RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL CHECKLIST
(PLANNING WORKSHEET)

This worksheet is designed to help a student researcher anticipate and manage possible ethical concerns that are relevant to planning and executing a study. This worksheet contains the same 40 ethics questions that you will find in Form C (the most critical component of an IRB application to collect data). These 40 ethical standards will be evaluated for your study by the IRB (Institutional Review Board), once your proposal is approved.

INSTRUCTIONS: To ensure a smooth ethics review, build your proposal and your research design so that the answer to each question below is "yes." You should be as objective and self-critical as possible during this self-evaluation in order to spot and resolve any potential ethical challenges in advance.

Researchers proposing to complete research in the following specialized areas are encouraged to review the relevant research ethics FAQs on the IRB website:
Clinical or Intervention Research
Educational Research
International Research
Research in One's Own Workplace
Research about Bullying or Other Potential Issues Related to Safety

If you don't know how to address one of the ethical standards below, just email IRB@mail.waldenu.edu for support or join the IRB office hours at one of the posted times. Footnotes containing tips, samples, and definitions can be viewed by hovering your mouse over the underlined phrase.

SECTION I: CONFIRMATION OF ETHICAL STANDARDS COMPLIANCE	**Answer each question below with yes, no, or N/A. If you cannot easily answer "yes" or "N/A" to each of the ethical standards below, then you probably need to build extra protections into your research procedures.**
1. **Has each recruitment, consent, and data collection step been articulated such that the responsibilities of the researcher and any partner organization(s) are clearly documented?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Recruitment and data collection steps:***

Provide a numbered list of the data collection steps that includes **how/who/where**[1] details for each step, in sequential order. Here are **samples**. Describe **pilot**[2] steps first if you are doing a pilot or road test.				
2. **Will the research procedures ensure privacy**[3] **during data collection?** Describe how you will prevent others overhearing or seeing the participant's responses.	Yes ☐	No ☐	***Supporting details:***	
3. **Will data be stored and shared**[4] **in a secured manner that provides access only to you and your supervising faculty members?** Researchers conducting studies involving identifiers and more than minimal risks will be directed to provide additional information and assurances in Form E (Data Security Checklist).	**Please confirm each of the data security measures below (no supporting details needed for these).**			
	Yes ☐	No ☐		**a. Do you confirm that you will only store the dataset on devices that are owned by you and in your sole control?**
	Yes ☐	No ☐		**b. If the data will be coded, and if there is a linked list of codes and identifiers, will this list be stored separately from all coded data?**
	Yes ☐	No ☐		**c. Will you take reasonable precautions to ensure that the device(s) and drive(s) storing the data are not stolen? (i.e., not leave it unattended in public, keep it in a locked area when not in use)**
	Yes ☐	No ☐	NA ☐	**d. If there will be any printouts or non-electronic physical forms of the dataset, will you be the only person with access?**

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[1]HOW = Write this like a recipe, including enough details so that a reader could replicate your study. Submit copies of any of the following that apply: flyer, invitation email, ad/posting.
WHO = Which parties are involved in each step? In particular, we need details about any partners who might be assisting the researcher in identifying or contacting participants. Note that doctoral students may not delegate the tasks of obtaining consent or collecting data to anyone else.
WHERE = Specify whether the interactions will take place via phone, email, online, or in-person at a specific location.

[2]It is fine to road test an interview or survey with friends or family prior to IRB approval and that data may not be used in the study's analysis. However, any piloting done outside of friends/family requires prior IRB approval, regardless of whether the data would be included in the final analysis or not.

[3] Adult volunteers are typically able to select how much privacy they desire while they complete a phone interview or online survey. However, for in-person data collection, the researcher is responsible for ensuring that no one can see or overhear their responses.

[4]Unless the IRB authorizes an exception, data shared with supervisors and future collaborators must have names and other identifiers removed first.

