Research Ethics Reviewers' checklist: Primary Data Collection (non-lab)

This checklist is intended to remind supervisors and independent peer reviewers of key considerations to keep in mind when reviewing an ethics application. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list and each application will raise unique questions.

Aim	• Is there a clearly stated research issue, question or hypothesis? • Is there adequate review/summary of existing research to justify the need for this research?
Research Design	• Is the research design appropriate? • Are the methods clear, justified and can the methods answer the research question? • Does the applicant/research team have the appropriate permissions, resources and skills to deliver the project (feasibility)?
Dates	• Is the timeline for the research project reasonable and feasible?
Sample	• Who are the participants? Are inclusion/exclusion criteria clear and justified? • Is the proposed sample size appropriate, achievable, feasible and adequate (consider applicant, research question, purpose e.g., module/funded project)? • If participants are regarded as 'vulnerable', are adequate safeguards in place?

Participant Recruitment & Data Collection	• Is it clear how the applicant will recruit participants and are these methods appropriate (including attachments of e.g., gatekeeper letters, emails, flyers, social media templates etc.)? Are there any risks of bias or reputational harm (to participants, researcher or institution)?
	• Are the recruitment or data collection methods appropriate, do they comply with current university/module guidelines? For example,
	  ○ Online surveys using JISC Online Surveys or Qualtrics.
	  ○ Virtual interviews using Microsoft Teams
	  ○ Student projects may have module specific guidelines.
	  ○ Staff projects with CU staff/students as participants must follow local procedures (e.g. may need Head of School approval).
	• Are any photographs, video or audio recordings being shared or used in dissemination? Is specific consent being sought?

Consent	• How will researchers ensure consent is freely given and informed? Are methods of obtaining and recording consent appropriate?
Withdrawal	• Are participants able to withdraw from the research, is it clear how and when a participant may withdraw?
Data Protection	• Have appropriate measures have been taken to ensure anonymity and/or confidentiality and security of personal information concerning research participants? Are there any implications from Data Protection Act 2018/General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (e.g. special category data)? Is there a reasonable justification for collecting the data requested? • Where will data be stored? Who will have access to the data? Will data be shared externally (and if so is there a data sharing agreement in place)? Is the retention appropriate and clear and in line with CU policy? ○ Electronic data should be stored on CU OneDrive.
Potential for harm	• Are you satisfied that the research design has considered and done all that is possible to minimise risk of harm to participants and the applicant? • Are any remaining risks justified and are participants adequately informed of any potential risks and is suitable support available to mitigate? • Is there sufficient debrief, including signposting for further support in the event of any harm?

	• Is any travel planned and are appropriate risk mitigations in place?
Conflicts of Interest	• Have any conflicts of interest been adequately identified and mitigated? Is appropriate mitigation in place? • If there are any inducements for taking part in the research, are they appropriate (balance between adequate cash/credit compensation to participant's vs avoiding coercion). Consider quantity and nature of the compensation.
Documentation	• Are all the documents and all the materials (e.g. surveys, interview schedules, vignettes) to be used in the project uploaded? • Does the time suggested on the PIS align with the data collection tool? • Are all recruitment materials present and do they follow the CU templates (PIS, consent form, gatekeeper letter etc.)? • Are the documents appropriate for the intended audience/is the language used clear and understandable? • Are contact details included for (a) lead researcher (and/or supervisor in the case of student projects) and (b) complaints (should be generic ethics committee)? • Has a suitable risk assessment been completed and uploaded to the documentation (if appropriate)?
Overall review	• Do the proposed benefits of this project adequately outweigh any associated risks? • Does the researcher have the necessary experience/skills for the overall risks presented/to carry out the research? • Does the research comply with the Research Conduct and Ethics Policy?

If at any point of the review process you have any concerns about the project, or questions arise outside of this reviewer checklist, please seek support from your local ethics team.