

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH MODULE

GETTING STARTED, APPLYING
FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

APPLYING FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

Signing and
completing the
Ethics Form



SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

Full Name:					
Tick all boxes which apply:					
Member of staff:	☐	Student:	☒	Honorary research fellow:	☐
Faculty/School/Centre:					
Campus:	Townhill				
E-mail address:					
Contact Telephone Number:					
<i>For students:</i>					
Student Number:			Undergraduate	☒	
Programme of Study:	School of Social Justice and Inclusion		Taught Postgraduate	☐	
	BA Counselling Skill and Interdisciplinary Studies				
	Module : M6X00966				
Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Beverly Cole		Research	☐	

PLEASE ALSO INCLUDE MY ROLE:

- Module Lead and Research Supervisor

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)		YES	☒	NO	☐
					<i>Date</i>
If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known):	Research Degrees Committee		☐		
	Faculty Research Committee		☐		
	Other: This is part of a module assignment and has been agreed by the external examiner.		☒		

Approval in principle **must** be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval.

SECTION 'B':

Ensure that you insert the date you were notified that your project proposal had been approved:

Other: A project proposal, including ethical considerations was presented as an assignment on and achieved a pass mark.

SECTION C: External Ethical Guidance Materials

Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines.

USE BULLET POINTS TO SEPARATE OUT YOUR POINTS

- ❖
- ❖
- ❖

My research is placed within the School of Social Justice and Inclusion in the UWTSD.

This research addresses and my research proposal relates this work to the discipline-specific codes of research ethics and guidelines offered by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy's [BACP] Ethical Framework (BACP, 2016) and the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.

Accordingly, this research adheres to the concepts contained within the BACP's Ethical Framework (BACP, 2016), with particular emphasis on the BACP Ethical Framework for Research (BACP, 2004).

My research will be conducted through a focus group consisting of volunteer from fellow students who are studying counselling and interdisciplinary studies, with the focus groups held on campus, and the module tutor present throughout data collection.

The focus group will be recorded [see consent form attached as Appendix #] and collected data will be analysed through Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013), with results presented to Level 6 students [undertaking the Empirical Research Module] in May 2018.

Within the consideration of the ethical principles involved in this research, cognisance was given to the possibility that I, as the researcher, may be affected by the process or content of this research and in recognition of this, opportunity will be provided within weekly workshops and tutorials which facilitate discussion, monitor, and address any adverse impact or ethical issues which may arise within the actual conduct of the research.

It is also recognised that focus groups participants could be adversely impacted by discussing this subject within the focus group. The following steps have been taken to help alleviate this risk:

It is also recognised that focus groups participants could be adversely impacted by discussing this subject within the focus group. The following steps have been taken to help alleviate this risk:

- Participants will be free to choose whether to participate in this focus group, having read the information sheet regarding this research [Attached as Appendix #]. It will be made clear to them that participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw from the research at any time.
- Participants will be made aware, prior to agreeing to participate in the focus group, of the overall research question and the specific questions to be considered within the focus group [Appendix #]
- Each participant will sign a consent form and informed consent and the particular problems which can arise with confidentiality within focus group research will be re-visited prior to the start of the focus group so that participants will have another opportunity to withdraw from the study should they so wish. Participant consent will therefore be recorded in both verbal and written form

During the moderation of the focus group, I will use my counselling skills training to check for non-verbal/body language, recognise signs of distress, and deal with sensitive material to ensure that the focus group will be facilitated in an appropriate manner.

A group de-brief will take place at the end of the focus group, with the offer of an individual de-brief for any participant should this be necessary [See Appendix #]

It is hoped that participants will benefit from the research process through increased awareness and learning as the result of the focus group discussion. However, should, despite these steps to ensure that no participant leaves the research in a worse condition than when starting it, a participant experience any distress, the module leader, who is an experienced researcher and counsellor will be present and able to address the issue. Steps are also in place for signposting to further support should this be necessary.

Please consider these comments alongside the information contained within the appendices # = # attached.

References:

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy [BACP]. 2004. Ethical Guidelines for Researching Counselling and Psychotherapy. Rugby: BACP.

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy [BACP]. 2016. Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions. *Therapy Today*. July 2016. 27(6). 19. Lutterworth: BACP.

