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FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Personal Information Impact Assessment
Research
(REC 20.0)

Section 1: Application Details		
1.1	Research Proposal Title	
1.2	Department	Choose
1.3	Research Type	Qualification ◯ Non-qualification ◯ External ◯
1.4	Student/Researcher First Name List all names for group projects	
1.5	Student/Researcher Last Name List all names for group projects	
1.6	Student/Staff Number List all numbers for group projects	
1.7	Supervisor Initials & Last Name	
1.8	Co-supervisor(s) Initials & Last Name	
1.9	Proposal Version	

Section 2: Applicability		
2.1	Does this research involve the processing[1] of personal information?[2]	Yes ◯ No ◯
	1 All activities that involve identifiable personal information – from collection to destruction. 2 Any information that relates to an identifiable, living individual or an identifiable, existing juristic person (i.e. company or other organisation). Please see notes about whether research data contains identifiable information at the end of this document for further guidance in answering 2.1.	
↳	If the answer is [No], please provide an explanation below of (i) how the research data have been de-identified or (ii) how the research data have been collected without identifiers (also explain how it is not possible to re-identify the research data in either case).	
↳	If the answer is [Yes], please complete sections 3 –11.	

**Boxed terms are defined at the end of the document.*

Section 3: Inherent Risk Assessment		
3.1	Will the research participants include children (minors), or will the research involve special personal information? Help	Yes ◯ No ◯
3.2	Will the research involve processing of personal information on a large scale?	Yes ◯ No ◯
3.3	Will the research involve the evaluation or scoring of Personal Information to make automated decisions (no human involvement in the decision) with legal consequences or that will have a significant effect on research participants?	Yes ◯ No ◯
3.4	Will the research involve processing where researchers are getting research participants' personal Information from sources other than the research participant themselves?	Yes ◯ No ◯
3.5	Will the personal information of research participants be disclosed to third parties?	Yes ◯ No ◯

3.6	Are any people or organisations that will have access to the personal Information located in another country?	Yes ○ No ○
3.7	Will unique identifiers be used to link, combine, compare, or match personal Information from multiple sources?	Yes ○ No ○
3.8	Does the research involve the use of new technology or technology that is, or might be, perceived by individuals as intrusive on their privacy?	Yes ○ No ○
3.9	Would the processing of personal information contemplated by the researchers be outside of the reasonable expectations of the individuals?	Yes ○ No ○
3.10	Will the research involve contacting or interacting with individuals in ways they might find intrusive?	Yes ○ No ○
↳	If the answer to any of the above questions is [Yes], the research must be classified as high risk (see section 4 below).	

Section 4: Risk Classification		
4.1	Risk category (based on sec. 3 above, this will be populated automatically).	Undetermined

Section 5: Self-assessment | Processing Limitation		
5.1 Minimality		
5.1.1	Is it necessary to collect all the (proposed) personal information? Help	Yes ○ No ○
5.1.2	Is there a less intrusive way to process the personal information (is it possible to pseudonymise the information)? Help	Yes ○ No ○
↳	If the answer to 5.1.2 is [No], please give a short explanation in the box below (5.1.3).	
5.1.3		
5.2 Legal Justification		
5.2.1	Will the participants be asked for POPIA consent?	Yes ○ No ○
↳	If the answer to 5.2.1 is [Yes], please answer 5.2.2.	
5.2.2	Is there a separate POPIA information letter and consent form attached to the research proposal/protocol?	Yes ○ No ○
↳	If the answer to 5.2.1 is [No], please answer 5.2.3 - 5.2.10. Help	
5.2.3	If the research involves children, will the parent or guardian of each child participant be asked for POPIA consent?	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
5.2.4	Is the research required by law?	Yes ○ No ○
5.2.5	Is the research conducted by a public body performing a public law duty?	Yes ○ No ○
5.2.6	Is the research in the legitimate interest[3] of the responsible party, of a third party to whom the personal information is supplied, or of the research participants?	Yes ○ No ○
5.2.7	If the research is high risk, is the research in the public interest? Help	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
5.2.8	If the research is high risk, is it impossible, or would it require a disproportionate effort to get POPIA consent? Help	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
5.2.9	If the research is high risk, has the research participant deliberately made the personal Information public?	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
5.2.10	If the research involves children, has the child made the personal information public deliberately with the POPIA consent of a competent person?	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
	3 In general, if the responsible party, research participants or a third party benefit from the research then an argument can be made for legal justification on the grounds of a legitimate interest.	