	Yes ☐ No ☐	**e. Will you be the only person with the password to access to any devices, drives, or clouds on which electronic data will be stored?**
	Yes ☐ No ☐	**f. Will you set up a "screen lock" to require the password to be re-entered if any data storage device is idle for 15 minutes or more?**
	Yes ☐ No ☐	**g. Have you installed all available updates for the operating system of the device(s) that will be used to access, store, and analyze data?**
	Yes ☐ No ☐	**h. Does your anti-virus software have current virus definitions?**
	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐	**i. If you are conducting an anonymous online survey: Will you ensure that your turn off IP address tracking in the survey platform and select the setting that is truly anonymous, allowing no respondent-tracking or follow ups?**
4. **Will the data be stored for at least 5 years?** Describe how data disposal will occur.	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***	
5. If participants' names or contact info will be obtained at any time**:** **Is this absolutely necessary[5]?** Describe why or confirm that data collection is 100% **anonymous**[6] (which is preferable).	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐ ***Supporting details:***	
6a. If the research topic involves stigma (e.g., workplace bullying):	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐ ***Supporting details:***	

[5] Retaining contact information might be necessary if the researcher needs to follow up for a member-checking step or to provide the thank-you gift. Contact information is NOT necessary to share study results if the consent form provides a website where results will later be posted. Note that consent signatures are NOT necessarry if the participant can indicate consent by some action such as clicking on a link, returning a completed survey, verbally stating "I consent" on the audio-recording, etc. For any topic that is remotely sensitive, data should be collected without names or contact information when possible.

[6] "Anonymous" means that no one (not even the researcher) knows who volunteered or declined. If a researcher documents consent in a manner that tracks their names, then the data is "confidential" rather than "anonymous."

Can you confirm that the volunteering and data collection processes will be discreet enough to prevent others from learning of your volunteers' participation in the study? This is NA if the study topic has no stigma attached.	
6b. If participants' demographic details (such as gender, ethnicity, number of years in a position) are going to be shared in the final results: **Will the demographic details be shared in a manner that will prevent readers from deducing[7] a participant's identity?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐ ***Supporting details:***
6c. The **standard** for Walden capstones is to not name the partner organization in published reports, including ProQuest. **If you are partnering with any organizations to identify participants or collect data, will you mask the organization's identity in published reports and presentations?** Exceptions to the organization-masking practice must be granted by the Program Director and approved by the IRB. Place an X here ☐ if you were granted an exception as part of your prospectus approval.	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐ ***Supporting details:***

[7] Participant identities might be indirectly and unintentionally disclosed if a researcher's final research report fails to withhold demographic details that might permit a reader to figure out the identity of a participant. So the researcher needs to think carefully about which demographic descriptors are most important to collect and report, while ensuring that the identity of individual participants is protected. For example, readers may be able to deduce a participant's identity if a qualitative analysis stated, "One female African-American vice-principal with 14 years of administrative experience described her professional development experience as…" A general rule of thumb is to only include a particular demographic descriptor combination if at least 3 people in the population have that combination of demographic details. So if a district had 4 African-American vice-principals with 10+ years experience but only 2 were female, then you would just mask the gender variable and an appropriate demographic description might be: "One African-American vice-principal with 10+ years of administrative experience described the professional development experience as…" However, it would be a good idea to carefully examine whether ethnicity is a relevant demographic detail to report or not, given the topic.

7. If you will be sharing the raw data (including names) with a transcriber, translator, or anyone[8] outside your Walden supervisors: **Will they be signing a confidentiality agreement [9]?** If so, submit a blank copy and confirm that you will keep signed copies in your research files.	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐ ***Supporting details:***
8. The ProQuest publication at the end of the doctoral program is for the community of fellow scholars. **Is a specific plan[10] in place for sharing results with the participants and community stakeholders using a brief, audience-appropriate format?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Description of results dissemination plan for laypersons:***
Social science research typically involves **minimal**[11] risks and sometimes involves **substantial**[12] risks. Those risks must be acknowledged and described in order to mitigate them and document that they are outweighed by the study's benefits (in #12 below).	

