Appendix: Sample Informed consent templates

**Example 1: template for MSc/UG/small projects where the research is not overly sensitive or complex** (template combines the information sheet/consent form in one) – **p.2**

**Example 2: template recommended for larger studies or complex/sensitive research** (information sheet + consent form) **– p.4**

**Example 3: template for verbal consent script – p.8**

**Example 4: template for online surveys and experiments – p.9**

**Adapting the templates – please note:**

1. Text in black are standard elements which we recommend you include

2. Text in square brackets/highlighted in yellow: please insert your specific information]

3. Notes in the grey boxes or highlighted in grey: these provide guidance only and are to be removed from the final version

**Accessibility**

Please ensure that the information sheet/consent form is provided in a format accessible to your intended participants. For instance:

* if providing a hard copy you may need to increase the font size;
* if your participants are not fluent in English you must provide them with a copy that has been translated as appropriate (but please attach an English version to your ethics form).

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| --- |
| Example 1: Template for MSc/UG/small projects where the research is not sensitive or complex  *This template combines information sheet and consent form in one* |

Dear […….],

My name is […………….] and I am a [student/researcher/academic] at the London School of Economics. Thank you for your interest in this project. In this [email], I give you information about the project and ask for your consent to participate. If you agree, please reply to this [email], stating your name and that you agree to the statements in the table below to give your consent.

**What is the study about?**

|  |
| --- |
| Briefly explain what the study is about in simple/accessible language that will be understood by your participants. If the study is funded, state who the funder is. |

**What will my involvement be?**

|  |
| --- |
| Briefly explain what their involvement will comprise. For example, if you plan to conduct interviews, state how long you expect these to take and where they would take place (and whether online or in person). If you plan to conduct focus groups, explain what other type of participants you are inviting to join the group. |

**Do I have to take part?**

Participation is **voluntary.** There are no negative consequences for you if you choose not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part but then later on you change your mind and wish to withdraw your data, you can let me know by [DATE\*] - you will not have to give any explanation why. It is also absolutely fine if you don’t want to answer any specific questions – you can just tell me, and we will move on.

|  |
| --- |
| \*This should usually be a date before you will begin analysis of the data. Ideally allow participants at least 2 weeks from after the date of the interview/focus group/survey |

**What will my information be used for?**

|  |
| --- |
| State whether the data is to be used in e.g. a Masters’ dissertation or some other kind of output. If you want the option to use the data in future research or publications, you must state so here.  If you plan to use any personal data in a Generative AI tool and/or the data will be shared with third parties via the tool or used to train models, then this should be explained here and consent obtained |

**Will my information be anonymous?**

Your participation will be anonymous - your name will not be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study.

If you agree to take part in the research, please complete the section below.

**Participant’s name**: [Participant to type first name and surname here]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Please read these three statements. If you agree with them, put a X in the boxes below** | |
| I have read this message and had the opportunity to ask questions. |  |
| I agree to participate in the [e.g. interview / survey / focus group] |  |
| I understand that my responses will be kept as confidential as possible, that my name will not be included in any reports or publications, and that my personal information will be kept securely and destroyed at the end of the study. |  |
| [If relevant, add additional statements, such as the use of personal data in Generative AI tools] |  |

Once completed please email this back to me. Thank you!

**Researcher name**: Email address:

Any concerns or complaints about this study should be addressed to [research.ethics@lse.ac.uk](mailto:research.ethics@lse.ac.uk)

The LSE Research Privacy Policy can be found here: <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Secretarys-Division/Assets/Documents/Information-Records-Management/Privacy-Notice-for-Research-v1.2.pdf>

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| Example 2: Template recommended for larger studies or complex/sensitive research  *Template comprises separate information sheet + consent form* |

**[Title of research study]**

**[Name of researcher]**

[Degree programme/Department/Centre, LSE]

**Information for participants**

Thank you for considering participating in this study which will take place [insert approximate dates]. This information sheet outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant, if you agree to take part.

**1. What is the research about?**

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| --- |
| Briefly explain what the study is about in simple/accessible language that will be understood by your participants. If the study is funded, state who the funder is. |

**2. Do I have to take part?**

You do not have to take part if you do not want to. If you do decide to take part [I/we] will ask you to indicate your consent in the form (below) which you can return to [me/us] in advance of the [interview/focus group meeting/survey] or at the start of the [interview/focus group meeting/survey].

