# Ethics Application Form

This ethics review application is for University of Cambridge staff and students who are undertaking research into the teaching, learning and other educational practices within and across the University. The review process for these applications will be undertaken by the Cambridge Higher Education Studies Research Ethics Committee (CHESREC) which has committee members drawn from experienced higher education researchers. The ethics review process is primarily intended to support researchers located in non-Departmental or Faculty based institutions across the University.

Before commencing the application, please consult the CHESREC **Stage 1: Self-Assessment Flowchart to** determine whether your research initiative requires ethics review and whether this process is the most suitable for your purposes.

## Section A: Summary of ethics issues

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| This section summarises some of the key areas for consideration of ethics review of educational studies. Please mark ‘X’ in the Yes/No column. | | |
| 1. Are research participants classed as people whose ability to give free and valid consent is in question? This may include individuals under the age of 18, vulnerable groups and/or those lacking the capacity or opportunity to consent. Your attention is drawn to the University’s [Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Code of Practice](https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/policies-procedures/children-and-vulnerable-adults-safeguarding-policy) and its implications for researchers involving children or adults at risk. | Yes | No |
| 1. By taking part in the research, will participants be at risk of academic disciplinary action or damage to reputation? | Yes | No |
| 1. Does the research involve dependent subjects/people less able to refuse consent (e.g., the researcher’s own students that they are assessing)? | Yes | No |
| 1. Does participation in the study research have the potential to cause distress, discomfort or anxiety? | Yes | No |
| 1. Does the research involve the study of individuals without their capacity to voluntarily consent to participate in the research? | Yes | No |
| 1. Does the research involve some risk of identification of individuals participating in the study? | Yes | No |
| 1. Is the research to be undertaken in ‘gate keeper’ communities (e.g., Colleges) where authority/access permission is required from someone other than the researcher(s) to conduct the study? | Yes | No |
| 1. Does the research involve experiments or other data collection involving the deception of participants? | Yes | No |
| 1. Will the research be undertaken in online spaces where anonymity and privacy might be assumed (e.g. discussion forums, online chat groups)? | Yes | No |
| Based on an initial assessment of your answers to the above questions, your application may be direct to either Stage 2: Proportionate Review or Stage 3: Full Review. In either case, the same full application will need to be completed. Applications may be submitted at any time of year, but please consult the [CHESREC committee’s meeting schedule](https://www.cctl.cam.ac.uk/research-evaluation/ethics-review/cambridge-higher-educational-studies-research-ethics-committee) for to ensure timely submission during term time. You are welcome to contact the CHESREC chair or committee members for advice about the ethics implications of your research project design at any stage. | | |

Please note that the committee may determine that the risk factors involved in your study means that the local-level CHESREC review procedure cannot provide an appropriate degree of review, and may suggest that you submit it to another local-level research ethics commit, or refer it upwards to a relevant School research ethics committee. If you have any questions, please contact the CHESREC committee (chesrec@cctl.cam.ac.uk).

## Section B: Contact details of researchers

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| **Contact details:** | |
| 1. **Principal investigator** (give title, full name and qualifications)  Note: the prinicipal investigator will not normally be a student. However, if the study is a student-led project, please provide details of an endorsing staff member (e.g., supervisor, Director of Studies) as well as the lead student researcher. |  |
| 2. University affiliation and address (name of institute, organisation or unit) |  |
| 3. University (**not** private) e-mail address and telephone number |  |
| 4. **Co-researchers**: is this a student/staff partnership project? | No  Yes  If ‘Yes’, please indicate below whether this project is overseen or has been developed with support from a particular unit, grant body, or university project. |
| 5. Staff co-researchers: give title, full names, position, university affiliation. |  |
| 6. Student-co researchers: give full names, year of study, degree, department, college or other relevant institutional information. |  |
| 7. Name and role of others taking part in the project (e.g., postdoctoral research assistant). |  |

