## STUDENT PROJECT ETHICAL REVIEW (SPER) FORM

**Student Name** 

**Supervisor** 



The aim of the University's Research Ethics Policy is to establish and promote good ethical practice in the conduct of academic research. The questionnaire is intended to enable researchers to undertake an initial self-assessment of ethical issues in their research. Ethical conduct is not primarily a matter of following fixed rules; it depends on researchers developing a considered, flexible and thoughtful practice.

The questionnaire aims to engage researchers discursively with the ethical dimensions of their work and potential ethical issues, and the main focus of any subsequent review is not to 'approve' or 'disapprove' of a project but to make sure that this process has taken place.

The Research Ethics Policy is available at www.rgu.ac.uk/research-ethics-policy

Proj	ect Title			
Cou	rse of Study			
Scho	ool/Department			
DAD	T 1: DESCRIPTIVE QUEST	TONE		
PAR				
1.	Does the research involve, or does information in the research relate to: [see Guidance Note 1]			
	(a) individual human subje	ects		
	(b) groups (e.g. families, o	communities, crowds)		
	(c) organisations			
	(d) animals?			
	(e) genetically-modified or	'ganisms www.rgu.ac.uk/hr/healthsafety/page.cfm?pge=26027#122628		
	Please provide further deta	ails:		
2.	Will the research deal with [see Guidance Note 2]	information which is private or confidential?	Yes	No
	Please provide further deta	ails:		

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**PART 2: THE IMPACT OF THE RESEARCH** 

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3.	In the process of doing the research, is there any potential for harm to be done to, or costs to be imposed on: [see Guidance Note 3(i)]	Yes	No	
	(a) research participants?			
	(b) research subjects? [see Guidance Note 3(ii)]			
	(c) you, as the researcher?			
	(d) third parties? [see Guidance Note 3(iii)]			
	Please state what you believe are the implications of the research:			
4.	When the research is complete, could negative consequences follow:	Yes	No	
	(a) for research subjects			
	(b) or elsewhere? [see Guidance Note 4]			
	Please state what you believe are the consequences of the research:			
DAD	T 3: ETHICAL PROCEDURES			
PAK				
5.	Does the research require informed consent or approval from: [see Guidance Note 5(i)]	Yes	No	
	(a) research participants?			
	(b) research subjects? [see Guidance Note 5(ii)]			
	(c) external bodies? [see Guidance Note 5(iii)]			
If you answered yes to any of the above, please explain your answer:				

Are there reasons why research subjects may need safeguards or protection?	Yes	N
[see Guidance Note 6]		
If you answered yes to the above, please state the reasons and indicate the meas taken to address them:	ures to	be

No

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6.

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7.	Does the research involve any "regulated work with children" and/or "regulated work with protected adults", therefore requiring membership of the <i>Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme?</i> [see Guidance Note 7]	Yes	No
	[Please note: if the research potentially involves "regulated work", this MUST be regulated work, this MUST be required work, the property of the pro	oartmer	nt will
	(a) PVG membership is not required.		
	(b) PVG membership may be required for working with children.		
	(c) PVG membership may be required for working with protected adults.		
	(d) PVG membership may be required for working with both children and protected adults.		
	If you answered yes to (b), (c) or (d) above, please give further information about you will be required to undertake and the nature of the contact with these groups provide as much detail as possible:		
	Are you already a PVG member?	Yes	No
	If yes, please provide your PVG Scheme number:		
8.	Are specified procedures or safeguards required for recording, management, or storage of data? [see Guidance Note 8]	Yes	No
	If you answered yes to any of the above, please give details:		
PAR			
	T 4: THE RESEARCH RELATIONSHIP		
9.	T 4: THE RESEARCH RELATIONSHIP  Does the research require you to give or make undertakings to research participants or subjects about the use of data? [see Guidance Note 9]	Yes	No

