**Ethics Notes**

* When involving people in our project (interviews, requirements gathering, focus groups etc.) we need to go through a process of ethical approval and informed consent with them
* If we don’t then we can’t use the data we collect from them, so it’s important
* Brian has already submitted a ‘group’ application to the Ethics Committee. It covers low risk projects only – these are where you have fairly standard engagement with non-vulnerable users over the age of 18 and you aren’t asking them for personal or sensitive information or to undertake tasks where there’s an elevated level of risk
* To keep things simple it may be a good idea for our target audience to be 18+
* If we’re just doing basic interviews, questionnaires, evaluations etc then the group application will cover us
* Otherwise, we’ll need to speak to our lecturers and prepare to submit our own application
* If we *don’t* need ethical approval, we’ll need to:
  + State in our project report in a relevant location that ethical approval isn’t required
  + Complete ‘Checklist-1-Requirements-for-Ethical-Approval’, found here: <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/research/governance-policy/ethicsprocedures/ethics/applicationprocedure/> which allows us to officially record that no ethical approval was required
  + Include the completed checklist 1 within the appendices of our report
* To adhere to the requirements for our group application, we’ll need to be familiar with the documents in the ZIP file on MyDundee.
* We also need to complete a Researcher Declaration Form and put it in the appendices of our report

The ZIP file contains the following:

1. Checklist 1 – confirms whether ethical approval is needed or not. For info only
2. Checklist 2 – confirms whether project is low risk, medium risk or high risk. For info only
3. Form A: Low Risk Application – The main ethics application form. Describes nature of the tasks we can do and of the data we can collect and describes how data will be used and stored (securely). **Everyone must read this form** and adhere to its content when we conduct user engagement
4. Participant Information Sheet – Must be provided to **anyone we involve in our project** before they do anything. They need to understand what the project’s about and what they need to do. Replace the red text in the doc with our own content and change the colour to black
5. Informed Consent Form – Also provided to anyone involved in our project before doing anything. Confirms they understand what their involvement is and that they give their consent to be involved. Again, update the red text and change to black
6. Researcher Declaration Form – Confirmation that we have read the necessary ethics documentation and adhered to it during the project. Needs to be submitted in appendices of the report
7. Copy of the approval letter provided by the Ethics Committee – Mainly for info but also has the application number which might not already be filled in on 4-6 above
8. Document that clarifies: ‘what is personal data?’

* Finally, we need to make sure we’ve all read the UoD Code of Practics for Non-Clinical Research Ethics on Human Participants, found here:  
  <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/research/governance-policy/ethicsprocedures/ethics/applicationprocedure/>

**Personal Data**

The Low Risk ethics application that’s been submitted for this module only covers the use of non-personal data.

* Personal data is information that relates to an identified or identifiable individual
* An individual could be something as simple as a name or number or could include other identifiers like IP address, cookie identifier, etc.
* If it’s possible to identify an individual directly from the info you’re processing, it may be personal data
* If you can’t directly identify an individual from the info then you need to consider whether they are still identifiable. You should take into account the info you’re processing together with all the means reasonably likely to be used by you or anyone else to identify that individual
* Even if an individual is identified/identifiable, directly or indirectly, from the data you’re processing, it’s not personal data unless it ‘relates to’ them
  + When doing this you need to take into account a range of factors, including the content of the information, the purpose(s) for which you’re processing it and the likely impact of that processing on the individual
* It’s possible that the same information is personal data for one controller’s purposes but *isn’t* personal data for the purposes of another controller
* Info which has had identifiers removed/replaced to pseudonymise the data is still personal data
* Info which is truly anonymous isn’t covered by GDPR
* If info that seems to relate to an individual is inaccurate (i.e. factually incorrect or is about a different individual), the info is still personal data as it relates to the individual

More info found here: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/key-definitions/what-is-personal-data/>

In addition, the following ‘special category’ data can’t be collected within the Low Risk application either: racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetics, biometrics, health, sex life, or sexual orientation.

Guidance from ICO about special category data: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/special-category-data/>