GUIDELINES AND EXAMPLES FOR CEDU REC APPLICATIONS 2021

It is compulsory for students to read through the guidelines before attempting to complete the CEDU REC Application form. Without reading the guidelines the process of Ethical clearance could be delayed as many mistakes may be made which could have been avoided.

DUE DATES FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS 2021

(Applications received after the closing date will stand over to the next CEDU REC review meeting)

28 Jan	25 Feb	31 March	29 April	27 May
24 June	29 July	26 Aug	30 Sept	28 Oct

RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW MEETING DATES FOR 2021

10 Feb	10 March	14 April	12 May	9 June
7 July	11 Aug	8 Sept	13 Oct	10 Nov

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1. PURPOSE OF GUIDELINES AND EXAMPLES

This purpose of this document is to:

- Assist when completing the Ethics application form.
- Speed up the process of obtaining Research Ethical Clearance.
- Study the guidelines before completing the application form.
- Use examples to support with writing letters requesting permission to conduct research or obtaining consent from adults or assent from learners.

2. GUIDELINES

2.1 Before completing the application form, study the UNISA POLICY ON RESEARCH ETHICS. It is available at the following link:

http://www.unisa.ac.za/cmsys/staff/contents/departments/res_policies/docs/Policy%20on%20Research%20Ethics%20-%20rev%20appr%20-%20Council%20-%2020.06.2014.pdf

2.2 The UNISA Policy on Research Ethics should be read in conjunction with other relevant UNISA guidelines, policies and relevant legislative frameworks.

2.3 The UNISA Policy on Research Ethics stipulates that ethics clearance **may not be granted retrospectively.**

2.4 When **UNISA staff, students or data form part of your research** you also need to obtain permission from the Research Permissions Subcommittee (RPSC) of the Senate Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Degrees Committee after ethical clearance has been obtained from the CEDU REC. The clearance certificate should be appended to the RPCS application. Applications to RPSC need to be submitted through the Office of Graduate Studies and Research, College of Education [AJH 6-18].

2.5 Important information to keep in mind:

- The application form and supporting documents will enter a **pre-approval phase** where the application will be reviewed for technical quality and to ensure that all sections are complete. If not, **it will be returned to the applicant.**
- Decisions reached by the CEDU REC could be:
    - Approved
    - Referred back – requires modification, information or clarification
    - Disapproved with reasons.
- Decisions will be communicated within **10 working days** of the meeting.
- Ensure that you use the latest template [©2017]. Applications made on previous versions of the template cannot be accepted.
- Complete all sections of the application form in full.
- Indicate "not applicable" or NONE when you are sure that the section does not apply to your application. Do not leave any section open.
- Proof of registration (in case of students) must be attached as appendix A.
- The application should be a single document only. Separate documents cannot be accepted. All additional documents should be attached as appendices. Number them in a sequential order starting with the Registration form as appendix A.
- Applications may only be submitted by the supervisor not by the student.
- Only apply for ethics clearance after the literature review has been completed and the research design is being finalised.
- All relevant supporting documents (letters requesting permission to conduct the study, consent forms AND the research instruments like interview questions, questionnaires and observations protocols) must be appended.
- Sign and date the ethics declaration (Section 7). A signature is required (not a computer signature using a different font).
- Once you have signed and dated the application submit it to your supervisor and if he/she is satisfied with the quality of your application, it will be signed by the supervisor and submitted to both the CEDU REC Chairperson: Prof AT Motlhabane motlhat@unisa.ac.za

- It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the application is complete and meets the requirements. Incomplete applications will be returned without comment.
- It is the supervisor's task to support the student in the completion of the application and to check the application before submission.
- If an application adheres to the requirements as explained in the guidelines and the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics, there is no reason why an application should not be approved during its first submission.
- Supervisors must submit their students' applications electronically to the chairperson before or on the last WEDNESDAY of the month for tabling at the following month's meeting. Late submissions cannot be accepted.
- Academics requesting ethics clearance for research follow the same procedures as above, but submit their applications directly to the REC chairperson.

