
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



STUDYING PEOPLE

GUIDELINES ON
THE ETHICAL CONDUCT OF RESEARCH
IN THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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1 RESPONSIBLE PRACTICE IN RESEARCH

The University of Adelaide's (2003) *Guidelines and Rules for Responsible Practice in Research*¹ apply to all researchers associated with the University, including students engaged in research for undergraduate and postgraduate courses, students engaged in research for Honours and Higher Degree by coursework dissertations and students engaged in research for Higher Degree by research theses. These guidelines and rules require staff and students to maintain high ethical standards in their research and, in particular, strictly to observe all relevant institutional and governmental regulations dealing with research involving experimentation on human subjects² and research involving non-human animal subjects³. Before these kinds of research can proceed, they require clearance by the University's *Human Research Ethics Committee* or its *Animal Ethics Committee*, as appropriate.

The requirement for clearance by the *Human Research Ethics Committee* is intended to ensure that the University, its students and its staff meet their legal obligations, under the *National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Act 1992*, to comply with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans 1999*.⁴ State legislation, the *South Australian Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1985*, regulates the use of non-human animals for research. The University of Adelaide is licensed under this Act to acquire and use animals only when its *Animal Ethics Committee* has granted approval. The *Animal Ethics Committee* must ensure that all animal care and use is conducted in compliance with the *Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes (6th ed.) 1997*.

Staff and students of the University who engage in field research should inflict the least possible damage on the environments in which their research is conducted and must strictly observe all institutional and governmental regulations designed to protect particular environments or particular components of environments (e.g., vegetation, land forms, aboriginal sites etc.) from damage through human activities. For guidance on ethics in field research consult the Australian Science, Technology and Engineering Council's (1998) report, *Environmental Research Ethics: National Principles and Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Research in Protected and Environmentally Sensitive Areas*.⁵

¹ The full text of this policy document can be viewed at
<<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/ari/researchers/responsibleresearch.html>>.

² University of Adelaide regulations on research involving experimentation on human subjects can be viewed at
<<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/research/ethics/human/index.html>>.

³ University of Adelaide regulations on the use of non-human animals for teaching or research can be viewed at
<<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/research/ethics/animal/index.html>>.

⁴ The *National Statement* can be viewed at
<<http://www.health.gov.au:80/nhmrc/publications/synopses/e35syn.htm>>.

⁵ This report can be viewed at
<<http://www.dest.gov.au/archive/Science/astec/ethics/ethics.html>>.

1.1 Research Ethics in the Humanities and Social Sciences

Humanities and Social Sciences research does not commonly involve *experimentation* on human subjects. The University's *Human Research Ethics Committee (The University of Adelaide Handbook of Administrative Policies and Procedures 1998, Subsection 10.14)* defines this kind of research as '... investigations of a human subject in which the state of the subject may be changed in some way by the investigator in order that the result of this change may be observed and recorded.' Most commonly Humanities and Social Sciences research involves the use of human subjects simply as sources of information obtained by means of straightforward interview, questionnaire or observation, without any attempt to manipulate this information by altering the subjects' knowledge, attitudes or behaviour as part of the research methodology. This kind of research is unlikely to require clearance by the University's *Human Research Ethics Committee*. However, even where clearance is not required, the researcher is still obliged, legally and by University regulations, to comply with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans 1999*.

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences has published *Studying People: Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences* to assist its staff and students in conducting research that is of a high ethical standard and, where necessary, to aid them in obtaining ethics clearance for their research. The guidelines given in *Studying People* apply specifically to research intended to elicit information from human subjects without human experimentation. These guidelines do not replace the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans 1999*, but they may help the Faculty's staff and students to understand and comply with the *National Statement*.

1.1.1 Student Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences

Humanities and Social Sciences students who plan to conduct research that involves obtaining information from or about people (including other students or staff of the University) by interview, questionnaire or observation will need to obtain ethics clearance for this research from the academic staff who will supervise the research. Students may also need to obtain other forms of ethics clearance required by the Discipline and School in which they will conduct their research, by the Faculty and by the University. Students are responsible for determining the forms of ethics clearance required by their research and must obtain all the required forms of ethical clearance *before* they begin any phase of their research that has ethical implications.

In the case of research for undergraduate and postgraduate courses, students will need to obtain ethics clearance from their Course Co-ordinator (or equivalent) and, for some subject areas, from the relevant Head of School.

In the case of research for Honours and Higher Degree by coursework dissertations and Higher Degree by research theses, students will need to obtain ethics clearance from their principal dissertation/thesis

supervisor and, for some subject areas, from their Honours or Postgraduate Co-ordinator and/or from their Head of School. Higher Degree (by research) students will also need to address relevant ethical issues in the research proposal they submit to the Faculty as part of the Structured Program. Before approving a student's research proposal, the Faculty must be satisfied that the proposed research will comply with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans 1999*.

If student research requires ethics clearance from the University's *Human Research Ethics Committee*, the academic supervisor of the research will be the applicant to the Committee, with the student named in the application as 'involved in the research'.

Students should use the following procedure to obtain ethics clearance for their research.

Before you begin your research:

read *Studying People: Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences* and, in consultation with the academic staff who will supervise your research, devise a research plan that incorporates the guidelines.

Write a brief description of the way you intend to obtain information from or about people in your research. This should include:

- the topic and purpose of your research
- the ethical issues relevant to your research
- the participants who will be the subjects of your research (how the participants will be chosen, who will be excluded, and how those chosen will be contacted during the research)
- the information you will give to participants about your research (this should be in the form of a draft *Participant Information Sheet* based on the example included in the Appendix to these guidelines)
- except for *de-identified* data, anonymous questionnaire responses, anonymous observations and similar anonymous information, a draft *Consent Form* based on the example included in the Appendix to these guidelines
- where you intend to interview or question participants, a draft of your interview schedule, questionnaire or, in the case of an unstructured interview, a list of the matters to be discussed
- where you intend to observe participants, when, where and how you will make these observations
- a list of any demographic/descriptive information you intend to gather from or about the participants.

Give this description to your academic supervisor, clearly marked 'For Ethics Clearance', and ask for advice, within a mutually agreed period of time, concerning:

- the need, if any, to modify your research plan, in order to comply with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans 1999*
- the procedure you will need to follow to obtain ethics clearance at the School or Faculty level for your research, if your academic supervisor is not solely responsible for providing you with ethics clearance
- the need, if any, to obtain ethics clearance from the University's *Human Research Ethics Committee*.

You must obtain ethics clearance from your academic supervisor and obtain any other forms of ethics clearance that you required *before* you continue with your research beyond the planning stage.

When conducting your research:

provide each participant with a copy of the *Participant Information Sheet* to keep. Ensure that the participants understand what is being asked of them and what they can expect of you as the researcher.

Except for *de-identified* data, anonymous questionnaire responses, anonymous observations and similar anonymous information, have each participant read, sign and date *two copies* of the *Consent Form*. You should also sign and date each copy. Give one copy to the participant and retain the other yourself. File your signed and dated copies of the *Consent Form* in a safe place, as you should submit them with the report, dissertation or thesis incorporating your research results.

Following the completion of your research:

ensure that you meet any commitments that you have made to your participants; for instance the commitment to provide them with information on the results of your research.

Place the completed *Consent Forms* and one copy of the *Participant Information Sheet* in a sealed envelope, clearly labelled with your name and 'Confidential Consent Forms'. When you submit the results of your research for assessment include this envelope of material with your submission.

Your Discipline may have a policy on the retention of *Consent Forms*. If it does not, you should ensure that the Discipline returns your *Consent Forms* to you so that you can hold them in safe keeping as proof that you obtained the informed consent of all the identified participants in your research. It is recommended that you retain this proof for a period of three years from the completion of the research or its publication.

