ST3004: Research Methods

Ethics’ Approval Application
Research Proposal
Ethics

- You should always think carefully about the access and ethical issues implied by your research design.

- The research design should not subject those you are researching (the research population) to embarrassment, harm or any other material disadvantage.
General ethical considerations:

- privacy of possible and actual participants;
- voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw partially or completely from the process at any time;
- consent and possible deception of participants;
- maintenance of the confidentiality of data provided by individuals or identifiable participants and their anonymity;
- reactions of participants to the way in which you collect data, including embarrassment, stress, discomfort, pain and harm;
- effects on participants of the way in which you use, analyse and report your data, in particular the avoidance of embarrassment, stress, discomfort, pain and harm;
- behaviour and objectivity of you as researcher.
The school has a formal Research Ethics Committee to deal with this issue:
https://www.scss.tcd.ie/Local/research_unit/ethics/

You have to submit a formal application for every research project.
A Research Ethics Application consists of the following:

1. A completed **application form**, signed by both you and your supervisor

2. An **Information Sheet** for participants

3. A **Consent Form**. If your study involves minors, then separate consent forms are required for the participant and the parent/guardian of the minor.

4. Your **Research Proposal**

5. A copy of the intended questionnaire/survey/interview protocol/screen shots/representative materials as appropriate. If your questionnaire or survey is online, you must provide the related URL.
Information Sheet

This sheet should inform participants of the following, as appropriate to the study:

- The background context of the research explaining its relevance
- The procedures relevant to the participant within this particular study
- Declarations of conflicts of interest
- The voluntary nature of participation: the right to withdraw and to omit individual responses without penalty
- The expected duration of the participant’s involvement
- Anticipated risks/benefits to the participant
- The provisions for debriefing after participation
- Preservation of participant and third-party anonymity in analysis, publication and presentation of resulting data and findings
- Cautions about inadvertent discovery of illicit activities
- Provision for verifying direct quotations and their contextual appropriateness
- No audio or video recordings will be made available to anyone other than the research/research team, nor will any such recordings be replayed in any public forum or presentation of the research.

- Of course, the information sheet for participants will vary with the study at hand. It should provide all information necessary for informed consent.
Ethics Approval requirements

- **Research Proposal**
  - **Title** of project
  - **Purpose** of project including *academic rationale*
  - Brief description of **methods** and measurements to be used
  - **Participants** - recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria, including statistical justification for numbers of participants
  - **Debriefing** arrangements
  - A clear concise statement of the *ethical considerations* raised by the project and how you intend to deal with them
  - Cite any *relevant legislation* relevant to the project with the method of compliance e.g. Data Protection Act etc.
Research Planning – 7 weeks to go…

This week: -
1. Write down all your idea(s)
2. Discuss with colleagues
3. State the purpose and type of the study (what research question to you want to answer/explore and how are you going to do that?)
4. Project outline:
   1. Title
   2. Questions to be investigated
   3. Possible methods of investigation
   4. Literature to be consulted
5. Timing – Gantt chart

Then write proposal!