

Consent Form Template

Gaining Informed Consent  
  
Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)  
August 2024

 §

# How to use this document

This document is an example template of a Consent form.

Guidance on what to include in each section is provided under the section headings. Please edit this information for your individual research project.

This template can be used by researchers to gain informed consent when collecting data from people using questionnaires, observations, interviews, diaries, focus groups, video recordings, etc. Please note that there is the option to include consent arrangements at the start of online questionnaires and we have an alternative template for this. These templates address all the standard requirements needed for informed consent and pay particular attention to how data can be curated and made available for future use, which should be considered at the start of a project. It is consistent with the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act (2018).

The template should be adapted to the requirements of your particular project using the notes and suggestions provided. Please delete the guidance notes from your final version of the template before submitting to HREC.

Please note that informed consent in a written form is not the only method for gaining consent and, if appropriate to research participants, verbal consent can be obtained. You would need to make a case for how this meets the same requirements as this template in your Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) application.

The following template has been designed to meet Open University (OU) branding and accessibility requirements. Please ensure your template mirrors this branding and formatting.

# 1. Study Details

## Guidance notes for this section

(Please delete this text from the final version of the consent form before submitting to HREC).

The following information must be included at the beginning of your informed consent template.

Informed consent for [insert name of project]

The principal investigator for this project is [insert name, position and department/faculty of researcher]

## Guidance notes on alternative contacts

(Please delete this text from the final version of the consent form before submitting to HREC).

All research projects should provide an alternative independent contact and an explanation of under what circumstances they would be contacted. This information is provided so participants have an impartial contact should they have any concerns about the way the research project is being conducted. The contact should be an OU member of staff but someone who is not directly involved in the research e.g., a Head of Department or line manager. For postgraduate research degree students, the contact would normally be their lead supervisor.

The alternative contact for this project is [insert the name, telephone number and email of an alternative contact]. This contact should be used for [insert an explanation of under what circumstances they should be contacted].

# 2. Taking part in the project

## Guidance notes on this section

(Please delete this text from the final version of the consent form before submitting to HREC).

The following information can be adapted in your informed consent template to suit your individual project.

## Guidance notes on what to include in question 3

(Please delete this text from the final version of the consent form before submitting to HREC).

Describe in a few words how information is captured, using the same terms as you used in the participant information sheet, for example: an audio-recorded interview, a video-recorded focus group, a survey questionnaire completed via a web browser, etc.

| **Question number** | **Question for the participant to answer yes or no to** | **Use the DROP-DOWN Box to select yes or no to this question** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | I have read and understood the information sheet for the following project: [insert name of project], or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about my participation and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. | Choose an item. |
| 2 | I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this project and understand that I can refuse to answer questions I am not comfortable with and I can withdraw from the project at any time by contacting [insert name and email address] up until [insert specific information, e.g. data have been analysed/published, with specific date included], without having to give a reason. | Choose an item. |
| 3 | I understand that taking part in the project involves [insert description of what the project will involve for the participant]. | Choose an item. |

# 3. Participant recordings consent

## Guidance notes on what to include in the following section

(Please delete this text from the final version of the consent form before submitting to HREC).

Delete or amend the following statements as appropriate for your study. Depending on the project, it may be appropriate to list some additional consent items here for emphasis.

| **Question number** | **Question for the participant to answer yes or no to** | **Use the DROP-DOWN Box to select yes or no to this question** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 4 | I agree to photos being taken during the observation sessions | Choose an item. |
| 5 | I agree to the interview/focus group being audio-/video-recorded | Choose an item. |
| 6 | I agree to my web browsing activity being recorded and stored in a log file | Choose an item. |

# 4. Risks to Participants

## **Guidance notes on what to include in the following section**

Please delete this text from the final version of the consent form before submitting to HREC.

If there is a potential risk to participating in the project, then provide an additional statement in this section for the participant to agree or disagree with.

| **Question number** | **Question for the participant to answer yes or no to** | **Use the DROP-DOWN Box to select yes or no to this question** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 7 | I understand that taking part in the project has [insert details of risk(s)] as potential risk(s). | Choose an item. |

# 5. Collecting contact details

## Guidance notes on what to include in the following section

(Please delete this text from the final version of the consent form before submitting to HREC).

In the case of collecting contact details for data gathering, the plans for this should also be declared on the information asset register entry you agree with the data protection team.

| **Question number** | **Question for the participant to answer yes or no to** | **Use the DROP-DOWN Box to select yes or no to this question** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 8 | In order to organise data gathering for this project [add which methods need contact details], I agree for the following contact details to be held until after the data gathering is completed, or I withdraw from this part of the project.  [Insert telephone number/email address/other contact details of the participant as needed] | Choose an item. |

# 6. Collecting data

## Guidance notes on what to include in question 9

(Please delete this text from the final version of the consent form before submitting to HREC).

