**SAMPLE INFORMATION SHEET**

**AND CONSENT FORM**

**FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

Social Research Ethics Committee (SREC)

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*The outline provided below is intended as a general model for how the information sheet should look. At a minimum, such a sheet must provide participants with details regarding the voluntary nature of participation, the right to withdraw (including time limits), confidentiality and anonymity, the nature and duration of data storage (in secure form, and for at least ten years), and whether there is potential for harm arising from participation.*

*This example is designed with postgraduate research student work in mind – therefore it makes reference to degree programmes, theses and supervisors.*

*Please read the Guidance Document for SREC Applications which may assist you in completing your Information Sheet and Consent Form.*

**INFORMATION SHEET**

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**Purpose of the Study.** As part of the requirements for [*degree*] at UCC, I have to carry out a research study. The study is concerned with [*keep it brief and simple – 1-2 sentences. There is no need to go into the theoretical complexities of the topic.*]

**What will the study involve?** The study will involve [*Indicate the procedure and time commitment, giving the simplest possible explanation and avoiding jargon and unnecessary detail. Note that, while we want to keep the information clear and brief, it is necessary to give participants information about the methods to be used, the tasks they will be set, and the time likely to be required.*]

**Why have you been asked to take part?** You have been asked because [*Because they are specifically or generally suitable to provide data for your study*].

**Do you have to take part?** [*The answer is no! – participation is voluntary. Explain about signing a consent form. Ideally they get to keep the information sheet and a copy of the consent form. They should be told that they have the option of withdrawing before the study commences (even if they have agreed to participate) or discontinuing after data collection has started. Where data are identifiable (e.g. from interviews yielding qualitative data), it’s useful to allow for afterthoughts by letting them withdraw within two weeks of participation and ask to have their data destroyed. Explain all this in writing.*]

**Will your participation in the study be kept confidential?** [*Yes! - but remember, there’s no such thing as absolute confidentiality – don’t ever make promises you may not be able to keep. Usually the relevant term is anonymity rather than confidentiality. For example:* Yes. I will ensure that no clues to your identity appear in the thesis. Any extracts from what you say that are quoted in the thesis will be entirely anonymous.

**What will happen to the information which you give?**[*Kept confidential from third parties (including workers’ superiors, if relevant); will it be destroyed after a period? For example:*] The data will be kept confidential for the duration of the study, available only to me and my research supervisor. It will be securely stored (say how). On completion of the project, they will be retained for minimum of a further ten years and then destroyed.

**What will happen to the results?** [*For example:*] The results will be presented in the thesis. They will be seen by my supervisor, a second marker and the external examiner. The thesis may be read by future students on the course. The study may be published in a research journal.

**What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?** [*If you think there are none, say so, but not in a black-and-white way. If they may feel distressed, mention the possibility and refer to the next section. For example:*] I don’t envisage any negative consequences for you in taking part. It is possible that talking about your experience in this way may cause some distress.

**What if there is a problem?** [*Tell them what they can do, for example:*] At the end of the procedure, I will discuss with you how you found the experience and how you are feeling. If you subsequently feel distressed, you should contact…[*e.g. the investigator, The Samaritans – give contact details - or their GP. Where the data are gathered online or in paper & pencil form, one might say that no harm is anticipated but that some of the questions are of a personal nature; contact details for support services can be included in the debriefing page at the end of the data gathering instrument*].

**Who has reviewed this study?** [*School Ethics Committee? Clinical Research Ethics Committee? Social Research Ethics Committee? – for example:]* Approval must be given by the Social Research Ethics Committee of UCC before studies like this can take place.

**Any further queries?** If you need any further information, you can contact me: [*Name, mobile number, email address. To protect your own privacy, you should delete this information from the finished thesis. It is also advisable to use a dedicated mobile phone number for this purpose, as distinct from your personal mobile. Where the research is being conducted by a student, it is desirable to also provide contact details for a supervisor*].

If you agree to take part in the study, please sign the consent form overleaf. [*Note the formatting – it’s best not to have text dribbling on to the next page – but don’t make the font size too small, either – say, not less than size 12.*

[Over…

**CONSENT FORM**

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*This consent form is designed with qualitative research in mind. Where quantitative methods are used, issues such as quotations and audio-recording do not arise.*

I………………………………………agree to participate in [*name*]’s research study.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing.

I am participating voluntarily.

I give permission for my interview with [*name*] to be audio-recorded.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data within two weeks of the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications if I give permission below:

(Please tick one box:)

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview 

I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview 

Signed: ……………………………………. Date: ………………..

PRINT NAME: …………………………………….