Guidance Notes: Psychological Research

This ERM template allows the Division of Psychology, Communication and Human Neuroscience and Division of Psychology and Mental Health, referred to collectively as '*Psychology*', to '*approve*' (give favourable ethical opinions to) psychological research projects conducted by students under the supervision of academic staff.

The template is **NOT** to be used for staff projects, (i.e., those which are not directly related to an individual or group of students undertaking a specified course/programme of study (taught and research programmes, both Undergraduate and Postgraduate)); members of staff must seek ethical approval via UREC for non-student projects.

Applicants should complete the template to request 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 wider University Research Ethics oversight structures.

The template is designed to cover studies that **DO NOT** involve high ethical risks. If a low-risk or medium risk (Divisional) reviewer/chair deems that the details of the application fall outside the terms of reference for that route, it will be granted an unfavourable ethical opinion and the applicant will be required to apply for UREC review.

Low-Risk Student Only Projects (Supervisor sign-off)

All queries for low-risk student project should be directed to the low-risk Chair who will, if necessary, consult with the appropriate medium risk Divisional Chair.

The application must include the email/name of another academic from the Division, which the supervisor will identify, who will undertake a review of the application and sign off the approval for the study to proceed.

The timeframe for approval is **10 working days** from submission.

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

- Participants are adults who are able to give informed consent.
- Participants are **NOT** children (under 16 years of age).
- Participants are **NOT** classed as vulnerable or dependant. Please see the following guidance on vulnerability: https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=52973

- Topics are **NOT** distressing.[1]
- Topics are **NOT** personally sensitive.

[1] Matters of sensitivity/contentiousness/distress are contextual and require consensus between applicant and reviewer.

- Topics are **NOT** contentious (e.g., antisocial behaviour, mental health, political).
- There is **NO** risk of physical, emotional or psychological harm to participants.
- Any procedures used are **non-invasive** and (1) there is **NO** risk to both participants and researchers and (2) the researchers are trained to perform these techniques, for example:
    - Reaction time measures
    - Behaviour studies involving structured games.
- 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.
- There is **NO** ingestion or inhalation of any substance.
- The study does **NOT** involve data collection from social media.
- Any ethical issues associated with deception are **MINOR** in nature. In such cases these are debriefed fully at the end of the project. Minor deception includes withholding some information from participants regarding the aim of the study or the actual manipulation to avoid changing their behaviour in the way they complete the task. This could include incidental tasks (e.g., a surprise test at the end), or manipulations, such as priming. The deception reveal does **NOT** cause distress.

- Any in-person data collection will take place in a public or semi-public space/building (i.e., high street, University campus, school building); where places are semi-public e.g., school building, then appropriate local permissions must be sought.
- Any in-person data collection will take place within normal working hours and at a time convenient to participants.
- Any in-person data collection will take place exclusively within the UK.

Notes: If applicants wish to publish their data, then a Data Management Plan (DMP) needs to be included as part of the submission.

Medium Risk Student Only Projects (Divisional)

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

- Adults and/or children 16+ able to give informed consent.
- Children (under 16 years of age) who have the consent of parent or guardian (via an appropriate opt-in or opt-out procedure). Assent that is age-appropriate will be sought. See further guidance below on studies involving children and opt-in or opt-out).
- Participants are **NOT** classed as vulnerable or dependant. Please see the following guidance on vulnerability: https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=52973
- Study involves the use of secondary data.

- Topics will **NOT** lead to a **significant** level of distress and any potential distress is likely to be minor and temporary.
- Topics will **NOT** be of a personally sensitive nature[2].
- Topics will **NOT** be **highly** contentious (e.g., religion, gender identity, terrorism)
- 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** ingestion or inhalation of any substance.
- For projects involving social media data collection, data are being collected **ONLY** from public profiles, pages, groups or forums.
- There is **minimal risk** of uncovering potential disclosures of illegal activity, safeguarding concerns, poor practice, disclosure of professional malpractice or whistleblowing, and clear protocols are in place for such an eventuality.
- Any manipulations required involve **MINOR** deception only and are debriefed fully at the end of a participant's involvement. Minor deception includes withholding some information from participants regarding the aim of the study or the actual manipulation to avoid changing their behaviour in the way they complete the task. This could include incidental tasks (e.g., a surprise test at the end), or manipulations, such as priming. The deception reveal does not lead to significant distress and any minor or temporary distress is addressed in the distress protocol.
- Any procedures used are **non-invasive** and **low-risk** to both participants and researchers and the researchers are trained to perform these techniques on the specific group of participants listed in the application including:
    - Eye tracking
    - EEGs

[2] Please note, this is at the discretion of the Divisional Chair. 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

- Any of the following procedures performed by researchers who have been 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).

  provided recruitment is with the general population and recruitment is not by virtue of having a specific characteristic, condition, trait or underlying health condition.

- Any in-person data collection will take place in a public or semi-public space/building (i.e., high street, University campus, school building), where places are semi-public e.g., school building, then appropriate local permissions must be sought.
- Any in-person data collection that takes place in private locations e.g., participants' homes will **ONLY** be friends and family of the researcher.
- Any in-person data collection takes place at a time convenient to participants.
- In-person data collection does **NOT** involve travel to, or within, an international setting on the list of countries/regions the Foreign and Commonwealth Office currently recommend against 'all but essential' travel.

- For studies involving secondary data:
    - You are able to provide explicit consent from the data controller to access the data, and
    - You are able to prove that the data will be used for a purpose which falls within the remit of the original consent provided by data subjects.
    - Personally identifiable data requires evidence of mitigation for the ethical issue associated with maintaining participant's confidentiality.

- For studies involving children:
    - It must **NOT** involve the use of the '*Gillick competency assessment*'. Gillick competence involves children under the age of 16 taking part in a research study without the knowledge or consent of their parents/guardians. It may only be used in exceptional and justified circumstances and requires full UREC review.
    - Opt-in consent must be used in the following circumstances:
        - If physical testing or psychological interventions are included
        - If medical information will be accessed or medical tests (e.g., dental or eye checks) will be undertaken
        - If audio recordings will be taken for purposes other than the recording of interviews/focus groups/games
        - If video recordings will be undertaken

        - If group activities will be included where there is a possibility that the children could become distressed through the activity itself or through a reward scheme (e.g., an activity where children are rewarded with stickers and one child ends up with more stickers than another)
        - If sensitive issues will be explored which will be dependent on both the context and age of the children, including classroom observation of sensitive topics of discussion
        - If special category or sensitive (e.g., disciplinary or attendance record) data already held by the school will be accessed or collected by the school on behalf of the researcher.

    - Opt-out consent will **ONLY** be used for observational projects in accredited/educational institution (i.e., schools and nurseries) with approval from head or lead.
        - Opt-out consent will use **both** paper copies and electronic messages (e.g., emails from schools/nurseries) to minimise the likelihood that parents/guardians do not see the message).

    - Any study involving eye tracking, EEGs, autoscopy or other 'physical testing' with those 5 years and under will need to be reported to the University's Insurance Office.
    - Parents/guardians or teachers **MUST BE** present, as deemed appropriate for the setting e.g., testing in university labs, museums and other semi-public areas will have the parent/guardian present; testing in schools will not have parents/guardians present but will take place in rooms that can be readily accessed by teachers.
    - All experimenters will be enhanced DBS checked.

Students: If your project fits these criteria, please select 'yes' to Question C2: 'Are you applying for review by your local ethics panel for student projects?' to proceed to the Psychological Research template which will be sent either for an administrative check or Divisional Review.

Students: If your project does not fit these criteria, please select check if the study is suitable for Proportionate or full UREC Review. Once decided, select the appropriate route in Section C, to proceed to the relevant UREC application form.

Staff members (for non-student projects): Please check if the study is suitable for Proportionate or full UREC Review. Once decided, select the appropriate route in Section C to proceed to the relevant UREC application form.

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

- **Division of Psychology, Communication and Human Neuroscience**: Alexandros Kafkas, Dan Cox

- **Division of Psychology & Mental Health**: Charlotte Lennox or Kerry Gutridge