2.6 RESEARCH ETHICS RISK ASSESSMENT

The application form has a section where the researcher needs to indicate the risk category of the research. Use the table explaining the risk categories, the definitions and the examples to guide you to make an informed decision when you indicate the risk category of your research in the application form (3.3). **RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL**

The checklists below have been designed to guide researchers to assess the potential risk of proposed research. There are four risk categories, but due to the type of research which is conducted in the College of Education, the focus will be on Categories 2, 3 and 4 as research often involves vulnerable participants, such as children under the age of 18 years.

The categories are displayed in the table below:

Category 1: Negligible risk	No apparent risk to participants. No human participants directly involved. Analysis of statistics, literature study or market research surveys. All research directly involving human participants has an inherent measure of risk and cannot be marked as risk category 1	
Category 2: Low risk	Human participants involved. Foreseeable risk of inconvenience. Non-vulnerable adult participants and non-sensitive information involved.	

Category 3: Medium risk	Potential risk of harm or discomfort. Sensitive research topic. Personal information gathered and analysed. Participants directly involved. Participants are children under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults.	
Category 4: High risk	Real and foreseeable risk of harm or discomfort. Highly sensitive topics. Participants are vulnerable children under the age of 18. Deception of research participants.	

If any items on the ethical risk checklist in Tables **2 and 3** are ticked **"YES",** the research may be likely to involve **medium risk** to the participant. The applicant needs to indicate how participants will benefit from the research and describe the steps that will be undertaken to mitigate the risk.

High risk: If a number of items on the ethical risk checklist in Tables **1, 2 and 3** are ticked **"YES"**, the research may be likely to involve significant risk to the participants, researcher(s), institutions or UNISA. The applicant needs to indicate how participants will benefit from the research and describe the steps that will be undertaken to mitigate the risk.

Table 1	**Does your research include the direct involvement of any of the following groups of participants/research objects?**	**YES**	**NO**
Place x in box [if yes, provide details in the space allowed for comments]			
a)	Children or young people under the age of 18		
b)	Persons with a cognitive disability or mental impairment of any kind		
c)	Prisoners or people on parole		
d)	Children who are in custody of the State		
e)	Persons highly dependent on medical care		
f)	Military personnel		
g)	Communities that may be considered as vulnerable		
h)	Persons unable to give consent themselves		
i)	People aged 65 and older		
j)	Unisa employees or students		
k)	Persons not usually considered to be vulnerable but would be considered vulnerable in the context of this research project		
l)	Non-English speaking participants		
m)	Women considered to be vulnerable (pregnancy, victimisation, etc.)		
n)	People living in poverty		
o)	People with little or no education		
p)	Environmental related research		
q)	Other. Please describe.		
Comments:			

Table 2	**Does your research involve any of the following types of activity?**	**YES**	**NO**
Place x in box [if yes, provide details in the space allowed for comments]			
a) Collection, use or disclosure of information WITHOUT the consent of the individual or institution whose information it is, with the exception of aggregated data or data from official databases such as StatsSA, SARS, etc.			
b) Causing discomfiture to participants beyond normal levels of inconvenience			
c) Deception of participants, concealment or covert observation			
d) Examining potentially sensitive or contentious issues			
e) Seeking disclosure of information which may be prejudicial to participants			
f) Using intrusive techniques, e.g. audio-visual recordings of participants which may be of a sensitive nature			
g) Study of or participation in illegal activities that could place individuals and/or groups at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, professional or personal relationships			
h) Innovative therapy or intervention			
i) Personal and social information collected directly from participants			
j) Identifiable information to be collected about people from available records (e.g. medical records, staff records, student records, etc.)			
k)*Psychology inventories / scales / tests			
l) Activities which may place the researcher(s) at risk			
Comments:			

**Please add details on copyright issues related to standardised psychometric tests and registration at the HPSCA of test administrator if test administration is in South Africa or of an equivalent board if administration is outside South Africa.*

Table 3	**DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING APPLY TO YOUR RESEARCH PROJECT?**	YES	NO
Place x in box [if yes, provide details in the space allowed for comments]			
a) Reimbursement or incentives to any participants			
b) The participants will incur financial costs by participating in the study			
c) At least one of the researchers has a financial or other involvement in the research (apart from their research role) or may receive a reward			
d) Any other potential conflict of interest for any of the researchers (real or perceived financial or personal considerations that may compromise a researcher's professional judgement in carrying out or reporting research, such as conducting research with colleagues, peers or students)			
e) Research is done on the premises of Unisa or any of its units			
f) Research will make use of some of Unisa's facilities			
g) Research will be funded by Unisa or funding for it was acquired through Unisa			
Comments:			

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGED RESEARCH

If you are involved with community engaged research it is of the utmost importance to read **PART 4 of the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.** Special attention should be given to fair subject selection, favourable risk-benefit ration, informed consent and community involvement in the research.

