# Fact Sheet on Privacy Impact
ASSESSMENTS

What is a PIA?

- A Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) is a process which assists organizations in identifying and managing the privacy and information security risks arising from new projects, systems, business relationships etc.
- PIAs focus on how personal information (PI) will be collected, used, disclosed, stored, retained and protected.
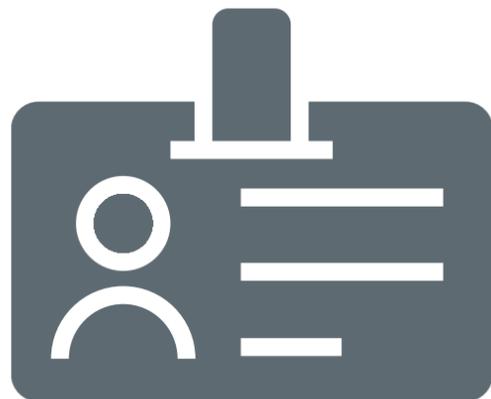
Why do we do PIAs?

- To promote transparency.
- To support risk management, in line with McMaster's Information Security Policy and Privacy Governance and Accountability Framework.
- To ensure compliance with provincial privacy legislation such as the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA).

When do I need a PIA?

- For any new or significantly altered process, project, or initiative that collects, stores, uses or discloses PI.
- When a vendor collects PI on behalf of McMaster, or McMaster discloses PI to a third party.

If you are unsure if your project requires a PIA, please complete the Preliminary Analysis Questionnaire.

PIA process

Information gathered during a PIA includes:
- Privacy policies and terms of service.
- Higher Education Community Vendor Assessment Toolkit (HECVAT) results.
- Location of data storage servers (under PHIPA, personal information must be stored on Canadian soil).
- Sharing information with third parties.
- History of privacy breaches of the vendor and any companies under the same corporate umbrella.

PIA outcomes

- PIAs outcomes generally don't cause disruption to the project plan.
- In order to avoid disruption, **it is essential to start discussions with the Privacy Office right away.**
- A set of recommendations for implementation and sometimes a re-negotiated service-level agreement with a vendor can help a project meet compliance requirements while staying on track.

For more information, check out the complete Privacy Toolkit on the Privacy Office website. Completed PIAs can also be found here.

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