

Factsheet: Public Interest Disclosures

What is a Public Interest Disclosure?

A Public Interest Disclosure (**PID**) is a special type of disclosure relating to ‘disclosable conduct’ under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012* (ACT) (**PID Act**).

A PID must relate to disclosable conduct by a public sector entity, or public official. A public official includes a current or former public sector entity employee; or a contractor, employee of a contractor or volunteer exercising a function of the public sector entity.

Disclosable conduct may relate to known or suspected past, present or future conduct, and includes:

- *Maladministration*; or
- Conduct that poses a *substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, or the environment*.

‘Maladministration’ means conduct, or a policy or practice or procedure that results in a substantial mismanagement of public resources or public funds; or involves substantial mismanagement in the performance of official functions: PID Act s 8(3). While ‘public health or safety’ refers to the health or safety of people under lawful care or control; using community facilities or services; or in workplaces.

How is a PID different from a complaint or grievance?

A PID must concern disclosable conduct. Disclosable conduct does not include personal work-related grievances such as:

- industrial matters.
- allegations of bullying, harassment or discrimination.
- concerns relating to underperformance or performance management processes.

Who can make a PID?

Anyone can make a PID about disclosable conduct under the PID Act. A person who makes a PID is called a ‘discloser.’

How do I make a PID?

A PID may be made orally (via telephone or in person) or in writing (via email, fax or letter). There is no requirement for the discloser to state that they are making a PID or even to refer to the PID Act. PIDs can be made anonymously. However, this may make it difficult for UC to appropriately investigate the disclosure.

A PID must be made to a disclosure officer. Under the PID Act, a disclosure officer includes:

- the ACT Public Sector Standards Commissioner;
- the ACT Auditor-General;
- the ACT Ombudsman;
- the ACT Integrity Commissioner;
- the University’s Vice-Chancellor & President; or
- one of the University’s nominated Disclosure Officers.

The contact details for UC’s disclosure officers are:

The Hon. Bill Shorten
Vice-Chancellor & President
Email: ovc@canberra.edu.au
Phone: (02) 6201 5000

Geoff Drummond
A/Chief Operating Officer
Email: chiefoperatingofficer@canberra.edu.au
Phone: (02) 6201 2886

Mail: University of Canberra
University Drive
Bruce ACT 2617

What protections are available to disclosers?

Under the PID Act a discloser is eligible for certain protections including:

- immunity from civil or criminal liability.
- protection from a defamation action.
- protection (including legal remedies) in respect of detrimental action.

It is an offence under the PID Act for a person (the 'retaliator') to take detrimental action:

- against a person who has made, or intends to make, a PID; or
- in circumstances where the retaliator believes that a person has made, or intends to make, a PID.

Where can I get further information?

Further information can be found via the:

- PID Act: [Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012 | Acts](#)
- ACT's Integrity Commission website: [Public Interest Disclosures \(PID\) - ACT Integrity Commission](#)
- Public Interest (Integrity Commission – Managing Disclosures and Conducting Investigations) Guidelines 2021: [Public Interest Disclosure \(Integrity Commission – Managing Disclosures and Conducting Investigations\) Guidelines 2021 | Notifiable instruments](#)