[8] Some professional transcribers/translators address confidentiality in their work agreement and this is acceptable. No confidentiality agreement is needed for the researcher or Walden staff because they are already bound to confidentiality.
[9] A sample confidentiality agreement can be found here.
[10] Typically, a 1 to 2 page summary or verbal presentation is most appropriate. Sharing the study's results with participants is required. It is important that the format is audience-appropriate. Stakeholders may lack the time or inclination to digest a full dissertation. Note that member checking and transcript review are not applicable to this section. If you plan to do transcript review or memberchecking, these steps need to be described as part of your data collection procedures in #1 above.
[11] Minimal risk is defined as follows in U.S. federal regulations: "that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves THAN THOSE ORDINARILY ENCOUNTERED IN DAILY LIFE or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests."
[12] Substantial risk is anything beyond the "minimal risks" of daily life. Substantial risks are acceptable when justified by the research problem and research design, as long as adequate preventive protections are in place.

9a. Are potential psychological[13] risks acknowledged and described here?	**Mark one:** ☐ **NA** ☐ **Minimal psychological risks include:** ☐ **Substantial psychological risks include:**
9b. Are potential relationship[14] risks acknowledged and described here?	**Mark one:** ☐ **NA** ☐ **Minimal relationship risks include:** ☐ **Substantial relationship risks include:**
9c. Are potential legal[15] risks acknowledged and described here?	**Mark one:** ☐ **NA** ☐ **Minimal legal risks include:** ☐ **Substantial legal risks include:**
9d. Are potential economic/professional[16] risks acknowledged and described here?	**Mark one:** ☐ **NA** ☐ **Minimal professional risks include:** ☐ **Substantial professional risks include:**
9e. If there are any other potential risks, have they been acknowledged and described here?	**Mark one:** ☐ **NA** ☐ **Other minimal risks include:** ☐ **Other substantial risks include:**
10. **Have the above risks been minimized as much as possible?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***

[13] Psychological risks are present if materials or questions could be considered embarrassing, stressful, sensitive, offensive, threatening, judgmental, triggering, etc. Psychological risks are typically present if any of the other risks below are also present. SAMPLE DESCRIPTION: Some participants might disclose things that they later regret sharing, causing distress.

[14] Relationship risks are present if the recruitment or data collection process could impact the existing dynamics between the researcher and participant (who may be coworkers or have some professional relationship), dynamics among participants (if they know one another), or dynamics between the participant and the participant's friends, coworkers, or family members. SAMPLE DESCRIPTION: Since I am recruiting people I know professionally, they might have concerns about how volunteering or declining could impact our professional relationship.

[15] Legal risks are present if data collection might result in a participant's disclosure of violation of laws (by the participant or others). SAMPLE DESCRIPTION: Participants could inadvertently disclose a legal violation during the course of the interview.

[16] Economic/professional risks are present if data collection could result in the participant disclosing violation of workplace policies, disagreement with leadership decisions, poor work performance, or anything else that could be damaging to the participant's position, professional reputation, promotability, or employability. SAMPLE DESCRIPTION: Since the questionnaire asks participants to rate their agreement with leadership decisions in their workplace, there could be an impact on a participant's promotion opportunities if there were a confidentiality breach.

In other words, are measures in place to provide participants with reasonable protection from loss of privacy, psychological distress, relationship harm, legal risks, economic loss, and damage to professional reputation? In the brown column, explain how each risk identified in #9 above will be minimized.	
11. If the researcher is known to the participants in some professional role: **Will the researcher be proactively managing any potential conflicts of interest[17]?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐ ***Supporting details:***
12. **Are the research risks and burdens[18] reasonable, in consideration of the new knowledge[19] that this research design can offer?** Describe why.	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***
13. If the study involves one or more partner organizations: **Will[20] the research partner organization(s) grant permission[21] for all relevant data[22] access,**	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐ ***Supporting details:***

[17] A conflict of interest is caused when the researcher has some sort of dual role in the research context, such as being a teacher, therapist, investor, business-owner, manager, etc. Conflict of interest must be managed to ensure that the research reveals "truth," not just the outcome that the researcher might desire to see due to their other role. The simplest way to ensure this impartiality is to conduct research OUTSIDE of one's own context but other methods are possible (e.g., using anonymous data collection to encourage honest responses).

