Ethical Risk Assessment

**Data collection involving no risk to participants above the everyday**

This type of data collection includes:

* projects that involve non-invasive procedures
* no apparent risk to participants above the everyday norm
* projects where participants (and/or organisations) are not identified.

# Examples

* use of questionnaires/surveys (that do not involve sensitive questions) sent to normal adult participants, and returned anonymously so that participants cannot be identified
* recording information from groups of participants (rather than individual participants) in an educational setting where participants are not identified

# Ethical Risk Checklist

For projects to be considered to involve no risk to participants above the everyday, all boxes on the checklist should be ticked **“NO”.**

**Data collection involving minimal or low risk to participants**

This type of data collection includes:

* projects that involve non-invasive procedures
* minimal or low risk to participants above the everyday norm (not including physical, psychological and social risk)
* projects where participants (and/or organisations) may be identified during data collection but steps will be taken to ensure confidentiality

**Examples**

* use of a questionnaire or interview that does not involve sensitive issues, where participants may be identified during data collection
* a project involving children or young people, with parental consent, that is not part of a normal instructional or educational activity

**Ethical risk checklist**

It is possible that some items on the ethical risk checklist are ticked **“YES”** but the project would still be considered to be low or minimal risk. An example of this might include:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **YES** | **NO** |  |
| [x]   | [ ]   | Children and young people (under 18 years of age) who will be involved in activities other than in normal instructional or educational activities. |

In cases where the **“YES”** option has been ticked, further information should be provided. The explanation can then determine if the project may be considered low or minimal risk. An example of this might be:

Low/minimal risk: A survey with primary school children to determine which television programs they watch the most and why.

Significant risk: An interview with secondary school children on knowledge and experience of alcohol consumption.

## Any project involving data collection which may involve significant risk to participants is not suitable to be approved under a Unit Licence

## Ethical Risk Checklist

**Projects and collection of information, data and/or samples undertaken by students for the purposes of fulfilling the requirements of a unit should involve more than low risk to the participants.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **YES** | **NO** |  |
|  |  | **PARTICIPANTS** |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | Children or young people (under 18 years of age) without parent consent |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | Children and young people (under 18 years of age) who will be involved in activities other than in normal instructional or educational activities. |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | Individuals who are unable to give informed consent (e.g. people with a mental or intellectual impairment, people with communication difficulties) |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | Individuals who are in a dependent relationship (such as students/lecturers, patients/doctors, employees/employers). |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | Intentional recruitment of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander groups or other identifiable cultural/minority groups with the intention of focussing on issues of significance to that group |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | People who may be involved with illegal activities |
|  |  | **PROCEDURES** |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | Any form or physically invasive diagnostic, therapeutic or medical procedure such as administration of substances, exercise regime or physical examination |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | Blood, body fluids or tissue samples will be obtained and/or stored  |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | Physical pain (i.e. more than mild discomfort) or psychological stress is likely to result from participation |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | Investigation of sensitive personal or cultural issues (e.g. suicide, gender identity, sexuality, fertility, gambling, substance abuse) |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | Deception of participants, concealment or covert observation |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | Payments or inducements to encourage involvement in the project (which are so significant they might be considered coercive) |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | Disclosure of the results of the project could place persons and/or groups at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, professional or personal relationships |
|   |   | **DATA COLLECTION** |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | Collection, use or disclosure of personal information from a Commonwealth, State or Territory agency or a private sector organisation without consent of the participant |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | Audiovisual recordings of participants which may be of a sensitive or compromising nature |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | Use of a questionnaire, survey or interview (where the identity of the participant may or may not be recorded) that might be expected to cause discomfort, embarrassment, or psychological harm |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | An individual organisation will be identified and this is likely to be of concern  |
| [ ]   | [ ]   | Project that involves data collection in an overseas country that may involve politically sensitive or cultural issues, or that may put the students or participants at risk |

|  |
| --- |
| FURTHER EXPLANATION  |
| If any of the items have been ticked “YES”, but you believe that the data collection involves minimal or low risk to the participants, please provide further explanation.  |