**STUDENT PROJECT ETHICAL REVIEW (SPER) FORM**

**The aim of the University’s *Research Ethics Policy* is to establish and promote good ethical practice in the conduct of academic research. The questionnaire is intended to enable researchers to undertake an initial self-assessment of ethical issues in their research. Ethical conduct is not primarily a matter of following fixed rules; it depends on researchers developing a considered, flexible and thoughtful practice.**

**The questionnaire aims to engage researchers discursively with the ethical dimensions of their work and potential ethical issues, and the main focus of any subsequent review is not to ‘approve’ or ‘disapprove’ of a project but to make sure that this process has taken place.**

The *Research Ethics Policy* is available at  [www.intranet.rgu.ac.uk/credo/staff/page.cfm?pge=706](http://www.intranet.rgu.ac.uk/credo/staff/page.cfm?pge=7060)0

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| **Student Name** | Navya Shiju |
| **Supervisor** | Mark Zarb |
| **Project Title** | Phishing URL Detection using Machine Learning Algorithms |
| **Course of Study** | MSCI COMPUTING SCIENCE |
| **School/Department** | School of Computing, Engineering and Technology |

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| **Part 1 : Descriptive Questions** | | | |
| 1 | Does the research involve, or does information in the research relate to: | Yes | No |
|  | (a) individual human subjects |  | X |
| (b) groups (e.g. families, communities, crowds) |  | X |
| (c) organisations |  | X |
| (d) animals? |  | X |
| Please provide further details: | | |
|  | The Phishing URL detection algorithm will be trained on thousands of malicious and benign URLs from potential Phishing emails so that it can categorise the various segments of a URL link to identify patterns that characterise a Phishing link. |  |  |
| 2 | Will the research deal with information which is private or confidential? | Yes | No |
|  |  | X |
| Please provide further details: | | |
| I will be using an open source dataset that is readily downloadable. |  |  |

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| Part 2: The Impact of the Research | | | |
| 3 | In the process of doing the research, is there any potential for harm to be done to, or costs to be imposed on | Yes | No |
|  | (a) research participants? |  | X |
| (b) research subjects? |  | X |
| (c) you, as the researcher? |  | X |
| (d) third parties? |  | X |
| Please state what you believe are the implications of the research: | | |
| There will be no negative implications with this research – this is an isolated study that will train Machine Learning models to identify malicious URLSs. When completed, individual test users will be able to input a potential Phishing link that they have come across in the wild that the algorithm will be able to analyse and provide a result of “malicious” or “beneign” | | |
| 4 | When the research is complete, could negative consequences follow: | Yes | No |
|  | (a) for research subjects |  | X |
| (b) or elsewhere? |  | X |
| Please state what you believe are the consequences of the research: | | |
| N/A | | |

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| Part 3: Ethical Procedures | | | |
| 5 | Does the research require informed consent or approval from: | Yes | No |
|  | (a) research participants? |  | X |
| (b) research subjects |  | X |
| (c) external bodies |  | X |
| If you answered yes to any of the above, please explain your answer: | | |
| 6 | Are there reasons why research subjects may need safeguards or protection? | Yes | No |
|  |  | X |
| If you answered yes to the above, please state the reasons and indicate the measures to be |  |  |
| 7 | Has PVG membership status been considered? |  | X |
|  | (a) PVG membership is not required. | X |  |
| (b) PVG membership is required for working with children. |  | X |
| (c) PVG membership is required for working with protected adults. |  | X |
| (d) PVG membership is required for working with both children and protected |  | X |
| If you answered yes to (b), (c) or (d) above, please give details: | | |
| 8 | Are specified procedures or safeguards required for recording, management, or storage of data? | Yes | No |
|  |  | X |
| If you answered yes to the above, please outline the likely undertakings: | | |

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| Part 4: The Research Relationship | | | |
| 9 | Does the research require you to give or make undertakings to research participants or subjects about the use of data? | Yes | No |
|  |  | X |
| If you answered yes to the above, please outline the likely undertakings: | | |
| 10 | Is the research likely to be affected by the relationship with a sponsor, funder or employer? | Yes | No |
|  |  | X |
| If you answered yes to the above, please identify how the research may be affected: | | |

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| Part 5: Other Issues | | | |
| 11 | Are there any other ethical issues not covered by this form which you believe you should raise? | Yes | No |
|  |  | X |
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| Statement by Student  I believe that the information I have given in this form is correct, and that I have addressed the ethical issues as fully as possible at this stage. | | | |
| Signature | Navya Shiju | Date | 23/09/2024 |

**If any ethical issues arise during the course of the research, students should complete a further Student Project Ethical Review (SPER) form.**

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| Part 6: To be completed by the supervisor | | | | |
| 12 | Does the research have potentially negative implications for the University? | | Yes | No |
|  |  | X |
| If you answered yes to the above, please explain your answer: | | | |
|  | | | |
| 13 | Are any potential conflicts of interest likely to arise in the course of the research? | | Yes | No  X |
|  | If you answered yes to the above, please identify the potential conflicts: | | | |
|  | | | |
| 14 | Are you satisfied that the student has engaged adequately with the ethical implications of the work? [In signifying agreement, supervisors are accepting part of the ethical responsibility for the project] | | Yes  X | No |
|  | If you answered no to the above, please identify the potential issues: | | | |
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| 15 | **Appraisal:** Please select one of the following | | | |
|  | The research project should proceed in its present form – no further action is required | | X | |
| The research project requires ethical approval by the School Ethics Review Panel | |  | |
| The research project needs to be returned to the student for modification prior to further action | |  | |
| The research project requires ethical review by an external body. If this applies please give details | |  | |
| Title of External Body providing ethical review |  | | |
| Address of External Body |  | | |
| Anticipated date when External Body may consider project |  | | |

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| Affirmation by Supervisor | | | |
| **I have read the student’s responses and have discussed ethical issues arising with the student. I can confirm that, to the best of my understanding, the information presented by the student is correct and appropriate to allow an informed judgement on whether further ethical approval is required.** | | | |
| **Signature** | Mark Zarb | **Date** | 24.9.24 |