[18] Even low-risk research activities place some degree of burden on the participants by asking the participants to share personal information, volunteer time, and assume risks.

[19] Examples of "new knowledge" include: effectively addressing a gap in the literature, generating new theory, enhancing understanding of a phenomenon, assessing effectiveness of a particular professional practice, addressing a local practical problem via data analysis.

[20] If a partner organization requires the researcher to obtain Walden's IRB approval before they can provide their written approval, that's fine. (Walden can issue a "conditional IRB approval" letter to the researcher and then Walden's IRB approval will then be finalized once the Walden IRB receives the partner organization's letter of cooperation.)

[21] No Letter of Cooperation is required (a) if the researcher will simply be asking organizations to distribute research invitations on the researcher's behalf, or (b) if the researcher is using only public means to identify/contact participants.

[22] Note that when medical, educational, or any type of operational records would be analyzed or used to identify potential research participants, the partner organization needs to explicitly approve access to data for research purposes (even if the researcher normally has access to that data to perform their job).

access to participants, facility use, and/or use of personnel time for research purposes? IRB staff will advise which type of partner agreement is needed, if applicable. State whether you will be obtaining written partner organization approval before or after Walden ethics approval.	
14. **Is participant recruitment coordinated in a manner that is non-coercive[23]?** Describe. Coercive elements include: leveraging an existing relationship to "encourage" participation, recruiting in a **group**[24] setting, extravagant compensation, recruiting individuals in a **school/work**[25] setting, involving a service **provider**[26] in the recruitment process, etc. When the researcher may already be known to the participants, we need to document how	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***

[23] For example, anonymous surveys and/or low-pressure communications such as flyers or email invitations permit potential participants to opt out with minimal fear of retaliation or other negative consequences.

[24] It is not ethically acceptable to invite a "captive audience" to participate in research on the spot (i.e., to ask an entire class or a group of meeting attendees to complete a survey during their session). Such a dynamic would not provide sufficient privacy or respect for their right to decline research participation. However, a researcher may use the last few minutes of a class session or meeting to introduce a study and distribute materials, such that the potential participants can then take their time to decide later about participation.

[25] Generally, data collection cannot be approved during work hours or school hours unless a "free period" has been identified (e.g., break, study hall) so the research activities can be separated from the participants' regular activities. It is important to maintain an "opt in" dynamic rather than implying that employees/students/group members are expected to participate.

[26] A researcher can ask a service provider (nurse, physician, therapist, shelter staff etc.) to give research invitations to clients who meet the inclusion criteria. However, we cannot approve for the service provider to answer questions about the study, obtain consent, or collect data (unless the data is being collected by the organization itself for purposes other than the study).

perceptions of coerced research participation will be **minimized**[27].	
15. If you were directed to complete **Form D** in order to specifically recruit certain **vulnerable individuals**[28] as participants: **Is targeting this population justified**[29] **by a research design that will specifically benefit that vulnerable group at large?** Describe why. If you were not directed to complete Form D, mark NA.	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐ ***Supporting details:***
16. Even when a researcher is not specifically seeking to recruit vulnerable individuals, any adult sample could by chance include some people who happen to have a disability, a low income, a crisis in their lives, or another vulnerable status (without the researcher's awareness). It is important to **include**[30] their perspectives, as long as we	

[27] Doctoral research directly benefits the student (allowing him or her to obtain a degree), and so the researcher should minimize the potential for either (a) conflict of interest or (b) perceived coercion to participate. Researchers who are in positions of authority or familiarity must take extra precautions to ensure that potential participants are not pressured to take part in their study.
EXAMPLES:

- A professor researcher may recruit her students AFTER grades have been assigned.
- A psychologist researcher may recruit clients from ANOTHER psychologist's practice.
- A manager researcher may conduct ANONYMOUS data collection so that subordinates do not perceive their responses or [non]participation as being associated with their job standing.

