**Combined Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form for Anonymous Online Surveys for Adult Participants**

*Information which you provide to your potential study participants is important as it explains to individuals everything that will happen to them should they agree to take part in your study, and allows them to weigh up the risks and benefits of taking part. To achieve this, information on this form should be clear, as concise as possible, consistent, and written in plain language which is appropriate to your target participant group.*

***Instructions to researchers****:*

*Please delete all wording in blue italics which is provided for guidance, and any other information which is irrelevant to your study. All wording in black is preferred wording which should remain unchanged wherever possible. Please follow guidance in brackets and* ***insert****/****amend****/****delete*** *information as required. Check that this form is fully formatted and ready to share.*

*Please use this form* ***ONLY*** *for* ***Anonymous Online Surveys****, and* ***ONLY*** *for* ***ADULT*** *participants (in this case meaning aged 18 and over).*

*A survey is* ***anonymous*** *ONLY if:*

1. *The survey questions will not be asking participants for any information which could directly identify them e.g. name, address, phone number, email, online identifiers. This includes requesting contact details for a prize draw (e.g. a chance to win vouchers) or for possible future research. If you will be collecting any contact details your survey will not be anonymous.*
2. *Questions about any demographic information are asked in a way that minimises the likelihood of identifying participants, and with careful consideration about including Special Category Data****\*****. For instance, asking for age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, workplace and department may provide enough information for participants to be identified.*
3. *The survey population is wide and diverse enough to maintain the anonymity of individual participants. For instance, if the survey is only disseminated to a small group of potential participants, it is likely that participants could be identified from their responses.*

*Please add an* ***Ethics****/****ERGO/IRAS number*** *(as appropriate),* ***version number*** *and* ***date*** *to the top of this form (the date and version number MUST be updated each time you create a new version of this form).*

*It is your responsibility as a researcher to find out how your chosen online survey platform operates from the technical point of view and include relevant information about this on this form where necessary/appropriate.*

*\*****Special Category Data*** *include information on racial or ethnic origin; sex life and sexual orientation; political opinions; religious and philosophical beliefs; genetic data; biometric data from which participants can be uniquely identified; trade union membership; and health data.*

*RIG Combined PIS and Consent Form Template for Anonymous Online Surveys for Adult Participants– effective from 09 October 2020 (Version 1.1).*

**Study Title:**

**Researcher(s):**

**University email:**

**Contact telephone number:** *[Please delete if not applicable.]*

**Ethics/ERGO no:**

**IRAS no:** *[Please delete if your study is not clinical research – classed as* ***Cat A\*****on ERGO II.]*

**Version and date:**

**What is the research about?**

My name is *[your name]* and I am a *[your degree programme]* student / *[position, department if a staff member]* *[please amend/delete as appropriate]* at the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom.

I am inviting you to participate in a study regarding *[briefly describe the general nature of your study, including the research aims and objectives, and what research questions you will be addressing.]*

This study was approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) at the University of Southampton (Ethics/ERGO Number: *[please insert]*).

**What will happen to me if I take part?**

This study involves completing an anonymous questionnaire which should take approximately *\_\_\_* *[please indicate]* minutes of your time. *[If participants will be able to start completing the survey, and their answers will be saved so that they can return to it later, rather than have to complete the whole survey at one sitting, please state this here.]* If you are happy to complete this survey, you will need to tick (check) the box below to show your consent. As this survey is anonymous, the researcher/research team *[please delete as appropriate]* will not be able to know whether you have participated, or what answers you provided.

**Why have I been asked to participate?**

You have been asked to take part because *[Please briefly describe* *why the participant was chosen, and especially from what pool/region/countries etc. you expect your participants will be (this is important so that participants can assess the anonymity of your study). If your study has any* ***inclusion****/****exclusion******criteria*** *(e.g. participants should be healthy/ have a specific condition), you should state this here.]*

*If a* ***gatekeeper*** *(an appropriate senior person within an organisation e.g. a workplace, a charity) agrees**to contact potential study participants on your behalf (e.g. managers sending invitations to their staff), or allows you to access potential participants from their membership (e.g. any network, forum or group with a closed membership), you should explain this here so that recipients understand that you do not have their contact details. For instance:*

You are receiving an invitation to participate because *[please enter the full name and job title of the gatekeeper]* agreed to forward to you information about this study on the researcher’s/research team’s *[please delete as appropriate]* behalf. *[Please amend appropriately or delete if your study does not involve contacting a gatekeeper.]*

I am aiming to recruit around \_\_\_ *[please indicate]* participants for this study.

