School of Environment, Education and Development
Ethics Online Template - Guidance Notes:

1. Who uses the school template?

The School of Environment, Education and Development template should be used only for research projects conducted by taught students (undergraduate and postgraduate) and postgraduate research students under the supervision of academic staff.

The template is **NOT** to be used for staff projects, as **all members of staff must seek ethical approval via UREC**.

Taught and postgraduate research students should complete the template in order to seek ethical approval for research projects that that fall within defined ethical boundaries and comply with the terms and conditions of the template, which has been approved for use by the University Research Ethics Committee.

2. What types of research can be approved at school level?

You should only use this template if your research:
- Involves only participants who are non-vulnerable adults who are able to give informed consent
- Involves children and young people in an educational setting who have the opportunity to provide assent, or where parental/guardian consent can be provided

    Excluded are:
    - NHS patients
    - children and young people under 18 outside of an educational setting
    - adults with learning difficulties
    - adults who have a terminal illness
    - adults with mental illness
    - adults with dementia
    - adults in care homes
    - adults or children in emergency situations
    - prisoners or criminals
    - young offenders
    - users of illegal drugs or illegal substances

- Will obtain informed consent or assent from all participants;
- Does not involve physically invasive procedures;
- Does not involve activities that pose a significant risk of causing physical harm or more than mild discomfort;
- Does not involve activities that pose a significant risk of causing psychological stress or anxiety;
- Does not require participants to take part in activities that pose a significant risk of having an adverse effect on their personal well-being (e.g. physical and psychological health), social well-being (e.g. social standing, social connectedness) or economic well-being (e.g. employment, employability, professional standing);

- Does not involve collecting or revealing data that enables individuals, groups or organizations to be identified in such a way that they could experience significant negative effects on their personal, social or economic well-being;
- Does not involve activities that pose a significant risk of harming the researcher(s).
- Does not involve secondary data analysis where data subjects did not provide consent for data to be shared or used for research purposes beyond the original organization setting.

Students: If your project fits these criteria please select please answer "**Yes" to Question C2** as well as **'School of Environment, Education and Development' for Question C2.3** in order to proceed to the School of Environment, Education and Development template which will be sent for school review (i.e. to the School Research Ethics Committee).

Students: If your project does not fit these criteria please answer **"No" to Question C2** to proceed to the UREC application form.

Staff, **Question C1** will direct you to either the full or proportionate UREC application form.

If your project will involve any of the following, you must seek ethical approval via the Health Research Authority:

- Involves data from NHS patients,
- Involves data relating to NHS staff that is not limited to non-sensitive questions about their professional role, and
- Involves users of other UK Health Department services.

3. What is 'low risk' research?

Students: When completing the SEED ethics template, you will also be asked to confirm whether your research is classed as low or medium risk. You will complete the same form regardless of which you choose, but the review process that your application takes will be different (please see section 6 below). The School of Environment, Education and Development defines low risk research as outlined below.

Low risk: The research engages healthy adults or children (the latter in an educational setting where they have the opportunity to provide assent, or where parental/guardian consent can be provided) who are able to give informed consent in a way that accords with accepted practice. The research follows standard procedures and established research methodologies, is carried out online or in a public setting that does not present risks to the researcher or research participants beyond what is normal in that setting, and does not require research participants to provide personal and sensitive information likely to compromise them, or to lead to distress (the research topics are not contentious or sensitive, such as asking about religious beliefs, sexual preferences, political views or illegal activities, or a reasonable person would agree the topic may only result in distress in *extremely rare* instances). If your research can be described as low risk, please indicate this in your answer to **Question C2.2.1**.

Please note: UG and PGT low risk applications are approved by the supervisor and only screened for completeness; however, you will be emailed a 'receipt' confirming we have

received your application, so please keep this for your records. PGR low risk applications are reviewed and approved by school chairs.

Low risk research can be described as research that fits with the following criteria (as applicable):
Type of Participants (choose one option)
- Adults who are able to give informed consent.
- Children in an educational setting, who are able to provide assent and a parental/guardian opt-in consent procedure has been established.

