RCM Research Ethics Application Form

for research involving human participation

2025/2026b

# **Checklist**

Your application should consist of:

1. RCM Research Ethics Approval Form signed by the corresponding researcher and supervisor

2. Participant information sheet(s) (see below for guidance including template)

3. Consent form(s) (see below for guidance including template)

4. Data collection materials (if you’ve ticked Box A) OR Project information and ethical considerations (if you’ve ticked Box B

An electronic copy of the submission, formatted into a **single file**, should be sent to the Committee Secretary, Lisa Hall (lisa.hall@rcm.ac.uk) with the subject: Application to RCM REC Your Surname. Please copy in all named collaborators in this email.

The timeline for 2025/2026 is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Deadline | Meeting in week commencing |
| Wednesday 20 August 2025, 5pm | 8 September 2025 |
| Wednesday 22 October 2025, 5pm | 10 November 2025 |
| Wednesday 10 December 2025, 5pm\* | 12 January 2026 |
| Wednesday 4 March 2026, 5pm | 23 March 2026 |
| Wednesday 15 April 2026, 5pm | 4 May 2026 |

\*early deadline due to Christmas vacation.

There should be no need for “extraordinary” applications to be made at other times.

# **RCM Research Ethics Application Form for research involving human participation**

*Please complete the fields in this section as you would like them to appear on your certificate*.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Status of corresponding researcher: | EXTERNAL / STAFF / STUDENT (delete as appropriate) |
| Course (for students only) | BMus / MMMusEd / MComp / MMus / MPerf / MSc / ArtDip / PhD |
| Title of project: |  |
| Anticipated start date and duration of project |  |
| Name(s) of researcher(s): |  |
| Email of corresponding researcher: |  |
| Name(s) of supervisor(s), line manager or head of department: |  |
| Email of corresponding supervisor, line manager or head of department: |  |
| Date: |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Checklist of attachments | Please list which of the following are included in this application.  For any that are included, please let us know how many you have. *For example, if you have 2 consent forms write ”2” in the “number” column.*  Please let us know the name of the attachment in the “title” column*. For example, “children’s consent form”, “adult’s consent form”* and **then include the page number where each attachment can be located.** | | |
|  | **Number** | **Title** | **Page** |
| Participant information sheet(s) |  |  |  |
| Consent form(s) |  |  |  |
| Data collection tool(s) |  |  |  |
| * Questionnaires |  |  |  |
| * Indicative interview/focus group guides |  |  |  |
| * Task descriptions and instructions |  |  |  |
| * Description of tools/apparatus |  |  |  |
| * Any other materials |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mark with X in box | YES | NO | N/A |
| 1 | Will you tell participants the purpose of your research at the outset, explain what you will ask them to do (e.g. take part in interviews or experiments, take tests or be observed) and tell them how long it will take, so that they know what to expect? |  |  |  |
| 2 | Will you tell your participants that their participation is voluntary? |  |  |  |
| 3 | Will you obtain participants’ written consent to take part in your research? |  |  |  |
| 4 | Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time without giving any reason? |  |  |  |
| 5 | Will you tell participants that they can omit questions or parts of research if they wish? |  |  |  |
| 6 | Will you tell participants that their data will be treated confidentially and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs? |  |  |  |
| 7 | Will you briefly explain the study to your participants at the end of their participation? |  |  |  |
| 8 | If the research involves any recordings of participants will you specify whether they are audio and/or video and will you obtain participants’ consent to the recordings being made? |  |  |  |
| 9 | If you make audio- or video-recordings, will you obtain participants’ consent for you to play excerpts from the recordings in the course of disseminating your research (e.g. in presentations) and tell them that you will not present the recordings if they do not give consent? |  |  |  |
| 10 | Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants in any way? |  |  |  |
| 11 | Is there any realistic risk of any participants experiencing either physical or psychological distress or discomfort? If Yes, give details on a continuation sheet and state what you will tell them to do if they should experience any problems (e.g. who they can contact for help). |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mark with X in box | | YES | NO | N/A |
| 12 | Will any conflicts of interest arise from your research? | |  |  |  |
| 13 | Does your project involve work with animals? If yes, please mark Box B. | |  |  |  |
| 14 | Are participants members of any of these vulnerable groups? | |  |  |  |
| 15 | If so, please select the relevant group here and refer to the BERA Ethical Guidelines or the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics and complete Box B.  You should ensure that you have DBS clearance if necessary. | Infants and children under the age of 18 |  |  |  |
| People with physiological and/or psychological impairments and/or learning disorders |  |
| People dependent on the protection or under the control of others |  |
| People with limited knowledge of the language in which the study will be conducted |  |
| Parents of sick children |  |
| People engaged in illegal activities (e.g. drug-taking) |  |
| Patients: If you are recruiting through the NHS, you MUST secure ethical approval from the NHS and you do not need to apply to the RCM REC. However, you should notify the RCM REC of your application to the NHS and forward your ethical approval to the RCM REC for records. |  |

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Do you consider that your study involves any potential risks to you whilst conducting the research?** e.g. working alone with participants outside of College, undertaking fieldwork in hazardous environments, working with dangerous or noisy equipment, raising issues that may cause you psychological distress | **YES/NO** |
| **If you answered yes, please tick the box to confirm you have had a risk assessment conversation with your supervisor or line manager.**  In thecase of working alone with participants outside of College, manual handling, or noisy or hazardous environments, you are advised to contact the College’s Health and Safety Manager Leigh Jones [leigh.jones@rcm.ac.uk](mailto:leigh.jones@rcm.ac.uk) for guidance on a suitablerisk assessmentprocess and appropriate mitigations.  In the case of issues that may cause you psychological distress, please talk with your supervisor or line manager about ways to reduce or manage this. |  |
| **Using the box below briefly summarise any potential risks to yourself which you have identified, the risk assessment process undertaken, and the mitigations proposed through this risk assessment.** | |
|  | |

## **PLEASE COMPLETE EITHER BOX A OR BOX B BELOW AND PROVIDE THE INFORMATION REQUIRED IN SUPPORT OF YOUR APPLICATION.**

If you have replied Yes or N/A to all of Q1-9 and No to Q10-12, you should normally complete Box A.

If you have replied No to any of Q1-9 or Yes to Q10, Q11 or Q12 you should normally complete Box B on the next page.

You are obliged to bring to the attention of the RCM Research Ethics Committee any issues with ethical implications not clearly covered by the above checklist by providing further information in the sections below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A. I consider that this project raises no important ethical issues that need be considered by the RCM Research Ethics Committee. | Yes / No [Delete as appropriate] | |
| In this box give a brief description of the purpose of the research, methodological approach (e.g. quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods) and specific methods: design, participants (recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria), materials/apparatus, procedure, proposed analyses (maximum 200 words).  In addition, on the pages below, please provide:  1) All relevant participant information sheets and consent forms.  2) All data collection materials in a section entitled “Data collection materials” (see page 10) | | |
| B. I consider that this project may raise ethical issues that should be considered by the RCM Research Ethics Committee, and/or it will be carried out with children or other vulnerable groups. | | Yes / No [Delete as appropriate] |
| On the pages below, please provide:  1) All relevant participant information sheets and consent forms.  2) Further information about the project using the headings in the “Project information and ethical considerations” section on page 11. | | |

Please discuss with your supervisor/manager which guidelines are more appropriate for your research and then tick the box to indicate those you have read (✓).

I have read and am familiar with ONE of the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [BPS Code of Human Research Ethics](https://www.bps.org.uk/guideline/bps-code-human-research-ethics) |  |
| [BERA Ethical Guidelines](https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024) |  |
| [Oral History Society](https://www.ohs.org.uk/legal-and-ethical-advice/) |  |
| and (if appropriate) I have discussed them with the other researchers involved in the project. |  |

Please confirm that you have checked the guidance and that this application meets the criteria for submission to the RCM REC (and not the CUK REC).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I confirm that this application meets the criteria of submission to the RCM REC |  |

Please also confirm that the supervisor, line manager, or head of department for this project is a member of the RCM staff.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I confirm that the supervisor, line manager, or head of department for this project is a member of the RCM staff. | Y/N |

If not, please explain why you are submitting the RCM REC:

Once ethical approval is granted, please seek permission from any institution at which you would like to carry out your research project.

Please type your name and the date in below to confirm that the provided information is accurate and that all known ethical considerations have been disclosed. ***Including names here indicates that each person whose name appears here has seen and approved this application***.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Name | Date |
| Researcher |  |  |
| Supervisor, line manager, or head of department |  |  |

# **Guidance on producing participant information sheets**

*The purpose of a participant information sheet (PIS) is to help potential participants make an informed choice as to whether they want to take part in your research project. You need to give them enough, accurate information as to what will be expected of them, so that they can decide. You must tell them that if they do take part, they are free to withdraw from the project at any time, either by physically leaving and/or by withdrawing consent for you to use whatever contribution they have already made to your research. You need to make sure that everyone who takes part in your project knows why they have been asked to participate, what they will have to do, how you will use their contribution in your research, with whom you will be sharing it and in what form (e.g. in a conference presentation, master’s or PhD thesis, report, journal article or book).*

*Please* ***use the template below, including all the headings:***

* *Explanations of the information you should provide are given in colour and in italics. Please* ***delete this text*** *when you have finished writing the form.*
* *“*Normal” text template is text that you may keep unchanged or edit as appropriate for your application.

*You should be able to print the final document on no more than two sides of A4 paper. This template will need substantial modification for work with some of the populations mentioned in Box B.*

## **TEMPLATE Participant information sheet**

## [Project Title] [Date]

### Invitation

*[Invite 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:]*

I/ We are inviting you 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/us 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

*[Provide the aim and purpose of the project, including an outline of the method, but keep this section brief and avoid jargon.]*

### Characteristics of participants

*[Explain why you have asked this reader, in particular, to take part in your project, and how many other participants will be involved.]*

### Voluntary participation

*[Participation in your project is entirely voluntary and that if the reader does not want to take part or changes their mind having agreed to do so, they won’t be penalized or affected in any way. You could use or adapt the following paragraph.]*

It is up to you to decide if you want to take part in my project or not. If you don’t want to take part, or you change your mind about taking part, having agreed to do so, you won’t be affected 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. If you decide to take part you are still 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 within X months of the present date. Again, you won’t be affected in any way.

### Nature of participation

*[Explain how long the project is going to last, how often participants will be required and for how long each time. Explain what you will ask them to do on each occasion. Be as specific as possible – give dates, times and places where possible. If you intend to audio- or video-record participants, say so and tell the reader that they can refuse consent to be recorded, and they can also refuse consent for the recordings to be played when you come to report the research.* *Please explain what will happen to the recordings: will they be transcribed; how they will be stored (this should always be on a password-protected RCM drive, not the hard drive of a personal machine or removable storage); when they will be destroyed (often this will be immediately after transcription, but if the recordings need to be retained they would usually be destroyed after 10 years maximum,). Please also explain what will happen if they refuse consent to be recorded.]*

### Lifestyle restrictions

*[You must 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. If they are not likely to experience any lifestyle restrictions, please include a sentence to say so here.]*

### Potential risks to participants

*[You must say if participants are at any risk of being offended, shocked or harmed by your research. If appropriate you can say: If participation in this project raises any issues of concern for you, you can seek help from the following sources: (list sources here, e.g., GP, Student Services, NHS support). If unforeseen risks arise during the course of*

*your project, 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 to say 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. If no benefit to participants is intended, however, please say so. You could use and complete the following sentence in your PIS:]*

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 must say that if your project has to be terminated for any reason and participants and/or the contribution they have made are no longer required for the research they will be told, and told why and what will happen to any already-collected data (usually it would be destroyed).]*

### Confidentiality and anonymity

*[You are responsible for ensuring that you are not contravening the legal or regulatory requirements in any part of the UK 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 project you will ask them to sign a form giving their informed consent to do so, which 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 project only. Information about participants will 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 PIS:]*

Information that is collected about you, for the purposes of the research, will be kept strictly confidential. [*PLEASE KEEP OR AMEND THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE AND USE ONLY IF YOUR PARTICIPANTS ARE IDENTIFIABLE*: The only instances when confidentiality would be broken are either in the event that you disclose risk of immediate harm to yourself or others (in which case I may need to discuss this with somebody else, such as my supervisor or line manager), or where we have a legal obligation to do so. Information you provide will only be attributed to you by name with your explicit permission [for Masters projects: Information you provide will not be attributed to you by name].

