**Procedures for Category Approvals for Research Ethics Review: Taught Courses**

**Background:** On many courses there are modules where the students may undertake identical or at least very similar small-scale data collection as part of their learning and teaching and/or assessment e.g., as part of laboratory classes, on research methods modules, on placements in schools or other work settings. This list is not exhaustive. Rather than individual applications having to be made to the relevant College Teaching Programme Research Ethics Committee (CTPREC) each year, a category approval can be granted by the CTPREC. This then gives the module Leader overarching Ethical Approval although students undertaking the projects are still required to undertake local ethical review, but this can be lighter touch as long as it ensures that the research is carried out ethically and legally. You can develop your own ethics proforma/ checklist for this but you must include it with the category approval application so it can be approved by the committee. Category approval is **not** for final student research projects or dissertations as for these students must complete the appropriate UREC Form (1,2,3, or 4).

**Procedure**

The module leader is required to complete the following form and attach any necessary documents used in the module. The completed form is sent to the College Research Ethics Chair for review[[1]](#footnote-1). Once category approval is granted, it will run for five years. If the research project significantly changes the module leader is required to notify the CTPREC of the changes and request re-approval.

**Auditing Processes**

Category approvals will be checked as part of the review of programmes.

**Application for Category Research Ethics Approval**

**College:**

**Department:**

**Course:**

**Module:**

**Module leader:**

**Email address:**

**Date:**

**Please complete the following checklist (to be completed by the module leader)**

| **Question** | **Yes/No** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Will any of the participants be vulnerable?

*Note: Vulnerable people include children and young people, people with learning disabilities, people who may be limited by age or sickness, pregnancy, people researched because of a condition they have, etc. See full definition on ethics website in the document* [***Code of Practice for Researchers Working with Vulnerable Populations***](https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/excellence/ethics-and-integrity/guidance) *(under the Supplementary University Polices and Good Research Practice Guidance)* |  |
| 1. Are drugs, placebos, or other substances (e.g., food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive, or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?
 |  |
| 1. Will tissue samples (including blood) be obtained from participants?
 |  |
| 1. Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?
 |  |
| 1. Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?
 |  |
| 1. Is there any reasonable and foreseeable risk of physical or emotional harm to any of the participants?

*Note: Harm may be caused by distressing or intrusive interview questions, uncomfortable procedures involving the participant, invasion of privacy, topics relating to highly personal information, topics relating to illegal activity, or topics that are anxiety provoking, etc.* |  |
| 1. Will anyone be taking part without giving their informed consent?
 |  |
| 1. Is it covert research?

*Note: ‘Covert research’ refers to research that is conducted without the knowledge of participants.* |  |
| 1. Will the research output allow identification of any individual who has not given their express consent to be identified?
 |  |

1. **Description of the research activity undertaken by all students:** If it is more helpful the assessment brief for the module specifying what the students are required to do can be pasted here.

*Please describe the nature of the research that you will carry out with your students and provide details about the participants that you will recruit (for example are they the students themselves or are they expected to collect a small amount of data from other people such as family members or close friends). Please note that these research activities should require only a small number of participants because they are designed for training/educational purposes. You should, also explain whether this is a single project in which all students collect identical data or if each student has a slightly different approach or a different angle to the project. If each student has a largely different project – which means they use different measures and/or different research questions or different populations, then categorical approvals may not be the way forward for your module. There are other options for gaining ethical clearance for student projects, which involve either applying through CONVERIS or gaining ethics for each student individually by completing one of the UREC forms. If you are unsure, please contact your College Chair to discuss your activities.*

**2. Description of the documentation that students will use/develop for the research activity (e.g., Participant information sheet, consent form, ethics checklist) or practical booklets and documentation.**