1.1.2 Staff Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences

Humanities and Social Sciences staff are obliged, legally and by University regulations, to comply with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans 1999*. Academic staff who supervise student research are also obliged to advise their students on compliance with the *National Statement*. Where student research requires ethics clearance by the University's *Human Research Ethics Committee*, the academic supervisor is obliged to assume primary responsibility for the ethical conduct of the research, since the academic supervisor must be the applicant to the Committee, with the student named in the application as 'involved in the research'. Finally, academic staff who collect information from or about students or require students to collect information from or about one another, as part of either a teaching or a research project, are obliged to treat the student participants with the same ethical consideration that they are obliged to extend to other human subjects in complying with the *National Statement*.

In order to discharge their obligations concerning the ethical conduct of research involving human subjects, Humanities and Social Sciences staff must be familiar with the contents of the *National Statement* and may find *Studying People* an aid to compliance with the *National Statement*. An additional aid is the *Human Research Ethics Handbook* available on the NHMRC web site at
<<http://www.health.gov.au/nhmrc/publications/synopses/e42syn.htm>>.

Staff should also be aware of the procedures for obtaining ethics clearance from the University's *Human Research Ethics Committee*, as described on the Committee's web site at:
<<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/research/ethics/human/index.html>>.

It is important for Humanities and Social Sciences staff to note the following statement by the *Human Research Ethics Committee* (*University of Adelaide Handbook of Administrative Policies and Procedures 1998*, Subsection 10.14), under the heading *Questionnaires*, and to bring this statement to the attention of the students whose research they supervise.

Straightforward exercises in eliciting information, where the intention is simply to gather true reports of facts (including subjects' perceptions of things) and are unexceptionable do not require clearance from the Committee. Where the information sought is concealed by some form of "trick question" and the information sought is not the ostensible information, the questioning is of ethical concern. Researchers with concerns about the ethical implications of questionnaires should consult the Committee.

Researchers anticipating questionnaires on publicly controversial issues (for example, AIDS, IVF) should approach the Committee for advice.

Staff who have any questions or concerns about ethical conduct in research involving human subjects should contact Sabine Schreiber, the Secretary of the University's *Human Research Ethics Committee* at
<sabine.schreiber@adelaide.edu.au>.

2 ETHICAL VALUES IN RESEARCH

Research involving human subjects raises special ethical considerations. The *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research* (NHMRC 1999, p. 11) observes that the ‘... responsibilities which researchers have towards participants in research reflect basic ethical values of integrity, respect for persons, beneficence and justice’.

The researcher’s *integrity* is expressed as a commitment to:

- the search for knowledge
- the acceptance of recognised principles of research conduct
- the use of honest and ethical research practice
- the dissemination and communication of research results.

When conducting research involving human research subjects the researcher’s *respect for persons* is expressed as ‘... a regard for the welfare, rights, beliefs, perceptions, customs and cultural heritage, both individual and collective, of the persons involved in the research’ (NHMRC 1999, p. 11). This regard must take precedence over the expected benefits to knowledge of the research.

Beneficence is expressed as the researcher’s acceptance of responsibility ‘... to minimise risks of harm or discomfort to participants in research ...’ (NHMRC 1999, p. 11).

Justice requires the researcher to ensure that, within a population of potential research participants, ‘... there is a fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of participation in research and, for any research participant, a balance of burdens and benefits’ (NHMRC 1999, p. 11). To meet this ethical requirement the researcher must:

- avoid imposing ‘an unfair burden of participation in research’ on particular groups ‘likely to be subject to over researching’
- ‘design research so that the selection, recruitment, exclusion and inclusion of research participants is fair’
- not discriminate in the selection and recruitment of research participants ‘by including or excluding them on the basis of race, age, sex, disability or religious or spiritual beliefs except where the exclusion of a particular group is essential to the purpose of the research’ (NHMRC 1999, p. 11).

3 GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL RESEARCH

Studying People provides guidelines for applying the ethical values of integrity, respect for persons, beneficence and justice to research in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The guidelines have been adapted from the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans 1999*, the *Guidelines for Applicants* provided by the University of Auckland's *Human Ethics Committee* (1990) and the *Application Papers and Guidelines* provided by the University of Adelaide's *Human Research Ethics Committee* (2003).⁶

Eight primary principles of ethical research are emphasised by the following guidelines. These principles are:

- informed consent free of coercion
- respect for rights of privacy and confidentiality
- minimisation of risk
- limitation of deception
- social and cultural sensitivity
- research merit
- avoidance of conflict of interest
- respect for property rights.

