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<b>To</b>	Te Poari Mātauranga   Academic Board	<b>From</b>	Simon Tries, Manager, Te Korowai Kahurangi
<b>Title</b>	Guidelines and Recommendations for the Utilisation of Student Survey Verbatim Data	<b>Date</b>	3 September 2019

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**Recommendation/s**

That Te Poari Mātauranga:

- approve the guidelines and recommendations set out in this memo.

And note that:

- these guidelines have been developed in collaboration with the Research Association of New Zealand (RANZ) and adhere to the RANZ code of conduct
- these guidelines have been sent to the Unitec Research Ethics Committee (UREC) for their information
- these guidelines will also be provided to the Unitec Research Ethics Committee for consideration and comment

**Purpose**

The purpose of this memo is to set the guidelines and provide recommendations on how Unitec are to use and report student verbatim comments received from ongoing student surveys.

This is so that:

- we are compliant with the Research Association of New Zealand (RANZ) Code of Conduct guidelines
- we are able to be transparent with students on how we manage the comments that they give
- we are consistent across all student surveys

**Background**

Unitec conducts a number of student surveys throughout the year asking students to provide feedback on various aspects of our service delivery (student net promoter score - NPS, course performance, graduate outcomes). These surveys are managed by Te Korowai Kahurangi (course and graduate surveys) and Marketing (student NPS). Within these surveys, students are able to provide open ended comments.

In light of the request from the Academic Board to be informed as to how verbatim data can be used, and their suggestion that Heads and Support managers review that data, Te Korowai Kahurangi engaged with the Research Association of New Zealand (RANZ) to ensure that whatever is recommended meets ethical standards. (RANZ are the governing body for the standards and ethics of market and customer research in New Zealand). Key is our ability to ensure that students are given the choice to have their comments passed on or remain anonymous.

The below guidelines are set with the key focus being on protecting the student's confidentiality and allowing them to provide feedback with confidence that they won't be identified.

#### Proposed Guidelines to Ensure Student Confidentiality

1. In all student surveys, the student is asked upfront if they are happy for their comments to be passed onto Unitec teaching staff and management.
2. If consent is given, then those 'unfiltered' comments will be reported directly to teaching staff and their managers.
  - a. for course surveys, student comments will be reported to teachers directly through individual course/ class reports and also reported to the Head of School and APMs
  - b. For student NPS, student comments will be reported directly to the Head of School and APMs
  - c. For the graduate survey, student comments will be reported directly to the Head of School and APMs
3. If consent is not given, then those comments will not be reported at all.
  - a. Open ended questions will still be asked (as it still provides a student a chance to give feedback)
  - b. This data will be used in any institutional analysis (e.g. coding of themes etc.) but never reported as a single comment.
  - c. Where non-consented comments provide significant insight, they cannot be directly used or reported, but their 'meaning' can be paraphrased as long as the new wording is substantially different to the original wording and cannot be tied to the respondent.

#### Reporting Student Comments in 'more public' Institutional Dashboards

1. To ensure student confidentiality, reporting consented student comments in the institutional dashboards is not recommended.
2. Reporting consented student comments in the institutional dashboards can only occur if all comments are reviewed by staff from the team responsible for the survey to remove all identifiable comments or the comment is paraphrased. This would require additional resource or budget.

#### Analysing Student Verbatims

1. To provide institutional insights from the student comments, each comment can be coded into themes. Because text analytics is still not at a level that provides meaningful insight, each comment would need to be read and coded. To review approx. 9000 comments (the number received in the semester 1 course surveys) would cost \$20,000- 25,000.

**Additional Consideration**

The above guidelines and recommendations are related only to ensuring the protection of student confidentiality as required by RANZ code of conduct. Further consideration is needed regarding the impact unfiltered comments may have on teaching staff.

**Next Steps**

Once approval is given for these guidelines and recommendations, all student surveys and the reporting of student verbatim will abide to these criteria.

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**Contributors**

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