### 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. You must adhere to the* [*RCM’s data protection policy and the GDPR*](https://www.rcm.ac.uk/websitepolicies/privacy/)*. You could include the following sentences in your PIS:]*

Information provided by you in this study will be handled in a confidential manner under the [policies and procedures of the Royal College of Music](https://www.rcm.ac.uk/research/about/importantdocuments/). Your personal data and any information that you provide for the purposes of the research will be stored securely on a password-protected RCM drive for 10 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. Please be aware that publications arising from this research will remain available beyond this period (see ‘Outputs’ below.)

### Outputs

*[You must say how you will use the contribution that participants make to your project, with whom you will share it, and in what form (e.g., in a conference presentation, master’s or PhD thesis, report, journal article or book). Make clear that not all dissemination opportunities can be accurately anticipated. For doctoral students, you will need to add the following sentence: The final dissertation will be shared internally at the RCM and will normally be made publicly available to anyone with an internet connection through* [*RCM Research Online*](https://researchonline.rcm.ac.uk/information.html)*. In exceptional circumstances, a thesis may be embargoed or sections redacted; please indicate in Box B if you think this will be necessary and amend the final sentence here accordingly.]*

### Ethical approval

*[You should tell the reader that the Royal College of Music Research Ethics Committee has reviewed your project and granted ethical approval for it to be carried out.]*

Thank you for reading this Participant Information Sheet and for considering your participation in this research project. Please let the researcher know if you have any questions.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Contact details | Name of supervisor/manager/head of department |
| Institutional email | Institutional Affiliation |
| Name of researcher | Institutional email |
| Institutional Affiliation |  |

*[For your participant consent form please use or adapt the following template. This template will need substantial modification for work with some of the populations mentioned in Box B.]*

## **TEMPLATE Research consent form**

### Project Title: Add title here Name of Researcher: Insert name here Participant identification code:

Please read each statement carefully and write your initials in the box if you agree.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information sheet dated [insert date stated on the PIS] for research project in which I have been asked to take part and have had the opportunity to ask questions. | | |  |
| I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. | | |  |
| I give the researcher(s) permission to collect information about me and from me for the purposes of the research project provided all information about me will be kept confidential, stored securely and destroyed after 10 years. | | |  |
| ***[For doctoral students only:]*** | | |  |
| **I understand that the final dissertation arising from this research will normally be made publicly available to anyone with an internet connection via RCM Research Online.** | | |  |
| *[The following two questions can be deleted if no recording will take place:]* | | | |
| I give the researcher(s) permission for audio- or video-recordings [delete as appropriate] of [e.g. interviews, performances, etc.] to be made. | | |  |
| I give the researcher(s) permission for audio- or video-recordings [delete as appropriate] of [e.g. performances, etc.] to be publicly played in the course of reporting this research. State here whether their voice, face, name, or other identifiable information will be present in the recording. | | |  |
| *[Additional statements might be added here should unique ethical concerns arise.]* | | | |
| I agree to take part in the above-named project. | | |  |
| Name of participant: | Signature: | Date: | |
| Name of person taking consent:  (if different from researcher) | Signature: | Date: | |
| Name of researcher: | Signature: | Date: | |

Copies: One copy for the participant, and one copy for the researcher / supervisor

## **For Box A applications**

### Data collection materials

Please provide any of the following that are appropriate, or any other material needed to fully understand your application:

* Questionnaires,
* Indicative interview/focus group guides,
* Task descriptions and instructions,
* Description of tools/apparatus.

## **For Box B Applications**

### Project information and ethical considerations

Please provide information about your project under the following headings and any other material needed to fully understand your application

1. Title of project
2. Purpose of project and its academic rationale
3. The methodological approach (e.g. quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods) and the methods you are using: design, participants (recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria), procedure, proposed analyses.
4. Data collection materials:

* Questionnaires
* Indicative interview/focus group guides
* Task descriptions and instructions
* Description of tools/apparatus
* Any other materials

1. A clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with them
2. How you will obtain informed consent and provide debriefing