

**THE BARTLETT SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND RESOURCES**

**MSc DASCH Dissertation Module**

**Research Ethics, Data Protection & Risk Check**

**Part A: Declaration of Review Stream Applicable to the Research**

This document is for MSc DASCH students to use to determine which ethics stream is applicable to their Dissertation research. It comprises five steps:

* **ALL STUDENTS TO COMPLETE…**Step A1 – Does the research require a *Risk Assessment?*  
  Step A2 – Does the research require *External* research ethics approval?
* **Where external ethics approval is not required, students complete…**Step A3 – Is the research *Exempt* from the need for ethics approval?
* **Where the research is not exempt from the need for ethics approval, students complete…**  
  Step A4 – Does the research require *High Risk* ethics approval*?*
* **Where the research is not exempt from the need for ethics approval,   
  but does *not* require high risk ethics approval, students complete…**  
  Step A5 – Does the research require:
  + Low risk ethics approval for *questions-based* *methods* – from MScDASCH.
  + Low risk ethics approval for *other methods* – from BSEER.
* **ALL STUDENTS TO COMPLETE…**Step A6 – MSC DASCH Dissertation Ethics *Declaration*  
  where students and their supervisors declare
  + Whether or not the research requires a risk assessment, and
  + Which of the following ethics review streams applies to the Dissertation research:
    - External (to UCL) research ethics review.
    - Exempt from the need for research ethics approval.
    - High risk research ethics review from the UCL Research Ethics Committee.
    - Low risk research ethics review for questions-based methods – from MSc DASCH.
    - Low risk research ethics review for other methods – from BSEER.

The MSC DASCH Dissertation Ethics *Statement* is submitted to the Dissertation module convenor as per their specifications, and included as a Dissertation Appendix, where it will be evaluated by the Dissertation’s second marker.

**Step A1 – Does the research require a *Risk Assessment?***

UCL has a duty of care to students under the Health and Safety at Work Act. Consult your Supervisor in completing this section. Your supervisor is responsible for ensuring that any risk assessment necessary for your research is completed appropriately.

**Evaluate Covid-19 related risks and overseas travel:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Will you conduct any of this research:** | **YES** | **NO** |
| **In a way that could breach any relevant Covid-19 laws or guidance?1** |  |  |
| **In a way that could put you or anyone else at increased risk of Covid-19?1** |  |  |
| **Overseas in an area where the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advises against travel – although this travel should be avoided in the first place and you will be asked to explain why this travel/activity is essential. Note that familiarity with that overseas area is irrelevant to this answer at this stage.** |  |  |

1Evaluating Covid-19 related risks – UCL resources:

* Evaluating *Fieldwork activity in taught and MRes programmes,* 2021-22 (Revised: October 2021):  
  <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/fieldwork-activity-taught-and-mres-programmes-2021-22>  
  EXTRACT: "​​​​​​safety must always come first…**a remote or virtual approach would usually be the preferred option** [**where this is possible for the discipline or activity and provides a good outcome]**…Appendix 1 outlines a series of questions designed to help guide the decision-making process.”
* The “Online data collection methods” section on the BSEER Ethics Intranet could help supervisors: <https://wiki.ucl.ac.uk/display/BI/Online+data+collection+methods> . Staff and PhD students can access the intranet.

**If you ticked YES to any of the Covid-19 related risks or overseas travel, your supervisor must complete a RiskNet assessment for this research and evidence of its approval should be attached to this form.**

UCL information on COVID-19 Risk Assessments is here: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/safety-services/node/2606/>

If Covid-19 risks or laws or guidance relevant to the research changes whilst the research is under way, students must immediately discuss this with their supervisors. Students and supervisors should consult the UCL resources above again and decide whether a (new) RiskNet assessment is necessary.

**Evaluate laboratory-related risks:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Will you conduct any of this research:** | **YES** | **NO** |
| **In a laboratory?** |  |  |

**If you ticked YES to conducting any of this research in a laboratory, your supervisor must complete a RiskNet assessment for this research and evidence of its approval should be attached to this form.** If your supervisor believes the lab work is exempt from the risk assessment, the exemption should be discussed with and approved by the Risk Assessment Lead in the relevant BSEER Institute (if the exemption is confirmed, please include the relevant email correspondence to this form).

**Evaluate fieldwork-related risks:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Will you conduct any of this research:** | **YES** | **NO** |
| In a way requiring fieldwork, especially (but not exclusively):   * Working alone, e.g. in someone’s home, a workplace or a street/park with few other people present; * Handling/using equipment which could cause damage to the researcher and/or public/private property and/or the environment; * Any actions which may put the student at increased risk of injury and/or cause damage to the environment and public private property. |  |  |

**If you ticked YES to fieldwork research, you must complete the Department of Geography Form2 with your supervisor.**

2Complete the Department of Geography Dissertation Fieldwork Risk Assessment template under the close supervision of your supervisor. The form and instructions for completing it are available here: <https://www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/resources/safety/risk-assessment>. Submit an e- copy of your completed and signed Risk Assessment to the Dissertation Module convenor before undertaking any activities covered by the risk assessment. If the Dissertation Module convenor or Course Director ask your supervisor to complete an additional UCL RiskNet assessment, you may only undertake the relevant activities once the assessment is approved.

**If the risks associated with this research turn out to be higher than expected, or the risks increase for any reason, students must immediately discuss this with their supervisors and decide whether a (new) risk assessment is required. At all times students are advised to reduce the risks associated with their research by considering alternative methods of data collection.**

ALL Students: Proceed to Step A2 – Does the research require external ethics committee approval?

**Step A2 – Does the research require *external* ethics committee approval?**

**MSc DASCH Students:** If you are unsure about what to answer, consult your Supervisor.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **YES** | **NO** |
| 1. **Is your research social care research funded by the Department of Health?**   **If you ticked YES, you require ethics approval from their authorised ethics committee.** |  |  |
| 1. **Is your research funded, sponsored or undertaken by the Ministry of Defence?**   **If you ticked YES, you require ethics approval from their authorised ethics committee.** |  |  |
| 1. **Does the study involve participants lacking the capacity to give informed consent?**   A person lacks the capacity to give informed consent if at the time when consent is sought they are unable to make a decision for themselves in relation to the matter (i.e. deciding whether to participate) because of an impairment of, or a disturbance in the functioning of, the mind or brain.  A person is unable to make a decision for themselves if they are unable:   1. to understand the information relevant to the decision, 2. to retain that information, 3. to use or weigh that information as part of the process of making the decision, or 4. to communicate their decision (by talking, using sign language or any other means).   If you ticked YES, you require ethics approval from a research ethics committee falling within the UK Health Departments’ Research Ethics Service([HRA](http://www.hra.nhs.uk/about-the-hra/our-committees/research-ethics-committees-recs/)). UCL committees cannot ethically review research involving participants who fall under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.  When unsure please refer to the Mental Capacity Act 2005:   * People who lack capacity <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/9/section/2> * Research <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/9/part/1/crossheading/research> |  |  |
| 1. **Does your research involve any of the following:**  * NHS patients and carers * Invasive research involving prisoners * Clinical Trial of an Investigational Medicinal Product * Human tissue requiring ethics approval from ‘approved’ ethics committee (Human Tissue Act 2004)   When unsure please refer to the [HRA checklist](http://www.hra.nhs.uk/documents/2013/09/does-my-project-require-rec-review.pdf) and the [decision tool](http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics/index.html).  If you ticked YES, you require ethics approval through NHS Research Ethics Review([NRES](http://www.hra.nhs.uk/about-the-hra/our-committees/research-ethics-committees-recs/)). |  |  |

If your research DOES require external ethics approval, you must secure this from the relevant authorized ethics committee before data collection starts. Proceed to Step A6 – *MSC DASCH Dissertation Ethics Declaration*.

If your research does NOT require external ethics approval, proceed to Step A3 – *Is the research exempt from the need for ethics approval?* (next page).

**Step A3 – Is the research *exempt* from the need for ethics approval?**

**MSc DASCH Students:** If you are unsure about what to answer, consult your Supervisor.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Research that is not exempt and requires ethics approval** | **YES** | **NO** |
| **1a. Will your research collect / use / store / process personal data?**  The **legal definition** of Personal Data is any information relating to an identifiable person who could directly *or indirectly* be identified from that information. It includes Personal Data that you are collecting simply to contact your participants. It is data that a motivated intruder or analyst (including you) *could* useto identify someone. This includes if someone could potentially identify individuals from an interview transcript, or from a subsequent report. Examples include:   * Name (can be sufficient to ID an individual; usually sufficient if combined with other information) * Email address / Phone number * Home address / Postcode * Photo / Audio / Video 🡪 can reveal ID if accessed by someone able to digitally enhance * Location data? EG taxi fleet location data can be processed to reveal identifiable information on individuals * Online identifiers (including IP addresses) * Data derived from electronic sensors or digital ‘tracking’ tools * Combinations of data that may reveal identifiable data (e.g. Employer + Job Title) |  |  |
| **1b. Will your research involve** **human participants or observing humans?**  **All research involving human participants and/or their data requires ethics approval.** |  |  |
| **1c. Will your research potentially raise other ethics issues?**  Research that does not involve human participants and/or their data *may still raise other ethics issues* that require consideration. Below are some examples that will require ethics approval (this list is not exhaustive):   * research on terrorism / extreme violence * research on pornography * environmental studies that have the potential to impact on or change the environment * archaeological excavations in disputed territories * studies involving access to sacred sites or the analysis of sacred cultural objects where access is restricted or where there are particular modern sensitivities or issues * access to indigenous communities that have come to insist upon prior permission gained from official or informal indigenous bodies * interpretations of publicly available data that make sensitive or personal claims about individuals. EG analysing speeches and concluding that the language used indicates dementia onset or autistic features |  |  |