It is important to note that the implications of these principles may differ for different kinds of research. The following guidelines consider only the implications of these principles for the most common kinds of research in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

3.1 Consent

The principle of *informed consent free of coercion* requires that people must not be involved in research without understanding and freely agreeing to such involvement, except where the research uses:

- *de-identified* data (e.g., census databases)
- observations of people in public places
- anonymous questionnaire responses
- similar sources of information where the identity of individual research subjects will not be known to the researcher.

Except for these situations, prospective participants in a research project must be made aware of the nature of the research and must be provided with all the information relevant to their decision to participate in the research when they are invited to take part. This information about the research must

⁶ The author also gratefully acknowledges the helpful comments of Prof Chris Mortensen on a draft of *Studying People*.

be given in plain language appropriate to the participants. The researcher must recognise and respect an individual's right to decline to participate in or to withdraw at any time from the research. This right includes the withdrawal, at any time before the completion of the research, of information a participant has provided. In some cases, it may be desirable to submit texts or transcripts of dialogue or summaries of data to participants for final approval.

Research is not ethical if coercion of any sort or inducement beyond reasonable compensation for participating is used to gain participation.

Since much Humanities and Social Sciences research involves collectivities, it is important that researchers recognise the potential complexities of the relationships between individuals and collectivities. In some cases, cultural mores may make it appropriate for leaders of a collectivity to agree to participation on behalf of other members. If any individual wishes to decline to participate in the research (in spite of consent given by a leader on behalf of the collectivity), his or her wishes must be respected, and the greatest care must be taken to prevent consequent retribution by the collectivity. In other cases, the rights of an individual to participate in the research may outweigh a collectivity's decision not to do so.

All research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals or collectivities must comply with the *NHMRC Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research 2003*.⁷ Additional information about the special ethical considerations that apply to such research is provided by the *Australian Anthropology Society's Code of Ethics*.⁸

Where prospective participants are not capable of giving informed consent to their own participation, consent must be obtained from other appropriate persons. Particular care must be taken in such cases to protect the interests of the participants and to be aware of any possible conflicts of interests between participants and those who consent to their involvement (see also Section 4: *Ethical Principles Relating to Children and Other Dependent People*).

It is desirable that information given to participants and their consent to participate be in written form (see also Section 5: *Requirements for Informed Consent*), though it is recognised that there are situations in which this may not be appropriate (e.g., where there are literacy problems).

⁷ The *NHMRC Guidelines* can be viewed at
<<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/e52syn.htm>>.

⁸ The *Australian Anthropology Society's Code of Ethics* can be viewed at
<http://www.aas.asn.au/Miscdocs/AAS_Code_of_Ethics.pdf>.

3.2 Privacy and Confidentiality

Privacy is a complex concept that stems from a core idea that individuals have a sphere of life from which they should be able to exclude any intrusion. ... Confidentiality refers to the legal and ethical obligation that arises from a relationship in which a person receives information from or about another. The recipient has an obligation not to use that information for any purpose other than that for which it was given (NHMRC 1999, p. 52).

The rights of research participants to privacy and confidentiality must be respected. This begins with the recruitment of research participants. The principle underlying ethical recruitment is that research participants must be sought in such a way that they do not feel pressured to participate.

Written invitations to participate in the research (together with questionnaires, etc.) can be distributed in public places, left in mailboxes and so on with little or no direct contact between the potential participants and the researcher. However, other forms of unsolicited approach to potential participants by the researcher are only appropriate if the individual's name and contact details have been obtained from a publicly accessible source, such as a telephone directory, business directory or similar publication.

Researchers must not seek or be given access to the names and other personal details of potential participants known to another person or to a collectivity, unless the potential participants have agreed that this information may be divulged to the researcher. Ethical ways to obtain this agreement would be for the person or collectivity that has the information:

- either to contact the prospective participants and seek their permission to have their names and other personal details divulged to the researcher
- or to send information about the research project to the prospective research participants and have them contact the researcher directly, if they wish to participate.

