Guidance on drafting a Student Research Participant Information Sheet

# Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for UWE undergraduate or Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students

# What is a Participant Information Sheet?

The Participant Information Sheet is the document given to potential participants with written information about the study. Its purpose is to help potential participants to decide whether they want to take part and to provide relevant details, including contact details. It should include the following core information:

* Title, or name of the project – self-explanatory to a lay person;
* The UWE Bristol logo must not be included;
* The name and profile of the Supervisor;
* The details of the ethical approval(s) granted, such as stating that ethics approval has been given by the Supervisor, or where there has been approval by a UWE Bristol Research Ethics Committee specify which one, and include email details for any ethical queries/comments/complaints (researchgovernance@UWE.ac.uk);
* An invitation to the participant to take part in the research, an explanation of why they have been invited, and non-technical explanation of the research;
* Assurance that participation is voluntary and details of how they can withdraw from the study without penalty;
* Non-technical explanation of what participation involves and what will happen to the participant’s data;
* Summary of the risks and benefits to the participant;
* Details of where the results of the research will be submitted or published;
* Contact details for student and supervisor for further queries/concerns/complaints;
* A ‘thank you’ to the participant.

**You must ALWAYS include a** [**Privacy Notice for Research Participants**](https://www.uwe.ac.uk/research/policies-and-standards/research-ethics/policies-procedures-and-guidance) **with the Participant Information Sheet**

# Invitation paragraph

For example: “You are invited to take part in research undertaken by a student of the University of the West of England, Bristol. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the study is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and if you have any queries or would like more information please contact [student name], [programme name], UWE, Bristol [UWE email address].”

# Who is organising the research?

Provide details of the student and their Supervisor. For example:

“The student researcher is [name] under the supervision of [name]. The [Supervisor’s] profile is available at [insert links to UWE profile].”

# What is the aim of the research?

You should explain the background and aim of the study in non-technical language, and what the participant is being asked to do, For example:

“The research is looking at [explain the aim/objective of the research in non-technical language]. The research questions are [explain the research questions in non-technical language].

# Why have I been invited to take part?

Explain how the participants have been chosen and why, with details on what will and will not be expected. For example:

“As a [professional/student/service user etc], we are interested in gaining information about your [experience/views etc] so the interview will ask you about these things. We will not be asking any questions about [insert details if applicable]. The purpose of the questions will be to [gain information about your experience/gain your views etc].

# Do I have to take part?

Explain that taking part in the research is entirely voluntary and that participants can withdraw their consent (although you may need to set a final date for withdrawal). For example:

“You do not have to take part in this research. It is up to you to decide whether or not you want to be involved. If you do decide to take part, you will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. If you do decide to take part, you are able to withdraw from the research without giving a reason [insert any restrictions here, for example, if you have collected any identifiable data: until the point at which your data is anonymised and can therefore no longer be traced back to you or removed]. This point will take place [insert time period here] from the date you signed your consent form (or a specific date if you have one date for all data, such as the date you anonymise all data or commence analysis). If you want to withdraw from the study within this period, please write to [insert student name and UWE email details]. Deciding not to take part or to withdrawal from the study does not have any penalty [insert details of what it cannot affect here, if applicable. For example: will not affect the standard of care you will receive, your assessment marks, etc]

# What will happen to me if I take part and what do I have to do?

This section needs a clear description of what will happen to the participant if they decide to take part in the research. In non-technical language, explain clearly what you expect of them. For example:

“If you agree to take part you will be asked to take part in [details, e.g. filling out a questionnaire, interview or focus group]. This will be conducted by the student researcher. The [activity, e.g. interview] will take approximately [insert time].

The subject and focus of the discussion will be [details]. Your answers will be fully anonymised.

[Give withdrawal details here, e.g. ‘a unique identifier will be used to re-identify you if you choose to withdraw from the study within the period. At the point of transcription, your voice/video recording will be deleted. Your data will be anonymised at this point and will be analysed with interview data from other anonymised participants’].

# What are the benefits of taking part?

For example: There are no direct benefits of taking part but you will be contributing to knowledge which we hope will benefit services in future.

# What are the possible risks of taking part?

This section should include a statement about any possible risks that you foresee. For example:

“We do not foresee or anticipate any significant risk to you in taking part in this study. If, however, you feel uncomfortable at any time you can ask for [the activity] to stop. If you need any support during or after [the activity] then the researcher will be able to put you in touch with suitable support agencies. The [Supervisor] is experienced in conducting and supervising [the activity] and will support the student to conduct the research sensitively. The [activities] have been designed with these considerations in mind.

# What will happen to your information?

Please refer to the University’s guidance ‘[Data Protection for UWE Bristol Students](https://www.uwe.ac.uk/research/policies-and-standards/research-ethics/policies-procedures-and-guidance)’for information on your data protection responsibilities as a student researcher.

This section should be written in non-technical language and should include a statement about any circumstance where you feel you need to break confidence. For example, there is a safeguarding concern, or if there is evidence of a criminal offence or professional misconduct etc. You will also need to be clear how you will ensure that the data, whether it be in hard copy or electronic, will be archived. example:

“All the information that you give will be kept confidential and anonymised at [point of anonymisation of data]. The only circumstance where we may not be able to keep you information confidential is [details of when, and what would happen if that circumstance arises, e.g. in safeguarding a child; or when required or compelled by law – please remember that this is a possibility]. Hard copy research material will be kept [if you collect any hard copy information, give details of exactly where this data will be securely stored, e.g. in a locked cabinet accessible only to the researcher located within a secure setting] and digital data will be stored on the University’s secure OneDrive system to which only the student and [Supervisory team] will have access in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation requirements. [Voice/video] recordings will be destroyed securely immediately after anonymised transcription. Your data will be analysed together with other interview and file data. Once anonymised, we will ensure that there is no possibility of identification or re-identification from this point.”

# Where will the results of the research be submitted or published?

This section tells the participants what will happen to the results of the research. Are the results likely to be published? If so, where can they obtain a copy of the published results? You might add that they will not be identified in any publication. For example:

“A dissertation will be written containing the research findings and submitted to the University. Anonymous and non-identifying direct quotes may be used in the dissertation. A copy may be displayed in the University library. If you are interested in reading a copy please contact the student.”

# Who has ethically approved this research?

If your project has been assessed as low risk then it can be approved by your Supervisor; if, in exceptional circumstances, the research is assessed as high risk it will need to go to a UWE Bristol Research Ethics Committee. In rare cases, e.g. NHS patient research, it may need additional ethical approval from a NHS ethics committee. For example:

“The project has been reviewed and approved by [Supervisor’s name under delegated authority from the [name] Research Ethics Committee] if low risk, or [the [name] Research Ethics Committee, and insert details of any other ethical approvals obtained]” if high risk.

Any comments, questions or complaints about the ethical conduct of this study can be addressed to the [name] Research Ethics Committee at:

[Researchethics@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Researchethics@uwe.ac.uk)“

# What if I have a concern or something goes wrong?

Explain how concerns, queries and/or complaints will be handled. This should be in the form of contacting your Supervisor in the first instance.

# What if I have more questions or do not understand something?

If you would like any further information about the research please contact either:

[insert names and email addresses of both student and Supervisor].

# Remember to thank participants

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| --- |
| Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.  You will be given a copy of this Participant Information Sheet and your signed Consent Form to keep. |