[28] For this purpose, vulnerable individuals include children, prisoners, people with severe cognitive or emotional disabilities, on-duty military personnel, and people living in an institutional setting such as a prison, inpatient care, rehab center, or shelter.
[29] Convenience sampling is not approvable. Targeted recruitment of children can only be approved when a majority of the IRB votes that the study's benefits justify its risks/burdens (such as disruption to instructional time). For recruitment of adult vulnerable populations, IRB staff will determine on a case-by-case basis whether approval must be issued via the full board's vote (as opposed to expedited ethics review).
[30] It is ethically appropriate to include certain vulnerable adult populations in social science research when screening for that particular status would be overly invasive, given the research topic and when they are sufficiently protected by the informed consent process and the voluntary nature of the study. For example, a researcher might unknowingly have some participants who happen to be disabled, low-income, in-crisis, elderly, facility residents, or pregnant. We don't expect researchers to screen for these statuses routinely in minimal risk social science research. However, minors may never be unknowingly recruited; adult recruitment procedures must deliberately avoid recruiting minors and when there is room for ambiguity, recruitment materials must state that only those aged 18+ may volunteer.

document here that there are sufficient protections in place. **Would the benefits of including these individuals outweigh the risks, given that they would be protected by the informed consent process and the voluntary nature of the study?**	Yes No ☐ ☐ ***Supporting details:***
17. If anyone would be excluded from participating: **Is their exclusion[31] justified and handled respectfully (without marginalization or stigma[32])?**	Yes No NA ☐ ☐ ☐ ***Supporting details:***
18. Researchers are only permitted to break[33] confidentiality (i.e., share a participant's identity along with their disclosures) when the researcher is legally required to report certain information to authorities in the very rare case of subpoena or the following mandated reporting instances: a. If you will be collecting data related to children in Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and/or Wyoming: **These states have laws requiring everyone to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Have you described your mandated reporting responsibility in clear layperson**	Yes No NA ☐ ☐ ☐ ***Supporting details:***

[31] Exclusion criteria are not just the opposite of inclusion criteria (a common misconception). Exclusion criteria are used ONLY when the researcher has good reasons to disqualify certain individuals who otherwise meet the inclusion criteria. For example, when a volunteer happens to be the researcher's own student or have a condition that would bias the results. Outside of these situations, efforts should be made to be as inclusive as possible. Exclusions need to be justified by either theoretical or empirical support.

[32] Inclusion and exclusion criteria should be listed upfront in the recruitment material (flyer, invitation email, etc.) to prevent situations in which the researcher needs to screen using invasive questions or reject volunteers in a stigmatizing manner.

[33] Any limits to confidentiality (i.e., duty to report) must be mentioned in the consent form. Outside of mandated reporting and supervision by Walden supervisors, researchers are expected to maintain confidentiality of all participants' identities.

language in the consent/assent forms? This is NA if your data collection couldn't possibly relate to children or if you won't knowingly be collecting data in the states listed above.	
b. If your professional licensure[34] mandates that you report child or elder abuse or neglect: **Have you described your mandated reporting responsibility in clear layperson language in the consent/assent forms?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐ ***Supporting details:***
c. If you are collecting data about possible violations of law/policy and have sworn a professional oath[35] that requires you to report such activities even when you are off-duty: **Describe your employer's ethics code regarding off-duty reporting requirements and ensure that your consent form is clear in describing your reporting obligations in clear layperson language.**	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐ ***Supporting details:***
19. If the data collection steps could reveal or create an acute psychological state: **Has a free or low-cost referral[36] been provided in the consent form?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐ ***Supporting details:***
20. If the research design has multiple groups: **Are measures in place to ensure that all participants can potentially benefit equally[37] from the research?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐ ***Supporting details:***
21. If the researcher is a student:	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐

