Research Proposal Toolkit

Drop-in paragraphs for grants, IRB, and pilot protocols

Methods, data handling, AI disclosure, budget,
DPIA, citation, pre-registration, before-submit checklist.

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How to Use This Toolkit

Copy, adapt, paste

This toolkit is designed for the moment in proposal-writing when you have least time and the most boilerplate to produce. Every section below is a finished paragraph you can paste into the corresponding part of your application, then adapt to fit your study. For the underlying source documents, see the withVR Compliance page (withvr.app/compliance) and the legal index (withvr.app/legal).

Drop-in paragraphs are shown in tinted blocks. Copy the contents of each block into your document, then adapt to your study's specifics.

Urgent grant deadline? If you have a grant deadline under 72 hours, email hello@withvr.app with "Urgent grant quote" in the subject line. You will get a same-business-day reply with a quote on letterhead.

1. Methods paragraph (short form, ~80 words)

For the part of the methods section that introduces the platform.

> Therapy withVR (withVR BV, Belgium) is a clinician-controlled virtual reality platform for communication-related practice and research. Sessions are operated by a researcher from a web app that controls a VR scene running on a Meta Quest headset worn by the participant. Avatars, environments, voices, sounds, and conversation content are configurable in real time. The platform is not a medical device; it does not score, diagnose, or treat. All experimental decisions remain with the researcher.

2. Methods paragraph (long form, ~250 words)

For methods sections that need more detail on capability and design.

> Therapy withVR (withVR BV, Belgium) is a clinician-controlled virtual reality platform developed for use in communication research, education, and practice. Sessions are operated by a researcher from a web-app interface that controls a VR scene running on a Meta Quest 2, 3, 3S, or Pro headset worn by the participant. The researcher selects the environment from a configurable scenario set (cafe, classroom, meeting room, reception, auditorium, customizable empty room, and others), places and configures avatars, selects emotions and conversational behavior, sends text-based prompts, and triggers ambient sounds in real time. Avatar speech is synthesized using Google Text-to-Speech in 59+ languages and language-region voices. Optional AI features (sentence translation, text generation, autocorrect, Whisper speech recognition, speaker grammar, formality adjustment, emotional speech) are off by default; researchers activate only what is needed. Session-level event data (avatar configurations, emotions triggered, sentences sent, sounds played, timestamps) can be exported for analysis. The platform does not record audio or video. Therapy withVR is not a medical device. It does not score, diagnose, or treat. All experimental decisions remain with the researcher. Reusable session profiles allow the same protocol to be loaded for every participant in seconds. The researcher's own measurement instruments, consent forms, and clinical or psychological assessments are managed through the institution's compliant systems and are not entered into the platform.

3. IRB / ethics data-handling paragraph (short form, ~100 words)

For the section of an IRB or ethics application describing how participant data is handled by the platform.

> Therapy withVR is hosted on Google Cloud / Firebase in Frankfurt, Germany (EU). All data at rest is encrypted using AES-256; data in transit uses TLS 1.2 or higher. Profile names are additionally encrypted at the application level. The platform does not record session audio or video, and no Protected Health Information (PHI) or special-category data under GDPR Article 9 will be entered. Optional AI features use OpenAI under EU Standard Contractual Clauses; OpenAI does not use API inputs for model training by default. Personal data breach notification follows GDPR Article 33 (within 72 hours).

4. IRB / ethics data-handling paragraph (long form, ~250 words)

For protocols that require fuller technical detail.