4. EXAMPLES OF LETTERS AND CONSENT FORMS AND TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR APPENDICES

Feedback from the REC shows that many students find it difficult to write letters of consent in meticulous English, which for most of us, is a second or third language. As it is not only the name of the researcher that appears in the letter, but also the name of UNISA, we place a few examples of letters and consent forms in the document to assist students and supervisors. Supervisors are free to use their own examples and styles to guide students. This is just an additional tool to support the students. The following examples can be found in this document:

- A letter requesting permission to conduct research
- Participant information sheet and consent/assent form (return slip)
- Parental consent for participation of minors in a research project
- Learner assent form: *secondary school*
- Learner assent form: *primary school*
- Interview: adult participant consent
- Covering letter for a questionnaire
- Focus group confidentiality
- Cover letter to an online anonymous web-based survey

Each example will appear on a new page.

4.1 TEMPLATE FOR REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Use this example to gain permission from: A School Principal; The SGB; The Provincial Department of Education (In Gauteng the Official GDE form must be completed); The Circuit Manager; The Gatekeeper of a community etc. Letters must be written on a UNISA Letterhead

ALL ASPECTS INDICATED IN THE EXAMPLES SHOULD BE IN THE LETTERS AS IT COVERS ETHICAL ASPECTS

Request for permission to conduct research at _____ (insert name of organisation or institution)

Title of the title of your research (**exactly** as it appears on your CEDU REC application form)

Date

Name of the person to who you address the request
Department of the person
Contact details of the person (tel and email address)

Dear _____ (insert contact person's title and name),

I, _____ (insert researcher's name) am doing research under supervision of _____ (insert supervisor's name), a _____ (insert supervisor's position, e.g. lecturer/senior lecturer/professor, etc.) in the Department of _____ (insert department name) towards a _____ (insert degree title, e.g. M Ed/D Ed) at the University of South Africa. We have funding from _____ (insert name of Funding Body if applicable) for _____ (insert why you have funding). We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled _____ (add title **exactly** as it appears on your CEDU REC Application Form).

The aim of the study is to_____

Your company/school/department (select one) has been selected because_____

The study will entail _____ (describe the nature and procedures briefly.)

The benefits of this study are _____ (indicate realistic benefits)

Potential risks are_____ (if no risk is involved also state it)

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Feedback procedure will entail _____ (indicate how you will give feedback to participants)

Yours sincerely

_____ (insert signature of researcher)

_____ (insert name of the above signatory)

_____ (insert above signatory's position)

4.2 PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (Use this example as the letter for consent and assent)

Date

Title :_____(**exactly** as it appears on your research ethics application)

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is _____ (insert student researcher name) and I am doing research under the supervision of _____ (insert supervisor's name), a _____ (insert supervisor's position, e.g. lecturer/senior lecturer/professor, etc.) in the Department of _____ (insert department name) towards a _____ (insert degree title, e.g. M Ed/D Ed) at the University of South Africa. We have funding from _____ (insert name of Funding Body if applicable) for _____ (insert why you have funding). We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled _____ (add title exactly as it appears on your CEDU REC Application Form).

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information that could _____ (*you may link this section to the benefits and/or outcomes of the study)*

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are invited because_____ (indicate here why you as the researcher chose this particular person/group as participants?)

I obtained your contact details from _____ (Describe how you obtained the participants' contact details. *The Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013, necessitates the disclosure of how access was gained to the personal information of prospective participants).* Indicate the approximate number of participants *(this is useful information to assist the participant to make an informed choice whether to participate in the proposed study – potential breaches of confidentiality increase with a small sample size)*.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

Describe the participant's actual role in the study.

The study involves _____ *(audio/video taping / questionnaires / surveys / focus groups /semi-structured interviews, etc.)*. Indicate what sort of questions will be asked or show the questions in this document. Describe the expected duration of participation and the time needed to complete specific research activities like questionnaires, focus groups or interviews. Describe the time allocated to conduct interviews/focus groups *(be realistic in your approximation)*.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent (adult)/ assent (participant younger than 18 years old) form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. (*Do not mislead your potential participants by stating that they can withdraw from a research project at any time if the project involves the submission of non-identifiable material such as questionnaires. Explain clearly to them that it will not be possible to withdraw once they have submitted the questionnaire. Please note that this will depend on the nature of the questionnaire. Some questionnaires may clearly indicate the identity of the participant, but the researcher may have agreed to anonymize personal data. Thus someone could ask for withdrawing the questionnaire).*

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Describe the presence or absence of possible benefits for the participant, the participants as a group, the scientific community and/or society (*This section can be integrated in the section that describes the purpose, but it is critical information to assist with voluntary informed consent).*

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

Describe any potential level of inconvenience and/or discomfort to the participant. List all possible or reasonably foreseeable risks of harm or side-effects to the potential participants *[outlining likely incidence and severity]*. Include any risk that may come from others

identifying the person's participation in the research. Describe the measures that will be taken if injury or harm attributable to the study occurs.

[Add a description for arrangement for indemnity and/or insurance coverage for participants if applicable].

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

You have the right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research *(this measure refers to confidentiality)* **OR** Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give (*this measure refers to anonymity)*. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings *(this measure refers to confidentiality)*.

If relevant, identify who will have access to the data *[transcriber/external coder]* and how these individuals will maintain confidentiality *(e.g. by signing a confidentiality agreement). Please note that confidentiality agreements should be submitted to the Research Ethics Review Committee for consideration].* Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

Create a sentence to inform participants that their anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings. Also indicate how privacy will be protected in any publication of the information (e.g. *A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report).* Please keep in mind that it is sometimes impossible to make an absolute guarantee of confidentiality or anonymity, e.g. when focus groups are used as a data collection method.

Include a description of what a focus group is and state: *While every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group.*

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet *[where? Indicate the location]* for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Indicate how information will be destroyed if necessary *(e.g. hard copies will be shredded and/or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme)*.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

Describe any payment or reward offered, financial or otherwise. Any costs incurred by the participant should be explained and justified in adherence with the principle of fair procedures (justice).

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the (*identify the relevant ERC),* Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact_____ (insert researcher's name) on _____(insert telephone number) or email _____(insert email address or fax number) or website_____ (insert URL). The findings are accessible for _____ (insert time frame).

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact _____ (insert principle researcher's contact details here, including email, internal phone number and fax number).

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact_____ (insert supervisor's contact details here, including email, internal phone number and fax number).

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.
Thank you.

_____

(insert signature)

_____

(type your name)

CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the _____ (insert specific data collection method).

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print) _____

_____ _____

Participant Signature Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print) _____

_____ _____

Researcher's signature Date

4.3 EXAMPLE OF A LETTER REQUESTING PARENTAL CONSENT FOR MINORS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Parent

Your _____<son/daughter/child> is invited to participate in a study entitled_____ (add title **exactly** as it appears on your CEDU REC Application Form).

I am undertaking this study as part of my _____ (doctoral/master's) research at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is _____ and the possible benefits of the study are the improvement of _____. I am asking permission to include your child in this study because _____. I expect to have _____other children participating in the study.

If you allow your child to participate, I shall request him/her to (delete what is not applicable):

- Take part in a survey (explain procedures, when, where, time to complete survey)
- Take part in an interview (explain procedures, when, where, time to complete survey)
- Take part in a group interview (explain procedures, when, where, time to complete survey)
- Complete a test (explain procedures, when, where, time to complete survey)
- Other (special attention must be given creating and using video recordings).

If you are going to use audio/video recording during the interview/group interview, you must indicate it and ask permission to record the interviews

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. His/her responses will not be linked to his/her name or your name or the school's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such a report will be used for research purposes only.

