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TUS Research Ethics Policy and Procedures for Taught Programmes

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PART A: POLICY

1.0 Introduction

The completion of a taught programme of study at TUS may require the participation of a student in primary research. Research ethics focuses on the standards or norms for the conduct of research including the perspectives, methods and procedures adopted by researchers. The absence of research ethics, or lapses in the application of research ethics, has the potential to result in substantial harm to participants, students, institutions, the public or to living organisms/environment as subjects of research. Because 'harm' is understood and defined contextually, ethical principles are more likely to be understood inductively rather than applied universally.

Rather than a 'one-size fits all' approach, ethical decision making is best approached through attentiveness to the specific context for the conduct of the research. Accordingly, this policy brings attention to the generic contextual issues which a student of TUS, who is conducting research as part of a taught programme, at undergraduate or at postgraduate level, should address. The procedures that the student researcher should undertake to obtain ethical approval for their proposed research are designed to support the student and their supervisors, enabling a flexible and proportionate approach depending on the specific disciplinary and programme context.

2.0 Ethical Standards

Research at TUS should be undertaken in accordance with commonly agreed standards of good practice, such as those laid down in the Declaration of Helsinki.[1] These standards include:

- Beneficence: the purpose and outcome of the conduct of the academic research is to do good in terms of the construction of knowledge and truth
- Competence of the Researcher: the researcher should have the education, training, and competence, and professional skill necessary to work with the population of interest in a research capacity
- Confidentiality: preserving the participant privacy and confidentiality, managing and preserving data confidentially. This is linked to informed consent
- Honesty: in terms of communications, data collection, data reporting, usage or methods and procedures
- Informed Consent: this is mutually negotiated process-based expressed willingness by the participant to engage in the research
- Integrity: the quality of being honest and having strong professional and ethical

[1] Declaration of Helsinki

standards

- Legality: knowing and obeying the relevant and governing laws (e.g. Data Protection, Charter of Fundamental Human Rights of the European Union), institutional and government policies as they relate to academic research
- Objectivity: limiting or acknowledging bias
- Privacy: refers to the basic human right of protecting an individual's worth, dignity, and self-determination
- Protection or Duty of Care to Humans: when conducting research with human subjects the principle of minimising risks and maximising the research benefits should be demonstrated. This requires that the researcher:
  - respects the autonomy, dignity, privacy, rights, safety, and wellbeing of all the actual or potential human research participant(s);
  - applies special precautions when dealing with minors;
  - limits errors in the design and conduct of research;
  - is not negligent in the design and conduct of their research;
  - maintains records securely and confidentially.
- Rights: are legal, social, or ethical principles of freedom or entitlement; that is, rights are the fundamental normative rules about what is allowed of people or owed to people, according to some legal system, social convention, or ethical theory.

3.0 Ethical Rules: Consent, Anonymity and Confidentiality

Consent is the giving of permission or agreement for an intervention, receipt or use of a service or participation in research following a process of communication in which the service user has received enough information to enable them to understand the nature, potential risks and benefits of the proposed intervention or service. For consent to be valid it must be *informed* consent. For this to be the case it must be:

- Given voluntarily (with no coercion or deceit);
- That the individual is afforded the opportunity to refuse;
- Given by an individual who has capacity;
- Given by an individual who has been fully informed about the issue;
- Given as informed consent in relation to children and vulnerable adults (see Common Definitions – Appendix 1);
- The consent provided must be capable of being withdrawn.

Consent can be *written or verbal***.** A written consent form is not the actual consent itself, but evidence that consent has been given (most forms include sections to record the important aspects of the procedure the participant has been informed of). Verbal consent should be formally recorded.

Anonymity refers to a condition in which the identity of individual subjects is not known to the researcher. In anonymous research, the information collected does not contain any identifiable information and the risk of being able to attribute data to individuals is low.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality refers to a condition in which the researcher knows the identity of a research subject but takes steps to protect the privacy of participants and their information from unauthorized access, use, loss, and theft. It is the agreement to protect the identity and private information of the participants from being disclosed to others.

A Sample *Research Participant Information Sheet* and Sample Research Participant Informed Consent Sheet in provided in Part B, Sections 4 and 5, respectively.

4.0 Scope of the Policy

This Policy sets out the expectations and requirements for the conduct of academic research by TUS students undertaking undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes to ensure adherence to appropriate ethical values, standards and rules. All students conducting research as part of a taught programme should be oriented to this document when conducting research as part of their academic programme of study in TUS. The procedures outlined in Part B of this document describe the steps that the student researcher should undertake to obtain ethical approval for their proposed research activity.

4.1 Research Activity Covered by this Policy

The Policy pertains to research undertaken by TUS Students registered on taught Level 6 to Level 9 programme as follows:

1. Full-time and part-time students of TUS who are registered on Level 6, Level 7 or Level 8 programmes who, in part fulfilment of that programme, undertake a research project.
2. Full-time and part-time students of TUS who are registered on Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma or taught Master's programmes who, in part fulfilment of that programme, undertake a research project.

4.2 Research Activity Not Covered by this Policy

Ethical approval for all other research activities including at postgraduate research degree level, staff research and industry lead research conducted at TUS is not

covered by this Policy. Such research activity is the responsibility of the TUS Research Ethics Committee which reports to the Postgraduate Matters and Research Subcommittee of Academic Council. It is governed by the TUS Research Ethics Policy.[2]

5.0 Responsibilities of TUS and Students for Research Ethics for Taught Programmes

5.1 Responsibility of TUS

TUS endeavors to protect the participants in research conducted by students from harm and identifies its responsibility to the participants in the research as being of utmost priority. The responsibilities of TUS, the Programme Board, the Research Project Supervisor, and the Student Researcher are detailed in this document. TUS is responsible for:

- developing, operating and reviewing policies and guidelines which prevent unethical practices, and which are consistent with recognised standards and best practice in the disciplines;
- providing appropriate guidance;
- supporting student researchers who are undertaking research which is ethically sound through implementation of guidance and appropriate supervision;

Compliance with this *TUS Research Ethics Policy and Procedures for Undergraduate and Taught Programmes* in the case of research carried out in part fulfilment of taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes is overseen by (A) Academic Council, (B) Programme Boards, (C) Research Project Supervisors and, (D) where required a Research Ethics Review Panel.