**If you ticked YES to ANY of the above, your research IS NOT EXEMPT from the need for ethics approval. Proceed to Question 2, below.**

If you ticked NO to ALL of the above, your research IS EXEMPT from the need for ethics approval. Proceed to Step A6 – *MSC DASCH Dissertation Ethics Declaration*.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Additional research that is exempt from the need for ethics approval** | **YES** | **NO** |
| 1. **Is all of your research literary or artistic criticism, or reviews of professional and other publicly-affirmed opinions?**   **If you ticked YES, your research IS EXEMPT from the need for ethics approval.** Proceed to Step A6 – *MSC DASCH Dissertation Ethics Declaration*.  **If you ticked NO, your research IS NOT exempt from the need for ethics approval. P**roceed to Step A4 – *Does the research require High Risk ethics approval?* |  |  |

**Step A4 – Does the research require *High Risk* ethics approval?**

**MSc DASCH Students:** If you are unsure about what to answer, consult your Supervisor.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Vulnerability** | **YES** | **NO** |
| 1. **Will your research involve participants who are particularly vulnerable?**   For example individuals:   * with learning disabilities or a cognitive impairment (see note below) * with emotional and mental health problems (see note below) * who are highly dependent or in unequal positions such as those in care who are unlikely to comprehend the rationale of the research or who are at risk of being traumatised or physically debilitated by it.   *A person will not be considered automatically vulnerable if, for example, they are illiterate or have dyslexia or OCD. A vulnerable participant is someone:*   * *who is, or may be, in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability* * *who is, or may be, unable to take care of himself/herself, or unable to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.* |  |  |
| 1. **Will your research include participants who due to their personal circumstances are particularly vulnerable?**   This includes asylum seekers, people in care facilities, prison, young offenders, refugees (UK and elsewhere), victims of crime, those who have suffered a traumatic event. |  |  |
| **Perceived pressure to participate (power relationships)** | **YES** | **NO** |
| 1. **Will the project involve researching your own students/clients?**  If so, will the research collect personal data that would not otherwise be disclosed during normal relationships/business? |  |  |
| **Sensitive Topics** | **YES** | **NO** |
| 1. **Will the project cover topics and include the collection of data that would usually be considered as sensitive?** For example:  * terrorism / extreme violence (including contact with terrorists, communities in which terrorists are thought to be based or very likely targets of terror), * pornography (to include pornographic materials or contact with persons and organisations that make these materials), * exploration of participants’ experiences of violence, abuse or exploitation, * exploration of participants’ illegal behaviour (to include direct contact with those persons knowingly engaged in illegal activities). |  |  |
| 1. **Will the project involve collecting data that, if disclosed outside of the research, foreseeably would place the participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to participants’ financial standing, employability, reputation or their ties with family or standing in the community?** |  |  |
| **Risk of Disclosure** | **YES** | **NO** |
| 1. **Will your research involve a risk of disclosure?**   In the course of their research, colleagues will sometimes collect information or data that appears to disclose criminal or illegal activity. In some cases there could be a legal obligation to inform the authorities. However, even if there is no legal obligation to report an activity, researchers may still find themselves in possession of information about acts that could potentially harm the participants themselves, specific third parties or the general public.  Although it is generally the case that *information should remain confidential there are limits to confidentiality and situations where confidentiality will need to be broken. You must consider beforehand whether the research involves an increased likelihood* of a disclosure happening should a participant tell the researcher something that causes significant concern, or it could be something that is observed during fieldwork such as an illegal activity. |  |  |
| **Consent, deception and covert methods** | **YES** | **NO** |
| 1. **Will your research involve an element of deception or covert methods\* (observation or other data collection), whereby fully informed consent is not obtained, partial consent is sought or participants are included without their knowledge?**   *\*This means situations where it is not appropriate to inform participants either in full or at all about the study as it may either affect the behaviour of participants and/or* *make it impossible to collect the data.*  *This does not include observation of individuals in public spaces.* |  |  |
| **Intrusive/Medical Interventions** | **YES** | **NO** |
| 1. **Will your research involve any of the following** **intrusive or medical interventions:**  * taking blood samples * administering drugs or other medicinal products * a medical device * exposure to strong magnetic fields, including Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) * making electrical recordings from muscle (ECG, EMG) or brain (EEG) * use of non-ionising radiation * physically intrusive procedures such as biopsies * DNA / RNA / genetic analysis * samples from participants that could reveal an unknown medical condition |  |  |
| **Risk of Harm to Participants** | **YES** | **NO** |
| 1. **Will your research present a significant risk of harm to the rights and wellbeing of participants; physical, emotional (i.e. distress or humiliation), psychological (i.e. stress or anxiety), reputational, legal or financial beyond the risks encountered in normal life?**   The answer in this section **should be ‘yes’** where there is a risk of participants experiencing psychological stress, anxiety, humiliation, harm or negative consequences as a result of participation and where this risk is significantly greater than anticipated for the participant in their everyday life. For example, the discussion of sensitive topics such as child abuse, terrorism, pornography, eating disorders, suicidal thoughts or sexual or political behaviour, experiences of violence, abuse or exploitation. However, discussing such topics with professionals whose work is related to those areas, such as social workers or psychologists, may not involve an increased risk of them becoming distressed as the nature of their professional lives is that these topics are for them less sensitive than for most people. |  |  |
| **Risk of Harm to Researcher/s** | **YES** | **NO** |
| 1. **Will your research present a real and/or significant risk to a member of the research team?** This includes but is not limited to:  * working in potentially unsafe environments (e.g. overseas research where the FCO has advised against all travel * lone working such as at night in non-public places where there are other risk elements to consider (for example, the study may be looking at domestic abuse) * engaging with groups or behaviour that could result in harm   The Social Research Association highlights these potential risks to researchers:   * physical threat or abuse * psychological trauma, as a result of actual or threatened violence or the nature of what is disclosed during the interaction * being in a compromising situation, in which there might be accusations of improper behaviour * increased exposure to risks of everyday life and social interaction, such as road accidents and infectious illness * causing psychological or physical harm to others |  |  |

