

**CHECKLIST: VERBAL CONSENT FROM *RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS***

***FOR RESEARCHER USE ONLY[[1]](#footnote-1)***

**Title of Project: <Insert Title>**

**Name of Researcher and School: <Insert Name and School>**

**RGEC Ref no: <Insert ER no.>**

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| SECTIONS BELOW TO BE AMENDED BY THE RESEARCHER AS APPROPRIATE:   1. **Process of obtaining verbal consent from research participants:** 2. Give an account of how you will verbally **explain** to the research participants as clearly as possible and in terms that they are familiar with (possibly by reading out the Participant Information Sheet, and explaining any queries):  * The **aims** and **objectives** of your research; * The reasons why you have **selected** them for this research; * The reasons why their story/knowledge/understanding/opinions are **relevant** to your research; * The ways in which the research data will be **used**: for example, in a dissertation/thesis/publications/blogs/reports/policy documents.  |  | | --- | | *Please expand the box as necessary* |  1. I will **verbally explain** to the research participants:  * That they can **withdraw** from the research at any time without giving a reason, and without it having an impact on their marks/assessments or future studies / on their future care and/or that they can tell me not to use certain types of information at any time; * What **confidentiality** means in the context of the research and how confidentiality will be maintained in this particular context (OR explain why confidentiality cannot be maintained in this particular case – e.g. interview group/focus group/face-to-face meetings or any other form of communication); “All members of the group will agree that anything they hear during a group session, including personal details, they will keep confidential.”   In exceptional circumstances, where a disclosure is made regarding your safety or that of others, the researcher will be legally requires to pass that information on to an appropriate individual or agency.   * What **anonymity** means and how it will be maintained in this particular context (OR I will ask approval for the use of their name/location/company/organisation (the researcher should be aware that the company / organisation may need to provide consent to this) in the final report/dissertation/further publication). * I will ensure that the participant is informed of the findings of the research when they are published.  1. Describe below how you will **verbally explain** to your informants that they can **withdraw** from the research at any time, what **confidentiality** and **anonymity** mean in your research context, and how you will explain these terms to your informants:  |  | | --- | | *Please expand the box as necessary* |  1. I will verbally **check** (possibly by reading out the written Consent Form) with the research participants that (tick, as applicable):  * They are happy to be interviewed and/or observed by me; * They are happy for me to be present at and/or participate in their activities; * They are happy for me to take notes on the interview/observations/interactions; * They are happy for the interview/observation/interaction to be:   + photographed   + video taped   + audio taped   + ***Where photographs, video or audio tape are to be shown to others, specific and separate consent should be sought in written, video or audio form.***   + ***This consent should involve a full explanation of the kinds of contexts in which these media are to be shown.***   + ***Media should not be published – online or elsewhere – without specific consent.*** * They are happy to be contacted again for a further interview should that be required.  1. I will give the research participants the opportunity to **ask any questions** about any of the above or any other concerns they may have. 2. I understand that seeking verbal consent will involve explaining all I have documented above and that verbal consent is an ongoing process. I understand that I will need to document the ongoing process of verbal consent. 3. **Process in which verbal consent cannot be obtained:**   If participant observation and/or other ethnographic research methods will be used in which verbal consent will not or cannot be sought/obtained, the following need to be considered by the researcher:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | 1) | Explain why the **aims and objectives** of the research cannot always be fully explained to the research participants (this might differ per group/individual): | |  |  | | 2) | Explain why **confidentiality** and/or **anonymity** cannot be explained and/or maintained: | |  |  | | 3) | Explain why research participants cannot be asked for **approval** for recording and/or particular use of information: | |  |  | | 4) | Explain how you ensure that negative or **harmful impacts** of the research on the research participants will be minimised: | |  |  |  1. **Researcher Training and Consultation of Professional Guidelines** 2. I confirm that in the course of my research design, I have received the following training in the ethical aspects of my research (please give details of any modules, CPD or other research ethics training you have attended in the last 18 months):  |  | | --- | |  |  1. I confirm that I have read and carefully considered the ethical guidelines of the main   professional associations for my subject area (eg: the ASA ethical guidelines: <https://www.theasa.org/ethics/guidelines.shtml>) and incorporated them into my research design.  Researcher Signature:  Date: |  |  |

***Notes for use***

[to be removed before submission for review]

Note: This is a form that should be used as a checklist of issues to be considered before you conduct research using verbal consent. It also documents how you plan to do so and should be completed in as much detail as possible to demonstrate that you have thought through the issues fully.

As such, the form also allows the SREO or C-REC to further evaluate whether your decision to use verbal consent is appropriate.

Please remember, since reviewers may not know you personally or be familiar with your research design, providing this information helps them to understand how you plan to conduct your research.

It is **not** a form to be given to the research participants to complete or sign.

Researchers should keep in mind that use of consent in research serves two important and closely linked principles:

Firstly, a fundamental principle of ethical research is that **participation and consent is voluntary and informed**. Instances in which the real reason for participation is initially ‘masked’ from individuals (such as is employed in Psychology or other disciplines) will be subject to discipline-based conventions or conditions that will be spelled out to the reviewing Ethics Committee at review stage.

Secondly, the storing and **processing of any personal data for research purposes is subject to legal requirements** and data protection legislation that researchers need to understand and follow. This legislation expects that participants who give consent for their data to be used understand how it will be stored, processed and eventually destroyed[[2]](#footnote-2). If the data is deemed to be *Special Category Data[[3]](#footnote-3)*, there are more stringent requirements for safeguarding what will be processed to avoid breaching fundamental data rights. Applicants should seek appropriate advice and guidance if they have any doubts about their responsibilities.

The consent process should usually cover the following areas:

1. The participant’s understanding of the research
2. Consent to the way in which research will be carried out
3. Privacy and confidentiality of information (the *ethical* basis of research)
4. Right to withdraw participation and/ or data in the study
5. Data protection (*legal* issues in data management
6. Future data re-use (when **specifically** required)

* All requests for consent should be **specific[[4]](#footnote-4)**, **unambiguous** and **informed.** All statements above that do not apply to the research should be removed. Studies that require different data types to be taken or use different media within the same project should take care that consent is *granular* whenever possible.
* In some fields of research, it could be helpful to re-use the data for future research and analysis. If it is likely that your data is of this kind and you want to have the option to use the data for other purposes, or for it to be available to other researchers, you must obtain **explicit** permission and describe what you want the participant to agree to in the Explanatory Statement.
* If the study involves the possible disclosure of information (either in focus groups, one to one interviews or through being passed on in any other forms of communication), the duty to pass on information that may have a bearing on the safety of others (for example in the context of possible terrorism or safe-guarding concerns) will require that the participant is informed of this fact.

1. To be submitted as supporting documentation for ethical review and approval [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “ Any freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous indication of the data subject's wishes by which he or she, by a statement or by a clear affirmative action, signifies agreement to the processing of personal data relating to him or her,” GDPR Article 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Data relating to race, ethnic origin, politics, religion, trade union membership, genetics, biometrics (where used for ID purposes), health, sex life, or sexual orientation. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. GDPR recital 32 states that silence, pre-ticked consent boxes or assumptions of consent will **not** be considered valid for processing data. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)