Section 6: Self-assessment | Purpose Specification		
6.1 Document the Purpose of the Research		
↳	Confirm if any of the following are being collected (are these documented in the research proposal?):	
6.1.1	Information relating to the race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, national, ethnic, or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental health, well-being, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language or birth of the participant.	Yes ○ No ○
6.1.2	Information relating to the education or the medical, financial, criminal or employment history of the person.	Yes ○ No ○
6.1.3	Any identifying number, symbol, email address, physical address, telephone number, location information, online identifier or another particular assignment to the participant.	Yes ○ No ○
6.1.4	Correspondence sent by an identifiable participant that is implicitly or explicitly of a private or confidential nature or further correspondence that would reveal the contents of the original correspondence.	Yes ○ No ○
↳	Are the following documented in the research proposal/protocol?	
6.1.5	The aim and objectives for collecting/processing the above personal information?	Yes ○ No ○
6.1.6	The number or participants and how they will be recruited and contacted?	Yes ○ No ○
6.1.7	How the personal information will be collected and stored?	Yes ○ No ○
6.1.8	If the personal information will be shared, with whom and how?	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
6.1.9	Whether any new or innovative technology will be used to process the personal information?	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
6.2 Retention & Restriction of Records		
↳	Are the following documented in the research proposal/protocol?	
6.2.1	The retention period for personal information?	Yes ○ No ○
6.2.2	A justification for the retention period (i.e. the reason why personal information must be retained for a specific period of time, particularly if this time extends beyond immediate use for the proposed research)?	Yes ○ No ○
6.2.3	If personal information must be retained beyond the period of immediate use for research, will it be pseudonymised?	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
6.2.4	If personal information must be retained beyond the period of immediate use for research, access is restricted to people requiring this for the purpose of the retention?	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
6.2.5	How the personal information will be destroyed (in a way that prevents re-identification)?	Yes ○ No ○

Section 7: Self-assessment | Further Processing Limitation (Secondary Use of Personal Information)		
7.1	Will there be further processing of personal information? Help	Yes ○ No ○
↳	If the answer to 7.1 is [Yes], please complete 7.2 – 7.10.	
7.2	Will the personal information used for further processing be pseudonymised?	Yes ○ No ○
7.3	If it is special personal information, does the research serve a public interest and is the information necessary for that purpose?	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
7.4	If it is special personal information, would it involve disproportionate effort or be impossible to obtain POPIA consent for further processing?	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
7.5	If it is special personal information of children, can the researcher(s) ensure that further processing will not adversely affect the privacy of the children concerned.	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
7.6	Is the purpose for which the personal information is being used (i.e. secondary use) different from the original purpose?	Yes ○ No ○

↳	If the answer to 7.6 was [Yes], are the following described in the research proposal/protocol?	
7.7	The circumstances under which the original data was collected and the information that was disclosed to the original participants regarding the purpose of the original research.	Yes ○ No ○
7.8	Measures to be taken to ensure that no identifiable data is disclosed.	Yes ○ No ○
7.9	If POPIA consent is going to be obtained for further processing, how information about the research will be communicated to the original participants and how their consent will be obtained.	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
7.10	Whether the researcher(s) have (or will be obtaining) gatekeeper permission (in writing) from the responsible party who initially collected the information to be used for further processing.	Yes ○ No ○

Section 8: Self-assessment | Information Quality		
↳	Are the following described in the research proposal, where necessary?	
8.1	The source of the personal information and the extent to which it can be considered accurate and reliable (including information about this where applicable).	Yes ○ No ○
8.2	The use of data quality reviews where appropriate, including the methodology used in the data quality review(s) or any reasons why data quality reviews were not done.	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
8.3	Whether research participants have or will be granted access to their own personal information (and if this is not the case, the reason(s) for not granting access).	Yes ○ No ○
8.4	How personal information quality is managed (i.e. is it under central management with copies allowed only under specific conditions).	Yes ○ No ○
8.5	If the research involves a questionnaire, steps that have been taken to enhance accuracy of the questions. Help	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
8.6	Steps that have been taken to minimise the risk of bias that may be present in personal information to be used for further processing.	Yes ○ No ○

Section 9: Self-assessment | Security Safeguards		
↳	Are the following described in the research proposal, where necessary?	
9.1	Risk-appropriate measures in place to address (i) access control and authentication, (ii) communication security, (iii) use of mobile devices, home networks and removable media, (iii) physical security (for hard copies of data) and redundancy (backup strategy) for personal information.	Yes ○ No ○
9.2	Details about the implementation of pseudonymisation, including any justification of not using pseudonymisation for high risk personal information.	Yes ○ No ○
9.3	Use of restricted environments for the processing of high risk personal information.	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
9.4	A security compromise incident reporting and response procedure.	Yes ○ No ○
9.5	Steps that participants can take to (i) withdraw POPIA consent and (ii) access their own personal information (if applicable – if not, what the reason is for not being able to access their personal information).	Yes ○ No ○