There are no foreseeable risks to your child by participating in the study (if, however, there are any risks involved in your study, they should be mentioned here). Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study; however, the possible benefits to education are _____ (indicate benefits). Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way. Similarly you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

The study will take place during regular classroom activities (or state when, if at an alternative time) with the prior approval of the school and your child's teacher. However, if you do not want your child to participate, an alternative activity will be available (state what the alternative activity will be).

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study and you and your child will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in the study, he or she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your child's participation in the study will be stored securely on a password locked computer in my locked office for five years after the study. Thereafter, records will be erased.

The benefits of this study are _____ (indicate realistic benefits)

Potential risks are_____ (if no risk is involved also state it)

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

If you have questions about this study please ask me or my study supervisor, Prof/Dr _____ (supervisor's name), Department of _____, College of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is _____ and my e-mail is _____. The e-mail of my supervisor is_____. Permission for the study has already been given by _____ (DET/principal/SGB etc.) and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA.

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow him or her to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

Name of child:

Sincerely

_____

_____

Parent/guardian's name (print) Parent/guardian's signature: Date:

_____ _____

_____

Researcher's name (print) Researcher's signature Date:

4.4 EXAMPLE OF A LETTER REQUESTING ASSENT FROM LEARNERS IN A <u>SECONDARY SCHOOL</u> TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Title of your research (**exactly** as it appears on your CEDU REC application form)

Dear _____ Date

_____

I am doing a study on _____ as part of my studies at the University of South Africa. Your principal has given me permission to do this study in your school. I would like to invite you to be a very special part of my study. I am doing this study so that I can find ways that your _____ (teachers, counsellors, coaches, etc.) can use to _____ better. This may help you and many other learners of your age in different schools.

This letter is to explain to you what I would like you to do. There may be some words you do not know in this letter. You may ask me or any other adult to explain any of these words that you do not know or understand. You may take a copy of this letter home to think about my invitation and talk to your parents about this before you decide if you want to be in this study.

Indicate what the child's participation will entail. This is an example: I would like to ask you _____ (questions/interview you about…/complete a questionnaire about……/involve you in a focus group (a group of 6 or 8 participants). Answering the _____ (questions/completing the questionnaire/discussion in the focus group will take no longer than) _____ (indicate the time it will to complete).

I will write a report on the study but I will not use your name in the report or say anything that will let other people know who you are. Participation is voluntary and you do not have to be part of this study if you don't want to take part. If you choose to be in the study, you may stop taking part at any time without penalty. You may tell me if you do not wish to answer any of my questions. No one will blame or criticise you. When I am finished with my study, I shall return to your school to give a short talk about some of the helpful and interesting things I found out in my study. I shall invite you to come and listen to my talk.

The benefits of this study are _____ (indicate realistic benefits)

Potential risks are_____ (if no risk is involved also state it)

You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the research.

If you decide to be part of my study, you will be asked to sign the form on the next page. If you have any other questions about this study, you can talk to me or you can have your parent or another adult call me at _____ (insert contact number). Do not sign the form until you have all your questions answered and understand what I would like you to do.

Researcher: _____ Phone number: _____

Do not sign the written assent form if you have any questions. Ask your questions first and ensure that someone answers those questions.

WRITTEN ASSENT

I have read this letter which asks me to be part of a study at my school. I have understood the information about my study and I know what I will be asked to do. I am willing to be in the study.

_____ _____ _____

Learner's name (print): Learner's signature: Date:

_____ _____

_____

Witness's name (print) Witness's signature Date:

(The witness is over 18 years old and present when signed.)

_____ _____

_____

Parent/guardian's name (print) Parent/guardian's signature: Date:

_____ _____

_____

Researcher's name (print) Researcher's signature: Date:

4.5 EXAMPLE OF A LETTER REQUESTING ASSENT FROM LEARNERS IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear learner, Date_____

My name is Teacher _____ (put in your name) and would like to ask you if I can come and _____ (watch you do some activities/listen how you read/do mathematics/ with your teacher and when you play outside on the playground etc.)

I am trying to learn more about how children do _____ (activities/read/ do mathematics) with their teachers as well as when they play with friends.