List the planned outputs, e.g. reports, publications, website, video channel etc., using the same terms as you used in the participant information sheet. For many projects, it is appropriate to state that information will only be shared in fully anonymised form.

## Guidance notes on what to include in question 11

(Please delete this text from the final version of the consent form before submitting to HREC).

Please note the OU recommends a minimum storage period of 10 years from the conclusion of the project.

| **Question number** | **Question for the participant to answer yes or no to** | **Use the DROP-DOWN Box to select yes or no to this question** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 9 | I understand that the information I provide will be used for [insert details of information use] | Choose an item. |
| 10 | I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as my name or where I live, will not be shared beyond the project team. | Choose an item. |
| 11 | I understand that my data will be stored [insert details of how data will be stored e.g. on a password protected computer and server] for [insert relevant timescale here, and if/when it will be destroyed]. | Choose an item. |

# 7. Including quotes from participants

## Guidance notes on what to include in this section

(Please delete this text from the final version of the consent form before submitting to HREC).

Delete or amend the following statements as appropriate for your study. Depending on the project, it may be appropriate to list some additional consent items here for emphasis.

## Guidance notes on additional questions that might be included in this section

(Please delete this text from the final version of the consent form before submitting to HREC).

If written information is being provided by the participant (e.g. diary entries), add any statement that may be required relating to copyright.

| **Question number** | **Question for the participant to answer yes or no to** | **Use the DROP-DOWN Box to select yes or no to this question** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 12 | I agree to being quoted anonymously. | Choose an item. |
| 13 | I agree that my real name can be used for quotes. | Choose an item. |

# 8. Future use and reuse of the information by others

## Guidance notes for what to include in this section

(Please delete this text from the final version of the consent form before submitting to HREC).

Where you plan on publishing only a subset of the data that you are preserving in a repository, you may need to split out consent for long-term data preservation from consent for data sharing.

Additional guidance notes on the destruction of consent forms

(Please delete this text from the final version of the consent form before submitting to HREC).

Consent forms should be kept for as long as the research data are retained (by the researcher or an archive). The hard copy consent forms do not need to be kept for any particular length of time. Therefore, we recommend that these should be digitised and stored securely (encrypted) as soon as practical, permitting the originals to then be destroyed securely by means of shredding. A proper process around storage of consent forms needs to be set up. For further information please consult the [HREC FAQ](https://research.open.ac.uk/environment/ethics/human/faqs) for retaining research-related documents and data. [GDPR - How does it affect Research Data Management and data sharing?](https://www5.open.ac.uk/library-research-support/sites/www.open.ac.uk.library-research-support/files/files/2022-Guide_RDM_GDPR-HowDoesThisAffectRDM.pdf) is a very useful document.

| **Question number** | **Question for the participant to answer yes or no to** | **Use the DROP-DOWN Box to select yes or no to this question** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 14 | I give permission for the [insert details of the specific data] that I provide to be deposited in a specialist data centre after it has been anonymised, so it can be used for future research and learning. | Choose an item. |
| 15 | I give permission for the [insert which elements of the dataset] that I provide to be deposited and shared on [insert the repository you are preserving data in, e.g. the OU’s open access research data repository ORDO] under a [insert the license you plan to publish this under, where possible], where it will be preserved for a minimum of [insert the length of time the repository agrees to maintain your dataset – for ORDO this is 10 years]. I understand that this dataset will be publicly available. | Choose an item. |

# 9. Future use and reuse of the information by others

## Guidance notes for what to include in this section.

(Please delete this text from the final version of the consent form before submitting to HREC).

You may wish to offer participants the opportunity to receive a summary of the findings of the project. In the case of collecting email addresses to form a mailing list for project findings, the plans for this should be declared on the information asset register entry you agree with the data protection team.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Question number** | **Question for the participant to answer yes or no to** | **Use the DROP-DOWN Box to select yes or no to this question** |
| 16 | I would like to receive a copy of the summary of the findings of this project.  Please insert your email address in the space below if you answer yes.  Email address: [participant to insert their email address] | Choose an item. |

# 10. Signatures

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Participants name** | **Signature** | **Date** |
| [insert participants name in capitals] | [insert signature - electronic signatures may be accepted] | [insert today’s date] |

For participants unable to sign their name, please select signed from the drop-down box below.

Choose an item.

## Guidance notes on what to include in the following section.

You must include one of the following statements at the bottom of the consent form. Delete the statement that does not apply to your project.

If your project will be reviewed by HREC please include this statement:

This research project has been reviewed by, and received a favourable opinion from, The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee – HREC reference number: [insert you HREC reference number]

If your project does not need formal HREC review please include this statement:

This research project conforms to and complies with the OU Human Research Ethics Committee’s conditions for exemption from formal review.

