

School of Computer Science & Statistics

Research Ethics Application

CHECKLIST

The following documents are required with each application:

1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCSS Ethical Application Form 	
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant's Information Sheet must include the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Declarations from Part A of the application form; Details provided to participants about how they were selected to participate; Declaration of all conflicts of interest. 	
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant's Consent Form must include the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Declarations from Part A of the application form; Researchers contact details provided for counter-signature (your participant will keep one copy of the signed consent form and return a copy to you). 	
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Project Proposal must include the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> You must inform the Ethics Committee who your intended participants are i.e. are they your work colleagues, class mates etc. How will you recruit the participants i.e. how do you intend asking people to take part in your research? For example, will you stand on Pearse Street asking passers-by? If your participants are under the age of 18, you must seek both parental/guardian AND child consent. 	
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intended questionnaire/survey/interview protocol/screen shots/representative materials (as appropriate) 	
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> URL to intended on-line survey (as appropriate) 	

Notes on Conflict of Interest

- If your intended participants are work colleagues, you must declare a potential conflict of interest: you are taking advantage of your existing relationships in order to make progress in your research. It is best to acknowledge this in your invitation to participants.
- If your research is also intended to direct commercial or other exploitation, this must be declared. For example, *"Please be advised that this research is being conducted by an employee of the company that supplies the product or service which form an object of study within the research."*

Notes for questionnaires and interviews

- If your questionnaire is **paper based**, you must have the following **opt-out** clause on the top of each page of the questionnaire: *"Each question is optional. Feel free to omit a response to any question; however the researcher would be grateful if all questions are responded to."*
- If your questionnaire is **on-line**, the first page of your questionnaire must repeat the content of the information sheet. This must be followed by the consent form. If the participant does not agree to the consent, they must automatically be exited from the questionnaire.
- Each question must be **optional**.
- The participant must have the option to '**not submit, exit without submitting**' at the final submission point on your questionnaire.
- If you have open-ended questions on your questionnaire you must warn the participant against naming **third parties**: *"Please do not name third parties in any open text field of the questionnaire. Any such replies will be anonymised."*
- You must inform your participants regarding **illicit activity**: *"In the extremely unlikely event that illicit activity is reported I will be obliged to report it to appropriate authorities."*

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN, TRINITY COLLEGE
Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science
School of Computer Science and Statistics
RESEARCH ETHICS PROTOCOL

When is Ethical Approval Needed?

Ethical approval is required before any studies involving human participants can commence. This requirement applies to studies to be undertaken by staff, postgraduate and undergraduate students. In the case of collaborative projects involving researchers from outside the School, ethical approval obtained from an external research ethics body may suffice – evidence of same must be submitted to the SCSS Research Ethics Committee prior to the commencement of the study (see procedures below). In the absence of such external approval, approval must be obtained as per this document. Additional ethical approval may be required if the project involves or is funded by an external body, for example, studies under FP7 automatically require such approval.

For the purpose of this document a “study” may be understood to involve a potentially staged series of different experiments to be conducted over a period of time. If substantive changes are made to a study following receipt of ethical approval, this will constitute a new study for which further ethical approval must be obtained.

Procedure

Completed application forms together with supporting documentation should be submitted electronically to research-ethics@scss.tcd.ie. To submit, if the proposal is from an undergraduate or postgraduate students, the **completed** application package must be presented to the academic supervisor who will sign after verifying completeness. These signed originals may be scanned and emailed. Please use TCD e-mail addresses only. When your application has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics committee hardcopies of the application form with original signatures should be submitted to the School of Computer Science & Statistics, Room F37, O'Reilly Institute, Trinity College, Dublin 2.

The Committee will consider each application and normally provide a response within two weeks but not more than one month later. Applications that are considered not to have significant ethical implications may be evaluated by the Committee Chair without reference to the full Committee. Applications will otherwise be considered at a meeting of the SCSS Research Ethics Committee. When approval has been obtained from an external research ethics committee, and School approval is not required, a copy of the external ethical approval must be submitted to the School's Research Unit, prior to commencement of study, for noting by the SCSS Research Ethics Committee.

