



STUDENT PROJECT ETHICAL REVIEW (SPER) FORM

The aim of the University's *Research Ethics Policy* is to establish and promote good ethical practice in the conduct of academic research. The questionnaire is intended to enable researchers to undertake an initial self-assessment of ethical issues in their research. Ethical conduct is not primarily a matter of following fixed rules; it depends on researchers developing a considered, flexible and thoughtful practice.

The questionnaire aims to engage researchers discursively with the ethical dimensions of their work and potential ethical issues, and the main focus of any subsequent review is not to 'approve' or 'disapprove' of a project but to make sure that this process has taken place.

The *Research Ethics Policy* is available at www.intranet.rgu.ac.uk/credo/staff/page.cfm?page=7060X

Student Name	Callum Roberts
Supervisor	Mark Bartlett
Project Title	Augmenting Deck Building AI using Deep Neural Networks and Genetic Algorithms for Hearthstone: Heroes of Warcraft
Course of Study	Computing and Application Software Development
School/Department	Computer Science

Part 1 : Descriptive Questions

1

Does the research involve, or does information in the research relate to:

Yes

No

(a) individual human subjects

Yes

(b) groups (e.g. families, communities, crowds)

No

(c) organisations

Yes

(d) animals?

No

Please provide further details:

The research could involve some individual participants to build decks to test against my AI

The research could involve certain organisations such as Blizzard Entertainment, for the game that we are developing the AI for and HearthSim for the simulator we will use to test our decks

2

Will the research deal with information which is private or confidential?

Yes

No

No

Please provide further details:

The information used will only involve statistics gathered from our simulations with the AI, the decks built by potential research subjects and the card information taken from the Blizzard API

Part 2: The Impact of the Research

3

In the process of doing the research, is there any potential for harm to be done to, or costs to be imposed on

Yes

No

(a) research participants?

No

(b) research subjects?

No

(c) you, as the researcher?

No

(d) third parties?

No

Please state what you believe are the implications of the research:

4

When the research is complete, could negative consequences follow:

Yes

No

(a) for research subjects

yes

(b) or elsewhere?

No

Please state what you believe are the consequences of the research:

The research could potentially cause frustration if the built deck doesn't win a lot. It could also frustrate the research subject if their deck loses a lot.

Part 3: Ethical Procedures

5

Does the research require informed consent or approval from:

Yes

No

(a) research participants?

Yes

(b) research subjects

No

(c) external bodies

No

If you answered yes to any of the above, please explain your answer:

I may need to ask expert Hearthstone players to create decks to play against the bot

6

Are there reasons why research subjects may need safeguards or protection?

Yes

No

No

If you answered yes to the above, please state the reasons and indicate the measures to be

7

Has PVG membership status been considered?

(a) PVG membership is not required.

Yes

(b) PVG membership is required for working with children.

No

(c) PVG membership is required for working with protected adults.

No

(d) PVG membership is required for working with both children and protected

No

If you answered yes to (b), (c) or (d) above, please give details:

8

Are specified procedures or safeguards required for recording, management, or storage of data?

Yes

No

Yes

If you answered yes to the above, please outline the likely undertakings:

If I collect sensitive data, I will need to encrypt it

Part 4: The Research Relationship

9

Does the research require you to give or make undertakings to research participants or subjects about the use of data?

Yes

No

No

If you answered yes to the above, please outline the likely undertakings:

10

Is the research likely to be affected by the relationship with a sponsor, funder or employer?

Yes

No

No

If you answered yes to the above, please identify how the research may be affected:

Part 5: Other Issues

11

Are there any other ethical issues not covered by this form which you believe you should raise?

Yes

No

No

Statement by Student			
I believe that the information I have given in this form is correct, and that I have addressed the ethical issues as fully as possible at this stage.			
Signature	Callum Roberts	Date	08/10/20

If any ethical issues arise during the course of the research, students should complete a further Student Project Ethical Review (SPER) form.

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Part 6: To be completed by the supervisor

12

Does the research have potentially negative implications for the University?

Yes

No X

If you answered yes to the above, please explain your answer:

13

Are any potential conflicts of interest likely to arise in the course of the research?

Yes

No X

If you answered yes to the above, please identify the potential conflicts:

14

Are you satisfied that the student has engaged adequately with the ethical implications of the work? [In signifying agreement, supervisors are accepting part of the ethical responsibility for the project]

Yes X

No

If you answered no to the above, please identify the potential issues:

15

Appraisal: Please select one of the following

The research project should proceed in its present form – no further action is required X

The research project requires ethical approval by the School Ethics Review Panel

The research project needs to be returned to the student for modification prior to further action

The research project requires ethical review by an external body. If this applies please give details

Title of External Body providing ethical review

Address of External Body

Anticipated date when External Body may consider project

Affirmation by Supervisor

I have read the student's responses and have discussed ethical issues arising with the student. I can confirm that, to the best of my understanding, the information presented by the student is correct and appropriate to allow an informed judgement on whether further ethical approval is required.

Signature Mark Bartlett

Date 14 October 2020