

School of Political Science and International Studies

Application for Ethical Clearance for Research Involving Human Participants

Project Title	
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Investigator	
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Student No.	
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Co Investigators (if applicable)	
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Supervisor/s	
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Contact Details of Investigator	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Fax</i>	<i>Email</i>

Degree Enrolled	
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Project Location		Project Duration	
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PLEASE ANSWER ALL OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

<p>1) Who are the participants? <i>(Please specify the approximate number of participants and provide justification for this number. Please also specify if the project may involve any of the categories of participants identified in the National Statement as requiring specific ethical considerations, including: a) people with a cognitive impairment, an intellectual disability or a mental illness; b) people who may be involved in illegal activities; c) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; d) children and young people; e) people in dependent or unequal relationships; and f) people in other countries. Please also identify whether your project is likely to involve g) people in Australia from cultural or ethnic groups other than Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples whose participation may also give rise to specific ethical considerations.)</i></p>

<p>2) How will participants be recruited? <i>(Please describe how you will contact the participants, including whether you need to seek approval from a 'gatekeeper' to access your population of interest. A gatekeeper or 'permission-giver' is someone authorised on behalf of any organisation involved in the research to give permission to the researcher to access people under the gatekeeper's authority. Gatekeeper permission is required in most cases where research participants are members of an</i></p>
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organisation. The permission protects any staff in the organisation you may be seeking to contact and will make it easier for you to access populations. Similarly, you may require permission from community leaders before making contact with potential participants in a community.)

3) Provide a brief summary of the project, explaining its aims and benefit. (There is no need to refer to literature here – you simply need to briefly explain your project in order to place ethical considerations involved in your research plan (for which you are seeking ethical approval) in context.)

4) Outline your research plan, giving details of what you are planning to do in your interactions with research participants and the ethical considerations involved. (If your project involves participants with specific ethical considerations as outlined in your response to question 1, please provide details of the extent of their involvement in the research and related ethical considerations – for example, whether there are any particular local laws, customs, practices or conditions which should be taken into account. Please detail what strategies you will use to address their needs and interests and whether you have sought guidance from anyone with relevant knowledge.)

5) How will informed consent be obtained from participants? (An informed consent process must inform participants about the project and their participation, ensure they understand the information provided and subsequently allow them to make a voluntary choice about whether to participate. At a minimum, the basic elements of informed consent require the researcher to provide the participant with a project **information sheet** presenting information about the research and its aims in an understandable/accessible format. In most cases it will also be necessary for participants to be provided with a participant **consent form** to sign. If, for example, it is considered inappropriate to provide written consent, or participants are being asked to provide information entirely 'off-the-record', it may not be necessary for them to sign a form, but informed consent must still be established. For example, you may wish to use a procedure in which participants are asked to consent verbally. The researcher should ensure that the level of language used in the consent process is directed towards potential participants of an 'average' comprehension and reading age of about 12 years old, or lower if appropriate. Please consider also that people who elect not to participate in a research project need not give any reason for their decision. Researchers should do what they can to see that people who decline to participate will suffer no disadvantage as a result of the decision.)

6) Provide details of procedures for establishing confidentiality and protecting privacy of participants. (Privacy refers to participants' control over the extent, timing and circumstances of sharing something of themselves (physically, behaviourally, or intellectually) with others. Privacy implies a zone of exclusivity where individuals and groups/communities are free from the scrutiny of others. Participants have the right to be protected against illegal invasions of their privacy and to preservation of their personal dignity. Confidentiality refers to the researcher's obligation to ensure that private information is not used for any other purpose than that for which it was given. In particular, participants in qualitative research are often easily identifiable and the information they provide may be sensitive. Please explain what strategies you

will use to ensure participants are not identifiable by the information they provide, unless they have agreed to be identified. Examples of identifiers include the individual's name, image, date of birth or address.)