Researchers must recognise and protect the right of research participants, both individuals and collectivities, to require that information they provide is kept confidential. Identification of participants in any research report must not occur without the participants' informed consent.⁹

The researcher must take all steps necessary to ensure that identities or information acquired in the process of research are kept secure from interception or appropriation by unauthorised persons and/or from use for non-research purposes. This will often require coding of data and removal of names from questionnaires and other material collected during the research. Where this is not possible, researchers are responsible for the safekeeping and confidentiality of tapes, transcripts, consent forms and other material that includes the identity of research participants.

⁹ An Overview of privacy regulation in Australia is available at <http://www.privacy.gov.au/act/index.html>.

3.3 Minimisation of Risk

The researcher must endeavour to minimise any risks (physical, psychological, social or cultural) attendant on participation by individuals or collectivities in a research project. The researcher must make every attempt to identify and inform participants of potential risks before obtaining informed consent. Risks include pain, stress, emotional distress, fatigue, embarrassment, cultural dissonance and exploitation. Participants must be consulted to ascertain if they perceive any risks to themselves from participation in the research and to explore any other concerns they may have about participation in the research.

3.4 Limitation of Deception

Deception of research participants conflicts with the principle of informed consent, but in some kinds of research it may be necessary to conceal the purpose of the research or make covert research observations of identifiable participants. If this is the case, the researcher must be able to demonstrate that:

- such deception is necessary because the provision of detailed information to prospective research participants about the purpose, methods and procedures of the research would compromise the validity of the research outcomes
- there are no suitable alternative research methods, not involving deception, by which the desired information can be obtained
- research participants will not be exposed to increased risk of harm because of the deception
- the deception practiced in this research is not likely to corrupt the relationship between the community at large and researchers or research in general (NHMRC 1999, p. 51).

Where research has involved deception, the researcher must ensure that each research participant is provided with an adequate explanation of the true purposes of the research and the reasons for the deception as soon as possible following participation. As part of this de-briefing, research participants must be informed that they now have the right to withdraw any information obtained from them without their knowledge or consent during the research.

Since research involving the deception of research participants violates the ethical principle of informed consent, such research is likely to require clearance by the University's *Human Research Ethics Committee* and the Committee should be consulted about the need for ethics clearance before the research begins. In this context, researchers should be aware that any research proposal involving deception requires particularly careful development and strong justification.

3.5 Social and Cultural Sensitivity

Research procedures should be appropriate to the subjects involved in the study. Adequate steps must be taken to meet the social and cultural sensitivities and the language preferences of all participants.

3.6 Research Merit

A research proposal must have clear aims and objectives that will indicate it has the potential to contribute to the advancement of knowledge to an extent that justifies any risk or burden to the research participants.

3.7 Conflict of Interest

Any sponsorship provided to researchers must not compromise the integrity, merit or ethical acceptability of their research.

3.8 Respect of Property Rights

Processes of research and publication must not violate or infringe legal or culturally determined property rights. These may cover such things as land and goods, works of art and craft, spiritual treasures, information and works of the intellect.

4 ETHICAL PRINCIPLES RELATING TO DEPENDENT PEOPLE

Children and other dependent people, such as those with intellectual disabilities, may be more vulnerable to the risks associated with research participation (pain, stress, emotional distress, fatigue, embarrassment, cultural dissonance and exploitation) and may also be less able to evaluate what research participation may mean to them. The following ethical principles apply in these cases, in addition to the general principles outlined above.

The informed consent of parents or of those who act *in loco parentis* (e.g., teachers, guardians and caregivers) to dependent persons must be obtained. In obtaining this consent, the researcher should be sensitive to the possibility of any conflict between the interests and wishes of dependent persons and their guardians.

Researchers should also be aware of the possibility that persons in *unequal relationships* (i.e., persons who occupy junior or subordinate positions in hierarchically structured groups) may be coerced to participate in research in various ways by others with authority over them (e.g., teachers coercing students, employers coercing employees etc.).

