

Participant Information Sheet

The title of the research project

Developing an AI-Driven Chatbot for Bournemouth University's Policies.

Invitation to take part

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part.

Who is organising/funding the research?

This research is being conducted as part of a Master's project in the MSc Data Science and Artificial Intelligence program at Bournemouth University. It is not financially supported or funded by any external organisation or individual.

What is the purpose of the project?

This project aims to develop a chatbot that provides clear, accurate, and context-sensitive responses to inquiries about Bournemouth University's policies. By testing the chatbot, participants will contribute to improving its usability and accuracy.

Why have I been invited?

You have been invited because we are recruiting 10–20 participants who are familiar with Bournemouth University's policies, including students, staff, and collaborators. Your experience will help us evaluate the chatbot's effectiveness in addressing policy-related inquiries.

What would taking part involve?

- Test the chatbot by interacting with it and asking policy-related questions.
- Provide feedback on its usability, clarity, and accuracy through a short questionnaire or interview.
- Providing verbal feedback during an interview, which may be recorded for transcription and analysis.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a participant agreement form. We

want you to understand what participation involves, before you make a decision on whether to participate.

If you or any family member have an on-going relationship with BU or the research team, e.g. as a member of staff, as student or other service user, your decision on whether to take part (or continue to take part) will not affect this relationship in any way.

Can I change my mind about taking part?

Yes, you can stop participating in study activities at any time and without giving a reason.

If I change my mind, what happens to my information?

After you decide to withdraw from the study, we will not collect any further information from or about you.

As regards to the information we have already collected before this point, your rights to access, change or move that information are limited. This is because we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. Further explanation about this is in the Personal Information section below.

If you withdraw, no further data will be collected from you. Any identifiable data already collected will be removed unless it has been anonymised or is integral to the project.

Will I be reimbursed for taking part?

Participation in this study is voluntary, and there is no financial compensation. However, your contributions will directly support the development of this tool.

What are the advantages and possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?

Advantages: By participating, you will help improve a tool designed to make university policies more accessible and reduce administrative workload.

Disadvantages: Participation involves minimal risk and will require approximately 30 minutes of your time.

What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

We will collect your feedback on the chatbot's usability, clarity, and accuracy. No sensitive personal data will be collected. Your data will be anonymised for analysis and future research.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

Interviews may be recorded using a voice recorder for transcription purposes. These recordings will be securely stored, transcribed, anonymized, and deleted after use.

How will my information be managed?

Bournemouth University (BU) is the organisation with overall responsibility for this study and the Data Controller of your personal information, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it appropriately. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest, as part of our core function as a university.

Undertaking this research study involves collecting and/or generating information about you. We manage research data strictly in accordance with:

- Ethical requirements; and
- Current data protection laws. These control use of information about identifiable individuals, but do not apply to anonymous research data: “anonymous” means that we have either removed or not collected any pieces of data or links to other data which identify a specific person as the subject or source of a research result.

BU's [Research Participant Privacy Notice](#) sets out more information about how we fulfil our responsibilities as a data controller and about your rights as an individual under the data protection legislation. We ask you to read this Notice so that you can fully understand the basis on which we will process your personal information.

Research data will be used only for the purposes of the study or related uses identified in the Privacy Notice or this Information Sheet. To safeguard your rights in relation to your personal information, we will use the minimum personally-identifiable information possible and control access to that data as described below.

Publication

You will not be able to be identified in any external reports or publications about the research without your specific consent*. Otherwise your information will only be included in these materials in an anonymous form, i.e. you will not be identifiable.

Security and access controls

BU will hold the information we collect about you in hard copy in a secure location and on a BU password protected secure network where held electronically.

Personal information which has not been anonymised will be accessed and used only by appropriate, authorised individuals and when this is necessary for the purposes of the research or another purpose identified in the Privacy Notice. This may include giving access to BU staff or others responsible for monitoring and/or audit of the study, who need to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations.

Identifiable data, such as participants' names and contact details, will only be used during the consent process to manage communication and participation in the study. After consent has been obtained, all collected data will be pseudonymised by replacing direct identifiers with unique codes.

At the end of the study, the data will be fully anonymised by removing all remaining indirect identifiers, ensuring that individual participants cannot be identified in any research outputs. Identifiable data will not be used beyond the consent and participation management phase.

All data will be securely stored on Bournemouth University's password-protected servers, with access restricted to authorised researchers only. Physical consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet, and electronic data will be encrypted and anonymised at the conclusion of the study.

Sharing your personal information with third parties

As well as BU staff and the BU student(s) working on the research project, No third parties will have access to the data collected in this study. Only authorised researchers from Bournemouth University will handle the data for analysis and storage purposes.

Further use of your information

The information collected about you may be used to support other research projects in the future and access to it will not be restricted. You will not be able to be identified in the data without your specific consent. To enable this use, the data will be added to an appropriate research data repository such as BORDaR (BU's Data Repository): this is a central location where data is stored, which is accessible to the public.

Keeping your information if you withdraw from the study

If you withdraw from active participation in the study we will keep information which we have already collected from or about you, if this has on-going relevance or value to the study. This may include identifiable information already collected, where necessary for research integrity. As explained above, your legal rights to access, change, delete or move this information are limited as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. However if you have concerns about how this will affect you personally, you can raise these with the research team when you withdraw from the study.

You can find out more about your rights in relation to your data and how to raise queries or complaints in our Privacy Notice.

Retention of research data

Project governance documentation, including copies of signed **participant agreements**: we keep this documentation for a long period after completion of the research, so that we have records of how we conducted the research and who took part. The only personal information in this documentation will be your name and signature, and we will not be able to link this to any anonymised research results.

Research results:

As described above, during the course of the study we will anonymise the information we have collected about you as an individual. This means that we will not hold your personal information in identifiable form after we have completed the research activities.

You can find more specific information about retention periods for personal information in our Privacy Notice.

We keep anonymised research data indefinitely, so that it can be used for other research as described above.

Contact for further information

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact

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Supervisor: Dr. Sofia Meacham, Principal Academic in Computing

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In case of complaints

Any concerns about the study should be directed to Bournemouth University by email to researchgovernance@bournemouth.ac.uk.

Finally

If you decide to take part, you will be given a copy of the information sheet and a signed participant agreement form to keep.

Thank you for considering taking part in this research project.