

# Completing a CRA Ethics Application

## Please read this first before making completing an Ethics Application

All research which involves human participants requires ethical approval from a duly constituted ethics committee before the research begins.

To apply for ethical approval, please use the .pdf version of the CRA Ethics Application Form. This can be found on the website under 'Ethics'. Download it and complete it. You will also need the additional documents that are relevant to your research such as Information Sheets, Consent Forms, draft surveys and interview schedules. If possible, join them into one document for submission, either a Word document or a .pdf document.

Low risk projects will be approved by the Executive Officer of the Ethics Committee. If it is not a low risk project, it will go to the Ethics Committee and you may be asked to meet with the Ethics Committee to explain your project and your ethical procedures. The decision on the level of risk will be made by the Executive Officer of the Ethics Committee.

## A. Information Required for Completing the Ethics Approval Form

Before completing the Ethics Approval form, you will need the following information about the project and we advise that you prepare these before you complete the Ethics Approval Form.

1. Project title.
2. A short description of nature and aims of the research (less than 200 words).
3. Details of what groups of people and how many will be invited to participate in the research.
4. Details of how you will recruit people to participate.
  - a. If you need permission from an organization, club, school or church to recruit people, you will need to provide a copy of the letter seeking permission OR a copy of the letter indicating permission has been granted.
  - b. If you are publicly advertising your research, you will need to provide your flyer or advertisement.
5. If you are doing research with minors, you will need the number and expiry date of your Working with Children Check.
6. If you are doing research outside Australia, you will need to explain how you will obtain legal and ethical permission as required in those countries.
7. If your research could lead to hurt or distress in any way, you will need to explain how you will refer people to independent counselling if there are hints of potential needs.
8. You will also need to explain how you maintain the confidentiality of what your participants share with you.

## **B. Additional Documents You Need to Submit**

You may need to submit the following documents in relation to your application.

### **1. Permission letter**

This is required if you need permission from an organization, club, school or church to recruit people.

The letter seeking permission should include the following elements:

1. The nature of your project and its aims, the degree for which you are studying, the institution, and who is supervising you.
2. What is requested of those who participate in the research, both in terms of what information you will be seeking from them and how long interviews or the completion of surveys will take. Also note how you will protect participants' confidentiality.
3. What you require of the organisation – for example, in inviting people to do interviews or to hand out surveys for you. (Note that it is illegal for a church to give you a list of contacts without first asking the people on the list if their details can be shared with you.)
4. How you will be using the information gathered and whether you will be providing the church with a report. (It is usually desirable to indicate that a report will be available.)
5. How further information about the research can be obtained.

It would also be appropriate to include a form with the letter that can be completed indicating whether or not permission is granted which can be returned to you.

### **2. Advertisement for Your Project**

This must be submitted if you are advertising for participants in your project publicly.

This should include:

1. Who is doing the research.
2. A brief indication of the topic of the research.
3. What is required of participants.
4. How further information can be obtained.

### **3. Information Sheet**

This is required as a separate sheet that you leave with your participants if you are conducting interviews or focus groups. If you are conducting a survey, this information can be provided in the introduction to the survey.

The information sheet needs to be in plain, non-technical language. It should contain the following elements:

1. The nature of your project and its aims, the degree for which you are studying, the institution, and who is supervising you.
2. How the person was chosen for the research and contact details obtained.
3. What you will be requested of those who participate in the research, both in terms of what information you will be seeking from them and how long interviews or the completion of surveys will take. Also note how you will protect participants' confidentiality.
4. Tell people if you are planning to record the interview or focus group and how you will protect the confidentiality of what you record.
5. How you will be using the information gathered and to whom you will be providing reports. (It is usually desirable to indicate that a report will be available.)
6. How further information about the research can be obtained and how a complaint about the ethics of the project can be made.

#### **4. Consent Form**

This is required as a separate sheet that you leave with your participants if you are conducting interviews or focus groups. If you are conducting a survey and the participants are free to complete the survey in their own time, they will indicate their consent to participation in the research by completing the survey and a separate form is not required.

The consent form needs to contain the following elements:

1. A statement indicating that the participant has read the information about the study and what is required of the participant.
2. A statement agreeing to the recording of the interview or focus group (if it is planned to record it).
3. A statement indicating that the researcher may use the information in writing a thesis or other published material. It should state that the identity of the participant will not be revealed. If you cannot protect their identity, that must be stated on the consent form.
4. If a person under the age of 18 is being interviewed, then there should be a separate space for the parent or guardian to sign.

#### **5. Agreement with Research Assistants**

A signed agreement is only needed when you are using research assistants to help you in conducting interviews or in analysing data which is not anonymous and which involve confidential information.