[34] Typically applies to licensed teachers, social workers, health providers, mental health providers, etc.
[35] Can sometimes to apply to officers of the court, law enforcement officers, military officers but many departments only require reporting crimes in progress or those likely to cause serious bodily harm.
[36] Possible referrals in the USA can be found at https://www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help/immediate-help or you could provide local, community-based resources. Do not direct research participants to use 911.
[37] Control groups must be eligible to partake in the intervention after the study, if results show the intervention to be beneficial. If the design does not involve a control group, then the researcher only needs to ensure that all participants have equal access to the study results.

Will the student researcher be appropriately qualified[38] and supervised[39] in all data collection procedures?	***Supporting details:***
22. If an existing survey or other data collection tool will be used: **Has the researcher appropriately complied with the requirements[40] for legal usage?** Describe how and submit relevant documentation.	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐ ***Supporting details:***

[38]If your study is targeting a vulnerable population or involves a sensitive topic, describe any additional training you have completed beyond the research courses and ethics training. Researchers must be able to document their training in the data collection techniques and the IRB might require the researcher to obtain additional training prior to ethics approval. For most student researchers, the research course sequence is sufficient but some research procedures (such as interviewing victims or people with mental disabilities) may require additional training. For psychological assessments, the manual indicates specific qualifications required. Data collection from children requires a background check/clearance through a local agency.

[39] Remote supervision is suitable for most studies but onsite supervision may be required for certain types of sensitive data collection (e.g., interviews or assessment regarding emotional topics).

[40]IF YOU ARE USING A PUBLISHED INSTRUMENT: Many assessment instruments published in journals can be used in research as long as commercial gain is not sought and proper credit is given to the original source (United States Code, 17USC107). However, publication of an assessment tool's results in a journal does not necessarily indicate that the tool is in the public domain. The copyright holder of each assessment determines whether permission and payment are necessary for use of that assessment tool. Note that the copyright holder could be either the publisher or the author or another entity (such as the Myers and Briggs Foundation, which holds the copyright to the popular Myers-Briggs personality assessment). The researcher is responsible for identifying and contacting the copyright holder to determine which of the following are required for legal usage of the instrument: purchasing legal copies, purchasing a manual, purchasing scoring tools, obtaining written permission, obtaining explicit permission to reproduce the instrument in the dissertation, or simply confirming that the tool is public domain and providing credit by citation. **Even for public domain instruments, Walden University encourages students to provide the professional courtesy of notifying the primary author of the student's plan to use that tool in their own research.** Sometimes this is not possible or there is no response. We recommend that the student make at least three attempts to contact the author at his or her most recently listed institution across a reasonable time period (such as 2 weeks). The author often provides helpful updates or usage tips and asks to receive a copy of the results. This type of communication with the author is not necessary when a website or publisher clearly states that the tool is public domain or can be used for academic/research purposes. Some psychological assessments are restricted for use only by suitably qualified individuals and these requirements are typically covered in the assessment's manual. When in doubt, researchers must check with the assessment's publisher to make sure that the student (or their faculty supervisor) is qualified to administer and interpret any particular assessments that they wish to use.

IF YOU ARE CREATING YOUR OWN INSTRUMENT OR MODIFYING AN EXISTING INSTRUMENT: It is only acceptable to modify data collection tools if one explicitly cites the original work and details the precise nature of the revisions. Note that even slight modifications to items or instructions threaten the reliability and validity of the tool and make comparisons to other research findings difficult, if not impossible.

