**International Distance Education and African Students (IDEAS)**

<http://www.ideaspartnership.org>

University of South Africa (UNISA)

The Open University, United Kingdom (OU)

University of Leicester, United Kingdom

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**Principal Investigators**

Professor Ashley Gunter, UNISA

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# **Welcome back to the IDEAS project!**

## **Phase Two**

**Thank you for taking part in Phase One of the IDEAS project when you completed an online questionnaire. We are now proceeding to the second phase where we are researching in more detail the experiences of individuals in international distance education by interviewing some 180 students at UNISA. During June, July, and August 2018, we are particularly approaching students who live in Namibia, Nigeria and Zimbabwe. The interviews are being conducted by researchers from The Open University by telephone and each interview takes half-an-hour to an hour. We would be most grateful if you would agree to being interviewed.**

## **Interviews**

**The interviews will focus on different aspects of being an international distance education student at UNISA. We will transcribe the interview but redact (take out) your name and anything else that might identify you or anyone else you mention. The transcripts will be combined with your questionnaires responses, but we will not link your name, email addresses or anything else that can identify you. The combined data will be used by the researchers to write a series of papers as we believe a lot can be learned from your experiences as a distance education student.**

## **You will not be identifiable**

**Although some of the researchers are at UNISA, we have no access to your records at UNISA. We will only know what you tell us. The researchers at UNISA will be able to see the interview transcript but only after it has been anonymised, i.e., after your name, the place you live, and your email addresses have been completely removed from anywhere in our records. From that moment, no one in the research team will be able to identify you.**

## **Right to withdraw, anonymization and data archive**

**Until we have anonymised the data, we do keep a list of who was interviewed in a secure file to preserve your right to withdraw without a reason. Once we have anonymised the data, we cannot withdraw your data as we won’t know which interview was yours. Also, because the project is being paid for with public monies, we will later lodge the anonymized data, with** [UK Data Service ReShare](https://reshare.ukdataservice.ac.uk/) **so that researchers worldwide are able to learn from your experiences to do research of their own.**

## **Ethics review**

**The project has received favourable opinions from the UNISA ethics committee and the OU ethics committee. Included in that opinion are your rights to take part completely voluntarily. That is, it is entirely your choice whether you contribute and you can change your mind at any time and contact us without giving a reason. You can also approach the Principal Investigators, the Universities, and the Information Commissioner’s Office at any time if you have any questions or reservations.**

## **Why the project may be of interest to you and risks in taking part**

**We believe you may find it interesting to talk through with researchers your experiences, to see how researchers work, and to learn through the questions we ask about the issues of globalization and distance education that are emerging in Universities around the world. We believe the risks to you of taking part are minimal but if you have any concerns at any time, please contact us.**

## **Your consent**

**We will go through this list again at the start of the interview so that you can record your consent.**

# **Data Protection Privacy Notice**

**In the following sections, we set out what we do with your personal data.**

## **Who are The Open University’s Research Partners on this project?**

The IDEAS project is a partnership between the University of South Africa, The Open University and the University of Leicester. The Open University and the University of Leicester are joint Data Controllers for the personal data that you provide on this stage of the project.

## **What data do we collect about you?**

In this stage of the project, we are interviewing you about different aspects of your experiences at UNISA which we record and transcribe. We will combine the transcription with the information you gave us previously in the questionnaire.

## **Who collects data?**

The interviews are being conducted by researchers from The Open University and the University of Leicester and are transcribed by professional transcribers in the United Kingdom who have a contract with The Open University.

## **Where is data stored?**

Thereafter the interviews and previous information you have given us are collated at The Open University who will check that no personal information remains that can identify you.

We then prepare a data base using this anonymised data that can be used by the entire research team from all three Universities and will later be deposited in perpetuity as a public archive at UK Data Service ReShare.

The Open University and the University of Leicester have data protection regimes in place to oversee the effective and secure handling of your personal data.

## **Lawful reason**

With strict new rules about data processing in the EU, we hereby state that the lawful reason for our processing your personal data is that academic research is necessary for the performance of a task set out inboth Universities’ Charters.

**Special Category Data**

The data we collect or have collected on you through the questionnaire includes the following Special Category Data:

* Ethnicity/Race (as stated by you)
* Citizenship (as stated by you).

When we anonymize your data, we remove any personal identifiers including your name, the place you live, and any email addresses.

The additional lawful reason for processing the Special Category Data is that it is necessary for scientific research purposes which are in the public interest. The wider project’s data collection is of public interest because it aims to:

* See how student participation can be improved through the use of learning analytics
* See how student adjustment (emotional, social, academic) can be improved by analysing current student adjustment patterns and the reasons why certain patterns of adjustment might be occurring
* See how informal learning methods such as social media are being used by students to learn
* Understand how migration of students from Africa may be speeded up or slowed down through distance education.

The project provides a dataset that will enable both current and future researchers, with whom appropriately anonymised data will be shared through UK Data Service ReShare, to work to improve HE students’ educational experience and performance.

We believe this is of public interest to achieve these educational aims in Africa and throughout the world.

## **Sharing of information outside of The Open University and the University of Leicester**

We share the information you have given to us with the following organisations in order to collect the data, analyse the data, and manage the data so that it is of high quality for international research of public interest.

1. Professional transcribers in United Kingdom who will type out the interview and immediately remove your name and where you live. We have contracts with them.
2. Researchers in the team at University of South Africa who will be analysing the anonymised data to write academic papers. All researchers have a contract with the project.
3. UK Data Service ReShare who will house the database as an archive in perpetuity. UK Data Service ReShare will not have access to the list of participants, a list which we destroy at the earliest possibility to ensure that your data is fully anonymised.

## **Your rights as a “data subject”**

You have a number of rights as a “data subject”:

* To request a copy of the personal data we have about you
* To rectify any personal data which is inaccurate or incomplete
* To restrict the processing of your data
* To receive a copy of your data in an easily transferrable format (if relevant)
* To erase your data
* To object to us processing your data.

## **Complaints and concerns**

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact The Open University’s Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter. Our Data Protection Officer can be contacted on the details below.

Academic Policy and Governance

The Open University

Walton Hall

Milton Keynes

MK7 6AA

Email: data-protection@open.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 (0)1908 653994

If you are not satisfied with our response, or believe we are processing your personal data in a way that is not in accordance with the law, you can complain to the UK Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). See [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

## Questions

If you have any questions, please contact Dr Markus Breines ([markus.breines@open.ac.uk)](mailto:markus.breines@open.ac.uk)) or Jo Jordan ([jo.jordan@open.ac.uk)](mailto:jo.jordan@open.ac.uk)) or Joanne Watts ([joanne.watts@open.ac.uk)](mailto:joanne.watts@open.ac.uk)) in the first instance who are able to discuss issues with you.

## Thank you!