Section 10: Self-assessment | Transborder Information Flows		
10.1	Will the research involve transborder personal information flows (from South Africa to another country)?	Yes ○ No ○
↳	If the answer to 10.1 is [Yes], please complete 10.2 – 10.4 (are the following described in the research proposal/protocol)?	
10.2	The nature and type of transborder information flows applicable to the research.	Yes ○ No ○
10.3	Any agreements that must be in place, where applicable (if necessary, these agreements must be concluded at the time of research proposal/protocol approval).	Yes ○ No ○ N/A ○
10.4	What level of legal protection is in place for transborder information flows from South Africa to another country.	Yes ○ No ○

Section 11: Self-assessment | Prior Authorisation		
11.1	Will the research involve processing of any unique identifiers for a purpose other than the one that the identifier was intended when collected and will these identifiers be used to link information processed by another responsible party together?	Yes ○ No ○
11.2	Will the research process information on criminal behaviour, unlawful or objectionable conduct on behalf of third parties?	Yes ○ No ○
11.3	Will the research transfer special personal information or the personal information of children to a third party in a foreign country that does not provide an adequate level of protection for the processing of personal information (i.e. the same level as POPIA).	Yes ○ No ○
↳	If the answer to 11.1 or 11.2 or 11.3 is [Yes], please complete 11.4 – 11.5 (are the following described in the research proposal/protocol)?	
11.4	The need for prior authorisation from the information regulator?	Yes ○ No ○
11.5	A description of how and when prior authorisation will be obtained and a statement that no data collection will commence until prior authorisation is in place.	Yes ○ No ○

Validate

Please validate this form by clicking the [Validate] button to the left **before the form is signed (below).** The results of validation will be displayed below this text box. If errors exist in the form, these will be highlighted in an error message and should be corrected, followed by re-validation (clicking the button again). Only validated forms (where the validation outcome is "Validated") should be signed. **Only signed and validated forms will be accepted when uploaded to the REC SharePoint site (unsigned/unvalidated forms will be returned).**

Validation Outcome: Not Validated

Section 12: Signatures		
12.1	Title, Initial and Surname of Supervisor/Researcher	Date
12.2	Signature of Supervisor/Researcher	
		Help - How to Sign

Self-Assessment Guide

The following self-assessment guide is additional information that is provided to assist researchers in interpreting the responses above to (i) offer more guidance in the POPIA compliance process and (ii) outline further detail that may be needed in the research proposal, as applicable.

Sections 3 and 4

a) The relevance of classifying research as high risk is that the POPIA specifies certain things that need to be done if this is the case. These are:
   - The REC needs to confirm that a PIIA (as contained in this document) has been done.
   - The REC must ask researchers to confirm periodically that they have implemented the measures described in the research proposal to protect personal information.
   - The REC must ensure that the personal information is pseudonymised unless there is a compelling reason why it is not feasible or appropriate.

Section 5

a) It is important that, if consent to collect and process personal information – what is sometimes referred to as 'POPIA consent' – is feasible, this information and consent is completely separate from consent to participate in the research. Please use the REC 19.0 form as a template for POPIA consent and the REC 11.0 form as a template for research consent. Both must be attached to the research proposal as separate annexures if personal information is being collected and processed.

b) POPIA consent is considered the default legal justification. A compelling reason and another valid legal justification must be given in the research proposal (and indicated in 5.2) if the answer to 5.2.1 is [No].

c) In 5.2.4 – 5.2.7, for any options selected as [Yes] a supporting explanation must be given in the research proposal.

d) In 5.2.8 – 5.2.10, please explain the relevant details in the research proposal and provide any supporting evidence required. In particular, the reason why POPIA consent cannot be obtained for high-risk research must be clearly and fully explained.

Section 6

a) In 6.1.1 – 6.1.4, justification for collection of any of these variables must be given in the research proposal. A clear argument must be made for the necessity of their inclusion. If any of the variables relate to the theoretical framework or background of the proposed research, this must be explained in the literature review and supported by the citation of appropriate references.
b) In 6.1.5 – 6.1.9, if any of the responses is [No] on initial impact assessment the research proposal must be revised so that all responses are [Yes] by the time of application for ethical clearance.
c) In 6.2.1 – 6.2.5, if any of the responses is [No] on initial impact assessment the research proposal must be revised so that all responses are [Yes] by the time of application for ethical clearance.

Section 7

a) If the answer to 7.2 is [No], this must be explained in the research proposal.
b) For 7.3 – 7.5, please ensure that there is adequate supporting explanation of any [Yes] responses in the research proposal.
c) For 7.7 – 7.10, please ensure that there is adequate supporting explanation of any [Yes] responses in the research proposal.