If the information you have gathered is NOT anonymous, and someone is assisting you with the research, add the agreement regarding confidentiality here.

#### **6. Data Collection Instruments (such as Surveys or Interview Schedules)**

Provide the Ethics Committee with the survey or interview schedule that you will be using to gather information or data. It is recognised that small changes may be made to surveys or interview schedules after approval is given. The Committee also recognises that interviews will flow freely to

some extent, and thus the exact wording of questions and the order in which questions are asked may vary from one interview to another. Only if major changes are made, do you need to re-submit these to the Ethics Committee.

Note that there should be an introduction to your survey or interview schedule which includes the following.

1. Who you are and why you are doing this research (e.g. the degree for which you are studying)
2. The institution you belong to and who is supervising your research or who has commissioned it.
3. What will be required of participants, including how long the survey or interview may take.
4. How confidentiality will be protected.
5. How the information or data will be used and how a report may be obtained.
6. Contact details for more information AND for how a complaint may be made.
7. For interviews or focus groups, whether participants agree to a recording to be made (if you wish to do that).

**Template for a Permission Letter. (Note that you may use the logo of your own organisation.)**



[Your contact details]

[Date]

[Name and position of head of organization]

[Address of organization from whom seeking permission]

Dear [Name of person from whom seeking permission]

I am studying [topic of research] at [name of institution] as part of the requirements for [name of degree]. This study is being supervised by [name of supervisor].

The aims of the study are [brief statement of the nature and aims of the research]. I expect the research to have benefits for [name the groups who may benefit] in the following ways [the benefits they will receive].

In order to undertake this research, I would be most grateful if you could invite people in your institution to participate in this research. Participants will be asked to [statement of what they will be asked to do – interviews / surveys and whether you wish to record interviews]. This is likely to take [length of time interview or survey likely to take]. *You may also want to request that the organization provide a location where the interviews can be done ... and note the requirements that this be private, but perhaps with a glass door so that participants can be seen. Or you may want to request the institution to gather surveys that have been distributed and bundle these to hand back to the research, requiring that they be kept anonymous.*

All information gathered from participants will be kept confidentially. While it must be kept for 7 years for legal reasons, it will be kept in locked cupboards at [name of your institution]. Only general patterns from this research will be reported in my thesis and in any other articles or publications based on this research.

In return for your assistance, I am happy to offer you a short report of the outcomes of the research. I will also offer a short report to all who participate in the research.

I am happy to provide further information on the research, and you may contact me on [your email address]. The research will be approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Christian Research Association and any ethical concerns regarding this research may be addressed to secretary\_HREC@cra.org.au .

Please let me know if you are willing to assist me in the research and I will then be in touch to make practical arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

[Your name]



### *Information Sheet*

[Title of Proposed Research Project and Name of the Researcher]

I am studying [topic of research] at [name of institution] as part of the requirements for [name of degree]. This study is being supervised by [name of supervisor].

The aims of the study are [brief statement of the nature and aims of the research]. I expect the research to have benefits for [name the groups who may benefit] in the following ways [the benefits they will receive].

In order to undertake this research, I would be most grateful if you would be willing to participate in this research. Please note that participation is entirely voluntary and there are no consequences for you of not participating. Participants will be asked to [statement of what they will be asked to do – interviews / surveys and where this will occur]. This is likely to take [length of time interview or survey likely to take]. You are being invited to participate because you are [a member of a specific group, have a particular interest, or whatever the reason for inviting them]. There are no costs to being involved. [You may want to say something about the benefits the participant will receive from involvement.]

*If recording interviews:* I would like to record the interview for the purposes of analysis. Please let me know if you are willing for this to occur on the consent form. If you would prefer that I did not record the interview, that is fine. I will rely on the notes that I take. If, at any time, you do not wish to answer a question, you can simply say 'Pass' and we will move on. It is not anticipated that you will find any of the questions sensitive or difficult to answer. There are no right or wrong answers. I am simply interested in your thoughts: your insights and your opinions. [OR describe any potential sensitivities or risks.] If you wish to withdraw your participation, you may do so up by simply letting me know up to 2 weeks after the interview.

All information gathered from participants will be kept confidentially. While it must be kept for 7 years for legal reasons, it will be kept in locked cupboards at [name of institution]. Only general patterns from this research will be reported in my thesis and in any other articles or publications based on this research. In return for your assistance, I am happy to offer you a short report of the outcomes of the research.

I am happy to provide further information on the research, and you may contact me on [your email address]. The research will be approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the Christian Research Association and any ethical concerns regarding this research may be addressed to [secretary\\_HREC@cra.org.au](mailto:secretary_HREC@cra.org.au).

