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# Research Ethics

[UG Final Year Projects – CS Dept]

Session 1

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2016

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Dear UG students

The Ethics first session took place during Learning Week 2. I hope that you found it useful.

The second (and final) session will take place during Learning Week 4.

Please make every effort to attend in order to ask any questions you might have and ensure that you understand the process. The focus of this session will be on the Part B form, important dates and answering questions.

Looking forward to seeing you there.

Kind regards

Frantzeska





*Research projects being undertaken by taught UG and PG students as part of their degree should be discussed in detail between the student and the supervisor. For these research projects the supervisor will act as the Principal Investigator and will be responsible for ensuring ethical standards are met and for ensuring ethical approval and/or management approval(s) are sought by the student researcher where appropriate.*

## 8.2 - Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research 2015-2016

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# UG Project Students

All UG students undertaking their final project must consider the ethical aspects of their work in line with University procedures.

**Please read carefully** through the University's Ethics Code of Practice <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/file/68476/download>

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# To summarise: there are 2 Forms

**Part A:** Students should begin the process of consideration of research ethics approval by completing an Application Cover Sheet and the Part A application form.

If there are minimal ethical implications – see the decision tool at the end of Part A - then they will not need to complete the Part B application form.

**Part B:** If the research raises ethical issues, the student will be asked to complete Part B of the application.

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The fundamental ethical principle is that there should be no risk of harm through participating in research, and particular care needs to be taken with participants such as children and vulnerable adults. Also a decision to participate should be based on informed consent. Full information must be provided in a Participant Information Sheet (PIS), and, after reading this, a participant should normally sign a Consent Form.

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Begin the process of consideration of research ethics approval by completing an *Application Cover Sheet* and the *Part A application form*. If there are minimal ethical implications – see the decision tool at the end of *Part A* - then you will not need to complete the *Part B application form*.

In this case, your application does not need to be submitted to the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC). You should then put your completed *Cover Sheet*, *Part A*, *PIS*, and *Consent Form* into one file and email it to your Supervisor for their approval.



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- You need to consider carefully your methodology, any areas of participant questioning (if applicable), potential risks, etc. This should be done together with your supervisor. Please note that your supervisor is there to guide and advise you and not in order to do the work for you.
  - You need to ensure that the you have adequately thought through the research methodology, any areas of participant questioning (if applicable), potential risks, etc. before submitting an application. If full ethics approval is required, the documentation will be forwarded to FREC (by your supervisor) and FREC will discuss it at their next meeting.

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*Part B application form* will need to be completed if your study has ethical implications. Then the *Cover Sheet, Parts A and B, PIS, and Consent Form*, should be emailed to your Supervisor, but, this time, they can all be sent as separate attachments. Your Supervisor will then send your application for consideration to the appropriate ethics Committee.

You should bear in mind that there is likely to be some delay before a decision is made by a Committee.

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# Informed Consent

Informed consent in the University's Code of Practice is defined as:

*Participant's consent given freely and independently, in the absence of coercion, in light of information provided on the participant information sheet. Principal Investigators are required to inform participants about anything that would affect their decision to take part. Informed consent may need to be an ongoing process for participants of a study.*

5.3.3 - Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research 2015-2016

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# Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

it should inform the participant of the following in plain, jargon-free language:

- the aims of the research and why it is being undertaken
- whether the research is part of a student project and/or the University of Westminster affiliation
- what the participant is required to do
- whether there is an inclusion or exclusion criteria
- why they have been chosen as a potential participant
- any harm which might occur as a result of participating
- the right to complain, and to whom, in the event of a problem in the research
- the right to withdraw, or withdraw their data, from the investigation
- arrangements ensuring the confidentiality and privacy of the participant and protection of the data
- technical protection of the data
- what will happen to their data after the research, e.g. destruction, archiving, etc. and the relevant timescales involved taking account of any requirements to retain data for formal audit purposes
- contact details of the Supervisor
- the requirement to report any symptoms which may occur
- how the participant will be informed of the results of the research if applicable
- the intended use(s) of the results of the research
- how the research will be published or disseminated.



*A copy of the Participant Information Sheet must be retained together with the signed Consent Form and stored suitably in the records of the investigation. A copy of the Participation Information Sheet should also be made available for the participant to take away.*

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# Forms and resources

The Coversheet, PART A and B forms (as well as PIS exemplar and Consent form exemplar are found at

<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/research-framework/research-ethics>

(see towards the bottom of the page, links under ***Useful resources and tool-kit for applicants***)



Research Ethics is an ongoing consideration and needs to be considered, understood and applied by the researcher to the entire research lifecycle, revisited as appropriate and intermittently, including from inception, proposal, data collection, writing, publication and dissemination of results.



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# See you again in LW4

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