

Agency Information Guide

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) This Agency Information Guide (AIG) has been prepared in accordance with the University of Newcastle's ("the University") obligations under the [Government Information \(Public Access\) Act NSW 2009](#) (GIPA Act) and is a key mechanism in the accessibility of information and its appropriate release.

(2) This AIG:

- a. describes the structure and functions of the University;
- b. describes the ways in which the University's functions affect members of the public;
- c. specifies any arrangements that enable members of the public to participate in the formulation of University policy and exercise of the University's functions;
- d. identifies the various kinds of government information held by the University;
- e. identifies the various kinds of information that the University makes, or will make publicly available;
- f. specifies the way the University makes, or will make, government information publicly available; and
- g. identifies the kind of information that is, or will be made publicly available free of charge, and those kinds of information for which a charge is, or will be, imposed.

Section 2 - Establishment and Structure of The University

Establishment

(3) The University is established by the [University of Newcastle Act 1989](#).

Structure

(4) The University is a body corporate under the name of the University of Newcastle. The structure of the University is detailed in the University of Newcastle [Annual Report](#).

(5) The University's organisational structure can be accessed in the [Organisation Chart](#).

(6) The University's controlled entities are:

- a. The University of Newcastle Research Associates Limited (TUNRA);
- b. NUservices Pty Ltd;
- c. Newcastle Australia Institute of Higher Education Pte Ltd; and
- d. NUsport Pty Limited.

(7) A full list of business names registered by the University can be found [here](#) in the Australian Business Register.

(8) The University is a multi-campus institution and education facilitator. Information regarding the University's

campuses and locations can be found [here](#).

Section 3 - Functions of The University and their Public Effect

(9) The object of the University is the promotion, within the limits of the University's resources, of scholarship, research, free inquiry, the interaction of research and teaching, and academic excellence, as outlined in Part 2 Section 6 of [The University of Newcastle Act 1989](#).

(10) Core functions of the University are:

- a. providing facilities for education and research of university standard;
- b. disseminating, advancing, developing and applying knowledge;
- c. providing courses of study across a range of fields, and carrying out research, that meets the needs of the community;
- d. participating in public discourse;
- e. conferring higher education degrees and awards;
- f. providing teaching and learning that engages with advanced knowledge and inquiry;
- g. developing governance, procedural rules, policies, financial arrangements and quality assurance processes to ensure the integrity of the University's academic progress;
- h. the exercise of commercial functions;
- i. the development and provision of cultural, sporting, professional, technical and vocational services to the community; and
- j. general and ancillary functions as may be necessary or convenient for the University to promote the objectives and interests of the University, or as may complement or be incidental to the promotion of the objectives and interests of the University.

How these functions affect members of the public

(11) The University serves the communities where our campuses are located, predominantly in the Newcastle, Hunter Valley and Central Coast areas of NSW. In these regions, we maintain close partnerships with business and industry.

(12) Engaging with the communities we serve is intrinsic to the University's mission. At the heart of engagement between the University and community is mutually beneficial relationships that strengthen our region and enhance research and innovation and teaching and learning for our students.

(13) Our staff, students and alumni are a resource for our whole community. Through community-based learning, engaged learning (Work Integrated Learning), volunteering, leadership programs, research and innovation, teaching and practice, our staff and students combine with the community to build on existing strengths and provide not just educational but cultural, sporting, professional, technical and vocational services to members of the public.

(14) Members of the public are encouraged to provide comment on the activities of the University through direct contact, select committees, or via the University's [Ask UON](#) online feedback form.

(15) More information about the University's community involvement can be found at [Community Engagement](#).

Section 4 - Governance

(16) The University's decision-making is guided by the strategic objectives in the [University Strategic Plan](#).

(17) As a NSW Government agency, the University is accountable to the NSW public. As a body that receives public funding, the University is also accountable to the government providing the funding.

University Council

(18) The University Council (Council) is the University's governing body. Section 16 of the [University of Newcastle Act 1989 No 68](#) gives Council responsibility for the management of the affairs and concerns of the University, and Council may act in all matters concerning the University.

(19) The Council has established a number of standing council committees to assist in its decision-making. Information regarding the University's governing bodies can be found at [Governing Bodies](#).

Academic Senate

(20) Academic Senate is the University's principal academic body. It oversees academic governance and the maintenance of academic standards; advises the Vice-Chancellor and Council on matters relating to the conduct and standards of teaching, scholarship and research; approves and amends academic policies; and has a major role in the University's academic quality assurance processes. Further information in relation to the Academic Senate's role and function can be found [here](#).

(21) Members of Academic Senate are elected or ex-officio, and include both academic staff and student representatives.

Academic Senate Committees

(22) The Academic Senate is supported by a number of committees to help deal with specialised issues. Further information on these committees and their functions can be found [here](#).

Executive Committee

(23) The Executive Committee is drawn from senior leadership of the University's colleges and divisions and provides advice to the Vice-Chancellor on matters of strategic importance and operational significance.

University Committees

(24) Staff and students, and in some cases other community members, are able to contribute to policy development through committee membership.

Section 5 - Government Information Held by the University

(25) The University supports openness regarding government information. Information may be available as outlined below.

Open Access Information

(26) The University maintains a range of open access information at [Access to Information](#). This includes:

- a. this AIG;
- b. information about the University contained in any document tabled in Parliament by or on behalf of the University, for example the University of Newcastle [Annual Report](#);
- c. relevant University policy documents, contained in the University's [Policy Library](#);
- d. information on disclosures made as a result of a formal [GIPA](#) application that the University considers to be in the broader public interest, found in the University's disclosure log; and
- e. a Register of Government Contracts entered into by the University in which the University spends, or is likely to spend, over \$150,000.

