

3.1 Participant information sheet

Source. Adapted from Conservatoires UK (2019). *Research Ethics*, <http://www.conservatoiresuk.ac.uk/research-ethics> (accessed June 1, 2020). © 2019 Conservatoires UK, used by permission.

Title of project

The title of your research should be self-explanatory. If it is not, provide a simplified title.

Date

Invitation paragraph

You should start by inviting the reader to take part in your research, having chosen to do so on the basis of what they are about to read. You could use or adapt the following paragraph in your participant information sheet:

You are being invited to take part in my research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. You will be given this information sheet to keep. Thank you for reading this.

Project

Next, you must tell the reader about the aim(s) of your research. You should outline the broad methodological approach you are taking and specify the research methods you are using. If you intend to audio- or video-record participants, say so here, and tell the reader that they can refuse consent to be recorded and for the recordings to be played when you come to report the research.

Characteristics of participants

You should say why you have asked this reader, in particular, to take part in your research, and how many other participants will be involved.

Voluntary participation

You must state that participation in your research is entirely voluntary and that if the reader does not want to take part or changes their mind having agreed to do so, they will not be penalized in any way. You could use or adapt the following paragraph in your participant information sheet:

It is up to you to decide if you want to take part in this research or not. If you do not want to take part, or if you change your mind about taking part having agreed to do so, you will not be penalized in any way. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. Even if you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. You can withdraw either by physically leaving and/or by withdrawing consent for me to use whatever contribution you have already made to the research. Again, you will not be penalized in any way.

Nature of participation

You must state how long the research is going to last, how often participants will be required, and for how long each time. You must say what you will ask them to do on each occasion. Be as specific as possible: give dates, times, and places where possible.

Lifestyle restrictions

You should say if participants are likely to experience any restrictions to their lifestyle as a result of taking part in your project and what these will be. Or, if they are *not* likely to experience any lifestyle restrictions, please include a sentence saying so here.

Potential risks to participants

You must state if participants are at any risk of being harmed, shocked, or offended by your research. If unforeseen risks arise during the course of your research, remember that you will need to bring these to the attention of participants and ensure that you have their informed consent to continue taking part. If there are no foreseeable risks, please include a sentence saying so here.

Potential benefits to participants

You must tell the reader if they can reasonably expect to experience any benefits associated with taking part in the project, but without exaggeration, since this could be seen as coercive or, by raising participants' expectations, have a direct effect on your research results. If no benefit to participants is intended, however, please say so. You could use and complete the following sentence in your participant information sheet:

While people taking part in my project are unlikely to experience any personal benefits as a result, I hope my research will...

Possible termination of research

You should say that, if your project has to be terminated for any reason and participants (and the contributions they have made) are no longer required for the research, they will be told, and told why.

Confidentiality and anonymity

You are responsible for ensuring that you are not contravening any legal or regulatory requirements when you collect, store, and disseminate data about or from participants. You must tell the reader that if they agree to take part in your research you will ask them to sign a form in which they give informed consent to do so that they will be given to keep. This will give you permission for you to collect information about them and provided by them, *for the purposes of the present research only*. Information about participants should be kept strictly confidential. Information from participants will only be attributed to them by name with their explicit permission. You could include the following sentences in your participant information sheet:

Information that is collected about you, for the purposes of the research, will be kept strictly confidential. Information you provide will only be attributed to you by name with your explicit permission.

If there are any circumstances in which you are not be able to offer full confidentiality, for example if a disclosure in the research could lead to a safeguarding concern, you should make clear to participants the process that would be followed.

Storing personal data and information

You are responsible for storing participants' personal data and any information they provide securely and destroying it after a specified period (see *Performing Music Research*, Box 4.4). You could include the following sentences in your participant information sheet:

Your personal data and any information that you provide for the purposes of the research will be stored securely as follows: for years. If I wish to re-use it within this time period, I will seek your permission to do so. At the end of the period, it will be destroyed.

Outputs

You should say how you will use the contribution that participants make to your research, with whom you will share it, and in what form (e.g. in a conference presentation, dissertation or thesis, report, journal article, or book).

Ethical approval

You must state which research ethics committee has reviewed your research and granted ethical approval for it to be carried out.

Contact details

Please provide your contact details—name, institutional affiliation, email address, telephone number—as well as those of your supervisor(s), line manager(s), co-researcher(s), or head of department, as appropriate.

Thank you

Thank the reader for reading to the end of the participant information sheet.