(A) <u>Academic Council Subcommittee on Quality Assurance and Enhancement</u>

1. Review and approval of the "*TUS Research Ethics Policy and Procedures for Taught Programmes"*
2. Publication of this Policy is managed through the TUS Academic Council Subcommittee on Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

(B) <u>Programme Boards</u>

Programme Boards have broad responsibility for:

1. identification of ethics issues relevant to its discipline area;
2. identification of appropriate research methodologies for its discipline area;

[2] TUS Research Ethics Policy: TUS Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook.

3. incorporation of appropriate ethical principles into programme material to ensure that learning outcomes relating to ethics issues are met by the student;
4. review of appeals for ethical approval by research project students as appropriate.

(C) Research Project Supervisors

Research Project Supervisors are responsible for:

1. oversight in relation to compliance with this Policy shall normally be conducted by the Research Project Supervisor.
2. granting ethical approval to Student Researchers undertaking research projects as part of their undergraduate and taught master's programmes or referring applications to the Research Ethics Review Panel for consideration.

(D) Taught Programmes Research Ethics Review Panel

The Research Ethics Review Panel shall be responsible for:

1. review of applications for ethical approval referred to Academic Programme Boards as appropriate.

5.2 Responsibility of the Student Researcher

The student researcher should consider all the ethical implications of their research project and conduct all their research in accordance with the ethical principles and rules as laid down in this TUS Research Ethics Policy and Procedures.

1. The responsibility for the conduct of research in an appropriate ethical manner rests with the student researcher.
2. The responsibility for ensuring that the ethical principles outlined in this Policy are applied, where relevant, lies with the student researcher.
3. Students undertaking research should familiarise themselves with this Policy and develop and maintain awareness of relevant discipline and professional ethical issues.
4. Students undertaking research should seek advice from their research project supervisor where appropriate.
5. Students undertaking research must apply to their Project Supervisor for ethical approval in accordance with this Policy and Procedure, before they can proceed with their research.

6.0 Standards for Research Students in Complying with Ethical Requirements

In all cases, students are requested to review the following standards and ethical requirements in detail in developing their approach to research ethics and in preparing

their application for ethical approval.

1. The student researcher must consider the ethical implications of their research and the physiological, psychological, social, political and economic consequences of it for the research participants. Every effort must be made to assure the protection of the research participants against any potential physical, mental, emotional or social injury. No harm must come to them because of being involved in the study.
2. In addition to TUS ethical approval, the student researcher must ensure that the relevant required permission and approval (ethical or otherwise) is sought from any organisation external to TUS who is involved in their research such as a school principal, head of a charitable organisation or a local authority manager, as relevant.
3. The student researcher is responsible for obtaining informed and freely given consent from everyone who is to be a subject of study or be personally involved in a study (See Section 3.0 *Ethical Rules: Consent and Anonymity*). They must make explicit the participant's right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any stage of the project, and this right must be respected. When it is not possible to obtain informed consent, i.e. vulnerable groups specialist advice must be obtained. Approval of data collection subsequent to obtaining specialist advice shall be in accordance with the Procedures described in this Policy.
4. If the nature of the research is such that being a fully informed participant before the study would invalidate results, then whatever explanation in relation to the nature of the research is possible should be given to the participants.
5. The student researcher should explain as fully as possible and in meaningful terms to participants what the proposed research is about, who is undertaking the research including the financing of it, if relevant, and why the research is being undertaken.
6. If the participant, for any reason, is unable to appreciate the implications of participation, informed consent must be obtained from parents or legal guardian, in the case of children. An agreed consent form should be signed in all cases. This form must be approved for use by the student researcher's research project supervisor.
7. If participants are being accessed as patients or information is being abstracted from medical records, the guidelines of the relevant HSE Area Research Ethics Committee, Hospital Ethics Committee, HRB Ethics Policy and Bioethics Policy should be followed.

8. There must be provision for appropriate explanation and debriefing to the participants on completion of the study.
9. A student researcher should seek the opinion of their research project supervisor, and other appropriately qualified specialists, whenever their research requires or is likely to involve: psychological or physiological stress, or elicit a sense of intrusion. Researchers must recognise that participants may experience distress or discomfort in the research process and must take all necessary steps to reduce the sense of intrusion and to put them at their ease. They must desist immediately from any actions, ensuing from the research process, that cause emotional or other harm.
10. A student researcher must ensure that they themselves, and any collaborators or research assistants and students under their supervision, comply with legal requirements in relation to working with school children or vulnerable young people and adults.
11. Student researchers must recognise concerns relating to the 'bureaucratic burden' of the research, especially survey research, and must seek to minimize the impact of their research on the normal working and workloads of participants.
12. A student researcher will not be permitted to proceed where research is likely to involve deception or covert data collection.
13. The nature of assurances of confidentiality, anonymity, or restrictions on the use of information, must be made clear to participants and strictly adhered to.
14. Attention must be given to TUS's policies related to: (i) Intellectual Property (IP), non-disclosure agreement (NDA) or confidentiality agreements with third parties.
15. Conflicts of interest must always be declared.
16. All student researchers must protect the integrity and reputation of educational research by ensuring adherence the highest standards. Researchers must not bring research into disrepute, for example, by:
    - falsifying research evidence or the research findings;
    - distorting research findings by selectively publishing some aspects and not others
    - criticising other researchers in a defamatory or unprofessional manner;
    - undertaking research work for which they are perceived to have a conflict of interest or where self-interest or commercial gain might be perceived to compromise the objectivity of the research;
    - undertaking research work for which they are not competent;
    - using research work carried out with co-researchers as the basis of individual

outputs without the agreement of the co-researchers concerned;
- using research for fraudulent or illegal purposes.