BACP Ethical Framework	
BACP Ethical Guidelines for Researching in Counselling and Psychotherapy	
UWTSD Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.	

N.B. Ethical Guidelines for Researching Counselling and Psychotherapy 2004 [Online]

Available at: https://www.bacp.co.uk/docs/pdf/ethical_guidelines.pdf

(accessed: 7/6/17)

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

Does the research activity involve collaborators outside of the University?	YES	☐	NO	☒
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If Yes, please provide the name of the external organisation and name and contact details for the main contact person:

Institution	
Contact person name	
Contact person e-mail address	

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☐
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If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

Indicative title:			
Proposed start date:		Proposed end date:	16 May 2018

Purpose of research activity (including aims and objectives)

Outline the purpose, aims and objectives of the research activity, including key research questions. Show briefly how existing research has informed the proposed activity and explain what the research activity will add and how it addresses an area of importance. (Maximum 300 words)

The purpose of this research is to

The aims and objectives are therefore to (Note: Aims are what you want to achieve, while, objectives are what you will do to achieve them. An objective is therefore more specific in character, while an aim is more abstract.)

Existing research shows that (Gap in knowledge???)

My research question is

The questions to be considered within my focus group schedule are

is acknowledged as an area of importance (ref[s]). This research will therefore add to the current body of knowledge within by (this box should expand as you type)

Proposed methods

Provide a brief summary of all the methods that **may** be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. (Maximum 600 words)

Data will be collected via focus groups with other students on this module who will freely elect to take part in this focus group, having read the information sheet attached [Appendix #] and signed the consent form [Example attached as Appendix #].

Research will follow the concepts advocated by Braun and Clarke (2013) and comply with their advice on ethical principles (pg ####), alongside the ethical principles of the BACP and UWTSD.

Location of research activity

Identify all locations where research activity will take place.

University of Wales, Trinity Saint David. Townhill Campus.

(this box should expand as you type)

Research activity outside of the UK

If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants.

Not applicable.

(this box should expand as you type)

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument? Focus group schedule	☒	☐
Use of interviews? Focus group	☒	☐
Use of diaries?	☐	☒
Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
Use of video or audio recording? The focus group will be recorded [See consent form attached as Appendix #]	☒	☐
Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
Other primary data collection methods, please explain in this box	☐	☒

REMEMBER:

- All boxes ticked above must be addressed within the methods section

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants N/A

Who are the intended participants:	YES	NO
Students or staff at the University?	☒	☐
Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
Children under 18?	☐	☒
Prisoners?	☐	☒
Young offenders?	☐	☒
Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
Others (please identify): Not applicable	☐	☒

Participant numbers and source

Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?

My focus group will consist of approximately 5 participants who will self select from the students undertaking this module.

One focus group = 5 participants

this box should expand as you type)

Information for participants: N/A	YES	NO	N/A
Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☐	☐	☒
Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer? Focus group schedule. See Information Sheet Appendix #	☒	☐	☐
Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs? Focus groups confidentiality/anonymity addressed in Appendix #	☒	☐	☐
Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
There will be no observation of participants. The focus group data will be analysed as in script form. (this box should expand as you type)			

Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☒	☐
Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
If YES to any question, please provide full details			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them.

Risks to participants

For example: emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information

Whilst no evidence was found of adverse impact within similar research of this nature undertaken by focus groups, there is always a chance of emotional distress within any research. This has been mitigated by the steps outlined within previous sections and the appendices to this ethical application

(this box should expand as you type)

If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities

(this box should expand as you type)

Risks to investigator

For example: personal safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest

As I student researcher. I could be impacted by the process or content of this research. Support will therefore be provided within weekly workshops and tutorials where progress will be supervised, monitored, and addressed as necessary. I am also aware of support and help I can access should this research impact upon me in any adverse way.

(this box should expand as you type)

University/institutional risks

For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection

All areas of possible risk have been addressed within this form and its appendices.

(this box should expand as you type)

Adverse outcomes

List measures put in place to limit any adverse effects or outcomes of research activity where appropriate. Include any emergency protocols.

See information contained within Appendices # to #

(this box should expand as you type)

Disclosure and Barring Service			
If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.			
	YES	NO	N/A
Has a DBS certificate been obtained?	☒	☐	☐

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

Feedback

What feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?