_	Does the research require you to give or make undertakings to research	Yes	No
9.	participants or subjects about the use of data? [see Guidance Note 9]		
	If you answered yes to the above, please outline the likely undertakings:		
10	Is the research likely to be affected by the relationship with a sponsor, funder or	Yes	No
10.	Is the research likely to be affected by the relationship with a sponsor, funder or employer? [see Guidance Note 10]	Yes	No

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			STUDENT PROJE	CT ETHICAL RE	/IEW (SPER)	FORM			
Part	5: Other Issu	es							
L1.	Are there any	other eth	nical issues r	not covered	by this for	m which	you believe	Yes	No
	you should ra	ise?							
Stat	ement by Stu	dent							
I be	lieve that the	informati	on I have <b>g</b>	iven in this	form is co	orrect, a	nd that I h	ave	
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# STUDENT PROJECT ETHICAL REVIEW (SPER) FORM

	If you answered no to the above, please identify the potential issues:
15.	Appraisal: Please select one of the following
	i. The research project should proceed in its present form – no further action is required
	ii. The research project requires ethical approval by the School Ethics Review Panel (SERP) (or equivalent)
	iii. The research project requires ethical review by the University's Research Ethics Sub-Committee
	iv. The project needs to be returned to the student for modification prior to further action
	v. The research project requires ethical review by an external body (N.B. Question 5 above). If this applies, please give these details:
	Title of External Body providing ethical review
	Address of External Body
	Anticipated date when External Body may consider project
AFFI	RMATION BY SUPERVISOR
stud the s	we read the student's responses and have discussed ethical issues arising with the ent. I can confirm that, to the best of my understanding, the information presented by student is correct and appropriate to allow an informed judgement on whether further cal approval is required.

Date:

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Signature:

## (i) Guidance Note 1

Ethical principles normally apply to information, data, and derivative substances in the same way as they apply to the subjects themselves. Consequently, work with individual financial data is governed by the principles of work with individual human subjects, and work with animal tissue is governed by the principles of work with animals.

[return to Question 1]

### (i) Guidance Note 2

The Australian National Health and Medical Research Council argues: "Individuals have a sphere of life from which they should be able to exclude any intrusion ... A major application of the concept of privacy is information privacy: the interest of a person in controlling access to and use of any information personal to that person." This principle applies to all information about a person, whether or not it is obtained directly from that person. The area that is private is conventional and culturally defined; in the UK it commonly includes income and family arrangements.

The information obtained in research is not, however, necessarily private. Some material is in the public sphere, which includes published and broadcast material, academic discourse, and the activities of government. Activities undertaken in a public place are public, rather than private, if they are openly displayed (e.g. artistic exhibition or attendance at a public event) or subject to public regulation (e.g. driving)."

[return to Question 2]

### i Guidance Note 3

- (i) "Harm" refers to negative consequences beyond those which would occur in the normal course of events. Costs may include putting subjects under stress, causing them anxiety, or even wasting their time. The question asks only about potential harm. Potential harm is not cancelled out by potential benefit. Broader consequences are considered in the following question. Reviews of information are also subject to ethical consideration. It should never be assumed that no harm can be done to people simply by writing about them.
- (ii) "Research subjects" includes not just participants and informants but those about whom data is collected. The term covers any research subject, including humans, animals, and inanimate subject matter.
- (iii) The University has a responsibility to avoid putting you at risk, and potentially dangerous situations should always be drawn to the University's attention.
- (iv)"Third parties" include any person, group or organisation who may be affected by the process of the research.

  [return to Question 3]

## i Guidance Note 4

"Elsewhere" is an open category, intended to include consequences for third parties, sections of the community (e.g. "the voluntary sector"), the economy ("the catering industry") or the environment. ("the national park"), globally, and generalities which are harder to identify (e.g. "animal welfare"). Student researchers should never assume that their work is harmless only because they don't believe others will read it.