7.0 Data Management and Associated Responsibilities

It is essential to safeguard the student researcher and TUS in the research design measures to address compliance requirements associated with data management. The student researcher, and their parent academic department, are all partners in the management and protection of any input and output research data produced in fulfilment of the completion of academic study in TUS.

The common questions that arise with data management include:

- Who owns the data?
- What purpose is the data collected for?
- What rights does the student researcher have in publishing the data?
- What obligations arise for the student researcher when collecting data?

Supervisors are advised contact the TUS Data Compliance Office if they have particular questions relating to data management and associated responsibility.

Guidelines for the Management of Data are presented in Part C, Section 1.0. The student researcher should take note of these guidelines in the conduct of primary research and address the arising data management considerations.

The Guidelines address:

1. Personal Data;
2. Data ownership and custody;
3. Data collection;
4. Data sharing;
5. Data storage;
6. Data retention.

Guidelines for Student Researchers Conducting Surveys are available in Part C, Section 2.0.

PART B: PROCEDURES

1.0 Research Ethics Approval Process

The student researcher has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that appropriate ethical approval is sought, and once obtained, that the research is conducted in line with the ethical approval given. If student researchers are unsure, or in doubt, as to what is appropriate, they should refer the matter to their research project supervisor(s).

All research projects and proposals that require the direct involvement of consenting participants require ethical approval. Such approval must be obtained before any primary data is collected from such participants. Guidelines for Supervisors/Research Ethics Panel (Taught Programmes) is available in Part C, Section 3.0.

Ethical approval is granted when granted a research project supervisor/ethics review panel has satisfied themselves that ethical standards or norms have been appropriately identified and addressed by the student in their project proposal. No retrospective ethical approval may be granted.

Ethical approval shall be relevant only for the duration of the project and for the specific research project that was proposed by the student researcher. Major changes or amendments to the research project that was approved with ethical approval will require a new submission to the research supervisor.

Ethical approval granted by TUS is separate to, and in addition to, any other ethical approval requirements from other organisations involved in the research process.

There shall be three overall Levels to the Ethical Approval Process for taught programmes, namely

Level 1. Discussion with Research Project Supervisor

Level 2. Written Application for Ethical Approval to Research Project Supervisor

Level 3. Application for Ethical Approval to Research Ethics Review Panel

Appeal.

A Process Flow Chart detailing the respective steps for the Research Ethics Approval Process for Taught Programmes is available in Appendix 1.

1.1 Level 1. Discussion with Research Project Supervisor

1. The student researcher meets their Project Supervisor and discusses and

assesses the ethical implications of any proposed research taking account of the *Guidelines for Supervisors/Research Ethics Review Panel.*

2. If, on completion of this assessment, no ethical issues are identified, the student researcher may proceed with data collection.
3. If, on completion of this assessment, potential ethical issues are identified that merit further consideration the Supervisor advises the Student to proceed to a Level 2 Assessment (as outlined in Section 1.2).
4. A given Programme Board may decide that all proposed Projects shall be assessed by a Level 2 Written Application.

1.2 Level 2. Written Application for Ethical Approval to Research Project Supervisor

1. The student researcher completes an Application for Research Project Ethical Approval. A template for this Application is provided in Appendix 3 (Form TPRE1). Please note that this template serves as a resource that may be adopted by the Project supervisor/Programme Board to suit a particular disciplinary area.
2. The student researcher submits the completed Application Form for research ethical approval to their research project supervisor based on their proposed research project.
3. The research project supervisor reviews the application form and takes account of the Guidelines for Supervisors/Research Ethics Review Panel (Taught Programmes) (Part C, Section 3.0).
4. Upon review the research project supervisor may decide:
   a) to grant ethical approval for the project;
   b) to grant contingent approval (approved, subject to implementation of recommended changes)
   c) request that the student amend their research ethical application and/or research project proposal as per noted recommendations of the project supervisor and resubmit;
   d) refer the Application/Amended Application to Level 3, review by the Taught Programmes Research Ethics Review Panel.
5. If approval is granted (4. a), the student can proceed with their research project or if contingent approval is granted (4. b), the student may proceed once the changes are made.
6. If, on resubmission (4. c), approval is granted, the student can proceed with their research project.

7. If the supervisor refers the application to the Level 3 Taught Programmes Research Ethics Panel (4.d), the student researcher shall submit the application, or an amended application (if required), to the panel.

It is anticipated that a relatively low volume of proposed projects/applications would require consideration by the Taught Programmes Research Ethics Review Panel.

1.3 Level 3. Application for Ethical Approval to Taught Programmes Research Ethics Panel

1. The Taught Programmes Research Ethics Panel (hereafter referred to as the Panel) shall be constituted from the relevant Programme Board and shall comprise of three Lecturers nominated by Head of Department.

   At the discretion of the Head of Department, a Lecturer from another Programme Board or Disciplinary area may be appointed to the review panel.

