

# TRINITY LABAN

## Research Ethics Committee: Guidelines for Applications

Section I Research Involving Human Participants

Section II Performance Ethics

### SECTION I: RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

These Guidelines give information on what your application to the Trinity Laban Research Ethics Committee should comprise of (A + B); on the Ethics Approval procedure (C); and general information on how to conduct a study (D).

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Your application to the Trinity Laban Research Ethics Committee should comprise of

**A) A completed and signed Ethics Application Form**

**B) Appendices including**

1. Information Sheet(s)
2. Consent Form
3. Other relevant forms such as a Medical screening questionnaire, questionnaires or interview guides, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, or advertisements for participant recruitment.

Please insert your appendices at the end of your application form and submit a single document to the committee. If, for some reason, you are unable to do so, submit clearly labelled separate documents.

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**A) Your Ethics Application Form**

Make sure you complete each section, and ask for advice if anything is unclear. The committee cannot give the go-ahead for a project that has not been clearly explained.

**For students**, remember to discuss and/or obtain feedback on your form proposal with your supervisor/ programme leader and obtain at least one of their signatures.

**IMPORTANT:** Specific participant names should not be included in application forms in advance of ethical approval. Practitioner names could be mentioned as examples of types of participants/ interviewees but generic descriptors of types of participants would be preferable and specific students should not be named.

**B) Appendices**

**1. Information sheet(s) for participants (parents/guardians, for participants under 18)**

Use the template provided or create a sheet/letter outlining your project to your participants. You need to give this to your participants before data collection begins. If you

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involve people under the age of 18, you should also create a (similar) sheet/letter for parents.

Please include the following:

- Information about study aim, rationale, and procedures
- What is expected of your participants (their role in the study)
- Any potential risk or discomfort associated with participation
- Information about anonymity and confidentiality (i.e. about those who will have access to the data)
- The statement: *"If there is an aspect of the study which concerns you, you may make a complaint via...(you/your supervisor)"*.
- The statement *"The Trinity Laban Research Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved the Project"*.
- The statement *"The information (data) collected will be treated as anonymous and confidential. Only the researcher, supervisor and, where necessary, Head of Department/ Programme Leader will have access to it."*
- Contact details for you and, if you are a student, a second contact person (Head of Department/Programme Leader's name and email)

## 2. Consent form

Use the template provided or create your own consent form. The form will be signed and dated by each participant at the time of study participation. If participants are under 18 years, parental consent is also needed.

Please include the following:

- The study title
- Statements relating to participants
  - Agreeing to take part in the study
  - Understanding the nature of the study
  - Awareness of how the data will be used, stored and processed. E.g. stored in password protected computer, deleted after 5 years, etc.
  - Knowledge that they can withdraw from the test without necessarily giving notice or reason
  - Awareness of any risks involved
  - Having read the information sheet
  - Knowledge that anonymity will be preserved unless other agreed arrangements have been made
- Space (and instructions) for participants to print, sign, and date the form.

## 3. Other relevant forms/documents

### 3.1 Medical Screening Questionnaire

If you are planning to run physical tests (e.g., fitness assessments) or similarly out-of-the-ordinary challenging physical activities, you also need to get participants to complete a quick questionnaire assessing potential risks for injury or harm prior to activity. The standard Medical Par Q can be used in most cases (if you are unsure, please seek advice from someone more experienced, such as your supervisor if you are a student). Once a participant has completed the form, be sure to read it before starting testing and make

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sure you know what to do in case of unexpected questionnaire answers. Also check that the relevant forms are signed and dated. For the purposes of ethics applications, you ONLY need to attach your medical screening questionnaire if it is not the standard Medical Par Q but do make sure you describe what you will use in the application form itself.

### **3.2 Questionnaires and preliminary Interview Guides**

If you are planning to ask participants to complete questionnaires or take part in structured/semi-structured interviews as part of your study, please attach these materials to your appendices.

### **3.3 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check**

If your research requires you to be alone with children/young people under the age of 18 and/or vulnerable adults, e.g. with learning or communication difficulties, you will need a DBS check. This takes time (several weeks) to obtain so make sure you clearly establish whether you need one first. If you do, state in your ethics application that you have applied for one or, if you already have one, give the reference number. Your Trinity Laban contact for DBS checks is Pamela Thompson, [p.thompson@trinitylaban.ac.uk](mailto:p.thompson@trinitylaban.ac.uk).

### **3.4 Advertisement for participant recruitment**

If you are advertising for recruitment, please attach your advertisement(s) as an appendix.

## **C) Ethics Approval Procedure**

All Staff and Students should submit their application form using the template provided to the Research Ethics Committee using the **Research Ethics Application Online Submission Portal**, accessed via this LINK: <https://forms.office.com/e/7tbEjEngEq>.

