



Participant Information for USQ Research Project Questionnaire

Project Details

Title of Project: **How can we build sustainable open textbook publishing programs at Australian university?**
Human Research Ethics Approval Number: USQ HREC ID: H21REA125

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details

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Description

While there is a growing body of research on open educational practice (OEP) and open educational resource (OER) use in Australian higher education, little research has been conducted on open textbook publishing at Australian universities. Most existing research on open textbook publishing focuses on the international context (e.g. North America), where differences in funding and legislative support affect not only how, but the extent to which this work is undertaken.

Recent studies such the 2019 [Starved of opportunity](#) survey conducted by the National Union of Students, YOUNG Campaigns, and the Australian Council of Social Service have found many Australian university students struggle to afford textbooks. The prohibitive cost of educational resources can lead them to go hungry or even drop out of study altogether. Australian universities are increasingly viewing open textbooks as an effective strategy for increasing participation in higher education and improving student outcomes.

This Doctor of Philosophy project is the first national study of open textbook publishing programs at Australian universities. It aims to investigate current and emerging trends in open textbook publishing within the broader context of university and library-led publishing.

I am requesting your assistance as understanding how we can build sustainable open textbook publishing programs at Australian universities and increase the output of high-quality Australian open textbooks will improve the student experience by helping to:

- reduce the financial burden of study
- remove geographic and copyright barriers preventing students from accessing essential course materials
- provide more accessible, diverse, and inclusive content than is typically offered by traditional publishers.

Participation

Your participation will involve completion of an online questionnaire that will take approximately 15-20 minutes of your time.

Questions will include: 'In your professional opinion, what are some of the benefits of universities engaging in open textbook publishing?' and 'How does your university acquire open textbook publishing projects?'. This survey is open to all Australian university staff directly engaged in or supporting publishing activities. This will assist me with building a more comprehensive understanding of practice in this area.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you are not obliged to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project prior to data analysis. If you do wish to withdraw from this project, please contact the Principal Investigator (contact details at the top of this form) to request that your data be excluded from the results.

Your decision to take part, not take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

Expected Benefits

It is expected that this project will directly benefit Australian universities by providing detailed insight into current and emerging trends in open textbook publishing in Australia that participants can use to inform their own professional practice.

This research will not only benefit academic libraries, but will also be of interest to the higher education sector more broadly since the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated adoption of digital OER and OEP in learning and teaching.

Risks

There are minimal risks to participating in the questionnaire.

You will be asked to set aside approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the questions online, and an additional hour for a follow up interview if needed (a separate participant information sheet is available for the interview). The questionnaire is designed to be as time efficient as possible by providing multiple choice options wherever questions can be answered in sufficient detail this way.

You will not be asked to answer any personal questions likely to cause psychological or social harm. Rather, quantitative questions will focus on operational topics such as funding, staffing, training, and outputs, while qualitative questions will ask you to reflect on your work by considering the benefits, challenges and opportunities of self-publishing open textbooks.

Your information will be coded during analysis of the research findings and you and your institution will not be identified in any publications resulting from this research.

You are free to opt out of this research prior to data analysis. Please see the section on Participation for more advice on this.

This questionnaire is for research purposes only. I understand that each university studied will adopt different approaches and strategies designed to fit their unique operational conditions and requirements.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law.

The names of individual persons are only required for the purposes of arranging follow up interviews, should you select 'Yes' when asked 'Would you be willing to participate in a follow up interview if required?'.

Your identifiable or re-identifiable data will not be shared, however a copy of your non-identifiable data, along with descriptive metadata, may be stored in USQ's research repository for archiving purposes.

Once the survey results have been analysed, you will receive a summary of the research findings via email. The results will also be shared in a PhD thesis published in USQ's research repository and as an open access book.

Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's [Research Data Management policy](#).

Consent to Participate

Clicking 'Accept' after reading the consent to participate statement on the welcome screen of the questionnaire and clicking 'Submit' on completion of the questions will be accepted as confirmation of your consent to participate in this project.

Responding 'Yes' to the question 'Would you be willing to participate in a follow up interview if required?', providing contact details, and responding 'Yes' to the statement 'Do you consent to the researcher using the contact details provided to contact you?' will be accepted as confirmation of your consent to be contacted to arrange a follow up interview.

Questions or Further Information about the Project

Please refer to the Research Team contact details at the top of this form if you have any questions or to request further information about this project.

Concerns or Complaints Regarding the Conduct of the Project

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project, you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics on +61 7 4631 1839 or email researchintegrity@usq.edu.au. The Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.