2. A Taught Programmes Research Ethics Panel shall meet as required, particularly at the commencement phase of Projects in the respective Departments, to enable decision making that supports student progress in the academic calendar context.
3. One member of the Panel shall be nominated to Chair the meeting.
4. The Panel shall review the application form and takes account of the Guidelines for Supervisors/Research Ethics Panel (Part C, Section 3.0).
5. Where it is considered appropriate, the Panel may invite the Applicant and/or their Supervisor to attend a meeting and participate in discussions about the proposal. However, only the panel will be present during the decision-making discussion.
6. Upon review the research project supervisor may decide to:
   a) grant ethical approval for the proposed research;
   b) request that the student amend their research ethical application and/or research project proposal as per noted recommendations of the project supervisor and resubmit;
   c) refuse ethical approval for the proposed research.
7. The Research Ethics Panel should identify if there are any issues or concerns, which should be conveyed to the applicant with the decision of the committee.
8. If approval is granted the student can proceed with their research project.
9. If, on resubmission, approval is granted, the student can proceed with their research project.
10. If ethical approval is refused the proposed research may not proceed and the student will be advised to consult with the project supervisor accordingly. The

student should explore alternative research options with their research supervisor.

11. If the student and/or supervisor is unhappy with the outcome of the ethical approval decision from Level 2, an appeal may be requested in accordance with the Appeal process outline in Section 1.4.

1.4 Appeal to Taught Programmes Research Ethics Appeal Board

1. An appeal can be made to the Taught Programmes Research Ethics Appeal Board by completing the TPRE2 Research Ethics Approval Appeal Form (Appendix 4).
2. The Taught Programmes Research Ethics Appeal Panel shall be constituted from the relevant Faculty Board and shall comprise of three members of the Faculty Board nominated by the Dean of Faculty/School.

   At the discretion of the Dean of Faculty, a Staff member from another Faculty or Disciplinary area may be appointed to the Appeal Board.
3. The Appeal Board shall consider the Appeal and take account of the Guidelines for Supervisors/Research Ethics Panel (Part C, Section 3.0).
4. If approval is not granted based on the submitted appeal, the student must amend their research ethical approval application and/or research project proposal as per the formal recorded recommendations of the project supervisor and resubmit.
5. If the appeal is not successful, the student the student will be advised to consult with the project supervisor accordingly and should explore alternative research options with their research supervisor.
6. If approval is not granted based on the submitted appeal, the student must amend their research ethical approval application and/or research project proposal, as per the formal recorded recommendations of the project supervisor and resubmit to their supervisor.
7. Decisions made by the Taught Programmes Research Ethics Appeal Board shall be final stage of this Procedure

PART C: GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES

1. Guidelines for the Management of Data.
2. Guidelines for Student Researchers in Conducting Surveys.
3. Guidelines for Supervisors/Research Ethics Review Panel (Taught Programmes).
4. Sample Research Participant Information Sheet.
5. Sample Research Participant Informed Consent Sheet.

1.0 Guidelines for the Management of Data

The Management of data at TUS shall be in a manner compliant with the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018[3] and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679[4] and the *TUS Data Governance Policy*.[5]

1.1 Management of Personal Data

Personal data is any data that can be used either on its own or in combination with other information to identify a living individual. Obvious examples of personal data include name, identification number, address and telephone number. Less obvious examples include political opinions, location data, biometric data such as fingerprints and the IP address of a device used by an individual. A person may also be identifiable by reference to factors that are specific to their identity, such as physical, genetic or cultural factors. Personal data is protected under data protection legislation. Where research involves the use of personal data this legislation must be complied with.

The following guidelines should always be adhered to when research involves the use of personal data. The guidelines are written as a checklist for researchers:

1. Make a list of each item of personal data you require for your research.
2. Record the reason that you need each item of personal data. The use of personal data must be necessary and proportionate. You should only request personal data for which your research has a specific need. It is not permissible to request personal data 'in case' you might need it. Miminise the amount of personal data you gather.
3. Document the source of the personal data. Is the individual providing you with the data directly or are you collecting it from a different source? If you are obtaining personal data from a different source, get confirmation from the source that they have permission to share it.
4. Are you collecting special category data? Special category data receives additional protection under data protection legislation and the student researcher must take additional security precautions when using such data. Special category data is personal data relating to any of the following:
   a) Racial or ethnic origin;
   b) Religious or philosophical beliefs;
   c) Political opinions;
   d) Trade union membership;

[3] Protection Acts 1988 to 2018
[4] GDPR
[5] TUS Data Governance Policy: Quality Assurance Handbook

e) Biometric data used to identify an individual;
f) Genetic data;
g) Health data;
h) Data relating to an individual's sex life or sexual orientation.

5. You must be transparent with the participant as to why you are collecting their personal data. At the outset of your research, clearly explain to participants (a) who you are (b) what the research relates to (c) whether you will share personal data gathered with any other party (d) the security measures used to safeguard the data (e) where the data is stored and (f) how long you will keep the data for.
6. When you are using interviews with participants as a means of gathering information for your research, you must inform them at the outset if you intend to include transcripts of interviews in your research.
7. Obtain the consent of the individual to participate in the research. The individual must provide explicit and informed consent to participate in the research. Explicit means that the individual must take an action to indicate consent; you cannot use a pre-ticked box or assume consent. If you are using a survey to gather information, include a tick box question asking the participant if they are happy to proceed with the survey. Informed consent means that you must comply with the transparency rules. See point 5 above. Tell participants that they have the right to withdraw their consent at any time. You must be able to demonstrate that you obtained an individual's consent to participate in the research i.e. your method of collecting consent must be auditable.
8. Protect the data. One of the methods you can use to protect personal data is to anonymise it. Anonymising data means that you irreversibly delete any uniquely identifying fields. For example, if you have used a survey to gather responses, you can anonymise the data by securely deleting the name or any other identifying data from the dataset. It should never be possible to attribute survey responses to an individual after anonymisation.
9. Where anonymisation is not possible, you can pseudonymise the data. This means that you remove obvious identifying information from the dataset e.g., name or identification number. This identifying information should be kept separately to the main dataset. The identifying information should be protected (e.g., kept in a password protected file) and only be accessible by the student researcher.
10. For all data, including that which has been anonymised and pseudonymised, you must take appropriate security precautions to protect the data. Hard copies of data must be kept in locked cabinets. Soft copies must be stored on a password-protected computer/laptop or encrypted external storage device. Where data is

being stored in the cloud, be aware of the level of encryption provided and the measures taken to secure encryption keys.

