

Please complete this quiz to receive the certificate of completion.

Please work through the following scenarios to establish if the Conflict Of Interest has been addressed.

Options are:

Yes: Ethical issue has been identified and adequately addressed

No: Ethical issue has not been identified

Incomplete: The ethical issue has been identified but has not been addressed or conflict fully resolved.

1. The research involves carrying out semi structured interviews that will be conducted with 10 employees within a public hospital organisation in Auckland. As the student researcher is also an employee of the organisation in senior management, an invitation to participate will be sent by the secretary to the director of the organisation.

☒ No



The main ethical issue that has not been identified is that a member of the research team also works in the organisation and is in a position of authority.

The planned recruitment process could present a power relationship as potential participants could see this invitation as coming from the Director's Office. This means they could feel pressure or coercion to take part rather than being able to exercise a voluntary decision to participate or not participate.

To mitigate the conflict of interest the position/role in the organisation for the student researcher should be clearly included in the researcher introduction of the participation information sheet (PIS).

It would be preferable that either another member of the research team or a 3rd party assistant carry out the interviews. Alternatively the researchers could consider if the interview questions could be developed into an anonymous online format.

☐ Yes

☐ Incomplete

2. The PI is a member of the teaching team for the course where the research is taking place. The research team are aware that student participants may think that their performance in the task sessions and focus group interviews may affect their course assessments. Students will be given assurance in the PIS that their participation or non-participation in the research will in no way affect their studies in a department where the research is taking place and that their participation is voluntary.

Firstly, the tasks and tools developed for this research are not related to the course content. Secondly, the researcher is not involved in marking any of the course assessments for these students.

Grades for students are determined by assignments (which are marked by graduate teaching assistants, who are supervised by one of the departmental undergraduate coordinators) and a multi-choice term test and exam which are scanned and marked electronically. The researcher guarantees that the database managers for the students' assessments have no involvement in the research. To further guard against this potential conflict of interest the researcher will ensure that the student participants are recruited from one of the five other lecture streams that the researcher is not teaching.

☐ Yes

☒ Incomplete



The main ethical issue identified is that a member of the research team also teaches the courses from which the student participants are being recruited.

The mitigation by the research team is providing an assurance that the research participation or non-participation will not affect 'their studies in xxx department', that the research is not related to the course content, confirmation that the researcher is not involved in marking any course assessments, and the research project is drawing participants from a lecture stream the research team member is not teaching.

These would seem to be reasonable mitigations of the concern, but it would be preferable that an independent third party rather than the researcher (and course teacher) approach the potential participants during recruitment.

Also the assurance statement regarding participation or non-participation needs to be provided by the Academic Head, rather than the researchers. This is because students in the department's courses are being sought as participants. In this case a letter of support should be included in the supporting documentation from the HoD stating that a student's participation or non-participation in the research will not affect their academic results or relationships with the Department. If a letter of support is not being included, the PIS for the Academic Head should explicitly ask for the assurance with a statement included in the CF for the Academic Head.

The PIS for students should include a clear and explicit assurance statement as well as saying who has provided it. A statement acknowledging understanding of this should also be included in the consent form (CF).

☐ No

3. The researcher is currently employed as a teacher at the school where the research is planned to take place. She is currently on a year's study leave to complete a Master of Education research thesis at the University of Auckland. It is possible that the researcher will be interviewing teaching colleagues while undertaking her research. There could be a perception of conflict of interest as the teaching colleagues could feel obliged to take part in the interview.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☒ Incomplete



The researcher is currently employed as a teacher at the school where the research is planned to take place. She is currently on a year's study leave to complete a Master of Education research thesis at the University of Auckland. It is possible that the researcher will be interviewing teaching colleagues while undertaking her research. There could be a perception of conflict of interest as the teaching colleagues could feel obliged to take part in the interview.

4. The researcher will be recruiting from their own organisation. To ensure that participants do not feel obligated or coerced, participants will not be recruited from the researcher's own direct reports.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☒ Incomplete



The researcher has identified and clarified the conflict of interest. However the recruitment process hasn't been completely resolved with respect to this.

This conflict of interest around the recruitment process could be further mitigated by avoid approaching participants directly by phone (apart from the approach to the CEO); instead information could be sent by email with an invitation for interested participants to get in touch with the researcher.

Alternatively if the research methodology uses an online anonymous questionnaire a link could be provided in the original introduction email for interested participants to follow if they wish to complete the questionnaire.

5. To ensure that no individual within the organisation feels obligated to participate in this project, the PIS will clearly state that individuals are under no obligation to participate. The invitation to participate will be circulated by the administrator/secretary of each group, instead of the researchers or manager, so that participants do not feel coerced or obligated to participate.

