THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Application Form for Departmental Ethics Review of Taught Postgraduate Dissertation/Thesis

1. Programme Name: _____

2. Department: _____

3. Title of Project: _____

4. Name of Student Investigator: _____
(University No: _____; e-mail address: _____)

5. Name of Research Supervisor: _____
(e-mail address: _____)

6. Anticipated commencement date for this project*: _____
Anticipated completion date for this project: _____

7. Please attach a one-page ***summary of the proposed research***. In this summary, briefly describe the purpose(s) or objective(s) of the proposed project and include any hypothesis(es)/research questions to be investigated. Also, provide a brief, sequential description of the procedures to be used in this study.

8. What process will be used to inform the potential participants about the study details and to obtain their consent for participation?

   [ ] ***Informed consent form*** (please provide a copy)**
   [ ] Other (please specify: _____
   _____)

   Note: If written informed consent cannot be obtained from the potential participants, please provide a detailed justification. (Attach additional sheets if necessary).

9. Will this study involve the use of deception? Yes [ ] No [ ]

   - If **Yes**, please (i) describe the deception(s) to be used in this study **AND** provide a justification for its use (attach additional sheets if necessary); and (ii) outline the process to be used to debrief participants **AND** attach a copy of the ***written debriefing sheet*** and the materials used to obtain consent following debriefing.

10. Will the study involve the use of research participants who are/were engaged in activities potentially in breach of the law? Yes [ ] No [ ]

- If **Yes**, please observe the conditions stated in Annex I, and attach a ***detailed explanation*** on (i) the nature of the "illegal/unethical/unsafe conduct" undertaken by the research participants; (ii) whether or not the risk is limited only or primarily to practitioners and/or consumers; and (iii) how you will protect yourself and the research participants. Such explanation should be duly approved by research supervisor.

Notes:

* Your proposed study may not begin until ethics approval has been received from the research ethics committee.

** Read and use the checklist for informed consent form.

Checklist for Informed Consent Form

Please check below all the information that has been included in your consent form:

[ ] A statement indicating that this is a research study and who the principal investigator is[1]
[ ] Your study purpose described in simple, non-technical language
[ ] Main points of the procedure
[ ] Duration of participation
[ ] Potential risks/discomforts and their minimization[2]
[ ] Compensation for participation (if any)
[ ] Potential benefits[3]
[ ] Assurance of confidentiality
[ ] Personnel who can access to the data/records
[ ] Participants' rights to withdraw from the study
[ ] Contact information for the principal investigator[4]
[ ] Contact information for the Human Research Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Faculties, HKU
[ ] Space for participant's signature

Please make sure you have provided full information in your consent form.
Omission of any information mentioned above may cause delay in the approval process of your application.
Please remember to attach the **full set of questionnaires** for evaluation.

Notes:

1 For students, please include the phrase "under the supervision of Professor/Dr. XXX"

2 Even the risks/discomforts are mild or minimal, please state so. Here are some examples:
- *This procedure has no known risks*
- *You may find expressing your personal experience during the procedure somewhat uncomfortable and upsetting. Such discomforts, however, should be no greater than what we experience in everyday life.*

3 If there are no benefits to the participants, please say so. (For instance, "*There are no direct benefits to you. However, the research project can provide valuable information on …"*)

4 For students, please include the contact information of your supervisor.

Researchers must ensure that all requested materials are submitted. The submission of incomplete application packages will delay the ethics review process.

Please check below all materials that are included in your application package to the **Ethic Panel Representative of your Department**:

[ ] Application Form for Departmental Ethics Review of Taught Postgraduate Dissertation/Thesis
[ ] A one-page summary of the proposed study
[ ] Informed consent form
[ ] Checklist for the informed consent form
[ ] Full set of questionnaire(s)
[ ] Debriefing sheet, if applicable

_____ _____

Signature of Student Investigator Date

Endorsed by:

_____ _____

Signature of Research Supervisor Date

****

FOR USE BY DEPARTMENT ONLY:

_____ _____

Ethics Panel Representative Date
Department of _____, HKU

Notes:

1. Applications for ethics approval can be submitted at any time during the academic year to the Department. Please note that researchers may be asked by the reviewer to revise and re-submit their ethics application. It may take up to a month (from the date of first submission) to obtain ethics approval during semester time, and up to two months between the semesters.
2. For each approved ethics application, the Department will send email to indicate that the study has been approved. Approval is valid for one year for the purpose of application to the participant pool.
3. Check the latest information at the Human Research Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Faculties (http://www.hku.hk/rss/HREC.htm).
4. This form was adapted from the Department of Psychology.

April 4, 2023

For applications that may involve research participants who are/where engaged in activities in breach of (or potentially in breach of) the applicable laws (including those of Hong Kong and/or those of other relevant jurisdictions)

In case sensitive data, namely, information related to possible illegal/unlawful conduct of research participants needs to be collected, I will take extra precautions to minimize risk to my research participants and myself and avoid any unethical action that may be illegal, especially when it is in breach of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance or other relevant laws of Hong Kong and/or those of other relevant jurisdictions.

As sensitive data could place research participants at significant risk if a criminal investigation were to take place, I understand that I would be required by a court order to hand over data, and that destruction of such materials after a court order to produce it has been issued could result in criminal prosecution.

In order to safeguard research participants and myself, I will store data including answers to questionnaires, interview transcripts, etc. (held electronically or in hard copy) in a manner so that it cannot be directly matched with the identity of individual research participants (such as names of participants, date of interview, location of interview etc.).

In the event that an ethics application involves research participant(s) under investigation by a competent authority or participant(s) subject to legal proceedings in court of otherwise (criminal, civil or disciplinary), I understand that the University will normally suspend the processing of the ethics application until the completion of the relevant investigation or legal proceedings.

I will oblige by the following principles:

(a) serious and due consideration must be given to whether or not such involvement is well justified, taking into account such factors as academic merit, alternative research methods and sources, potential risks, mitigation measures and interests of stakeholders;

(b) there must not be any act, conduct or activity that may bring the University into disrepute;

(c) there must not be aiding, abetting, counselling or incitement in respect of any offence or potential offence;

(d) legal duties to report or disclose as required under the applicable laws must be discharged (e.g., legal provisions in respect of offences of drug trafficking, money laundering, terrorism, national security, etc.);

(e) there must not be obstruction to criminal or other investigations by the competent authorities or the commission of acts tending to pervert the course of justice;

(f) requests for the disclosure of information/documents (including confidential information/documents) as required under the compulsion of applicable laws must be complied with; and

(g) in the informed consent form, in addition to being provided with the general information, prospective research participants must be informed of the risks and circumstances in which confidentiality may not be maintained (e.g. compulsion by relevant legal authorities to hand over research materials or answer questions) and what additional safeguards the PI will therefore undertake to protect the integrity of the research and the identity of research participants, subject to compliance with the applicable laws.