11. Are you collecting children's data i.e., personal data relating to individuals under the age of 18? If so, you must obtain the consent of a parent or guardian for the collection and use of that data.
12. Decide how long you will retain the data for. Personal data must not be held for longer than is necessary. The retention period must be outlined to participants at the outset of your research.
13. Consider how you will dispose of personal data that is no longer required. You must ensure the deletion or disposal of data in a secure manner e.g., for hard copy data use the confidential shredding bags supplied by the TU. Ensure that you dispose of both hard and soft copies of data.

1.2 Data Ownership and Custody

As research produces data, it is envisaged that the student researcher(s) who conducts the research owns the product of that research, including the data. This common understanding should prevail unless there are explicit conditions specified as part of any commissioned and/or funded research by third parties which delineate alternative ownership of data. Ownership does not imply custody. Unless stipulated otherwise, custody of the data remains with the student researcher during the conduct of the research. On completion of the research project, custody of the data transfers to TUS. Explicit transfer of the data that was used in a student's research project should be collated and transferred to TUS when the research has been completed and ownership of the data transfers to TUS. This may include hard copy files and/or computer files.

1.3 Data Collection

The nature of the research, and its design, dictates the type of data collection technique to be adopted. Irrespective of the specific type of data collection technique, some common principles prevail in relation to ethical data collection that will ensure that the overall integrity of the data collection process, and the information collected, is ensured. These include:

a) authorisation to collect data in advance of proceeding;
b) the use of appropriate methods of data collection – to have reliable research via its data then appropriate, reliable, and controlled methods should be used;
c) attention to detail - the data collected should be suitably and accurately recorded, and then interpreted;
d) recording of data correctly - the permanent record of the data collected should be

managed to ensure it is auditable and traceable irrespective of the storage device used.

1.4 Data Sharing

During the period of ownership of the data by the student researcher, they are not allowed share the data via any mechanism with any other third party unless authorised to do so. Consent to share the data must be formally obtained from participants in the research whose data is to be shared. Retrospective authorisation to share data is not appropriate and does not exempt the student researcher from unauthorised sharing of data. Research data must be available to respond, if required, to Freedom of Information requests. It is the responsibility of the data owner to ensure such data is available.

Research data that includes personal data or is subject to Section 39 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2014*[6], is not permissible to share.

1.5 Data Storage and Security

The student researcher who collects and uses research data has the primary responsibility for it. All data collected and used should be adequately stored to ensure it is not accessed inappropriately, damaged, lost, or stolen. The stored data must be kept in a secure and protected state, and should be stored on the relevant institutional file storage platform (e.g. One Drive, SharePoint, MS Teams)

All data that is subject to privacy conditions requires adequate and secure storage. This may require the encryption of data. All data that includes the storage of the personal data of participants must be encrypted. Data should only be accessible by the student researcher and other pre-authorised personnel such as a Research Supervisor.

1.6 Data Retention

Data can only be stored and retained for the period explicitly notified to the participant at the outset of the study. To that end, data retention in a secure and protected state should be in accordance with the *TUS Record Retention Policy.*

[6] Freedom of Information Act 2014

2.0 Guidelines for Student Researchers Conducting Surveys

1. When conducting a survey by email or social media, the subject line of the email invite/social media link should clearly indicate the purpose of the survey.
2. All surveys must have an information section at the beginning. The section must set out:
   a) Who you are and the fact that you are a student researcher in TUS
   b) Explain the purpose of the survey
   c) Explain what the survey will do i.e. ask a series of questions about X.
   d) State whether the data is being gathered on an anonymous basis, or not. Anonymity means that it will be impossible to identify the individual based on their replies to the survey. If you are using an online survey tool, make sure that you have turned off any tracking functionality on the tool.
   e) State approximately how long the survey will take to complete.
   f) State that the research has obtained approval from the Research Ethics Advisory Committee and/or Research Supervisor.
   g) Explain what will happen to the data, how long it will be kept and the fact that it will be held securely.
   h) If the data is to be shared with any other party, you must state this.
3. Obtain the participant's consent to take part in the survey. This means that they must actively click on a box/answer 'yes' to a statement that they 'have read the explanatory information provided and consent to participate in the survey'.
4. State that further information on data protection can be found on the TUS website at http://www.lit.ie/InformationCompliance/Data.aspx

3.0 Guidelines for Supervisors/Research Ethics Panel (Taught Programmes)

1. Checklist for Supervisor as guide for when an application would warrant escalation to Stage 2 involving a YES answer to the following Questions:

Does the Research Involve?

