

Human Ethics Minimal Risk Checklist PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

The checklist items below appear in Themis on screens 5, 6, 7, 8 of the Minimal Risk application. Screen 10 allows for a special case to be made for minimal risk review by the HEAG. Screen 2 in Themis has a research checklist to determine the application form suitable for the particular research and whether additional modules need to be completed. Some projects are ineligible for minimal risk, e.g. drug trials.

Researchers should respond to the checklist items below to ascertain whether their project would be eligible for review as minimal risk by the Human Ethics Advisory Group (HEAG). A HEAG can approve a minimal risk project. Student researchers are to discuss the checklist items with their supervisors. If researchers answer "YES" to **ANY** of the items in the checklist the project would normally **not be eligible** for minimal risk review.

If in doubt, please have the responsible researcher (i.e. the faculty member) discuss the issue with Dr. Piers Howe (Head of Psychological Sciences Human Ethics Advisory Group) before the application is submitted.

If there is a risk that your research will uncover something that will require an intervention (e.g. depression, an eating disorder, a previously undiagnosed health issue, criminal conduct etc.) then normally a minimal risk application would not be appropriate since central ethics will want to review the intervention procedures.

Additionally, if the potential harm to the participant, *even if the harm is unlikely to occur*, is beyond the level of "discomfort" then it normally would not be a minimal risk application. So if there is the potential that as a result of participating in your experiment the participant may experience strong negative emotions or that your experiment may exacerbate an existing psychological condition (e.g. depression, an eating disorder or PTSD) then it is unlikely to be considered minimal risk. Additionally, if there is a possibility that the participant might feel "used" or unhappy with their conduct then this would also indicate that your application could not be considered minimal risk.

Bearing the above paragraph in mind, it is very important to consider whether your experiment contains any deception or whether you otherwise conceal the true purpose of the experiment. In some cases, concealing the true purpose of the experiment may not preclude your application being minimal risk. Indeed, it is common not to tell the participants the exact hypotheses that you intend to test. However, if in concealing the true purposes of the experiment you are encouraging individuals to participate who may not have participated had no concealment taken place or if, through concealment, you are introducing an additional risk that the participant may be adversely affected by participation, then your project is unlikely to be considered minimal risk. For example, if in your experiment an experimenter were to pretend to be a participant and in that role try to encourage the real participant to do something that he might regret (e.g. make a socially unacceptable statement), and this were to be concealed from the participant, then such a project is unlikely to be considered minimal risk. In deciding whether a project is minimal risk the HEAG and HESC place a lot of weight on the Plain Language Statement and whether that statement accurately informs the prospective participants of all the likely risks. If the deception in your experiment requires the Plain Language Statement not to mention significant risks then it is unlikely that your application will be considered to be minimal risk.

1. EXTERNAL REQUIREMENTS

Is the research being funded by an agency outside the University which requires Human Research Ethics Committee approval involving community representation? *[If "YES" then researchers must fill out the standard ethics application form]* YES NO

2. RISK ASSESSMENT

A. Are any of the following topics to be covered in part or in whole?

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • research about parenting | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • research investigating sensitive personal issues | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • research investigating sensitive cultural issues | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • explorations of grief, death or serious/traumatic loss | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • depression, mood states, anxiety | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • gambling | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • eating disorders | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • illicit drug taking | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • substance abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • self report of criminal behaviour | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • any psychological disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • suicide | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • gender identity | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • sexuality | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • race or ethnic identity | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • any disease or health problem | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • fertility | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| • termination of pregnancy | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |

- deprivation of food, water, sleep etc YES NO

B. Are any of the following procedures to be employed?

- use of personal data obtained from Commonwealth Gov't Department/agency YES NO
- use of personal data obtained from State Gov't Department/agency YES NO
- Involves use of personal information from a non-government organisation YES NO
- deception of participants YES NO
- concealing the purposes of the research YES NO
- covert observation YES NO
- audio or visual recording without consent YES NO
- recruitment via a third party or agency YES NO
- withholding from one group specific treatments or methods of learning, from which they may "benefit" (e.g., in medicine or teaching) YES NO
- any psychological interventions or treatments YES NO
- administration of physical stimulation YES NO
- invasive physical procedures YES NO
- infliction of pain YES NO
- administration of drugs YES NO
- administration of other substances YES NO
- administration of ionising radiation YES NO
- tissue sampling or blood taking YES NO
- collecting body fluid YES NO
- genetic testing/DNA extraction YES NO
- use of medical records where participants can be identified or linked YES NO
- drug trials and other clinical trials YES NO
- administration of drugs or placebos YES NO

C. Other Risks

Are there any risks to the researcher, (e.g. research undertaken in unsafe environments or trouble spots)? YES NO

3. PARTICIPANT VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

Does the research specifically target participants from any of the following groups?

- those suffering a psychological disorder YES NO
- those suffering a physical vulnerability YES NO
- people highly dependent on medical care YES NO
- minors without parental or guardian consent YES NO
- people whose ability to give consent is impaired YES NO
- residents of a custodial institution YES NO
- people unable to give free informed consent because of difficulties in understanding information statement (eg language difficulties) YES NO
- members of a socially identifiable group with special cultural or religious needs or political vulnerabilities YES NO
- those in dependent relationship with the researchers (eg lecturer/student, doctor/patient, teacher/pupil, professional/client) YES NO
- participants able to be identified in any final report when specific consent for this has not been given YES NO
- indigenous Australians YES NO

4. RESEARCH IN OVERSEAS SETTINGS ASSESSMENT

Does the research involve any of the following:

- research being undertaken in a politically unstable area YES NO
- research involving sensitive cultural issues YES NO
- research in countries where criticism of government and institutions might put participants and/or researchers at risk YES NO

5. SPECIAL CASE ASSESSMENT

Researchers are asked to make a special case if they have answered "YES" to an item in the checklist but still believe that because of the particular nature of the project and/or the participants the project may still be eligible for minimal risk review. The Human Ethics Advisory Group then assesses whether the project can be reviewed as minimal risk. It is the HEAG that decides if a project is minimal risk.

If in doubt, please have the responsible researcher (i.e. the faculty member) discuss the issue with Dr. Piers Howe (Head of Psychological Sciences Human Ethics Advisory Group) before the application is submitted.