**3. What will my involvement be?**

|  |
| --- |
| Briefly explain what their involvement will comprise. For example, if you plan to conduct interviews, state how long you expect these to take and where they would take place (and whether online or in person). If you plan to conduct focus groups, explain what other type of participants you are inviting to join the group. |

**4. How do I withdraw from the study?**

You can withdraw from the study at any point until [insert date\*], without having to give a reason. If any questions during the [interview/focus group/survey] make you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer them. Withdrawing from the study will have no effect on you. If you withdraw from the study, I will not retain the information you have already given, unless you are happy for me to do so.

|  |
| --- |
| \*This should usually be a date before you will begin analysis of the data. Ideally allow participants at least 2 weeks from after the date of the interview/focus group/survey |

**5. What will my information be used for?**

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| --- |
| State whether the data is to be used in e.g. a Masters’ dissertation, research project, academic paper, or some other kind of output. If you want the option to use the data in future research or publications, you must state so here.  If you plan to use any personal data in a Generative AI tool and/or the data will be shared with third parties via the tool or used to train models, then this should be explained here and consent obtained. |

**6. Will my taking part and my data be kept confidential? Will it be anonymised?**

The data [I/we] collect will be kept as confidential as possible. Only [my supervisor and I] will have access to any files that contain your personal data. Your data will be anonymised – your name and anything else that could identify you will not be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. All data (your personal data and the information you provide) will be securely stored in keeping with LSE data management policies and the LSE Research Privacy Policy[[1]](#footnote-1).

|  |
| --- |
| **Naming participants** (e.g. in the case of interviews with experts, activists, etc.): There are some circumstances in which you may – with their explicit consent – name your participants in your research; in this case you need to amend the wording in the section above accordingly.  However, caution should be exercised, and you are advised to discuss this with either your supervisor or the REC via [research.ethics@lse.ac.uk](mailto:research.ethics@lse.ac.uk)  **Limits to confidentiality:** Where applicable (e.g. in the case of research on very sensitive topics) add the following proviso: “Confidentiality will be maintained as far as it is possible, unless you tell [me/us] something which implies that you or someone you mention might be in significant danger of harm and unable to act for themselves; in this case, we may have to inform the relevant agencies of this, but we would discuss this with you first.” |

**7. Who has reviewed this study?**

This study has undergone ethics review in accordance with the LSE Research Ethics Policy and Procedure.

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| You must obtain approval of your research ethics review before you undertake any data collection or recruit participants. Details of the Research Ethics Policy and Procedure can be found at:  <http://www.lse.ac.uk/research-ethics> |

**8. What if I have a question or complaint?**

If you have any questions regarding this study please contact the researcher, [Researcher’s name], on [email address].

If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the conduct of this research, please contact the LSE research ethics managers via [research.ethics@lse.ac.uk](mailto:research.ethics@lse.ac.uk).

**If you are happy to take part in this study, please complete the consent sheet attached/below.**

**CONSENT FORM**

|  |
| --- |
| This form is to be completed by the participant. They should be given a copy of this and the information sheet to keep.  Please ensure you adapt the text highlighted below as appropriate to your study |

**[Title of research study]**

**[Name of researcher]**

**PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY IS VOLUNTARY**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I have read and understood the study information dated [DD/MM/YY], or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. | YES / NO |
| I consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I understand that I can refuse to answer questions and that I can withdraw from the study at any time up until [date], without having to give a reason. | YES / NO |
| I agree to the [interview/focus group] being [audio and video\*] recorded. I understand that the researcher will securely delete the [audio and video] recordings as soon as notes/transcripts have been made. | YES / NO |
| [For focus groups add] I agree to maintain the confidentiality of the focus group discussions. | YES / NO |
| [If relevant, add additional statements, e.g. for taking videos, photographs, use of diaries, etc. You should add a statement such as “I agree to joint copyright of the [specify the data] to [name of researcher]. Please also ensure that use of photographs, video, diaries, etc has been explained in the information sheet] | YES / NO |
| [If relevant, add additional statements, such as the use of personal data in Generative AI tools] | YES/NO |
| I understand that the information I provide will be used for [Researcher name]‘s [dissertation, thesis, research publication, etc.]. | YES / NO |
| I understand that any personal information that can identify me will be kept as confidential as possible and will not be shared with anyone other than [researcher name] [and supervisor name]. | YES / NO |
| I agree that my anonymised information can be quoted in research outputs.  Our recommendation is that all participants are anonymised unless there is good reason to do so (e.g. interviews with experts). Where naming participants can be justified, please add the following optional clause to this section:  *OR (delete as appropriate)* I agree that my real name can be used for quotes in research outputs. | YES / NO |
| I give permission for the anonymised information I provide to be deposited in a data archive so that it may be used for future research.  For some funders it is a requirement to ask participants this. UG/MSc students, however, should only include this clause if it is something they really intend to do this. | YES / NO |

\*You should only video record interviews/focus groups where absolutely necessary – for instance if conducting these online and it’s not possible to turn the video off feature and still see participants

Please retain a copy of this consent form.