If you say YES to do this, I will come and watch you when you are with your teacher doing _____ (activities/reading/maths) as well as when you play on the playground. We will do a fun game where you have to answer some questions for me. I will also ask you to do some activities with me. I will not ask to you to do anything that may hurt you or that you don't want to do.

I will also ask your parents if you can take part. If you do not want to take part, it will also be fine with me. Remember, you can say yes or you can say no and no one will be upset if you don't want to take part or even if you change your mind later and want to stop. You can ask any questions that you have now. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, ask me next time I visit your school.

Please speak to mommy or daddy about taking part before you sign this letter. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. A copy of this letter will be given to your parents.

Regards
Teacher _____ (put in your name)

Your Name	Yes I will take part 	No I don't want to take part 
Name of the researcher		
Date		
Witness		

4.6 EXAMPLE OF A COVER LETTER FOR A QUESTIONNAIRE

Title of questionnaire:

Dear respondent

This questionnaire forms part of my _____ (doctoral/master's) research entitled: _____ (add title **exactly** as it appears on your CEDU REC Application Form) for the degree _____ (MEd/DEd) at the University of South Africa. You have been selected by a_____ *sampling* strategy from the population of _____. Hence, I invite you to take part in this survey.

The aim of this study is to investigate _____. The findings of the study may benefit _____.

You are kindly requested to complete this survey questionnaire, comprising _____ (indicate how many) sections as honestly and frankly as possible and according to your personal views and experience. No foreseeable risks are associated with the completion of the questionnaire which is for research purposes only. The questionnaire will take approximately _____ (indicate how many) minutes to complete.

You are not required to indicate your name or organisation and your anonymity will be ensured; however, indication of your age, gender, occupation position etcetera will contribute to a more comprehensive analysis. All information obtained from this questionnaire will be used for research purposes only and will remain confidential. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you have the right to omit any question if so desired, or to withdraw from answering this survey without penalty at any stage. After the completion of the study, an electronic summary of the findings of the research will be made available to you on request.

Permission to undertake this survey has been granted by the _____ (indicate the institution) and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. If you have any research-related enquiries, they can be addressed directly to me or my supervisor. My contact details are: _____ (insert telephone number) e-mail: _____ insert email address or fax number) and my supervisor can be reached at _____ (insert telephone number) Department of _____, College of Education, UNISA, e-mail: _____.

By completing the questionnaire, you imply that you have agreed to participate in this research. Please return the completed questionnaire to_____ before _____

4.7 EXAMPLE OF FOCUS GROUP CONSENT/ASSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I_____ grant consent/assent that the information I share during the focus group may be used by _____ (name of researcher) for research purposes. I am aware that the group discussions will be digitally recorded and grant consent/assent for these recordings, provided that my privacy will be protected. I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared in the group discussions to any person outside the group in order to maintain confidentiality.

Participant's Name (Please print): _____

Participant Signature: _____

Researcher's Name: (Please print): _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

If you are and adult who gives permission you **consent** then delete assent

If you are a learner who gives permission you **assent** and then delete consent

4.8 COVER LETTER TO AN ONLINE ANONYMOUS WEB-BASED SURVEY

(Change as required & adhere to UNISA brand guidelines for cover page to online survey)

Dear Prospective participant,

You are invited to participate in a survey conducted by_____ (insert researcher name) under the supervision of_____ (insert supervisor's name) a _____(insert supervisor's position, e.g. lecturer/senior lecturer/professor, etc.) in the Department of _____(insert department name) towards a _____(insert degree title, e.g. MEd/D Ed) at the University of South Africa.

The survey you have received has been designed to study the _____ (project description in non-scientific language). You were selected to participate in this survey because _____ (state reason for selecting the participant). By completing this survey, you agree that the information you provide may be used for research purposes, including dissemination through peer-reviewed publications and conference proceedings.

