities have helped change perceptions of the OfS.

To achieve the above aims, the specific uses that will be made of your personal information are listed below:

- The OfS will contact providers by email (using contact information from the provider directory) to invite them to take part in the research project with a link to an expression of interest (EOI) form.
- The Supplier will contact the data subjects who register an interest to take part in the research, to undertake a programme of cognitive interviews/focus groups.
- Pseudonymised results will be shared with the OfS in order to help improve the quality of the OfS's consultations and communications and help to surface issues in provider engagement.

If we want to use your personal information for a reason other than those purposes set out above, we will tell you before we start that use and provide further information about the new purpose(s).

5. Legal basis for using your personal information

Under data protection legislation, we require a legal basis to be able to process your personal information for the purposes set out above.

In this case, the legal basis is:

Article 6(1)(e) Public task: the processing is necessary for you to perform a task in the public interest or for your official functions, and the task or function has a clear basis in law.

Withdrawal of consent

Consent must be a clear positive action that you have given your agreement to the use of your personal information, and consent can also be withdrawn at any point if you are no longer happy with the use of your personal information for a specific reason. If you wish to withdraw consent, please do so in writing to:

Data Protection Officer

Office for Students

Nicholson House

Lime Kiln Close

Bristol

BS34 8SR

Email: dp@officeforstudents.org.uk

In compliance with the MRS Code of Conduct participants, can withdraw from the research at any time, even after data collection has taken place.

Email communications from Shift will include an 'unsubscribe' link which automatically marks the respondent as 'unsubscribe' when they submit it.

Should a respondent opt out after filling in the EOI form, but before being interviewed, Shift Insight will make a note not to contact them, and then delete all EOI data after the close of the project.

If they take part in the interview and subsequently withdraw, Shift will delete all responses and data associated with the individual, and will not transfer the data to the OfS. The only exception is if the research data has been pseudonymised, with all personal details removed making it unidentifiable to any individual.

Once consent is withdrawn, we will destroy all relevant personal information unless we are relying on a different legal basis to justify keeping your personal information. If that is the case, we will tell you in writing. However, withdrawing your consent does not affect the lawfulness of processing based on consent before you withdrew consent.

6. Who we share your personal information with and why

The personal information (name, contact details, job role and provider) is used solely by Shift Insight Ltd to invite you to participate in the survey.

After the interviews, data will then be passed onto Transcript Services Ltd, to transcribe responses.

The OfS and Shift Insight will not routinely pass your information to any other organisation except where required to do so as part of our functions or by law.

7. How long we hold your personal information

We are only able to retain a copy of your personal information as long as it is still needed for the purpose(s) for which it was collected.

Your personal information will be kept by Shift Insight until the project has been completed in October 2024, after which time Shift Insight will destroy all personal data

After that point, your personal information will be confidentially and securely disposed of by Shift Insight. If we need to keep your personal information for longer than the retention period above, we will inform you and explain the reasons for this.

8. Where your personal information will be stored

Your personal information will be stored on servers in the UK and Europe and will not be transferred outside that territory unless required by a court order.

9. How we protect your personal information

The OfS has a number of security measures in place to protect your personal information, including:

- accredited to the Cyber Essentials PLUS standard for cybersecurity
- all staff are required to undertake training in data protection and information security on joining the OfS
- formal information security policies that must be read and understood by all staff
- personal information is only available to those members of staff who require access as part of their role
- Shift Insight are accredited to the Cyber Essentials and their certificate can be accessed here - <https://shift-insight.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/CERTIFICATE-CyberEss-2022-23.pdf>

You can read more information on our approach to information security on our website: www.officeforstudents.org.uk/ofs-privacy/information-security/.

10. Your rights over your personal information

Once your personal information has been collected, you have certain rights in relation to that personal information that may be exercised. You have the right to request:

- a copy of your personal information
- inaccurate personal information held about you is corrected
- your personal information to be deleted
- processing of your personal information is restricted
- a copy of your information in a format that allows easy transfer ('data portability')

- that you are not subject to automated decision making or profiling (if these take place).

All these rights have certain limitations depending on the request and the purpose for which we are holding your personal information. Further information can be found about these rights and our processes for handling such requests at: www.officeforstudents.org.uk/privacy/individual-rights-under-the-general-data-protection-regulation/.

11. Use of cookies on OfS website

We will invite providers to register their interest to take part in the research via email which will contain a link to a Microsoft form owned by Shift Insight.

Cookies are text files placed on your computer to collect standard internet log information and visitor behaviour information. This information is used to track visitor use of the website and to complete statistical reports on website activity. For further information about our cookies visit: www.officeforstudents.org.uk/cookies/ and for Shift Insight: <https://shift-insight.co.uk/cookie-policy-uk/>

For further general information visit: www.aboutcookies.org or www.allaboutcookies.org.

12. Complaints about the use of your personal information

If you are unhappy with the way in which your personal information has been handled by the OfS, please contact us via our Data Protection Officer (details in section two) and we will try to resolve your issue informally.

If you remain dissatisfied, you can complain to the data protection supervisory authority. In the UK, this is the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and they can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113

ICO website: ico.org.uk

13. Changes to this notice

We keep our privacy notices under regular review; and we will inform you of any changes to this notice by placing an update on our website.

This privacy notice was last updated on 16 April 2024.