Please note that in signing the approval form one is making a commitment to review the provisions of the Data Protection Act, like legislation and College Policy on Good Research Practice. Please ensure that your study conforms to the standards of anonymity preservation and data retention set in those documents. Those provisions suggest a default proscription against making digital or photographic recordings of participants. A study which requires such records must include in the research ethics approval application a justification and documentation of the methods by which the statutory provisions and research practise guidelines will be met.

Note: These procedures may be amended from time-to-time following recommendation by the SCSS Research Ethics Committee and with the approval of the SCSS Research Committee.

Before seeking ethical approval researchers should:

- identify actual and potential ethical issues that might arise;
- reflect on how these will be addressed; and
- formulate procedures to deal with all such issues.

During the research project researchers should:

- implement the ethical procedures;
- obtain continuous feedback from participants about ethical issues;
- periodically review the ethical strategy in the light of feedback received; and
- if required, update their ethical procedures;
- retain copies of consent forms signed by the participants.

Composition of the SCSS Research Ethics Committee

The Committee will consist of a Chairperson/Convenor appointed by the Director of Research and two other experts – a member of the School's academic staff and external advisors. The internal and external members will be selected from a panel approved by the Director of Research from time to time. Members will be selected on a case by case basis by the Chairperson subject to their availability. Researchers will be precluded from the Committee considering ethical approval for their study.

School of Computer Science and Statistics
Research Ethical Application Form

Part A

Project Title:

Name of Lead Researcher (student in case of project work):

Name of Supervisor:

TCD E-mail: Contact Tel No.:

Course Name and Code (if applicable):

Estimated start date of survey/research:

I confirm that I will (where relevant):

- Familiarize myself with the Data Protection Act and the College Good Research Practice guidelines
http://www.tcd.ie/info_compliance/dp/legislation.php;
- Tell participants that any recordings, e.g. audio/video/photographs, will not be identifiable unless prior written permission has been given. I will obtain permission for specific reuse (in papers, talks, etc.)
- Provide participants with an information sheet (or web-page for web-based experiments) that describes the main procedures (a copy of the information sheet must be included with this application)
- Obtain informed consent for participation (a copy of the informed consent form must be included with this application)
- Should the research be observational, ask participants for their consent to be observed
- Tell participants that their participation is voluntary
- Tell participants that they may withdraw at any time and for any reason without penalty
- Give participants the option of omitting questions they do not wish to answer if a questionnaire is used
- Tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identified as theirs
- On request, debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e. give them a brief explanation of the study)
- Verify that participants are 18 years or older and competent to supply consent.
- If the study involves participants viewing video displays then I will verify that they understand that if they or anyone in their family has a history of epilepsy then the participant is proceeding at their own risk
- Declare any potential conflict of interest to participants.
- Inform participants that in the extremely unlikely event that illicit activity is reported to me during the study I will be obliged to report it to appropriate authorities.
- Act in accordance with the information provided (i.e. if I tell participants I will not do something, then I will not do it).

Signed:

Date:

Lead Researcher/student in case of project work

Part B

<i>Please answer the following questions.</i>		<i>Yes/No</i>
Has this research application or any application of a similar nature connected to this research project been refused ethical approval by another review committee of the College (or at the institutions of any collaborators)?		
Will your project involve photographing participants or electronic audio or video recordings?		
Will your project deliberately involve misleading participants in any way?		
Is there a risk of participants experiencing either physical or psychological distress or discomfort? If yes, give details on a separate sheet and state what you will tell them to do if they should experience any such problems (e.g. who they can contact for help).		
Does your study involve any of the following?	Children (under 18 years of age)	
	People with intellectual or communication difficulties	
	Patients	

**School of Computer Science and Statistics
Research Ethical Application Form**

Details of the Research Project Proposal must be submitted as a separate document to include the following information:

1. Title of project
2. Purpose of project including academic rationale
3. Brief description of methods and measurements to be used
4. Participants - recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria, including statistical justification for numbers of participants
5. Debriefing arrangements
6. A clear concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with them
7. Cite any relevant legislation relevant to the project with the method of compliance e.g. Data Protection Act etc.