Please complete the Consent Form if you are willing to assist me in the research and I will then be in touch to make practical arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

[Name of researcher]

**CONSENT OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

**Project:** <name of project>

**Researcher:** <name of researcher>.

I (*the participant*) understand what this research project is designed to explore. What I will be asked to do has been explained to me. I agree to take part in the project, realising that I can withdraw at any time without having to give a reason for my decision. I agree that research data collected in the study may be published in a form that does not identify me in any way. **[Or note if you cannot protect the identity of the participant, for example, if they are a leader in an organisation.]**

I am willing / not willing for the researcher to make an audio recording of the interview or focus group. (Please indicate if you are willing OR not willing.)

[For focus group participants:

I will maintain the confidentiality of all other participants in the research and will not repeat anything that is said in the group to anyone outside of the group.]

I am happy for the researcher to contact me to arrange a suitable time and place for a conversation.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT .....

*(block letters)*

SIGNATURE ..... DATE .....

CONTACT DETAILS: Email contact: .....

Telephone (if needed to arrange the conversation): .....

*[Include the following section if appropriate.]*

***If you are under the age of 18, please also ask you parent to sign their consent to the conversation.***

**Parent's confirmation**

I confirm that I..... (the child's parent/guardian) have provided written consent for.....(child's name) to take part in the research and that I have explained the information provided above to my child and that he/she has indicated that he/she understands the activity and wants to participate.

SIGNATURE .....(parent/guardian) DATE .....

***Please hand this form to <name of person> or post it to <address of researcher>.***

***Agreement with Research Assistants  
Regarding Confidentiality and Intellectual Property***

Name of Project: .....

We thank you for your willingness to assist in this project. In doing so, it is important that you keep the confidentiality of all the information that has been gathered in the course of the project. Hence, we ask that you sign your agreement to following points.

**Confidentiality**

The research assistant must not during the term of their involvement or anytime afterward (except in the proper course of their duties or as may be required by law):-

1. Without prior consent of [name of institution] copy any document or disclose to any other party any confidential information or material relating to the research project;
2. Use or attempt to use any information gained in the process of the research and data gathering in any manner outside of this research project;
3. At the end of the research project, returned to the [name of the researcher], who will arrange for a copy to be kept at [name of institution] for the required time of 7 years, while all other copies are destroyed;
4. Will not keep in electronic or hard copy any material or notes relating to this research once the files have been sent to [the name of the researcher].

**1. Copyright and Intellectual Property**

In signing this form, [name of the research assistant] forfeits any rights to intellectual property that the member may have developed at the direction of [name of the researcher] whilst in any capacity of research data gathering.

*“I ..... both acknowledge and agree to abide by the terms and conditions of my responsibilities towards confidentiality and intellectual property during my involvement with any and all aspects of the research project of [name of researcher].”*

Name of research assistant: .....

Signature of research assistant: .....

Date of signing: .....



## Introduction to Survey or Interview

*If a survey is being undertaken, a separate information sheet is not required. However, a statement such as the following should occur at the start of the survey. An interview should begin with the following details.*

I am studying [topic of research] at [name of institution] as part of the requirements for [name of degree]. This study is being supervised by [name of supervisor].

The aims of the study are [brief statement of the nature and aims of the research]. I expect the research to have benefits for [name the groups who may benefit] in the following ways [the benefits they will receive].

In order to undertake this research, I would be most grateful if you would be willing to complete this survey. Please note that participation is entirely voluntary and there are no consequences for you of not responding to the survey. You are also free to refrain from answering any question. The survey is likely to take you about [length of time interview or survey likely to take].

There are no right or wrong answers. I am simply interested in your thoughts: your insights and your opinions. All information gathered from participants will be kept confidentially. While it must be kept for 7 years for legal reasons, it will be kept in locked cupboards at [name of institution]. Only general patterns from this research will be reported in my thesis and in any other articles or publications based on this research. [If true...] I will not be asking your name or identifying details in the survey OR explain how you will remove identifying details from the data.

In return for your assistance, I am happy to offer you a short report of the outcomes of the research. You may contact me to request a report or to obtain further information about this research on [your email address]. The research will be approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the Christian Research Association and any ethical concerns regarding this research may be addressed to secretary\_HREC@cra.org.au .

**For surveys:** Please note that your willingness to participate in the research is indicated by your completion of this survey.

**For interviews:** *You should already have the consent form – and you cannot proceed without that. However, you should check again: Are you willing for me to record this interview?*

[Name of researcher]

## Survey or Interview Questions