Mandatory Criteria (ALL must be ticked)
- Participants are NOT classed as vulnerable or dependant.
- Topics are NOT of a contentious and/or sensitive nature.
- Topics are NOT distressing.
- Topics are NOT of a confidential nature.
- There is NO risk of physical, emotional or psychological harm to participants.
- Ethical issues DO NOT include the risk of breaking confidentiality due to safeguarding concerns or disclosure requirements.
- Ethical issues DO NOT include the risk of possible coercion of participants.
- Data collection will take place in a public or semi-public space/building (i.e. high street, University campus, school building) or in a domestic environment familiar to the researcher (i.e. family home or friend's residence).
- Data collection will take place within normal working hours and at a time convenient to participants.
- Data collection does not involve *travel to* or *travel within* an international setting outside of the UK, EU or EEA.[1]

Optional Criteria (tick all that apply, if applicable)
- The research will capture video, audio or photographic material and the researcher is able to guarantee controlled access to authorised viewing during analysis
- Any public screening of the video, audio or photographic material captured by the researcher will be subject to the consent agreement with the participants.
- The research requires the collection of personal data, but data will be anonymised prior to analysis and write up or presented in a format which the participant has explicitly agreed and consented.

4. What is 'medium risk' research?

Students: When completing the SEED ethics template, you will also be asked to confirm whether your research is classed as low or medium risk. You will complete the same form regardless of which you choose, but the review process that your application takes will be different (please see section 6 below). The School of Environment, Education and Development defines medium risk research as outlined below.

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[1] It is the joint responsibility of both the student and supervisor to ensure they are acquainted with the data protection regulations of any given country beyond this context, particularly concerning data exporting. In cases where these regulations are complex or restrictive, a medium risk application should be submitted.

Medium risk: The research engages adults and/or children (the latter in an educational setting where they have the opportunity to provide assent, or where parental/guardian consent can be provided), follows standard procedures and established research methodologies, is carried out in a public setting that does not present risks to the researcher or research participants beyond what is normal in that setting, and does not require research participants to provide personal and sensitive information likely to lead to significant levels of distress (the research topics are either not contentious or sensitive, or a reasonable person would agree the topic is of legitimate interest and may result in distress in *rare* instances). If your research can be described as medium risk, please indicate this in your answer to **Question C2.2.1**.

Please note: medium risk applications are assessed by the school research ethics committee. Upon submission of your application you will receive further information on the process for approval. Please wait until you have received final confirmation of the approval of your study before carrying out any research (which includes recruitment).

Medium risk research can be described as research that does not contravene or conflict with *any* of the following:
Type of Participants (choose one option)
- Adults who are able to give informed consent.
- Children in an educational/accredited organisation, who are able to provide assent and an appropriate opt-in or opt-out parental/guardian procedure has been established.

Mandatory Criteria (ALL must be ticked)
- Participants are NOT classed as vulnerable or dependant.
- Topics will NOT lead to a significant level of distress.
- Topics will NOT be of a sensitive personal nature.
- Topics will NOT be highly contentious.
- There is NO significant risk of physical, emotional or psychological harm to participants and any potential harm is likely to be minor and temporary.
- Data collection takes place in public or private locations where the safety of the researchers can be protected and privacy of participants can be guaranteed.
- Data collection takes place at a time convenient to participants.
- Data collection *does NOT involve travel to or travel within* an international setting that is on the list of countries/regions that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advices against 'all but essential' travel to.'[2]

Optional Criteria (tick all that apply, if applicable)
- The research will capture video, audio or photographic material and the researcher is able to guarantee controlled access to authorised viewing during analysis.
- Any public screening of the video, audio or photographic material captured by the researcher will be subject to the consent agreement with the participants

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[2] There may still be data protection and/ or ethical issues in relation to other aspects of the project – as outlined under mandatory criteria and regardless of location -that need to be mitigated and therefore projects that are conducted online should not be automatically assumed not to be high risk. In considering data protection issues, researchers should also be aware that use of online methods may create potential data security issues in some cases for researchers and/ or participants. In such cases Full UREC review would be appropriate.

- The research requires the collection of personal data, but data will be anonymised prior to analysis and write up or presented in a format which the participant has explicitly agreed and consented, with the rare exception of observational research where implied consent may be appropriate with clear justification.
- In the case of secondary data analysis, the data is either not anonymous or there is a potential risk of personal identification being exposed through geographical coordinates or other indirect means.

5. What is 'high risk' research?

Students: If your research can be described as high risk you must apply to UREC for approval. The School of Environment, Education and Development defines high risk research as outlined below.

High risk: The research focuses on groups or individuals within society in need of special support, is carried out in an unstable or volatile setting, involves non-standard methodologies or approaches, presents risks to the personal safety of the researcher or research participant beyond what is normal in the setting, or where there is a possibility the research may be distressing to the researcher or research participant in one or more ways.

