

Informal Release of Government information under GIPA Act

Summary for business areas

This summary may assist department [authorised officers](#) in dealing with requests for informal release of government information for which they are responsible under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.

- Check first to see whether the information requested is publicly available on the [department's website](#) – statistical, policy and general information is added regularly.
- If you are not the officer responsible for the information requested, refer the inquiry to the most appropriate person (check with the Right to Access unit if you are unsure).
- If it is a media request, refer the caller to the Media Unit on 7814 1559.
- Assist the person seeking informal release to identify the records required.
- Explain that although there is no application form, the request for informal access to personal information (e.g. student records held in the school or institute) must be in writing to ensure that the correct records are identified, and for privacy reasons.
- Make a decision on informal release (using the guidelines, checklists and tools on the website) and advise the applicant within 20 working days (or school days) of receiving the request, if possible.
- Ensure that, before releasing personal information, the applicant provides identification, preferably including a photograph and signature; if the applicant cannot provide this, other documents that satisfy you as to their identity may be accepted.
- Ensure that access is permitted only to those parts of records requested; and where personal information is requested, only to the information which relates to the person applying.
- If you have decided to provide access to a copy of the information by blocking out certain information (e.g. another person's information, commercial in confidence material etc.) ensure that the blocked information cannot be read.
- If you are providing access by inspection, negotiate a mutually convenient date and time for the applicant to view the documents and ensure that the applicant is supervised.
- Arrange to provide photocopies or electronic copies (e.g. compact disc) of any records, or parts of records requested, to the applicant as you have agreed.
- If you have declined the request for informal release, advise the person that they can make a formal [access application](#).

If in doubt – don't give it out. Don't be pressured into informal release. Take your time to make the right decision and discuss it with your manager or director. You can also contact the Right to Access unit on (02) 7814 3525 or GIPA@det.nsw.edu.au if you have any doubts about informal release.