What risk level is the research you are proposing? What forms should you complete?

EXEMPT FROM REVIEW

Will you be using an existing set of data, which you will then re-interpret/analyse? If YES your project may be considered “exempt from review”. Please complete page 1 of the Ethics Checklist (Ethics Checklist for research projects exempt from review) and the “Exempt from Review” Form (Application for Review by the College Human Ethics Advisory Network of “Exempt from review” research).

NEGLIGENCE RISK

Will you be conducting a mail-based or web-based survey (or equivalent)? Will participants be non-identifiable at every stage of the survey? If YES, your project may be considered “Negligible Risk”. Please complete page 2 of the Ethics Checklist (see Ethics Checklist for research projects exempt from review) and the Negligible/Low Risk Form (Application for Review by the College Human Ethics Advisory Network of Negligible/Low Risk Research).

LOW RISK

Will you be conducting an identifiable survey, interview, focus group or action research project? Will all your participants be consenting adults? If YES, your project may be considered “Low Risk”. Please complete page 3 onwards of the Ethics Checklist (see Ethics Checklist for research projects exempt from review) and the Negligible/Low Risk Form.

Who should you contact if you have any questions, or need copies of ethics forms?

You should contact your Supervisor, Course Coordinator, or the Secretary of the Business College Human Ethics Advisory Network, Kristina Tsoulis-Reay, kristina.tsoulisreay@rmit.edu.au, Ph. 9925 5596. Please note that Kristina works part time, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.
Guide to completing the Application for Review by the College Human Ethics Advisory network of Negligible/Low Risk Research form

1 PROJECT TITLE

Please state the title of your research project. Ensure that the same title is used throughout the application.

2 RESEARCHERS

2.1 Complete if the principal investigator is a member of staff. If principal investigator is a student please leave blank and go to 2.3

2.2 Complete for all additional investigators. Include any investigators external to RMIT.

2.3 Complete if the principal investigator is a student. Ensure that Degree and School details are also included. Please note that ‘School’ is not ‘Business College’, rather it is the School within the College ie. “School of Management”.

2.4 For a student project, include supervisor’s details. If student has more than one supervisor (ie. First and Second supervisor) both should be included.

2.5 Complete if there are additional investigators other than the supervisor/s.

3 PROJECT DETAILS

3.1 Specify the duration of the whole project, this is generally the period from the formulation of the research questions to the publication of findings.

3.2 Specify the duration of the data collection stage of the project, ie. the period in which you will conduct interviews, send out a questionnaire etc.

3.3 Provide a brief outline of your project. This should include the subject, scope, target population and possible outcomes. This should be in simple, straightforward, easy to understand English. The aim of this statement is to inform the reviewer exactly what your research entails. Avoid confusing language and excessive description.

3.4 State the aims, objectives and significance of the project. What is the specific topic of inquiry to be investigated? What are the research question/s? How will your project contribute to existing knowledge? Are there any expected benefits for the community? Mention the key literature that has informed the project (if applicable).

3.5 Provide a summary of the proposed methodology. What number of participants will be required for these proposed methods?

3.6 What data collection techniques will you be using? Make sure that you tick every box that is applicable to the project.

Please note that a “web-based survey” applies to an online survey hosted by a program such as survey monkey. It doesn’t apply to questionnaires sent via email.
This practice is discouraged as participants’ privacy and anonymity cannot be protected. If you are planning to conduct a web-based survey please complete the document “are you planning a web-based survey”, which is available on the HREC website. See [http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=sp7y1u3kp66w](http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=sp7y1u3kp66w)

If you are planning interviews or focus groups attach a question schedule or list of topic areas. If you are conducting a survey, a copy of the questionnaire should be attached to your application.

If you are planning to take photos or video of participants, you will need to gain their consent using the “consent form for photographs”, which is available from the HREC website. See [http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=sp7y1u3kp66w](http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=sp7y1u3kp66w)

If you will be audio recording interviews this should be disclosed in the Plain language Statement (see Plain Language Statement template).

3.7 Specify exactly what participants will be asked to do? For example, if you are conducting an interview, you should state the type of interview ie. semi-structured, as well as the expected interview duration, the venue and whether it will be recorded. If you are planning more that one data collection method you should specify separate details for each. Use sub-headings and bullet points if helpful.

3.8 How will you analyse the data? What method will be used? Will specific software assist with the interpretation of data?

3.9 Provide a list of any references that were used in the completion of Section 3.

4 RESEARCHERS’ QUALIFICATIONS

List the academic qualifications of all investigators and briefly outline the experience and skills that are relevant to the project.

5 PARTICIPANT DETAILS

5.1 Tick the relevant box. If you are conducting interviews or action research the data would usually be “potentially identifiable (coded)” as the investigator knows who the participant is, even though they may be de-identified in any research findings/reports.

“Non-identifiable/anonymous” should only be ticked if you will not know the identity of participants at any stage. For example an anonymous questionnaire sent to a large number of participants.

5.2 Specify the target participant group. You should only state “no special characteristics” if the participants are randomly selected from a comprehensive source, such as the phone directory. If you select “Other” make sure details of the specific participant group are provided.