The wording in the PIS for the employee will state: Participation is completely voluntary. It is your choice whether or not you choose to participate in this study. An assurance has been obtained from both the CEO and manager that your participation or non-participation will not affect your employment or relationship with the organisation. A statement is also included in the consent form for the employee. The organisation's PIS includes a request from the CEO and Manager that states "we seek your assurance that participation or non-participation of your employees will not affect their employment or relationship with the organisation". This following has been included in the CF for the organisation: "I give my assurance that participation or non-participation will not affect employees' employment or relationship with the organisation."

- ☒ Yes



The researcher has identified and clarified the conflict of interest.

The researcher has also ensured this is fully mitigated in the recruitment process. They have obtained assurance from an individual of authority within the organisation where the research is taking place and provided the assurance to the potential participants correctly by also stating who is providing the assurance.

- ☐ Incomplete
- ☐ No

6. The research is taking place within the university. There could be an apparent conflict of interest if some students of PI choose to enrol in the experiment. The participants will be informed that there is no relation between participating in the experiment and their academic performance.

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes
- ☒ Incomplete



The researcher has identified and clarified the conflict of interest. However assurance regarding the conflict of interest/power relationship hasn't been fully resolved.

To mitigate the conflict of interest the researcher could consider also excluding students of the PI from the research, though this is not always possible.

If not, and there is a possibility of recruiting their own students, the PI can give this assurance and direct participants to the HOD if they feel that this assurance has not been met. If the PI is also the HOD, in the contact section of the PIS (last page) the HOD details should show the details of the next line of report for the PI/HOD. An assurance statement should also be included in the CF.

7. The researchers aims to monitor, benchmark and support public and private sector policies and actions to create healthy food environments. Participants with conflicts of interest will be excluded from the study.

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No



The researchers have not provided clarity for the committee as to what potential conflicts of interest could entail, or how these will be mitigated and managed. There is no explanation of how participants with conflicts of interest will be identified in order to be excluded.

The researchers should also clarify in their application:

How the possible conflicts will be identified, and who will decide when these exist, as any company engaged in food production is likely to have a vested interest in the outcome.

How conflicts that exclude participation will be handled after a participant has already given consent to take part. Identified conflicts could be included as an exclusion criteria in advertising material and the participation information sheet. If applied after consent, then a suitable explanation letter will need to be provided (and approved by the ethics committee).

Researchers might also want to consider the potentially bias in their results if companies engaged in certain types of food production are excluded from the study (unless only certain viewpoints are desired for inclusion).

- ☐ Incomplete

8. The research involves interviewing participants who hold leadership roles and managers of teams as part of their daily work. The PI will approach members of her network to invite colleagues to participate in an interview. Colleagues may feel coerced into participating because of their work relationship with the

person who has forwarded the invitation.

Mitigation: The PIS clearly states that participation is voluntary. They have the right to withdraw contributions to the research before analysis starts and without giving a reason.

☐ Incomplete

☐ No

☒ Yes



The researchers has provided clarity as to what the potential conflicts of interest could entail, and how it is to be mitigated and managed.

9. The student researcher has previously worked in the education system in Fiji. The researcher is currently not working, and will return to Fiji and take up a new role next year that will involve coordinating professional development offered to schools across Fiji. The researcher is not in a relationship of power or authority with any of the schools and has no personal relationships with the schools or their principals.

☐ No

☐ Yes

☒ Incomplete



The researcher has identified and clarified the conflict of interest.

To fully mitigate the conflict of interest, the researchers working status and new position should be included within the researcher introductory paragraph in the PIS.

10. The research will be open to all doctoral students and supervisors in the Faculty of xxx, the supervisors will be colleagues (in a more or less sense) of the PI, and some students may be those of the PI. Any student of the PI will be interviewed by the Co-investigator researcher. Assurance statements are not necessary as the research participants are a highly informed pool of prospective participants.

☒ Incomplete



The researcher has identified and clarified the conflict of interest and considered an alternative research team member carrying out the interviews.

While the researchers may believe they are "dealing with a highly informed pool of prospective participants (ie they are all themselves researchers in the area of xxx)" prospective participants may feel pressure from their supervisors or school to participate or to remain in the study when they want to withdraw, and should be protected (and feel and be told explicitly that they are protected) from any such pressure.

An assurance statement should be obtained from the HoS, and the assurance provided in the PIS and CF for the potential participants. The PIS should also state that: Participation is completely voluntary. It is your choice whether or not you choose to participate in this study.

☐ Yes

☐ No

[1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [8](#) [9](#) [10](#)

You got 10 out of 10 answers correct

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