Human Participants	**Yes**	**No**
Working with participants over 65 years of age?	☐	☐
Any person under the age of 18?	☐	☐
Adult patients?	☐	☐
Adults with psychological impairments?	☐	☐
Adults with learning difficulties?	☐	☐
Adults under the protection/ control/influence of others (e.g. in care/prison)?	☐	☐
Relatives of ill people (e.g. parents of sick children)	☐	☐
People whose comprehension of the research and its requirements might be compromised by their linguistic competence?	☐	☐
Hospital or GP patients recruited in medical facility?	☐	☐
Human Tissue/Samples	☐	☐
Sensitive Subject Matter	Yes	No
Sensitive personal issues? (e.g. suicide, bereavement, gender identity, sexuality, fertility, abortion, gambling)	☐	☐
Illegal activities, illicit drug taking, substance abuse or the self-reporting of criminal behaviour?	☐	☐
Any act that might diminish self-respect or cause shame, embarrassment or regret?	☐	☐
Research into politically and/or racially/ethnically and/or commercially sensitive areas?	☐	☐
Use of animals?	Yes	No
Direct animal research – In-vivo	☐	☐
Use of food producing animals		
Collecting samples from animals for analysis – Ex-vivo	☐	☐
Modification of animal habitats	☐	☐
Research Procedures	Yes	No
Use of personal records without consent?	☐	☐
Deception of participants?	☐	☐
The offer of large inducements to participate?	☐	☐
Audio or visual recording without consent?	☐	☐
Invasive physical interventions or treatments?	☐	☐
Research that might put researchers or participants at risk?	☐	☐
Storage of results data for less than 7 years?	☐	☐
Use of personal records without consent?	☐	☐
Deception of participants?	☐	☐
Other	Yes	No
Environmental impacts	☐	☐
Military technology?	☐	☐
Hazardous biological materials?	☐	☐
Genetic modification?	☐	☐

Radiation?	☐	☐

2. The decisions of the Supervisors/Research Ethics Review Panel/Appeal Board, as relevant, should be guided by the following set of generic ethics principles:
   a) Respect for the dignity, worth and self-determination of all participants;
   b) Responsibility to the research participant and to society;
   c) The conducting of research which is within the competence of the researcher;
   a) Transparency and accountability of ethics decision making.

3. Supervisors/Research Ethics Panel/appeal Board, as relevant, should review each application form to:
   a) Ensure that the applicant has assessed and addressed the risks and benefits which potential;
      research participants may be exposed to or experience;
   b) Ensure that the proposed selection of participants is equitable;
   c) Ensure that the informed consent process will provide sufficient information to potential participants, so they can amend informed decisions about participating in the research.

4.0 Sample Research Participant Information Sheet

Dear Participant,

My name is _____and I am currently in my final year of college at TUS studying _____.

As part of my final year, I am required to complete a research project. My chosen topic for research is "_____". I would be extremely grateful if you were available to meet me to participate in an interview for this research when availability best suits you. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes.

Involvement in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any stage without consequences. All information will be fully confidential and will not be shared with any other third party. Identification codes only, rather than personal data, will be utilised throughout the study for your full protection. Any identifying features will be changed. Your interviews will be used only for this study and will be stored on my computer protected by a password. Transcripts (other than what appears in the final report) will be destroyed after submission of the thesis and audio recordings will be held in a password protected file on my computer for seven years. Your personal details will not be attached to this record.

If you would like to participate in this study, please sign the attached consent form.

If you would like any further information about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me on _____or email _____.

Yours sincerely,

x _____

Signature of Research Student

Date: ____/__/____

5.0 Sample Research Participant Informed Consent Sheet

Sample Research Participant Consent Form

I, _____ have agreed to take part in the above research project.

The nature of my participation has been fully explained to me and I have full knowledge of how the information collected will be used

- I understand that I will take part in a 20 – 30-minute interview with _____ which will be audio recorded.
- My participation is fully voluntary.
- I am entitled to full confidentiality in terms of my participation and the storage and usage of my personal details
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this process at any time.
- If I withdraw from the study, there will be no negative consequences
- I am aware that should at any time I feel uncomfortable with being recorded, I can request that the recording equipment be turned off.
- I am aware that I am permitted to view all research and transcripts that have taken place concerning my involvement. I can request a copy of the report from the researcher.
- All information will be confidential and used only for the purposes of the research study
- I understand that ID codes will be used to protect my anonymity and confidentiality and names of people and places will be changed
- I agree that quotations may be used for the research.

I would like the pseudonym used for direct quotations from me to be _____

Yours sincerely,

X _____

Signature of Participant

Date: ____/__/____

PART D: APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Common Definitions

Appeal: An application for a decision to be reversed.

Bias: The tendency for research results to reflect the student researcher's subjective opinions, unproven assumptions, political views, or personal or financial interests, rather than the truth or facts.

Confidentiality: The obligation to keep some types of information confidential or secret. In science, confidential information typically includes, private data pertaining to human subjects, papers or research proposals submitted for peer review, personnel records, proceedings from misconduct inquiries or investigations, and proprietary data.

Conflict of interest (COI): A situation in which a person has a financial, personal, political or other interest which is likely to bias his or her judgment or decision-making concerning the performance of his or her ethical or legal obligation or duties.

Children, Vulnerable Young People and Vulnerable Adults: Articles 3 and 12 of the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child requires that in all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child must be the primary consideration and that children who are capable of forming their own views should be granted the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, commensurate with their age and maturity. Children should therefore be facilitated to give fully informed consent. The spirit of Articles 3 and 12 above should also apply in research contexts involving young people and vulnerable adults. In the case of participants whose age, intellectual capability or other vulnerable circumstance may limit the extent to which they can be expected to understand or agree voluntarily to undertake their role, researchers must fully explore alternative ways in which they can be enabled to make authentic responses. In such circumstances, researchers must also seek the collaboration and approval of those who act in guardianship (e.g. parents) or as 'responsible others' (i.e. those who have responsibility for the welfare and well-being of the participants e.g. social workers).

Data: Recorded information used to test scientific hypotheses or theories. Data may include laboratory notebooks (paper or digital), field notes, transcribed interviews, spreadsheets, digital images, x-ray photographs, audio or video recordings, and outputs from machines (such as gas chromatographs or DNA sequencers). Original (or primary data) is drawn directly from the data source; secondary (or derived) data is based on the primary data.