## Section C: Project description

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| **Project description:** | | |
| 8. Title of research project | |  |
| 9. Anticipated duration of overall research project | | months or       years |
| 10. Anticipated start and end dates of the part of the research project involving human participants and/or personal data | | From: (dd/mm/yy)  To: (dd/mm/yy)  **Note**: You will need ethics review **before** you start your research. Proportionate Reviews with two or three CHESREC committee members will take around 2 weeks to process, while Full Reviews with the full committee will take longer. |
| 11. In the case of collaborative research across different university departments or institutions, will you submit or have you submitted this project for ethics review or consideration elsewhere (e.g. collaborators’ local ethics committee, or other local endorsement)? | | N/A – not collaborative  Yes  If ‘Yes’, please attach ethics or other approvals and give more details here.  No  If ‘No’, please explain your reasons here. |
| 12. Are the student/staff co-researchers paid or otherwise incentivised to conduct the research? If yes, give details. | |  |
| 13. Are the participants to be paid or otherwise incentivised to participate? If yes, give details. | |  |
| 14. Have you been funded to undertake this research? If yes, give details about the source of funding | |  |
| 15. Where will the research be conducted? (e.g., on University premises, in Colleges, in the same room the students attend classes?) | |  |
| 16. Brief description of the research project (e.g., purpose, research question/s, anticipated outcomes). You may also attach a longer research proposal, for instance if you have prepared one for a grant application. | | |
| *Please expand section as necessary* | | |
| 17. Brief rationale for the methods and procedures to be used in the research project. | | |
| *Please expand section as necessary* | | |
| 18. Your research study is likely either subject to the special exemptions for research or, in addition, exemptions for academic purposes. Please consult the [University’s academic data protection advice on research using personal data](https://www.research-integrity.admin.cam.ac.uk/academic-research-involving-personal-data) to determine whether the academic purposes exemptions or only the research purposes exemptions applies to your study. | | |
| 1. For research purposes (only) projects:  * If only the research purposes exemptions apply, please confirm that the use of personal data is necessary and proportionate for the aims of the study | N/A (research exemptions don’t apply)  Yes (use of personal data is necessary/proportionate)  No (use of personal data not necessary/proportionate) | |
| 1. For academic purposes projects:  * If you understand the academic expression exemptions to apply, please confirm that the use of personal data is necessary and proportionate for the aims of the study or there is a reasonable belief that the application of these standard UK GDPR expectations would be incompatible with the academic purpose(s). | N/A (academic expression exemptions don’t apply)  Yes (use of personal data is necessary/proportionate)  No (use of personal data not necessary/proportionate) | |
| Section D: Methods for data collection and analysis | | |

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| 19. **Method used:** Please note which methods you intend to collect data in your research. | **Please mark ‘X’** |
| 1. Analysis of particpants existing personal records |  |
| 1. Analysis of participants existing academic records or results |  |
| 1. Snowball sampling (recruiting through contacts of existing participants) |  |
| 1. Participant observation |  |
| 1. Covert observation |  |
| 1. Observation of specific organisational practices |  |
| 1. Participant completes questionnaire in hard copy |  |
| 1. Participant completes online questionnaire or other online task |  |
| 1. Using social media (*Please add note below about whether this is for recruitment or data collection/analysis purposes)* |  |
| 1. Participant performs paper and pencil task |  |
| 1. Participant performs verbal or aural task |  |
| 1. Focus group |  |
| 1. Interview |  |
| 1. Audio recording of participant (you will need specific consent from participants for this) |  |
| 1. Video recording of participant (you will need specific consent from participants for this) |  |
| 1. Photography of participant (you will need specific consent from participants for this) |  |
| 1. Other (please describe below) |  |
| *Please expand section as necessary* | |
| 20. Has the person carrying out the research had previous experience of the procedures to be used? If not, will they receive training or be supervisised? | |
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| 21. If the research project involves students as co-researchers, please indicate here which methods they will be involved with administering, what training they will have received and/or how they will be supervised. | |
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## Section E: Participant details and ethics issues

