

Guidelines for filling in the Ethics Approval Form

Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, each course participant is to fill in the [Ethics Approval Form](#) of the Institute for Education. Course participants are instructed to first speak to their dissertation supervisor prior to completing the form online. A copy of this form may be found in Annex A of this document.

The [Ethics Approval Form](#) must be submitted **both** online as well as in soft copy by email to ife.ethics@ilearn.edu.mt. For the soft copy students shall print Annex A, fill it in, sign it and have it countersigned by the dissertation supervisor/co-supervisor and then send a scan of the filled and signed document to ife.ethics@ilearn.edu.mt.

Section A - Details

In this section, you will need to provide your personal details, the name of the qualification you are following, your proposed research title and the envisaged start date and duration of your dissertation research.

Section B – Description of Proposed Research

Question 8 asks you to provide a self-classification of your research:

- A. Research will mainly be desk-based and does not involve participants.
- B. Research involves minimal risk of physical or emotional harm to participants such as classroom observation, questionnaires on non-sensitive topics, analysis of archived databases.
- C. Research focuses on topics of a sensitive nature or participant groups where ethical issues might require careful consideration but are unlikely to be problematic.
- D. Research is potentially problematic as it may cause physical or emotional risk to participants.

We invite you to discuss this with your dissertation supervisor.

Question 9 and 10 refer to whether your research project will require approval from entities other than the Institute for Education. If your research project is to take place in a school or entity, you are to go through the proper channels to receive approval.

- **State Schools:** Apply through website: <https://researchandinnovation.gov.mt/en/Pages/Request-for-research-in-state-schools.aspx>;
- **Church Schools:** Apply to Ms Laila Sekkaki at the Secretariat for Catholic Education: sekkaki@maltadiocese.org;
- **Independent Schools:** Contact to the respective Head of School;
- **Private/Public Organisations and Industries:** Contact the respective entity.

For Question 11, the brief description of your research project may be taken from your approved Research Proposal.

Section C – Potential Risks to the Researcher

For this section, you are asked to think about the equipment you will be using (if any), the environment in which you will be carrying out your research and whether the situation you will be analysing may cause emotional stress to yourself as the researcher.

Section D – Information on Participants (applicable only for research classified as B-D in question 8)

In this section, you need to provide information about the expected participants of your research study. The criteria in selecting your chosen participants may be determined by their age group, gender, school sector, social group, additional needs etc. Moreover, information about any measures that will be taken to safeguard participants must be given.

The measures used to safeguard participants need to be outlined to ensure that all participants are fully aware of the study they are consenting to participate in and its purpose.

Section E – Potential Risks to the Participants (applicable only for research classified as B-D in question 8)

Information about the participants and any risks they might face while participating in or resulting from the study must be considered. Data and/or consent issues from participants or their parents/guardians and mitigating procedures that will be adopted need to be outlined.

Section F - Data Protection

This section deals with participant consent and data handling. For this section you will need to prepare a sample consent form that will be used for your study which must include a description of the study and its purpose (this may be obtained from the research proposal). You will also need confirm that your research records will be held in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations.

Section G – Supporting Documents

In this section you will have to confirm that you submitted all relevant supporting documents to the Research Ethics Office (REO) for assessment of your research ethics approval request. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Consent forms
- Research tools
- Information sheets
- External ethics approval from other institutes / schools / organisations / industries

Section H – Declaration

In this section you will have to confirm that you have discussed your proposal with your dissertation supervisor and that the information provided in the form is true and correct.

Annex A: Ethics Approval Form

Ethical approval is needed for all research undertaken by the Institute's staff and course participants (both undergraduate and postgraduate) wherever research and related activities involve human participants or raise ethical issues. Ethical issues should be considered early on in the planning process and approval must be obtained before the start of a research project. Before completing this form please refer to the Institute's Research Ethics Policy and Procedures which is available through the following link: <https://bit.ly/2QnX5me>.

Section A - Details

1. Surname: _____
2. Name: _____
3. ID Number: _____
4. Name of qualification: _____
5. Proposed research title: _____
6. Proposed research start date (Please input date in format of mm/dd/yyyy): _____
7. Duration of research project: _____

Section B - Description of Proposed Research

8. Please tick the option which best describes your research.
 - A. Research will mainly be desk-based and does not involve participants.
 - B. Research involves minimal risk of physical or emotional harm to participants such as classroom observation, questionnaires on non-sensitive topics, analysis of archived databases.
 - C. Research focuses on topics of a sensitive nature or participant groups where ethical issues might require careful consideration but are unlikely to be problematic.
 - D. Research is potentially problematic as it may cause physical or emotional risk to participants.
9. Does your research project require approval from an external institute/school/organisation/industry apart from the Institute for Education?
 - Yes
 - No
10. If you replied YES to Question 9, please specify from which external institute / school / organization / industry you have sought approval.

11. Please include below a brief description of the research project. This section may be taken from the research proposal.

Section C - Potential Risks to Researcher

12. Does the proposed research project pose any particular risks to the researcher(s)?

Potential risks to consider include: working in a dangerous or isolated geographical area; lone working; working with equipment and manual handling; environmental hazards; chemical and biological hazards; and emotional risks associated with sensitive research.

- Yes
- No

13. If you replied YES to question 12, please provide brief details indicating the nature and level of risk (low, medium, high).

Section D - Information on Participants

If your research is mainly desk-based (if you ticked A for question 8) and does not involve participants, please do NOT fill in this section.

14. How many participants do you envisage taking part in this research project?

15. What criteria will be used in choosing these particular participants for this research project?

16. Are any of the participants likely to be:

- Under 18 years of age
- In a student-teacher relationship with the researcher
- In a client or professional relationship with the researcher
- In any other dependent relationship with researcher
- From a racial or ethnic minority
- Known to have additional support needs
- Physically or mentally ill
- Vulnerable in other ways
- None of the above

17. If you ticked any option in Question 16 please describe the measures you will use to safeguard the participants. (consent forms, etc)

18. In the case of participants whose first language is not English or Maltese, will arrangements be made to ensure informed consent? If yes, what arrangements will be made?

19. Will participants receive any financial or material benefits as a result of their participation in your study? If yes, what will they be offered?

Section E - Potential Risks to Participants

If your research is mainly desk-based (if you ticked A to Question 8) and does not involve participants, please do NOT fill in this section.

20. Will your research project induce psychological stress or anxiety, or produce humiliation or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in the everyday life of the participants?

- Yes
- No

21. Will it be possible to link identities or trace information back to individual participants in any way?

- Yes
- No

22. Will participants be required to take part in the project without their consent or knowledge at the time (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places), and/or will deception of any sort be used?

- Yes
- No

23. Is there a risk of the research project putting participants in danger of physical harm?

- Yes
- No

24. Is there a risk that your project might lead to disclosures of participants concerning their involvement in illegal activities?

- Yes
- No

25. Is there a risk that obscene and or illegal material may need to be accessed for your project (including online content and other material)?
- Yes
 - No
26. Does your project involve participants disclosing information about sensitive subjects? For example, but not limited to, health status, sexual orientation/behaviour, political orientation/behaviour, religious affiliation/practice, domestic violence.
- Yes
 - No
27. Does your project involve adults who are vulnerable because of their social, psychological or medical circumstances (vulnerable adults)? This includes adults with cognitive and / or learning disabilities, adults with physical disabilities and older people.
- Yes
 - No
28. If you replied YES to any of the questions 20-27 please explain why. What mitigating measures will be adopted?

29. If you listed a number of mitigating measures in question 28, please send the consent form that you will provide to the participants/parents/guardians on ife.ethics@ilearn.edu.mt.

Section F - Data Protection

30. Will consent from the participants be obtained?
- Yes
 - No
31. If you replied YES to question 30, please send a copy of the information/consent form to ife.ethics@ilearn.edu.mt. This should include a description of the project details, confidentiality agreement, and freedom to withdraw from study at any stage of the project.
32. If you replied NO to question 30, explain why.

33. Can you confirm that your research records will be held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act (Cap 586)?
- Yes
 - No

Section G - Supporting Documentation

34. I confirm that I have submitted all the relevant documentation such as consent forms, research tools, information sheets, external ethical approvals from other institutes/schools/organisations/industries to ife.ethics@ilearn.edu.mt.
- Yes
 - No

Section H: Declaration

35. I confirm that I have discussed the ethical considerations of the above research project with my dissertation supervisor/s.
- Yes
 - No
36. I certify that the information given herein is true and correct.
- Yes
 - No

Signature by student

Date

Signature by dissertation supervisor

Date

Signature by dissertation co-supervisor (if applicable)

Date