**Guidelines for completing the Application for Ethical Approval (Research) form**

**General advice:**

* Make sure you use the latest version of the ethics application form and other templates which can be downloaded here <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/research/students/ethical-review-process.aspx>. Most applications will need to include at least a Participant Information Sheet and a Consent Form.
* The application form should be written in language that a lay person (an ordinary member of the public) can understand, and the participant information sheet, consent form (and all documents going to participants) should be written in a style that the participants can understand. If a person does not understand the purpose of the research study then informed consent cannot be given. Applications may be returned without review if the application form includes technical language without explanation, or if the application is poorly written and lacks clarity. In some cases, for example if you are intending to work with children of different ages, you may need several versions of both the information sheet and consent form to ensure that the language is targeted at the right level. Templates are available.
* Make sure you answer all questions e.g. 21a), 21b) etc. Do not leave any boxes blank. If appropriate, state N/A (not applicable).
* Make sure you (and your supervisor if applicable) sign the ethics application form at the end. The Approval Sheet must also be signed by your supervisor and/or an ethics representative (as appropriate).

**Specific sections:**

**Q13 – Proposed start and completion date**

Give as precise dates as possible for the start of the project, the period of data collection, and the completion date of your project. If precise dates (e.g. month/year) cannot be given please explain why. If your project is later delayed or goes beyond the dates you have given, you must update your ethics application form and ask your supervisor/ethics representative to approve the change.

**Q16 – Purpose of the Study**

Make clear the main objectives of the study. What are you trying to find out? Assertions must be justified by reference to the relevant source.

**Q17 – Study Design/Methodology.**

Consider using diagrams, tables or charts to enhance the clarity of the description of the research design, timelines etc. Please provide copies of any surveys or interview questions. For online surveys, state whether you will use Jisc Online Surveys or MS Forms. Use of other survey platforms will need to be justified.

**Q18 – Participants**

**Q18d** - Try to include both inclusion and exclusion criteria and make sure the inclusion and exclusion criteria are stated on the Participant Information Sheet.

**Q18f** - If you do not yet have permission from organisations you are recruiting participants from because you are waiting for ethical approval before asking them, please state this on the form and submit their permission as soon as possible (email agreement is acceptable).

**Q20 - Risks and benefits of research/activity**

Consider any possible risks to the safety of the researcher as well as that of the participants in your response. In considering how to mitigate risks during testing, consider having a first aider on hand, if appropriate, and state this on the form.

**Q21 – Confidentiality, Privacy and Data Protection**

Ensure that you answer all the questions in this section.

**Q21b** - Consider how you will store data/personal information on St Mary’s servers – for example you could set up a project on MS Teams, or your St Mary’s One Drive. Before you leave the university, you must remember to transfer any such data and personal information from your One Drive to your supervisor’s One Drive (or the One Drive of another member of staff) so that it is not deleted before you have stated it will be. A project on MS Teams can remain on the servers after you leave St Mary’s as long as there is one current member of staff on the project.

**Q21d** - Be clear about how respondents can withdraw from the study. For example, it may be that you give each respondent a number to protect their identity, but you hold a key to their identity in a secure place, so that you can identify and withdraw their data if necessary. Also consider setting a date beyond which they will not be able to withdraw their data, for example, once you begin analysis, or after the dissertation is handed in. You would need to state this clearly on the Participant Information Sheet.

**Q21e** – Most staff and Masters/Doctoral Student research projects will benefit from a Research Data Management Plan. St Mary’s subscribes to DMPOnline and you can sign up for an account. Please consult this page for advice: <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/research/students/%E2%80%8Bresearch-data-management.aspx>