UCL Department of Information Studies

# **Department of Information Studies**

# **Research Ethics Application Form**

# **Guidance notes**

UCL expects all staff and students to follow its Research Ethics regulations (<http://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/>).

All staff & PGR students\* embarking on research classed as exempt must complete this form **before** they start their research. Students are required to follow instructions on INST0062 Moodle for submitting the form, while the staff can submit it to the DIS Research Ethics Review Panel (RERP) via [dis-ethics@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:dis-ethics@ucl.ac.uk).

*\*MA & MSc students registered for the INST0062 Dissertation module are generally presumed to be doing research exempt from requirement for full UCL ethical clearance (i.e. their research does not involve vulnerable subjects and is non-sensitive, anonymised and non-invasive or interactive), see UCL guidance on research exempt from requiring more than just Departmental level approval, see UCL guidance on research exempt from full UCL research ethics committee consideration at* [*https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/exemptions.php*](https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/exemptions.php)*.*

*However,* ***all******students*** *must follow the process outlined on INST0062 Moodle page, consult example forms on Moodle if needed and discuss their research approach with their personal tutors and then supervisors at their first meeting. Further advice and guidance on the exemptions and further research ethics processes are available from the* [*Chair of the DIS Research Ethics Review*](mailto:dis-ethics@ucl.ac.uk) *Panel.*

The [DIS RERP](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/information-studies/dis-research-ethics) will review the form and decide whether:

* the proposed research is **exempt** from the full UCL Research Ethics Committee;

**Or**

* the proposed research requires **further information or full** **approval by the UCL Research Ethics Committee** or A&H’s Local Research Ethics Committee – the DIS RERP will notify you (and if appropriate your supervisor) and advise you on how to proceed.

**Changes to research projects and plans**: if your research project or methodology change after you received approval, your approval will no longer be valid. You must contact DIS RERP with details on the proposed changes prior to initiating these changes. Note that any proposed changes should not be initiated without prior review and approval by the approving research ethics body.

Please also note that in addition to research ethics (whether exempt or not), researchers collecting and processing personally identifiable data of any kind (e.g. email addresses of interviewees or IP addresses of survey participants, personal data from interviews or surveys, etc.) in the course of their research will need to apply for [data protection registration](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/data-protection/guidance-staff-students-and-researchers/research/research-registration-guidance).

UCL researchers (staff and doctoral students), who are planning to conduct fieldwork, should consult the [Framework for starting or resuming fieldwork at non-UCL settings](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/integrity/framework-starting-or-resuming-fieldwork-non-ucl-settings) and apply for an [approval through RiskNET separately](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/safety-services/) to this form.

# **Department of Information Studies**

# **Research Ethics Application Form**

1. **Personal Details**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **First Name** | **Surname** | **Email** |
|  |  |  |

1. **For UCL PGR students only**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Programme of Study (MA, MSc, MPhil, PhD, etc.)** |  |
| **Provisional Dissertation Title** |  |
| **Name of Principal Supervisor** |  |

1. **All applicants**

*Describe your proposed & suggested research methodology (including details of topic, human participants and plans for anonymity, procedures to acquire and document informed consent from participants etc.)*

|  |
| --- |
| **Brief description of research topic:** [1]   * What is the proposed justification/need for this study? |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Outline research methods / data collection practices**: [3-4]   * Please detail chosen research methods. * Briefly outline any ethical issues you anticipate arising out of this research and how you will address them? [19] |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Details of participants:**   * Who are the expected participants (age, approx. number, characteristics)? [7] * How will they be recruited? [5] * How and when will you give participants an opportunity to withdraw from the study? [6, 8] * How is the informed consent of research participants to be obtained and documented?[3] |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Data:**   * Will research be collected/reported anonymously or pseudo-anonymously? If not, why not? [9] * How long will the data be stored (suggest deleting the data within 6 months of completing the study)? [10] * What happens to data if a participant withdraws? [11] * If using secondary data, outline legal rights for using the data. Include details of consent your analysis if the data is collected from humans.[17-18] |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Identifiable data:** [12]   * What personal identifiable data do you anticipate collecting? * If you are collecting non-anonymous or personal identifiable data (e.g. email addresses), has or will the study be registered with Legal Services (GDPR)? |
|  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Please attach the following documents as appropriate:** [13-16] | | | |
|  | **Attached** | **In preparation** | **Not applicable** |
| **Information Sheet** |  |  |  |
| **Draft Consent Forms** |  |  |  |
| **Draft Recruitment Communications** |  |  |  |
| **Draft Interview/Questionnaire questions** |  |  |  |

