Participant information sheet

Participant Information Sheet Template

The highlighted text in square brackets [] provides guidance on what to include in the sheet. Use plain language and second person narrative throughout e.g. ‘You are invited to…’. The project information and language used should be tailored to the particular participant group. Paragraph headings can also be modified to suit. Include a version number and date updated in the footer. Delete highlighting and any guidance text before submitting to the HREC.

PROJECT TITLE: Plain language title for participants

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL NUMBER: H-2022-\*\*\*

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: This will be the applicant on the application form.

STUDENT RESEARCHER: \*Delete if not relevant

STUDENT’S DEGREE: \*Delete if not relevant

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in the research project described below.

What is the project about?

This research project is about….

[Describe in plain language a summary of what the research project is about. Include its aims and objectives, what you hope to achieve and any limitations.]

Who is undertaking the project?

This project is being conducted by [insert name(s)]. If relevant add the following: This research will form the basis for the degree of [insert degree] at the University of Adelaide under the supervision of [insert name of supervisor(s)].

[Include details of any commercial sponsors, external partners and funding.]

Why am I being invited to participate?

You are being invited as you are….

[Describe the capacity in which participants are being invited to take part in this project. Include the participant selection criteria as described in section 3.6 of the application]

What am I being invited to do?

You are being invited to….

[Describe in plain language what the project involves in relation to the participant:

Procedures, questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, interviews

Outline the nature of survey, focus group, or interview questions and themes

Any follow up that may be requested

Use of any recording (audio, video) or photographs

Location of activities.]

How much time will my involvement in the project take?

[Describe how much time the participant will need to participate in the project (e.g. how long will the questionnaire/interview take, how many follow up visits are required, how many testing sessions will there be, how long and how often?). If participants are to be reimbursed for their time include these details.]

Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?

[Describe any foreseeable risks, side effects, emotional distress, discomforts, inconveniences or restrictions, both immediate and later. If there are no foreseeable risks, you should state this rather than saying there are ‘no risks’. Indicate how any risks will be mitigated. Include the measures that will be taken in the event of an incident or adverse event. Ensure this information reflects sections 4.1 and 4.2 of the application.]

What are the potential benefits of the research project?

[Describe the potential benefits of the project to the participant and/or the community, indicating that the benefits of research cannot be guaranteed i.e. use ‘the research may result in’ rather ‘the research will result in’. Do not overstate the benefits or provide unrealistic expectations. If there are no immediate benefits to the participant, this should be stated.]

Can I withdraw from the project?

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at [include appropriate time frame.]

 [Any limitations on withdrawing should be described including at what points it will be possible to withdraw their data e.g. only up until the submission of the thesis, for an anonymous survey only before submission of the survey, interview withdrawal period of until validation of transcript is appropriate, etc. Consider people cannot withdraw identifiable data post analysis/publication.]

If the research involves dependent or unequal relationships, include a statement that outlines that non-participation or withdrawal will not affect their ongoing treatment/employment/studies at the University of Adelaide etc.]

What will happen to my information?

[The items to cover here are privacy and confidentiality, security, storage, publishing, presenting, sharing, and future use.

Confidentiality and privacy: Outline if participant names or pseudonyms will be used, or if participation is anonymous. In some situations, even if identifiers are removed, if the sample of participants is small and from a discrete population, there may be the potential that individuals could be identifiable. Any limitations of de-identification need to be expressed in the participant information sheet and consent form e.g. while all efforts will be made to remove any information that might identify you, as the sample size is small, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed. However, the utmost care will be taken to ensure that no personally identifying details are revealed.

Storage: Include statements about how the information and project records will be securely stored, who will have access to them, how long they will be kept.

Publishing: Describe how information will be used and results reported and publicised e.g. publications, journal articles, report to funding body, PhD/Honours/Master’s thesis or if presentations are intended etc. Clarify if participants will be identified in publications, or if only summary data will be published. Ensure the information provided reflects the publication intentions described at section 5.7 of the application.

Sharing: If participants are given access to interview transcripts this should be outlined. Describe how the results or a summary of the results will be made available to the participants.

If there is an intention for data/tissue to be used in future research or data to be shared (e.g. in an online repository such as Figshare) this should be described.]

Your information will only be used as described in this participant information sheet and it will only be disclosed according to the consent provided, except as required by law.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?

[Include details of how the participant can contact the researcher/s to ask questions about the project. Add the name, title and telephone numbers of all members of the research group. The Applicant or Project Manager/Principal Supervisor should be listed as the primary contact.

For University researchers it is preferred that University telephone numbers and email addresses are used instead.]

For the protection of the researchers the Committee prefers that personal telephone numbers and personal email addresses are not listed. This is particularly relevant as related to student researchers.]

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Adelaide (approval number H-2022-xxx). This research project will be conducted according to the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (Updated 2018). If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the Principal Investigator. If you wish to speak with an independent person regarding concerns or a complaint, the University’s policy on research involving human participants, or your rights as a participant, please contact the Human Research Ethics Committee’s Secretariat on:

Phone: +61 8 8313 6028

Email: hrec@adelaide.edu.au

Post: Level 3, Rundle Mall Plaza, 50 Rundle Mall, ADELAIDE SA 5000

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

[If the research is being conducted overseas, where possible a local contact for any complaints should be listed.]

If I want to participate, what do I do?

[Clearly describe what the researcher and/or the participant will need to do in order for the participant to join the study e.g. how to complete and return a survey, instructions for returning signed consent forms, arrangements for booking appointments, contact the research team via email/phone, etc.]

Yours sincerely,

List all researchers’ names and titles