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| **Policy Title:** | Application Form for Ethical Approval of Research Proposals |
| **Description:** | Marino Institute of Education requires all research activity involving people as participants to be subjected to ethical scrutiny and this form is designed to enable the Marino Ethics in Research Committee to assess any research proposed by members of staff, students, or external researchers where the research has not been subject to ethical scrutiny by another ethics board. |
| **Author (Position):** | Marino Ethics in Research Committee |
| **Version:** | 3 |
| **Approved By:** | Academic Council |
| **Policy Approval Date:** | 28 March 2022 |
| **Date of Next Policy Review:** | April 2023 (or as necessary) |

# Application for Ethical Approval of Research Proposals

## 1. Notes for Investigators Prior to Completing Application Form:

1. Marino Institute of Education ('The Institute', MIE) requires all research activity involving people as participants to be subjected to ethical scrutiny and this form is designed to enable the Marino Ethics in Research Committee (MERC) to assess any research proposed by members of staff, students, or external researchers where the research has not been subject to ethical scrutiny by another ethics board.

   If your research does not involve human (or animal) participants, their material or data you do not need to proceed with this form, for example:

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| 1. Quality assurance studies (e.g. assessment of one's own teaching practice)<br>2. Audits of standard practice (not involving identifiable records)<br>3. Research on publicly available information, documents or data<br>4. Historical research in education<br>5. Research that uses pre-existing data in the public domain (e.g. data from the Growing up in Ireland study)<br>6. Review of literature or research<br>7. Document analysis |

   Such research is considered to be at Level 0. If you are a student, please agree this course of action with your supervisor.

2. You must state whether you require ethical approval at **Level 1** or **Level 2** as outlined below.

## 2. Level 1 Ethical Approval

This is **no risk to relatively low risk research** – i.e. research carrying little or no risks or discomfort greater than usually encountered during normal daily life, for example:

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| 1. Anonymous surveys of a non-intrusive personal nature.<br>2. Unrecorded and anonymous observation of individuals in public areas.<br>3. Analysis of irrevocably anonymised and appropriately collected data.<br>4. Interviews (consensual) with non-vulnerable adults.<br>5. Some action research<br>6. Surveys where respondents can be identified and where respondents have given appropriate consent. |

## 3. Level 2 Ethical Approval

**Moderate to high risk research** – i.e. risk or discomfort is greater than that usually encountered during normal daily life – includes ALL RESEARCH WITH CHILDREN (i.e. under 18 years of age) AND VULNERABLE ADULTS[1].

**MODERATE RISK**

1. Surveys asking questions of a sensitive or private nature
2. Questionnaires or observational studies involving children or vulnerable adults.
3. Research where there is a risk of a participant feeling undue pressure to participate by virtue of his/her relationship with the researcher (e.g. student/supervisor; teacher/student; assessor/student).
4. Projects involving a justifiable degree of deception.
5. Some action research.

**HIGH RISK**

1. Research involving children and vulnerable adults.
2. Research where identifiable information obtained may have legal, economic or social consequences for research subjects.
3. Research that may identify illegal activity.
4. Projects where each subject is paid (over and above token gestures).
5. Research that may potentially endanger the subjects, and/or researchers, and/or third parties, and/or the environment.
6. Research that may have a direct military role.
7. Research conducted outside Ireland.
8. Research involving psychological intervention.
9. Research where a potentially beneficial or harmful treatment, information or learning method may be withheld from some participants.
10. Video recording or observation.

Additional notes:

i. In situations where research ethics approval has been granted by an appropriate research ethics committee elsewhere, the submission may qualify for fast-tracked approval processing in MIE.

ii. Unless otherwise noted, research involving adults assumes adults with a capacity to consent.

- Vulnerable groups/persons are described as: Individuals who face excessive risk of being enrolled in research, including those with limitations in their ability to

[1] See Child Safeguarding Statement, Safeguarding Policy: Children and Safeguarding Policy: Vulnerable Persons

provide informed consent to research because of factors such as immaturity, cognitive impairment, or language competence.

- Vulnerability can also stem from individuals' relationships with others, and it is imperative that coercive situations are avoided. Such cases may occur when an employee/student/dependent is asked to participate in research being conducted by a supervisor/mentor.

iii. Additional social factors, such as poverty and lack of access to health care, can also make individuals vulnerable to coercion, exploitation or other risks and need to be considered in reviewing applications.

1. The primary focus for approval is research involving people. Where the participants include **children or vulnerable adults**, research cannot proceed unless all researchers involved have obtained Garda vetting[2]. In principle, all research in MIE should be conducted in a manner that respects the rights of all participants (including to privacy of data, confidentiality and anonymity as appropriate), causes no harm to participants or researchers, and requires the active, fully informed consent of all participants and their parents, carers, guardians or relevant responsible others.
2. In the case of **Level 2 ethical approval applications**, consent forms, **must be attached to the application**, and therefore demonstrate clearly that prospective participants are being fully informed about the purpose of the research and their role in it, how their data will be gathered, the purposes to which their data will be put and how their right to privacy (confidentiality and anonymity) will be respected (for research involving children, use the ethics guidelines produced by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.
3. Educational research undertaken outside Ireland must adhere to the same ethical standards as research Ireland. Any additional regulations (e.g. police clearance) and cultural sensitivities of the host country must also be observed.
4. Some **Level 2 ethical approval applications** may need to be referred to expertise beyond that available to MERC where proposals:
    - have the potential to cause harm to participants or researchers, directly physical or psychological;
    - may give rise to situations in which the researchers have to make statutory disclosure of illegal activity, whether on the part of participants or others;

[2] See Garda Vetting for Students Procedure and Vetting Policy (Staff)

- seek to deceive participants for any reason;
- may give rise to situations that may put the participants or researchers in any form of jeopardy.

Such cases and the nature of referral will be decided by MERC on a case-by-case basis.

5. If any changes to the approved research proposal are made:
    i. **For Students**: these must be discussed with your supervisor, and may require additional ethical approval[3];
    ii. **For Staff**: substantive changes need to be clarified with the MERC and may require additional approval.

8. This form along with any correspondence that is undertaken as a follow-up (e.g. approval letter, request for amendments etc.) will be kept as a formal record of the scrutiny process, for inspection as required by the University authorities. As such, proposers should ensure that proposals are presented to a professional standard as they will be returned for resubmission if deemed not to have been adequately prepared.

**Please email the completed ethical approval application form, consent form(s) and a cover email requesting ethics review to the MERC administrator: ( researchoffice@mie.ie )**

**In the case of student applicants, the form MUST be signed off by the supervisor prior to submission, or it will be returned.**

## 4. Responsibility

Responsibility for processing completed application forms rests with the MERC Committee.

## 5. Related Documents

5.1. MIE Privacy Policy

5.2. Ethics in Research Policy

5.3. Procedure for Ethical Approval of Research Proposals

5.4. Safeguarding Policy: Children

5.5. Safeguarding Policy: Vulnerable Persons

5.6. Child Safeguarding Statement

5.7. Garda Vetting for Students Procedure

5.8. Vetting Policy (Staff)

[3] See Ethics in Research Policy and Procedure for Ethical Approval of Research Proposals

## Appendix 1: Application for Ethical Approval of Research Proposals

**Title of Research**

_____

**Research Reference Number**[4]

_____

**Researcher's Name**

_____

**Email Address**

_____

**Category of Proposer** (please tick)

**Student** ☐

**Principal Investigator (Staff)** ☐

**Principal Investigator (External)** ☐

**If you are a student, please complete the following: Student Number:**

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**Course of Study:** **B.Ed.___ B.Sc.___ PME ___ MES ___ OTHER: ___**

**Please indicate the level of approval required (see accompanying notes).**

| Level 0 | Level 1 | Level 2 |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**If proposing to complete research with MIE students, has/have the relevant course leader(s) been consulted on this application in advance of it being submitted to MERC?**

**YES/NO**

[4] Research reference number (available from the MERC administrator - researchoffice@mie.ie prior to submitting the application). This number should be at the start of the file name of any document or mail submitted in relation to this application. Please follow the reference number with 1, 2, 3, etc. corresponding with the number of documents submitted with the application.

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| **1. Please give a brief overview and indicative timeline of the proposed research, including the methods you intend to use** (approx. 300 words). |

**Please tick** √

| **2. Please answer the following questions in relation to your proposed research. Questions (b), (c) or (d) will require detailed explanations if answered 'yes' and will be referred for additional scrutiny by the MERC.** | **Yes** | **No** |
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| a. Does the research involve work with children (under-18) or vulnerable adults?<br><br>If 'Yes', has appropriate Garda clearance (or equivalent) been obtained (include details)? | | |
| Please provide the date of issue on the Certificate of Garda Vetting. | | |
| b. Does the research involve work with students on a module you coordinate, teach or assess or a course you coordinate? | | |
| c. Could any aspect of the research give rise to any form of harm to participants, including the researcher(s)? | | |
| d. Could any aspect of the research produce information that could lead to criminal prosecution of the participants or others? | | |
| e. Is deception of the participants planned in any aspect of the research? If yes, provide details. | | |
| f. Does any aspect of the research involve patients (or their relatives or carers) or other users of health and social care services, the premises or | | |

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| facilities of such services, access to personal records or the participation of health or social care staff? | | |
| g. Does the Researcher plan to disseminate the work? If yes, provide details of how and where? | | |

**3. (a) Who are the proposed participants, e.g. teachers; students?**

**(b) What is your relationship with them?** (If you are in a position of authority, for example, indicate how you will deal with the potential influences of such a relationship.)

**(c) What data will be used?**

**(d) How will the data be collected?**

**(e) How will the data be used?**

**4. (a) How will you recruit participants?**

**(b) Please detail any ethical aspects that must be considered, including the proposed use of any incentives.**

**5. (a) What is the location(s) at which the data collection will be undertaken?**

**(b) Describe any circumstances that might give rise to security concerns for participants or researchers.**

**(c) Describe any conflicts of interest where data might be critical of working practices, people etc. or disclosure of illegal activities.**

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| **6. Please indicate how informed consent of all participants will be gained. For participants under the age of 18, indicate how the informed consent of both the participant and the participant's parent/guardian will be gained.** (Draft consent forms MUST be attached – see question 8 for guidance.) |

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| **7. (a) Please indicate how the participants' rights to privacy (inc. confidentiality and anonymity) and the privacy of their data will be protected. Highlight potential limitations of confidentiality in the ethics form and information sheets for participants (e.g. for small samples or insider research and how this will be addressed).**<br><br>**Please provide a copy of or a link to your research tool(s). If this is not appropriate, please advise.**<br><br>**(b) Please clearly outline what steps you will take for encrypting data.**<br><br>**(c) Please also indicate how the data will be stored (and ultimately destroyed as appropriate).**<br><br>**(d) Please outline what considerations you have taken in relation to GDPR and the potential GDPR implications for the proposed research.**<br>**Please provide evidence that your data collection platform is GDPR compliant.** |

| **8. Please complete the checklist below to confirm you have considered all ethical aspects of consent.**<br><br>**(Note that the consent forms that must accompany this application; any omission or inadequacy in detail will result in a request for amendments).** | **Please tick √** |
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| I have attached (an) appropriate consent form(s) which include the freedom to withdraw at any stage without having to offer a reason. | |

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| Each consent form has full contact details of the researcher to enable prospective participants to make follow-up inquiries | |
| Each consent form has full details, in plain non-technical language, of the purpose of the research and the proposed role of the person being invited to participate | |
| Each consent form uses inclusive language and has full details of the purposes to which the data (in all their forms: text, oral, video, imagery etc.) will be put, including for research dissemination purposes | |
| Each consent form explains how the privacy of the participants and their data will be protected, including the storage and ultimate destruction of the data as appropriate | |
| Each consent form gives assurances that the data collection (questionnaires, interviews, tests etc.) will be carried out in a sensitive and non-stressful manner, and that the participant has the right to cease participation at any time and without the need to provide a reason | |
| Please include here any other comments you wish to make about the consent form(s) | |

**Has your proposal been submitted to any other Research Ethics Committee? Yes / No If yes, please provide details:**

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**Declaration by All Proposers:**

I have read and understood Marino Institute of Education's policy on ethics in educational research: and the Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin Good Research Practice Policies:

I declare that the details above reflect accurately my research proposal and I undertake to seek updated approval if substantive changes are proposed after this submission. I have consulted an authoritative set of educational research guidelines.

**Signed:** **Date:**

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**(Students Only**) My proposals are based on consultation with my supervisor(s).

**Signed:** **Date:**

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Supervisor's Signature: (**Student Proposal Only**, first supervisor only if there are two)

**Signed:** **Date:**

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In instances where supervisors feel that their specialised expertise may be important information for the MERC to take into account (e.g.in relation in researching highly sensitive areas such as trauma/abuse), please submit an additional page with any relevant information.

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**Final Approval Signed-Off by Research Ethics Committee**

**Signed:** **Date:**

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## Appendix 2: List of Research Methods that do not Typically Require Ethics Approval

- Historical research in education
- Research that uses pre-existing data in the public domain (e.g. data from the Growing up in Ireland study)
- Review of literature or research
- Document analysis
- Quality Assurance studies
- Audits of standard practice and research on publicly available information, documents or data

## Appendix 3: Bibliography and Useful Reading re. Ethics in Research

British Educational Research Association (2011). *Ethical guidelines for educational research*. London: Author.

Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2012). *Guidance for developing ethical projects involving children.* Dublin: Author.

Strike, K.A. (2006). The ethics of educational research. In Green, J.L., Camilli, G., & Elmore, P.B. (Eds.). *Handbook of complementary methods in education research.* Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association.