*If this section, please explain whether students will produce their own PIS and consent form or whether you as a module leader will provide these documents completed to them. In identical projects you may wish to develop these forms yourself and ask students to distribute them to their participants (i.e., a small number of participants that they will recruit). If the projects are not identical but similar, you may want to make a template and ask students to adapt it to their needs (for example you may wish to leave some spaces empty to add their own information). Within the category approval option, we assume as reviewers that the vast majority of information on the PIS and consent forms will be identical or very similar. If this is not the case, this means that category approvals may not be the way forward for your module. Once again there are other ways to gain ethical clearance for student projects. If you are unsure, please contact your College Chair to discuss your activities. If you are using any checklists, or practical booklets you can send them to the reviewer to check them.*

**3. Description of the Ethics approval process and ethical review undertaken by the module teaching team to ensure that the research activities that students conduct adhere to SHU Ethical Guidelines and GDPR.**

*In this section you are asked to explain how you will ensure that GDPR guidelines are followed by your students. If you provide the students with a pre-completed PIS and consent form, then you should attach them in this form so that the reviewers can check that the correct GDPR information is provided. If students develop their own PIS and consent forms please explain how you will review them. For example, will this be part of their assessment? Or will you as a module leader review them and will these be submitted in BB? As a module leader you should make sure that consent is safely stored in case the research activities are audited. In this section, please explain how and where you will store them (if the students store the consent forms, they need to bring the to you if they are paper versions or send them to you if they are electronic). In any case, please provide details about this process. For example, if these are online surveys or online interviews and you receive verbal consent, you need to have some evidence of this process.*

**4. Is a Health and Safety Risk Assessment required for the research activities?** Yes/ No

If yes, please attach the risk assessment form with this form.

If no, please explain why this is not required. Please choose one of the following options

**Will the data be collected fully online (no face-to-face contact with participants)?**

[ ]  Yes

[ ]  No

**Will the proposed data collection take place on campus?**

 [ ]  Yes

[ ]  No

**Where will the data collection take place?**

 (Tick as many as apply if data collection will take place in multiple venues)

|  | **Location**  | **Please specify**  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [ ]  | Researcher's Residence |  |
| [ ]  | Participant's Residence |  |
| [ ]  | Education Establishment |  |
| [ ]  | Other e.g. business/voluntary organisation, public venue  |  |

**If face-to-face contact with participants is required for your study? Please stipulate below how you will comply with any government requirements related to Covid-19 and social distancing or other limitations on contact. Here is a link to the current Covid advice for staff, this may help in the mitigation against the risk of Covid infections during your research project.** [COVID 19 (sharepoint.com)](https://sheffieldhallam.sharepoint.com/sites/3069/SitePages/COVID-19.aspx)

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**5. Does the module handbook and student information sheets include the standard information on Research Ethics and GDPR requirements?** Yes/ No.

The following statement should be included in all participant information sheets to ensure that the research is lawful (it can be in smaller print).

*The University undertakes research as part of its function for the community under its legal status. Data protection allows us to use personal data for research with appropriate safeguards in place under the legal basis of public tasks that are in the public interest. A full statement of your rights can be found at:*[*https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/privacy-notices/privacy-notice-for-research*](https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/privacy-notices/privacy-notice-for-research)

*All University research is reviewed to ensure that participants are treated appropriately, and their rights respected. This study was approved by the College Research Ethics Committee.*

*If you have concerns about how the research was conducted or how you were treated, please contact Dr Mayur Ranchordas (Head of Ethics; e-mail: M.Ranchordas@shu.ac.uk). If you have a query about how your data are used, you would like to report a data security breach, or you would like to complain about how your personal data have been used, please contact the Data Protection Officer (DPO@shu.ac.uk). Both above-mentioned individuals can also be contacted by telephone (0114 225 5555) or by writing to Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield, S1 1WBT.*

1. Please return this form completed with any supporting documents to your College Research Chair:

College of Social Sciences and Arts – Dr Antonia Ypsilanti (a.ypsilanti@shu.ac.uk )

College of Business, Technology and Engineering – Dr Tony Lynn (t.lynn@shu.ac.uk )

College of Health, Wellbeing and Life Sciences – Dr Nikki Jordan-Mahy (n.jordan-mahy@shu.ac.uk ) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)