**SAMPLE ANSWERS TO ETHICS APPLICATION: SURVEYS**

**by Simon Moss**

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| **Introduction** |

**Application forms for research candidates at CDU**

For projects that include human participants or animals, CDU research candidates will need to submit an ethics application. This application is designed to assess the extent to which the benefits of your research outweigh the risks.

* For projects that include human participants, visit www.cdu.edu.au/research/ori/human-ethics and read *submission of new proposals*
* For projects that include animals, visit www.cdu.edu.au/research/ori/animal-ethics and read *all forms and documents*

**Application forms for research candidates at Menzies**

For projects that include human participants or animals, Menzies research candidates complete a slightly different ethics application. For more information, visit

* www.menzies.edu.au/page/Research/Ethics\_approval/

**Sample answers**

The CDU ethics application includes 14 main sections. This document illustrates some typical answers whenever the research entails administering surveys or questionnaires. These answers could help you formulate your own responses to the various questions. Nevertheless, you still need to think carefully about your answers, because every project raises distinct ethical challenges.

The Menzies ethics application is slightly different. Nevertheless, many of the answers in this document are relevant to research students at Menzies as well.

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| **Preliminary questions and Question 1** |

**Question 1d. Approval of project**

* This project was presented at a College seminar. A panel was organized after the seminar to discuss potential amendments and improvements
* This project was approved during my confirmation of candidature
* The project was reviewed and commended by the panel of reviewers who evaluate ARC grants.

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| **Question 2: Research categories** |

For many surveys, tick

* 2a Healthy members of the community
* 2b Adults
* 2c Anonymous questionnaires or surveys
* 2e Payment of money or offering rewards including prizes

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| **Question 4: Description of the project** |

This study explores some university practices and individual characteristics that influence the productivity, innovation, and wellbeing of research students. In particular, this study will ascertain which university practices, policies, and procedures enhance the degree to which individuals experience clarity about their future career prospects—a feeling that is hypothesized to foster productivity, innovation, and wellbeing.

To explore this topic, approximately 200 participants will complete an online survey or paper survey. To distribute the survey, we will utilize websites in which participants complete short jobs, and we will invite managers to distribute this survey to employees and members. The survey can be completed within about 15 minutes and includes questions about university policies as well as validated measures that assess clarity about future career prospects, motivation at university, creativity, and mood. The data will be subjected to multiple regression and structural equation modelling.

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| **Question 5: Aims and significance of the project** |

**Limitations of past research**

Many studies have explored the practices of universities and the characteristics of individuals that affect the productivity, innovation, and wellbeing of research students. Nevertheless, past research has not examined how the practices of individuals can promote these benefits. This research explores how one practice—an intervention that clarifies the future career prospects of individuals—could improve the productivity, innovation, and wellbeing of research students.

**Aims and hypotheses**

The aim of this study is to explore whether clarity about future prospects could promote the productivity, innovation, and wellbeing of research students. Furthermore, this study explores which university practices, policies, and procedures are related to this clarity. The hypothesis is that

* clarity about future prospects should be positively associated with productivity, innovation, and wellbeing of research students
* internships increases clarify of future prospects

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| **Question 6: Locations** |

**If online**

Participants will complete the survey online, in a location of their choice. They will be encouraged, however, to complete the survey in a quiet location in which they are unlikely to be disturbed.

**If completed on paper**

Participants will can complete the survey at any time, in a location of their choice. They will be encouraged, however, to complete the survey in a quiet location in which they are unlikely to be disturbed.

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| **Question 7: Research methods** |

**Question 7a for online surveys**

Participants will complete a survey online. The survey will begin with a plain language statement. If participants agree to continue, the rest of this survey will appear. Attachment A presents the plain language statement and the survey questions.

Specifically, participants will be instructed to copy and paste a URL into their browser. This action will initiate the plain language statement and survey. Each survey can be completed within about 15 minutes.

**Question 7a for surveys on paper**

Participants will complete a survey on paper. The survey will begin with a plain language statement. If participants agree to continue, they will be instructed to continue to complete the rest of this survey. Attachment A presents the plain language statement and the survey questions. Each survey can be completed within about 15 minutes.

**Question 7b: Indicative questions**

A representative sample of questions include

* What is the highest level of education you completed?
* To what extent do these words describe you? Sociable. Anxious. Ambitious. Sympathetic. Conventional
* To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements about various issues. I believe that capital punishment is sometimes appropriate

Attachment B presents all the questions.

**Question 7c: Qualifications of individual members**

Dr Adam Adams, the primary investigator, has accrued many years of experience in this discipline: sociology. He has worked in academia for 5 years, and has worked in a range of organizations, including Red Cross.

Dr Betty Betts, one of the associate investigators, has utilized similar methods in other research projects, such as constructing and administering online surveys as well as analysing the survey data.

**Question 7d. External service providers**

We will not utilize any external service providers. However, we will utilize two websites, called MTurk and Micro-workers respectively, to recruit participants. Nevertheless, no individuals who work at MTurk or Microworkers can access the data or contribute to the study. These organizations have merely constructed a website that people can utilize to promote their study and pay participants.

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| **Question 8: Research methods** |

**8a. Describe the potential participants: Online surveys**

All participants will be users of MTurk and Microworkers—websites in which individuals complete small tasks or jobs, such as complete surveys, proofread documents, and evaluate websites, to receive small payments. These websites generate several benefits. First, the sample is generally or largely unbiased: Relative to internet users in general, users of these websites generate similar properties on many characteristics. Second, many participants can be recruited inexpensively from a diversity of nations.