There will be a group debrief. Individual debrief will also be offered to participants. Results will be [Individual presentation of research, data collection, analysis and findings],to the Level 6 students of Empirical Research Module in May 2018.

(this box should expand as you type)

Informed consent

Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded.

All participants who opt-in to the research focus group will be asked to complete and return a consent form. See attached Appendices [# to #]

(this box should expand as you type)

Confidentiality / Anonymity

Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.

See attached Appendices

Particular issues of **anonymity** and confidentiality in relation to focus groups have been considered and addressed.

.....

(this box should expand as you type)

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

In completing this section refer to the University's Research Data Management Policy and the extensive resources on the University's Research Data Management web pages (<http://uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/>).

	YES	NO
Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the Data Protection Act)?	☒	☐

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

In completing this section refer to the University's Research Data Management Policy and the extensive resources on the University's Research Data Management web pages (<http://uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/>).

	YES	NO
Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the Data Protection Act)?	☒	☐

If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:

I will act in accordance with the eight data protection principles of the 1998 Data Protection Act, and in particular Schedule 2, which makes reference to the conditions by which most personal data can be processed. This 'privacy notice', respects the principles of fairness and transparency and I will therefore give consideration to its identified concepts.

Further information on this can be found at

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/privacy-notices-transparency-and-control/>

In line with these principles, I will ensure that participants are fully informed as to these questions via an information sheet, so that consent is informed and I will store data as required within the terms of this act.

Consent forms will be kept securely in a locked cabinet which can only be accessed by myself as the researcher.

My focus group will be audio recorded and the context will be typed as a script to facilitate analysis

No participant will be named either during the focus group, the recording, or the transcript. Where necessary, pseudonyms will be used to identify particular speakers.

(this box should expand as you type)

Does it involve sensitive personal data (as defined by the Data Protection Act)?	☐	☒
If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
(this box should expand as you type)		

Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
Sharing of data with others at the University?	☒	☐
Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
Export of data outside the European Union or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
Use of data management system?	☐	☒
Data archiving?	☐	☒
If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act (and/or any international equivalent):		
Electronic transfer of data and sharing of information will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act, the BACP Ethical Framework for Research and the University Research Ethics and Integrity Code of practice..... (this box should expand as you type)		

Will the research activity involve storing personal data on one of the following:	YES	NO
Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☒	☐
University computers?	☒	☐
Private company computers?	☐	☒
Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
“Cloud” storage or websites?	☐	☒
Other – specify:	☐	☒
For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure data confidentiality, including details of password protection, encryption and anonymisation:		
All students have a password protected account University systems are well protected (this box should expand as you type)		

List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:

Myself as the researcher and the module leader [supervisor].

(this box should expand as you type)

List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:

The researcher

(this box should expand as you type)

Give details of data storage arrangements, including where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.

Data will be anonymised

Personal data will be kept securely so that no unauthorised access can occur in accordance with Principle 7 on the Data Protection Act

Hard copy material will be kept locked in a lockable cabinet within a lockable office when not in use

Electronic data will be kept on a memory stick/secure network drives and password protected.

The data as hard copy or in digital form will be stored, as above, for the duration of the research and then immediately disposed of through confidential waste or deleted from the computer.

(this box should expand as you type)

SECTION K: Declaration

The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.

In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's [Research Ethics and Integrity Code of practice](#)

Signature of applicant

.....

Date:

.....

For students:

Director of Studies/Supervisor:	
Signature:	
Date:	12 March 2018

For staff:

Head of School/Assistant Dean:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☐	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Head of School.

REMEMBER TO READ

- Application process
- Notes of guidance

DELETE THE NOTES AT THE BOTTOM OF
THE FORM PRIOR TO SUBMISSION

- Application process: How to complete the ethics form
- Guidance on completing the ethics form



IMPORTANT NOTE:

- Only sign this after you have gone through the whole document in detail, completed the parts which relate to your own study and are happy with the content

FIRST STEPS

Firstly, you need to pick a topic that you find compelling and relevant to the course

Secondly, the topic should be relatively narrow so that it does not overwhelm you

Thirdly, there needs to be enough supportive evidence for you to research thoroughly