[return to Question 4]

### i Guidance Note 5

(i) Research in the public sphere (question 2) may not require the consent or approval of research subjects. The advice of the Canadian Tri-Boards is that "REBs (research ethics boards) should recognize that certain types of research - particularly biographies, artistic criticism or public policy research - may legitimately have a negative effect on organizations or on public figures in, for example, politics, the arts or business. Such research does not require the consent of the subject ... Consent is not required from organizations such as corporations or governments for research about their institutions".

There is a general presumption that consent should be obtained from subjects whenever the information is private. The requirement to seek consent can, however, be waived in certain

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exceptional cases, for example where there is necessary deception, or where the consent of a subject may jeopardise the welfare of an informant. All such cases require explicit ethical review and an extended justification.

- (ii) The consent of research *subjects* cannot be presumed because the consent of *informants* has been obtained. For example, one member of a family cannot necessarily be taken to speak for others, and an employer cannot always give consent on behalf of employees.
- (iii) The consent of external bodies is required for several types of research, including e.g.
  - research relating to the NHS
  - research for work with dangerous substances, and
  - research involving experimentation with animals.

The existence of external consent does not ethically exclude the project from consideration by the University, or vice-versa. Please provide a brief description of the project as submitted to the external body for ethical review.

[return to Question 5]

#### i Guidance Note 6

This may apply, for example, to human subjects who are regarded as vulnerable (e.g. children or prisoners) and to animals. Consent should not be taken as sufficient protection.

[return to Question 6]

#### i Guidance Note 7

- (i) Regulated work normally involves caring for, supervising or working with individuals who participate in an organised activity. There are two types of regulated work: regulated work with *children* and regulated work with *protected adults*.
- (ii) *Children* are all people under the age of 18.
- (iii) **Protected adults** are individuals aged 16 or over who are provided with (and thus receive) a type of care, support or welfare service. It is a service-based definition and avoids labelling adults on the basis of disability. A person will be a protected adult for the duration that they are receiving the service. Therefore some adults will be protected most of the time (e.g. residents within a care home) whereas others will only be protected for short periods (e.g. whilst receiving medical treatment at a hospital).
- (iv)Further details can be found at

www.rgu.ac.uk/about/governance/policies-and-legal/disclosure-scotland and www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/pvg/pvg\_index.html.

Alternatively, you may want to discuss this with your HR Representative: https://you.rgu.ac.uk/org/hr/SitePages/Meet%20the%20HR%20Team.aspx.

[return to Question 7]

## i Guidance Note 8

Private data should be presumed to be under the control of the person or organisation to whom it relates. Anonymity is not a sufficient condition for confidentiality. Removing names from a report, or using aggregate data, may not be enough to ensure that respondents cannot be recognised or identified; and even where material is not identifiable except by the person who gave it, using it in ways that go beyond the terms on which it has been given may be a breach of trust.

[return to Question 8]

## i Guidance Note 9

The integrity of the researcher, and the status of future research, requires that such undertakings should be respected. Promises should not be given in circumstances where they cannot be kept. For

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example, a researcher is not at liberty to conceal criminal activity and consequently cannot offer unconditional confidentiality in a study of such activity.

[return to Question 9]

#### i Guidance Note 10

Students who are undertaking research within the context of a work placement or employment should be aware that this is likely to have implications for the research and should identify what those implications are.

Sponsorship includes the grant of access to material by a responsible organisation.

[return to Question 10]

## i Guidance Note 11

The University needs to know if the research may jeopardise its reputation through, for example, work for oppressive governments or other research relationships (e.g. work for tobacco firms) that might compromise or bias the research. Negative consequences in the form of criticism of the University or negative evaluations by students are legitimate potential outcomes.

[return to Question 12]

#### i Guidance Note 12

This includes, for example, conflicts between researchers, funders, stakeholders, employers and other research projects.

[return to Question 13]

#### i Guidance Note 13

In signifying agreement, principal supervisors are accepting part of the ethical responsibility for the project.

[return to Question 14]

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