23. **Do the informed consent[41] procedures provide invitees adequate time to review the study information and ask questions before they are asked to consent?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***
24. **Will informed consent be appropriately[42] documented?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***
25. **Has the Consent Form Template been tailored using language that will be understandable[43] to the potential participants?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***
26. **Does the consent form explain the sample's inclusion criteria in such a way that the participants can understand why THEY are being asked to participate?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***
27. **Does the consent form include an understandable explanation of the study purpose?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***
28. **Does the consent form include an understandable description of the data collection procedures?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***
29. **Does the consent form include an estimate of the time commitment[44] for participation?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***
30. **Does the consent form clearly state that participation is voluntary and that the participant has the right to decline or stop participation at any time?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***

[41] Informed consent is not just a form; it is a process of explaining the study to the participant and encouraging questions before the participant makes a decision about participation.

[42] While documenting consent via signature is common, note that anonymous surveys can obtain "implied consent" by informing the participant, "To protect your privacy, no consent signature is requested. Instead, you may indicate your consent by clicking here/returning this survey in the enclosed envelope.") Audiorecording verbal consent is also an option just before interviews. See posted sample consent form for email options.

[43] Walden encourages tailoring the language to the readers as long as a professional tone is maintained. For the general population in the USA, aim for grade 5 to 7 reading level.

[44] Provide an estimate (in minutes or hours) of each component of data collection (e.g., survey, interview, memberchecking. etc.)

When recruitment occurs through the researcher's network or through an organization, the consent form must include written assurance that declining or stopping will not negatively impact the participant's relationship with the researcher or access to services provided by the organization, as applicable).	
31. **Does the consent form state how many participants the researcher is seeking?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***
32. **Does the consent form include a description of reasonably foreseeable risks[45] or discomforts?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***
33. **Does the consent form include a brief description of anticipated benefits to participants[46] and/or society?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***
34. **Does the consent form describe any thank you gifts[47], compensation, or lack thereof?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***
35. **Does the consent form describe how privacy will be maintained[48] and state that that the data will not be used for any purposes other than research?** For this item, we strongly recommend using the language in Walden's **consent form template**.	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***

[45] The consent form should state that the minimal risks are similar to those encountered in daily life, in addition to describing any risks that are substantial.

[46] For most social science studies, it is appropriate to state that there are no particular direct benefits to the individual. In this case, just present the benefits to society and/or benefits to the group to which the participant belongs (i.e., teachers).

[47] Offering a modest gift card (between $5 and $20) is common for interview studies and questionnaires that are not anonymous. Questionnaire studies more often provide a nominal donation to a relevant charity for each survey completed. Note that raffles are not permitted.

[48] See posted template. The consent form should explain any coding system that will permit the researcher to withhold names in the research report; how names, contact info, and research data will be secured and eventually destroyed; and that the data will not be used for any purposes other than research. It is not always clear to participants how a research interview is different from a journalistic interview, in which informants might be named. So the consent form should make this distinction clear. For sensitive interviews, the researcher might also want to assure participants that recordings will be destroyed immediately after transcription.

This is also where any mandated reporting obligations should be described.	
36. If the researcher would already be known in some other role to the participants or if the researcher will receive direct financial benefit from the study: **Does the consent form disclose all potential[49] conflicts of interest?**	
37. **Is the consent document free of language that would waive the participant's legal[50] rights?** The Walden template is free of exculpatory language so be sure not to add anything exculpatory or asking participants to waive their rights.	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***
38. **Does the consent form explain how the participant can contact the researcher (for general questions about the study) and the university's Research Participant Advocate (if they have questions about their rights as participants)?** Contact info is 612-312-1210 or irb@mail.waldenu.edu). Provide international code if outside the USA.	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***
39. **Does the consent form include a statement that the participant should consider keeping a copy of the consent form?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ ***Supporting details:***
40. **If any aspect of the study is experimental (unproven), is that stated in the consent form?**	Yes ☐ No ☐ NA ☐ ***Supporting details:***

[49] Typically applicable only when the researcher has a dual role in relation to the participant (i.e., is known to the participant as a teacher, nurse, or similar professional role) or if the researcher is being compensated by some entity with a financial stake in the topic under study.
[50] In some settings, consent forms include exculpatory language and/or ask the signer to waive rights. Walden does not permit that.