Guidance notes to support ethics applications

Please read the following guidelines *before* you complete both the application form and the Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms (PCF) as these are designed to help support and clarify some of the issues that we know researchers might have about the process.

The application form asks for full details of your proposed project and is designed to help clarify all of the different aspects of your study: what it is about and what you want to study; how you plan to collect data; who your participants are and how you will recruit them; how you will ensure fully informed and voluntary consent and any other dynamics (e.g. geographical, environmental, cultural, gender or other demographic factor) that might influence how you plan to run your study from an ethical point of view. The aim is not to create an onerous task for researchers but to ensure that the ethical practice and research integrity of studies approved by EDU align with the University Research Ethics guidelines. It also acts as a useful tool to help shape your research project.

Application form:

Section	Additional notes
4.1	This is essentially a mini rationale for your study where we would expect to see an explanation in simple language about what it is that you planned to do and your aims. *This would be matched to PCF section 1 'what is the study about'?*
4.2	This is where we want to see what it is you plan to actually do to collect your data, with whom and where this is likely to take place. We need to see the specifics of how many, how often etc. *This detail should be clearly matched to PCF section 3 'what will the study involve for me'?*
4.3	A clear indication of where and how you plan to recruit your participants, if you need gatekeeper permission etc. If you need access to email lists, databases, social media sites, chat rooms etc. this should be identified here and how you plan to ask for permission – you should include any letters of invitation.
4.4	If you are a student, generally the only people that will have access to raw data will be yourself and your supervisor. In some cases this would only be you as the student or researcher as any 'findings' will already be processed before you show anyone else. You should identify clearly, how you plan to anonymise data (if applicable) and if it's possible for you to maintain confidentiality. *This detail should match PCF section 8 'what will happen to information about me that is collected during the study'?*
4.5	This would generally apply only to those studies where you might need access to email lists, attendance records, attainment scores, assessment measure etc. that another part might hold (e.g. school, university). Even if you are a member of that institution there would still be a request to this third party to access these sorts of material.
4.6	This should really be all clear within the PCF for each participant group. If there are other ways in which consent is going to be obtained because of literacy levels, cultural expectation etc. this should be detailed here.
4.7	Most of the time this is likely to be a 'no' but if you are planning of providing an incentive it should be clear what that is and why it is necessary.
4.8	For the majority of UG and MA coursework dissertations this is likely to just be your dissertation project. If you and supervisor might feel there is the *possibility* that you

	might publish or present your work elsewhere you should identify this. Its more realistic to ask consent for this early on rather than try and seek it after the fact if you change your mind. For PGR and staff you only need to identify the types rather than the specifics of dissemination e.g. conferences vs International Teacher Education Society 2018. *This detail should match PCF section 8 'what will happen to information about me that is collected during the study'?*
4.9	Consider here the practicalities of providing feedback and the method of doing this. This should be offered as a matter of course rather as a specific request *from* the participant. *This detail should match PCF section 10 'will I be told of the results'? and as an option in the consent part of the form.*
4.10	This requires you to consider any other factor that might create an ethical situation for you. You need to consider any possible negative consequences attached to either withdrawing or not wishing to participate and how you might address that. *This detail should match PCF section 5 'do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started'?*
4.11	Consideration should be given here to the range of consequences that might occur for a participant and how you are planning on managing that risk. This detail should match PCF section 6 'are there any costs associated with being in the study'?
4.12	As researchers we recognise that participants are supporting our work and therefore this should not just be about 'us'. We would hope that there was some positive outcome for their participation. *This detail should match PCF section 7 'are there any benefits associated with being in the study'?*
4.13	We ask all researchers to reflect on any specific detail that might impact on the design or running of your project. This would require you reflecting on your own cultural, social or gender based characteristics as well the participants because of the impact this might have on data collection, access or practical considerations. For example, even if you belong to the same 'group' as your participants has this affected your design in terms of making it easier/harder to gain access and trust of that group?
4.14	For many research projects, this is a simple 'not applicable', but its increasingly becoming something ethics committees are assessing so you need to reflect on what your potential impact might be.
4.15	For many research projects, this is a simple 'not applicable', but its increasingly becoming something ethics committees are required to ask and assess so you need to reflect on the scope of your research.
4.16	It is expected that if you are planning to conduct research that you have considered the safety aspects for yourself as researcher. You may need to access a travel advice site to show the level of 'risk' attached to your project. As the situation in anyone country or are within a country can fluctuate, we ask that you identify the date of accessing that material and the source. We expect this even if you are a national of that part of the world. For work in schools, for example, have you undertaken a DBS check?
4.17	Applying the same questions to other researchers you are working with if applicable
4.18	Indicate if applicable
4.19	Indicate if applicable

PCF forms:

Each template has a series of statements in blue and red to help guide the researcher. Those in BLUE are indicators to INSERT something or to choose an OPTION; those in RED are descriptions of the type of things you could include under that section. Please use this to consider how you want your PCF to look and read. It should also be noted that the language used is just **AN EXAMPLE,** it is absolutely expected that you will adjust the language to suit your participant groups. We have provide an option for younger children that incorporates pictures but these are guides for you and you are free to develop ones that suit your particular needs.

The templates have been developed to focus around broad methodological approaches to data collection: interviews, focus groups, observations, ethnographic work and questionnaires. It is hoped that this might be useful to researchers rather than having one form with a large number of options. It should also be noted that some projects may require additional parts from one template into another e.g. an ethnographic study might contain observations, questionnaires, interviews and focus groups.

The templates have also been grouped according to if you are an UG/MA coursework student or a staff member/PGR student. This relates specifically to the management of data and if you are only conducting research as part of an assessment exercise. Please refer to point 4.8 in the application form and PCF section 8. The language regarding how data is managed and stored is different in these two groupings so please check you are using the appropriate forms.

We have also provided a number of examples of virtual PCFs so you can see what they might look like in the end.

Use of opt out forms:

UEA and EDU prefer that all projects use opt in forms to ensure explicit written informed consent from each participant group. This may, on occasion, add additional time to your project and the development of your study should reflect this. This additional time is not an immediate indication that opt out is the appropriate strategy to take. If you feel there are special circumstances where opt out might be more appropriate please feel free to contact Kate directly to discuss your options.

If you have any additional questions regarding the process or any comments please feel free to contact Kate Russell Chair EDU Research Ethics kate.russell@uea.ac.uk.