

University of Sheffield School of Education RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION FORM

Complete this form if you are planning to carry out research in the School of Education which will not involve the NHS but which will involve people participating in research either directly (e.g. interviews, questionnaires) and/or indirectly (e.g. people permitting access to data).

Documents to enclose with this form, where appropriate:

This form should be accompanied, where appropriate, by an Information Sheet/Covering Letter/Written Script which informs the prospective participants about the a proposed research, and/or by a Consent Form.

Guidance on how to complete this form is at: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/content/1/c6/11/43/27/Application%20Guide.pdf>

Once you have completed this research ethics application form in full, and other documents where appropriate email it to the:

Either

Ethics Administrator if you are a member of staff.

Or

Secretary for your programme/course if you are a student.

NOTE

- Staff and Post Graduate Research (EdD/PhD) requires 3 reviewers
- Undergraduate and Taught Post Graduate requires 1 reviewer – **low risk**
- Undergraduate and Taught Post Graduate requires 2 reviewers – **high risk**

I am a member of staff and consider this research to be (according to University definitions)
: **low risk**

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*Note: For the purposes of Ethical Review the University Research Ethics Committee considers all research with 'vulnerable people' to be 'high risk' (eg children under 18 years of age).

COVER SHEET

<p>I confirm that in my judgment, due to the project's nature, the use of a method to inform prospective participants about the project (eg 'Information Sheet'/'Covering Letter'/'Pre-Written Script'):</p>	
Is relevant	Is not relevant
X (if relevant then this should be enclosed)	

<p>I confirm that in my judgment, due to the project's nature, the use of a 'Consent Form':</p>	
Is relevant	Is not relevant
X (if relevant then this should be enclosed)	

<p>Is this a 'generic "en bloc" application (ie does it cover more than one project that is sufficiently similar)</p>	
Yes	No
	x

I am a member of staff

I am a PhD/EdD student

I am a Master's student

I am an Undergraduate student

I am a PGCE student

The submission of this ethics application has been agreed by my supervisor

Supervisor's signature/name and date of agreement

.....
I have enclosed a signed copy of Part B

**University of Sheffield School of Education
RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION FORM**

PART A

A1. Title of Research Project: Doctoral Examiners' Perceptions and Experiences of Problematic Examining Situations

A2. Applicant (normally the Principal Investigator, in the case of staff-led research projects, or the student in the case of supervised research projects):

Title: Professor First Name/Initials: Pat Last Name: Sikes
 Post: Professor of Qualitative Inquiry Department: Education
 Email: p.j.sikes@sheffield.ac.uk Telephone: 01142228158

A2.1. Is this a student project? NO

If yes, please provide the Supervisor's contact details:

A2.2. Other key investigators/co-applicants (within/outside University), where applicable:

Please list all (add more rows if necessary)

Title	Full Name	Post	Responsibility in project	Organisation	Department

A3. Proposed Project Duration:

Start date: End date:

A4. Mark 'X' in one or more of the following boxes if your research:

	Involves children or young people aged under 18 years
	Involves only identifiable personal data with no direct contact with participants
X	Involves only anonymised or aggregated data
	Involves prisoners or others in custodial care (eg young offenders)
	Involves adults with mental incapacity or mental illness
	Has the primary aim of being educational (eg student research, a project necessary for a postgraduate degree or diploma, MA, PhD or EdD)

A5. Briefly summarise the project's aims, objectives and methodology?

(this must be in language comprehensible to a lay person)

Research and writing looking at the doctoral examination process has tended to focus on the perceptions and experiences of students, the practicalities of the viva situation, or on the ways in which examiners read doctoral theses and come to decisions about what recommendation (eg Pass, Minor Amendments, Resubmission, Fail etc) to make. The proposed project would, rather, concentrate on the perceptions and experiences of examiners faced with what they consider to be difficult and/or problematic situations that may arise at any stage of the examination process, from the initial approach to be an examiner, through to signing off the thesis and beyond.

The aim is to investigate what examiners themselves experience as being problematic and the study will essentially be qualitative in that examiners will be asked to describe and give narrative accounts of what they have found to be difficult.

The proposed study would involve:

- A questionnaire survey to gain some sense of how many people had experienced problems and what the nature of those problems was. It would collect demographic information and would also invite extended written accounts of problematic situations. People who were prepared to be interviewed would be asked to provide contact details.
- Narrative unstructured interviews with people who consider themselves to have experienced problematic examination situations.

The questionnaire would (in the first instance) be distributed to all academic staff working at the University of Sheffield. Delegates attending the *Discourse Power Resistance (DPR)* conference (April 13 -15) would also be invited to take part. Interviewees would be self selecting from the questionnaire survey.

A6. What is the potential for physical and/or psychological harm / distress to participants?

Minimal. People may feel some discomfort recounting difficult circumstances but I do not anticipate this leading to substantial distress.

A7. Does your research raise any issues of personal safety for you or other researchers involved in the project and, if yes, explain how these issues will be managed? (Especially if taking place outside working hours or off University premises.)

No

A8. How will the potential participants in the project be (i) identified, (ii) approached and (iii) recruited?

All University of Sheffield staff on academic contracts will be sent a questionnaire (subject to clearance being given) and invited to complete it. Delegates to the DPR conference will be sent questionnaires via the

conference distribution list. Involvement in the study will be totally by choice. These populations have been identified on the basis of my access to them.

A9. Will informed consent be obtained from the participants?

Yes

X

No

If informed consent is not to be obtained please explain why. Further guidance is at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/researchethics/policy-notes/consent>

Only under exceptional circumstances are studies without informed consent permitted. Students should consult their tutors.

A.9.1 How do you plan to obtain informed consent? (i.e. the proposed process?):

Participants responding to the questionnaire will be given information about the research at the start of the questionnaire. The decision to complete the questionnaire will be understood to constitute consent.

Participants who identify themselves as willing to be interviewed will be provided with information and asked to sign consent forms.

A.10 How will you ensure appropriate protection and well-being of participants?

As far as is possible and is desired, participants will be anonymous. Participants will be free to withdraw at any stage.

A.11 What measures will be put in place to ensure confidentiality of personal data, where appropriate?

Only the researcher will have access to raw data and this will be stored without identifying details attached. In any reporting/writing pseudonyms will be used where required and, if necessary other disguising strategies will be used.

A.12 Will financial / in kind payments (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants? (Indicate how much and on what basis this has been decided.)

Yes

No

X

A.13 Will the research involve the production of recorded or photographic media such as audio and/or video recordings or photographs?

Yes

No

A.13.1 This question is only applicable if you are planning to produce recorded or visual media:
How will you ensure that there is a clear agreement with participants as to how these recorded media or photographs may be stored, used and (if appropriate) destroyed?

PART B - THE SIGNED DECLARATION

I confirm my responsibility to deliver the research project in accordance with the University of Sheffield's policies and procedures, which include the University's *'Financial Regulations'*, *'Good research Practice Standards'* and the *'Ethics Policy for Research Involving Human Participants, Data and Tissue'* (Ethics Policy) and, where externally funded, with the terms and conditions of the research funder.

In signing this research ethics application I am confirming that:

1. The above-named project will abide by the University's Ethics Policy for Research Involving Human Participants, Data and Tissue': <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/researchethics/index.html>
2. The above-named project will abide by the University's 'Good Research Practice Standards': <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/researchethics/general-principles/homepage.html>
3. The research ethics application form for the above-named project is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.
4. There is no potential material interest that may, or may appear to, impair the independence and objectivity of researchers conducting this project.
5. Subject to the research being approved, I undertake to adhere to the project protocol without unagreed deviation and to comply with any conditions set out in the letter from the University ethics reviewers notifying me of this.
6. I undertake to inform the ethics reviewers of significant changes to the protocol (by contacting my supervisor or the Ethics Administrator as appropriate
7. I am aware of my responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data, including the need to register when necessary with the appropriate Data Protection Officer (within the University the Data Protection Officer is based in CICS).
8. I understand that the project, including research records and data, may be subject to inspection for audit purposes, if required in future.
9. I understand that personal data about me as a researcher in this form will be held by those involved in the ethics review procedure (eg the Ethics Administrator and/or ethics reviewers/supervisors) and that this will be managed according to Data Protection Act principles.
10. If this is an application for a 'generic'/'en block' project all the individual projects that fit under the generic project are compatible with this application.
11. I will inform the Chair of Ethics Review Panel if prospective participants make a complaint about the above-named project.

Signature of student (student application):

Signature of staff (staff application):

Pat Sikes

Date:

Email the completed application form to the course/programme secretary

For staff projects contact the Ethics Secretary, Colleen Woodward
Email: c.woodward@sheffield.ac.uk for details of how to submit