

Memoranda of Understanding and Other Data Use Agreements

Memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and acceptable use statements are effective tools for describing and enforcing data usage agreements between two or more parties. They are frequently used to formally agree to desirable behavioral practices such as good data ethics.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) is a written document describing a bilateral or multilateral agreement between two or more parties. It expresses a convergence of will and understanding between parties, indicating an intended common line of action. It most often is used in cases where parties do not intend to imply a legal commitment to each other, but do wish to engage in an agreement of principle all the same.

A MOU typically establishes the framework for collaboration, intended outcomes, audiences, and the purposes for which data will and will not be used. It may also describe ownership of resources, confidentiality aspects, and conditions for proper release of data (if any). A MOU may also specify the responsibilities of the parties coordinating the data collection, and any fees associated with collecting, compiling, and transmitting data. The document may also specify any timelines to be met.

A MOU is a common synonym for a letter of intent (LOI).

Sample Memoranda of Understanding

Several examples can be found at:

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/mar/82496.htm>

<http://www.uscis.gov/files/nativedocuments/mou.pdf>

<http://www.uscis.gov/files/article/mou.pdf>

Sample Agreements

Employee Acceptable Data Usage Statement

I acknowledge that [name of organization]'s data usage policies, guidelines, and procedures have been made available to me for adequate review and consideration. I also certify that I have been adequately trained in the application of these requirements and given ample opportunity to have any and all questions about my responsibilities addressed. I am aware that I am accountable for all data usage policies, guidelines, and procedures that apply to my tasks at the organization. Moreover, I agree to use data in an appropriate and ethical manner as required by the organization's data usage policies, guidelines, and procedures. I understand that failure to abide by any and all policies, guidelines, and procedures can result in organizational, civil, or criminal action; and/or the termination of my employment.

Signature:

Printed Name:

Job Title:

Date: //

Contractor/Consultant/Outsider Acceptable Data Usage Statement

I acknowledge that [name of organization] has provided me with adequate time to review and consider the data usage policies, guidelines, and procedures it deems applicable to responsibilities I am undertaking on its behalf, regardless of my employment status. I am aware that I am accountable for all data usage policies, guidelines, and procedures that apply to my tasks at the organization. Moreover, I agree to use data in an appropriate and ethical manner as required by the organization's data usage policies, guidelines, and procedures. I understand that failure to abide by any and all policies, guidelines, and procedures can result in organizational, civil, or criminal action; and/or the termination of my relationship with [name of organization].

Signature:

Printed Name:

Affiliation:

Date: //