It is anticipated that the information we gain from this survey will help us to _____ (state anticipated outcomes of the project). You are, however, under no obligation to complete the survey and you can withdraw from the study prior to submitting the survey. The survey is developed to be anonymous, meaning that we will have no way of connecting the information that you provide to you personally (please note that this is only relevant to anonymous surveys). Consequently, you will not be able to withdraw from the study once you have clicked the send button based on the anonymous nature of the survey (or state : Any identifying information that is obtained in connection with this survey will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law). If you choose to participate in this survey it will take up no more than _____ (insert anticipated minutes) of your time. You will not benefit from your participation as an individual, however, it is envisioned that the findings of this study may _____ (indicate anticipated benefits of the study). We do not foresee that you will experience any negative consequences by completing the survey *OR* We foresee the following consequences in completing the survey_____ (describe the risks, discomforts or inconveniences expected, followed by measures to mitigate any negative consequences). The researcher(s) undertake to keep any information provided herein confidential, not to let it out of our possession and to report on the findings from the perspective of the participating group and not from the perspective of an individual.

The records will be kept for five years for audit purposes where after it will be permanently destroyed. Hard copies will be shredded and electronic versions will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer (adapt according to the nature of the study). You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the survey.

The research was reviewed and approved by the < identify the Ethics Review Committee>. The primary researcher, <Name>, can be contacted during office hours at <insert contact details here>. The study leader, <Name>, can be contacted during office hours at <insert contact details here>. Should you have any questions regarding the ethical aspects of the study, you can contact the chairperson of the <identify the Ethics Research Committee>,

<insert contact details of the ERC here>. Alternatively, you can report any serious unethical behaviour at the University's Toll Free Hotline 0800 86 96 93.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate by continuing to the next page. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time prior to clicking the send button.

5 SAMPLING METHODS (Examples)

Qualitative sampling (always purposive)	**Quantitative sampling** (always random/probability)	**Sampling: Mixed methods**

• Extreme or Deviant Case sampling • Maximum Variation sampling • Homogeneous sampling • Typical Case sampling • Critical Case sampling • Theory-based sampling • Snowball or Chain sampling • Criterion sampling • Confirming or Disconfirming cases sampling • Opportunistic sampling • Politically Important Cases sampling • Convenience sampling • Combination or Mixed Purposeful sampling	• Simple random sampling • Stratified random sampling • Cluster random sampling • Systematic random sampling • Multistage sampling	• Simple sampling • Stratified sampling • Cluster sampling • Systematic sampling • Multistage random sampling • Maximum variation sampling • Homogeneous sampling • Critical case sampling • Theory-based sampling • Conforming/disconfirming sampling • Snowball/chain sampling • Extreme case sampling • Typical case sampling • Intensity sampling • Politically important case sampling • Random purposive sampling • Stratified purposive sampling • Criterion sampling • Opportunistic sampling • Mixed purposive sampling • Convenience sampling • Quota sampling • Multistage purposeful random sampling • Multistage purposeful sampling • Other (please specify)

6 RESEARCH APPROACHES AND DESIGN

Qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed Method
• Case study a. Intrinsic b. Instrumental c. Collective d. Single • Action research • Participatory action research • Historical research • Concept analysis	• Design research • Descriptive survey • Correlation research • Causal comparative • True – Experimental • Quasi-experimental • Cross-sectional design	Leech & Onwuegbuzie • Partially mixed concurrent equal status design • Partially mixed concurrent dominant status design • Partially mixed sequential equal status design • Partially mixed sequential equal dominant design

• Ethnography • Focused ethnography • Critical ethnography • Institutional ethnography • Autoethnography • Ethnomethodology • Biography • Autobiography • Life history • Narrative inquiry • Design research • Phenomenology • Phenomenography • Document analysis • Grounded theory • Discourse analysis • Critical discourse analysis • Evaluation research (proactive; clarification; interactive; monitoring; impact) • Community mapping • Photovoice		• Fully mixed concurrent equal status design • Fully mixed concurrent dominant status design • Fully mixed sequential equal status design • Fully mixed sequential equal dominant design • Transformative mixed methods A. Creswell • Convergent design • Explanatory sequential design • Exploratory sequential design • Explanatory concurrent design • Exploratory concurrent design • The intervention design • Social justice design • Multistage evaluation design

Authors to consult: John W Creswell or NL Leech and AJ Onwuegbuzie

7 MISTAKES OFTEN MADE WHEN COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

Section 1: Researcher's details

- Ensure that proof of registration is attached as Appendix A. Then number the following attachment as Appendix B, then Appendix C etc.