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| 22. **Evaluation of risk in use of personal data:** In some cases, research projects might involve the processing of personal data that involves a high risk to the participants. The University’s Research Commmittee (UREC) has provided a set of criteria for considering whether personal data processing in research poses a very high ethical risk. Please note that any project flagged by the applicant, or identified by CHESREC, as potentially including very high-risk personal data processing will need to be escalated to a School-level Research Ethics Committee. | | | | |
| a) Does your project involve the utilisation of personal data that is highly and unusually sensitive, particularly where publication of this information could be extremely harmful to the career or personal life of the individual concerned especially where it concerns vulnerable groups. | No | | Yes | |
| b) Does your project involve the the processing of personal data that, in the event of a security breach or inappropriate publication, might endanger the physical health or safety of the individual concerned? | No | | Yes | |
| c) Does your project involve the processing of identifiable biometric or genetic data or the tracking of an identifiable individual’s location or behaviour where the processing poses a plausible risk of harm or significant adverse effect to the individual to whom the data relates in a way that is unusual for the type of research being undertaken? | No | | Yes | |
| d) Does your project involve the profiling of individual children or other vulnerable individuals? (Note: *The UK GDPR has guidelines on automated decision-making and profiling, which involves the automated processing of personal data to evaluate certain things about an individual*) | No | | Yes | |
| e) Does your project involve the collection of sensitive personal data, the monitoring of public spaces, or the profiling of individuals on a large scale in a way that is unusual for the type of research being undertaken? | No | | Yes | |
| f) Does your project involve the direct collection of personal data without the research participant providing consent, where it would normally be provided in comparable research? | No | | Yes | |
| g) Does your projct involve the collection or combination of personal data using a highly innovative technological or organisational solution for which there is a plausible risk of harm or significant adverse effect to individual persons that is unusual for the type of research being undertaken? | No | | Yes | |
| h) Does your proect invovle automated decision-making or profiling that leads to a significant effect for research participants on an individual basis (please note that this is highly unlikely to occur in research)? | No | | Yes | |
| 23. Are the particpants students or staff at the University of Cambridge? | No | | Yes | |
| *If you answered no, please describe your role and relationship to the participants* | | | | |
| 24. Are the particpants your students? (ie students in a course or programme that you coordinate or deliver). | No | | Yes | |
| *If you answered yes, describe your role and relationship to the student participants* | | | | |
| 25. Are you responsible for marking, evaluating, or otherwise reporting on the student participants’ performance? | No | | Yes | |
| *If yes, describe the steps you will take to avoid coercion and to ensure reasonable consent in the following sections and make sure these are communicated in the Participation Information Sheet and Consent Form (e.g., a survey will emailed to all your students with a link to a survey set up in Qualtrics in order to not record details of participating students, or data will be collected by a co-researcher or administrator, anonymised, and will not be analysed until after the completion of the assessment process)* | | | | |
| 26. Are the participants likely to receive any educational advantage or enjoy any positive bias as a result of participating in your research project? | No | | Yes | |
| *If yes, please describe what the advantage/disadvantage or potential for bias and how this will be addressed.* | | | | |
| 27. Description of participants and how you will obtain voluntary consent to take part in the research.   1. Description of participants (who, how many) **and** your criteria for inclusion/exclusion   Please expand fields as necessary   1. Your method(s) of recruitment (please expand fields as necessary) 2. Your processes for obtaining consent from participants. Will it be written, verbal or emailed consent? Will it be opt-in/opt-out consent? (please expand fields as necessary) 3. The timing of obtaining consent: prior or during the research? (please expand fields as necessary) 4. Description of option and process for participants to withdraw consent. How easy will it be for participants to say no, or to withdraw at a later stage of the study? (please expand fields as necessary)   Please **attach separate supporting documents** (preferably in Word) if appropriate for your research. Tick those you are submitting below. If appropriate supporting documents are not submitted, you will be asked to provide these separately, which may delay the ethics review process.   |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | Recruitment and advertisement material (e.g., a poster, social media recruitment text, or brief invitation letter/ email). | |  | Information for participants to read (or hear) before they agree to take part (e.g. written Information Sheet to be provided to each participant to keep that includes a summary of the research, reason for their inclusion and your contact information. This may, if applicable, be an outline oral information script. A template for written information sheets is available from the CHESREC website.) | |  | A record of valid and voluntary consent. (A template for written consent forms is available from the CHESREC website, but you may propose alternate methods of recording consent suitable for your research approach and participants.) | |  | Questions to be asked of participants (e.g. structured or semi-structured interview questions, or a preliminary scope of questions, or a sample questionnaire). | |  | (If relevant) debriefing document after participants have taken part. | |  | If you cannot obtain consent according to CHESREC guidelines and good practice in your discipline, please give a brief explanation and justification of this decision below. | | | | | |
| *If relevant, discuss rationale for NOT obtaining voluntary consent of participants here:* | | | | |
| 28. What are the ethics issues connected with your research and what steps have you taken to address them? **Please do not answer ‘none’.** We need to see evidence that you have identified potential ethics issues with respect to your research and have taken steps to mitigate them. If applicable, please address:   * Participant discomfort, inconvenience, burdens and/or risks (please expand fields as necessary) * Researcher or co-researcher discomfort, inconvenience, burdens and/or risks (please expand fields as necessary) * Data protection/ confidentiality (general issues only here, specific details to be provided in Section E: 24).     For more guidance on potential ethics issues, please see the [Planning Your Research](https://www.research-operations.admin.cam.ac.uk/planning-your-research-0) webpages of the University of Cambridge’s Research Operations Office, as well as the [Data Protection and Ethics](https://www.data.cam.ac.uk/sensitive-data) web resources. | | | | |
| *Describe any other ethics issues relating to the researcher, co-researchers or participants here* | | | | |
| 29. Will your research involve discussing sensitive issues?  This could be information relating to race or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious beliefs, physical/mental health, trade union membership, sexual life or criminal activities. | | Yes | | No |
| *If you answered ‘Yes’, make sure you include some supporting information showing the range of questions covering these issues. Indicate here what this supporting information is, and that it is attached.* | | | | |

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| Section F: Management and handling of personal and other research data | | | |
| For the purpose of completing this section, all information provided by participants is considered research data. Any research data from which participants can be identified is known as *personal data*; any personal data which is sensitive is considered *special category data*.  Management of personal data and special category data of human participants, either directly or via a third party, must comply with the requirements of the [General Data Protection Regulation](https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/general-data-protection-regulation) (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, as set out in the University’s [Guidance on Data Protection and Ethics in Research.](https://www.data.cam.ac.uk/sensitive-data)  For advice on research data management and security, please consult the University of Cambridge’s [Research Data Management](https://www.data.cam.ac.uk/sensitive-data) web pages. You may also consult [online data management training and resources.](https://www.data.cam.ac.uk/support/external) | | | |
| 30. **Please mark ‘X’ against the data you will collect for your research** | | | |
| Consent records (written consent forms, audio-recorded consent) including participant name | | |  |
| Online consent (may be anonymous) | | |  |
| Opt-out forms | | |  |
| Contact details for research purposes only (destroyed when no longer needed for this research) | | |  |
| Contact details kept for future studies | | |  |
| Audio recordings (preferably using PIN-protected audio recorder and stored on a hard drive) | | |  |
| Video recordings | | |  |
| Transcript of audio/video recordings | | |  |
| Photographs | | |  |
| Task results (e.g., paper/online tasks, diary completion) | | |  |
| Questionnaire answers | | |  |
| Field notes | | |  |
| Other (please specify below) | | |  |
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| a.) For **each** of the types of data selected above, state how this will be physically collected then transferred to a local secure storage site (and backed up as necessary).This includes paper records and data captured electronically. | | | |
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| b.) How and where will **each** **type of data** be stored during the research (until the end of all participant involvement, until publication) and **for how long**?Describe the arrangements for ensuring confidentiality, i.e. location of storage (e.g. Nexus 365 OneDrive for Business, SharePoint), security arrangements and de-identification of such data.Do not store unencrypted data in freely available cloud services or unprotected USB drives. | | | |
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| c.) Will you use a unique participant number on research data instead of a participant name?  If **yes,** state at what point the participation number/pseudonymisation will occur, whether or not you will retain a list of participant names against numbers (i.e. pseudonymisation via a linkage list). Where will the list be stored, and when will it be destroyed? If a participant chooses to withdraw from the study, how will their data be extracted and removed from storage and any analysis of findings? | | | |
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| d.) Who will have access to the research data? | | | |
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| e.) If research data is to be shared with another organisation, how will it be transferred / disclosed securely? | | | |
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| f) Will personal data be shared or stored in services located outside the UK or the EEA? If yes, please provide details. | | | |
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| g.) When and how will identifiable data (including audio/video recordings & photos) be destroyed or deleted?  **Note:** Records of consent should be retained for a **minimum** **of** **three years** **after publication or public release**. Some funders may require longer periods (see <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/policy-and-legal/overview-funders-data-policies>). If you wish to retain contact details in order to re-approach participants about future studies, you must detail this in information provided to them and obtain specific consent for this. | | | |
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| h.) Does your research involve the use of secondary data?Common sources of secondary data include censuses, information collected by government departments, organisational records and data that was originally collected for other research purposes. Cambridge educational data may include examination and assessment results, HESA data, College admissions etc.  (If “**No**”, please go to Q31) | | Yes | No |
| i.) Do you have data access agreements for the use of this secondary data? (If so, please attach these.) | | Yes | No |
| j.) Is your use of this secondary data compatible with what participants agreed that their data should be used for? | | Yes | No |
| k.) Could this data be linked back to an individual or individuals? If yes, address how securely any personally identifiable data will be transferred to you, and where and for how long it will be stored during or after the research. Who will have access to it? | | Yes | No |
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| 31. Publication and dissemination of research data | | | |
| How will you disseminate project outcomes at the end of the research period? |  | | |

