APPLICATION FORM ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HMUANITIES (EASHW)

This application form can be submitted as a request for advice to the Ethics Committee for the Social Sciences and Humanities regarding research proposals with human participants. You can find several tipsheets on our website with all the necessary information on ethical issues when doing research with human subjects.

This application form is intended for new research projects. If you are requesting advice for a project for which a positive ethical advice has already been given, fill in the more brief "Form in case of changes to the study".

Send your ethical clearance request to the ethical advisory committee via eashw@uantwerpen.be.

A. General Information

Project title:

Supervisor:

Researchers:

Funding:

PeopleSoft project-ID (Antigoon):

Is this application related to a previously approved application? Please state the filenumber here:

B. Declaration of honour

1. DATAMANAGEMENT NON-ANONYMOUS DATA

The applicant of this application for ethical clearance guarantees that all who are (in)directly involved with this study, will handle personal data confidentially and according to GDPR-legislation. All data in which individuals are recognizable will always and only be stored on secured servers or applications offered by the AUHA (N-drive, Teams, OneDrive for Business, Sharepoint). Only when this is practically impossible, will the researcher temporarily be stored on a personal drive secured with a password, two-step verification and/or specialized programs such as 7-Zip or AEScrypt.
Data in which individuals are recognizable (datasets, but also contact details of participants and others) will only be shared

1. with persons/institutions when participants and all involved (who are recognizable) have been made aware of, and
2. with consent of the involved (recognizable) persons, and
3. via secured channels. The documents that will be shared will, if possible, be password protected. Bigger Files can be sent via Belnet Filesender (https://filesender.belnet.be/). To send/share these data you *do not* use applications such as Google Drive, Dropbox, WeTransfer, a personal OneDrive (not connected to the AUHA), or any other system not provided by the AUHA.

I have read the above information and confirm that all data in which individuals are recognizable will be managed accordingly.

☐ YES
☐ NO

2. COLLABORATIONS IN RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

When you collaborate with an external partner for contacting, recruiting and potentially reimbursing participants, we ask you to consult this partner's privacy policy and make sure this is in accordance with the GDPR-legislation and the current EASHW-guidelines.

Will you collaborate with an external partner for the recruitment of participants? *Please provide the name of the external partner and state the following: "I hereby declare that the privacy policy and procedures of [name of the partner] are in accordance with the GDPR-legislation and EAHSW-guidelines".*

3. DATAMANAGEMENTPLAN

For this study, you are also required to submit (potentially in a later stadium) a datamanagementplan. This is also important to this committee. Therefore, we ask you to endorse the following declaration of honour:

I am aware that a datamanagementplan is required for this study and that is in accordance with the EASHW-guidelines. I confirm that this DMP will be submitted to DMP online (https://www.dmponline.be/).

☐ YES
☐ NO

[For more questions on your DMP, please contact rdm-support@uantwerpen.be]

C. Risk Analysis

STUDY POPULATION

1. BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE INTENDED STUDY POPULATION(S).

Be sure to include the following information: (1) number of participants (magnitude), (2) who can/cannot participate (inclusion/exclusion criteria), (3) how participants will be recruited

CONSENT

2. ETHICAL CONSENT: ARE YOU DEVIATING FROM OBTAINING ACTIVE WRITTEN "INFORMED CONSENT" FROM ALL PARTICIPANTS?

A fundamental principle of research ethics is: (1) As a researcher, you have an obligation to inform participants adequately and in advance, and (2) as a participant, you have the right to consent or not to participate. If you deviate from this principle, you must provide a rationale.

(select)

☐ **YES:**

I. Why are you deviating from written informed consent?

II. Will an alternative form of informed consent be obtained? (e.g. oral consent)

☐ **NO:**

briefly explain how participants are informed and how active consent is obtained.