If an Ethics Application forms part of a graded assessment for a taught programme, it must instead be submitted via the relevant Moodle module page by agreement with the Supervisor/ Programme Leader

If your project is cross-institutional your application may be considered by the Conservatoires UK Research Ethics Committee. Please contact the Research Ethics Committee Chair, Professor Jonathan Clark, in the first instance ([j.clark@trinitylaban.ac.uk](mailto:j.clark@trinitylaban.ac.uk)).

The Research Ethics Committee meets in October, December and March and holds extraordinary meetings as and when required. Applications are also considered outside the committee schedule. Please contact the Chair of the Ethics Committee, Professor Jonathan Clark, ([j.clark@trinitylaban.ac.uk](mailto:j.clark@trinitylaban.ac.uk)), and copy to the Secretary of the Committee, Sara Pay ([s.pay@trinitylaban.ac.uk](mailto:s.pay@trinitylaban.ac.uk)).

The Research Ethics Committee will consider your proposal and you will be informed by the Secretary whether your application has been approved; conditionally approved pending amendments; or rejected.

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## D) General Information about Conducting a Study

### 1. Giving Information and Feedback to Participants

For some projects, complete information is provided prior to study participation. If so, you simply need to give participants a chance to ask you questions (before or after the study) and the opportunity to be sent the final report, should they be interested.

In other cases, feedback should be offered to the participants after completion of the study. This might, for instance, be the case where you have not explained everything about your study's aims because it might have biased their answers. Informed consent should always form part of a study; this means providing written (information sheet) and usually also some verbal information prior to the start of any study. Thereafter, participants should complete a consent form. Make sure that you allow time within your study for the giving of information, provision of consent, and for questions. In particular, the obtaining of parental consent can take a long time.

### 2. Anonymity, Confidentiality and Data Storage

All information (data) collected in the study should be kept anonymous and confidential and stored in locked cabinets (hard copies) and password protected computer files. If you feel that your study does not justify anonymity (e.g., if participants wish to be identified), please make this clear throughout the study (in information letters, verbal information, and in your ethics application). It is common practice for scientific research to store data for 3-5 years and then destroying hard copies (e.g., it is a requirement of some journals). For student projects, this means that you will need to discuss your data storage plans with your supervisor.

### 3. Treatment of participants

You need to make it clear to participants that:

- a) their participation is voluntary
- b) they can choose not to answer questions they do not wish to answer (e.g., in questionnaires or interviews)
- c) their data will be treated anonymously and confidentially and that, if published, no data will be identifiable as theirs (unless you have reached an agreement that they wish to be identified)
- d) they can ask for their data to be deleted or redacted
- e) they can ask you questions and ask for a final report if they should wish
- f) they are taking part in a student project (if appropriate).

Misleading participants is normally in conflict with research ethics and you should usually aim for honesty, clarity and transparency. However, if you feel that you have a strong case for doing so then please outline your rationale clearly in the ethics application (Ethical Considerations section), including your post-project feedback strategy.

Please note: Topics that the institution is not confident can be adequately safeguarded will not be given approval, for instance, projects in which students investigate the mental health, trauma or neurodiversity of other students, themselves or external participants. Ethics applications from postgraduate/ research students investigating these themes will be considered, but these projects will not be approved at undergraduate level for research involving human participants.

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## SECTION II: PERFORMANCE ETHICS

### **GUIDANCE**

**Does your project involve research with human participants/subjects whereby data is collected?**

**If YES:** Please complete the 'Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants' form available on the Trinity Laban website and Moodle.

**Does your project involve a performance-based outcome that has the capacity to cause harm?**

**If YES:** Please describe, in the application form provided, the content of your performance / installation / project with focus on any ethical considerations, such as:

- Explicit material (for example, performances involving nudity)
- Material that has potential to cause serious offence to members of the Trinity Laban community (examples might include performances that depict religious or racial groupings in derogatory terms, either deliberately or unintentionally)
- Material that may be unsuitable for viewing by children (for example, the use or depiction of strong language and/or violence in a performance/other project)
- Depiction or action of physical harm on/to yourself or other participants
- Projects that may affect the mental health and/or wellbeing of participants. (Please note: Topics that the institution is not confident can be adequately safeguarded will not be given approval, for instance, projects in which students investigate the mental health, trauma or neurodiversity of other students, themselves or external participants. Ethics applications from postgraduate/ research students investigating these themes will be considered, but these projects will not be approved at undergraduate level for research involving human participants.)
- Any other project or part of a project that, in your judgement, may have ethical implications

The location of the performance/project has no bearing on whether an application is necessary and performances in classroom settings are subject to this process also.

**Please ensure that you also refer any performance / installation / projects with any ethical or health & safety considerations to the relevant Production Team at Trinity Laban (if a performance contains explicit content, for example, signage may be required to warn members of the public).**