## School of Education, Trinity College Dublin
### Application for Ethical Approval of Research Proposals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Research</th>
<th>A study of something interesting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Researcher Name(s)</td>
<td>Ann Ed Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinity Email Address</td>
<td><a href="mailto:astudent@tcd.ie">astudent@tcd.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor Name (if applicable)</td>
<td>A. Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor Email (if applicable)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:asupervisor@tcd.ie">asupervisor@tcd.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of Proposer (please tick)</td>
<td>Student ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course of Study (please tick)</td>
<td>BMusEd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASIAP</td>
<td>□</td>
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</table>

Please indicate the level of approval required (see appendix)

- [ ] Level 0
- [ ] Level 1
- [x] Level 2

Has your proposal been submitted to any other Research Ethics Committee?

- [ ] Yes
- [x] No

If yes, please provide details:

Commented [A1]: Check the ethics guidelines policy document on the School of Education website to ensure you have marked the correct level. This study is with teenagers and is therefore level 2.
Declaration by All Applicants:
I have read and understood the School of Education’s policy on ethics in educational research: [http://www.tcd.ie/Education/research/ethics/](http://www.tcd.ie/Education/research/ethics/) and Trinity College Dublin’s Policy on Good Research Practice: [https://www.tcd.ie/research/dean/assets/pdf/TCD%20Good%20Research%20Practice%20Policies%20copy.pdf](https://www.tcd.ie/research/dean/assets/pdf/TCD%20Good%20Research%20Practice%20Policies%20copy.pdf)

I declare that the details provided reflect accurately my research proposal and I undertake to seek updated approval if substantive changes are proposed after this submission. I have consulted an authoritative set of educational research guidelines.

Applicant’s Signature: 

Signed: Date

Declaration by Supervisor (if applicable)
I have read this application. I am satisfied that it is in line with the criteria set out by the School of Education Research Ethics Committee in their published Code of Practice and application form templates.

Supervisor’s Signature: 

Signed: Date

In instances where supervisors feel that their specialised expertise may be important, information for the REC to take into account (e.g. in relation to researching highly sensitive areas such as trauma/abuse), please submit an additional page with any relevant information.

Final Approval Signed-Off by a member of the Research Ethics Committee

Signed: Date

Commented [A2]: Signing this declaration indicates that you comply with the above. Please do not sign this section and submit your application until you meet these criteria.

Commented [A3]: The applicant must sign the document. Electronic signatures are accepted. Any application without signatures will be returned without review.

Commented [A4]: For student applications, supervisors are important gatekeepers and provide important guidance. Supervisors are invited to sign this declaration if they are satisfied that the application meets the criteria outlined. Electronic signatures are accepted. Any application without signatures will be returned without review.
Details of the Proposed Project

1. Please give a structured abstract of the proposed research, including the methods you intend to use (approx. 300 words).

Theoretical Background
Recent research in the area of X has demonstrated that...

The following research questions have been identified in order to investigate this topic:
1. Research Question 1
2. Research Question 2

Detailed description of methods and fieldwork instruments
In order to address these research questions, the following fieldwork-based project is proposed: Questionnaires will be designed and 211 Junior Cycle second level students (age 12-14 years) in Schools X and Y, Town Z will be invited to participate. The questionnaire will be adapted from the internationally-recognised and validated questionnaire designed by Researcher A. The questionnaire contains 40 questions that address [describe the topic here], including questions such as [provide some sample questions here]. Participants will answer using a Lickert scale and it is anticipated that it will normally take no longer than 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire will be administered online at school, during school hours, and at a time that suits the participants and that does not disrupt their formal studies. Students will not be asked for any identifying information in the questionnaire, therefore the data are anonymised at the point of data collection.

In addition to the questionnaire, the researcher will conduct individual interviews with a sample of the participants. The project consent forms and information sheets will include separate checkboxes for consent to participate in the questionnaire and in the individual interviews. It is anticipated that between 10-15 participants will take part in this part of the fieldwork. If students provided signed personal and parental consent to participate in the interviews than required, all volunteers will be thanked for their interest and a random sample of the volunteers will be invited to participate in the interview. The interview will provide a qualitative perspective on the research questions and will allow the researcher to seek clarification regarding some of the responses that emerged from the questionnaire. The semi-structured interviews, adapted from the interview schedule designed by Researcher A, will therefore further address [describe the topic here] and will again include questions such as [provide some sample questions here], allowing participants a free response. The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The interview will be conducted at school, during school hours, and at a time that suits the participants and that does not cause any disruption to their formal studies.