Participants will be 18 years of age or older, residents of nations in which English is the official language, and employed for at least one day a week. Consistent with the recommendation of a power analysis and previous research on this topic, the sample size will be approximately 200 participants.

**8a. Describe the potential participants: Surveys on paper**

Participants will be 18 years of age or older, residents of nations in which English is the official language, and employed for at least one day a week. Consistent with the recommendation of a power analysis and previous research on this topic, the sample size will be approximately 200 participants.

**8a.1. Rationale for the selection of participants**

The questions and theories we want to assess a more germane to adults only. The scales have been validated in English, and hence the survey was written in English only to circumvent some of the problems that translation can present. Because some of the questions revolve around experiences in workplaces, participants need to be employed.

**8a.2. Recruitment: Online surveys**

Users of MTurk or Microworkers receive a catalogue of potential jobs, and then choose the job they would like to complete. In this catalogue will be a reference to this survey, entitled "How to inspire research students?". After they click this option, participants will be instructed this survey is suitable to anyone 18 years of age or over, who speaks English fluently, and works at least one day a week. To continue, they will be instructed to copy and paste a URL to open the plain language statement and survey.

MTurk and Microworkers can be used to confine the users to a specific population. For this study, we will restrict the participants to people who have completed many jobs reliably before. Consequently, the responses are more likely to be accurate.

**8a.2. Recruitment: Surveys on paper**

We will email managers and coordinators of relevant groups, such as coaches of football teams. This email will summarize the purpose of this research and ask these managers and coordinators whether they would be willing for us to distribute this survey to their members. See Attachment C for a sample invitation.

If they agree, we will then distribute a pile of these surveys to the managers and coordinators, coupled with a self-addressed envelope. The managers and coordinators would then distribute these surveys to the relevant members.

**8b, 8c, 8d, 8e, 8g.** NA

**8f. Incentives: Online surveys**

Participants who start to complete a survey will automatically receive $1.50 US

**8h. Accommodating other cultures: Online surveys**

All participants will be users of MTurk or Microworkers who chose to complete a survey. Accordingly, these individuals will most likely have completed other comparable surveys before. They are, therefore, familiar with many of the customs of surveys--such as the notion that respondents can withdraw at any time and that responses are anonymous. Nevertheless, the plain language statement will reiterate these principles.

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| **Question 9: Benefits and potential risks** |

**9a. Anticipated benefits of the research**

This research is designed to clarify the determinants of wellbeing and productivity in research students. Consequently, this research could unearth initiatives that could be implemented to enhance wellbeing and productivity in research students and, potentially, other individuals as well.

**9b. To whom will the benefits flow**

Research students will experience greater wellbeing and complete their work more efficiently. Their supervisors will be able to assist these students more expeditiously. Their universities will enjoy the benefits of higher completion rates and satisfaction of students.

**9c. 9d. Explain the potential risks**

* Because participants merely complete a survey, this study entails no physical risks.
* Because participants complete the survey anonymously, in the comfort of a private space at home, the study entails no social risks.
* Because the survey does not include questions that revolve around crime, misconduct, or malfeasance, the study entails no legal risks

However, psychological risks are possible, because some of the questions revolve around personal matters, such as mood and wellbeing. Individuals who feel depressed, helpless, or resigned might become attuned to their despair while answering these questions. Nevertheless, these questions typically normalize feelings of futility or despair, and this normalization tends to temper, rather than amplify, unpleasant emotions.

**9e. To whom do the risks apply**

The risks apply to all participants, especially individuals who experience mental health issues.

**9f. Strategies to negate risks**

If participants experience any distress, the plain language statement will encourage these participants to withdraw from the study and discontinue the survey. If these individuals feel they would like to seek support, the plain language statement will prompt these individuals to contact their local health practitioner. Alternatively, they could Google “Wikipedia List of suicide crisis lines” to identify a relevant hotline in their nation or, if living in Australia, they could telephone Lifeline on 13 11 14.

**9d. Do the benefits outweigh the risks**

The risks are negligible: Participants are unlikely to experience levels of distress that exceed the levels they would endure most days. The benefits, however, are potentially pronounced: the study could enhance the wellbeing and productivity of many individuals over time.

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| **Questions 10 to 12: Informed consent, privacy, confidentiality, data storage** |

**10a.** Affirm opting in by return of questionnaire

**10b, 10c.** No

**10d, 10e.** NA.

**11a.** No

**11b, 11c, 11d.** Non-identifiable information

**11e.** The survey is anonymous. Furthermore, the survey does not include enough demographic questions to be able to conjecture about the identify of individuals from their answers

**11f-11i.** NA

**12a.** Yes

**12b, 12c**. NA

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| **Questions 13: Indigenous research** |

**13a.** No

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| **Questions 14: Other ethical issues** |

**14a. Debriefing**. Yes

At the end, the final paragraph will clarify the purpose of this survey. Specifically, this paragraph will read "We are really grateful for your contribution to our study. This study was designed to clarify whether greater clarity about the future enhances the motivation, creativity, and mood of participants. If you would like more information, such as a summary of these results, please contact Simon Moss on [simon.moss@cdu.edu.au](mailto:simon.moss@cdu.edu.au).

**14b Feedback to participants**

As indicated in Question 14a, at the end of this survey, participants will be prompted to email the primary investigator to request a summary of these results. Furthermore, if a manager or coordinator of some organization distributed the survey to members, this person will receive a summary of the results as well. The summary will include graphs that display the mean and standard deviation of each measure across members and across the entire sample—but only if the number of members exceeds 8 and thus provides no information about specific individuals. In addition, this summary will include a table that specifies the correlation between each pair of measures. Finally, this summary will outline some of the key conclusions.

**14c to 14g**. No