Dublin City University
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF A PROJECT INVOLVING **HUMAN PARTICIPANTS**

Application No. *(office use only)* DCUREC/2020/____

Please read the following information carefully before completing your application. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will make your submission ineligible for review.

- **Applications must be e-mailed to the DCU Research Ethics Committee at rec@dcu.ie** –no hardcopy required.
- **Student applicants must cc their supervisor on that e-mail** – this applies to all masters by research and PhD students. The form should be checked, approved and signed by the supervisor in advance of submission to REC. ***NB – Taught Masters and Undergraduate students apply for ethical review via their local review panels, not via REC.***
- **The application should consist of one electronic file only,** with an electronic signature from the PI. The completed application must incorporate all supplementary documentation, especially that being given to the proposed participants. It must be proofread and spellchecked before submission to the REC.
- **All sections of the application form must be answered as instructed and within the word limits given.**

Applications which do not adhere to all of these requirements will not be accepted for review and will be returned directly to the applicant.

Applications must be completed on the form; answers in the form of attachments will not be accepted, except where indicated. No hardcopy applications will be accepted. Research must not commence until written approval has been received from the Research Ethics Committee.

Note: If your research requires approval from the Biosafety Committee (BSC), or review by the School of Nursing and Human Sciences Ethics Advisory Committee (SNHSEAC), this must be in place prior to REC submission. Please attach the responses from these committees to this submission as directed below.

PROJECT TITLE	MyTrip
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S) *The named Principal Investigator is the person with primary responsibility for the research project. In the case of Taught Masters projects the supervisor is the Principal Investigator.*	Gareth Jones
START AND END DATE	07/01/22 - 22/04/22
LEVEL OF RISK *Please indicate whether this project requires (a) notification (b) expedited **or** (c) full committee review. Justification for your choice is required under section 3.1*	Notification only: YES

1. ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

1.2 WILL THE RESEARCH BE UNDERTAKEN ON-SITE AT DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY?

YES or NO
NO

(If NO, state details of the off-campus location – provide details of the approval to gain access to that location in section 2.7.)

Due to the global pandemic, not all users will be present in person. If a participant is not available in person, the user testing will be undertaken from our homes via the internet. Both myself and James will join a zoom call where we will interact users what to do. If the user is available in person, we will do the same but on campus if it is possible.

DECLARATION BY PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S)

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://www.dcu.ie/researchsupport/researchethics.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): Alex O' Neill, James Fallon

Print Name(s) here: Alex O' Neill, James Fallon

I/We, the students on this proposal, have read and approve of this submission
Student(s) signature(s) : James Fallon, Alex O'Neill
Print name(s) here: James Fallon, Alex O'Neill
Date: 23/03/2022

2. PROJECT OUTLINE

2.1 LAY DESCRIPTION *(Approx. 300 words)*

Please outline, in terms that any non-expert would understand, what your research project is about, including what participants will be required to do. Please explain any technical terms or discipline-specific phrases.

MyTrip is a web based application (accessible through any web browser such as google chrome, Microsoft edge, etc.) that allows users to have a stress free trip. The application learns the users interests and uses this information to make insightful and accurate recommendations based on the location and duration of the users trip. Participants will be required to use and all features of the application such as create account, log in, tell us a little bit about themselves, viewing the many tips of recommendations and interacting with the recommendations.

2.2 AIMS OF AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RESEARCH *(Approx. 400 words)*

State the aims and significance of the project. Where relevant, state the specific hypothesis to be tested. Please provide a brief description of background research, a justification as to why this research project should proceed in that context and an explanation of any expected benefits to the community. NB – all references cited should be listed in an attached bibliography.

The aim and justification of the research behind this project is to provide accurate and useful recommendation using a wide range of tools that machine learning can provide. The background research consists of collaborative based filtering, content based filtering, natural language processing among other technologies to improve the accuracy of our recommendation machine. The benefits that a well functioning application will provide is a large amount of user time saved as instead of searching for activities that suit their preferences, the user will automatically be presented with items for them to enjoy.

2.4 PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Provide the number, age range and source of participants. Please provide a justification of your proposed sample size. Please provide a justification for selecting a specific gender, age, or any other group if this is done in your project.

The sample size needed to test the functionality and user interface of the application is between 10-15. Our desired age range is between 20-40, as this demographic are the type to Tavel and seek help from an application to enhance their trip. The participants will be friends and family of the developers and classmates.

2.4(a) PARTICIPANT VULNERABILITY

Are some or all of participants vulnerable in any way? (e.g by virtue of the group they belong to, people who have undergone traumatic or adverse emotional events, people with diminished cognitive ability, power relations between researchers and participants etc.)? If they are, state what this vulnerability (or vulnerabilities) is and justify why this research is being done with such participants.