Part C

I confirm that the materials I have submitted provided a complete and accurate account of the research I propose to conduct in this context, including my assessment of the ethical ramifications.

Signed:
Lead Researcher/student in case of project work

Date:

There is an obligation on the lead researcher to bring to the attention of the SCSS Research Ethics Committee any issues with ethical implications not clearly covered above.

Part D

If external ethical approval has been received, please complete below.

External ethical approval has been received and no further ethical approval is required from the School's Research Ethical Committee. I have attached a copy of the external ethical approval for the School's Research Unit.

Signed:
Lead Researcher/student in case of project work

Date:

Part E

If the research is proposed by an undergraduate or postgraduate student, please have the below section completed.

I confirm, as an academic supervisor of this proposed research that the documents at hand are complete (i.e. each item on the submission checklist is accounted for) and are in a form that is adequate for review by the SCSS Research Ethics Committee

Signed:
Supervisor

Date:

Completed application forms together with supporting documentation should be submitted electronically to research-ethics@scss.tcd.ie Please use TCD e-mail addresses only. When your application has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics committee hardcopies with original signatures should be submitted to the School of Computer Science & Statistics, Room F37, O'Reilly Institute, Trinity College, Dublin 2.

SAMPLE

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

LEAD RESEARCHERS:

BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH: *(explain the background, context and relevance of the research)*

PROCEDURES OF THIS STUDY: *(explain what will happen in this particular study, including duration and risks to the participant)*

PUBLICATION: *(explain the intended publication and presentation venues for the research)*

Individual results will be aggregated anonymously and research reported on aggregate results.

DECLARATION:

- I am 18 years or older and am competent to provide consent.
- I have read, or had read to me, a document providing information about this research and this consent form. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction and understand the description of the research that is being provided to me.
- I agree that my data is used for scientific purposes and I have no objection that my data is published in scientific publications in a way that does not reveal my identity.
- I understand that if I make illicit activities known, these will be reported to appropriate authorities.
- I understand that I may stop electronic recordings at any time, and that I may at any time, even subsequent to my participation have such recordings destroyed (except in situations such as above).
- I understand that, subject to the constraints above, no recordings will be replayed in any public forum or made available to any audience other than the current researchers/research team.
- I freely and voluntarily agree to be part of this research study, though without prejudice to my legal and ethical rights.
- I understand that I may refuse to answer any question and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I understand that my participation is fully anonymous and that no personal details about me will be recorded.
- *<If the research involves viewing materials via a computer monitor>* I understand that if I or anyone in my family has a history of epilepsy then I am proceeding at my own risk.
- I have received a copy of this agreement.

PARTICIPANT'S NAME:

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE:

Date:

Statement of investigator's responsibility: I have explained the nature and purpose of this research study, the procedures to be undertaken and any risks that may be involved. I have offered to answer any questions and fully answered such questions. I believe that the participant understands my explanation and has freely given informed consent.

RESEARCHERS CONTACT DETAILS:

INVESTIGATOR'S SIGNATURE:

Date:

SAMPLE

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

This sheet should inform participants of the following, as appropriate to the study:

- The background context of the research explaining its relevance
- The procedures relevant to the participant within this particular study
- Declarations of conflicts of interest
- The voluntary nature of participation: the right to withdraw and to omit individual responses without penalty
- The expected duration of the participant's involvement
- Anticipated risks/benefits to the participant
- The provisions for debriefing after participation
- Preservation of participant and third-party anonymity in analysis, publication and presentation of resulting data and findings
- Cautions about inadvertent discovery of illicit activities
- Provision for verifying direct quotations and their contextual appropriateness
- No audio or video recordings will be made available to anyone other than the research/research team, nor will any such recordings be replayed in any public forum or presentation of the research.

Of course, the information sheet for participants will vary with the study at hand. It should provide all information necessary for informed consent.