1. **Exemptions. Please state why you believe your study is exempt from further ethical review using the dropdown box. The full list of common reasons for exemption is found at** [**https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/exemptions.php**](https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/exemptions.php)**)**

Choose a relevant exemption. ▼

1. **Investigator (Supervisor/Personal Tutor for PG Students)**

Name: ………………………………………………………………………………………………

Signature: …………………………………………………………………………………………

# DIS Dissertation Ethics: Checklist and Feedback

**To be completed by Ethics Reviewers only**

*The outcome of this submission needs to be discussed with your dissertation supervisor. You can start your research if the outcomes is “Approved” or “Approved in Principle”. Otherwise, you will need to either update your form providing relevant details, or seek approval from A&H’s Local REC or UCL’s central REC.*

*Please continue discussing ethical implications of your research with your supervisor throughout your research and seek approval using the departmental, faculty or UCL REC routes if your research methods change.*

| **#** | **Assessment Criteria** | **Addressed**  (Yes / No / N/A) | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Brief Description of Research and Methods** |  |  |
|  | Is there likely to be worthwhile outcome? (to justify the time and effort contributed by participants). |  |  |
|  | Is there enough detail in the application (minimising gaps ambiguities or uncertainties)? |  |  |
|  | Are the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of participants considered? |  |  |
|  | Is the ethics form explicit that the proposed research is neither [sensitive](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/integrity/sensitive-research) nor [high risk](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research-ethics/ethical-approval/applying-ucl-rec)? |  |  |
|  | **Details of Participants** |  |  |
|  | Is there a clear strategy for recruiting participants? |  |  |
|  | Is there a detailed plan giving the participant an opportunity to withdraw? |  |  |
|  | Is the form explicit that the participants are not potentially vulnerable (e.g. children, people with disabilities). |  |  |
|  | Can participants withdraw from the study at any time?  If not, are participants informed of when it is too late to withdraw consent? |  |  |
|  | **Data** |  |  |
|  | Is the data collected anonymously/pseudo-anonymously? |  |  |
|  | Has the form detailed how long data will be stored? |  |  |
|  | Is the form clear on what happens to the data when participant withdraws? |  |  |
|  | **Identifiable Data (Data Protection)** |  |  |
|  | If collecting non-anonymous, personal, identifiable data, has the research been registered with Legal Services? Personal data includes:   * Names, date of birth * Contact details – email addresses, telephone numbers, postal addresses * Audio or video recordings * Consent forms containing names and signatures |  | You can register with Legal Services here: <https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/procedures.php> |
|  | **Additional Documents** |  |  |
|  | Is there a clear Participant Information Leaflet/Sheet attached to the submitted application? |  |  |
|  | Is there a clear Consent Form attached to the submitted application? |  |  |
|  | Is there a Questionnaire/Interview daft attached to the submitted application? |  |  |
|  | Is there a clear Recruitment Document attached to the submitted application? |  |  |
|  | **Secondary data analysis** |  |  |
|  | Are there legal rights to analyse the data? |  |  |
|  | If the data is collected from humans, is there user consent for analysing the data in line with the proposal? |  |  |
|  | **Ethical considerations** |  |  |
|  | Has the form listed all potential ethical problems? |  |  |
|  | **Signature** |  |  |
|  | Has the Supervisor or Personal Tutor signed the application form? |  |  |
|  | **Other General Conditions** |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |