***This Framework has been reviewed and approved by the School Research Ethics Committee (SREC).***

1. **Purpose of this Framework**

***School of Computer Science and Informatics***

***CM3203 - One Semester Individual Project***

**Ethics Framework – 2024/2025 Academic Year**

To confirm:

* the general principles and ethical standards that apply to your project.
* what form of ethical review (approval) is required prior to commencing your project.
* your responsibilities as a student, and the responsibilities of your Supervisor(s), module leader(s) and the SREC in relation to ensuring the ethical conduct of your dissertation project.

1. **General principles**

* Your dissertation project must be conducted to the highest ethical standards.
* You are expected to be aware of the University’s [Ethics Policy for Human Research](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/intranet/staff/documents/research-support/srecs/CU-Ethics-Policy-for-Human-Research-2.0_FINAL-July-2021.docx), [Research Integrity and Governance Code of Practice](https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/937021/Research-Integrity-and-Governance-Code-of-Practice-v3-PDF.pdf), and the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1549878/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf) and to abide by the principles contained in these documents.
* You, alongside your Supervisor, must have undertaken appropriate ethics training, i.e. [Research Integrity Online Training Programme](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/postgraduate-research-support/integrity-and-governance/training/research-integrity-online-training-programme) (Students) or [Research Integrity Online Training Programme (Staff)](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/staff/training-and-development/staff-courses-and-programmes/research-careers/training/research-integrity-online-training-programme) as appropriate.
* Ensuring your safety, alongside the health and safety of staff and research participants is paramount. [Health and Safety](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/your-rights-and-responsibilities/procedures-and-guidance) must underpin the planning of your project.
* [Equality, diversity and inclusion](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/postgraduate-research-support/integrity-and-governance/equality-in-research) considerations must underpin your project.
* Failure to meet ethical standards may constitute Academic Misconduct.

1. **Key Responsibilities**

Your key responsibilities as a student under this Framework, together with the responsibilities of your Supervisor(s), Module Leader(s) and the SREC are set out in **Annex 1**.

1. **Ethical review process for your dissertation project**

Projects will fall into one of three categories:

1. **Projects that do not require ethical approval.** See **Section 5** of this framework.
2. **Projects eligible for supervisor-only ethical approval.** The SREC has endorsed a proportionate, risk-based, approach to ethical review which enables supervisors to provide ethical approval of projects falling within specific parameters. These parameters are set out in **Section 6** of this Framework.
3. **Projects that require full ethical approval from the SREC.** If the project doesn’t fall within the parameters specified in either Section 5 or Section 6,then you need to apply for full ethical approval from the COMSC SREC using the standard forms available here: <https://www.cs.cf.ac.uk/ethics/>
4. **Projects that do not require ethical approval**

If your project involves using pre-existing datasets and you are not planning to test your final product with individuals from outside your group, **you do not need to apply for ethical approval**. Please notify the supervisor, e.g. by emailing “I understand that my project doesn’t require ethical approval”. You **must** still abide by the general principles set out in Section 2, including undertaking ethics training.

1. **Determining if a project is eligible for Supervisor-only ethical approval**

If your project requires ethical approval, you **must** complete the “**Dissertation** **Ethics Form**” (**Annex 2**) to assess and document whether your project:

* is eligible for Supervisor-only ethical approval
* **or** whether you are required to apply for ethical approval from the COMSC SREC using the standard forms available here: <https://www.cs.cf.ac.uk/ethics/>.

If your project is eligible for Supervisor-only ethical approval, your Supervisor **must** countersign your Dissertation Ethics Form and review all project-specific documents prior to data collection.

Where relevant to the project, you **must** utilise the template Participant-facing documents contained in **Annex 3** of this Framework.

You **must** also follow all requirements contained in **Section 7** and **Section 8** of this Framework.

Your project is eligible for Supervisor-only ethical approval if:

1. You are only using one or more of the “Approved Research Methods” below; **AND**
2. Your project **does not** meet any of the “SREC review criteria” below.
3. Approved Research Methods

* *Usability evaluation* *study focused on evaluation of a developed system (e.g. website, app), including questionnaires, interviews, or think-aloud sessions*
* *Anonymous survey to gather requirements for the system*

If your project involves methods not listed above, you must complete and submit the SREC’s “Application Form for Ethical Review”. Your project is **NOT** eligible for Supervisor-only ethical review and you cannot utilise the “Dissertation Ethics Form”. Instead, you are required to apply for ethical approval from the COMSC SREC using the standard forms available here: <https://www.cs.cf.ac.uk/ethics/>.

1. SREC review criteria

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Activity within, or involving, the NHS or health and social care systems (e.g. patients, service users, staff, resources or data). |
| 1. The collection or use of [Human Tissue](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/postgraduate-research-support/integrity-and-governance/human-tissue-research/about-the-human-tissue-act), as defined by the Human Tissue Act 2004. |
| 1. The use or involvement of animals. |
| The subject areas of terrorism, extremism or radicalisation.  *Note: these terms are defined in the University’s* [*Security Sensitive Research Policy*](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/postgraduate-research-support/integrity-and-governance/security-sensitive-research)*.* |
| 1. Primary data collection without the prior consent of participants\*   *\*The following are specifically excluded from this criteria: (1) observation of people in a public space where no identifiable information is being captured; (2) use of publicly available information or secondary data where no identifiable information is being captured.”* |
| 1. An element of deception, including covert activity. |
| 1. Children under the age of 18 or ‘at risk’ (vulnerable) adults or groups. |
| Topic areas likely to be considered highly sensitive for participants.  *Note: examples include sexual behaviour, illegal activities, political, religious or spiritual beliefs, race or ethnicity, experience of violence, abuse or exploitation, and mental health.* |
| Access to records of a sensitive or confidential nature, including ‘[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/)’ or [criminal offence data](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/criminal-offence-data/). |
| Intrusive or invasive procedures  *Note: examples include the administration of substances, vigorous exercise, procedures which may involve pain or more than mild discomfort to participants (including the risk of psychological distress or anxiety – more than the risks encountered in everyday life).* |
| 1. More than a minimum risk of harm to the safety and wellbeing of participants **and/or** the student conducting the project. |
| 1. Any other activity which clearly falls outside of the parameters of the **Module Ethics Framework** or raisesother material ethical concerns. |

If your project meets any of the criteria listed above, your project is **NOT** eligible for Supervisor-only ethical review, and you cannot utilise the “Dissertation Ethics Form”. Instead, you are required to apply for ethical approval from the COMSC SREC using the standard forms available here: <https://www.cs.cf.ac.uk/ethics/>.

1. **Specific Ethical considerations and requirements**

Projects involving audio and/or visual recording of human participants.

If your project involves audio and/or visual recording of human participants, you must meet **all** requirements of the University’ Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on this subject, [available here](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/intranet/staff/documents/research-support/integrity-and-governance/SOP-for-Audio-and-Visual-Recording-of-Research-Participants-v1.docx). If you are not able to meet all requirements of the SOP, you must report this in section 1e) of your Dissertation Ethics Form so that your Supervisor can assess risk in this area and seek advice from the SREC on whether your project may warrant an individual application for ethical review and fall outside of this Module Ethics Framework.

1. **Data Protection and Records Management**

You are expected to review the University’s *“*[*Managing research data tutorial’*](https://xerte.cardiff.ac.uk/play_12864), in addition to adhering to the expectations below:

Data Protection

If your project involves collecting identifiable information from or about humans, you must ensure that:

* You only collect the minimum information required i.e., only what is absolutely necessary.
* You have provided participants with clear information about why you are collecting their data and how it will be used and managed (note that this requirement should be met if utilising the template participant-facing documents in Annex 3)
* All data and records containing identifiable information are securely stored within the University’s system (separately to any de-identified data or records)
* Access to data and records containing identifiable information is restricted to only those that need it (usually you and your Supervisor)
* Identifiable data and records are securely destroyed at the end of the relevant retention period (set out below)

General Data and Records Management

* All data and records relating to your project must be securely stored
* Data and records should be clearly named, with a version number and date
* If your project is not contributing to a publication or wider research project, data and records relating to your project must be retained for a minimum of 1 year after submission of your assessment. If your project is contributing to a publication or is part of a wider research project, data and records must be retained for a longer period of 1 year from the end of the project.

The group **must** submit the following to their designated OneDrive folder:

1. Signed **Dissertation Project Ethics Form (Annex 2)**
2. Final version of participant-facing documents
3. Data collection tools (e.g. survey questions, evaluation tasks)
4. Research Integrity Training Certificate with assessment.
5. **Audit and Governance**

The Module Leader, SREC or central University governance colleagues may conduct random spot-checks of project-specific documents for audit and governance purposes. It is imperative that you adhere to the records management requirements above to enable this.

**Annex 1**

**Key Responsibilities**

You (The Student)

1. To review and adhere to the Module Ethics Framework.
2. To discuss ethical approval requirements for the project with the Supervisor during the project selection process.
3. To complete the **Dissertation** **Ethics Form** (if required).
4. To undertake required ethics training: [Research Integrity Online Training Programme](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/postgraduate-research-support/integrity-and-governance/training/research-integrity-online-training-programme) (Students).
5. Gain ethical approval for your project prior to commencing data collection.
6. To inform your approver (Supervisor or SREC) of:
   * any changes to your project following ethical approval; and/or
   * any ethical issues that arise during your project (especially any risk of harm/emotional distress that emerges as your project progresses).
7. Engage with the module and complete all tasks and assessments, including any additional ethics-specific requirements identified through the ethical approval process.
8. Please note that the student is responsible for their actions, whether Supervisor or SREC approval has been obtained or not.

Your Supervisor

1. To review the Module Ethics Framework and to support you to adhere to its requirements.
2. To undertake required ethics training, appropriate to their role as: [Research Integrity Online Training Programme (Staff)](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/staff/training-and-development/staff-courses-and-programmes/research-careers/training/research-integrity-online-training-programme).
3. For projects eligible for Supervisor-only ethical approval - to review and countersign your **Dissertation Ethics Form** and to review your project-specific documents, prior to the commencement of data collection.
   * Please note that the Supervisor can decline to sign off the application. If that is the case, the Student needs to address all issues or may decide together with Supervisor to submit a regular application instead to the SREC.
4. For projects requiring SREC review – to review and countersign your “Application Form for Ethical Review”, together with supporting documents, prior to submission to the SREC.
5. To provide appropriate supervision as the project progresses, this includes helping to ensure that your project stays within the permissible parameters, reviewing any project amendments and working with you (and SREC where required) to address any ethical issues that arise during your project, including those relating to your own wellbeing/risk.

The Module Leader

1. To oversee the preparation of a Module Ethics Framework and supporting annexes.
2. To obtain SREC approval of the Module Ethics Framework, by submitting the framework and an “Ethics Framework Coversheet” to the SREC.
3. To undertake required ethics training, appropriate to their role as Module Leader: [Research Integrity Online Training Programme (Staff)](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/staff/training-and-development/staff-courses-and-programmes/research-careers/training/research-integrity-online-training-programme).
4. To ensure ethics is integrated into the module and that students and Supervisors are familiar with the ethics approval process applicable to the module. This must include, as a minimum, including the Module Ethics Framework and supporting annexes in the Module Pack (or equivalent, i.e. the material given to students that includes a description of what is going to be taught in a module, the assessment and the references).
5. General oversight responsibility including keeping the Module Ethics Framework under review and to report to the SREC any matters of ethical concern arising from a dissertation project.

The SREC

In relation to dissertation projects undertaken in this module, the responsibility of the SREC is to:

1. Review and approve the Module Ethics Framework (inclusive of annexes and Ethics Framework Coversheet) submitted by the Module Leader.
2. Review and approve any projects falling outside of the Module Ethics Framework (those not eligible for Supervisor-only ethical approval) and to set any monitoring conditions for such projects.
3. Ensure any SREC-specific guidance or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are reflected in the Module Ethics Framework.
4. Provide advice and guidance to the Module Leader and Supervisors on any ethical issues escalated to the SREC that arise during the planning or conduct of module dissertation projects.
5. Set minimum standards for ethics training and/or competency of those involved in the ethical approval process for dissertation module projects (module leaders, supervisors and students)
6. Implement monitoring/audit requirements where this is considered necessary and to conduct random spot checks/audit of individual dissertation project documents where there is capacity to do so.

**Annex 2** – Dissertation Project Ethics Form

[*see next section*]

**Annex 3 –** Templates or Exemplars for adoption by Students (with project specific modifications)

[available on the PATS project management site with the overall project guidance]

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| 1. Recruitment Adverts/Invitation Letters |
| 1. Participant Information Sheets |
| 1. Consent Forms |

***School of Computer Science and Informatics* – *CM3203 One Semester Individual Project***

**Dissertation Project Ethics Form**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **PROJECT SUMMARY** | | | | | | | | | |
| Project Title: | | *A visualization tool for personal finance management* | | | | | | | |
| Student Name: | | *Pui Chi Angie Wong* | | | | | | | |
| 1. Approved methods to be used: | | | [Anonymous survey to gather requirements for the system ☒ ]  [Usability evaluation ☒ ]  *If usability evaluation, please specify what it will include:*  [Questionnaire ☒] [Interview ☐] [Think-aloud session ☐] | | | | | | |
| 1. Please provide a summary of your project, including its aims and the methods you will be using: | | | | | | | | | |
| *My project aims to develop a financial management tool that extracts, processes and visualises personal spending data. I am designing a front-end prototype with interactive charts to presents users’ spending habits and enabling budget tracking. After reviewing the design, user feedback will be collected through a questionnaire.* | | | | | | | | | |
|  | Do you have any potential conflicts of interest to declare?  *Information and guidance on conflicts of interest is contained in the* [*Research Integrity Online Training Programme*](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/postgraduate-research-support/integrity-and-governance/training/research-integrity-online-training-programme) *and the* [*Research Integrity and Governance Code of Practice*](https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/research/our-research-environment/integrity-and-ethics/research-integrity-and-governance)*.* | | | | | | Yes | | No |
| **☐** | | ☒ |
|  | *If you have answered ‘****yes****’**to b, please confirm the action you propose to take to address such conflicts:* | | | | | | | | |
| *N/A* | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. What do you consider to be the ethical issues or considerations specific to your project? How do you intend to address these? | | | | | | | | | |
| * ***Informed Consent****: Participants will be clearly informed about the purpose of the questionnaire and how their responses will be used.* * ***Privacy & Confidentiality****: No personally identifiable information will be collected, and all feedback will be anonymized.* * ***Data Privacy & Security****: No real financial data will be collected; all data used for testing will be anonymized or simulated.* | | | | | | | | | |
|  | Are you planning to collect data from any users from outside of your group?  *This includes collecting data from social media.*  *If No, skip to Section 2.* | | | | | | Yes | | No |
| **☐** | | ☒ |
|  | If working with human subjects, please confirm your participant group and how you will identify and recruit such participants: | | | | | | | | |
| The participant group will consist of individuals who have experience managing their personal finances. Participants will be identified and recruited through social media platforms and messaging. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. How many participants are you aiming to recruit? | | | | 10 or less ☐ | 11-20 ☒ | 21-49 ☐ | | 50+ ☐ | |
| 1. Please describe the consent procedures/arrangements for the project – will informed consent be obtained from participants, and if so how? (If informed consent will not be obtained, then your project is **NOT** eligible for supervisor sign off.) | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes, informed consent will be obtained from all participants. Initially, I will contact potential participants and provide them with an overview of the project. If they agree to take part, I will send them the consent form through email. Only after I receive their signed consent form will I proceed to send them the prototype and questionnaire for the study. | | | | | | | | | |

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| 1. **IS YOUR PROJECT ELIGIBLE FOR SUPERVISOR-ONLY REVIEW?** | | |
| **Does your project involve any of the following:** | Yes | No |
| 1. Activity within, or involving, the NHS or health and social care systems (e.g. patients, service users, staff, resources or data). | **☐** | ☒ |
| 1. The collection or use of [Human Tissue](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/postgraduate-research-support/integrity-and-governance/human-tissue-research/about-the-human-tissue-act), as defined by the Human Tissue Act 2004 | **☐** | ☒ |
| 1. The use or involvement of animals. | **☐** | ☒ |
| The subject areas of terrorism, extremism or radicalisation.  *Note: these terms are defined in the University’s* [*Security Sensitive Research Policy*](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/postgraduate-research-support/integrity-and-governance/security-sensitive-research)*.* | **☐** | ☒ |
| 1. Primary data collection without the prior consent of participants\*   *\*The following are specifically excluded from this criteria: (1) observation of people in a public space where no identifiable information is being captured; (2) use of publicly available information or secondary data where no identifiable information is being captured.* | **☐** | ☒ |
| 1. An element of deception, including covert activity. | **☐** | ☒ |
| 1. Children under the age of 18 or ‘at risk’ (vulnerable) adults or groups. | **☐** | ☒ |
| Topic areas likely to be considered highly sensitive for participants.  *Note: examples include sexual behaviour, illegal activities, political, religious or spiritual beliefs, race or ethnicity, experience of violence, abuse or exploitation, and mental health.* | **☐** | ☒ |
| Access to records of a sensitive or confidential nature, including ‘[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/)’ or [criminal offence data](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/criminal-offence-data/). | **☐** | ☒ |
| Intrusive or invasive procedures  *Note: examples include the administration of substances, vigorous exercise, procedures which may involve pain or more than mild discomfort to participants (including the risk of psychological distress or anxiety – more than the risks encountered in everyday life).* | **☐** | ☒ |
| 1. More than a minimum risk of harm to the safety and wellbeing of participants **and/or** the student conducting the project | **☐** | ☒ |
| 1. Detailed demographics or background information collected beyond age or gender. Age question asks for a specific age (as opposed to using age ranges). | **☐** | ☒ |
| 1. Any other activity which clearly falls outside of the parameters of the **Module Ethics Framework** or raisesother material ethical concerns? | **☐** | ☒ |
| If you have selected **“Yes”** to any of the above, your project is **NOT** eligible for Supervisor sign-off and must be reviewed by the SREC. **Please do not continue with this form**. You must instead complete the SREC’s ‘**Application Form for Ethical Review’**. [See COMSC Ethics website for details.](https://www.cs.cf.ac.uk/ethics/)  If you have selected **“No”** to all of the above, your project **is eligible for Supervisor sign-off** and you must complete the rest of this form. Your project does not require a SREC application. | | |

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| 1. **DECLARATIONS – For use where project IS eligible for Supervisor sign-off.** | |
| **STUDENT DECLARATIONS** | |
| 1. The information in this form is accurate to the best of my belief. I take full responsibility for it. | ☒ |
| 1. I have read, and will adhere to, the Module Ethics Framework. | ☒ |
| 1. I have completed the University’s Research Integrity Training and believe we have the necessary skills and knowledge to conduct the project as proposed. | ☒ |
| 1. I am familiar with the [Ethics Policy for Human Research](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/postgraduate-research-support/integrity-and-governance/research-ethics), [Research Integrity and Governance Code of Practice](https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/research/our-research-environment/integrity-and-ethics/research-integrity-and-governance) and [Academic Integrity Policy](https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1549878/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf) and will abide by all standards relevant to our project. | ☒ |
| 1. [If collecting user data] I have submitted all final version participant-facing documents and data collection tools to our supervisor or the module leader for approval prior to commencing data collection. | ☒ |
| 1. [If collecting user data] I will notify our supervisor or the module leader of any amendments to our project and seek approval of any substantial changes to participant-facing documents or data collection tools. | ☒ |
| 1. I will notify our supervisor or the module leader of any ethical issues that arise during the project. | ☒ |
| **Signed**:  Angie Wong | |
| **Print names**:  Pui Chi Angie Wong | |
| **Date**: 14/4/2025 | |
| **SUPERVISOR DECLARATIONS** | |
| 1. I have reviewed this form and I am satisfied that the project, as proposed, meets ethical standards. | **☐** |
| 1. I have reviewed all participant-facing documents and data collection tools prepared by the group to ensure they meet ethical standards and the Module Ethics Framework. | **☐** |
| 1. I have completed the University’s [Research Integrity Training](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/staff/training-and-development/staff-courses-and-programmes/research-careers/training/research-integrity-online-training-programme) within the last three (3) years and believe I have the necessary skills and knowledge to review the documents referenced above and to offer appropriate supervision in matters of ethics. | **☐** |
| 1. I am familiar with the [Ethics Policy for Human Research](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/postgraduate-research-support/integrity-and-governance/research-ethics), [Research Integrity and Governance Code of Practice](https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/research/our-research-environment/integrity-and-ethics/research-integrity-and-governance) and [Academic Integrity Policy](https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1549878/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf) and I will provide support to the group in following all standards relevant to their project. | **☐** |
| 1. I will encourage the group to discuss with me, and reflect on, any ethical issues that arise during the project and, where relevant, I will ensure such issues are notified to the Module Leader. | **☐** |
| **Signed**: | |
| **Print name**: | |
| **Date**: | |