Data management: Practices and policies related to recording, storing, auditing, archiving, analyzing, interpreting, sharing, and publishing data.

Debriefing: A meeting that takes place in order to get information about a particular piece of work that has been finished, for example about what was done successfully and what was not.

Dual use research: Research that can be readily used for beneficial or harmful purposes.

Ethics:

- Standards of conduct (or behavior) that distinguish between right/wrong, good/bad, etc.
- The study of standards of conduct.

Informed Consent: The process of making a free and informed decision (such as to participate in research). Individuals who provide informed consent must be legally competent and have enough decision-making capacity to consent to research. Research regulations specify the types of information that must be disclosed to the subject.

Vulnerable Person: A "vulnerable person" is any individual who lacks the ability to fully consent to participate in a study. The concept of vulnerability is a cornerstone of the application of ethics in research involving human subjects.

Non-compliance: The failure to comply with research regulations, institutional policies, or ethical standards. Serious or continuing non-compliance in human subject research should be promptly reported to the institutional and other authorities.

Privacy: A state of being free from unwanted intrusion into one's personal space, private information, or personal affairs.

Research ethics: 1), Ethical conduct in research. 2), The study of ethical conduct in research.

Research Integrity: Following ethical standards in the conduct of research.

Right: A legal or moral entitlement. Rights generally imply duties or obligations. For example, if A has a right not to be killed then B has a duty not to kill A.

Risk: The product of the probability and magnitude (or severity) of a potential harm.

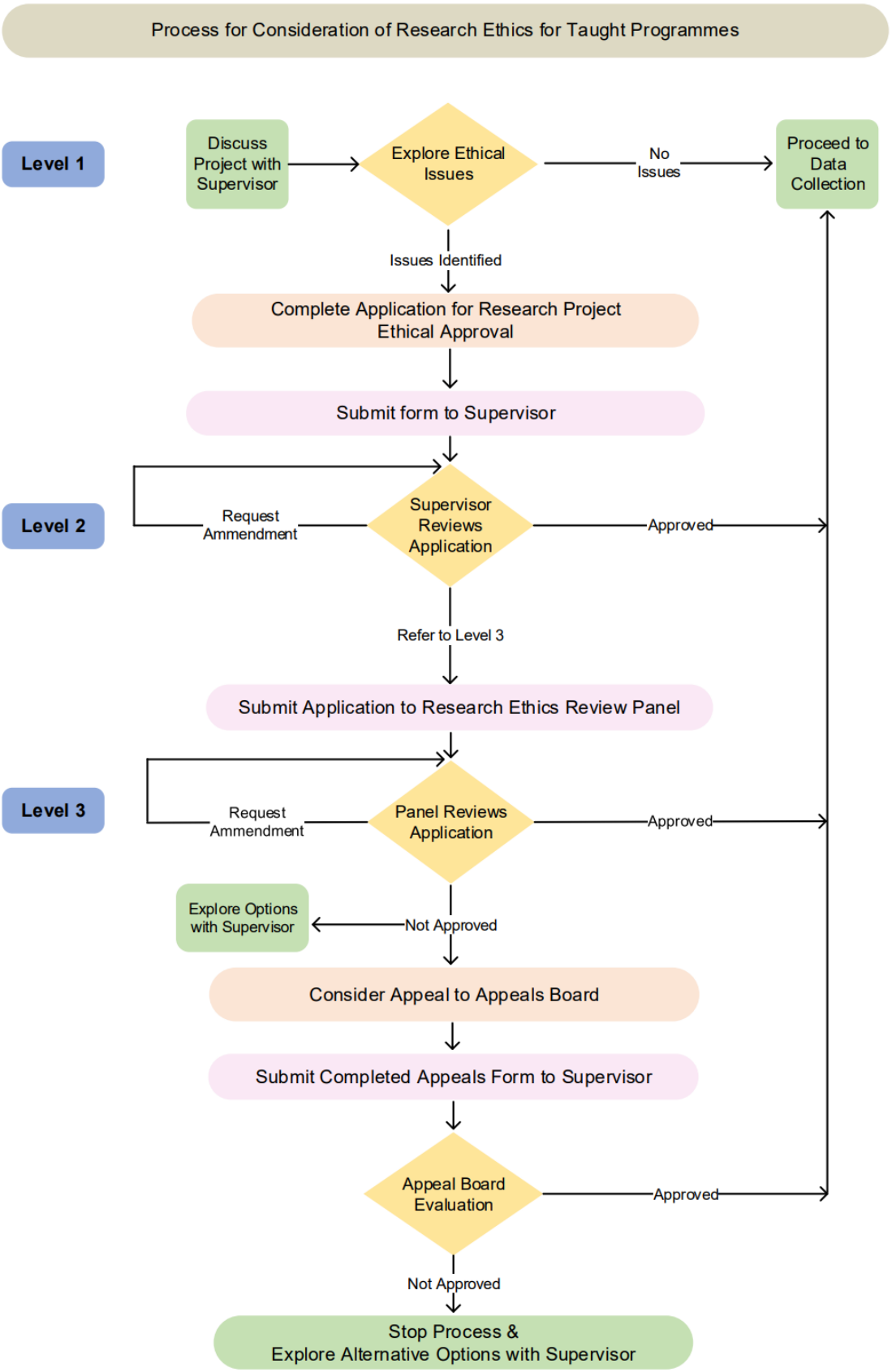
Risk/Benefit Analysis: a process for determining an acceptable level of risk, given the potential benefits of an activity or technology.

Risk Management: the process of identifying, assessing, and deciding how best to deal with the risks of an activity, policy, or technology.

