

SAMPLE INFORMATION SHEET

Create your own Information Sheet for your participants. The following gives you an idea of how to set out the information and also what particular ethics information is mandatory on a Participant Information Sheet.

Use language that is easily understood, check spelling and grammar.

In the Information Sheet, the researcher is talking to potential participants, so it should be worded as “you”, not “the participant”.

Researchers must use the current Southern Cross University letterhead

Name of project – this could also be placed in the Introductory paragraph!

Introduction: – how do I introduce myself and my research project to my participants?

Example for students:

My name is I am conducting research about ABC as part of my Honours (or Masters or PhD) degree in Psychology (or relevant discipline) at Southern Cross University, under the supervision of Professor (or Dr) XX ...

Example for SCU staff conducting research:

My name is and with my colleagues X, Y and Z, we are conducting research that will explore ABC.....

State how you have selected your participants, *for example:*

I am inviting all Staff and students at Southern Cross University to participate in this study.

Or

To be eligible to participate in this research, you must be 18 or above and regularly play completion sports (or whatever the description is of the participants you are seeking.

Or

If you are 18 and over and are interested in X, Y or Z, I invite you to participate in this research

What is this research?

Describe the research, (provide a brief, understandable statement on what is hoped to be achieved by the research) For example: The aim of this research is to ... (e.g., explore what factors encourage or prevent older people joining a walking group; or ... understand what motivates young people to volunteer their time to protect the environment; or whatever is relevant for your research)

Any expected benefits to the wider community.

What does this research involve? (i.e., describe the methods of the research project) (for example),

This research involves the completion of an anonymous on-line survey (or questionnaire) that should take about 20 minutes to complete.

OR.

This research involves an experiment to do X, Y, Z; it will be conducted in the XX Laboratory at the Coffs Harbour (or Lismore or Gold Coast) campus of Southern Cross University.

OR

This research involves face-to-face (or telephone or Zoom) interviews that will take approximately one hour

OR.

This research involves face-to-face focus groups that will take place at a location convenient to participants .

What are the risks associate with this research?

Clearly state what the risks associated with participation in the research are. (Note: There is no such thing as risk-free research. A participant could become distressed by questions which the researcher thinks would not distress anyone. Consider what the potential risks could be.)

What is the relative likelihood of the risk occurring? (It is acceptable to say, It is unlikely that these questions would cause distress)

How will the risks be minimised (what steps could you take to reduce the likelihood that the identified risks will occur) and managed (what processes will you have in place to manage the risk if it does occur?, for example: “If you become uncomfortable or distressed at any time, please stop immediately. If you need support, please contact (SCU staff and students can be directed to SCU Counselling; other participants can contact an appropriate free counselling service, such as Lifeline or Beyond Blue. Some organisations, such as schools or hospitals, may have counsellors available to their staff or students); provide phone numbers.

My responsibilities to my participants.

How their privacy and confidentiality will be protected.

Any payments to participants: (Note, these may be to cover travel costs, or gift certificates as a thank you for the person’s time, but they must not be so much that they would constitute an inducement to participate in the research).

Any other provisions for them, such as, morning/afternoon tea/lunch.

Your responsibilities for this research (you are telling the participant what is expected of them)..

Tell them what will be required of them to participate in this research. Include details such as, their participation is voluntary; that they should stop immediately if they become distressed (e.g., when completing a survey); or inform you if they wish to leave the research (if they are being interviewed or participating in a focus group or experiment).

The likelihood and form of dissemination of the research results, including publication.

(If the results of this research are to be published, the participant should be aware of this), e.g. “The results of this study may be published in a peer-reviewed journal and presented at conferences, but only group data will be reported”.

Include details about the security and storage of the research material. In general, the minimum recommended retention period of five years from the date of publication applies to University research material. The standard statement is: All data collected in this project will be stored safely and securely at Southern Cross University for a minimum of 5 years after publication.

Please refer to Section 2.1 of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research for other retention periods for specific types of research, e.g., clinical trials.

Participant’s Consent

Provide detail of what consent is necessary and how it will be given for this research project, e.g.

if the research involves an anonymous questionnaire being returned to the researcher, then consent is implied by the return of the questionnaire. Therefore, a consent form is NOT necessary.

If the participant is required to return the consent form, then the researcher should explain how to do that. e.g. Please complete, sign and return the consent form to (your email address). Once it is received I will contact you to make an appointment for the interview (or focus group or experiment).

Inquiries

Provide detail of how participants can make further inquiries about the research. Include the Researcher contact details and the Supervisor contact details.

It is preferable to use SCU telephone details, if possible, rather than mobile phone numbers.

Feedback

All participants are entitled to feedback from the study. This should be more than just advising them that the results will be part of a Thesis that will be available 'at some later stage' in the SCU Library. Where possible, participants should be offered the option of receiving a summary of the results by email or mail and provision for that option should be included where appropriate, for example, on the Consent Form.

Say "If you would like a summary of the research when it is completed, please provide your email address where indicated at the bottom of the Consent Form."

For anonymous surveys, say "If you would like a summary of the research when it is completed, please email the researcher at (your email address). (Note: For on-line surveys, such as Qualtrics, participants can click on a link at the bottom of the survey which will take them to a separate page where they can leave their contact details. This must NOT be on the actual survey, or it is no longer anonymous.)"

(include the following statement about ethics approval; a heading is not necessary)

This research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Southern Cross University. The approval number is ECN-??-???

THE FOLLOWING IS MANDATORY INFORMATION THAT MUST BE INCLUDED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE INFORMATION SHEET

Complaints about the research/researchers

*If you have concerns about the **ethical conduct** of this research or the researchers, write to the following:*

*The Ethics Complaints
Officer Southern Cross
University
PO Box 157
Lismore NSW 2480
Email: ethics.lismore@scu.edu.au*

All information is confidential and will be handled as soon as possible.