

Research Ethics Approval Process

Principles underpinning educational research at City of Bristol College

The Academy of Social Sciences (AcSS) through in-depth consultation with its member learned societies (including BERA) have established some principles of ethical research:

- a. Social science is fundamental to a democratic society, and should be inclusive of different interests, values, funders, methods and perspectives.
- b. All social science should respect the privacy, autonomy, diversity, values and dignity of individuals, groups and communities.
- c. All social science should be conducted with integrity throughout, employing the most appropriate methods for the research purpose.
- d. All social scientists should act with regard to their social responsibilities in conducting and disseminating their research.
- e. All social science should aim to maximise benefit and minimise harm.

Responsibilities of those conducting educational research at City of Bristol College

Please note that the recent [BERA 2018](#) ethical guidelines emphasise the following:

- responsibilities to participants
- responsibilities to sponsors, clients and stakeholders in research
- responsibilities to the community of educational researchers
- responsibilities for publication and dissemination
- responsibilities for researchers' wellbeing and development.

Please note that in accordance with these principles and responsibilities:

1. As a general rule you must obtain **full and explicit consent from participants** for your research (BERA 2018, 9-17). Participants' rights not to consent to participate in research are extremely important. Participants' **rights to withdraw** from the research must be respected and acted upon whenever reasonably possible.
2. If you are involved in primary research, **you must observe participants' rights to anonymity** unless they expressly ask to have their real names used (BERA 2018, 21-22).
3. Please note that any relevant documentation (e.g. information sheets or consent forms if used) should be attached with your ethics form so that they can be reviewed.
4. If you are asked to resubmit your application following review, then you must submit a revised form with responses to the comments (please use track changes).

This form is divided into three Sections:

- **Section A** consists of an overview of the project and an ethical checklist. This should be completed by all staff and students undertaking research activity. If you answer Yes to any of the questions please complete Section B.
- **Section B** consists of the request from staff or students to undertake primary research. This section is not required for students who have answered NO to all questions in Section A i.e. those undertaking secondary research, that is to say research based on the analysis or reanalysis of materials demonstrably in the public domain
- **Section C** is the response of the Department to that request.

SECTION A – to be completed by all researchers

Name of applicant:	
Student ID no.	
Type of Assessment	
Programme of Study	

Date of submission of application:	
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Supervisor name and department name:
Title of research project:

1. Brief overview OF THE STUDY: Describe the aims and purposes of the research proposed. <u>Outline the research questions and methods to be used and list the main types of research participants you intend to collect data from.</u>

RESEARCH ETHICS CHECKLIST

Please confirm you have consulted the guidelines of a professional association relevant to your discipline (i.e. BERA, BSA or BPS) in completing this checklist (please consult your supervisor if necessary) ☐

Please confirm that you and your supervisor have discussed research ethics and safety issues ☐

Answer each question below by ticking the appropriate box:

	Yes	No
1. Will the research involve gathering personal information on identifiable living individuals?	☐	☐
2. Will the research involve gathering confidential information of any kind (i.e. information not currently in the public domain)?	☐	☐
3. Will the research involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent (e.g. children, adults with learning difficulties)?	☐	☐
4. Will the research require the cooperation of a “gatekeeper,” e.g. an authority figure who has the power to grant access to groups and individuals possibly without their informed consent?	☐	☐
5. Will participants be remunerated in some form for the information they are asked to provide (e.g. being paid for interviews)?	☐	☐
6. Could the research cause harm to subjects or have negative consequences for them that exceed those experienced in everyday life?	☐	☐
7. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, will the research raise any issues which should be the subject of ethical consideration and/or review?	☐	☐
8. Does the research entail potential security or health and safety risks to the researcher that exceed those experienced in everyday life?	☐	☐
9. It is suggested that research reports are made available publicly upon completion to participants. Do you or your supervisor feel that, for any reasons whatsoever, access to your final report may need to be restricted?	☐	☐

If you have ticked **NO** to all questions, please sign below:

Student signature	Date

Supervisor signature	Date

If you ticked **Yes** to any of the questions in section A, please fill in the relevant sections in **Section B** and sign at the end of that section.

SECTION B - To be completed by researchers having answered Yes to any of the previous questions in Section A

1. RECRUITMENT/SELECTION PROCEDURES: How will study participants be selected? What information will be provided about the study so that participants can make an informed decision. Is there any sense in which participants might feel 'obliged' to participate?
- Information provided to participants must consist of a brief factual account of the study aims and data collection methods so that participants can make an informed decision, if necessary following further discussion with the researcher. - The approach taken to requesting consent must be sufficiently separate from the provision of information. As a general rule researchers will use information sheets and consent forms, although there may be cases in which this is not appropriate. - If you are considering using social media to recruit and select participants please read the BERA 2018 guidelines on this topic and/or the ESRC guidance on internet-mediated research (link on p.11 of the BERA 2018 guidelines)
2. VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS: Specify whether the research will include vulnerable groups, including children, vulnerable adults or others. If so, please explain what will be done to facilitate their participation and reduce possible harm to them. If working with people with disabilities, please explain how you will provide any special support that they may need, for instance, in relation to communication or to access to the interview site.
Consider if there are any particular issues for children, babies, vulnerable adults, English as a Second Language (ESL) speakers, refugees and other potentially vulnerable participants? How will you ensure your research approach takes account of vulnerabilities?
3. INFORMED CONSENT: Please explain your approach to how consent is to be obtained, including from parents, carers and children as appropriate. As a general rule a consent form should be used, unless this is not appropriate (if so please explain why). A copy of the proposed consent form, written in simple, non-technical language intelligible to your participants should be attached with this form. Participants' entitlement to withdraw consent should be explained on the consent form used.
- Please explain clearly how children are asked for assent to participate - Information should be provided to participants outlining rationale for study - Consider how information will be provided to parents, and how consent will be requested from parents if appropriate. - As a general rule consent should be explicit. Participants should opt-in not opt-out - Participants' right to withdraw must be respected and acted upon whenever reasonably possible. If participants' data is no longer identifiable and cannot be disaggregated as data analysis is already at an advanced stage then full withdrawal of all data may not be possible.