## Section G: Checklist of supporting documents

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| The following is a list of essential documents that are required for consideration by the Cambridge Higher Education Research Ethics Committee (CHESREC). Please note that without this documentation, the ethics review cannot be completed. | **Please mark ‘X’** |
| Participant Information Sheet |  |
| Participant Consent Record |  |
| Interview or focus group schedules and /or questionnaires |  |
| Please list below and attach any further documentation that you have identified in earlier sections of this application and which you think will help the committee in reaching a decision about your application. | |
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## Section H: Principal Investigator Signature

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| The following section is to be signed by the Principal Investigator listed at the top of this application.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | I declare that the answers above accurately describe the research as presently designed, and that an updated application form will be submitted to CHESREC should the research design change in a way which would alter any of the above responses. I will inform CHESREC if I cease to be the principal investigator on this project and will supply the name and contact details of my successor if appropriate. | | | **Full name (printed)** |  | | **Date** |  | | **Signature**  (digital signatures accepted) |  |   In the case of student-led research projects, the following should be signed by a University of Cambridge member of staff with a supervisory role over the student (e.g., supervisor, Director of Teaching, Senior Tutor)   |  |  | | --- | --- | | I declare that I have discussed the research protocol as outlined in the above application with the student identified as the Principal Investigator. I believe that the study is ethical, and I support the student’s work on this project. | | | **Full name (printed)** |  | | **Role and university affiliation** |  | | **Relationship to the student PI** |  | | **Date** |  | | **Signature**(digital signatures accepted) |  | |

### Additional notes for applicants:

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| 1. To finalise the ethics review process, if CHESREC responds with a favourable ethics opinion, applicants will be asked to now add their allocated CHESREC review code to their Information Sheet and Consent Form. If you choose not to use the provided templates, this is the suggested text for inclusion: **This research project has been reviewed by the Cambridge Higher Education Studies Research Ethics Committee and has received a favourable response (CHESREC code: xxxx). If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact:** [**chesrec@cctl.cam.ac.uk**](mailto:chesrec@cctl.cam.ac.uk)**.** 2. If any changes are made to the research project, including to the methods used or participants targeted, applicants must advise CHESREC and submit an amended application form (highlighting where any changes have been made to the original document). 3. If any risks become apparent during the research project, after commencement following this ethics review, this will require immediate consideration by the Research Committee of an amended application. The Research Ethics Committee contact person must be consulted immediately. 4. Researchers are asked to submit a short report on the progress of their research projects to CHESREC either annually or on completion of the project, whichever comes first. |