High risk research can be described as research that involves *one or more* of the following:

- Research that engages children under 16 outside of an educational setting where they have the opportunity to provide assent, or where parental/guardian consent can be provided; Adults or children with learning difficulties; Adults or children who are unable to self-consent; Adults or children with mental illness; Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the researcher; Prisoners or young offenders; Any other group who can be regarded as vulnerable or dependent; NHS patients.

- Data collection involves travel to or travel within an international setting that is on the list of countries/regions that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advices against 'all but essential' travel to.

- Research that addresses themes or issues in respect of participant's personal *experience* which may be of a sensitive nature and that therefore may involve any risk of psychological damage or distress to the subject (or the subject's family).

- Research that cannot be completed without data collection or associated activities which place the researcher and/or participants (or any third party) at physical risk or serious inconvenience.

- Research that requires participant informed consent and/or withdrawal procedures which are not consistent with accepted practice.

- Research that involves primary data collection on an area of public or social objection (e.g. terrorism, paedophilia).

- Research that involves the necessary deception of research participants.

- Research that makes use of video or other images captured by the researcher, and/or research study participants, where the researcher cannot guarantee controlled access to authorised viewing.

- Research that will take place in locations where first aid and/or other medical support or facilities are not available within 30 minutes.

- Research that takes place in, or involves transport to and from, locations where the researcher's lack of familiarity combined with potential threats in that context may put them at personal risk.

If any aspect of your student research can be described within this frame of reference, please indicate **'No for Question C2**, in order to proceed to the **UREC form**. Please remember to add your supervisor as the Co-PI (**in Section B**) to enable you to request their signature at the end of the form.

6. Who sits on the School Ethics Committee and what are their roles?

The SEED Ethics Committee is made up of two Co-Chairs, Reviewers, and Administrators.

The role of the Co-**Chair** is: to chair the SEED research ethics committee and oversee research ethics procedures within SEED; review all medium-risk ethics applications; review all amendments to low and medium risk applications.

The role of **Reviewers** is: to review medium-risk ethics applications within SEED.

The role of **Administrators** is: to pre-screen incoming low and medium risk school applications (that they are complete and have been signed by the supervisor); disseminate medium risk school ethics applications to reviewers; issue approval letters.

Please note: Proportionate and full UREC applications are **NOT** reviewed by the School Research Ethics Committee; UREC applications are **pre-screened** by UREC signatories from the University's Research Ethics Team. If you require your UREC application to be reviewed prior to submission, please utilise review systems within your supervisory team, research group or subject discipline, where appropriate.

7. What is the process for obtaining school ethics approval?

Low Risk:
1) Applicant submits SEED ethics form (low and medium risk student projects)
2) Form received by appropriate School Ethics Administrator and pre-screened

Medium Risk:
1) Applicant submits SEED ethics form (low and medium risk student projects)
2) Form received by appropriate School Ethics Administrator and pre-screened
3) If the form is complete and ready for review, an administrator sends application for review to 1 SEED reviewer and Chair
4) Reviewers have 3 decision outcomes available: Favourable decision, Favourable decision subject to revisions, Unfavourable decision.
5) If the reviewers agree on the outcome, their responses are collated and sent to the applicant in a letter. If the reviewers disagree on the outcome, the application is sent to a third reviewer. The response is then sent to the applicant in a letter. In the case of a

favourable decision subject to revisions, changes are submitted to the chair for chair's action. If found to have an unfavourable decision and the applicant reapplies, the form must be submitted following these same channels.

6) If an applicant needs to submit an amendment to an application, this is done through an amendment form and is subject to chair's action.

UREC review process:

1) Applicant submits UREC ethics form (high risk and staff projects)

2) Form received by Ethics Signatory and pre-screened

3) If the form is complete and ready for review, it is signed off by the signatory and sent to UREC for consideration. If the form is not complete and ready for review, it will be returned to the applicant for revisions.

4) If found to have an unfavourable decision at UREC and the applicant reapplies, the form must be submitted following these same channels.

If you have any queries about the specifics of your project in relation to approval from the **School**, please contact:

Taught Ethics Team (UGT or PGT students) – taught.ethics.seed@manchester.ac.uk
PGR Ethics Team (PhD level) - HUMS.doctoralacademy.support@manchester.ac.uk
UREC Signatories (staff and high risk projects) – research.ethics@manchester.ac.uk

Timelines: The committee aims to screen and assign low and medium risk school applications to a reviewer within 5-10 days of receipt. The majority of applications are reviewed and a decision issued by the Chair within a further 10-15 working days. During peak periods, this process can be delayed due to the large volume of applications we process, but most applications receive a decision within 15-20 working days from submission.