2. Please answer the following questions in relation to your proposed research. Questions (b), (c) or (d) will require detailed explanations if answered ‘yes’ and will be referred for additional scrutiny by the REC or Trinity REPC. Answering ‘Yes’ to (e) will require a separate application to the relevant HSE REC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please tick</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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Commented [A5]: Locate the research within the broader context of research in the field, paying special attention to ethical considerations as applicable.

Commented [A6]: Outline the research questions for the project.

Commented [A7]: As research instruments are not normally required for applications for ethical approval, the description of methods and instruments should be very detailed.

Commented [A8]: Describe the research instrument.

Commented [A9]: State who will be invited to participate.

Commented [A10]: If the questionnaire is previously validated, state this. If it is not, indicate how it complies with ethical requirements in your area.

Commented [A11]: Provide details on the number of questions and their nature and describe how long participation will last.

Commented [A12]: This should must be reflected in questions 5 and 7 below on consent and data storage.

Commented [A13]: If there is more than one instrument, separately describe each of them in detail.

Commented [A14]: Explicitly state the data collection methods used and how data will be processed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Does the research involve work with children (under-18) or vulnerable adults?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If 'Yes', has appropriate Garda clearance (or equivalent) been obtained (include details)?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please provide the date of issue on the Certificate.</td>
<td>1/1/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Could any aspect of the research give rise to any form of harm to participants, including the researcher(s)?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Could any aspect of the research produce information that could lead to criminal prosecution of the participants or others?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Is deception of the participants planned in any aspect of the research? If yes, provide details.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Does any aspect of the research involve patients (or their relatives or carers) or other users of health and social care services, the premises or facilities of such services, access to personal records or the participation of health or social care staff?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commented [A15]: Include the date on the Garda Clearance Certificate.
For Level 1 and Level 2 applications ONLY

3. (a) Who are the proposed participants, e.g. teachers; students? Please indicate approximate numbers.

The proposed participants for this study are the first year students from School X, in Town Y, County Dublin. 111 students aged between 12-14 years will be invited to participate in the questionnaire and 10-15 will be invited to take part in the individual interviews.

3. (b) What is your relationship with them? (If you are in a position of authority, for example, indicate how you will deal with the potential influences of such a relationship.)

I teach the students that I hope to invite to participate in the study. Students will be made aware that participation in entirely voluntary and that they may withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason and without prejudice. Students will be made aware that there is no extra credit or course material incentive for partaking in this study. Students will be made aware that they may talk to the researcher or an independent party about the project if they wish.

4. (a) How will you recruit the proposed participants?

Recruitment for this study will be voluntary among first year students at School X and Y. Following consent from school management (see attached principal information sheet and consent form), the nature of the study will be described in detail by the researcher to potential student participants. It will be made clear that students are not obliged to participate in any aspect of the study and that they can withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without prejudice. Interested students will then be presented with an information sheet (see attached student information sheet) and invited to participate in the questionnaire and the interview components of the study. For those willing to participate in the research, signed student and parental/guardian consent forms (see attached parent information sheet and student/parent consent forms), will be required before commencing their involvement in the research.

The project consent forms and information sheets include separate checkboxes for consent to participate in the questionnaire and in the individual interviews to allow students to participate in one or other or both or neither of the study parts. It is anticipated that between 10-15 participants will take part in the individual interviews. If more students provide signed personal and parental consent to participate in the interviews than are required, all volunteers will be thanked for their interest and a random sample of the volunteers will be invited to participate in the interview.

4. (b) Please indicate how informed consent of all participants will be gained. (Draft consent forms MUST be attached for all participant groups – see question 7 for guidance.)

All parties involved in the project will be informed of the structure and purpose of the research and completed consent forms will be required before the study is conducted. An information sheet and consent form (Appendix A) will be presented to the principal of the school in which the study is based. The research, and the nature/duration of the students’ participation, will be described to the principal and written consent will be sought to proceed with the research in the school (see attached principal consent form). The study will be described to students in person. The attached information sheet will be provided and they...
will be asked to indicate their consent to take part in the questionnaire and/or the interview using the attached consent form. An information sheet and consent form (see attached), will also be sent home with students for their parent(s)/guardian to complete if willing to take part in the either or both components of the study. No data will be collected until all forms are returned and signed by all relevant parties.

4. (c) Please detail any ethical aspects that must be considered, including the proposed use of any incentives.

The research will adhere to Trinity’s Policy on Good Research Practice (see link below). It will be based on a) respect for the participants, b) beneficence & the absence of maleficience, and c) justice. No incentives will be offered and there are no further ethical aspects that must be considered in the recruitment of the proposed participants. All participants will participate on an informed and voluntary basis and they will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without prejudice. Participation will be arranged at a time that suits the students and so as to cause minimum disruption to their formal studies.


5. (a) What is the location(s) at which the data collection will be undertaken?

Data collection will take place in a classroom in Schools X and Y.

5. (b) Describe any circumstances that might give rise to security concerns for participants or researchers?

There are no known security concerns beyond those encountered by participants and the researcher in everyday life. Any data collected will be securely stored and password protected, as described in Section 7.

5. (c) Describe any conflicts of interest where data might be critical of working practices, people etc. or disclosure of illegal activities?

There are no known conflicts of interested associated with this research project. Participants may be critical of current practice in this area. The research findings may highlight how current practices in the data collection location diverge from recognised best practice. If this occurs, the researcher will report this in a professional, constructive manner. The potential for the disclosure of illegal activity is very low in this research and it is not anticipated. If this does occur, the data will be excluded from the dataset and the relevant authorities will be notified. Participants must be informed at the point of data collection at the latest regarding disclosing illicit activity: “In the extremely unlikely event that illicit activity is reported I will be obliged to report it to appropriate authorities.”

6. (a) Please indicate how the participants’ rights to privacy (including confidentiality and anonymity) and the privacy of their data will be protected. Highlight potential limitations of confidentiality in the ethics form and, for participants, in the information sheets (e.g. for small samples or insider research and how this will be addressed).
Confidentiality and anonymity will be assured for all participants. Neither the participants nor the school will be named in the study. The questionnaire data will be anonymised at the point of data collection: 1) no identifying information will be included in the questionnaire questions; 2) the researcher will not observe the participants as they complete the questionnaires, surveys, scales. Interview participants’ identities will be anonymised by randomly assigning pseudonyms in the transcripts and removing any identifying information from transcripts if relevant. Pseudonyms will be used for the school name and address so that they will not be identifiable in what is written. In this way, responses will not be attributed to individuals.

6. (b) Please also indicate how the data will be stored, for how long and how it will be destroyed as appropriate.

Data will be stored and destroyed in line with College’s Policy on Good Research Practice and policy for retention and with Irish Data Protection Legislation and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). All electronic data (questionnaire data, interview recordings, interview transcripts) will be stored securely on encrypted USB in compliance with GDPR. All hard copies of consent forms will be securely stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s school at all times. Access to raw data will be limited to the research student, supervisor and, potentially, examiners. Data will be retained for 13 months after completion of the thesis examination process. Following this period, all electronic copies of the data will be deleted from all storage sites and all paper copies will be shredded.

7. Please complete the checklist below to confirm you have considered all ethical aspects of consent. 
(Note that the consent forms must accompany this application; any omission or inadequacy in detail will result in a request for amendments). Please tick

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Ticking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have attached the consent form(s) for all research participant groups which are accessible to the target participant audience (e.g. children, participants with literacy needs, etc).</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each consent form clearly informs possible participants that participation is voluntary and that the participant has the right to cease participation at any time without giving a reason and without prejudice</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each consent form gives assurances that the data collection (questionnaires, interviews, tests etc.) will be carried out in a sensitive and non-stressful manner.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each consent form has full contact details of the researcher (and of the supervisor for student applications) to enable prospective participants to make follow-up inquiries.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each consent form has full details, in plain non-technical language, of the purpose of the research, the proposed role of the person being invited to participate, the research instruments (e.g. tests, interviews, questionnaires) with indicative questions if appropriate and the expected duration of participation</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Each consent form has full details of the purposes to which their data (in all their forms: text, oral, video, imagery etc) will be put, including for research dissemination purposes and requires explicit consent for each purpose and each form of data  

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each consent form explains how the anonymity, where appropriate, of the participants will be ensured and operationalised</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each consent form explains how participant data in all its forms (e.g. paper forms, recordings, etc) will be protected, including how it will be stored and for how long and how it will be ultimately destroyed.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each consent form clearly states up to what point a participant can withdraw their data from a study, e.g. up until the data is irrevocably anonymised or until analysis or publication of the data findings.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please include here any other comments you wish to make about the consent form(s)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have any further comments or notes in relation to any aspect of your application, please outline them here:
Appendix A: Principal Information Sheet and Consent Form
Appendix B: Student Information Sheet and Consent Form
Appendix A: Parent Information Sheet and Consent Form

Commented [A39]: All relevant consent forms and information sheets must be included.