Guidance Notes: Psychological Research

This template allows the Division of Neuroscience and Experimental Psychology (School of Biological Sciences), the Division of Psychology and Mental Health (School of Health Sciences), and the Division of Human Communication, Development, and Hearing (School of Health Sciences)—referred to collectively as Psychology below—to ‘approve’ (give favourable ethical opinions to) psychological research projects conducted by students under the supervision of academic staff based in these Divisions. The template is NOT to be used for staff projects; members of staff must seek ethical approval via UREC for non-student projects.

Students should complete the template in order to seek ethical approval for research projects 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.

The template is designed to cover studies that DO NOT involve high ethical risks. If a Division reviewer or chair deems that the details of the application fall outside the scope of the template, it will be forwarded to a University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) for approval.

You should only use this template if your project fits the following criteria:

- It is a psychological research project
- Data collection will take place on University premises or in a safe public place in the UK
- Any adult participants are healthy individuals able to provide informed consent and are not from vulnerable groups
- Any participants who are children or infants will be supervised during testing
- Any procedures used are non-invasive, low-risk to both participants and researchers and the researchers are trained to perform these techniques on the specific age group of participants listed in the application including:
  - Reaction time measures
  - Behaviour studies involving structured games
  - Eye tracking
  - EEGs
- Any of the following procedures provided they are being performed on healthy, non-vulnerable adults with the capacity to consent and performed by researchers who have appropriately trained in the specific technique being undertaken:
  - Collecting otoacoustic emissions (transient, distortion product and spontaneous)
  - Measuring acoustic reflex thresholds
  - Performing otoscopy (looking in the ear to see if it is clear/occluded)
  - Tympanometry (checking the pressure of the ear)
- Any stimuli used are neither painful nor objectionable
- Topics will not lead to a significant level of distress\(^1\)

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\(^1\) Please note, although specific topics or groups of questions may appear potentially distressing at first glance, it is often the case that the experience of the supervisory team in conducting research of a similar nature would confirm that distress has only occurred in rare instances in the past. If this is the case for your topic/questions you must provide adequate justification of this to the Division Chair.
• Topics will not be of a sensitive, personal\(^2\) 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
• There is no real risk of uncovering potential disclosures of illegal activity, safeguarding concerns, poor practice or whistleblowing

**IMPORTANT:** Any study involving eye tracking or EEGs with those 5 years and under will need to be reported to the University’s Insurance Office. Please ensure you indicate this in Section C of the application form by clicking ‘physical testing’.

**Note that you cannot use the template if your project involves any of the following:**

- Participants who are **vulnerable**, including (but not limited to):
  - Adults who are unable to provide informed consent
  - Children who will not be supervised during testing
- Procedures that are **invasive or high in physical or psychological risk**, including:
  - MRI, PET, or CT imaging
  - Neurostimulation (e.g., TMS, tDCS, tACS)
  - Delivery of painful stimuli
  - Delivery of objectionable stimuli (see UREC guidance)
  - Deliberate manipulations of mood or psychological state
  - Deception that is not subsequently explained via debriefing
- **Ingestion or inhalation** of any substance

**Students:** If your project fits these criteria please select **Division/School Review for Question A5** as well as ‘Psychological Research’ for Question D5.2 in order to proceed to the Psychological Research template which will be sent for Division Review.

**Students:** If your project does not fit these criteria please select **UREC Review for Question A5**, to proceed to the UREC application form.

**Staff members** (for non-student projects): Please select **UREC Review for Question A5** to proceed to the UREC application form.

If your project involves any of the following, you must seek ethical approval via the Health Research Authority (Please return to **Question A2**, change your answer accordingly and ensure you read the corresponding guidance notes for obtaining ethical approval):

\(^2\) Please note, this is at the discretion of the Division Chair as what is classed as personally sensitive in one context with a specific group of participants may not be the same in a different context with a different group of participants. In addition, this will often depend on whether the research is aimed at members of the general public or targeted to an identified population with a specific connection to the topic you are investigating.
• Data from NHS patients,
• Data relating to NHS staff that is not limited to non-sensitive questions about their professional role
• The use of NHS equipment or facilities (including permissions to be on site at NHS Trust institutions).

If you have any queries with regards to your specific proposal, please email your Division Ethics Chair:

• **Division of Human Communication, Development & Hearing**: Elena Lieven
• **Division of Neuroscience & Experimental Psychology**: Jason Taylor or Alexandros Kafkas
• **Division of Psychology & Mental Health**: Jane Senior or Peter Taylor