WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

REDI HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS

RESEARCH | ENGAGEMENT | DEVELOPMENT | INNOVATION

Guidance on Writing Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms

The form needs to be customised to align with the research aims and methodologies.

1. Create a separate Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and Consent Form for each participant group, if different groups will be asked to do different things. If creating more than one PIS and Consent Form for the project, please ensure that the heading of each differentiates between them. The ethics website provides a range of different templates depending on the participant group type and the type of consent (specific, extended or unspecified) being sought. See https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/research/forms

2. If the researcher is a student the Supervisors name(s) and details should also be provided.

3. The information included in your documents should match the information in the ethics application.

4. Customise the template for your project. The template includes a set of headings and the information needs to be provided, but there may be ways more appropriate for you participants.

5. Write for a lay reader, that is, someone who is not an expert in the field and who will need to have the information presented to them in an easy to understand way. The questions in the form are asked as if the participant is asking them. You should use language like *'You will be asked….'*

6. If acronyms are used make sure they are explained in full at least once.

7. When explaining what the study will involve and how long it will take – be explicit about the participant experience and if more than one experience is required detail these in an easy to understand manner. The time required from the participant to be involved in all aspects of the study needs to be realistically stated.

8. Pay specific attention to the question of how the participants' information will be treated. Where the data collected will only be used for the specific project, you must use the 'specific' forms. Where the data collected may be used for future research projects the 'extended' or 'unspecified' forms must be used.

9. Complete all sections. The forms contain instructions. Follow the instructions but then remove them from the form. For example, enter the relevant text where there is [enter text] and remove brackets and any other instructional text from the document.

10. Go into the document Footer and add the date you have created the document and a version number, i.e. the first time you submit this document to the Human Research Ethics Committee it will be Version 1. If you are asked to make adjustments after assessment you will call the document Version 2 with a new date.

Involving young people capable of consenting

If the project includes young people for whom you need parent or guardian consent, but the young person should also be given the right to agree or not, you should create a separate form for them. A parental form is still required.

Human Research Ethics Guidance Documents available from REDI

- Guidance for Researchers New to Human Ethics Review
- Guidance on Choosing the most appropriate PIS and Consent
- Guidance on Levels of Risk and the Ethical Review Process
- Guidance on Making an Amendment to an Approved Project
- Guidance on Questions Related to Cultural Sensitivities
- Guidance on Questions Related to Restrictions on Publication of Results
- Guidance on Receiving and Responding to Ethics Committee Assessor Comments
- Guidance on Research Projects Seeking to use Western Sydney Staff as Participants
- Guidance on Reimbursements
- Guidance on the use of 'Opt Out' or Passive Consent in Human Research
- Guidance on Writing Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms
- Guidance on Data Storage and Retention Questions
- Guidance on Ethics Review Exemption
- Guidance on Research Involving Young People
- Guidance on Using Focus Groups in Research
- Guidance on Complaints
- Guidance on Research being done with, or for, Organisations

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