Section 8

a) For 8.1 – 8.6, please ensure that there is adequate supporting explanation of any [Yes] responses in the research proposal. If any of the responses is [No] on initial impact assessment the research proposal must be revised so that all responses are [Yes] by the time of application for ethical clearance.

Section 9

a) For 9.1 please ensure that all of the sub-items are explained in the research proposal or, if they are not, why they are not applicable.
b) For 9.2 please clearly explain and justify why pseudonymisation is not done if this is the case.
b) For 9.3 – 9.5 please ensure that explanations are given in the research proposal for [Yes] responses. If any of the responses is [No] on initial impact assessment the research proposal must be revised so that all responses are [Yes] by the time of application for ethical clearance.

Section 10

a) If transborder personal information flows are applicable, please ensure that all of the information required by 10.2 – 10.4 is clearly explained in the research proposal. If any of the responses is [No] on initial impact assessment the research proposal must be revised so that all responses are [Yes] by the time of application for ethical clearance.

Section 11

a) If any of the requirements for prior authorisation are met (11.1 – 11.3) there must be an acknowledgement in the research protocol/proposal that prior authorisation is required and a description of how and when this will be done (this is done by application to the information regulator).
b) There must also be an acknowledgement that no data collection will start until prior authorisation has been obtained in writing from the information regulator.
c) Prior authorisation is a significant compliance matter – processing personal information where prior authorisation is required without the latter is an offence in terms of s59 of the POPIA.

Definitions

1. **Special Personal Information**: Examples:
- *Religious and philosophical beliefs*: e.g., church membership, climate change denialism or ethical veganism.
- *Race or ethnic origin*: e.g., membership to a population group, culture, ancestry, territorial possession, language, or forms of dress.
- *Trade union membership*.
- *Political persuasion*: e.g., membership to a political party, political opinions or voting records.
- *Health*: e.g., any information on physical or mental injury, disease, disability or disease risk, including medical history, medical opinions, diagnosis and clinical treatment; medical examination data, test results, data from medical devices, or data from fitness trackers; information collected from a research participant when they register for health services or access treatment; any appointment details, reminders and invoices which reveal the health status of a research participant; any other information or behaviour that reveals a past, present or future physical or mental health status; administrative documents that reveal health status such as medical certificates, forms concerning sick leave or the reimbursement of medical expenses; inherited characteristics or genetic data.
- *Sex life*: e.g., information about a research participant's sexual activity, relationships, sexual orientation, or sexual proclivities.
- *Biometric information*: the information that results from specific technical processing relating to the physical, physiological, or behavioural characteristics of a research participant, such as facial images or dactyloscopic or genetic data when it is linked with other personal information to identify a data subject.
- *Criminal behaviour*: information from a data subject relating to the alleged commission of an offence or proceedings relating to an alleged offence. (criminal convictions).
- Any information from a child (a data subject < 18 years of age) is special personal information.

2. **Further Processing**: Reusing personal information for a purpose other than the original purpose it was processed for.
3. **Large Scale**: Processing is considered on a large scale if:
- Many research participants are involved; or
- A large proportion of a population is involved; or
- A large volume of personal information will be collected (even if there are only a few research participants); or
- the processing will take place over a long period (e.g., longer than the average research activity).

4. **Third Parties**: People or organisations that have not previously had access to the personal information (including external collaborators, funders, service or system providers, and cloud hosting services).
5. **Public Interest**: If the research process or outcome widely and generally benefits the public at large or a group, community or specific population (as opposed to a few individuals or a single entity).
6. **Competent Person**: A person with parental responsibilities in terms of the Children's Act 38 of 2005.
7. **Responsible Party**: A public or private body or any other person which, alone or in conjunction with others, determines the purpose of and means for processing personal information.

Notes on Personal Information

The POPIA only applies to identifiable personal information (according to s6(b) of the Act it does not apply to personal information "*that has been de-identified to the extent that it cannot be re-identified again*"). To de-identify personal information means (from s1 of the Act):

> *"to delete any information that— (a) identifies the data subject; (b) can be used or manipulated by a reasonably foreseeable method to identify the data subject; or (c) can be linked by a reasonably foreseeable method to other information that identifies the data subject."*

The term "de-identify" implies that the information was identifiable at the start. However, quite often in research, researchers purposefully do not collect any identifiers from participants. The same test would apply in this case – the Act would not apply to information that, from the point of collection, does not contain any information as specified above (subsections (a) – (c)). Please note that, even if a researcher is situated outside South Africa and research data is being collected outside South Africa, POPIA compliance is required if the researcher is a student registered at UJ or a staff member or post-doctoral research fellow at UJ.