Research Ethics Review
Faculty of Management, Economics, and Social Sciences
University of Cologne

Application Form for Seeking Ethical Advice about Approval of Projects

Preamble

The applicants assure that all described research procedures, methodologies, conducts, data collections, data storages, and data usages are in accordance with the legislations of Germany, the European Union and all countries in which one of the involved institutions or researchers is based, as well as countries in which the research project is conducted. In particular this is relevant for data protection laws, criminal laws, tax laws, employees and consumer protection laws.

The applicants further assure that they make all materials fully available which is necessary to replicate the study findings. If they are not allowed to disclose part of such materials, this should be clearly indicated in their research proposal. The applicants need to acknowledge in their research proposal or study all those for whom credit is due, for example, funders of research, all those involved in the research activity (whether as co-authors, research assistants or in any other capacity, any who have given formative comments or reviews, and also any authors whose research is being built on). All conflicts of interest, whether financial or otherwise, should be disclosed in their study and research proposal. All research findings and results will be truthfully reported. Data and results must not be fudged.

All ethical issues of the proposed research which the applicants possibly foresee should be clearly indicated by them in this application.

Significant modifications to the study design subsequent to approval need to be submitted to this Ethical Review Board (ERB) and all other involved committees and institutions.

This document consists of three parts:
Part 1: A checklist to decide if the ethics committee is the right addressee
Part 2: A checklist of ethical safety
Part 3: Project details

Acknowledgement: Some of the examples and notes were obtained from documents of the ethics committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Zurich, the European Economic Association, the London School of Economics and the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin.

Part 1: A checklist to decide if the ethics committee is the right address

1. Do you seek advice and approval for research covered by the declaration of Helsinki of the World Medical Association (WMA) "Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Participants", e.g. does our study aim to examine diseases or the structure and function of the human body?

◯ No
◯ Yes
◉ Don't know

2. Do you seek advice on data protection that does not involve ethical issues?

◯ No
◯ Yes
◯ Don't know

Did you answer "Yes" or "Don't know" to any of the above questions? In this case, the ethics committee is probably not the right addressee. You are referred to the relevant committee (e.g., a medical ethics committee, a data protection committee etc.).

If you answered "No" to all the questions above, you may continue to Part 2 and Part 3.

Part 2: A checklist to assess studies concerning their ethical safety

Please complete the following checklist as a first orientation for the ethics review board.

Autonomy of participants, truthfulness, adequate information, consent and voluntariness

3. Do participants fall into a category of **vulnerable populations?**

   Note: *Vulnerable populations include, for example, children (under age 18; age must be documented during the recruitment process or prior to the data collection); people with learning or communication difficulties; people in custody; people engaged in illegal activities (e.g. drug users); illegal immigrants; people with limited capacity/incapability of judgement.*

◯ No
◯ Yes
◯ Don't know

4. Does the study involve subjects who are uninformed about their participation in the study or did not provide their **informed consent** to participate?

   Note: *These situations may be particularly relevant in studies that observe or experimentally influence the behaviour of people without their knowledge.*

◯ No
◯ Yes
◯ Don't know

5. Will participants not be told that their participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw at any time and for any reason?

   Note: *To make sure that participants are aware of their right to withdraw, you should use the following or an equivalent statement in your instructions:*

   "Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw from participation at any time during the experiment/survey, without providing any reasons. In order to use your data for research, however, it is important for us that you complete the entire experiment/survey. If you choose to withdraw from the experiment/survey, you will be paid the fixed €4 show-up fee but no further earnings that you may have obtained during the experiment/survey."

◯ No
◯ Yes
◯ Don't know

„Ihre Teilnahme ist völlig freiwillig und Sie können jederzeit ohne Angabe von Gründen von der Teilnahme am Experiment / an der Umfrage zurücktreten. Damit wir Ihre Daten für die Forschung jedoch verwenden können, ist es notwendig, dass Sie alle Teile des Experiments / der Umfrage bearbeiten. Falls Sie sich entschließen, von der Teilnahme während des Experiments / der Umfrage zurück zu treten, erhalten Sie die 4-Euro für Ihr Erscheinen, nicht jedoch weitere Beträge, die Sie möglicherweise während des Experiments / der Umfrage verdient haben."

6. Does the study involve financial or non-financial **incentives out of proportion**, such that they may threaten the voluntary nature of a participant's choice to participate?

   Note: *This may include excessively high monetary compensation or rewards in other contexts, like grades.*

◯ No
◯ Yes
◯ Don't know

7. Will your project involve **deception** in the sense of deliberately misleading participants in any way?

   Note: *This question refers to studies that deliberately deceive participants. In other words, participants are purposefully misinformed or falsely informed about integral parts of the study concerning them, in a way that once the truth is revealed, participants are likely to feel being lied to. Examples are incorrect feedback about their performance or the goals of the study, or interaction with a co-worker of the researcher(s) who is falsely introduced as "another study participant". Deception is not equal to not revealing the experimental manipulation and the scientific background or the hypotheses of a study.*

◯ No
◯ Yes
◯ Don't know

Risks and potential harm to participants, researchers and society

8. Is there any realistic risk of any participants experiencing either physical or psychological **distress, discomfort, psychological and social harm, or anxiety**?

   Note: *One needs to distinguish here between negative and neutral consequences of the intervention. For example, mood change due to sad music is harmless, because such music is common in everyday life. However, showing images of war, for example, may be problematic. Such pictures may also be accessed in everyday life, but one is usually not forced to look at them.*

   Studies may result in uncomfortable situations for participants. Also here one should distinguish between a small discomfort which can be considered comparable to an everyday occurrence and thus acceptable and a discomfort that oversteps this boundary (being yelled at, being embarrassed etc.)

◯ No
◯ Yes
◯ Don't know

9. Will participants be asked to disclose personal experiences (e.g. stressful incidents) or sensitive information (e.g., drug use) that may result in physical or psychological adverse effects?

   Note: *This question relates to data acquisition that is sensitive due to one of two reasons. On the one hand, it is about information that needs to be treated highly confidentially because its distribution could lead to disadvantages for the person. On the other hand, it is about disclosed information that can be connected with strong emotions for the person (e.g., traumatic experiences) resulting in an unacceptable emotional strain for the participant.*

◯ No
◯ Yes
◯ Don't know

10. Will the study collect data that is **not anonymized**? ***Note:*** *Data is not anonymized if it can be assigned to a specific participant by somebody (e.g. the researchers, other participants, the audience of a research talk, etc.). Materials that allow such an assignment have to be destroyed in due course.*	◯ No ◯ Yes ◯ Don't know
11. Is there any possibility of **causing disadvantages** resulting for participants either through their behaviour shown during the study or for not taking part in the study?	◯ No ◯ Yes ◯ Don't know
12. Is there any dependency relation between the participants and any of the researcher(s)? **Note:** Often participants are students who are in a dependency relationship with one of the researchers (because they will have to take an exam or because they are employed as tutors or assistants). In this case it is very important to make sure that there are no negative consequences due to a participation or non-participation in the study.	◯ No ◯ Yes ◯ Don't know
13. Do participants or researchers get in contact with materials that could be seen as threatening or offensive or disgusting?	◯ No ◯ Yes ◯ Don't know
14. Will the proposed research entail any considerable **risk to the researcher(s)**?	◯ No ◯ Yes ◯ Don't know
15. Does any member of the research team have any association that poses or could pose a **conflict of interest** in connection with the results in the study?	◯ No ◯ Yes ◯ Don't know
16. Is it foreseeable that the dissemination of the research results produce significant **harm to individuals** or that the results will be misused by governments, companies or other institutions?	◯ No ◯ Yes ◯ Don't know
17. Was **approval** of this research **already refused** by a different committee?	◯ No ◯ Yes ◯ Don't know

Part 3: Project details

Title of the project:

Name of applicant(s):

Institution of applicant(s):

Email address(es) of applicant(s):

Name(s) of involved researchers:

Institution(s) of involved researchers:

Email address(es) of involved researchers:

Date of application: Presumed starting date of the project :

I confirm that the project will not start before the decision of the ethics committee is made. ☐

Abstract / a short description of the project (up to 100 words) :

Please attach an appropriately detailed documentation of your research proposal.

Data collection

Please tick all options that apply to your research project.

- ☐ New data collection
- ☐ Secondary analysis of existing data
- ☐ Laboratory experiment
- ☐ Field experiment / intervention study
- ☐ Randomized control trials
- ☐ Face-to-face interview
- ☐ Telephone interview
- ☐ Postal interview
- ☐ Online interview
- ☐ Qualitative interviews
- ☐ Quantitative interviews
- ☐ Group discussion / focus group
- ☐ Social media data
- ☐ Observation, participant observation
- ☐ Publicly available (newspaper, internet)
- ☐ Not publicly available (archives, records)
- ☐ Other form of data collection (please specify):

Which ethical issues do you foresee in your project? Please list them and provide page numbers in the proposal or copy the relevant parts from the proposal.

Please comment here on any potential issues addressed by the previous questions (Please indicate the respective question numbers).

Is there any further information regarding the research proposal that you consider relevant for the ethics review procedure? Please provide details in the following space or attach a document.

I hereby confirm that the above information is complete, true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Date	Name of applicant	Signature