7) Provide details of data collection, security and storage *(In all research involving human participants, confidentiality of identifiable information is presumed and must be maintained unless the researcher obtains the express permission of the participant to do otherwise, or in other limited circumstances. Please specify in what form data will be collected: identified (data that allows the identification of the specific individual who contributed it); potentially identifiable (where identifiers have been removed and replaced with codes which may still allow the data to be linked to the identifiers); or de-identified (identifiers are permanently removed or data has never been identified). Please specify whether any codes and potentially identifiable data will be kept in a separate location, procedures for transporting data if required and whether data will be kept in locations such as in locked filing cabinets and password protected hard drives.)*

8) Give details of whether and/or how feedback will be available to participants. *(Consider how feedback might benefit the participant, contribute to recognising the participant's contribution to the research and maintain a good relationship between the participant and university researchers.)*

9) Does the project involve any of the following possibilities? Answer YES or NO for each. If YES, please provide details and explain any steps you will take to address the possibility.

a) Psychological/mental stress/distress, discomfort to participants or researchers

b) Deception of, or withholding information from, participants at any stage of the project

c) Use of questionnaires, interviews or focus groups with questions on topics that are sensitive and have potential to cause distress or may reveal illegal activity

10) Please indicate what you think is the level of risk for prospective participants against the scale below:

(Risk refers to the probability of negative impacts on people involved in the research, including: emotional and psychological risks such as anxiety, depression, guilt, shock, loss of self-esteem and altered behaviour; economic risks such as loss of wages or other income and damage to employability; and risks associated with loss of confidentiality. The level of risk involves assessing both the likelihood of harm and

the seriousness of any harm that may be caused: for example, there may be a high risk of harm where the research is nearly certain to cause psychological distress to the participant.)

- Extreme Risk
- High Risk
- Some Risk
- Minimal Risk
- No Foreseeable Added Risk above the Risks of Everyday Living

11) Please explain your rationale for selecting the level of risk indicated in Q10 above, referring to any information provided in your response to question 9.

12) How has the possibility of withdrawal from the project been addressed? *(Participants are entitled to withdraw from the research at any stage. Before consenting to involvement in the research, participants should be informed of this right and consequences, including what will happen to any data already collected should they withdraw after commencing the project. Please specify how you will ensure that participants are able to withdraw and how you will respond to participants who decide to withdraw.)*

13) Please provide details of any external (outside UQ) funding you are receiving for this research and whether there is any related conflict of interest.

Have you also attached your:

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|---|---------------|
| 1) Participant consent form? (see guidelines below) | Yes/No |
| 2) Project information sheet? (see guidelines below) | Yes/No |
| 3) Gatekeeper or permission-giver letter? (see guidelines below) | Yes/No |
| 4) Questionnaire? (if applicable) | Yes/No |

DECLARATION

We/I, the undersigned researcher(s) have considered the ethical issues in relation to this project and agree to abide by [The University of Queensland Guidelines for Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans](#) and the [NHMRC's National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#) in the conduct of this research.

Signature _____ of
Investigator _____

Date: / /

Signature _____ of
Supervisor _____

Date: / /

Decision: Approved
 Declined

Signature of the Chair of Research Committee: _____

Comments (if any):

FURTHER GUIDELINES FOR INFORMATION SHEETS, CONSENT FORMS AND GATEKEEPER LETTERS

Please also see question 5 in relation to project **information sheets** and participant **consent forms** and question 2 in relation to **gatekeeper letters**.

Normally an information sheet would provide details of the points below, while the participant consent form would reiterate points in a precise form (dot format) for the participant's agreement. An information sheet is kept separate from a consent form so that the participants can keep it. That allows them to retain valuable information about the project and the researcher in case they wish to discuss any concerns at a later date. The consent form is kept by the researcher after signing.

Both documents must be printed on UQ letterhead and would normally take up only a single page. You can use the letterhead provided in the examples attached in the electronic version of this document.

A project information sheet should contain:

1. The title of the project;
2. The purpose of the proposed study;
3. The expected duration of participants' involvement in the study;
4. A clear and precise description of procedures for their involvement;
5. A clear and precise description of any foreseeable risks due to their involvement in the study;
6. The method used to maintain their confidentiality and privacy, including anonymity if guaranteed, along with the security of the data once collected and stored;
7. A statement that their participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw at any time without prejudice;
8. The researcher's name and contact details, with a statement that the researcher can answer further questions about their participation in the project; and
9. A statement on gaining feedback or results of either their individual involvement in the project or the completed study.