- Sponsors or funders: To state Unisa is incorrect. You need to be specific.

Section 2: Details of proposed research

Application status: (2.1 in the application form).

- First submission: Is it the first time that the application is submitted to the CEDU REC for clearance? It doesn't refer to the submissions made to the supervisor to get the application ready for submission to the REC.

- When the application was referred back and it is submitted for a second or third time it is a **revised** application. In such cases it is of the utmost importance that the application number is indicated.

The type of application (2.2 in the application form).

- Community engaged research is only applicable to staff doing research. If you are a student completing the application form the only box to be ticked is Master' student/Doctoral student.

Section 3: Research/project summary

Title of the dissertation/thesis/project (3.1 in the application form).

- Make sure the title is correct with regard to spelling; punctuation etc. as it will appear on the clearance certificate.

Risk category (3.3 in the application form).

- Every researcher needs to indicate the risk category. Often it is indicated by the applicant as N/A. If human participants are involved in the research (teachers/parents adults older than 18 years) it will be at least category 2. If children younger than 18 years old are involved in the research it will be category 3 or 4 depending on the risk. Use the RISK CATEGORIES, DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES table included in this document to choose the correct risk category.

Conflict of interest (3.4 in the application form).

- Often research is conducted at your workplace (school) which implies it can be seen as a conflict of interest. It is important to describe how you will deal with the situation to mitigate the conflict of interest.

Research background (3.6 in the application form).

- The background is often written without sub headings and references. The following should be used as sub headings: *Background*, *problem statement, research question, sub-questions*, *aim and objectives, reference list.*

Sample size (3.7.4 in the application form).

- The sample size is often not clearly described. All the groupings involved in the research should be indicated. Be specific.

- Participant selection is described without indicating what criteria were used to select the participants. Criteria for each group must be indicated.

Data collection instruments (3.7.5 in the application form).

- Only indicate the instruments applicable to your research and **delete** the rest. Make sure that you use the bullet points given as subheadings and that the instrument is attached as an appendix. If a focus group, observation, interview, questionnaire/online surveys are used it must be attached as an appendix or appendices if more than one is used. Each must be on a separate page and the

numbering of the instruments must follow a logic sequence so that the reviewers are able to follow the reasoning behind it.

Section 4: Proposal and risk related information.

Description of how participants will be informed of the findings or the results (4.3 in the application form).

- Participants are entitled to age-appropriate feedback. Therefore to indicate that the dissertation or thesis will be available in a library or that the researcher can be contacted for the results is not appropriate where learners were participants. Think of a creative way to give feedback to learners. This section also does not refer to the ensuring that the transcribed data is correct (Not member checking).

Section 5: Permission, consent and assent.

- Most of the problems with regard to obtaining clearance stems from this section. It is critically important that you **list** the procedure you are following to obtain permission to conduct the research and to **describe** in detail how permission, consent and assent will be obtained. This is clearly explained in the application form under 5.1. When children are younger than 18 years, consent must be obtained from the parent and assent must be obtained from the child

- Informed permission, consent and assent letters. Only attach an example of the letters outlining the study and requesting permission, consent or assent not a signed form as it poses the question of research being retrospective.

- Each letter should be on a separate page and attached as a numbered appendix.

- **Informed consent and informed assent prompt sheet**

  - There is a specific space on the last page of the application form where you need to list all the appendices.

Example how to indicate the Appendices in the application form

Appendix number	Name of appendix	Attached YES or NO
A	Proof of Registration	YES
B	Request permission form GDE	YES
C	Response letter form GDE	NO
D	Permission form Circuit office	YES
E	Response letter from Circuit office	NO
F	Request to School Principal	YES
G	Consent letter to Parent	YES
H	Assent letter form child	YES
I	Focus group questions	YES
J	Questionnaire	Yes
K	Interview questions	Yes

L	Observation schedule /list	Yes

Section 6 is only for UNISA STAFF.

Section 7: Declaration

- You need to complete the declaration and sign it (real signature not a computer signature made by using a different font) and the supervisor must approve the application by signing that he/she checked that the form is correctly and honestly completed**. Often this is not signed.** Unsigned applications cannot be considered.