Guidelines of the Psychology Research Ethics Committee
*(Dutch: Commissie Ethiek Psychologie, CEP)*

**Research not evaluated by the CEP:**
Not all research can be evaluated by the Psychology Research Ethics Committee (CEP). Research with human subjects must undergo a medical ethical review if it falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act (WMO). Although deciding whether research falls under the WMO or not can be difficult in some cases, in general research cannot be evaluated by the CEP when the following two conditions apply:

1. It is medical/scientific research: This means research which is carried out with the aim of finding answers to a question in the field of illness and health (etiology, pathogenesis, signs/symptoms, diagnosis, prevention, outcome or treatment of illness), by systematically collecting and analyzing medical data. The research is carried out with the intention of contributing to medical knowledge that can also be applied to populations outside of the direct research population.

2. Participants are subjected to procedures or are required to follow rules of behavior that could potentially lead to physical or psychological damage. As examples, the following types of research need to be evaluated by an accredited medical ethical committee:

- research with a medicinal product;
- studies including blood samples or fMRI measurements;
- studies entailing highly stress-inducing procedures
- for guidelines regarding food supplements, see additional guidelines on our website

In case of doubts on whether a study can or cannot be evaluated by the CEP, please contact the secretary of the CEP, Monique Leemkuil (ethiekpsychologie@fsw.leidenuniv.nl).

For research falling under the reach of the CEP, this document contains guidelines regarding specific ethical aspects of psychological research. It is assumed that researchers submitting a CEP-application have taken note of and adhere to these guidelines, where applicable, or discuss and justify any deviations from these guidelines in the application form. The following topics are discussed (by clicking on each of the topics, you will be guided to the specific part of the guidelines describing this topic):

- **Anonymity**
- **Compensation for participation**
- **Debriefing**
- **Deception**
- **Informed Consent**
- **Psychophysiological assessments**
- **Unobtrusive methods**
- **Vulnerable groups**

**Anonymity:** Data should either be collected anonymously (e.g., by means of online questionnaires without collecting any identifiable information) or processed in a coded way (e.g., uncoupling the identifiable information from the data). Participants should be informed about how their anonymity is guaranteed in the informed consent. In case of any deviation from these general guidelines (e.g., in case of longitudinal research in which data from different time points need to be coupled), a justification should be provided in the application form of the CEP.

**Compensation for participation:** Guidelines for maximum compensation (less is allowed as long as participants are aware of the exact compensation, more should be justified) of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of Leiden University are the following:

  o Behavioural experiment:
- 30 minutes: € 3.50 or 1 credit
- 1 hour: € 6.50 or 2 credits

  ○ Behavioural experiment with participants that are difficult to find within the faculty (e.g., participants with a specific cultural background, age group, or educational level):
    - 1 hour: € 7.50

  ○ Psychological and physiological experiment (e.g., EEG, application of medication/hormone/pheromone, collecting DNA, cortisol, and other hormones, measuring heart rate, blood pressure, skin conductance):
    - 1 hour: € 7.50 or 2 credits

**Debriefing:** According to APA guidelines, debriefing is necessary to inform participants about the nature of the research, their role in the study, and to educate individuals about research. The goal of debriefing is to have individuals feel good about their participation. This means that a thorough debriefing informs participants about the rationale for the research in which they participated, about the need for deception, and about their specific contribution to the research. Important goals of debriefing are to clear up any misconceptions and to leave participants with a positive feeling toward psychological research. Therefore, in all research in which this information could not be fully provided in the Informed Consent, this information should be provided in a debriefing at the end of the study. This holds for all kinds of research, including questionnaire and experimental studies. Specific guidelines regarding debriefing in case of deception or unobtrusive methods can be found at these specific topics.

Example of information to be included in the debriefing:

*The aim of this study was to ....*

*We told you that the study was about ..., but actually we examined .... It was not possible to tell you this beforehand, because ...*

*We expect to find ...*

*Your contribution to this study is important, because ...*

**Deception:** Deliberately withholding information about the aim, the setup, and the character of the study is only allowed when there is no possibility to answer the research question without deception. Deception is not allowed if it implies withholding information about the possible risks that are associated with participation. Following deception, participants need to be fully debriefed about the nature and aim of the deception. When there are reasonable expectations of potential negative effects of the deception (e.g., in case of negative feedback), the debriefing should take place immediately after the participant finishes the session. The debriefing takes place in such a way that potential negative effects on, for example, mood or self-image will be eliminated. When no temporary negative effects are expected, the debriefing may also take place within one month after the data collection.

**Informed Consent:** All research should include an Informed Consent for the participants. Specific guidelines regarding Informed Consent in research in vulnerable groups can be found at that specific topic. It is allowed to provide Informed Consent on a page where multiple participants sign, as long as there are no privacy rules regarding the separation of this information (e.g., when participants are selected on the basis of specific characteristics, such as social anxiety). The Informed Consent should at least include the following parts:
The participant is informed about the theme of the study, the time investment asked of the participant and (if applicable) cognitive or emotional investment, and the compensation awarded for participation.

The participant has read and understood the information about the study and has had the opportunity to ask questions about this.

The data will be processed anonymously or coded.

The participant can withdraw participation at all times, without needing to provide reasons (also indicate what the consequences will be for the compensation that participants receive).

The participant offers permission to participate by signing (on paper or virtually) or by actively ticking a participation box on a website, and should only be able to participate if informed consent is provided.