Withdrawal: removing a human research subject(s) from a research study. Subjects may voluntarily withdraw or be withdrawn by the researcher to protect them

from harm or to ensure the integrity of the research study. Subjects who withdraw from a study may request to have their samples removed from the study (i.e. destroyed)

Appendix 2. Research Ethics Procedures Flowchart


Process for Consideration of Research Ethics for Taught Programmes
Level 1
Discuss Project with Supervisor
Explore Ethical Issues
No Issues
Proceed to Data Collection
Issues Identified
Complete Application for Research Project Ethical Approval
Submit form to Supervisor
Level 2
Request Ammendment
Supervisor Reviews Application
Approved
Refer to Level 3
Submit Application to Research Ethics Review Panel
Level 3
Request Ammendment
Panel Reviews Application
Approved
Explore Options with Supervisor
Not Approved
Consider Appeal to Appeals Board
Submit Completed Appeals Form to Supervisor
Appeal Board Evaluation
Approved
Not Approved
Stop Process & Explore Alternative Options with Supervisor

Appendix 3: TPRE1, Application for Research Project Ethical Approval Form

Instructions

1. Please note that this ethical approval application form must be completed with reference to and comply with *TUS Research Ethics Policy and Procedures for Undergraduate and Taught Programmes*. This template serves as a resource that may be adopted by the Project supervisor/Programme Board to suit a particular disciplinary area.
2. If you do not obtain ethical approval in writing from your research project supervisor your project may fail on ethical grounds.
3. Please complete all sections and submit this Application Form to your Research Project Supervisor.
4. Submit copies of any data collection instruments, information sheets and informed consent forms (outlining participants' right to withdraw with no negative consequences).

Student Name & Id Number	
Department	
Programme Title	
Project Title	
Supervisor Name	
Provide a clear and succinct research question.	
State the primary aim and any additional aims of the proposed research (the aims should be stated as clearly and succinctly as possible).	
Method of data collection	☐ Survey ☐ Focus Group ☐ Interview ☐ Content Analysis ☐ Participant Observer ☐ Other (please specify)
Provide detail on the Method of Study Design (Include estimated number of participants).	
Does your proposed research need initial clearance from a 'gatekeeper' (e.g. local authority, head teacher, college head, nursery/playgroup manager)? ☐ Yes ☐ No	

If Yes, please provide details and indicate how you will negotiate this in your proposal?

Are human participants required for the proposed research?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If Yes, please provide details and indicate how you will negotiate this in your proposal?

Does your proposed research involve work with 'vulnerable' populations?
☐ Yes
☐ No
Please explain your answer:

If Yes, please provided full details.

Are there any potential risks to participants or ethical concerns associated with the proposed research?

☐ Yes
☐ No
Please explain your answer:

If Yes, please provided full details. List all potential risks to participants' physical / mental well-being or safety and all ethical concerns associated with this project. For each stated risk or ethical concern, state how often it will arise in the research process and state clearly the procedures for dealing with these concerns.

Please indicate how informed consent will be obtained from your participants? (*Your consent letters/forms must inform participants that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time).*

Have you ensured (in your consent form) that participants are aware of who they should contact if they have a complaint?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Please explain:

Please attach your Consent Forms to this application (if relevant).

Please explain your debriefing procedures (if relevant).

Are you proposing to collect video and/or audio data?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If Yes, please explain, how you will protect participants' anonymity and confidentiality?

Please explain, how you will store the data?

Have you built in time for a pilot study ?

(A pilot study may help ensure that any task materials you propose to use are appropriate and that they are unlikely to cause offence to any of your participants?

☐ Yes
☐ No
Please explain your answer:

Is your research likely to involve discussion of sensitive topics ?
(e.g. adult/child relationships, peer relationships, discussions about personal teaching styles, ability levels of individual children and/or adults)
☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, what safeguards have you put in place to protect participants' confidentiality?

Does your proposed research raise any issues of personal safety for yourself or other persons involved in the project?
☐ Yes
☐ No

If Yes, please provide details.

How do you propose to ensure your own safety and that of your participants?

Do you have the name of an appropriate mental health professional or organisation available if a participant becomes distressed because of participation in the research process and needs to access support?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If Yes, please provide details.

Have you attached a copy of any stimulus materials e.g. questionnaires /interview schedule etc.?

Please select here and submit accordingly.

	Electronic Copy	Hard Copy	N/A
Pre-Participation Questionnaire	☐	☐	☐
PAR-Q	☐	☐	☐
Participant Recruitment Email	☐	☐	☐
Participant Recruitment Poster	☐	☐	☐
Participant Information Sheet	☐	☐	☐
Parental/Guardian Information Sheet	☐	☐	☐
Informed Consent Form	☐	☐	☐
Parental Consent Form	☐	☐	☐
Permission Letters/E-mails	☐	☐	☐
Letter to School Principal	☐	☐	☐
Relevant Information Sheet(s)	☐	☐	☐
Questionnaire(s)	☐	☐	☐

Note: All accompanying documentation must be collated and included at the end of this word document.

Student Declaration:

I understand that it is my responsibility to inform my supervisor fully and honestly of all details relating to the conduct of the study and to follow the direction of my supervisor and of the research ethics panel. I understand that it is my responsibility to obtain approval for the study prior to the commencement of the study and to follow approved procedures at all times.

X

Signature of Student

Official Use Only

Please select as appropriate

☐ Approved

☐ Not Approved

In not approved please provide relevant feedback:

X _____

Signature of Project Supervisor

or

Chair Research Ethics Panel

Date: ____/__/____

Appendix 4: TPRE2 Research Ethics Approval Appeal Form

Instructions

1. Please complete all sections and submit this Application Form to your Research Project Supervisor.

Student Name & Id Number	
Department	
Programme Title	
Project Title	
Supervisor Name	
Please provide details of the reasons for the Appeal.	