

 Department specific letterhead should be used, or department name here.

**Participant information sheet**

For further information about how Lancaster University processes personal data for research purposes and your data rights please visit our webpage: [www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/data-protection](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/data-protection)

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*Start by presenting yourself:*

I am a researcher/PhD student (*delete as appropriate*) at Lancaster University and I would like to invite you to take part in a research study about –*add title of the study or brief statement about what the study is about’*

Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to take part.

**What is the study about?**

**This study aims to (*explain the purpose briefly and in lay language, avoid jargon*)**

**Why have I been invited?**

I have approached you because …*type a brief explanation here. For example:* I am interested in understanding how students who learn English benefit from intensive classes. *Or:* I am trying to understand how young people make choices about what products to buy…..

I would be very grateful if you would agree to take part in this study.

**What will I be asked to do if I take part?**

If you decided to take part, this would involve the following: *type here* *a brief explanation of the procedure/data collection methods, be as clear as possible about what you ask participants to do. Add details on any data collection methods you would like people to take part in, so tell them about interviews, focus groups, or observations you are planning, what they will cover, where they will take place and how long participants will be spending on these activities.*

 **What are the possible benefits from taking part?**

***Try to list here any ways in which the participant might benefit from taking part, for example:* Taking part in this study will allow you to share your experiences of using social networking sites*. Or:* If you take part in this study, your insights will contribute to our understanding of *…..***

**Do I have to take part?**

No. It’s completely up to you to decide whether or not you take part. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

***If you ask students or employees to take part it is important that you include a sentence such as the following:* If you decide not to take part in this study, this will not affect your studies and the way you are assessed on your course. *For an employee you might want to say the following:* If you decide not to take part in this study, this will not affect your position in the company and your relations with your employer*.***

**What if I change my mind?**

***You also need to explain what will happen if somebody agrees to take part but later decides to withdraw. Once you have anonymised and analysed data it is often impossible to extract a specific participant’s data, so withdrawal becomes impossible. You can write the following:***

**As explained above, you are free to withdraw at any time and if you want to withdraw, I will extract any data you contributed to the study and destroy it. Data means the information, views, ideas, etc. that you and other participants will have shared with me. However, it is difficult and often impossible to take out data from one specific participant when this has already been anonymised or pooled together with other people’s data. Therefore, you can only withdraw up to 6 weeks after taking part in the study (*6 weeks is a suggestion and you need to adjust this according to the context of your study)***

*If you use anonymous questionnaires, withdrawal may not be possible,*

***because the data is anonymised and the data provided by the person who wants to withdraw can therefore not be identified. Make sure to explain this in the information sheet.***

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

*It is unlikely that there will be any major disadvantages to taking part. You may want to point out though that taking part will mean investing for example 30-60 minutes for an interview or an experiment you will ask them to take part in.*

**Will my data be identifiable?**

After the interview/focus group/observation (*change as applicable*), only I, the researcher conducting this study will have access to the data you share with me (*if you intend to share data with your supervisor, you should add them here)*. The only other person who will have access to the data is a professional transcriber who will listen to the recordings and produce a written record of what you and others have said. The transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement.

I will keep all personal information about you (e.g. your name and other information about you that can identify you) confidential, that is I will not share it with others. I will anonymise any audio recordings and hard copies of any data. This means that I remove any personal information.

*The above is common practice. However, in some projects and for some participants, it will be preferable or necessary to use their real names and identify them*.

*If your study includes focus groups, you can add the following sentence:*

*Participants in the focus group will be asked not to disclose information outside of the focus group and with anyone not involved in the focus group without the relevant person’s express permission.*

**How will my data be stored?**

Your data will be stored in encrypted files (that is no-one other than me, the researcher will be able to access them) and on password-protected computers.

I will store hard copies of any data securely in locked cabinets in my office.

I will keep data that can identify you separately from non-personal information (e.g. your views on a specific topic).

In accordance with University guidelines, I will keep the data securely for a minimum of ten years.

**How will we use the information you have shared with us and what will happen to the results of the research study?**

**I will use the data you have shared with only in the following ways:**

**I will use it for academic purposes only. This will include (*add as appropriate, e.g. my PhD thesis and other publications, for example journal articles*). I may also present the results of my study at academic conferences *(Or maybe you will attend practitioner conferences or inform policy-makers about your study. If this is the case, include this here.)***

**When writing up the findings from this study, I would like to reproduce some of the views and ideas you shared with me. When doing so, I will only use anonymised quotes (e.g. from our interview with you), so that although I will use your exact words, you cannot be identified in our publications.**

***Some studies ask participants to talk about issues which could possibly reveal harm or risk of harm that they or others may be subject to. If this might happen in your project, you have to add a sentence here to explain that you may have to tell others about what the participant has told you about. You can add a sentence such as this:***

**If anything you tell me in the interview (*or other data collection method*) suggests that you or somebody else might be at risk of harm, I will be obliged to share this information with *add who you would turn to in the first instance, probably your supervisor and/or colleagues*. If possible I will inform you of this breach of confidentiality.**

***If your funder request data archiving or sharing, you need to add information on this, e.g.***

**This study is funded by …… The funder expects me to make my data available for future research and use by other researchers. We will only share anonymised data in this way and will exclude all personal data from archiving. We intend to archive/share our data via (*add where/how it will be shared).***

**Who has reviewed the project?**

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Science and Technology Research Ethics Committee.

**What if I have a question or concern?**

**If you have any queries or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please contact myself (*add your contact details and, if you are a PhD student, your supervisor’s name and contact details, including email, telephone and mail address here).***

**If you have any concerns or complaints that you wish to discuss with a person who is not directly involved in the research, you can also contact:**

***Add Head of Department name and contact details***

**Sources of support**

I*n some projects, sensitive and potentially distressing topics may be discussed as part of the research. In such cases, it is good practice to add sources of support participants can turn to.*

**Thank you for considering your participation in this project.**