If you tick **YES** to **ANY** of the above questions, your research is deemed high risk and you require approval from the UCL Research Ethics Committee (see <https://wiki.ucl.ac.uk/display/BI/Ethics>). Proceed to Step A6 – *MSC DASCH Dissertation Ethics Declaration*.

If you ticked **NO** to **ALL** of the above questions, your research is not deemed high risk. Proceed to Step A5 —*Check if DASCH or BSEER Low Risk Ethics Review*.

**Step A5 – Does the research require  
MSc DASCH Low Risk Ethics Review for *Questions-based* *methods*  
OR  
BSEER Low Risk Ethics Review for *Other methods?***

This step is for the use of MSc DASCH Dissertation students who have confirmed that their research does not require approval from an external ethics committee (Step A2), that their research is not exempt from the need for ethics approval (Step A3), and that their research will not include any high-risk elements (Step A4). It will help students determine whether they may apply for research ethics approval to the *MSc DASCH* Dissertation module coordinator, or whether they should submit a BSEER Low Risk Ethics application.

**MSc DASCH Students:** If you are unsure about what to answer, consult your Supervisor.

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Will you use questions-based methods for your Dissertation?**   **Interviews** arequestion-and-answer sessions with mostly open answer response options. They can be verbal (e.g. face-to-face, phone) or written (e.g. email, chat) and with either individuals or groups. Yes  No  **Focus groups:** whereresearchers facilitate discussion on a topic among a group of participants.  Yes  No  **Social surveys / Questionnaires** are highly structured questions with mostly closed answer response options. They can be verbally administered by the researcher (e.g. face-to-face, phone), or written self-completion (e.g. paper, online, via apps).  Yes  No  If you ticked **YES** to **ANY** of the above, proceed to Question 2.  If you ticked **NO** to **ALL** of the above, submit a BSEER Low Risk Ethics application (<https://wiki.ucl.ac.uk/display/BI/Ethics>) and proceed to Step A6 – *MSC DASCH Dissertation Ethics Declaration*. |
| 1. **OTHER THAN these interviews / focus groups / questionnaires, will the research involve** **human participants?**   Yes  No  If **YES**, submit a BSEER Low Risk Ethics application (<https://wiki.ucl.ac.uk/display/BI/Ethics>). Proceed to Step A6 – *MSC DASCH Dissertation Ethics Declaration*.  If **NO**, proceed to Question 3. |
| 1. **Will you collect or use personal data for your Dissertation?**   The **legal definition** of Personal Data is any information relating to an identifiable person who could directly *or indirectly* be identified from that information. It includes Personal Data that you are not using as research data – EG personal data you are collecting simply to contact participants. It is data that a motivated intruder or analyst (including you) *could* useto identify someone. This includes if someone could potentially identify individuals from an interview transcript, or from a subsequent report. Examples include:   * Name (can be sufficient to ID an individual; usually sufficient if combined with other information) * Email address / Phone number * Home address / Postcode * Photo / Audio / Video 🡪 can reveal ID if accessed by someone able to digitally enhance * Location data? EG taxi fleet location data can be processed to reveal identifiable information on individuals * Online identifiers (including IP addresses) * Data derived from electronic sensors or digital ‘tracking’ tools * Combinations of data that may reveal identifiable data (e.g. Employer + Job Title)   Yes  No  If **YES**, go to Question 4.  If **NO**, submit an MSc DASCH Ethics Assessment Part B ***Research Ethics Protocol & Application – Methods involving questions.* P**roceed to Step A6 – *MSC DASCH Dissertation Ethics Declaration*. |
