Statement of Academic Activity
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

General

1. What is the Statement of Academic Activity?
The Statement of Academic Activity (SAA) is a report that collates the achievements of an academic staff member across a range of academic activities. It is accessible through the ANU Insight tool which provides transparent, up-to-date information that is easy to access in one place.

2. How does this report relate to the University’s broader strategic priorities?
ANU by 2020 outlines the aim to maintain and enhance our distinctive excellence both as Australia’s national university and Australia’s finest university. For the University to achieve this ambition, its staff must perform at a level commensurate and be supported to do so. The University has outlined the following as key outcomes from its strategic priorities:
   • ensure that the majority of staff are highly research active
   • ensure that education is research led
   • continue to win research funding from external sources
   • remain a top ranked university
   • remain above the Go8 average in national course and university surveys
   • be a national leader in contributions to public policy analysis and formulation

3. What will the statement be used for?
The statement will be used:
   • For individuals to reflect on and evaluate their performance, and to plan their professional development.
   • To assist academic supervisors as a conversation starter to enhance the quality of performance development discussions with their staff.
   • To ensure that the University’s data is complete and accurate in order to make informed decisions and maximise performance.

4. How was the decision made for how the Statement would be used?
Our academic staff and their representatives have made it clear that they expect a developmental framework that assists them to achieve at the highest level. An important element of this framework is meaningful and objective performance and development discussions between academics and their supervisors. The Statement of Academic Activity will be one of a number of tools that academic staff and supervisors will have available to them to inform these essential discussions.

The content and application of the report has been discussed extensively with the Deans, Research School Directors and with the University Council. A working party was established under the direction of the Vice-Chancellor to guide the development and implementation of the report. This working party consists of the Vice-Chancellor, three Deans, the Director of Human Resources and the Director of Planning and Performance Measurement.
5. What information does the Statement contain?
The report contains a summary of an individual’s research and education activities as extracted from a range of ANU administrative systems. The report also includes some contextual human resources information and provides opportunity for staff to capture service and other significant contributions.

Through ANU Insight, the Statement of Academic Activity provides the capability for an individual to drill-down into detailed reports providing a complete list of activities. This allows academic staff to ensure their information is accurate, and provides a clear process to correct information and have records added where required.

It is anticipated that appropriate quality measures will be developed in the report in the future. This might include information such as citations, impact statements and journal quality.

More information on the individual data elements included in the report and any logic used to derive them can be found in the Report inclusions, sources and methodologies document.

6. How was it decided what information would be included in the report?
A wide range of data and metrics were considered. These were informed and prioritised by the measures that impact on institutional funding, reputation and ranking as well as current data quality and availability. They align to the key performance measures of the University.

These considerations highlighted the importance of the first phase of the report’s release to focus on base information to ensure accuracy and completeness. This release incorporates data validation capability to support the collection and verification of identified modifications and/or additions to source data.

7. How does the statement fit within the Academic Development framework?
The Statement of Academic Activity is one of many tools available to complement the Performance and Development Process (PDP). Academic staff are encouraged to supplement the data in the Statement of Academic Activity with additional material and contextual information that they feel will support a productive, two way professional development conversation.

8. Is use of the Statement of Academic Activity mandatory?
Use of the Statement of Academic Activity to support the PDP is at the discretion of the individual and their academic supervisor; its use is not mandated. An individual academic’s report will be available to their academic supervisor at any time via the ANU Insight portal.

9. Will the Statement of Academic Activity be used in Academic Promotions?
An academic may choose to use their Statement of Academic Activity to support their promotion application, however it is not mandatory under the Promotions Procedure for staff to provide their report.

Statement of Academic Activity access and security

10. How often will the Statement of Academic Activity be accessible and updated?
The report will be accessible anytime through the ANU Insight system to those who have been approved to have access. The ANU Insight system is a web-based enterprise reporting application that utilises a range of sensitive information. As a result it is secured and password protected. More information about ANU Insight, including access to the system can be found on the Insight web page.
The information within ANU Insight is extracted from ANU administrative systems; this is refreshed on a weekly basis. Modifications and additions proposed by academics are available live to supervisors and administrators.

11. Who is able to see the Statement of Academic Activity and how is it be provided?
The statement will be provided though the ANU Insight portal via secure login.

Individuals will only be able to access their own Statement of Academic Activity. Through a security framework, academic supervisors will have access to all staff they manage. A number of select roles, including Dean’s, Heads of School, General Managers, relevant Executive, and select Human Resources Division staff, will have access to the report of all staff within their respective School, College or the University.

12. Who is the Statement of Academic Activity relevant to?
All current academic staff who undertake teaching and/or research at ANU on a fixed-term or ongoing contract. Other staff may be provided access to their reports on a case-by-case basis.

Where to go for additional information or support

13. Who do I contact if I have concerns about how this will impact on my position and career at ANU?
To seek more information or raise concerns about the report and its implications you are able to contact the ANU Academic Development team via academicdevelopment@anu.edu.au.

14. Who do I contact if I am having trouble using or logging into my report?
To seek assistance in using, interpreting or accessing your activity statement via the ANU Insight system you can;

- Email the ANU Insight Service Desk on insight@anu.edu.au
- Call the ANU Insight Service Desk on (02) 6125 8649
- Visit the Insight website.

Report changes

15. What do I do if there is some data that is missing or incorrect on my report?
A stated key purpose of the Statement of Academic Activity is to ensure that the University’s data collections are as accurate as possible. Following the release of the statement there will be a four week period of data validation and improvement. This will support the development of the reports and ensure they will be at their most beneficial.

The ANU Insight system provides an academic with the ability to notify the University where they believe their data is incorrect or incomplete. Step-by-step instructions on reporting data problems can be found on the Statement of academic activity webpage.

There may be some exceptions to this where an academic staff member is able to update the data themselves within the University’s systems. Academic staff will be notified where this is possible from within the activity statement and associated detailed reports.

Once an issue has been logged, in a similar manner to the recent Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) process, administrative staff members will be notified and able to process the
proposed change. In some circumstances they may contact the academic staff member for further information. More information on how to process a change, and where the responsibility of processing each data items lies can be found in the Step-by-step user guide - Process a change document.

Once the data has been validated and entered or corrected in the University’s enterprise systems, the data will be updated into the Statement of Academic Activity. Different data elements have different update frequencies and details on these can be found in the Report inclusions, sources and methodologies document.

16. How long do I have to correct data in my report?
The ANU will go through a period of intensive data validation and improvement for four weeks from the 1st of July until the 29th of July. By undertaking this intensive cleansing exercise we will ensure that ANU moves forward with future enhancements and developments to the report from a solid data foundation.

During this time we would like academic staff to run their report and test the data for completeness and accuracy. The ANU Insight team will work with Colleges and academic staff to maximise access during this period.

Should academic staff identify further issues with their data following this data validation period they will still be able to report new problems which arise.

17. Will the types of measures contained in the statement be reviewed?
The Statement of Academic Activity in its current state is a phase one release. Aligned with the data validation process, feedback will be sought from academic staff and their supervisors for future enhancements.

This feedback will be collated and provided to the Vice-Chancellor’s working party for review and incorporation into future phases of the Statement of Academic Activity release.

To provide feedback about the reports content and future direction please email saa.feedback@anu.edu.au.

Research contributions

18. I am relatively new to ANU, are my published outputs included from my previous university?
Academics may wish to ensure their publications profile is complete. Any research outputs that have been entered into the ANU Research Information Enterprise System (ARIES) will be included in the report.

All creative and published works can be entered in the ARIES system. College collection officers and Research Services are able to assist with categorising these for the Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) eligibility and Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) profiles. These collections directly contribute to ANU institutional rankings and research funding allocated to ANU.

19. Why is there a category called “Non-HERDC” under the HERDC funding categories?
There are instances recorded in ARIES where the funds awarded were classified as HERDC eligible, however no funding category (1-4) has been applied. This is a known issue. If you have an instance
where you have funding in this field that is either not HERDC eligible or where appropriate category has not been applied, you should advise this through the standard report mechanisms as outline in item 15 of the FAQs.

20. My research activity is focused on high quality rather than quantity, why is this not captured in the statement?
A key purpose of the first release of the report is to validate and improve the base level data of the University. Quality measures will be considered in future releases of the report for which feedback from staff will be sought as to the best available and comparable measures of quality.

To provide feedback about the reports content and future direction please email saa.feedback@anu.edu.au.

21. Does the awarded funding report include grants administered at other universities?
The awarded funding report will include grants administered at other universities where a proportion of funding is attributed to ANU. If an ANU staff member is a part of a research team at another Australian university that is receiving grant funding (e.g. ARC), but no funding is attributed back to the University this will not be recorded in the ARIES system. However, if you are an investigator on a grant at another institution this can be recorded in the Service and Other Significant Contribution section of the activity statement.

22. Are my internal research, teaching and other grants included in the awarded funding report?
The detailed awarded funding report incorporates the majority of funding information recorded in the ARIES system. This includes a wide variety of funding types such as ANU teaching and education grants (e.g. the Vice-Chancellor’s Linkage for Learning and Teaching Grant) and other non-research or project related funding such as teaching and consultancy awarded funding. The funding that is not Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) eligible will appear in the “other” category of the funding section of the summary report.

The detailed funding report can be filtered by academic investigator position, grant type, grant status, funds provider and research category. Academics are encouraged to record internal grants in the ARIES system.

23. Why are my unsuccessful grant applications included in the report?
It is understood that preparing a grant application can be a considerable undertaking for academic staff. It is important to recognise the work contributed to grant applications, even those that are unsuccessful. Academic staff are able to provide contextual information for these grant applications in their career conversations.

Education contributions

24. Why is my historical teaching data not included?
When the University began work on the Statement of Academic Activity (SAA) it was recognised that Teaching Contributions were under-represented relative to the research data available.

There was no reliable central source of teaching contributions and work was undertaken with the Colleges and Schools to capture and upload 2014 data into the student administration system and made available within the SAA. This process was designed as a once-off bulk collection to support the development of the SAA.
The University is commencing work to identify the best way to manage the ongoing collection of teaching contribution data that will consider the frequency of collection, supporting administrative processes and responsibilities, and enabling technology. This will involve consultation with the Colleges and Schools to ensure an effective and efficient process is developed.

