rijksuniversiteit groningen

CF Research ethics checklist for BA-MSc student projects

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Ethics Committee CF/UCG

Procedure
After the research method for the student project has been agreed upon, and if the student plans to conduct research involving humans or animals, they must reflect on these questions and discuss this checklist, the informed consent form and the information sheet with their supervisor. If any questions remain unresolved or if the student and supervisor need input from the Ethics Committee, they can always contact the Ethics Committee (**ethics-cf@rug.nl**).
The checklist, the informed consent form and the information sheet do not need to be sent to the Ethics Committee or submitted to Brightspace. The questions serve as a guideline to thoroughly reflect on any ethical matters related to the student project. You are requested to shortly reflect on research ethics in your thesis and to always use the adjusted informed consent and information sheet when conducting research among humans.

A full application is required if the student plans to publish their work or if the research involves any of the following:

- Personal data, such as identifiable data or sensitive topics
- Vulnerable groups, including minors or individuals who are unable to provide informed consent
- Any physical or psychological risk to participants, or potential social, financial, or legal consequences
- The use of AI for decision-making that impacts individuals, or research involving surveillance, tracking, or monitoring of individuals without their knowledge
- Deception or withholding of information – in such cases, always include a debriefing form and consult us to determine whether a full application is necessary

Please visit the Ethics Committee website for more information on the full application procedure.

Please do not hesitate to contact ethics-cf@rug.nl with any questions concerning the procedure.

CF Research ethics checklist for BA-MSc student projects

This checklist is based on *Research Ethics for Students in the Social Sciences* (Jaap Bos, 2020), an open-access book that provides a non-technical introduction to research ethics and integrity-related issues.

1. Participants

• Does the study involve participants who are unable to give informed consent (i.e. people with learning disabilities)? If yes: Discuss why and what measures you will take to avoid or minimize harm.

• Does the research involve potentially vulnerable groups (i.e. children, people with cognitive impairment, or those in dependent relationships)? If yes: Discuss why and what measures you will take to avoid or minimize harm.

• Will the study require the cooperation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited? (i.e. students at school, members of self- help group, residents of nursing home)? If yes: Who

is the gatekeeper? What agreement have you made, and which expectations do you share? Discuss whether and how this cooperation may influence your results.

- Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time (i.e. covert observation of people in non-public places)? If yes: Discuss why and how, and provide a risk analysis if applicable.

- Will any dependent relationships exist between anyone involved in the recruitment pool of potential participants? If yes: Explain why and how, and provide a risk analysis.

2. Research design and data collection

- Will the study involve the discussion of sensitive topics? (i.e. sexual activity, drug use, politics) if yes: Discuss which topics will be discussed or investigated, and what risk is involved? What measures have you taken to minimize any risk, if applicable?
  - Are drugs, placebos, or other substances (i.e. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants? If yes: Discuss the procedure and the cost-benefit analysis. • What measures have you taken to minimize any risk, if applicable?

- Will the study involve invasive, intrusive, or potentially harmful procedures of any kind? If yes: Discuss the procedure and the cost-benefit analysis. What measures have you taken to minimize any risk, if applicable?

- Could the study induce psychological stress, discomfort, anxiety, cause harm, or have negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in everyday life? If yes: Discuss the procedure and why no alternative method could be used. If necessary, discuss the cost-benefit analysis. What measures have you taken to minimize any risk, if applicable?

- Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing? If yes: Discuss the procedure and how the interests of the participants are safeguarded.

- Is there any form of deception (misinformation about the goal of the study) involved? If yes: Discuss the procedure and provide a rationale for its use.

- Will you be using methods that allow visual and/or vocal identification of respondents? If so: Discuss what you will do to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality?

- Will you be collecting information through a third party? If yes: Discuss your choice for this party and the procedure.

- Will the research involve respondents on the internet? If yes: Discuss how you plan to anonymize the participants.

- How will you guarantee anonymity and confidentiality? Discuss the procedure and estimate the risk of a breach of confidentiality.

- What information in the informed consent will participants be given about the research? Please consult the template for information sheets and informed consent sheets for further guidance. Adjust the template to your situation and discuss it with your supervisor. Which procedures are in place in case participants wish to file a complaint?

- Will financial compensation be offered to participants? Discuss the compensation being offered and the rationale for it.

- If your research changes, discuss how consent will be renegotiated?

3. Analysis and interpretation

• What is the expected outcome of your research? Discuss what you would consider a significant result? • During the course of research, discuss how unforeseen or adverse events will be managed (i.e., do you have procedures in place to deal with disclosures from vulnerable participants)?

4. Dissemination

• Discuss how you plan to share your research findings. Which audience do you intend to target?

5. Data storage

• Discuss

- where your data will be stored and which measures you have taken to make sure it is secure? • Which safety precautions have you arranged for in case of data leakage?
- whether your data be disposed of. If yes: When? (date) if no: Why not?
- Whether your research involves the sharing of data or confidential information beyond the initial consent given (such as with other parties)? What specific arrangement have you made and with whom?