

GSPPC Policy on Personal Information Contained in Theses

Canadian privacy legislation mandates the removal of any personal Information from theses or dissertations that are forwarded to the National Library of Canada Thesis Deposit Program. According to the Privacy Act, personal information is any information, however recorded, that could be used to identify an individual. This does not include information that indicates an individual's professional identity. The candidate and the thesis supervisor are responsible for ensuring all personal information is removed or concealed before the thesis is submitted.

Examples of personal information:

- Information relating to the race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age or marital status of the individual
- Any identifying number assigned to the individual
- Signatures
- Home addresses
- Home phone numbers
- Personal email addresses

Sections that commonly contain personal information:

- Appendices
- Copies of signed forms, such as research ethics approval
- Copies of signed letters such as a letter accompanying a survey or letter of informed consent to participate in research
- Copies of survey instrument with contact details

The name and professional contact information of thesis supervisors and/or ethics committee members is not considered personal information, but all signatures from these people must be removed.

How to remove personal information:

- Prior to photocopying or scanning, signatures, home phone or personal email addresses can be covered or blacked out.
- Replace large sections of personal information with a separation sheet that states what have been removed (e.g., copy of letter of consent).

If personal information is found in a thesis, the thesis will be returned to the thesis supervisor for action.

Approved: March 24, 2011