HLS FREC Checklist for Reviewers

This checklist focuses upon key issues. See also the UKRIO Researcher Checklist.

Details [think about risk]

Is the risk rating is appropriate, based upon your reading of the DMU Research Ethics Code of Practice? [See Appendix 2, pp. 23-9]. Factors impacting risk *include* the mode of recruitment, participant vulnerabilities, and specific questions/interventions with participants.

Scope [think about justifications and integrity]

Does the research involve only secondary data, archival material or anonymized data sets? If so, has the appropriate screening tool being used?

Is the research sensitive in nature? If so, has the sensitive research form been submitted?

Is the project background understandable and justifiable? Is there an identified research gap supported by appropriate, up-to-date literature? This includes in replication studies.

Does the project have clear aims and objectives, which are not simply additional background material? Do these aims and objectives align, and clarify the research to be undertaken?

Does the project clearly explain how it will maintain research quality and integrity, in relation to honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, with care and respect for those involved in research? Does it make explicit connections to disciplinary/DMU/in-country codes of practice? NB this must not be a copy of the methodology.

Methodology [think about the validity of the methods, and any risks/mitigations]

The first question asks for details about each research *method*. Has the applicant separated out and detailed each separate method, with an appropriate description of participants (including numbers to be recruited, and from where), why this method was selected, and how the data will be analysed? Is it feasible in the timescale?

For each of the methods detailed, is there a corresponding participant information sheet (PIS), consent form (or means of giving consent), and finalised data collection tool? It is important that each of these is provided and reviewed.

Is the application and PIS specific and consistent about online/off-line research locations?

Is there a potential for the researcher to be affected by the research, and have mitigations been identified? Here, the aims, data collection tools and proposal are important. Are there any risks from lone working? Is their appropriate support/training for the researcher?

Human Participants [think about appropriate processes for involvement]

Is the application clear about involvement, including any inclusion/exclusion criteria, and sampling? Does this align with the documentation and the methodology? Has a justification been supplied? Is involvement and time to be managed ethically?

Are potential individual/group participant vulnerabilities been identified/mitigated? NB this also includes any researcher/participants relationship and connected harms or coercion.

Are the application and documentation clear and aligned about how participants will be approached and recruited, and how consent will be taken? Is it clear about the process for

withdrawal, including any caveats, and limits to confidentiality? NB where applications state that participants can withdraw at any time, is this possible for their data?

Is the application consistent about whether social media are being used, including for recruitment? Are the necessary processes detailed and recruitment materials supplied?

Please consider carefully whether the research risks disclosure of sensitive, embarrassing or distressing topics, illegal activities, or harm. Does it risk stigmatising groups or individuals?

If the research involves children or young people, has the applicant considered the issues raised in the relevant DMU guidelines for such research, and obtained a DBS?

Do you believe that a DPIA is required? Is the applicant collecting or using ('processing') personal data? Have they completed a Data Protection Impact Screening Assessment, and where needed, a full DPIA? NB a favourable ethics opinion is not a formal mechanism to evidence compliance with data legislation.

NB could the collection of demographic information enable participants to be identified.

Data Management [think about the data to be collected and its security]

Is the applicant clear about the data to be collected, including digital and paper recordings?

Is the application clear about where data will be stored, and that this is in-line with University policy (for instance, use of Figshare and encryption, location of cabinets etc.)?

Is the application clear about the end-date for storage, any potential re-use of data, and who specifically will have access to those data? This must not breach GDPR.

Is the application clear about whether it is collecting new personal data? Is it clear about the process for managing this collection? Does this align with statements about withdrawal, confidentiality and anonymity?

Documents [think about consistency and whether all files are submitted]

Are all necessary documents submitted, including the document checklist?

Are all submitted documents using the up-to-date DMU Templates?

Does the text in the Worktribe application align with that in the submitted documentation?

Does each research method have a corresponding consent form, PIS, and data collection tool submitted? Are these appropriate, for instance, based on age or culture? Is a debrief sheet with independent support services provided where required?

Where appropriate, have external approvals for data collection been submitted?

In terms of NHS research, has the IRAS form being submitted?

Is there sufficient information given, in non-technical terms, in the PIS, in order to enable potential participants to make an informed decision about their participation?

Are there any reputational risks to institutions through the proposed research?

Are researcher contact details DMU staff/student email addresses and phone numbers?

NB throughout the application, applicants must give full details, rather than referring to submitted documentation.