MSc Computer Science

CSPROJ_PCOM7E April 2025

Ethical Considerations

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Literature Review Outline

Project Title

Data Strategy for Regulatory Compliance and Innovation in Hong Kong's Insurance Sector: Navigating Privacy Law Amendments and Emerging Cybersecurity Challenges

Informed Consent

All participants will receive a Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 1) outlining the project's aims, procedures, and their rights. Written informed consent (Appendix 2) will be obtained prior to any data collection, either via a signed form (for interviews) or online affirmation (for surveys). This process ensures that participation is fully voluntary and informed, in line with University of Essex Online guidance (UoEO, n.d.; UoEO, 2018).

Right to Withdraw

Participants will be clearly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason, and without penalty. They will be provided with a participation code to facilitate the withdrawal of their data, which will be honoured up to the point at which data analysis commences.

Confidentiality

All data will be anonymised at the point of collection. No names or identifying information will be linked to responses. Only aggregated, anonymised results will be reported. Raw

data will be accessible only to the researcher and supervisor, with consent forms stored separately from research data (UoEO, 2018).

Protection from Harm

Only non-sensitive, professional topics will be discussed. Participation is voluntary and non-coercive. A debrief sheet (Appendix 3) will be provided, including contacts for support or complaints. The study involves only adult professionals; no vulnerable groups will be included (UoEO, 2018).

Data Access, Storage, and Security

All personal data will be stored and processed in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU, 2016) and the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (PDPO) (PCPD, 2022). Electronic data will be kept on password-protected, encrypted devices or approved cloud storage; hard copies will be stored in locked cabinets. Data and consent forms will be stored separately and destroyed after the retention period required by the University. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to raw data.

Other Issues

The research presents minimal ethical risk due to its focus on professional experiences and the absence of sensitive topics. Should any unforeseen issues arise, these will be managed in accordance with University policy (UoEO, 2018; UoEO, 2023).

Reference

European Union (EU). (2016) *Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 (General Data Protection Regulation). Official Journal of the European Union,* L119, 4 May, pp. 1–88.

PCPD. (2022) *The Ordinance: Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486). Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.* Available from: https://www.pcpd.org.hk/english/data_privacy_law/ordinance_at_a_Glance/ordinance.html [Accessed 2 March 2025].

University of Essex Online (UoEO) (2018) Ethics Submission Guidance Booklet. Available from: https://www.my-course.co.uk/mod/glossary/showentry.php?courseid=14&eid=14370&displayformat=dictionary [Accessed 2 June 2025]

University of Essex Online (UoEO) (2023) Research: Ethical Approval Policy. Available from: https://www.my-course.co.uk/mod/glossary/showentry.php?courseid=14&eid=13072&displayformat=dictionary [Accessed 2 June 2025]

University of Essex Online (UoEO) (n.d.) MSc Computing Project Research Proposal and Ethical Approval Guidance Document. Available from: https://www.my-course.co.uk/pluginfile.php/1365517/mod_resource/content/2/Research%20proposal%2

0and%20ethical%20approval%20guidance%20document%20for%20Computing.pdf

[Accessed 2 June 2025]

Appendix 1 Example Participant Information Sheet (UoEO, 2018)

Appendix 1: Example Participant Information Sheet

Your participant information sheet should provide enough detail for the general public to understand and provide informed consent to take part in your research. Please see the guidance below and use it to guide the development of your participant information sheet.

1. Invitation

You need to explain why you are inviting your participant to take part in your research. For example: *You are being invited to take part in this research project. You have been chosen because you have a unique insight into the members of staff working for the University of Essex Online. Before you take part, it is important to ensure that you fully understand why the research is being undertaken and what is involved. Please take the time to read through the following information and ask any questions that you may have. Take time to decide if you would like to take part in this study.*

2. What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of the study is very important. The purpose outlines and allows the participants to understand why the research is being undertaken. In the case of the dissertation, it may be that the primary purpose is educational, to fulfil the requirements of a degree. You may also like to inform the participant if your research is aiming to fill a knowledge gap in a certain topic area or to find out information that will help to design an intervention or develop a service.

3. Where and when will the research take place?

In this section you need to outline any information the participant may need to know about where and when they are expected to take part in the research. To answer this question, you will need to consider the following questions:

- How long will the participants be involved in the research?
- How often will they need to attend?
- How long will the questionnaire/interview take?

4. What will I have to do?

It is important that all participants have an understanding of what they are expected to do during your research. Put yourself in the shoes of the participants: what would you like to know? You could use a flow chart to demonstrate participant involvement and outline any specific requirements. If the study will involve participants being audio recorded/videoed/photographed, it is important to ensure that they are aware of this and that you cover any confidentiality issues.

You should set out simply the research methods you are using to undertake your research.

5. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Provide a clear outline of any benefits to the participants. If there are no direct or indirect benefits to the participant, you may wish to outline the intended benefits of the research.

6. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Outline any risks, discomforts or inconveniences to the participant in this section. For example, this section may include an outline of potential distress associated with research exploration of sensitive topics. Outline how you will provide support to participants with any regard to the risks e.g. debrief sheet including relevant support services.

7. Do I have to take part?

You should explain that the research is voluntary and that the participant can withdraw from the research at any time. Include information on how they would withdraw. If there is an option to skip any questions they don't want to answer this should be included as well.

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8. How will my personal data be kept confidential?

You should explain how participant's data will be safeguarded throughout and after the research has been completed. When writing this section, you may wish to consider:
- How the participants' data will be collected?
- How the data will be stored & protected?
- How the data will be used?
- Who will have access to the data?
- How long will the personal data be retained?

9. Will I receive a payment for taking part?

If payment, reimbursements, gifts or voucher are being provided to participants, please outline these.

10. What will happen if I do not want to continue with the study?

Please outline what will happen if the participant withdraws from the study. For example: *If you withdraw from the study all of the information and data collected from you, to date, will be destroyed and your name removed from all the study files.*

11. Who has ethically reviewed the project?

Provide an outline of any ethical permission that have been sought and approved for this project.

12. What will happen to the results of the research project?

Participants often want to know the results of the research they have been involved in. You should let the participants know what will happen to the results, where will they be published and how the results will be made available to them.

13. Further information and contact details

This section may include details of:
- General or specific information about the research (e.g. website address, contact details of the researcher & supervisor)
- Who the participants should approach if they are unhappy with the study (complaints procedure if not listed earlier)

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Appendix 2 Example Consent Form (UoEO, 2018)

Appendix 2: Example Consent Form

Research title:

Participant number:

Please indicate your agreement with each of the statements below.

		YES	NO
1	I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have been provided with a copy to keep.	☐	☐
2	I have had the opportunity to ask the researcher questions about this research project.	☐	☐
3	I understand I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason, and that all information I have given will be destroyed.	☐	☐
5	I understand that the interviews will be recorded to aid transcription and accuracy.	☐	☐
6	I understand that my identity will be protected by treating the information I provide anonymously, and it will be used solely by the researcher for the purpose of writing a report on the research project.	☐	☐
7	I understand that the information I provide will be kept securely, and will not be revealed to any other party, and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project.	☐	☐
8	I understand that if I have any questions or concerns about how this research is being conducted, I can contact the independent person named in the Participant Information Sheet.	☐	☐

I consent to participating in this research interview according to the information and principles described in the information sheet.

DECLARATION AND SIGNATURE/S			
Signed		*Date*	

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Appendix 3 Example Participant Debrief Sheet (UoEO, 2018)

Appendix 3: Example Participant Debrief Sheet

Your participant debrief sheet should provide enough detail for the participant to have a complete understanding of the project. Please see the guidance below and use it to guide the development of your participant debrief.

1. **What was the purpose of the research?**
   The purpose of the study is very important. The purpose outlines and allows the participants to understand why the research is being undertaken. In the case of the dissertation, it may be that the primary purpose is educational, to fulfil the requirements of a degree. You may also like to inform the participant if your research is aiming to fill a knowledge gap in a certain topic area or to find out information to design an intervention or develop a service.

2. **What did I complete and what did the study aim to find out?**
   Provide a comprehensive overview of what the participant completed and why they did this. Give as much detail as to what you hoped to find out as the researcher.

3. **How can I receive a summary of the results?**
   Provide the participants with an email address they can email should they wish to receive a copy of the study outcome. You will need to ensure that only a summary will be provided and not the results chapter of your dissertation.

4. **What do I do if I wish to make a complaint?**
   For whatever reason a participant may wish to complain about the project. Please give the details of your research supervisor and their university email address. They can then forward this on to the organisation.

5. **Support agencies**
   Provide contact details for a support agency. The research may have uncovered an upsetting memory or topic for the participant and they may wish to speak to somebody about this.

6. **Researcher contact details**
   Include your university email address here rather than any personal contact details. Your home address or telephone number is not required.

Thank the participants for taking part!

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