3. LEGAL CONSENT: WILL YOU ACQUIRE DATA FROM PARTICIPANTS AT ANY POINT DURING THE STUDY THAT MAKES THEM IDENTIFIABLE?

When collecting data that makes individuals identifiable, the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) legislation applies, and in addition to "ethical consent," "legal consent" from participants is required for the collection and use of such identifiable data.

i. As soon as you, as a researcher, come into contact with participants and/or when you capture or receive recordings of individuals, your study is no longer anonymous (someone's face and voice are unique and make that person identifiable).

ii. "Anonymous" means "no one can be identified by any means reasonably deployed."

iii. For more information and the distinction between anonymous, pseudonymous, and non-anonymous data, we refer to our guidelines.

(select)

☐ **YES:**

Specify the legal ground on which this is based: Consent or Public Interest.

[NOTE: AUHA (Antwerp University and College Association) advises researchers to use "consent" as legal ground in all research. "Public Interest" can be invoked only with justification for why "consent" as a fundamental right is not feasible. In this case, it is required to notify the Privacy Commission (privacy@uantwerpen.be), and we ask you to indicate in the EASHW application that this committee is informed.]

☐ **NO:**

Ensure that no identity-related information is requested from the participants at any point.

RISK TABLE

4. IDENTIFIABILITY IN RESEARCH RESULTS: IS IDENTIFICATION OR RE-IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS POSSIBLE IN THE ANALYSED DATA AND/OR RESULTS?

i. *Ethically, risks only arise when participants can be individually linked to study results.*

ii. *Answer NO if (a) participants are never identifiable throughout the entire study, or (b) participants are definitively anonymized before data analysis begins.*

iii. *Answer YES if (a) participants are identifiable in datasets, or (b) can be made identifiable again in datasets (with a key file or, for instance, if you retain recordings of conversations alongside anonymous transcripts – recordings are never anonymous as the voice serves as an identifier)*

NOTE: Identifiability is not necessarily related to the collection of identity-related information. Even an anonymous survey can still lead to the identifiability of participants for example through the combination of specific data. Reflect on this matter accordingly.

If the above is not entirely clear: consult the EASHW guidelines and additional information on our website.

(select)

☐ **YES:**

I. What kind of data/results can participants be linked to?
II. How long will this linkage remain possible?
III. Why is this linkage necessary during (and potentially after) the study?
IV. Who will have access to data in which participants can be identified?
V. Will every external individual (including (student) employees) involved in this study sign a confidentiality declaration? (Attach these forms as an appendix).

☐ **NO:**

Briefly explain why (re)identification is not possible.

5. COMPENSATION: IF YOU REIMBURSE PARTICIPANTS, COULD THIS COMPENSATION POTENTIALLY BE CONSIDERED UNETHICAL?

Compensation is allowed but must be fair. You should not entice people to participate with overly attractive compensation. Naturally, you also should not exploit participants with excessively low, and thus unethical, compensation. Consider the study population in this assessment as well: children (who can be enticed more easily), studies involving people in extreme/chronic poverty, etc.

i. *There are usually no set criteria to determine what constitutes fair compensation. It's up to you, as the researcher, to make that judgement. You can consider factors like the (average) income of your participants to base the compensation on.*

ii. *For studies abroad: make sure to consult the information in the Tip Sheet on compensation.*

(select)

☐ **YES:**
What could be the impact of this on the participants, and how will you address it?

☐ **NO:**
(I provide compensation, but it is fair)
Briefly explain why the compensation can be considered 'fair' (neither too high or too low).

☐ **N/A:**
There will be no compensation.

6. **COMENSATION: DO YOU COLLECT CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANT COMPENSATION THAT CAN BE LINKED TO THE RESEARCH DATA?**
If you collect and store contact information separately from research data in a way that they can never be linked to datasets or results, you may answer "no" here. (If you do not provide compensation, answer "no" and "N/A").

(select)
☐ **YES:**
I. What kind of data/results can participants be linked to?
II. How long will this linkage remain possible?
III. Why is this linkage necessary during (and potentially after) the study?
IV. Who will have access to data in which participants can be identified?
V. Will every external individual (including (student) employees) involved in this study sign a confidentiality declaration? (Attach these forms as an appendix).

☐ **NO :**
(Compensation without connection to the research data)
Briefly explain why (re)identification is not possible.

☐ **N/A**:
There will be no compensation.

7. AGE and NON-ANONYMOUS: ARE PARTICIPANTS YOUNGER THAN 18 YEARS IDENTIFIABLY DURING DATA COLLECTION AND/OR PROCESSING?
Are participants in your study identifiable (even if only temporarily), and do you recruit children/minors up to 17 years old? According to the GDPR legislation, the Belgian Privacy Commission, and EASHW, active consent from a parent/guardian is required in this case.

(select)

☐ **YES:**

I. How is active consent obtained from the children?
II. How is active consent obtained from a parent/guardian? (Attach informed consent form as an appendix).
III. What happens if only one of the parties gives consent for participation (e.g. parent gives consent but minor does not)?

(Deviating from active consent is only possible when invoking 'public interest' as legal ground, see question 3.)

☐ **NO :**

(Participants are younger than 18, but data is anonymous at all times)
Please refer to your answer on the following question.

☐ **N/A:**

No minors are involved in this study.

8. **AGE and ANONYMOUS: DO YOU RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS YOUNGER THAN 13 YEARS FOR FULLY ANONYMOUS RESEARCH?**

Your study is entirely anonymous (meaning no one is ever identifiable by anyone), but you are working with minors. According to EASHW guidelines, active consent from a parent/guardian is desirable for studies involving children up to 12 years old.

i. From the age of 13, young people can participate in fully anonymous research without the need for parental consent.
ii. Exceptions are possible; please contact us in advance for more information.

(select)

☐ **YES:**

I. How is active consent obtained from the children?
II. How is active consent obtained from a parent/guardian? (Attach informed consent form as an appendix).
III. What happens if only one of the parties gives consent for participation (e.g. parent does not give consent but child wants to participate)?

☐ **NO:**

(Participants can be younger than 13 but the study is not anonymous)
Please refer to your answer on the previous question.

☐ **N/A:**

No minors are involved in this study.

9. VULNERABILITY: DO YOU RECRUIT VULNERABLE PARTICIPANTS?

There is no fixed definition here. You need to assess whether your target population is vulnerable given the theme of your study.

i. We ask you to be cautious but also not too hastily label individuals/groups as "vulnerable."

ii. If you are recruiting participants from countries/regions classified as "Resource Poor Settings" according to the Global Code of Conduct (https://www.globalcodeofconduct.org), then it's advisable to answer "YES" here.

(select)

☐ **YES:**

I. In what way can the participants be considered 'vulnerable'?
II. Is additional consent from a guardian/caretaker required due to potential legal incapability?
III. How will this vulnerability be managed during data collection?
IV. How will this vulnerability be managed when potentially storing non-anonymous data?
V. How will this vulnerability be managed in publications/communication about the study?
VI. Will you refer participants to any organization they can contact for questions or a conversation during and after the study?

☐ **NO:**

If relevant, briefly explain why your study population should not be considered vulnerable in the context of the planned study (for instance, individuals identifying as genderqueer or non-binary might not necessarily be labeled as 'vulnerable' right away).

10. SENSITIVE: DO VERY SENSITIVE TOPICS ARISE IN THIS STUDY?

There is no strict definition of "sensitive" here; it depends on numerous factors (possibly even current events). As a "yardstick", you can consider whether participants might feel the need to discuss the study with a trusted person, or confidential counsellor afterward.

(select)

☐ **YES:**

I. In what way is the topic or theme of this study 'sensitive'?
II. How will this sensitivity be managed during data collection?
III. Will participants be referred to relevant organizations or resources for questions or discussions after the study?

☐ **NO:**

If relevant, briefly explain why the study theme should not be considered sensitive. There may be a thin line between sensitive/non-sensitive and it's acceptable to present arguments for not being overly cautious (for instance, questions about 'bullying' might not always be deemed 'very sensitive').

11. **DISCOMFORT: COULD PARTICIPANTS BE EXPOSED TO PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL DISCOMFORT DURING THIS STUDY?**
This includes stress, anxiety, humiliation, discomfort due to the use of certain experimental methods, being subjected to gruesome images, etc.

(select)

☐ **YES:**

I. What types of discomfort could occur?
II. How will participants be reassured?
III. Will participants be referred to relevant organizations or resources for further questions or discussions after the study?

☐ **NO (or when in doubt):**

Briefly explain why you do not anticipate any discomfort.

12. **RECORDINGS: DO YOU MAKE OR COLLECT PHOTO/AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDINGS OF PEOPLE AND DO YOU SAVE THOSE DURING AND/OR AFTER DATA ANALYSIS?**
This applies when photo/audio/video recordings of individuals are made, and individuals are identifiable in those recordings. If all such recordings are erased before the start of data analysis, you may answer "NO". If you use recordings during analysis and potentially retain them for later (re)use, then you should answer "YES".

i. *This includes not only recordings made by researchers but also recordings that participants themselves provide (e.g. in photovoice research). If you ask participants to provide photo/audio/video recordings that contain individuals and these recordings are present, you should also answer "YES" here. If no recordings are made, answer with N/A.*

(select)

☐ **YES:**

I. What type of recordings are made or obtained?
II. How will these recordings be securely saved?
III. How long will these recordings be saved?
IV. Who has access to these recordings?
V. Will these recordings be shared with third parties? If yes, with whom and why?
VI. Will images or excerpts from the recordings be made public through publication or other channels?
VII. Do the individuals from whom recordings are made provide separate active consent for these purposes:
    a. The making of the recordings?
    b. The storage of the recordings (where and by whom)?

c. The sharing of these recordings (how and with whom)?
d. The possible publication/public disclosure of images or excerpts?

→ Make sure to provide separate consent options for these matters in the informed consent form)

☐ **NO:**

(Recordings are made, but these are permanently erased before data analysis)

I. Confirm that all recordings will permanently erased before data analysis
II. Do the individuals from whom recordings are made provide separate active consent for these purposes:
    a. The making of these recordings?
    b. The temporary storage of these recordings (where and by whom)?

→ Make sure to provide separate consent options for these matters in the informed consent form.

☐ **N/A:**

No recordings will be made or obtained in this study.

13. DECEPTION: DO YOU MISLEAD PARTICIPANTS AT THE START OF THE STUDY?

This pertains to not being able to disclose the exact purpose of the study right from the beginning, with a requirement for debriefing afterward.

(select)

☐ **YES:**

I. Do you use a vague/general description of the study at the beginning or deliberately mislead participants?
II. Are participants fully informed about the exact purpose of the study at the end of the study?
III. Can participants decide after debriefing that their data should not be used after all?

☐ **NO**

(no further explanation needed)

REUSE OF DATA

14. (RE)USE OF EXISTING DATA: DO YOU USE EXISTING NON-ANONYMOUS DATA?

This pertains to data that were collected in the past and are now being used for research purposes without having obtained initial consent at the time. For example, reusing a large dataset or repurposing visual or audio material for which participants did not grant consent back then.

(select)

☐ **YES:**

I. In principle, for reuse of existing data in which participants are identifiable, initial written consent must be obtained for later reuse (AVG/GDPR). How do you go about if this initial consent was not obtained?
   a. Will you make an attempt to still obtain informed consent from the participants or their relatives?
   b. Suppose that, given reasonable efforts, you can no longer obtain informed consent at this time: why do you think the reuse of the data is justified anyway?