A project information sheet must also contain the following paragraph:

This study adheres to the Guidelines of the ethical review process of The University of Queensland. Whilst you are free to discuss your participation in this study with the researcher (contactable on), if you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may arrange to speak to the Chair of Research Committee of the School of Political Science and International Studies by making contact with the Finance and Research Support Officer on + 61 7 3365 1524 or emailing polsis.finance@uq.edu.au.

A consent form should contain:

1. The title of the project;
2. The researcher's name, position, the name of the school and university;
3. A statement that the participant has read the information sheet and understands its key points, provided in a format that allows the participant to signal agreement;

4. Where relevant, questions for the participant to answer such as whether they agree to have information from their contact with the researcher published and how they wish to be identified. These options would have been explained in more detail in the information sheet; and
5. A space to enter the date and the signatures of the participant and researcher.

A gatekeeper letter should contain:

1. The title of the project;
2. The name of the researcher;
3. A subject heading indicating the purpose of the letter: giving permission for a research activity;
4. A statement that the gatekeeper is giving permission for a specified research activity involving specified participants at their organisation and the gatekeeper's role at the organisation to show in what capacity they are giving permission; and
5. A space for the gatekeeper's name and signature.
6. If printed, the organisation's letterhead should be used, rather than UQ letterhead.
7. If provided by email, the gatekeeper's official contact details at the organisation should be clearly stated.

Examples of these documents are provided in the following pages.



PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

Name of project

Ice Cream Consumption Amongst Public Servants in Southeast Queensland

Researcher

Ms Rosemary Stevens

PhD Student, School of Political Science and International Studies

The University of Queensland, Brisbane QLD 4072

Email: r.stevens@uq.edu.au

Purpose of the study

My project examines factors influencing ice cream consumption amongst public servants in Southeast Queensland. I focus on whether a change in government influences levels of ice cream consumption amongst public servants.

I am interviewing employees in three state government departments in Brisbane to explore this topic.

Participation in the study

Taking part is your choice. You can decide not to participate at any time, whether prior to or during the meeting. If you agree to participate, we would have an interview that should take no more than an hour. Feel free to say if a shorter meeting would suit your schedule. It would take place at a time and place that suits you.

Confidentiality

Your participation in the study would be anonymous. All identifying information will be separated from any written notes I keep. Notes will be stored securely and computer data will be password protected.

You will be given the opportunity to decide whether you agree to have published any information gained from the meeting. If you agree, I will also ask you to tell me how you wish to be described as the source of the information (e.g. if you are happy to be referred to as an 'Education Department employee').

Please note the meeting can be 'off-the-record', with no information gained being used in the study. I am simply interested in hearing your thoughts and any information you can provide.

Ethical clearance

This study adheres to the Guidelines of the ethical review process of The University of Queensland. Whilst you are free to discuss your participation in this study with the researcher (contactable at r.stevens@uq.edu.au), if you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may arrange to speak to the Chair of Research Committee of the School of Political Science and International Studies by making contact with the School Manager, Ms Ros Roche on + 61 7 3365 2517 or emailing r.roche@uq.edu.au.

Thank you for any assistance you are able to give

CONSENT FORM

Name of project

Ice Cream Consumption Amongst Public Servants in Southeast Queensland

Researcher

Rosemary Stevens
PhD Student, School of Political Science and International Studies
The University of Queensland

Your involvement in this research is highly valued. After reading the project information sheet, please review the information below and tick the box if you agree:

1. I have read the project information sheet.
2. I am willing to participate in this research.
3. I understand the nature of the research and my role in it.
4. I understand I am free to withdraw from participating in the project at any time.
5. I understand that the researcher will keep all my personal information confidential.

Do you agree that information gained from your interview may be published? (please circle)

Yes

No, I wish this interview to be 'off-the-record'

If yes, please indicate how you wish to be identified in any publications:

Do you give permission for the interview to be tape recorded? (please circle)

Yes

No

Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____

(space provided for Department of Education letterhead)

Re: University of Queensland Research Project
Ice Cream Consumption Amongst Public Servants in Southeast Queensland

PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES

As the Director-General of the Department of Education, I give my permission to the researcher, Rosemary Stevens, to interview Department of Education employees about this project.

Name of permission-giver: _____

Signature of permission-giver: _____

Date: / /