**What information will be collected?**

The questions in this survey ask for information in relation to *[state briefly what kind of information you wish to collect, including any demographics information (e.g. participants’ age, gender). If you will be collecting information which could be considered as* ***distressing****/****upsetting****/****sensitive*** *(e.g. questions related to personal abuse, mental health, violence, self-harming), you must clearly state this so that participants are informed about this fact, even if the distress/discomfort is expected to be mild and/or temporary.]*

*Please note that, as stated above, you should* ***only*** *collect information that is* ***relevant****,* ***adequate*** *and* ***absolutely necessary*** *for carrying out your study, and from which by itself it would be very unlikely that you would be able to identify any research participants. This is to ensure as far as possible that your survey is anonymous.*

Some of the survey questions contain textboxes where you will be asked to type in your own answers. Please note that in order for this survey to be anonymous, you should not include in your answers any information from which you, or other people, could be identified. *[Please include this paragraph if your survey includes* ***textboxes*** *or delete if not applicable.]*

You do not have to answer all the questions if you do not wish to do so. *[Please amend/delete this sentence if not applicable to your study.]*

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

If you decide to take part in this study, you will not receive any direct benefits; however, your participation will contribute to knowledge in this area of research. *[Please amend appropriately if not applicable to your study.]*

*If participation includes direct benefits to participants (e.g. monetary compensation or study credits) please state this here and indicate if such benefits will be awarded* ***only on*** *completion of the study, or irrespective of whether participants will complete the study or not. This may depend on the online platform you are using for your survey, so it is your responsibility as a researcher to check how the online platform operates.*

*Please note that you can offer participants monetary compensation only if such option is provided by the online platform you are using – i.e. you must not collect/have access to participants’ bank details.*

*If you are using* ***iSurvey*** *you can offer study credits to participants as your survey will be still anonymous.*

**Are there any risks involved?**

It is expected that taking part in this study will not cause you any psychological discomfort and/or distress, however, should you feel uncomfortable you can leave the survey at any time or contact the following resources for support:

*Please list here sources of support which participants could contact, which are appropriate in the context of your research.*

*[Please delete the paragraph above if this is not true for your study and use the alternative wording below.]*

*OR*

There is a possibility that taking part in this study could cause you some psychological discomfort and/or distress. If this happens, you can contact the following resources for support:

*Please list here sources of support which participants could contact, which are appropriate in the context of your research.*

*[Please amend the wording above if necessary or delete this section if not applicable to your study.]*

**What will happen to the information collected?**

All information collected for this study will be stored securely on a password protected computer and backed up on a secure server. In addition, all data will be pooled and only compiled into data summaries or summary reports. *[If your survey includes textboxes and you wish to quote qualitative data, you need to delete the second sentence above, and provide further information to your research participants.]* Only the researcher and their supervisor will have access to this information. *[Please amend appropriately if required.]*

The information collected will be analysed and *written up as part of the researcher’s dissertation/published in a journal/presented at conferences etc. [Please amend appropriately.]*

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of ethics and research integrity. In accordance with our Research Data Management Policy, data will be held for 10 years after the study has finished when it will be securely destroyed. *[Please use this paragraph if you are a PGR student or staff member or anticipate that your research will lead to publication.*]

*OR*

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of ethics and research integrity. In accordance with our Data Management Policy, data will be securely destroyed after conferment of the researcher’s degree in *[please indicate estimated time, e.g. summer 2020]*. *[Please use this paragraph if you are a UG or PGT student and your research will not lead to any publications.]*

**What happens if there is a problem?**

If you are unhappy about any aspect of this study and would like to make a formal complaint, you can contact the Head of Research Integrity and Governance, University of Southampton, on the following contact details: Email: [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk), phone: + 44 2380 595058.

Please quote the Ethics/ERGO number above. Please note that by making a complaint you might be no longer anonymous.

More information on your rights as a study participant is available via this link:

<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/about/governance/participant-information.page>

**Thank you for reading this information sheet and considering taking part in this research.**

Please tick (check) this box to indicate that you have read and understood information on this form,

are aged 18 or over and agree to take part in this survey.

*Above is the* ***preferred*** *statement which should be used for gaining participants’ consent where possible. If, however, the online platform you are using to conduct your survey does not allow you to use this statement, you must include a consent statement which will be used instead.*

*Please note that the online platform you are using to conduct your survey* ***MUST NOT*** *allow the study participants to start answering the questions in your survey before they provide their consent by ticking a consent box.*