YES or NO
NO

2.5 EXPLAIN HOW PARTICIPANTS ARE TO BE RECRUITED

Please provide specific details as to how you will be recruiting participants. How will people be informed that you are doing this research? How will they be approached and asked if they are willing to participate? If you are mailing or phoning people, please explain how you have obtained their names and contact details. If a recruitment advertisement is to be used, please ensure you attach a copy to this application.

We will inform participants by sending them a text on our class group chat or texting our friends on WhatsApp. We will ask them if they are willing the participate through these platforms. We have attained their names and contact details from knowing our friends and through the class group chat we can message individual people.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

5.1 WILL THE IDENTITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS BE PROTECTED?

YES or NO
Yes

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO 5.1, PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

5.2 HOW WILL THE ANONYMITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS BE RESPECTED?

Please bear in mind that where the sample size is very small, it may be impossible to guarantee anonymity/confidentiality of participant identity. Participants involved in such projects need to be advised of this limitation in the Plain Language Statement/ Information Sheet. If you intend to fully anonymize the data, please provide details

We will provide dummy data for our users to login with, e.g

Name: user01

Email: user01@gmail.com

Password: 1234

5.3 LEGAL LIMITATIONS TO DATA CONFIDENTIALITY

Participants need to be made aware that confidentiality of information provided cannot always be guaranteed by researchers and can only be protected within the limitations of the law - i.e., it is possible for data to be subject to subpoena, freedom of information claim or mandated reporting by some professions. This information should be included in your Plain Language Statement and Informed Consent Form. Depending on the research proposal and academic discipline, you may need to state additional specific limitations.

State how and where participants will be informed of these limitations

When participants are recruited, they will be informed in the text. They will also be informed in the plain language statement and in the consent form.

6. PERSONAL DATA - COMPLIANCE WITH THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

Personal data is data relating to a living individual (i.e. the 'Data Subject') who is, or can be, identified either from the data itself or from the data in conjunction with other information that is in, or is likely to come into, the possession of the 'Data Controller' (i.e. DCU and its constituent units e.g. research teams etc.). Further information on personal data is available from the DCU Data Protection Unit at https://www.dcu.ie/ocoo/dp/guides.shtml

6.1 IS PERSONAL DATA BEING PROCESSED AS PART OF THIS PROJECT?

YES or NO
NO

If YES, Please indicate your compliance with the following guidelines:	Mark here
We confirm that we have read and agree to act in accordance with DCU Data Protection Unit guidance and procedures regarding personal data	
We confirm that we have put in place a Personal Data Security Schedule (PDSS) for the project and have attached it to this application	

Please see the GDPR and the Research Ethics Process section of the REC main webpage for guidance

6.3 WILL ANONYMISATION/PSEUDONYMISATION OF THE PERSONAL DATA BE UNDERTAKEN?

YES or NO
YES

(If NO, please explain why.)

7. DATA/SAMPLE STORAGE, SECURITY AND DISPOSAL

For the purpose of this section, "Data" includes that in a raw or processed state (e.g. interview audiotape, transcript or analysis). "Samples" include body fluids or tissue samples.

7.1 HOW AND WHERE WILL THE DATA/SAMPLES BE STORED?

Note that the REC recommends that all data be stored on campus – please justify any off-site storage.

The data will be gathered through an online form. This form will store the anonymised data.

7.2 WHO WILL HAVE ACCESS TO DATA/SAMPLES?

If people other than the main researchers have access, please name who they are and explain for what purpose.

Researchers and (on request) examiners

7.3 HOW LONG IS THE DATA TO BE HELD/RETAINED FOR?

Note that with very few exceptions personal data may not be retained indefinitely. It is up to the unit or research team to establish an upper retention limit for each category of personal data under its control.

Data will be stored until after promulgation of results or until supervisor indicates that they may be disposed of.

7.4 IF DATA/SAMPLES ARE TO BE DISPOSED OF, PLEASE EXPLAIN HOW, WHEN AND BY WHOM THIS WILL BE DONE?

Note that simply deleting files is not sufficiently secure. The additional steps to be taken to maintain data security should be given. Personal data must be disposed of in a safe and secure manner at the end of its retention period. If the data is stored in a: a) paper based format then shredding or disposal via a secure bin is recommended; or b) if it is stored in an electronic based format then deletion of the record or full anonymization of the data is recommended.If data/samples are NOT being disposed of, please justify this decision.