II. How will you handle participants who were not informed and only later find out that their data were used for other purposes?

☐ **NO**

(no further explanation needed)

15. LATER REUSE OF COLLECTED DATA: WILL YOU (ALLOW) COLLECTED DATA IN WHICH INDIVIDUALS ARE IDENTIFIABLE TO BE USED AGAIN LATER FOR OTHER PURPOSES?

This pertains to data in which participants are identifiable and which might be reused for other purposes at a later time. This is permissible with informed consent from the participants. For the reuse of anonymous data, a standard notice is included in the informed consent. For the potential reuse of non-anonymous data, the AVG/GDPR regulations apply, and there are additional ethical risks.

(select)

☐ **YES**:

I. Do you currently know the exact purposes for which the data will later be reused?
II. Is it possible that the data might be used for additional (currently unknown) purposes?
III. Do participants actively consent for this reuse?

☐ **NO:**

(Only anonymous data can be reused later)

➔ Make sure this is included in the informed consent.

☐ **N/A:**

There will be no reuse of the data.

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT & ETHICAL REFLECTION

16. DOES THE RESEARCH TAKE PLACE IN (amongst others) THE GLOBAL SOUTH OR WITH COMMUNITIES FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH?

The term "Global South" is a non-exhaustive umbrella term for countries with high levels of poverty and inequality and a history of oppression, exploitation and colonisation, and which still bear the consequences of this today socially, politically, and economically. For more information an a list of countries, you can visit the OECD website.

i. *In a context of high inequality, it is important to consider issues such as power dynamics, benefit sharing and ownership. If your study takes place in, or is in collaboration with communities from the global south, you should reflect on how you will deal with these topics. For more information on global engagement at the UAntwerp, please visit the website.*

(select)

☐ **YES:**

I. Who benefits from the research results: are these mainly researchers from institutions in the Global North or do those locally also benefit? Moreover, does the research benefit the local community?

II. Who was involved in setting the research agenda, the topic and the implementation of the research? To what extent was this initiated by and/or in collaboration with local scientists, with equal participation and ownership?

III. Do local partners have a say in decision-making processes? In addition, is there sufficient reflection with Global North researchers about possible unconscious biases, assumptions, the 'saviour syndrome', and feelings of superiority when conducting research in the Global South?

IV. Is there a clear strategy for mutual capacity building and knowledge exchange? Are the long-term implications of the research and cooperation considered?

V. Are mechanisms in place to monitor, evaluate and report any ethical violations and power imbalances?

☐ **NO**

The research does not take place in or with communities from the global south.

17. COULD THERE BE ANY ETHICAL RISKS DURING THE RESEARCH THAT HAVE NOT BEEN MENTIONED ABOVE OR DO YOU HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE?

D. Attached documents

Obligatory attachments for every application:	
Document 1	Methodology of the study
Document 2	Informed Consent for participants
Attachments to be added in specific cases:	
Document 3	Informed Consent for the parent/guardian(/schoolboard)
Document 4	Confidentiality agreement
Document 5	Certificate of good conduct *(In case of research with minors, to be provided for all actors who come in contact with the minors)*
Document 6	Debriefing form *(in case of deception)*
Document 7	Contracts between researchers and sponsors

E. Submission and evaluation

☐ **OPTION 1 – Low ethical risk**

- Are you sure that your application has been drawn up very accurately and in accordance with all guidelines of the EASHW;
- AND does your application not contain particularly sensitive topics or a vulnerable study population;
- AND do you have no further questions for the committee?

Then choose option 1.

☐ **OPTION 2 – Higher ethical risk**

- Do you doubt whether your application has been drawn up completely correct and in accordance with all guidelines of the EASHW;
- AND/OR does your application concern highly sensitive research and/or a vulnerable target audience;
- AND/OR do you have any questions for the committee?

Then choose option 2.

Date:

Name and signature of supervisor: