Dublin City University
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

NOTIFICATION FORM FOR **LOW-RISK PROJECTS**

Application No. *(office use only)*   DCUREC/2017/_____

Section A: Applicant Details

PROJECT TITLE:	Open Freelance Hub
APPLICANT NAME:	Dean Lynch & David Weir
SCHOOL/UNIT:	School of Computing
APPLICANT EMAIL:	dean.lynch49@mail.dcu.ie david.weir3@mail.dcu.ie
If a student applicant, please provide the following additional information:	
Programme of Study:	Computer Applications 3rd year
Supervisor Name:	Brian Stone
Supervisor Email:	Brian.Stone@dcu.ie

Section B: Questions

1. Notification Review is reserved for low-risk social studies that fall under the following classifications. Please indicate your project type below:

Please mark as appropriate:	
x	Anonymous Survey (the topic will not elicit significant difficulties for participants)
	Observation (without audio or visual recording) of a public setting
x	Questioning participants regarding their opinions on products or services
	Questioning students about standard educational practices
	Study will monitor the impact of participants' daily activities
	Questioning public figures/professionals in their professional capacity regarding their professional activities
	Analysis of existing anonymised data which has been provided to the researcher by a third party
	Collection of biological samples which are anonymised and do not require invasive techniques (e.g. hair, nails).
	Other *Please explain:*

2. Please provide a justification for why your study is considered to be low-risk?

No personal information of the participants will be stored. Participants will be asked to interact with our application and asked a series of simple questions based around their experiences.

3. Please describe how your participants will be recruited?

Participants will be people known by both applicants. We will ask fellow students, our friends & family to interact with our application. These participants will be emailed to participate with the survey.

4. Informing your participants – Plain Language Statement

Research study: User testing of the Open Freelance Hub application
University Department: School of Computing

Principal Investigators: Dean Lynch (dean.lynch49@mail.dcu.ie)

David Weir (david.weir3@mail.dcu.ie)

Brian Stone (brian.stone@dcu.ie)

We are looking for people to participate in user testing of the application which we are developing as part of our third year project "Open Freelance Hub" (OFH). OFH is a blockchain hosted application designed for freelancers and employers to buy and sell work. We are looking for people of working age to participate.

We will use surveys and interviews to collect data from the participants. Users will be interviewed after completing various tasks on our application such as creating an account, posting a job and accepting a job. Users will be asked how they found each of the tasks and any difficulties or suggestions they might have.

Users will then be given a short questionnaire about to application and the website frontend. This will gather qualative information such as the users thoughts on the ease of use of the website and thoughts on its layout and appearance. We will combine the information gathered from the interview and survey do discover issues with our application along with other improvements that users suggested.

Participation in user testing of OFH will be completely voluntary and will not include any benefits for the participant. There are also no risks for the participant.

The data collected will not be distributed and will be only used as part of user testing for out third year project. We will not store any of the participants information other than thier demographic. Some opinions may be included in out testing report which is part of our third year project submission. None of the users information will be included in this document. All of this information can only be protected within the limitation of the law.

Data not used as part of our final submission will be destroyed before submission of our project on 9/03/2018. All of the data used in the report will be qualitive data consisting of participants opinions. No personal information will be included in the report.

Participants can see how the information has impacted our project with the following link:

https://gitlab.computing.dcu.ie/lynchd49/2018-CA326-dlynch-openfreelancehub

As participation is voluntary, they may withdraw at any time throughout the project. Any opininons provided by the user up to that point will be destroyed.

**If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person,
please contact:**
The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000, e-mail **rec@dcu.ie**

Please confirm whether the following issues have been addressed in your plain language statement for participants:

	YES or NO
Introductory Statement (PI and researcher names, school, title of the research)	YES
What is this research about?	YES
Why is this research being conducted?	YES
What will happen if the person decides to participate in the research study?	YES
How will their privacy be protected?	YES
How will the data be used and subsequently disposed of?	YES
What are the legal limitations to data confidentiality?	YES
What are the benefits of taking part in the research study (if any)?	YES
What are the risks of taking part in the research study?	YES
Confirmation that participants can change their mind at any stage and withdraw from the study	YES
How will participants find out what happens with the project?	YES
Contact details for further information (including REC contact details)	YES

If any of these issues are marked NO, please justify their exclusion:

5. Capturing consent – Informed Consent Form

Research Study: User testing of the Open Freelance Applications
University School: School of Computing
Principal Investigators: Dean Lynch (dean.lynch49@mail.dcu.ie)
David Weir (david.weir3@mail.dcu.ie)
Brian Stone (Brian.Stone@dcu.ie)

The purpose of this research is to complete user testing of the open freelance application being developed as the applicants third year project.

The participant will interact with the application for approximately 15 mins. They will be asked to complete a number of tasks on the site. The paricipant may be asked to take part in a short interview at this point. Following this, the participant will be asked to complete a short survey to end the research project.

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)
I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)	*Yes/No*
I understand the information provided	*Yes/No*
I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study	*Yes/No*
I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions	*Yes/No*
I am aware that my interview will be audiotaped	*Yes/No*

I may withdraw from the research project at any point. Any information that I have provided up to this point will be immediately destroyed. No information about me other than my demographic will be stored. Only the opinions I provide will be used in the testing report, not any information about me. Any unused data will be destroyed on the 09/03/18. This data is however subject to legal limitations.

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project.

Participants Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness:_____ **Date:** _____

Important Notes:

- ➢ Please ensure you attach any *additional* relevant documentation to your application: **E.G.** copy of Survey/Questionnaire, copy of Interview/Focus Group schedule, copy of permission/approval from external sources (i.e. approval to access individuals in an organisation, school, community group)
- ➢ The application should consist of <u>one electronic file only</u>. The completed application must incorporate the plain language statement, informed consent form and all supplementary documentation
- ➢ All sections of the application form must be answered. The completed application must be proofread and spellchecked before submission to REC
- ➢ Your application must be e-mailed to the DCU Research Ethics Committee at rec@dcu.ie . **Student applicants must cc their supervisor on that e-mail** – this applies to *all* student applicants (masters and postgraduate). **The form should be approved and signed by the supervisor in advance of submission to REC.**

Applications which do not adhere to these requirements will not be accepted for review and will be returned directly to the applicant. The administrator to the Research Ethics Committee will assess, on receiving such notification, whether the information provided is adequate.

<u>Please note:</u> Project supervisors have the primary responsibility to ensure that students do not take on research that could expose them and the participants to significant risk, such as might arise, for example, in interviewing members of vulnerable groups such as young children. In general, please refer to the REC Guidelines for further guidance on what research procedures or circumstances might make a higher level of ethical approval necessary.
See https://www4.dcu.ie/researchsupport/research_ethics/guidelines.shtml

DECLARATION BY PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S)
In the case of student applicants the Principal Investigator is their supervisor.

The information contained herein is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate. I have read the University's current research ethics guidelines, and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in the attached application in accordance with the form guidelines, the REC guidelines (https://www4.dcu.ie/researchsupport/research_ethics/guidelines.shtml), the University's policy on Conflict of Interest, Code of Good Research Practice and any other condition laid down by the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee. I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting this research and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.

If there exists any affiliation or financial interest for researcher(s) in this research or its outcomes or any other circumstances which might represent a perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest this should be declared in accordance with Dublin City University policy on Conflicts of Interest.

I and my co-investigators or supporting staff have the appropriate qualifications, experience and facilities to conduct the research set out in the attached application and to deal with any emergencies and contingencies related to the research that may arise.

Electronic Signature(s):

Principal investigator(s):

Print Name(s) here: BRIAN STONE.

Date: 16 Feb 2018.

Open Freelance Hub Questionnaire

Do you have any previous experience with blockchain applications?

_____

Do you have any previous experience using freelance / contract work sites?
(Eg: weWork, fiverr, Freelancer)

_____

Did you have any difficulty when completing any of the tasks?

_____

Do you feel any features of the application are lacking in any way?

_____

What part of this application is your favourite?

_____

Would you use this application if you were looking for contract work / contract workers online?

_____

Please choose your level of agreement with the following (1 being strongly disagree & 5 being strongly agree):

The application is easy to use.

1	2	3	4	5

The application has a pleasing style.

1	2	3	4	5

This application is difficult to use.

1	2	3	4	5

I would recommend this application to a friend.

1	2	3	4	5

Open Freelance Hub Interview Questions

1. How did you find using the open freelance application?
2. Would you like any additional information regarding blockchain technology and how this application uses this technology?
3. Is there any sections of this application that you feel could be improved on?
4. If you could add one feature to this application what would it be and why?
5. **(IF PARTICIPANT HAS FREELANCE EXPERIENCE)** Do you feel that this application could fit into the industry as you have experienced it?
6. Is there any other feedback you wish to provide?