Example of Informed Consent form (English):

Title of the study
(if necessary, add a simplified title, which is identical to the one mentioned in the information letter)

Information for the participant, including (1) theme of the study, (2) estimation of the time and, if applicable, cognitive or emotional investment asked of the participant, and (3) compensation awarded for participation.

- I have read the information letter for the participant. I could ask additional questions. My questions have been answered adequately. I have had sufficient time to decide whether or not I participate.
- I am aware that participation is completely voluntary. I know that I can decide at any moment not to participate or to stop. I do not need to provide a reason for that.
- My responses are processed anonymously or in a coded way.
- I give consent to use my data for the purposes that are mentioned in the information letter.

I consent to participating in this study.

Name of participant: ___________________________________________________

Signature: __________________________ ______________________

Date: _____/_____/______

Example of Informed Consent form (Dutch):

Titel van het onderzoek
(indien noodzakelijk kan een makkelijkere titel worden toegevoegd, welke identiek is aan de titel die wordt genoemd in de informatiebrief)

Informatie voor de proefpersoon, inclusief (1) thema van het onderzoek, (2) inschatting van de belasting voor de proefpersonen in tijd en, indien van toepassing, cognitieve of emotionele belasting, en (3) beloning.

- Ik heb de informatiebrief voor de proefpersoon gelezen. Ik kan extra vragen stellen. Mijn vragen zijn adequaat beantwoord. Ik heb genoeg tijd gehad om te beslissen of ik meega of niet.
- Ik ben bewust van de vrijwilligheid van deelname. Ik weet dat ik een moment op elk moment kan beslissen me te laten en te stoppen. Ik hoeft geen reden te geven.
- Mijn antwoorden worden onthoud of in een gekodeerde manier verwerkt.
- Ik geef toestemming om mijn gegevens te gebruiken voor de doeleinden die zijn genoemd in de informatiebrief.

Ik toestem in deelname aan deze studie.

Naam van de proefpersoon: ________________________________________________

Souschrift: ____________________________________________________________

Datum: _____/_____/______

Example of Informed Consent form (Dutch):

Titel van het onderzoek
(indien noodzakelijk kan een makkelijkere titel worden toegevoegd, welke identiek is aan de titel die wordt genoemd in de informatiebrief)

Informatie voor de proefpersoon, inclusief (1) thema van het onderzoek, (2) inschatting van de belasting voor de proefpersonen in tijd en, indien van toepassing, cognitieve of emotionele belasting, en (3) beloning.

- Ik heb de informatiebrief voor de proefpersoon gelezen. Ik kan extra vragen stellen. Mijn vragen zijn adequaat beantwoord. Ik heb genoeg tijd gehad om te beslissen of ik meega of niet.
- Ik ben bewust van de vrijwilligheid van deelname. Ik weet dat ik een moment op elk moment kan beslissen me te laten en te stoppen. Ik hoeft geen reden te geven.
- Mijn antwoorden worden onthoud of in een gekodeerde manier verwerkt.
- Ik geef toestemming om mijn gegevens te gebruiken voor de doeleinden die zijn genoemd in de informatiebrief.

Ik toestem in deelname aan deze studie.

Naam van de proefpersoon: ________________________________________________

Souschrift: ____________________________________________________________

Datum: _____/_____/______
- Ik heb de informatiebrief voor de proefpersoon gelezen. Ik kon aanvullende vragen stellen. Mijn vragen zijn afdoende beantwoord. Ik had voldoende tijd om te beslissen of ik meedoe.
- Ik weet dat meedoen helemaal vrijwillig is. Ik weet dat ik op ieder moment kan beslissen om toch niet mee te doen of te stoppen. Daarvoor hoef ik geen reden te geven.
- Mijn antwoorden worden anoniem / gecodeerd verwerkt.
- Ik geef toestemming om mijn gegevens te gebruiken, voor de doelen die in de informatiebrief staan.

Ik geef toestemming om aan dit onderzoek mee te doen.

Naam proefpersoon: ___________________________________________________

Handtekening: ___________________________________________

Datum: _____/_____/_____

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• **Psychophysiological assessments**: For psychophysiological research (excluding fMRI), including EEG/ERP/EOG, ECG/blood pressure, GSR/EMG, eyetracker, genetic assessments, endocrine measures, and NIRS, the *guidelines for hygienic testing* should be followed. Additionally, the Informed Consent should clearly state that no medical statements are possible on the basis of the data collected, that coincidental findings will not be interpretable by the researchers, and that the participant should visit his or her general physician when he/she wants to know more about his or her physical functioning.

• **Unobtrusive methods**: Collecting data without the participant being informed, e.g., by observing the participant’s behavior (e.g., assessing how much food has been eaten, or whether a participant helps the experimenter pick up a dropped pen), is only allowed when informing the participant beforehand will influence his or her behavior. Participants always need to be informed that they are videotaped or sound-recorded, although the reason provided for this may differ from the actual reason. In the debriefing, the participant should be informed about the unobtrusive measures that have been collected or the actual reasons for video- or audiotaping.

• **Vulnerable groups**: Research in vulnerable groups (i.e., research subjects who are legally, physically, or mentally incapable of giving consent). The use of such groups should be adequately justified and additional safeguards need to be implemented to minimize risks unique to each group. According to the Declaration of Helsinki, the investigator must obtain informed consent from the legally authorized representative. For research in minors between 12 and 16 years of age, active consent needs to be obtained from both the participant and the parents; for research in children below the age of 12, active consent of the parents is necessary, whereas the child should be informed at his or level of understanding. With ‘active consent’, a signature under an informed consent form is meant. This means that it is not sufficient to assume consent after only giving legal representatives the opportunity to object (‘opt out’).