> Therapy withVR is operated by withVR BV (Jozef Hebbelynckstraat 21, 9820 Merelbeke, Belgium; VAT BE-0790.909.294). The platform is hosted on Google Cloud / Firebase infrastructure in the europe-west1 region (Frankfurt, Germany). All data at rest in Cloud Firestore is encrypted using AES-256 (Google Cloud default infrastructure encryption); profile-name fields are additionally encrypted at the application level using AES-256 with unique initialization vectors per record. All data in transit between client and infrastructure uses TLS 1.2 or higher. The platform does not record or store session audio or session video. Session data consists of configuration settings, text labels, avatar selections, sentences sent, sounds played, and timestamps - and is exportable for analysis on request. The platform is architected so that Protected Health Information (PHI) under HIPAA, FERPA-protected student educational records, and special-category data under GDPR Article 9 do not enter the system; researchers are responsible for ensuring such data is collected and managed through their institution's compliant systems and not entered into Therapy withVR. Optional AI features (off by default) use OpenAI's API under EU Standard Contractual Clauses 2021 (GDPR Art. 46(2)(c)); under OpenAI's API data usage policy, API inputs are not used to train OpenAI's models by default. Personal data breach notification follows GDPR Article 33 (Belgian Data Protection Authority, GBA, within 72 hours), with notification to the institutional Controller within 72 hours where a Data Processing Agreement is in place.

5. AI involvement disclosure

For the part of an ethics application or participant information sheet that discloses AI use. Aligns with the EU AI Act Article 50 transparency obligation (in force from 2 August 2026).

> During the study, you will hear avatar voices that are AI-synthesized using Google Text-to-Speech rather than recorded human voices. The avatar's speech content is selected and controlled by the researcher; the AI generates only the audio. [If optional OpenAI features are activated, add:] The researcher may also use AI tools to draft, translate, or adjust the text of conversational content before it is presented to you; this text is reviewed by the researcher before each session begins. AI features used in this study do not analyze, score, or evaluate you. No personally identifying information about you is sent to any AI service.

6. Budget table

Typical research budget lines for a VR-based study using Therapy withVR. Paste into your grant spreadsheet and adapt.

Line item	Notes
Therapy withVR software subscription	€49/month per seat (ex. VAT, when billed annually). Custom research/education pricing on request - multi-year bundles up to 5 years, multiple seats, quotes on letterhead, purchase-order billing supported.
Meta Quest 3S headset (×n)	~$350 USD / ~€350 EUR each. Purchased directly from Meta - withVR does not sell hardware.
Silicone face covers (hygiene, shared use)	~€10 each; plan for one per participant pool cycle. Sold separately by third-party retailers - withVR does not sell hygiene supplies.
Research assistant time (setup, training, session running)	Initial setup ~1 hour live training call. Ongoing minimal once trained.
Participant compensation, ethics fees, transcription, statistical support	Institution-specific - not part of the Therapy withVR cost.

7. DPIA helper (GDPR Article 35)

A Data Protection Impact Assessment is required under GDPR Article 35 where processing is "likely to result in a high risk" to data subjects. For most VR-SLT research using Therapy withVR, the platform's architecture (no PHI, no audio/video, no special-category data, EU hosting, AES-256, no AI training on inputs) materially reduces the risk profile. Whether a DPIA is required for your specific study is an institutional determination, but withVR BV provides supporting documentation on request. Typical DPIA-relevant facts:

- **Data location:** Frankfurt, Germany (EU). No personal data stored outside the EEA on withVR BV's own infrastructure.
- **Encryption:** AES-256 at rest (Google Cloud) and at the application layer (profile names, with unique IVs per record). TLS 1.2+ in transit.
- **Categories of personal data processed:** participant pseudonym/profile label, session timing, avatar configuration, sentences sent, sounds played, emotions triggered. No audio. No video. No biometric data.
- **Data subject rights:** access, rectification, erasure, restriction, portability, objection, withdrawal of consent - supported per GDPR Articles 15-22.
- **Sub-processors:** Google Cloud (EU), Google Text-to-Speech (EU processing terms), OpenAI (US, SCCs), Stripe (US, SCCs + DPF), MailerLite (EU). Full list at withvr.app/sub-processor-list.
- **Retention:** account/subscription 5 years post-end; session/profile 3 years post-end; research data under Research Agreement 24 months post-project; billing 7 years (Belgian accounting law).
- **Breach notification:** 72 hours to GBA per GDPR Article 33; institutional Controller notified within 72 hours per DPA.

Request DPIA-supporting documentation from legal@withvr.app.

8. Citation

Suggested citation formats for the platform itself in your publication. As Therapy withVR is regularly updated, including the access date is recommended.

