**School of Geography and Environmental Sciences**

Ulster University

MODULES EGM303/350/351

**DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

Use this form to set out your provisional ideas for a dissertation in the form of a research proposal, ethics approval, and risk assessment. Students who fail to submit forms on time will be allocated to supervisors without reference to the student's research interests.

If you have any queries, please contact your dissertation supervisor or Dr Rory Quinn, the Dissertation Co-ordinator. rj.quinn@ulster.ac.uk

**PART 1: RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

This form should be completed electronically following the guidance in the dissertation handbook.

**1.1 STUDENT AND SUPERVISOR DETAILS**

Name

B-number

Degree programme

Dissertation title

Supervisor

**1.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT** (maximum 1000 words)

**1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

**1.4 METHODOLOGY** (maximum 500 words)

**1.5 GANTT CHART**

**1.6 REFERENCES**

**PART 2: ETHICS APPROVAL**

If you have any queries, please contact your dissertation supervisor or Dr Sara McDowell, the Chair of the School Ethics Committee. sp.mcdowell@ulster.ac.uk

**SECTION 1: RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **YES** | **NO** |
| 1.1 Does the research involve human participants (with or without their permission or knowledge at the time)? If NO, go to Section 2 |[ ] [ ]
| **CONSENT & CONFIDENTIALITY** |
| 1.2 Will you get written consent from participants?  |[ ] [ ]
| 1.3 Is there a risk that participants may be identifiable?  |[ ] [ ]
| 1.4 Will data be kept securely? |[ ] [ ]
| 1.5 Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses & compensation for time) be offered to participants? |[ ] [ ]
| **VULNERABLE PARTICIPANTS** |
| 1.5 Does your research involve children (under 18)? |[ ] [ ]
| 1.6 Does your research involve participants with cognitive or physical impairment that may render them unable to give informed consent? |[ ] [ ]
| 1.7 Does your research involve participants who may be vulnerable for personal, emotional or psychological reasons? |[ ] [ ]
| 1.8 Does your research involve participants who may become vulnerable as a result of the conduct of the study (e.g. because it raises sensitive issues) or as a result of what is revealed in the study (e.g. criminal behaviour, or behaviour which is culturally or socially unacceptable)? |[ ] [ ]
| 1.9 Does your research involve participants in unequal power relations (e.g. groups that you teach or work with, in which participants may feel coerced or unable to withdraw)? |[ ] [ ]
| 1.10 Does your research involve participants who are likely to suffer negative consequences if identified (e.g. professional censure, exposure to censure or abuse, damage to professional or social standing)? |[ ] [ ]

If your answer appears in a shaded box (NO for questions 1.2 & 1.4, or YES for all others), please explain how you will deal with the ethical issues raised.

**SECTION 2: RESEARCH INVOLVING USE OF SECONDARY DATASETS OR ARCHIVES RELATING TO PEOPLE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **YES** | **NO** |
| 2.1 Does the research involve use of secondary datasets or archives relating to people? **If NO, go to Section 4** |[ ] [ ]
| 2.2 Is there a risk that individuals may be identifiable?  |[ ] [ ]
| 2.3 Will the research involve the use of administrative or secure data that requires permission from the appropriate authorities before use? |[ ] [ ]

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, please explain how you will deal with the ethical issues raised.

**SECTION 3: RESEARCH INVOLVING ACCESS TO FIELD SITES**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **YES** | **NO** |
| 3.1 Does the project involve research at field sites? **If NO, go to Section 4** |[ ] [ ]
| 3.2 Will there be movement between field sites and an associated increase in biosecurity risk? |[ ] [ ]
| 3.3 Will the field research take place at sites where permission will be required to access and/or sample?  |[ ] [ ]
| 3.4 Will geological or ecological samples be taken? |[ ] [ ]
| 3.5 Will cultural or archaeological artefacts be investigated or removed? |[ ] [ ]
| 3.6 Does the research involve animals? |[ ] [ ]

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, please explain how you will deal with the access and ethical issues raised. For research involving animals (both vertebrates and invertebrates), cultural artefacts or geological/ecological samples please also outline what form these samples take (e.g. invertebrates, geographical distribution, estimated sample size).

**SECTION 4: RISK TO RESEARCHER**

**ALL** students must complete a risk assessment before starting research. This is in addition to this ethics form.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **YES** | **NO** |
| 4.1 Is there a possibility that the researcher could be placed in a vulnerable situation either emotionally or physically (e.g. by being alone with vulnerable or potentially physically aggressive participants, by entering an unsafe environment, or working in countries in which there is unrest)? |[ ] [ ]
| 4.2 Is the topic of the research sensitive or controversial such that the researcher could be ethically or legally compromised (e.g. as a result of disclosures made during the research)? |[ ] [ ]
| 4.3 Will the research involve the investigation or observation of illegal practices, or the participation in illegal practices? |[ ] [ ]

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, please explain how you will deal with the ethical issues raised.

**DECLARATION**

I declare that the questions above have been answered truthfully and to the best of my knowledge and belief, and that I take full responsibility for my responses. I undertake to observe ethical principles throughout the research and to report any changes that affect the ethics of the project to my supervisor.

**Student’s signature (please type)**

**PART 3: RISK ASSESSMENT**

 **PLEASE READ THE INFORMATION ON RISK ASSESSMENT AND SAFETY IN THE LAB AND FIELD IN THE DISSERTATION HANDBOOK PRIOR TO COMPLETING THIS SECTION**

Many dissertations include fieldwork and/or the use of laboratories. In all these activities it is essential that students pay proper attention to safety and related issues. When using laboratories you must familiarise yourself with, and abide by, the relevant regulations. If you are working in the field, you must conduct yourself in a mature, responsible and prudent manner. Never work in the field alone.

Please complete the table below, identifying the hazards you are likely to encounter and precautions you will take to minimise risk. For example, if working on a rocky shore, obvious hazards are tripping or exposure to sunlight. A trip hazard would be mitigated by wearing boots, and prolonged exposure to sunlight by applying sunblock, long sleeves and a sunhat. If working on digital data, you might spend long time periods in front of a computer. Typical hazards might be neck and eye strain. These factors would be mitigated by taking regular breaks.

Fieldwork location:

Laboratory location:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| HAZARD | PRECAUTION |
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