Participant name:

Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |
| --- |
| Signature does not need to be in hard copy where, for instance, arrangements are made over email or other electronic form |

Interviewer name:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

For information please contact: [name and email address of researcher]

|  |
| --- |
| Example 3: Template for verbal consent  *Verbal consent should only be used in cases where written consent is not appropriate, for instance due to literacy levels, cultural norms, or where a written record may heighten risks to the participant. Please see §2 of the Informed Consent guidance. The use of verbal consent usually requires review/approval by the Research Ethics Committee.* |

**[Title of your study]**

**[Researcher name]**

[Degree programme, Department, LSE]

**Pre-interview**

Hi, my name is [……], and I’m a [student/researcher] at the London School of Economics.

*[show School ID/business card]*

[As explained in the information sheet I sent/gave you,] I am researching […add brief details of what the study is about and what their involvement will include – e.g. if you would like to interview them, roughly how long that would take, etc.]

Before I ask for your agreement to participate, I’d like to tell you more about how your information will be used. Is it ok with you if I record this?

*[wait for acknowledgement]*

First, this study has undergone ethics review in accordance with the LSE Research Ethics Policy and Procedure. The information you provide will be anonymized and confidential, which means your name and any identifiable details will **not** be used in my [dissertation/publication]. You can retract any information you provide up to [insert date\*] without any reason. And during the interview, if any questions make you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer them.

|  |
| --- |
| \*This should usually be a date before you will begin analysis of the data. Ideally allow participants at least 2 weeks from after the date of the interview/focus group/survey |

|  |
| --- |
| If you plan to use any personal data in a Generative AI tool and/or the data will be shared with third parties via the tool or used to train models, then this should be explained here and consent obtained. |

If that’s all clear and alright with you, are you happy to proceed with [the interview]?

*[wait for acknowledgement]*

And is it ok for me to audio record the interview? This is only to help me write notes/transcribe afterwards. I will then delete the recording.

*[wait for acknowledgement]*

Do you have any questions before we begin?

*[potential interviewee responds]*

**Post-interview**

Thank you so much for your answers. To confirm, are you happy for me to use this information you provided for my [dissertation / publication] with the terms outlined before? I’m also happy to go through them again.

*[interviewee reconfirms/asks for details of the study or how data will be used to be repeated]*

Thank you so much for your time!

|  |
| --- |
| Example 4: Template for online surveys/experiments  *This should be presented on the first screen of the survey/experiment; participants should only be able to proceed if they answer Yes to the consent questions at the end* |

**[Title of your study]**

**[Researcher name]**

**[Degree programme, Department, LSE]**

Thank you for your interest in this study. The study is about [briefly describe the study].

**What will my involvement be?**

If you agree to take part you will be asked to [briefly explain what will be required].

[The survey/task] should take approximately [X minutes/hours] of your time.

Participation is voluntary. You do not need to answer any questions you don’t want to, and you can stop completing the [survey/task] at any point if you wish to. If you take part but then later on you wish to retract the information you have provided, you can let me know via email [your email address] by [DATE] - you will not have to give any explanation why.

|  |
| --- |
| If the data collection will be entirely anonymous and you will not have any contact details of the participants, replace the above text with, e.g. “Since the data collection is anonymous, it will not be possible to withdraw the information you have provided once you have completed and submitted the [survey/ questionnaire.]” |

**Will I be compensated for taking part?**

|  |
| --- |
| Researchers should reflect on whether participants should be compensated for their time (or, e.g. entered in a lottery prize). Please refer to our guidance [here](https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/research-and-innovation/research/Assets/Documents/PDF/ethics-incentives-reimbursement-etc-v5.pdf). If participants will be compensated for their time, provide a clear statement of what this will be and ensure you have thought through how to arrange payment |

**What will my information be used for?**

Your responses will be used in my [Masters’ dissertation/PhD thesis/publications/future research/other].

[If relevant] Your personal information will be kept securely and destroyed at the end of the study.

[If relevant] Your IP address will not be collected during this survey/task.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Your participation will be anonymous - your name will not be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. The [LSE Research Privacy Policy](https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Secretarys-Division/Assets/Documents/Information-Records-Management/Privacy-Notice-for-Research-v1.2.pdf) can be found online.

|  |
| --- |
| If you plan to use any personal data in a Generative AI tool and/or the data will be shared with third parties via the tool or used to train models, then this should be explained here and consent obtained. |

**Please read and select the following statements if you agree with them:**

- I have read and understood the explanations above YES/NO

- I am 18 or over YES/NO

- I agree to take part YES/NO

1. <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Secretarys-Division/Assets/Documents/Information-Records-Management/Privacy-Notice-for-Research-v1.2.pdf?from_serp=1> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Qualtrics/IP addresses: By default, surveys using Qualtrics collect IP addresses; if you do not need to collect IP addresses, you must turn this off in the settings. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)