

## **HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

For all queries, please contact:  
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## **Consent Form Requirements**

### **Letterhead**

The first sheet of the Consent should generally be printed on ECU letterhead paper prior to distribution to participants. This is appropriate for all student projects.

However, if the project is being conducted in collaboration with another agency (e.g. research conducted in hospitals) or is part of a multicentre research project, it may be more appropriate to use that agency's letterhead. However, the involvement of researchers from ECU should be mentioned in the information provided to participants.

### **Title of the project**

The title of the project should be clearly printed on the document. The title used is usually the same as that provided on the ethics application, but in some cases it may be appropriate to use a short title or lay title.

### **Researchers and Contact details**

#### **Student projects**

The name and contact details of both the student and the supervisor should be provided. The School should be included.

#### **Staff projects**

Members of the research team and their contact details should be provided, with the Chief Investigator clearly identified. The School should be included.

### **Statement indicating consent to participate**

Although the wording of the Consent Form may vary according to the potential participants to be recruited, the following essential features must be included in the document:

The Consent Form must include statements that the participant:

- has been provided with a copy of the Information Letter for Participants, explaining the research study
- has read and understood the information provided
- has been given the opportunity to ask questions and has had any questions answered to their satisfaction
- is aware that if they have any additional questions they can contact the research team
- understands that participation in the research project will involve:
  - list all procedures that the participants are requested to participate in (as outlined in the Information Letter for Participants)
- understands that the information provided will be kept confidential, and that the identity of participants will not be disclosed without consent
- understands that the information provided will only be used for the purposes of this research project, and understands how the information is to be used
- understands that they are free to withdraw from further participation at any time, without explanation or penalty
- freely agrees to participate in the project

# Consent Form

## Other issues

### Consent for audiovisual recording

If the research project involves audiovisual recording as part of the data collection procedures, participant consent to be recorded should be obtained. A specific statement should be included in the Consent Form indicating to participants what recording method will be used, and what will happen to the recording after the completion of the project.

### Consent for further use of data and/or samples collected

In general, data and/or samples collected from participants should only be used for the purposes for which they were originally collected. However, there may be cases where researchers may wish to use the data and/or samples for future research projects, for other purposes, or to make it available for other researchers.

If researchers wish to have this option, this should be explained to the participants in the Information Letter and specific consent should be obtained. Participants should be provided with options, e.g.:

- The data and/or samples collected for the purposes of this research project may be used in further approved research projects provided my name and any other identifying information is removed.
- The data and/or samples collected for the purposes of this research project may not be used in further approved research projects without my consent.
- The data and/or samples collected may be used only for the purposes of this research project.

### Consent for the use of personal information from other agencies or institutions

Where a research project involves access to personal information about participants from another agency or institution (e.g. access to medical records), the following applies:

- the Information Letter for Participants needs to indicate to participants what information will be accessed, in what form, how the information will be used, and who will have access to the information
- the Consent Form needs to specifically indicate that participants have given their consent for this access and for the use of the information (as described in the Information Letter)

Where a Commonwealth or private sector organisation is involved, legislative guidelines apply. It is recommended that researchers consult the information available on the website of the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner: <http://www.privacy.gov.au/>

### Statement indicating consent to participate – parents and/or guardians

Where children and/or young people (people under 18 years of age) are potential participants, an Information Letter for Participants should be prepared explaining the study to parents and/or guardians, and separate additional consent should be obtained from parents and/or guardians. The Information Letter for Participants and the Consent Form should be structured and worded so that it seeks consent from the parents and/or guardians for the participation of the child or young person in the research project.

The Consent Form must include statements that the parent and/or guardian:

- has been provided with a copy of the Information Letter, explaining the research study
- has read and understood the information provided
- has been given the opportunity to ask questions and has had any questions answered to their satisfaction
- is aware that if they have any additional questions they can contact the research team
- understands that participation in the research project by the child or young person will involve:
  - list all procedures that the child or young person is requested to participate in (as outlined in the Information Letter)
- understands that the information provided will be kept confidential, and that the identity of the child or young person and the identity of the parent and/or guardian will not be disclosed without consent
- understands that the information provided will only be used for the purposes of this research project, and understands how the information is to be used
- understands that they are free to withdraw the child or young person from the study, and that the child or young person is free to withdraw from further participation at any time, without explanation or penalty
- understands any consequences of withdrawal from the research project relating to withdrawal of data already collected
- freely agrees to allow the child or young person to participate in the project

Note that the Consent Form for parents and/or guardians does not replace consent from the participant. The *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* indicates that children and young people who are able to understand the research project and have sufficient competence to make a decision to participate should be provided with the opportunity to give consent. The child's or young person's refusal to participate in a research project must be respected.