



**UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

**RISK ASSESSMENT FORM – PROCEDURES INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

	<b>Procedure No</b>	2021_01_13_EHS (RA)
<b>Title of Procedure</b>	Semi-Structured Interviews	
<b>Name of Assessor(s)</b>	Dr Ronni M. Greenwood	<b>Assessment Date</b> 16/11/20
Does this procedure already have ethical approval? (Delete as appropriate)	Yes	
If <b>YES</b> , enter ethical number and expiry date	<b>Approval No: 2021_01_13_EHS (RA)</b> <b>Expiry Date: 31/01/2031</b>	

**1 Please provide a brief description of the procedure**

Semi-structured interviews are a qualitative method of data collection that researchers use when they wish to gain insight into participants’ subjective understanding, for example, of an experience, a phenomenon, or a setting. The procedure begins with preparation of an interview guide developed on the basis of the researchers’ understanding of the literature, epistemology, aims, and research questions. Interviews should be arranged to occur at a place and time determined by the participants’ preferences and comfort, in which distractions and noise are minimal when possible.

Create a welcoming, easeful atmosphere for the participant through a description of the research and a few “getting-to-know-you” ice breaker questions. Briefly describe the research project and explain the material covered in the information sheet. Give the participant time to decide whether to proceed with the interview and if they do, ask them to sign the consent form after affirming that they understand the contents of the information sheet. Start the interview by asking the participant a few questions about themselves that are relevant to the topic. Ensure that your questions are phrased in ways that convey your interest in them as an individual and so build trust and rapport.

The interview guide should consist of a set of pre-determined questions that will guide the conversation and ensure that each participant has an opportunity to discuss all aspects of the topic. The interview guide should include optional probes to elicit increasingly elaborated answers. Researchers should avoid closed-ended questions that elicit ‘yes’ or ‘no’ responses. Open-ended questions that elicit more detailed and elaborated answers and should be used as often as possible.

Remember to listen and be unafraid of silence. Use silence as opportunities for reflection and thought and resist the urge to fill silence with your own talk. Actively follow-up on the participants’ responses with encouragement to elaborate: “tell me more about that”, “what was that like for you”, “describe that for me”, “how did you feel when that happened”, “what did you do next?” Use active listening techniques to reflect back to your participants: “that must have been really difficult for you”; “you must have been really relieved”. You are a co-creator of the interview, and so if your participant offers you a tantalizing partial response, it’s your turn in the conversation to show interest by asking them to tell you more. Often the richest part of an answer comes after a well-phrased probe. Don’t stick dogmatically to the questions in your interview guide. Instead, let your participant lead you and tell you how they experience the phenomenon under examination. Adjust your interview guide to the interviewee.

Data collection, processing, and storage: Ensure that all software, hardware, and cloud storage are GDPR/UL/ITD compliant. Recordings must be stored in password protected files. UL's data storage policy requires data storage for 7 years, after which they must be destroyed.

References:

Barriball, K. L. & While. A. (1994). Collecting Data Using a Semi-structured Interview: A Discussion Paper. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 19, 328-335.

LaForest, J. (2009) *Guide to Organising Semi-Structures Interview with Key informant*, vol 11, Quebec, Library and Archives Canada.

Patton, M .Q. (1990) *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, 2nd edn. Sage, Newbury Park, California.

McGrath, C., Palmgren, P. J., & Liljedahl, M. (2019). Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews. *Medical teacher*, 41(9), 1002-1006.

**2 Location in which the procedure may take place**

- University of Limerick campus buildings
- A location convenient to the participant

Others, please specify

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**3 Eligibility of participants to be recruited**

- e.g. UL student (U.G. or P.G.)
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**4 Potential risks. To be explained before obtaining consent**

None, or minimal discomfort only

**5 Action to be taken in the event of a foreseeable emergency**

No unforeseeable emergency is expected in this type of semi-structured interview.

**6 Level of supervision required for procedure**

Qualified lecturing/research staff

Others, please specify

**7 Other documentation required for this assessment?**

Information sheet

Informed consent form

Others, please specify

Debriefing sheet.

**FOR COMPLETION BY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

**RISK ASSESSMENT FORM – PROCEDURES INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

In the Department of: Psychology

Procedure No 2021\_01\_13\_EHS (RA)

Title of Procedure Semi-Structured Interviews

Name of Assessor(s) Dr Ronni M. Greenwood      Assessment Date / /

**8 Approval of procedure**

Granted

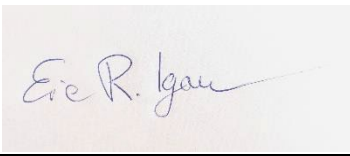
Subject to conditions (see below)

Others, please specify

Refer to Medical Ethics

**Comments/conditions**

Informed consent must be completed.

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_  
(Head of Department)

Date: 22.01.21