5.3.1 Provide the number of participants. If there are more that one set of participants indicate how many groups will be used and describe the characteristics of each group.
5.3.2 Specify the age range of participants. If there is no particular age range and you will be targeting adults in their place of employment please state 18-65. You should state that applicants will be over 18 years of age, unless you intend to recruit children.

5.3.3 Where will participants be sourced? For example, are they from a particular workplace? Will they be accessed via a particular database? Please attach a letter of permission from the participating organisation or Head of School if applicable.

5.3 How will you recruit participants? ie. via the web, a community group, a workplace, a database, on the street, via email. How will you invite them to participate in the project? How will their permission be sought? If you will be conducting a survey online, or an interview over the phone, how will participants indicate their consent to participate? Your response to this question should specify how the Plain language Statement and Consent Form (if applicable) will be distributed to participants.

5.4.1 Here you should flag any potential dependant relationships between the researcher and participants, for example, a teacher/student, manager/subordinate relationship. What steps will be taken to ensure that participation is voluntary?

5.4.2 Will you conduct your research in a place of business or in a class room? How will you ensure that the conduct of the research does not interfere with the primary teaching role of the class or conduct of normal business? Please attach a letter of permission from the participating organisation or Head of School.

5.4.3 Will your participants have any particular cultural sensitivities? What steps will you take to respect these potential sensitivities?

5.4 If you intend to recruit children for your research project you will need to complete a working with children check. A copy of the check should be attached to your application. Please see: http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/Working+With+Children/Home/Application+Process/

6 RESEARCH INTO TEACHING PRACTICE

Will you be researching university teaching practice? Will you be targeting students as participants in your research project? If YES, you need to complete this section. If NO, please move to section 7.

7 INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS AND INFORMED CONSENT

7.1 An Information Statement or “Plain Language Statement” (PLS) should be provided to participants for all Negligible and Low Risk projects. Please refer to the Plain Language Statement template and ensure that your PLS answers all the questions included in the template.

The PLS should be written in plain, simple to understand English. Technical jargon and abbreviations should be avoided. It is essential that your PLS is well presented.
and reflects correct English language, grammar and spelling. If required ask someone with excellent language and grammar skills to proof read your PLS for you.

7.2 Here you should specify your provision for obtaining participants’ consent. Your method for obtaining consent should also be explained in the recruitment strategy (question 5.4)

If you will be conducting interviews, focus groups or action research, you will need to get written consent from participants using a Consent Form. If you plan to conduct an interview over the telephone or via other electronic media, you need to plan how you will obtain participants’ written consent before the interview commences.

If you will be conducting a survey/questionnaire the completion and return of the survey may be taken to indicate consent. In such cases the investigator may opt not to use a separate consent form. If you are conducting a web-based survey you should have an alternative provision for the indication of consent. For example, there may be an “I agree” button that the participant presses once they have read the Plain language Statement.

8 PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

8.1 All electronic data should normally be stored on University Network systems. These systems provide high levels of manageable security and data integrity, can provide secure remote access, are backed up on a regular basis and can provide Disaster Recover processes should a large scale incident occur.

The use of portable devices such as CDs and memory sticks is valid for archiving, data transport where necessary and some works in progress. The authoritative copy of all current data should reside on appropriate network systems; and the principal investigator is responsible for the retention and storage of the original data pertaining to the project for a minimum period of five years after completion of the project.

Hard copy data must be archived at the university. Each school is responsible for ensuring that appropriate archiving facilities are available. During data collection and analysis hard copy data may be stored in a place with appropriate security provisions – i.e. locked filing cabinet, locked office.

9 FUNDING AND FINANCE

In this section you should provide details of any funding or finance associated with the project. Will the researcher/s be receiving funding from any departmental, commercial, non-commercial or government source? Will the researcher receive any income to conduct this research? Will participants receive any payment or expenses for participation in the research?
10 OTHER APPROVALS

Do you need to submit your application to ethics committees at other institutions? This may be necessary if one of the investigators is from another university, or if government or medical organisations are involved.

11 DECLARATION BY RESEARCHERS

Please ensure that the form is signed by all investigators before it is submitted, including the Supervisor/s if the applicant is a student.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: INFORMATION SHEET

Please ensure that the Information Sheet (Plain Language Statement) contains all items in Attachment A (although items 9 and 13 may not be applicable and may be omitted).

The Statement should be completed using the ‘Plain language Statement’ template. It is important to ensure that the PLS answers all the questions included in the template. See 7.1

ATTACHMENT B: CONSENT FORM

Please attach a Consent Form if applicable (see 7.2). The project title and details of all Investigators should be included at the start of the form.

ATTACHMENT C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/ SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Please attach a list of the questions you will be asking in interviews/ focus groups and/or a copy of your survey/questionnaire.

BEFORE SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION PLEASE ENSURE THE FOLLOWING:

- The relevant section of the Checklist is completed and attached to the application
- The application has been signed by the Investigators, including supervisors
- The Plain Language Statement (PLS) is attached and contains all items specified in Attachment A and the PLS template.
- The Informed Consent Form is attached (if applicable)
- The interview questions/ survey instrument is attached
- A letter of permission is attached (if applicable)