In the meantime the Activity reports will only display 2014 teaching data until a 2015 collection is undertaken. Further information will be made available as the project gets underway.

25. I have a teaching role that does not fit within the categories specified, how can this be captured?
There are many different teaching roles across the University, for collection and consistency an aggregated perspective of teaching roles has been captured at this time. This is the first time teaching allocation data of this extent has been collected centrally. It is recognised there are a large range of teaching and delivery methods that are specific to different areas; it was not practical during this initial collection to capture all categories separately.

Academics and their supervisors will have a more in-depth understanding of the education activities undertaken by an individual. This report aims to provide a basis for discussion, including identifying the number and size of classes contributed to. It is recognised that this is not a complete representation of the effort or time contributed to these roles.

26. I arranged for someone else to teach my class – will I see this in my Statement?
No. Only those academics who undertook or made significant contributions to the teaching will have the teaching attribute against them. If you arranged for someone else to teach your class then the person who taught it will receive this teaching contribution.

Higher Degree Research (HDR) supervision

27. Does the HDR supervision report include Postgraduate (by research) and Honours students?
The detailed HDR supervision report will include all PhD and Masters by Research students. It does not currently capture undergraduate research (honours) students. Honours classes are identifiable in the Education drill-through report. The contributions to education report will also include student headcount and load.

28. I supervise a summer research student, where are these included?
Academics who are supervising students who have undertaken our intensive summer research scholarship programs and submit a research project can record this contribution under the Service and Other Contributions category of their report. There is a category specifically for this supervision contribution called ‘Summer Research Supervisor’. As these students do not formally enrol in a program at the university, do not have their supervisors attributed to them in the student administration system and do not receive a transcript from the ANU they are unable to be captured in the HDR supervision or contributions to education reports.

29. I make a significant contribution to my HDR students who have high-quality outcomes and complete within three years, how can this be recognised?
The HDR supervision report does not currently incorporate completions information (time and result). This has been decided as supervisors recorded during completion are not always the person who has had a supervision role through the life a research degree. Therefore the contributions of an
individual can be challenging to report. A project is currently underway to review HDR processes and it is anticipated that additional information and metrics will come from this process that can be incorporated into the project in the future.

30. Why is my SELS overall satisfaction score appearing if my student headcount is less than 5? Should this be suppressed for confidentiality?
Generally, SELS responses are reported by term. In the case of the SAA the SELS responses have been aggregated to present a yearly estimate. The re-calculation of SELS by year still provides the same estimate of agree responses divided by the total no of responses. Therefore once aggregated there are fewer instances where these results must be suppressed (fewer than 5 respondents). This in turn means that the SELS estimate visualised in the report does not align specifically to the semester it sits against, instead the years that semester sits within.

Service and other significant contributions

31. I undertake other significant work that is not captured in the research or education data shown, how do I have this other contribution considered?
Significant contributions that are not covered in the other measures of the report can be included in the Service and Other Significant Contribution section. You can manage this list yourself and change it as required. Academics are able to enter as many contributions as they like into the detail report. They then must choose the top five contributions to display on the front page.

32. Why doesn’t the data show my proportion of the contribution?
There are two reasons why the proportion of contribution of each academic activity is not shown in the report. Firstly, collaborative activity is encouraged; apportioning the data may discourage this. Secondly, the recorded proportion of an individual’s contribution to an activity may not be an accurate representation of the actual effort involved.

In some instances of collaborative activity it is split evenly across all contributors and in others, the data is not recorded centrally or consistently across the University. If overwhelming support is shown for the generation and collection of a measure of efforts, steps will be made to report the information in future versions of the report.

Human Resource information

33. Does the Statement of Academic Activity take into consideration my workload and changes that have occurred?
The report shows the recorded workload distribution for research, teaching and service. This is recorded at the current point-in-time only. The report is intended to be used as one of a number of available tools to support engaged career conversations between a staff member and their academic supervisor. Additional contextual information should be considered during that conversation, including changes in workload distribution over time.

34. Why is my academic level not displayed correctly in the Statement of Academic Activity?
For academic staff who hold an ARC Fellowship, there is an identified anomaly in how the HR system captures and reflects their academic level. It is important to note that this does not impact an academic’s salary however, as the HR system does reconcile the salary level appropriately.
We have identified this anomaly as a data integrity focus area and are currently working towards a resolution. When the matter has been resolved, the Statement of Academic Activity will display the academic staff member’s actual academic level.

35. Why am I showing as continuing when I am on successive contracts?
An employee who is employed on a continuing (contingent funded) contract is classified as a ‘continuing’ employee. An expected job end date is entered in the payroll system to identify when funding for the position is due to expire.

36. I took extended leave during the Statement reporting period which has resulted in my activity lower over this period, how is this recognised?
The report is to be used as one of a number of available tools to support engaged career conversations between a staff member and their academic supervisor. Additional contextual information should be considered during that conversation. If there is support from the academic community, it may be possible to show significant leave periods in the report in a future release.