| 1. **Why are you collecting this personal data?**  |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | Just for the **interviews / focus groups / questionnaires (e.g. to contact participants) Submit an** MSc DASCH Ethics Assessment Part B ***Research Ethics Protocol & Application – Methods involving questions.*** | |  | For some other aspect of my Dissertation as well / instead. Submit a BSEER Low Risk Ethics application (<https://wiki.ucl.ac.uk/display/BI/Ethics>). |   Proceed to Step A6 – *MSC DASCH Dissertation Ethics Declaration.* |

**Step A6 – MSC DASCH Dissertation Ethics Declaration**

|  |
| --- |
| **Statement of Risk Assessment & Ethics Approval** **Requirements** |
| **Student Candidate Number** [RXZM2]:  Student Name: []:  Student UCL Email Address: []:  **Supervisor Name:** [Irene Iriarte]:  Supervisor UCL Email Address: [irene.iriarte.c@gmail.com]:  **Dissertation Research Proposal** [A study of open data for recipes]:   * Title / Topic: Recipe data research in open data: data scraping, cleaning and analysis * Research Question(s) / Aims & Objectives: Calculate the similarity of recipes between different regions * Data & source (specify all data to be used; if none, explain why): only need data from Wikipedia, and it is open data * Method(s) (specify all methods to be used): use python as the tools to crawl and analyze data from Wikipedia. |
| I have read and understood **Step A1 ‘Does the research require a Risk Assessment?’** and:  [DELETE ONE STATEMENT]:   * This planned research does NOT require a risk assessment. |
| I have read and understood **Step A2 ‘Does the research require External research ethics approval?’** and:  [DELETE ONE STATEMENT]:   * This planned research does NOT require external ethics review. |
| External ethics approval is *not required* and I have read and understood **Step A3 ‘Is the research Exempt from the need for ethics approval?’** and:  [DELETE ONE STATEMENT]:   * This planned research IS EXEMPT from the need for research ethics approval. |
| The research is *not exempt* from the need for ethics approval and I have read and understood **Step A4 ‘Does the research require High Risk ethics approval?’** and:  [DELETE ONE STATEMENT]:   * This planned research is NOT deemed high risk. |
| The research is *not exempt* from the need for ethics approval, does not require high risk ethics approval and: I have read and understood **Step A5 ‘Does the research require DASCH low risk ethics review for questions-based methods OR BSEER low risk ethics review for other methods?’** and:  [DELETE ONE STATEMENT]:   * This planned research requires MSc DASCH Low Risk Ethics approval for questions-based methods and approval will be secured before data collection starts. |
| **I confirm that:**   * the information I have provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge. * if the answers to any of these questions changes, I will go through this protocol again. |

**NEXT STEPS:**

* **STUDENT:** Copythe text of the *completed*statement above into an email and email it to your supervisor.
* **SUPERVISOR:** Reply to the email confirming your approval of the completed statement.
* **STUDENT:**
  + Submit this A6 Statement (matching the one approved by your supervisor) on Moodle as your Dissertation Ethics Declaration.
  + Include this A6 Statement as a Dissertation Appendix after you have BLACKED OUT YOUR NAME & EMAIL ADDRESS so the second marker can mark anonymously.

The Dissertation mark sheet asks the second marker whether this form was filled out correctly and, if not, what % mark deduction they recommend.