The data will be anonymised but after the project is graded, the data will be deleted. It will be deleted by James Fallon and Alex O' Neill

9. PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT *(Attach to this document. Approx. 400 words)*

A Plain Language Statement (PLS) should be used in all cases. This is written information in plain language that you will be providing to participants, outlining the nature of their involvement in the project and inviting their participation. The PLS should specifically describe what will be expected of participants, the risks and inconveniences for them, and other information relevant to their involvement. Please note that the language used must reflect the participant age group and corresponding comprehension level – if your participants have different comprehension levels (e.g. both adults and children) then separate forms should be prepared for each group. The PLS can be embedded in an email to which an online survey is attached, or handed/sent to individuals in advance of their consent being sought. See link to sample templates on the website: https://www.dcu.ie/researchsupport/ethicsapproval.shtml

PLEASE CONFIRM WHETHER THE FOLLOWING ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED IN YOUR PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT/ INFORMATION SHEET 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**
Details relating to GDPR Compliance if Personal Data is being sought	**YES**

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

10. INFORMED CONSENT FORM *(Attach to this document. Approx. 300 words)*

In most cases where interviews or focus groups are taking place, an Informed Consent Form is required. This is an important document requiring participants to indicate their consent to participate in the study, and give their signature. If your participants are minors (under 18), it is best practice to provide them with an assent form, while their parents/guardians will be given the Informed Consent Form. In cases where an anonymous questionnaire is being used, it is enough to include a tick box in the questionnaire (underneath the information section for participant), where participants can indicate their consent.
See link to sample templates on the website: ***https://www.dcu.ie/researchsupport/ethicsapproval.shtml***

NB – IF AN INFORMED CONSENT FORM IS NOT BEING USED, THE REASON FOR THIS MUST BE JUSTIFIED HERE.

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

TO: Participant

Date: 26th March 2022
Full Project Title: MyTrip
Principal Researcher: Gareth Jones
Student Researcher: James Fallon and Alex O Neill

1. Your Consent

This form contains detailed information about the project. This is provided to you so an informed decision can be made whether you would like to take part of not. This statement must be read carefully and fully understood before a decision is made regarding participation in the project.

Any questions regarding the project can be forwarded onto any of the researchers mentioned above. Participation will only be accepted upon completion of this form, with a full understanding.

2. Purpose and Background

This project has a focus on the organisation of events to bring people together. This will be determined on common interests among users that the user will input manually.

A small group of users will be chosen to use the application to find strengths but most importantly faults. The resulting data will be used to improve the application in later development. The data will be anonymous and not linked to anyone’s personal details. The data will only be used for the purpose of improving the application system.

3. Procedures

If the participant has chosen to partake in the testing of the application, they may be asked to sign a consent form regarding their data.

Once this is completed the Goal of the testing will be to get critical feedback from the users on their experience. The user may be asked to create an account, create an event, add or remove a friend. They may also be asked to customise their own profile.

After the user has had sufficient time with the system, they will then be presented with a series of questions, regarding their experience. This may ask questions such as level of difficulty when using the system, thoughts on the user interface and other similarly styles questions.

To participate in this testing you must be above 18 years old.

Participants will not be provided with any information as to the findings of the outcomes of the project.

5. Possible Benefits

Possible benefits of the testing would include the opportunity to see the inner working of an application in early development and not yet released. Participants may leave with a better understanding and appreciation for the development of software.

6. Possible Risks

There should be no physical or mental risk when participating in testing protocols. If the user feels at harm at anytime in their involvement they may leave. Help will be provided by contacting any researcher stated above.

7. Privacy, Confidentiality, and Disclosure of Information.

User data will be anonymous. A user ID will be used to associate your user data in one place, mainly the database. No personal information will be needed for testing purposes.

User data will never leave the system. The data provided will only be used for the required and stated purposes. The storage system will be a database that will only be accessible by administrators on local machines that are password protected on multiple levels.

The data will only be used for the duration of the projects creation, then destroyed in an appropriate manner once the project has been completed. This will include deletion of data and then deletion of database to ensure the data can not be retrieved for any purpose.

Data will be used to prove testing was conducted, but personal information will not be gathered and therefore not be used.

Confidentiality of information provided cannot always be guaranteed by researchers and can only be protected within the limitations of the law -i.e., it is possible for data to be subject to subpoena, freedom of information claim or mandated reporting by some professions.

9. Participation is Voluntary

Participation in this testing is voluntary. Receipt of this plain language statement does not mean intended participation. If at any point during the testing you wish to stop taking part please contact one of the researchers mentioned and the information you have provided will be destroyed.

11. Complaints

Any questions or unconventional feedback may be forwarded on to the supervisor of the project.

Gareth Jones, Gareth.jones@mail.dcu.ie Please mention project MyTrip

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

Informed Consent Form

Study Title: MyTrip
Principle Investigator: Gareth Jones
Additional Investigators: James Fallon and Alex O'Neill
Affiliation: Dublin City University

Clarification of the purpose of the study

Participants will test our project and gather information as to what works and what does not work. No personal data will be gathered.

Confirmation of particular requirements as highlighted in the Plain Language Statement

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 understand the information provided in relation to data protection	*Yes/no*
I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study	*Yes/no*

Confirmation that involvement in the Study is voluntary
If you decide to participate in this study, you may withdraw from your participation at any time.

Confirmation of arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations

All data used will be anonymised by using "dummy" data.

Confirmation of arrangements regarding retention/disposal of data

The data provided will only be stored until the project is complete. Once completed, this data will be permanently deleted.

Signature:

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 consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this project

Participants Signature:
Name in Block Capitals:
Witness:
Date: