**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.

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

**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.