

Information on Human Ethics Approval for Research Conducted by Research Postgraduate / Taught Postgraduate Students

I. Preamble

1. The University deems it important that researchers (both staff and students) adopt means to ensure and demonstrate ethical conduct of research. The Research Grants Council (RGC) specifies that all research involving human subjects must obtain human ethics approval even though the investigator believes participants will not be exposed to any risk of danger or physical harm, psychological discomfort, stress and the like. As confirmed by the RGC, this requirement applies to standard questionnaire surveys or in-depth interviews as well as any study or experiment involving direct contact with humans.
2. The above requirement of obtaining approval is applicable to MPhil/PhD and taught postgraduate (TPg) students who would be conducting research during their studies.

II. Application Procedures

3. The School of Graduate Studies (GS) will remind MPhil/PhD students at the beginning of each academic year to submit ethics applications if their research involve human subjects, while individual TPg programme offices will remind its TPg students.
4. A student should fill in the application form (as shown in the Attachments (i) and (ii)) and submit the completed form to his/her (Chief) Supervisor/course instructor before conducting research involving human subject.
5. Unless the (Chief) Supervisor/course instructor deems it necessary, the ethics application submitted by the student will be approved by the (Chief) Supervisor/course instructor concerned without referral to the Research Ethics Sub-Committee. The criteria in determining the application are set out in Section III below. The Co-supervisor(s), if any, should normally be consulted in the process.
6. When in doubt, the Supervisor(s) may refer the case to the Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee (RPSC) concerned/Board of Graduate Studies (BGS) (for MPhil/PhD students) or the Programme and Curriculum Committee (PCC) concerned (for TPg students) for consideration and, if necessary, further to the Research Ethics Sub-Committee. In case the Supervisor(s)/course instructor(s) wish(es) to refer the application to the RPSC concerned/BGS or PCC concerned, please forward the application together with a copy of the research proposal to the RPSC/BGS or PCC Secretary concerned for action.
7. The student and the (Chief) Supervisor should respectively report on the application, if any, in the progress/assessment report for confirmation of candidature/annual progress and keep a copy in their files.

III. Criteria Used to Determine Ethical Acceptability

8. In determining whether ethics clearance should be given, the Supervisor(s)/the Research Ethics Sub-Committee should consider the following questions:
 - Does the research involve any vulnerable groups (categories of people who are not legally able to provide informed consent due to age or incompetence, or who are in an

unequal relationship with the researcher)?

- Does the research involve sensitive topics (sensitive aspects of the subject's own behaviour such as illegal activities, racial biases and sexual behaviour)?
- Does the research involve invasive procedures, physical or psychological stress/distress or discomfort?
- Does the research involve deception or withholding of information from participants?
- Does the research involve access to data by persons or organisations other than the researcher?
- Does the research involve conflict of interest issues or ethical dilemmas?
- Will the information be disposed of safely after the research is completed?

LINGNAN UNIVERSITY

**Application for Ethical Review of a
Research Project Involving Human Participants
by a Taught Postgraduate Student**

Section A: to be completed by the student

I. Title of Research Project

II. Details of Procedures to be Used in the Research

III. Participant(s) Involved in the Research

[Approximate number, age group, how obtained, and information on whether the researcher is in a position of power vis-à-vis the participants e.g. teacher-student, employer-employee.]

IV. Do your procedures expose your participants to any risk of:

[Please check in box(es) as appropriate]

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | - danger or physical harm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | - pain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | - stress |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | - fatigue or other form of physical discomfort |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | - noxious stimulation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | - emotional distress or other form of psychological discomfort |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | - invasion of privacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | - deception |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | - criminal or civil liability |

If you have checked "Yes" to any of the above questions:

- (a) Estimate the degree of risk involved

- (b) Describe the steps you will take to minimize the risk and to protect your participants from it

- (c) How will you explain the risk to your participants?

(d) How will you obtain their consent to take part in the research (please attach consent forms to be used)?

(e) Will there be any payment to the participants?

(f) Describe how the participants will be debriefed after the study

V. Will you collect names, addresses, or any other details which would make it possible to identify your participants?

Yes No

If you have checked "Yes" to the previous question:

(a) Describe the identifying data you will collect

(b) How will you use these data?

(c) How will you dispose of these data?

(d) What procedures will you follow to make sure that your participants cannot be identified?

VI. Declaration

I undertake to exercise reasonable care to ensure that the proposed research is conducted in a manner that is consistent with international standards of ethical practice.

Signature of Student

Date

Name of Student

Study Programme

Personal Information Collection Statement:

1. Personal data provided on this form/report will be treated confidentially and will be used for processing this application/matter only.
2. Information provided may be transferred to other units within the University for necessary actions, where applicable, and will not be disclosed to other parties without your consent or unless required by law.
3. Without your consent, the University will not use your personal information provided to us to conduct direct marketing.
4. Applications for access to personal data should be made to the Data Protection Officer (DPO@LN.edu.hk) of the University. For update/correction of personal data, please contact the relevant Programme Offices as shown at <https://www.ln.edu.hk/sgs/taught-postgraduate-programmes/programme-teams-contact>.

Section B: to be completed by the (Chief) Supervisor of Taught Postgraduate Student in consultation with the Co-Supervisor(s), if any

Having considered the information provided above, I :

- approve this application.
- do not approve this application.
- wish to refer this application to the Programme and Curriculum Committee (PCC) concerned and, if necessary, further to the Research Ethics Sub-Committee for consideration.

Signature of Course Instructor

Date

Name of Course Instructor

(Note: Upon the student's request, the University shall provide a copy of the information given on this form to the student in compliance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance when all necessary processing of this form is completed.)

Ver. Sep 2020