# Checklist for submitting a research proposal to the Ethics Committee Computer & Information Science

This is the Ethics Assessment checklist for the Ethics Committee Computer & Information Science. It consists of several sections according to the various typical forms of research in this domain. Depending on your plans for research, you have to fill out some of them – but often, not the complete list. The questions in the checklist will guide you through this flow.

The procedure for submitting this checklist for review can be found on the EC-CIS website. [[1]](#footnote-2)

It is part of the official Research Ethics Policy of the University of Twente. [[2]](#footnote-3)

For most questions, some explanation is provided *(in italics)*. In some cases, the explanation may refer to further information that can be found in the FAQ on the website of EC-CIS. [[3]](#footnote-4)

The checklist allows you to indicate whether you want to use the LONG FORM or the SHORT FORM of the questionnaire. The short form is specifically for researchers experienced with the procedure. The long form is highly recommended for people with less experience or who are uncertain at various places what is expected of their answers.

FOR THE SHORT FORM THERE IS ALSO A REDUCED SEPARATE TEMPLATE ONLY CONTAINING THOSE QUESTIONS

## I. Intro

Name:

Title of the research:

Context:

* Bachelor's thesis,
* Master's thesis
* PhD project/AIO
* Academic research conducted by a faculty member
* Other

If Bachelor/Master's thesis, give education programme:

If Bachelor/Master's thesis or PhD Project, give name supervisor:

Research group:

Summary of the research:

*Please provide a clear and concise description of your research including rationale (background), objective (aim), design and methods.*

Start date (estimated):

End date (estimated):

## II. Submission Process

1. **“Ethically trivial” research:** Is your research fully described by one of the following options?

I *only* interview experts, in their role as professionals, on their expertise; I meet the following conditions: 1) the interviewees are not themselves the subject of research , they are experts that advise me on aspects of the target population of my work 2) I guarantee written informed consent by the participant and 3) I adhere to current standards of data management. *à end checklist; submit to EC to receive automatic approval*

Neither of these options fully cover my research *à continue filling out this checklist*

1. **Short form / long form:** Do you want to fill out the short form or the long form of the questionnaire?

*The short form is more concise; the long form provides a few extra questions that may help understand what you need to fill out in various places.*

Short form *à Skip all questions that start with LONG FORM ONLY, or use the other checklist from the website*

Long form

### II-a. Medical Research

1. **Research domain:** Regarding the nature of your research, does one or more of the following statements apply to your research?

\* the research is in a potentially medical domain such as illness, assessment and diagnosis, prevention, cure, or care  
\* the research addresses a health outcome  
\* the research gathers health data  
\* the research involves a hospital or other medical setting  
\* the research may be potentially medical for some (other) reason

Yes, one or more of the above apply to the research *à please explain below (mandatory) and follow up*

I am uncertain whether the above applies to my research*à please explain below (mandatory) and follow up*

No, the research is not medical, health related, or close-to-medical in any way whatsoever à continue to section II-b

Explanatory notes: …

* 1. à Followup if Yes or Uncertain:   
       
     **METC involved:** Have you been, or are you planning to be, in contact with an METC (Medical Ethical Assessment board) concerning this research?   
       
     *If medical research and human subjects are involved, you possibly need to apply at a medical research ethics committee (METC). For more information, please contact* [*Research Support TechMed Centre*](mailto:researchsupport-techmed@utwente.nl)

Yes, the METC has already formally ruled that our research is NOT subject to the WMO *à continue filling out the rest of this self assessment*

Yes, the METC has already provided a review of the research, or we have applied or will apply for a full review to the METC for this research *à Research that has undergone a full METC review is not reviewed by the EC-CIS, so you should probably not fill out this checklist. Contact the secretary of the EC if you believe you still need to engage with the EC-CIS assessment procedure.*

No, this is not needed à *Explain below why, despite your answers to the previous question, METC involvement is not needed.*

Explanatory notes: … *…*

### II-b. Pre-Advice procedure

1. **Pre-advice:** Did you consult an ethics adviser before submitting this request for review?

*For students Create and I-Tech this is mandatory. Please, contact the* [*create-itech-ethics team*](mailto:ethics-create-itech@utwente.nl)*. For others, this is optional but may be helpful in speeding up the review process. See website of EC-CIS for list of some available advisers.*

Yes *à indicate who and include their final advice below*

No, and I am \*NOT\* a student in CreaTe or I-Tech

Explanatory notes: *…advice and who provided it…*

## III. Human research participants

1. **Human participant research:** Does the research include   
   - active involvement of human research participants during the research, and/or   
   - gathering new data from individuals   
   such as measurements or responses from interviewees, survey respondents, participants, informants, or simply people whose data is measured because they are present in a certain place at a certain time?  
     
   *Regarding interviews, sometimes researchers are uncertain whether their interview with an expert or client falls under “research with human participants”. The FAQ on the EC-CIS website contains some guidelines in that respect.*

No *à proceed to the next section*

Yes *à answer the other questions in this section*

### III-a. The participants

1. **Research population:** Please provide a brief description of the intended research population, including inclusion and exclusion criteria and number of participants, and recruitment strategies.

*“Research population” covers all the individuals and organizations acting as sources for your data collection and other research and design work, including participants, respondents, subjects in experiments, informants, co-designers, interviewees and people to be observed.*   
  
*Number of participants: must be reasonably decided; e.g. through sample size calculation, expected point of saturation, etc. The FAQ contains some more detailed explanations  
  
Inclusion: characteristics that participants must have in order to be included (e.g., profession, age, membership of organization, capacity to speak a certain language, etc)*   
*Exclusion: Where relevant, you can formulate additional exclusion criteria. This concerns individuals who meet the inclusion criteria but who will be excluded from the study for other reasons (e.g., because they may be particularly impacted by the risks to which participants will be exposed, or lack a necessary competency in a certain language)*

*Recruitment: How will the invitation be distributed? The exact method can carry several implications, e.g. for representativity and diversity of the population, and the level of pressure that people may feel to respond.*

Explanatory notes: *…*

### III-b. Inclusion of vulnerable participants

1. **LONG VERSION ONLY: Lack of capacity to consent:** Do you have participants whoare formally NOT able to give informed consent?  
     
   *Able to give informed consent: adult, not cognitively impaired, not otherwise incapacitated [[4]](#footnote-5). Can reasonably be said to fully understand the terms of their participation and potential risks associated with it, and are also legally considered able to give informed consent (in Dutch: “wilsbekwaam”).*

All our participants have the capacity to consent

We include people who lack the capacity to consent *à Please elaborate in your answer to the last question in this subsection*

1. **LONG VERSION ONLY: Vulnerable participants:** Does your research target vulnerable participants such as focusing on specific ethnic groups, people in another country, minors (<16 years), people with physical or cognitive impairments (regardless of their capacity to consent), people under institutional care (e.g., nursing homes, hospitals, prisons), or any other particular group that may be more vulnerable than people in the general population?  
     
   *Note that targeting vulnerable participants can be a good thing —it is important to have everyone benefit from our research— as long as you take their vulnerability into account in an appropriate way.*

Yes *à Please elaborate in your answer to the last question in this subsection*

No

1. **LONG VERSION ONLY: Power relations:** Does your research target participants somehow dependent on, or in a subordinate position to the researcher (e.g., students or relatives)?

*Participants who are in any dependent or unequal relationship with the researcher or research supervisor (e.g., students or employees of the researcher or the research supervisor) may also be regarded as a vulnerable group. If your study will involve such participants, it is essential for you to guard against possible adverse consequences of this situation (e.g., students having the impression or fear of staff members assigning lower grades to the coursework of students because they have refused to participate in a research project). This can for example be achieved by ensuring that participants will remain anonymous to the individuals concerned or by requesting permission to add the data to the research only after the grades have been assigned. Also in such settings it is more important to ensure that participants have a good alternative to participating.*

Yes *à Please elaborate in your answer to the last question in this subsection*

No

1. **Explanation of approach to vulnerable participants:** Please elaborate in what wayyou include participants that are vulnerable in any way, and how you will take this into account in your plans.

*Take into account your answers to the earlier questions in this subsection.*  
 Yes *à Please elaborate below.*

No

Explanatory notes: *… Please explain which; why inclusion of these participants is necessary/right; how you will deal with issues arising from their inclusion; and which measures you will take to protect their interests, both regarding their ability to give active, informed, and voluntary consent and regarding any other vulnerabilities.…*

### III-c. Task, measures, and stimuli

1. **LONG VERSION ONLY: Research types:** Please succinctly introduce the research types that you include for participants in your research.

*Note briefly which types of research are part of the procedure. E.g., “observation session at work place followed by interview”; “experiment in which user carries out a task with a prototype”; “video recording of participants holding a conversation about a set topic“; “focus group about a piece of technology”; “interview to get knowledge and insights from informant”; …*

*Non-exhaustive list of research types:  
\* Interviewing: paper/online questionnaires, survey, face to face or online interview, focus group  
\* Field research in natural setting: observations, contextual interview, automated data collection  
\* Individual or group design work: e.g., codesign workshop  
\* Participation in non-experiment activity: can be formative evaluation of prototypes, but more in general providing artificial tasks, includes triggering stimuli and tasks to elicit observable behavior and responses; measured with e.g. observations, interviews, and manual or automated data collection   
\* Participation in formal experiment: asked to perform a set task, respond to predefined stimuli, measuring behaviour and outcomes*

Explanatory notes: *… probably some overlap with summary of research in section I…*

1. **LONG VERSION ONLY: Context of real life activities**: Do the activities of participants that people do, included in your research, include activities in a real life setting?   
     
   *E.g., observation of daily work activities; measuring behaviour in daily life, work, sports or school setting; …*

Yes *à Include elaboration under your extended description of the research procedure at the end of this subsection*

No

1. **LONG VERSION ONLY: Materials, prototypes and designs**: Do the activities include interaction with a prototype, design, mockup, product, interaction technology, etc?  
     
    Yes *à Include elaboration under your extended description of the research procedure at the end of this subsection* No
2. **LONG VERSION ONLY: Assigning tasks to participants**: Do the research procedures include activities performed specifically for the sake of the research?  
     
   *These may include tasks, assignments, and guided activities with or without prototype (e.g., play a game; do a design task; role-play a situation; hold a scripted conversation; interact with a prototype; respond to presented pictures or other stimuli). If you only carry out an interview, or passively measure human activity (e.g., using environmental sensing), answer “No”.*

Yes *à Include elaboration under your extended description of the research procedure at the end of this subsection* No

1. **LONG VERSION ONLY: Location**: Where will the research activity take place?  
     
   *E.g., public space, lab, user’s home, work place, online, …*

Explanatory notes: *… …*

1. **LONG VERSION ONLY: Time investment**: How much time will each participant spend?   
     
   *What is the number of sessions/meetings in which each will participate and the time per session/meeting? Ethically relevant because too large time investment could be inappropriate.*

Explanatory notes: *… …*

1. **Description of research procedure**: What is the research procedure, in terms of setting, tasks, activities, content, and stimuli?

*Construct your explanation including the elaboration to the preceding questions in this section.*Explanatory notes: *… …*

1. **Measures**: What measurements, recording tools, discussion topics will you include?  
     
   *E.g., interview responses on certain topics, surveys, automated measurements, self reports, observational notes, recordings, and other sources of data. These measures may be taken with the researchers present (e.g. interview), or with the researcher absent (e.g. diary study, or experiment recordings with the researcher remaining in a different room).*

*Please describe succinctly which sensors and recording devices will be used and the type of behaviour/communication that will be observed, topics/questions that participants will be asked to address, and other data that will be recorded, with researcher present or absent, in relation to the research procedure that you described earlier.*

Explanatory notes: *… …*

### III-d. Risks

1. **Risk of adverse effects:** Is there a risk for adverse (or: negative) effects of the research for certain participants, and how do you deal with these risks?

*Adverse effects may include, for example: danger posed by equipment or human error, e.g. risk of injury; danger posed by the task; adverse effects on mental health and well being (e.g. due to unpleasant stimuli such as shocking visual materials or confronting interview questions); physical effects such as epilepsy or motion sickness; and other effects.*

*Screening: If certain participants are more than average vulnerable to adverse effects from the research, you can decide to exclude those participants through screening before the start of your research (e.g., you might want to exclude people with epilepsy when subjecting them to certain visual content). You have described this as part of your inclusion / exclusion criteria, and can refer to these here.*

*Mitigations might include monitoring, defining criteria for discontinuing the research because of major discomfort (“stop protocol”), providing debriefing, or other facilities.*

Yes *à please explain further below*

No

Uncertain *à please elaborate below*

Explanatory notes: *… what are the risks of adverse effects (or why are there no such risks); explain your screening, monitoring, mitigation, and break-off procedures; how do you ensure that both researcher and participant can be considered competent to deal with the risk …*

1. **Burden to participant more generally:** What are other short-term or long-term burdens and/or risks to the participants, if any; and if they are significant, how will you mitigate them? Consider burdens and risks such as physical and psychological stress, inconvenience or discomfort beyond the normal experience of everyday life, related to your research.  
     
   *Mitigations might include monitoring, defining criteria for discontinuing the research because of major discomfort (“stop protocol”), providing debriefing, or other facilities.*

Explanatory notes: …

1. **Accidental findings:** Does the method used allow for making an accidental, diagnostic finding that the experimental participant might have to be informed about?

*Some research methods can lead to accidental discoveries that may be of vital importance to the subject, such as an irregular heartbeat on an ECG. If so, a clause should be included in the informed consent, which outlines an exact procedure to be followed in such a case. For instance, whether the subject is to be informed about such a result.*

No, the method does not allow for this possibility

Yes*à explain below*

Uncertain *à explain below*

Explanatory notes: … …

### III-e. Briefing, Deception, and Debriefing

1. **Briefing.** Will you inform potential research participants (and/or their legal representatives in case of legally non-competent participants) completely about the aims, activities, burdens and risks (such as to their health and well-being) of the research and about other relevant information before the decide to take part in the research? How will you do this?  
     
   *How can you do this: You can inform participants about the research through an information letter/e-mail/brochure, information posted on a website which is brought to the participant’s attention, information delivered orally by the researcher or intermediary, or other means. Level of appropriate formality also depends on possible severity/urgency of ethics issues.*  
     
   *Understanding is key: It is important that you show how you ensure that the participant actually received and processed the information. Information not unnecessarily complex or hard to understand; take expected reading ability of the audience into account; amount of information that is delivered must not be out of proportion with the size and scope of the research, leading to an unreasonable burden of another kind.*

*Do not withhold information unless: Information may not be withheld from participants unless it could bias subsequent findings (e.g., if information about the research question/hypothesis or awareness of the details of the research procedure is likely to influence participants’ behaviour or responses to questions) or if doing so has been found to be in the public interest. Information concerning any actual or potential risks or burdens of a study should never be withheld.*

Yes, participants are fully briefed beforehand *à Please explain*

No, participants are not briefed beforehand *à Please explain*

Participants are briefed, but in an incomplete manner (important information is withheld) *à Please explain*

Explanatory notes: *…   
Information that you withhold: which and why; how you mitigate any risks / consequences of that during participation.   
Information that you provide: summarize how you will provide the information; attach the relevant documents with that information to this request …*

1. **Information on withdrawal of consent.** Will you inform potential research participants (and/or their legal representatives in case of legally non-competent participants) clearly that they can withdraw from the research at any time without explanation/justification?  
     
    Yes

No *à Please explain*

Explanatory notes: *… …*

1. **Deception.** Will you use any Deception in the research procedure? How, and why?  
     
   *Deception is defined as intentionally providing inaccurate information to the subject about the true nature of the study and what is expected from them (in contrast to withholding information, as in the previous question). Examples include using covert methods of observation, observing types of behaviour other than those announced beforehand or intentionally misinforming participants about specific aspects of the study or the technology involved. Although deception can be necessary in order to avoid socially desirable answers or other forms of bias, it also goes against the principle of active, informed consent. It should therefore be applied only when the knowledge sought cannot be obtained in any other way. Deception is never allowed concerning information about the possible risks and burdens that are linked to participation. Deception is only allowed if there is no possibility of answering the research question without deception.* No, we will not use any deception

Yes, we will use deception *à*

1. Does any deception regarding risks take place?  
     
   *Note that deception is never allowed concerning information about the possible risks and burdens that are linked to participation.*

Yes***!*** *à please explain why you think your deception is justified*

No *à please explain the nature of the deception below*

1. Are participants offered, immediately after participation, the opportunity to retroactively withdraw their initial consent?

*If deception cannot be avoided, participants should be provided with information about the true nature of the research immediately after their participation is completed. Such debriefing should allow participants to confirm/withdraw their initial consent (and hence any data collected from their participation so far).*

Yes

No***!*** *à please explain why you think this is justified*

Explanatory notes: …

1. **Debriefing**: Will the research procedure involve a debriefing after participation, and how will you do this?  
     
   *Debriefing is used to inform participants about any incomplete or deceptive information they received earlier, and to inform them of possible follow-up to the research.   
     
   Debrief after deception/withholding information: If information has been withheld from participants, the information should be provided to them immediately after their participation is completed. This debriefing is typically done by explaining in person or providing a standard document with explanation. Such debriefing may have to involve an opportunity for participants to confirm/withdraw their initial consent.   
     
   Debriefing about follow-up: In the interest of transparency, it is good to inform participants about what will happen after their participation is completed. How will you inform participants about what will happen after their participation is concluded? Some options (of which you can use more than one) are: provide participant with researcher’s contact details so they can ask for more information if they would like to know more; provide oral or written information about what the researchers will do with the collected data; participants and others who are interested may provide their contact details to the researcher and will then receive a summary of the research results. If you use none of these, please explain why.*

Yes *à please explain your debriefing procedures*

No

Explanatory notes: …

### III-f. Consent Procedure

1. **Freedom to participate:** Are the participants completely free to participate in the research and to withdraw from participation whenever they wish and for whatever reason?   
     
   *The freedom to participate or not and to withdraw might be reduced in various circumstances. Generally this reduction is not desirable; sometimes it can be considered acceptable but it always requires clear explanation (in this request, but also to the participant where possible).*   
    *Limiting freedom to participate: Some underlying reasons that the participant does not have freedom of choice to participate (but not in every circumstances acceptable): they are not aware that research is going on (so cannot choose NOT to participate); there is no reasonable alternative to participation (almost always not acceptable);*   
    *Limiting freedom to withdraw: Some underlying reasons limiting the freedom to withdraw after consenting to participate (but not in every circumstances acceptable): data has been anonymized and the link to the participant’s identity has been broken; data has been publicly release in a way that cannot reasonably be undone; data is part of a data set for more people and the data for this person cannot be withdrawn without withdrawing a larger group of data of other people (placing an undue cost on research);*

Yes, and we clearly communicate this to them

No, or not entirely *à explain how and why*

Uncertain *à explain*

Explanatory notes: …

1. **Direct consent or proxy consent:** Who will provide the consent?

*Please note that not all human beings are capable of consent. Individuals with the capacity or competence to consent:*

* *Are 16 years or older (adult);*
* *Have the capacity to make choices about a proposed course of action;*
* *Know about the risks, benefits and alternatives;*
* *Understand that consent is ‘voluntary and continuing permission’;*
* *Understand that consent ‘can be withdrawn at any time’.*

*Research with less-than-competent participants: If an individual is non-competent or less competent to provide consent, you should ask for informed consent from the individual’s legal guardian or representative(s). For adults who are unable to provide informed consent (incapacitated subjects) their legal guardian or representative must sign consent for participation. If at all possible, you must additionally ask / verify with the participant, and break off the participation if during the experiment the participant shows clear signs of objection; in that case describe how you do this. See also* [*https://english.ccmo.nl/human-subjects/informed-consent/incapacitated-adults*](https://english.ccmo.nl/human-subjects/informed-consent/incapacitated-adults)*.*