The informed consent of persons in dependent or unequal relationships must be obtained, in so far as is possible. An explanation of what is involved in research participation must be given in a suitable way and agreement to participate must be sought. Persons in dependent or unequal relationships must not be involved in research against their will and must be assured by the researcher that refusal to participate in, or a decision to withdraw from, the research will not result in victimisation.

Research involving persons who are not in a position to give informed consent for their own participation must not be undertaken if there is any other way of obtaining the desired information.

5 REQUIREMENTS FOR INFORMED CONSENT

Except for the special circumstances described in previous sections of these guidelines, researchers must obtain informed consent from all research participants (or appropriate third persons). In addition, researchers may be required to document the procedures they propose to use in obtaining informed consent (e.g., when applying for ethics clearance) or to demonstrate that they have obtained informed consent (e.g., in response to a litigious research participant or a concerned thesis examiner).

There are two basic components to informed consent; the consent itself and the information based on which consent is given. An application for ethics clearance (whether addressed to a student's academic supervisor or the University's *Human Research Ethics Committee*) needs to document the information to be given to research participants and needs to include an example of any *Consent Form* to be used by the researcher. In providing this material, researchers should keep in mind the four elements required for informed consent:

- information on which to make a decision
- comprehension of the information
- competence to make a decision
- absence of coercion.

5.1 Participant Information Sheet

A *Participant Information Sheet* should normally be available for potential research participants to take away and keep. All information provided by the researcher, whether written or verbal, must be expressed clearly and simply (with minimal technical terminology or jargon) in a way that will facilitate comprehension by prospective research participants. To aid comprehension, information should be provided in the preferred language(s) of potential participants.

The information provided by the researcher to potential research participants should include:

- the name, title, Discipline/School/Faculty/University or other institutional affiliation and contact details of the researcher (or each member of a research group)
- a brief, plain-language explanation of the purpose of the research (see Section 3.4: *Limitation of Deception*)
- a brief, plain-language description of the possible benefits from the research, to the participants and/or the community, indicating that these benefits are by no means assured
- identification of sources of funding and other *external* (to the University) support being provided for the research
- a clear statement to the effect that individuals are *invited* to participate in the research and that, if they choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time during the research, they may do so without

giving a reason and without penalty (potential research participants must also be told that they may withdraw, at any time before completion of the research, the information they have provided)

- an explanation of how participants are being selected for the research
- a clear description of the nature and duration of the participant's involvement in the research (the use of any recording devices should also be explained)
- a clear description of the steps that will be taken to protect the participants' privacy and confidentiality (may be on the *Consent Form*)
- details of any compensation available to participants in return for their participation
- an explanation of how the research results will be made available to participants
- encouragement for the participant to ask questions and express concerns, before agreeing to participate and by contacting the researcher at a later date
- the names and contact details of person(s) who will deal with any concerns or complaints that the participant does not wish to address to the researcher.

Normally, in the case of student research, the need to establish an independent complaints procedure would be met by the academic supervisor of the research and the relevant Postgraduate Co-ordinator or Head of School. In the case of staff research, the relevant Head of School or Dean of Faculty would provide an independent complaints procedure. In the case of research requiring clearance by the University's *Human Ethics Research Committee*, the Committee provides an independent complaints procedure.

A sample *Participant Information Sheet* for student research is included as an appendix to these guidelines.

5.2 Consent Form

All the individuals who agree to participate in the research should normally sign and date a form documenting their consent to participate. This is an important legal protection for researchers and the University, as well as for research participants. Safekeeping, confidentiality and eventual disposal of *Consent Forms* are primarily the responsibility of the researcher, although some Disciplines/Schools may have their own procedure for dealing with *Consent Forms* used in student research. An application for ethics clearance will normally need to include an example of the *Consent Form(s)* that the researcher will use. If the use of a *Consent Form* is considered inappropriate in the particular circumstances of the research, the reasons for this omission must be included in the application for ethics clearance.

Ideally, the *Consent Form* should be printed on the back of the *Participant Information Sheet*, but must at least be attached to the *Participant Information Sheet* when it is given to the research participants.

Consent Forms may be tailored to the specific needs of the research and its participants, but must, as a minimum, contain:

- the name of the research project

- a reference to the *Participant Information Sheet*
- a clear statement that the consenting party has been given, and has understood, an explanation of the research project and a description of the nature and duration of participants' involvement in the research project
- a clear statement that the consenting party is aware participants may withdraw from the research project at any time prior to the completion of the research (including withdrawing any information provided) without giving reasons and without penalty of any kind
- a sentence explicitly giving consent to participation in the research, followed by provision of spaces for
 - the signature of the consenting party,
 - the clearly written name of the consenting party,
 - the date
- similar provision for signing and dating by a witness.

The researcher is acceptable as a witness except where there is any relation of dependence between the participant and researcher (e.g., student/teacher) or where there are problems about the capacity of the participant to give valid consent.

The *Consent Form* must also include any conditions requiring special agreement (e.g., agreement to be videotaped, to personal information being solicited from or passed to some third party, to the participant's identity being revealed in reports of the research results).

Where consent is being given for the research participation of some other person (e.g., a parent/guardian consenting to a child's participation), this must be made clear in the wording of the *Consent Form*. The name of the participant and their relationship to the person giving consent must also be clearly stated.

The participant should be given a copy of the signed *Consent Form*, and the researcher should keep a copy. As a rule, the researcher should retain all copies of the *Consent Form* signed by the participants, together with a copy of the *Participant Information Sheet*, for a minimum of three years after completion of the research or its publication.

Sample *Consent Forms* for student research, based on those used by the University's *Human Research Ethics Committee*, are attached as an appendix to these guidelines.

6 APPENDICES

SAMPLE PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORMS

6.1 Sample Participant Information Sheet

GNOMES OF NARACOORTE CAVES: TOURISM AND ITS IMPACTS ON GNOME SOCIETY

My name is Mary Jane Doe. I am undertaking research as part of my Master of Arts program in the School of Myths and Legends at the University of Adelaide. My study is looking at the feelings of Naracoorte gnomes about tourism in their home caves. I am hoping to speak with twenty Naracoorte gnomes who have interacted with tourists in different ways (as members of the Cave Management Committee, as tourist guides, as staff in souvenir shops, in the normal course of their lives in the caves). The discussions will provide an opportunity for you to reflect upon both the positive and negative aspects of tourism from your point of view. The study results may help to improve the management of tourism in Naracoorte Caves, but I can not guarantee that you or your community will benefit from the study.

The study is completely confidential, so nothing that you say will be reported in a way that will identify you or your remarks about any person or organization, unless you agree to be identified. If you do not wish to be identified, no personal or identifying information about you will be included in my thesis, and I will use an invented name to attach to your interview notes.

The way that I will carry out the study will be to organise a time and place to meet that suits you. The meeting should take only 40-60 minutes and will be more like a *conversation* than a formal interview. I would like to tape our conversation if that is okay with you. If you do not wish to be identified, your real name would not be connected with the tape. The tape would be erased as soon as I have finished using it to make notes of our conversation. If you would prefer not to be tape-recorded, I am happy just to take notes. If you wish to check a copy of my notes before I use them in my study, then please indicate this on the attached *Consent Form*.

If you decide to participate in the study you are free to change your mind and withdraw at any time before the study has been completed. Also, you are not obliged to answer questions or to discuss any issues that you do not wish to discuss. You are free to withdraw your interview material up until the time that I have finished all the interviews. You do not have to give me any reason if you do decide to withdraw from the study.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you want more information about the study. If you have concerns that you do not wish to discuss with me directly, contact Dr Harry Potter, who is the Co-ordinator of the Masters program for which I am conducting this study.

CONTACT DETAILS

Ms Mary Jane Doe Student, Master of Arts, School of Myths and Legends, University of Adelaide Ph. 8303 xxxx FAX 8303 xxxx E-mail mary.doe@student.adelaide.edu.au	Dr Harry Potter Postgraduate Co-ordinator' School of Myths and Legends, University of Adelaide Ph. 8303 xxxx FAX 8303 xxxx E-mail harry.potter@adelaide.edu.au
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6.2 Sample Standard Consent Form

CONSENT FORM FOR A PARTICIPANT IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

I (print your name) consent to take part in the study titled:
Gnomes of Naracoorte Caves: Tourism and its Impacts on Gnome Society.

I acknowledge that I have read the attached *Information Sheet* that describes the aims and purpose of this study. I confirm that I have had the study, so far as it affects me, fully explained to my satisfaction by the researcher, Mary Jane Doe. My consent to be interviewed for the purpose of the study by Mary Jane Doe is freely given.

Although I understand the purpose of this study is to improve the management of tourism in Naracoorte Caves, it has been explained to me that my involvement in the study may not be of any benefit to me or my community.

I understand that I can request that my name not be connected with any information that I provide and that, if I do not wish to be identified, Mary Jane Doe will create a pseudonym to identify me.

I do/do not (*circle one*) wish to be identified.

I also understand that, if I do not wish the interview to be tape-recorded, Mary Jane Doe will only take notes of the interview.

I do/do not (*circle one*) wish to be tape-recorded.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that:

- I am free to withdraw the information that I provide at any time during the information gathering stage of the study
- I do not have to give reasons for withdrawing the information that I provide
- I am under no obligation during the interview to divulge information or to discuss issues if I do not wish to do so.

I understand that I can request to check the transcript of the interview before it is used in the study.

I do/do not (*circle one*) wish to check the transcript of the interview.

I understand that I will be provided with information about the results of the study if I wish.

I do/do not wish (*circle one*) to be provided with information about the results of the study.

If you answered in the affirmative to either of the above questions, please provide your contact details.

..... Street City
..... Postcode (H) (W) Phone

I am aware that I should retain a copy of this *Consent Form*, when completed, and the attached *Information Sheet*.

Signature (Participant)

Date

WITNESS

I, Mary Jane Doe, have described to (name of participant)
the nature of the interview to be carried out. In my opinion she/he understood the explanation.

Signature (Interviewer)

Date

6.3 Sample Consent Form for a Dependant Person

CONSENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED BY A PARENT OR GUARDIAN ON BEHALF OF A PARTICIPANT IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

I (print your name) consent to allow
(print participant's name) to take part in the study titled:
Gnomes of Naracoorte Caves: Tourism and its Impacts on Gnome Society.

I acknowledge that I have read the attached *Information Sheet* that describes the aims and purpose of this study. I confirm that I have had the study, so far as it affects the above named participant, fully explained to my satisfaction by the researcher, Mary Jane Doe. My consent for the above named participant to be interviewed for the purpose of the study by Mary Jane Doe is freely given.

Although I understand the purpose of this study is to improve the management of tourism in Naracoorte Caves, it has also been explained to me that the participant's involvement in the study may not be of any benefit to him/her or his/her community.

I understand that I can request that the participant's name not be connected with any information that he/she provides, and that, if I do not wish him/her to be identified, Mary Jane Doe will create a pseudonym to identify him/her.

I do/do not (*circle one*) wish the participant be identified.

I also understand that, if I do not wish the interview to be tape-recorded, Mary Jane Doe will only take notes of the interview.

I do/do not (*circle one*) wish the interview to be tape-recorded.

I understand that my agreement to the interview of the participant is completely voluntary and that:

- I am free to withdraw the information that he/she provides at any time during the information gathering stage of the study
- I do not have to give reasons for withdrawing this information
- I am under no obligation during the interview to permit the participant to divulge information or to discuss issues if I do not wish to do so.

I understand that I can request to check the transcript of the interview before it is used in the study.

I do/do not (*circle one*) wish to check the transcript of the interview.

I understand that I will be provided with information about the results of the study if I wish.

I do/do not wish (*circle one*) to be provided with information about the results of the study.

If you answered in the affirmative to either of the above questions, please provide your contact details.

..... Street City
..... Postcode (H) (W) Phone

I am aware that I should retain a copy of this *Consent Form*, when completed, and the attached *Information Sheet*.

Signature (Parent/Guardian) Date

WITNESS

I, Mary Jane Doe, have described to (name of parent/guardian) the nature of the interview to be carried out. In my opinion she/he understood the explanation.

Signature (Interviewer) Date