> APA: withVR. (2021). Therapy withVR. Retrieved [Month Year], from https://withvr.app
>
> MLA: withVR. Therapy withVR. 2021. https://withvr.app. Accessed [Month Year].
>
> IEEE: [1] withVR, "Therapy withVR," 2021. [Online]. Available: https://withvr.app. [Accessed: Month, Year].

Where a publisher or institution requires attribution for screenshots or visual materials, the suggested attribution is: *"Used with permission by https://withvr.app"*.

9. Pre-registration helper (OSF, AsPredicted, etc.)

Suggested fields specifically for VR-SLT studies, when pre-registering on Open Science Framework, AsPredicted, or similar:

- **Platform and version.** Therapy withVR v[x.y.z] - check the in-app About screen at session-running time.
- **Headset.** Specify Meta Quest 2 / 3 / 3S / Pro and the firmware version if known.
- **Scenario configuration.** Environment, number of avatars, avatar emotions, ambient sound profile, language and voice profile, session duration. (Save the configuration as a profile in the platform; pre-register the profile name.)
- **AI features used.** List which optional OpenAI features were active (sentence translation, text generation, autocorrect, Whisper, speaker grammar, formality, emotional speech) - or note "none, default-off" if all optional AI features were disabled.
- **Operator/researcher interventions.** Pre-specify under what conditions the researcher will adjust scene complexity mid-session, pause, or terminate.
- **Outcome measures collected outside the platform.** List the measurement instruments and where they are stored (institutional REDCap, Qualtrics, etc.).
- **Stopping rule for adverse experience.** Pre-specify the criteria for terminating a session (e.g., self-reported nausea, fatigue, distress).

10. Before-you-submit checklist

- Ethics committee / IRB has approved the use of AI features in your study (if any are activated).
- Informed consent form discloses AI involvement (synthetic voices; any optional features used) where required by your professional standards or applicable law.
- Participant information sheet reflects what the participant will actually experience (synthetic voices, scenarios used, modalities supported).
- Data Processing Agreement requested from withVR BV (if institutional procurement requires it).
- Sub-processor list reviewed against any institutional procurement restrictions on data transfers.
- Budget includes hardware and face covers (third-party purchases, not part of the withVR subscription).
- Pre-registration includes the platform version and the saved scenario profile name.
- Citation format chosen and access date recorded.
- Researcher trained on the platform (one-hour live onboarding call with withVR BV included with subscription).

Supporting documents available on request

Email legal@withvr.app to request:

- **Research Agreement** (template) - defines research-data ownership, publication freedoms, retention.
- **Data Processing Agreement** (template) - GDPR Article 28 processor obligations.
- **VPAT v2.5 (March 2026)** - accessibility conformance report (WCAG 2.0/2.1/2.2, Section 508, EN 301 549).
- **Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Summary** - service resilience, dependency assessment, recovery objectives.
- **Patch Management Policy** - vulnerability handling, patch timelines, exception procedures.
- **EU AI Act Compliance Statement** - classification, Article 50 disclosure, prohibited-practices review.

Want a paragraph adapted to your specific protocol or institution? Email hello@withvr.app with the gap you are filling. Turnaround is usually quick.

Companion Resources

Free, printable, CC BY-SA-licensed

All available at withvr.app/resources:

CAT One-Pagers - critically appraised topics for the literature review section.

Journal Club Packs - team-based deep reads of specific studies.

IEP and EHCP Goal-Writing Template - access and participation goals as outcome measures.

Goal Rating Sheet - self-rated outcome data for single-case and small-N designs.

Informed Consent Template - a starting point for the consent section of the protocol.

Evidence Hub - catalog of clinical VR studies, organized by topic and assessment. At withvr.app/evidence.

About withVR

Therapy withVR is a clinician-controlled VR platform for speech-language therapy, built by people who stutter, with the speech-language professionals who use it every day. Built and maintained by withVR BV (Belgium); supported by Google, Orange, the NHS, and the AR/VR User Research Panel at Meta.

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