*Research with minors: according to Dutch law, minors younger than 12 years of age are not able to give informed consent, and parent(s) or legal representative(s) must sign consent for the child’s participation. In case of minors older than 11 and younger than 16 years of age, informed consent is obtained from* ***both*** *the minor and the parent(s) or legal representatives). In both cases, consent from one parent/legal representative is considered sufficient, unless the Ethics Commission decides that a particular research project requires consent from both parents. From 16 years of age, consent is only obtained from the participant. For some types of research it may nevertheless be good practice to inform the parents or legal representatives.*

Participant (no legal representative will separately be informed)  
 Legal representative  
 Both participant and a legal representative  
 Participant, but legal representative will additionally be informed

No consent will be obtained

Explanatory notes: …

1. **Type of consent:** Which type of consent will you use?  
     
   *The formality and reliability of the (documentation of) obtained consent partially relates to the severity of the ethics issues involved in the research.*

*Some possible forms for obtaining consent are:  
\* Signed, written consent form prior to participation*

*\* Active, non anonymous online consent before the start of the research (e.g. as part of opening statement of online survey including a checkbox for the appropriate forms of consent)*

*\* Active, anonymous online consent before the start of the research (e.g. as part of opening statement of online survey including a checkbox for the appropriate forms of consent)*

*\* Oral, non-recorded consent prior to the research*

*\* Oral, recorded consent prior to the research (e.g., interview)*

*\* Passive/tacit consent (opt out). This type of consent assumes individuals’ consent if they do not explicitly object to participation after they have been informed about the research. Note: this is a dispreferred option! If you intend to use this form of consent, make a clear case for (a) why this is necessary and (b) why this is acceptable and (c) why you think sufficient action will be taken to inform participants (and possibly legal representatives) of the research.*

*\* No consent: only in exceptional cases; requires very good motivation including identification of, and measures to mitigate, potential undesirable consequences.*  
 Signed, written consent form prior to participation *à Please upload the form*  
 Active, non anonymous online consent prior to participation *à Please upload document describing exact method and text of consent*   
 Active, anonymous online consent prior to participation *à Please upload document describing exact method and text of consent*  
 Oral, non-recorded consent prior to participation

Oral, recorded consent prior to participation  
 Passive/tacit consent (opt out) *à Please explain below* Other *à Please explain below*  
  
Explanatory notes: …explain consent method and upload supportive information…

1. **Consent for future use:** Will you keep and reuse the newly collected data for future research uses, and do you obtain adequate consent for this?  
     
    No, I will only use the data for this research  
    Yes, I may keep and reuse the data in future research, and I do obtain explicit consent   
    Yes, I may keep and reuse the data in future research, but do NOT obtain separate consent for this  
     
   Explanatory notes: …
2. **Personal data:** Will you gather new personally identifiable data about the research participants, and does the consent information also address consent for Personally Indentifiable Information, separate from and in addition to consent for research participation and research data collection and use?  
     
    No, I do not gather personally identifiable data aside from (possibly) the consent form itself  
    Yes, I will gather PII but the consent information does not mention this separately   
    Yes, I will gather PII; the consent information deals with this separately and adequately   
     
   Explanatory notes: …

1. **Rewards:** Will participants receive any rewards, incentives or payments for participating in the research?  
     
   *Participants may be offered proportional compensation. If you are intending to use incentives/payments, keep in mind that such rewards should be modest, in order to avoid enticing individuals to participate.  
     
   Some forms of reward that have been used include:  
   \* travel expenses to a specified maximum  
   \* voucher of specified value  
   \* lottery amongst participants to win prize of specified nature and value  
   \* financial reward: amount per activity/time  
   \* no reward  
   \* …*  
     
    No, the participants will not receive any reward  
    Yes, the participants will receive a reward *à please elaborate*   
     
   Explanatory notes: …

### III-g. Addressing implementation challenges due to COVID19

1. **Face to face:** Will the research introduce additional face to face contacts between subjects, or between subject and researcher?  
     
    No face to face contact at all, only online  
    Yes but only between people who are already in contact (eg housemates, family) with each other within the 1.5m *à explain who, how, what is done to prevent covid transmission risks*  
    Yes, new contacts are introduced *à explain who, how, what is done to prevent covid transmission risks*  
     
   Explanatory notes: …
2. **Indirect contact via objects:** Does research involve tangible products, prototypes, shared objects etc?  
     
   *E.g., a prototype which can be cleaned between sessions, or a prototype that is actually shared between people during a session*  
    No  
    Yes *à elaborate what, and how you will prevent contagion*  
     
   Explanatory notes: …
3. **UT Rules for experimentation under COVID19:** Are you aware of departmental/UT rules regarding experimentation under COVID19 and will you follow them?  
     
    The rules do not apply to the type of research I am doing *à briefly comment why*   
    Yes I know the rules and will follow them *à please explain which rules you follow*   
    Yes I know the rules but will deviate from them *à please explain*   
    Uncertain / don’t know *à please explain*  
   Explanatory notes: …
4. **Other COVID19 issues:** Please explain, in relation to your answers below, any other implementation challenges due to COVID19 and how you deal with them.  
     
   Explanatory notes: …

## IV. The use of pre-existing data in your research project

1. Will the research involve the inclusion, combination, use, and/or analysis of already existing data sets about people?

*Examples of such data: documents, annual reports, datasets resulting from earlier research projects, social media platforms, websites, medical files. In most cases, you will have no direct contact with the individuals to whom these data pertain.*

No *à proceed to the next section*

Yes *à answer the other questions in this section*

### IV-a. Sources and type of existing data and grounds for permission to use existing data

1. **LONG VERSION ONLY:** Has the data originally been collected or generated, among possibly other reasons, for the explicit purpose of scientific research?  
     
   *When you use an existing data set for your research, the data set has originally been collected for a purpose other than your research project. This original purpose may have been research, as well, or something else (e.g., Twitter data, medical dossiers, or websites, are typically not created for the purpose of scientific research). Repurposing data beyond the original scope for which they were created has to be done with care.*

Yes  
 No *à please include elaboration under last question in this subsection*

1. **LONG VERSION ONLY:** Will you include data from **publicly available sources**?

*Examples of such data: public documents and reports, newspapers, public websites, open web forums or web platforms including Twitter communication, and other public media and/or publicly published data sets. Inclusion of fully publicly available data does generally not lead to additional ethical concerns.*

No

Yes *à Please explain which public sources you include under last question in this subsection*

1. **LONG VERSION ONLY:** Will you include data from **semi-public sources**?

*Examples of such data: data on web forums, discussion forums, online chatrooms, Facebook and other social media that are accessible only to members of an organization or to registered users with a password.  
  
These data are not automatically available to all. You may obtain access if you register as a user. You should nevertheless be aware that individuals who use such platforms expect that other users will have purposes similar to their own. They may not wish to be observed or cited by researchers. In such cases, you should start by consulting the terms and conditions of use of the specific platform to determine whether there is a gatekeeper/administrator who you should approach for approval or advice.*

No

Yes *à Please include elaboration under last question in this subsection, and follow up*

a. Do your activities as a researcher on the semi-public data conform to the terms and conditions of the specific platform?  
  
 Yes

No *à Please include elaboration under last question in this subsection*

b. If relevant, has permission for the use of data been secured from the moderator/administrator/owner of the website?  
  
 Yes

No *à Please include elaboration under last question in this subsection* Not applicable

c. Will you make your intentions clear to site users before retrieving data and will you offer them the opportunity to withdraw from, or not participate in, your research?  
  
 Yes

No *à Please include elaboration under last question in this subsection* Not relevant *à Please include elaboration under last question in this subsection*

1. **LONG VERSION ONLY:** Will you include data from **private sources**?

*Some examples of such data: personal private data (e.g. medical or police files on individuals); data from Statistics Netherlands (CBS); personal records; data from previous research activities or corporate data that was not publicly released.*

No

Yes *à Please elaborate under last question in this subsection: explain which private sources you include, for which purpose the data was originally generated, how you will obtain access to the data, what are the conditions to use, and whether individuals that the data pertains to have already consented to this kind of additional later use of the data.*

1. **Summary of grounds for permission to use the data:** Please summarize/list the pre-existing data sets that you will include in your research and explain why you think you can use this data for your research.  
    *See FAQ for some extra support.*  
   Explanatory notes: …

### IV-b. Accidental findings in existing data

1. **Accidental findings in existing data sets:** Does your research allow for making an accidental, diagnostic finding about people who are included in the existing data set, that they might have to be informed about?

*Some research methods can lead to accidental discoveries that may be of vital importance to the data subject, such as an irregular heartbeat on an ECG that was included in the data set that you use. If so, outline an exact procedure to be followed in such a case. For instance, whether the subject is to be informed about such a result.*

No, the method does not allow for this possibility

Yes*à explain below*

Uncertain *à explain below*

Explanatory notes: … …

## V. AI technology

1. Will the project develop AI technology, or will the project involve the deployment and/or use of AI technology for practical applications?  
     
   *Artificial intelligence (AI) is a computational system that is interacting with the environment and is capable of directing this interaction without direct human control. AI includes a wide range of techniques that aim at simulating certain aspects of human cognitive processes. These techniques may include if-then rules, decision trees, logic, heuristics, but it is machine learning (and more specifically deep learning) that are currently most prominent.*

No *à proceed to the next section*

Yes *à answer the other questions in this section*

### V-a. Bias and discrimination by AI

1. **Biased AI.** Is it possible that (a) the data used for training the AI contains implicit or explicit biases, or (b) that the AI algorithm itself introduce biases, for example by having worse performance for some groups than for others?

*Bias is a prejudiced and unfair belief about a person, group of people, or animal species. It normally relies on unfavorable preconceived evaluation of a person based on personal characteristics or perceived group membership. Biased decisions result in unfair treatment of those affected by it or otherwise disadvantages them.  
  
The FAQ provides some more information on possible sources of bias, possible measures to identify these biases, and possible mitigation of any possible harmful outcomes resulting from these biases.*

No

Yes *à Explain below: how, why, and mitigation.*  
Explanatory notes: …

### V-b. Proper use of the AI’s output for decision making purposes.

1. **Explainability:** Is there a possibility that AI will generate decisions (or advice) that would not be explainable and, as a result, the professional users (e.g., factory operators, medical staff, policy makers, and others) would be unable to provide justifications for the decisions informed by the AI model?

*A decision-making process is transparent when it is obvious how a conclusion was reached. An explainable decision (or advice) is such that it provides relevant reasons for preferring one course of action to alternative ones. A decision is justified when there a good reason to accept it.*

No risk; the AI’s decisions (advice) are explainable *à Please explain under last question in this subsection: How will such explanations be provided?*

Yes, there is a risk that the AI’s decisions (advice) are not explainable *à Please explain under last question in this subsection: How do you plan to address the problem of the lack of explainability?*

1. **Validity and certainty, expert in the loop:** Is the validity or certainty of the AI based decisions such that using the AI system without an expert opinion of a professional in the loop may pose risks of malformed decision making (and its concomitant negative consequences)?

No  Yes *à Please explain under last question in this subsection: How do you plan to inform future users about the need to use the AI’s output in combination with an expert opinion?*

1. **Misapplication on new data sets:** Is there a non-negligible risk of misapplication of the AI, i.e. the risk that the model will be applied to a dataset, which is not representative of the dataset on which it was trained, and thus produce results that will malform human decision making?

No

Yes *à Please explain under last question in this subsection: How do you plan to explore this risk, and inform future users of the AI model, regarding the limitations of the training dataset and the model’s applicability?*

1. **Unrealistic expectations of users:** Is there a non-negligible risk that those who will use the AI model to inform their decision making will have unrealistic expectations about its capacities and misinterpret its output?   
     
    No  
    Yes *à Please explain under last question in this subsection: How will you inform the future users about the correct procedure to interpret the results and the conditions under which they can inform the decision-making process?*
2. **Summary of proper use of AI’s output for decision making purposes:** Taking into account your earlier answers in this section, explain how you address proper future use of the AI’s output in decision making processes. Reflect on the properties of the AI decision making and on how this translates to proper use in practice.  
     
   Explanatory notes: …

### V-c. Harm from application of the AI

1. **Unintentional harm:** Could the AI generate decisions (or advice) that will negatively impact people, either through intended future applications or plausible alternative uses?   
    *Such harm could include, for example:   
   \* harm from errors in the AI output: such as a pedestrian pushing a bicycle being misclassified as a cyclist; or a system mistakenly responding to erroneous emotion recognition  
   \* harm from AI that did not make an error and was applied correctly: AI can often lead to real decisions that have a real, potentially harmful impact on people. Some examples: people not getting invited for a job interview because the automatic application-analysing AI discarded their letter; algorithms in crime & law keeping informing police or judicial decisions; algorithm supported decisions in insurance or bank loans; health care decision support systems; with or without bias, in such applications the AI can lead to decisions that can have real harmful impact on people.*  
     
    No *à Please explain why* Yes *à Please explain: What, and how do you mitigate this risk?*  
     
   Explanatory notes: …
2. **Intentional misuse:** Is it foreseeable that in the future the AI model   
   (a) will be used in a manner that violates people’s privacy and could potentially result in surveillance, or

(b) will be forced on people without their consent, or

(c) in other ways can actively be used for ethically undesirable purposes?  
  
 No  
 Yes *à Provide explanation why you think this is the case, and how you will mitigate*

Explanatory notes: …

## VI. Cybersecurity

1. Will the research involve any cybersecurity or online privacy issues, such as the possible discovery of security vulnerabilities, experiments with malicious software (e.g., computer viruses), or the discovery and investigation of illegal activities on the Internet?

No *à proceed to the next section*

Yes *à answer the other questions in this section*

1. Could your research result in the identification of security weaknesses in existing systems?

No

Yes *à Please explain under last question in this subsection what measures you will take to responsibly disclose the security flaws, preventing harm on the users.*

1. Will your research involve experiments on malicious software (e.g., computer viruses) or real-world attacks (e.g., denial of service attacks)?

No

Yes *à Please explain under last question in this subsection what measures you will take to prevent the unauthorized disclosure, manipulation, or deletion of information and to prevent malfunctions in real systems.*

1. Will your research involve external machines on the Internet?  
     
    No, this will be an offline research  
    No, we will be doing passive measurements  Yes, we will be doing active measurements or interactions *à Please explain under last question in this subsection how you will minimise the impact on the accessed system(s)*
2. Might your research lead to the accidental discovery of illegal behavior or behavior that could pose a risk to others, either directly or indirectly, on the Internet?

No

Yes *à Please explain under last question in this subsection how you will deal with these discoveries*

1. **Coordinated Vulnerability Disclosure:** Please explain concisely, and in relation to your answers above, how you will deal with the various potential issues raised in the previous questions of this section and how you will follow the UT policy on Coordinated Vulnerability Disclosure. [[5]](#footnote-6)   
     
   *Note that any disclosures have to be managed by a staff member; in case of student work this means the teacher should play a central role and*

Explanatory notes: …

## VII. Unintended consequences, misuse, and application risks

1. Is it reasonable to anticipate that the research will provide knowledge, products, or technologies that could be intentionally used to threaten, or non-intentionally result in threats, to public health and safety, crops and other plants, animals, the environment, or material infrastructure?  
     
   *More explanation at the FAQ [ADD LINK]*. *For the types of misuse already discussed in the AI section you can refer to what you wrote there.*

No *à also answer the other questions in this section!*

Yes *à please explain under last question in this subsection how, and what you will do to prevent or mitigate undesirable consequences*

1. Is a disproportionally negative impact foreseeable on certain groups of users or non-users, for example, people of a certain age, gender, sexual orientation, social class, race, ethnicity, religion, political orientation, culture, or disability, creating or reinforcing social injustices?

No *à also answer the other questions in this section!*

Yes *à please explain under last question in this subsection how, and what you will do to prevent or mitigate this*

1. Does your research or prototype have military/police/defence applications?  
     
    No *à also answer the other questions in this section!*  
    Yes *à please explain under last question in this subsection how and whether this is a potential ethical issue; include implications regarding research funding that contributed to the research*
2. Please explain concisely, and in relation to your answers above, how you will deal with the various potential issues raised in the previous questions of this section.  
     
   Explanatory notes: …

## VIII. Privacy, GDPR, and possible need for DPIA

1. Does the research include any possible access to, gathering, or use, or publication of data that can be traced back to specific individuals, directly or, for instance, by combining data from multiple sources? Or is it possible that you will accidentally access or publish PII?  
    *Make sure to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and register the processing of any personal data through* [*https://www.utwente.nl/privacy/*](https://www.utwente.nl/privacy/)*.  
     
   In some cases, a full Data Protection Impact Assessment might be necessary; see* [*https://www.utwente.nl/en/bms/datalab/research-data-and-gdpr/dpia/*](https://www.utwente.nl/en/bms/datalab/research-data-and-gdpr/dpia/) *for more information, and* [*https://www.utwente.nl/en/cyber-safety/privacy/pre\_dpia\_form/*](https://www.utwente.nl/en/cyber-safety/privacy/pre_dpia_form/f) *for a quick scan whether a DPIA is needed.* Yes, and we follow the rules on processing of personal data, including acquiring explicit consent for processing PII (besides possibly the consent for participating in research) and including a possibly necessary GDPR registration   
    No

## IX. Conflicts of interest

1. Do any of the parties involved in overseeing or carrying out the research have a potential conflict of interest?

*Conflicts of interests could include, e.g.:   
- financial interests of participating researcher(s) or overseers that could affect or reasonably appear to affect the ethical conduct, review or oversight of the proposed research;   
- non-financial interests of the participating researcher(s) that could cause conflicts of interest, including conflicts of commitment (situations in which persons have obligations to others that may interfere with the ethical conduct, review or oversight, such as contracts, research collaboration or supervision, including limitations to open sharing and publishing of research results), and  
- conflicts of conscience (situations in which the personal beliefs of persons, such as religious, political or ideological beliefs, could interfere with the ethical conduct, review or oversight; or “tainted collaborations” when it is foreseeable that a collaborator does not commit to the same ethical standards).*

No

Yes *à please elaborate and disclose any possible conflicts of interests; if relevant, include information about (co)funders and (co)sponsors.*

Explanatory notes: …

## X. Risks to researcher

1. **Risks to the researcher:** Will the study expose the researcher to any risks (e.g. when collecting data in potentially dangerous environments or through dangerous activities, when dealing with sensitive or distressing topics, or when working in a setting that may pose ‘lone worker’ risks)?

No

Yes *à Please explain*

Explanatory notes: …

## XI. Other information

1. Please add any comments on how you will ensure in practice that the procedures that you included in your answers to this whole self assessment will be followed during execution of your research.

*We will not presume to suggest how you will ensure this, but some reasons that others have supplied in the past are: personal experience of researcher or supervisor; having a consultant on board for certain specific areas of expertise; the research being ethically as well as methodologically standard and non-problematic in the field of researcher and supervisor; …*

Explanatory notes: …

1. Please include any other information you feel you should share about your research

Explanatory notes: …

## XII. Attachments

Depending on answers to the questions, there may be certain attachments that have to be supplied. Make sure that any attachments are in **pdf format.**

*Some possible attachments*

* *Consent form and Information brochure*
* *Description of debriefing*
* *Request and review of submission elsewhere (METC, EC other institution, etc)*
* *METC non-WMO decision*
* *…*

1. <https://www.utwente.nl/en/eemcs/research/ethics/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://www.utwente.nl/en/organisation/about/integrity/scientific-integrity/ethics-assessment/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. <https://www.utwente.nl/en/eemcs/research/ethics/ethics-faq/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. <https://english.ccmo.nl/human-subjects/informed-consent/incapacitated-adults> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <https://www.utwente.nl/en/eemcs/research/ethics/> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)