

Consent

A session for the  
Central School of  
Speech and Drama  
University Research  
Ethics Committee,  
October 2023

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# Participant information sheet:

## **Participant information medium:**

Potential participants must be given sufficient opportunity to read, watch or listen to the information provided.

The left side of the slide features several abstract geometric shapes. At the top left is a blue circle. Below it are two vertical yellow bars. To the right of these is a large orange semi-circle. Further right is a blue circle. At the bottom left is a green square outline. In the center bottom is a large orange circle. Above it are several yellow curved segments. At the top center is a green triangle outline.

Where potential participants have accepted your invitation to participate in your study based on the 'Participant Information Medium' you provided them, and in light of all relevant information which may affect their decision to take part, and their right to withdraw, they simply need to provide their consent to you.

The left side of the slide features several abstract geometric shapes. At the top left is a blue circle. Below it are two vertical yellow bars. To the right of these is a large orange semi-circle. Further right is a green triangle pointing downwards. Below the orange semi-circle is a blue circle. At the bottom left is a green square. In the center bottom is a large orange circle. Above it are several yellow curved segments.

Consent does not need to be written, and in many circumstances you do not need to collect names of participants. They can be totally anonymous, if they are not identifiable or traceable to anyone, this has to include their identity not being known to the investigators.



**Discussion:**

A collection of colorful geometric shapes including a blue circle, a green triangle, a yellow vertical bar, an orange semi-circle, a blue circle, a green square, and a large orange circle with yellow curved lines, scattered across the left side of the slide.

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Researchers should provide a rationale for seeking and obtaining evidence of consent verbally

Participant information medium itself could be written via advertisements or specific participant information, conveyed to potential participants, or it could also be verbal, or in other non-written mediums.



### **Verbal consent:**

Why is non-written consent and non-written participant information sometimes more appropriate?

Discussion



Why is non-written consent and non-written participant information sometimes more appropriate?

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# More reasons on why verbal consent can sometimes be more appropriate

- Accessibility needs
- Literacy
- Different cultural or political environments
- Risk to potential participant or researcher if evidence of consent is in writing

# When verbal consent can be appropriate

- Individual and group or community consent
- Assent from children
- Where requests for signatures or completion of consent forms may cause suspicion, fear, or distrust

Some ethnographic studies or knowledge exchange activity

# When written consent may not be possible:

Online or telephone consent, where a signature is not possible

Where there is an emergency or short time period (this should not be used for lack of planning)

audio recording of the consent obtained, consider whether you need to collect this data though, and you will need consent to audio record. May be suitable if the interview for example itself is being recorded.

Potential 'elite' participants in research: University of Oxford define this as:

## **University of Oxford's Informed Consent website:**

[https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/resources/consent:](https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/resources/consent)

*Prominent or 'elite' public figures could range from senior government officials, Chief Executives of large companies and community leaders, to individuals famous for their activities in academia, the arts or sport. 'Expert' participants may be individuals chosen by virtue of their role or expertise (e.g. editors of national newspapers, high court judges, heads of NGOs, tax lawyers, top-level managers). Anyone who is responsible for and has privileged access to the knowledge of specific groups of people or decision-making processes can be seen as an expert.*

In some cases, oral consent may be preferable.

Consent received from school authorities for research or KE activity which is part of the usual routine or class , guardians/parents/carers consent or child assent

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Verbal or non written obtaining of consent in light of participant information will depend on how you encounter the potential participants, i.e. Online, face-to-face, location, telephone etc.

The participant must be given a reasonable amount of time between the giving of information to consider whether they wish to participate, including time to ask questions beforehand.



The amount of time seen as necessary would depend on the project design, level and type of ethical implications or risks, complexity and length or stages of project, and the participant cohort needs themselves.





Researchers should:

- Keep a record of how the consent was obtained, a record or transcript or other medium of how the participant information was conveyed.
- How consent was obtained, by whom, anonymous or known participant details, date and time consent was obtained, medium used to obtain consent (i.e. telephone).



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Researchers should  
(2):

- Have a transcript of the consent interaction

Sometimes a witness is used when gaining verbal consent, this must be somebody independent and isn't always feasible or desirable.

# Researchers should provide to Research Ethics Committees (RECs):

- A rationale to the REC on why non written consent is preferable and perhaps even more ethically sound

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Transcripts (including translations) to be used to obtain consent, methods, any specific consent for recording or quotations or consent to be contacted for future research, that they understand the information provided to them, have had a reasonable time to agree and are aware they can withdraw etc.

- Participant facing materials in whichever medium

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# Importantly:

- consent must be opt-in; opt-out consent is not acceptable.

# Consent must be appropriate:

- Any consent process and medium must be appropriate for the particular participant to reasonably understand what is being conveyed.





Consent is an ongoing process:

- Consent is an ongoing process, however it is received.
- Withdrawal of consent can also be non-written and should be noted and a record retained in the same manner as when obtaining consent.

# The content and context of consent:

- It is the content and context of providing clear understandable information that is more important than the medium of how that consent is obtained/recorded or evidenced.

# Resources used for this presentation:

- UKRI Consent <https://www.ukri.org/councils/esrc/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics-guidance/consent/>
- UCL's Guidance Note 2: The Ethics of Research Related to Healthcare in Developing Countries [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research-ethics/sites/research\\_ethics/files/guidance2.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research-ethics/sites/research_ethics/files/guidance2.pdf)
- University of Oxford's Informed Consent website: <https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/resources/consent>

# ESRC Case study:

- Case study: surveying protestors
- Caught in the act of protest
- Dr Clare Saunders

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20210901140218/https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/ethics-case-studies/case-study-surveying-protestors/>

Verbal participant information provided.

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Discussion: Could consent have also been obtained verbally?