4. PARTICIPANTS IN DEPENDENT RELATIONSHIPS: Specify whether participants will include students or others in a dependent relationship (this could affect their ability to decline to participate). For example, they may be children in a class you are teaching or working with. How will you ensure that participants feel able not to consent to the research or to withdraw?
Carefully consider whether potential participants can give unrestrained informed consent and how to reassure potential participants that non-participation is acceptable and will be fully respected (see BERA 2018 guidelines pages 9-13 on consent)
5. PARTICIPANTS WHO YOU WORK WITH OR FOR: Explain how you have considered relationships with colleagues who you work with or managers you work for as part of this research (if appropriate). If you are conducting your research on placement this also applies to staff in the school or setting you are working within.
Carefully consider any particular issues of conducting research with staff in place of work. How will you deal with these? How will you ensure that your role as a researcher is clear to colleagues? Will you only be conducting the research at specific times in the workplace? If so how will you make this clear to colleagues and/or managers?
6. CONFIDENTIALITY: Please state who will have access to the data and which measures will be adopted to maintain the confidentiality of research participants. Will the data be anonymised and if so in what ways?
- Explain how you will achieve anonymity if appropriate e.g. using pseudonyms - Ensure that any documentation relating to the research maintains confidentiality and anonymity when appropriate. Consider how participants might be identified with reference to any information you might provide. - Consider checking the data you have collected from research participants is factually accurate. As a general rule, it is considered good practice to allow participants to review their contributions before analysis. - Consider whether participants have a right to read the final report, in addition to having the right to view any data that concerns them.
7. PROTECTION OF RESEARCHER (Applicant): Please state briefly any precautions being taken to protect your health and safety if appropriate. Is there anything about the environment in which you will be researching that requires you to take extra precautions? Do you have any health condition that might give you serious problems during your fieldwork?
- Ensure you are competent to conduct the research, including all research methods you plan to use - Consider any potential risks in the environments and contexts you are researching in. Please consult BERA 2018 guidelines (pages 35-36)
8. ANTICIPATED USE OF RESEARCH DATA: Do you anticipate using your data beyond your research project, e.g. for publishing articles or in a report for your organisation? If so, please state

- You must carefully consider how you use data relating to your research project. As a general rule data (and particularly any personal data) should be destroyed following completion of the research project.
- However, you should consider if there is a secondary use of the research data, and how this will be handled appropriately considering your responsibilities to participants and to your organisation (if appropriate). Will it be necessary to request further consent from participants?

9. DATA PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT: How do you intend to store your data? Have you thought carefully about archiving methods and where to keep confidential information? What data protection procedures will you follow to ensure the anonymity of your participants at all times? Please ensure you are aware of the GDPR guidelines.

- Consider how will you store and subsequently destroy data. Data must be stored securely. Use password protection and data encryption; avoid portable storage devices; anonymise records and avoid transferring data by email (please see BERA 2018 guidelines, page 25).
- Consider how personal data will be processed in accordance with GDPR guidelines. Researchers must have participants' explicit permission to disclose personal information to third parties. Please read the BERA 2018 guidelines on privacy and data storage (pages 21-24 and page 16). All citizens are entitled to know how and why their data is being stored, how data will be used and to whom it will be made available.
- Please explain your procedure for dealing with disclosure (consider pages 25-26 of BERA 2018), and information that you may come across regarding illegal or harmful activities.

10. FEEDBACK TO PARTICIPANTS: Will the data or findings of this research be made available to participants or to others? If so, specify the form and timescale for feedback – e.g. an electronic copy of your dissertation or report. What commitments will be made to participants regarding feedback? How will these obligations be verified?

- For many students the research will be reported as a dissertation report and may be shared with future students. Would you like to disseminate it in other ways? It might be appropriate to give a copy to the school or setting in which you have done the research. Alternatively, it might not be appropriate on ethical grounds (for example if you have interviewed Teaching Assistants on their perspectives of school support it might break confidentiality to give a copy to the Head teacher. Please consider your responsibilities for dissemination (BERA 2018, pages 32-35), and discuss with your supervisor what is appropriate for your project.

DURATION OF PROJECT	
START DATE	

END DATE	
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Student Signature	Date

Document checklist for submission

I have completed and include relevant documents with this form, which may include:
Information sheet ☐
Consent form ☐
Interview schedule ☐
Observation schedule ☐
Survey ☐
Systematic literature review format ☐

SECTION C – Review and decision.

Supervising Tutor and moderator use only:

Decision on ethics form

Pass	You can now start your research with continued supervision	
Conditional pass	You can start your research when you meet the following conditions:	
Redraft the form and resubmit	Please reconsider your approach to ethics and make changes taking account of the following comments:	
Refer to Research Ethics Committee	The Research Ethics Committee will examine the issues raised in your ethics form. Please await further guidance.	

Supervisor signature	Date
Moderator signature	Date

Please note that if necessary the Research Ethics Committee (or another appointed reviewer) may be asked to make further comments on this application, and these will be made in the box below:

Further notes from the Research Ethics Committee (or other reviewers if necessary)	
Signature (Research Ethics Committee Member)	Date