Proactive Release of Information

(27) The University proactively releases a wide range of information on the University website and through public access facilities.

Published Information

(28) The University regularly produces free publications of direct interest to students. These program documents, handbooks and brochures are available at Student Central.

(29) Detailed information relating to all University matters is published annually in the University of Newcastle's [Annual Report](#).

Research

(30) Information relating to research funding, grants and contracts, performance and reporting, monitoring and promoting ethical research and contact information is available at [Research Advantage](#).

(31) Researcher profiles are available [here](#).

(32) Research theses are available in the [NOVA Research Online](#) system.

Corporate Information

(33) The University holds data collected as a result of its administrative and quality assurance activities.

(34) The following principles apply to data that is used for internal quality assurance and benchmarking purposes:

- a. institutions are de-identified unless the information is already in the public domain - this includes removing any obvious attributes that may be present in the comparative data; and
- b. qualitative data is reviewed to confirm de-identification and anonymity.

Library

(35) The University operates a number of Library buildings and an online library environment (see [Library Spaces](#)). The Library holds information relating to and identifying persons entitled to use its services. Further information and contact details are available on the Library [New Cat Library Catalogue](#).

University Archives

(36) The University Archives unit is located in the Auchmuty Library on Callaghan Campus. Further information about the Archives unit is available at [Archive and Manuscripts Collections](#).

Donors

(37) The University is a registered deductible gift recipient and receives philanthropic support from various sources. Confidential donor information is not made public. Further information can be found at [Give to UON](#).

Alumni

(38) Alumni of the University includes graduates of the University, past and present members of the University Council, academic staff, and other people admitted under the [By-law](#). The University is committed to building and nurturing lifelong relationships with its alumni. More information can be found on the [Alumni](#) webpage.

Informal Release of Information

(39) Wherever possible, the University provides requested information informally, without the need of a formal application form. The University may impose reasonable conditions prior to release of the information.

(40) Requests for personal information are granted in line with the access principles prescribed by the [Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 \(NSW\)](#). If a formal request is required, guidance is available from the Right to Information Officer.

(41) Information may be accessed informally if it is:

- a. an individual's own personnel file – staff members can contact the Human Resources Officer or their college or division to request information; or
- b. an individual's own student information – students can contact the Assistant Director, Student Experience and Administration and Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Academic Registrar at Student Central. Requests for informal release of information can be made directly to the relevant school, college, division or unit.

Formal Applications for Information

(42) A formal application for access to information is required when the information is not already available and cannot be provided informally.

(43) A formal application will be required when the information is considered to contain sensitive material or details about a third party.

(44) For a formal application to be considered valid, it must include:

- a. proof of identity;
- b. detailed description of the information sought; and
- c. a \$30 application fee.

(45) An applicant may request a review of certain decisions relating to a formal application via:

- a. an internal review – a fee of \$40 is payable in most cases;
- b. [Information and Privacy Commission New South Wales](#); and/or
- c. NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Fees and Charges

(46) Fees for requests for information fall into two categories – application fees and processing fees.

(47) A \$30 application fee covers applications for both personal and non-personal information, which covers up to one hour of processing time.

(48) Processing fees cover time for locating information, decision making, and consultation where necessary and any photocopying. A fee of \$30 per hour may be charged for processing personal and non-personal information.

(49) The University may request an advance deposit for estimated processing fees.

(50) Applicants are entitled to up to 20 hours of free processing time for access to their own personal information.

(51) Fees relating to requests for information under the [GIPA Act](#) are GST exempt and may be reduced by 50% if:

- a. the applicant is under 18 years of age;
- b. the applicant can demonstrate personal financial hardship;
- c. the application is on the behalf of a non-profit organisation; or
- d. the applicant can demonstrate a special public benefit.

(52) If the University makes the information publicly available within 3 working days after providing access, the applicant is entitled to a waiver of any processing charge.

Section 6 - Contact and Further Advice

Right to Information Officer

(53) The Right to Information Officer can assist members of the public, staff and students to locate publicly available information and provide advice on the [GIPA Act](#) and application process. The Right to Information Officer can be contacted via email at gipa@newcastle.edu.au

The GIPA Act

(54) The [Information and Privacy Commission](#) supports the [GIPA Act](#). Contact details are available on the [Information and Privacy Commission New South Wales](#) website.

Further Information

(55) Further information is available at the [Access to Information Portal](#).

Status and Details

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| Effective Date | 20th October 2021 |
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| Expiry Date | 22nd May 2023 |
| Responsible Executive | Alex Zelinsky Vice-Chancellor alex.zelinsky@newcastle.edu.au |
| Enquiries Contact | Daniel Bell General Counsel and Chief Governance Officer <hr/> Legal and Governance Services |

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Council" - The governing authority of the University established under section 8A of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Graduate" - (Noun) Has the same meaning as in section 3(2) of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Working day" - Any day other than Saturday, Sunday, or a public holiday in Newcastle, on which business may be conducted.

"Academic staff" - A person employed as an academic staff member or appointed as an academic honorary appointee (including adjunct, clinical conjoint, visiting, honorary and conjoint appointments), but does not include persons who are employed solely as teachers or professional staff.

"Applicant" - Where referring to a student, an applicant is an individual seeking entry to a program or course offered by the University or its partner organisation/s. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Award" - When referring to a University qualification, this term means an academic qualification approved by Academic Senate that is conferred when a student has met the relevant program requirements. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Campus" - means any place or premises owned or controlled by the University, but may also specifically refer to a designated operating location such as the Callaghan Campus.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Personal information" - Has the same meaning as in the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW).

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Financial hardship" - An inability to meet basic living needs.

"Research" - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

"School" - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"Third party" - A person or group other than the University or any of the University's partner institutions.

"College" - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.