



Senate Ethics in Research Committee (EiRC)

Recommendations: Standard criteria for inclusion in research invitations

Purpose

To outline a standard set of criteria that applicants must include in the communications which are distributed to potential research participants/on public invitations.

Including relevant information in research invitations demonstrates to participants that the project has received adequate consideration, an appropriate level of review and necessary approval from ethics committees and institutional gatekeepers. It is also a means of building and developing responsible research practices and embedding as a crucial part of the project.

Note

This is not an attempt to be prescriptive of/to faculty processes. It is an attempt to put in place minimum criteria that applicants can use when developing communications that form part of the research project.

Items which should be included in research invitations:

- Title of project
- Purpose of the project (incl. if student/staff etc)
- Name and contact information of researcher(s)
- Proof of ethics and gatekeeper approval (reference number or similar)
- Inclusion criteria (who can/could participate?) or exclusion criteria (who cannot participate?)
- Potential benefits/risks to the participants
- What the research will involve, the time commitment and methods for data collection (e.g. anonymous surveys, recorded audio-visual interviews, biological samples etc.)
- A statement regarding voluntary participation and the right to withdraw from research at any point without negative consequences
- A statement on whether or how participants will be anonymised or de-identified, which must be described fully in the informed consent form
- Guidance for how to participate (survey link or response via email)
- Overview of data management plans, more detailed information on data management plans must be provided in the informed consent process and form.

Items that should NOT be included in research invitations:

- Note for potential participants to contact the REC Chairperson with queries related to the project.
- Information which might lead or bias the potential participants.

Deception in research

In limited, well justified, and approved circumstances it may be necessary to the research to not fully disclose the nature of the of the research to potential participants, or to deceive them. This research is rare and must be approved by an REC (which has thoroughly reviewed it) before it can commence. In these cases it may be necessary to adjust the invitation letters appropriately to account for this peculiar feature of the research project.

For use by researchers, Faculty RECs and other stakeholders and gatekeepers to use when developing and/or considering invitations to research participants.

Drafted by the Office of Research Integrity for the Senate Ethics in Research Committee.

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Version 2, approved at the Ethics in Research Committee meeting, 6 November 2024.
