

EASHW TIPS- REIMBURSEMENT

Reimbursements require reflection on both the amount (question 5) and how it is managed (question 6). If identity data is needed for reimbursement (check with the Finance Department), the study is non-anonymous, and legal permission (GDPR consent) is required.

C5. REIMBURSEMENT: DO YOU OFFER REIMBURSEMENT OR EXTRAS THAT MAY POSE ETHICAL RISKS?

Participation must always be voluntary. Reimbursements for time and expenses are acceptable, but they should not pressure participants to join.

- **AVOID EXCESSIVE FEES:** Ensure compensation is reasonable and doesn't tempt participants to take part solely for the reward.
- **BE CAUTIOUS WITH VULNERABLE GROUPS,** like children, who are more easily influenced.
- **AVOID UNDER-COMPENSATION:** Very low fees—or no reimbursement at all—can also be unethical, as they may exploit participants. For example, when collecting data from people in chronic poverty, compensation may be necessary to respect their time.
- **COLLECTING DATA ABROAD?** Check for local guidelines on reimbursements and ensure compliance.

For question 5 the answer options are:

- YES to question 5 = You give **compensation** that **may involve ethical risks**.
- NO to question 5 = You give **compensation without ethical risks**.
- NA to question 5 = There is **NO compensation** for participants.

If you answer YES, please address:

1. WHAT are the risks?

- Explain WHY you use this reimbursement despite the ethical risks.
- Examples of reimbursements that can pose ethical risks
 - Excessive financial incentives: Offering a high monetary reward to participants in extreme poverty, which might coerce participation even if they are hesitant.
 - Luxury items: Providing expensive gifts (e.g., electronics or vouchers) in contexts where such items are seen as unattainable for many participants, creating pressure to participate.
 - Social pressure/ vulnerability: Offering reimbursement in tightly knit communities, where participants may feel obligated to join because others in their group have participated. Think about classroom contexts in this case as well.

2. HOW do you protect the participants?

- Describe how you mitigate these risks.
- For example:
 - Clear communication in informed consent forms that participation is entirely voluntary.
 - Measures to ensure participants feel free to decline or withdraw without negative consequences.
 - Limiting the use of reimbursement to strictly necessary cases, avoiding excess.

If you answer NO, please address:

1. What compensation you give, and why this compensation is reasonable.

- Specify the type and amount of compensation (e.g., gift cards, travel reimbursement).
- Justify why this compensation is appropriate:
 - Does it reflect participants' time and effort?
 - Does it comply with local norms or guidelines?

NA:

There is no compensation for participants.

C6. REIMBURSEMENT: DO YOU COLLECT CONTACT DETAILS FOR REIMBURSEMENT AND CAN YOU LINK THEM TO RESEARCH DATA?

For many reimbursements to participants, the Finance Department requires an overview of identity data for accounting. Even using gift cards may require you to request identity information from each person who receives a voucher. Consult with the Finance Department in advance to be sure whether you will have to request additional data with which participants are recognizable.

For question 6 the answer options are:

- **YES to question 6 = You give compensation** and identity details needed for reimbursement **can be linked to research data/results**.
- **NO to question 6 = You give compensation**, but identity details needed for reimbursement **NOT be linked to research data/results**.
- **NA to question 6 = There is NO compensation** for participants.

If you answer YES, please address:

1. WHY do you link contact details to research data?

- Legal consent is required for the use of identity information (GDPR legislation).
- You best store identity information separately from any other data. From an ethical point of view, risks occur if this identity data can be linked to research data.

2. WHICH results or data can be linked to the identity of participants?

- Specify the data or results that may reveal participants' identities, or that could be linked to their identity.
- This ensures transparency with participants and allows the ethics committee to assess the potential risks of recognizability in your study data/results.
- We are especially cautious with data/results that may be perceived as taboo or sensitive to the participants.

3. HOW long will this link last?

- Identity data required for reimbursements should only be kept for as long as these data are needed, not longer.
- State the exact period and justify why remain recognizable for that duration.
- GDPR requires identity data to be stored only as long as necessary. Keeping recordings indefinitely increases risks to participant privacy.

4. WHO can consult data in which people are recognizable?

- List everyone with access (e.g., researchers, assistants) and their roles.
- Participants have the right to know who can view their identity data; you must also mention this information in the informed consent.

- Limiting access reduces risks of misuse or breaches: restrict access to non-anonymous data.
5. Do all participants **ACTIVELY CONSENT** to this link? Please arrange this in the informed consent form, this requires separate explicit consent.
 - In the **INFORMED CONSENT**:
 - Clearly explain that participants will be recognizable in data/results. Also explain who can access their identity information and for how long. It is important to explain why this is necessary for the research and what may be the consequences for the participants.
 - Ensure that participants give **ACTIVE CONSENT** for the recognizability in analysis data/results.
 - PLEASE NOTE: Only use relevant and **CUSTOMIZED CONSENT OPTIONS** from our website's informed consent forms. Unclear, missing or redundant information in the informed consent forms will result in a **PRELIMINARY NEGATIVE ADVICE** from EASHW.
 - Use the **INFORMED CONSENT TEMPLATE FOR NON-ANONYMOUS RESEARCH**.
 - This template includes only the minimum required information as per EASHW and GDPR standards. While you must adapt the language to suit your target population, the content itself cannot be changed.
 6. Do all researchers involved (including external persons and (job) students) sign a **CONFIDENTIALITY DECLARATION**? Attach these declarations.
 - Make sure that everyone with access to non-anonymous data signs a **CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**, and ensure these documents are attached to your application.

If you answer NO, please address:

1. How you can guarantee reimbursement without possibility of data connection

- If you provide reimbursement but ensure that it cannot be linked to participants' research data, explain the steps you take to safeguard anonymity and prevent any connection between identifiable information (used for reimbursement) and study data.
- What to explain:
 - Confirm that reimbursement information (e.g., names, contact details) is collected separately from research data and stored in a separate file or system.
 - Detail how and where reimbursement data is stored securely (e.g., on a password-protected server) and how it is kept completely separate from the research data.
 - Specify how long reimbursement data is retained and when it will be deleted.
 - Indicate how you inform participants that their reimbursement details are not connected to their study responses.
- Some examples:
 - Participants complete an anonymous survey and, at the end, are redirected to a separate link to provide their contact details for reimbursement. The two datasets are never merged. We explain this further at the end of this document.
 - In an experiment participants fill out a paper form with their name and payment details, which is placed in a sealed envelope and processed separately from their research responses.
 - A third-party administrator (e.g., financial department, external recruiter) handles reimbursement independently from the research team, ensuring no connection between payment details and study data.

REIMBURSEMENT & ONLINE SURVEYS

For an online survey: Set up a separate survey for reimbursements.

- End your research survey (in which you collect the research data) with the message: “Thank you for participating! If you would like to receive compensation, click the link below to provide your contact details in a separate survey. This ensures your personal data is stored securely and cannot be linked to your research responses.”
- In the separate survey, request:
 - Contact details.
 - Legal consent for using this data (in line with the GDPR legislation).
- Store identity data securely in a separate file.
- Delete this file once reimbursements are processed.