Guidelines and template for review

Below, you will find key points relating to ethics review in the context of scientific studies in the field of psychology for consideration by the Department of Psychology's Ethics Committee. These relate to the general Ethical Guidelines SPS (EG SPS) of the Swiss Psychological Society (SPS SGP SSP) and the Federal Human Research Act (HRA). Please take the following points into consideration:

1. Responsibility

Is it a project that has to be submitted to the Ethics Committee of North West and Central Switzerland?	Selection

If yes, please give the reasons for your assessment. The presence of the following elements indicate submission is necessary:

• The project includes research on the structure and function of the human body, i.e. basic research, especially on the anatomy, physiology and genetics of the human body, as well as non-disease-oriented research on interventions and effects on the human body (HRA Art. 3c). Basic research on the human psychological state or its development only falls within the scope of the HRA if it generates findings on the causes and development of (usually psychological) diseases. However, research on the normal structure, function, and development of the human psyche such as, for example, in education and in the psychological basis of research is not included in its scope.	Selection
• The project collects biological material, i.e. bodily substances, from living persons (HRA Art. 3e)	Selection
• The project collects health-related personal data, i.e. information relating to identified or identifiable persons, on their health or disease, including their genetic data (laboratory values, ECG, etc.), image data (fMRI, PET, CT, etc.), EEG measurements, genetics, etc.) (HRA Art. 3f)	Selection
• The project collects genetic data, i.e. information about the genome of a person, obtained through a genetic investigation (HRA Art. 3g)	Selection
• The project includes biological and/or physiological measurements, seemingly non-invasive, but nevertheless with the aim of collecting health-related data.	Selection

2. Ethical and regulatory aspects

2.1 Participant information and informed consent

Please assess the study in relation to the following points and summarize your assessment in the comment field.

- Do researchers Inform the participants in an understandable way about 1) the purpose of the project, the expected duration and the procedures, 2) their right to refuse or terminate participation, 3) the foreseeable consequences of non-participation or termination, 4) the foreseeable factors that influence the willingness to participate such as risks and inconvenience, 5) the expected benefits of the research, 6) the limits of confidentiality and anonymity, 7) the incentives and reward of participation, and 8) the responsible person regarding the research project and the rights of participants? (D16 ER SPS)

- Do researchers obtain informed consent before collecting data (including recording of voices/images)? (D17 ER SPS)

  Note: This agreement may be waived if 1) The project makes observations only in a public environment and it is not intended to use the recordings in a way that would lead to personal identification or cause harm to those involved; 2) The experiment design requires deception and retrospective agreement is obtained in the context of debriefing. (D17 ER SPS)

- Do researchers endeavor to ensure that there is no negative impact on potential participants who refuse participation or end participation prematurely?

  Note: If trial participation is required within the context of the training of students, an equivalent alternative to fulfilling the conditions of experiment must be offered. (D18 ER SPS)

- Do researchers give participants information on the subject matter, results, and conclusions of the research project at the earliest possible opportunity, and endeavor to clear up possible misunderstandings? (D23 ER SPS)

Please enter assessment here:

2.2 Stresses during the investigation

Please assess the study in relation to the following points and summarize your assessment in the comments field.

- During the experiment, are participants under excessive strain that can give rise to negative consequences, such as impairment of mental integrity (e.g. the ability to concentrate, induction of negative emotions) or impairment of psychological integrity (e.g. bad reputation because of participation, stigmatization)?

- Will participants be asked to divulge personal experiences (e.g. stressful experiences), sensitive information (such as sexual behavior, drug use) or sensitive opinions (for example, political preferences)?
- If the answer is yes to any of the above questions: Do the experiment measures attempt to reduce the stress? (D24, D25 ER SPS)
- Will participants intentionally be falsely informed (with the goal of deception) about the aims and the procedure of the project (e.g. via manipulated feedback on their performance)?

  Note: deception or endangerment of participants is permitted only if this is justified by the expected scientific or practical benefits and the purpose of the research allows no alternative procedure without deception. (D20 ER SPS)

- In the event of deception taking place, will this be explained and justified to the participant as soon as possible, but no later than at the end of the data-collection phase? Do participants have the right to withdraw their data following clarification? (D22 ER SPS)

Please enter assessment here:

3. Theoretical justification for the research project

Please assess the study in relation to the following points and summarize your assessment in the comment field.

- Are the research question and the theoretical background of the experiment sufficiently clearly described?
- Does the request contain a comprehensible presentation of the theoretical starting point, the hypotheses, the proposed methods and survey groups/sampling?
- Is there an acceptable correlation between the expected gains in knowledge and the potential risks to which the participants are to be exposed? (Risks also include unauthorized access to personal data, possible identification of participants, etc.)
- What measures do the researchers envisage to mitigate any risk?

Please enter assessment here:

4. Methods

Please assess the study methods in relation to the following points (4.1–4.6) and summarize your assessment in the comment field.

4.1 Experiment design

- Detailed description of the experimental design
- Are possible problems or limitations due to the experimental design pointed out?

4.2 Collection, monitoring, compensation

- Are the envisaged survey techniques (contact recording, etc.) clearly described and traceable or potentially problematic?
- Will participants be compensated in accordance with applicable standards?

4.3. Description of the implementation of the experiment

- Are the envisaged procedural steps (data collection, measurements, interviews, tests, test intervals, schedule, etc.) sufficiently detailed and presented in a comprehensible way?
- Are quality assurance measures envisaged for the collected data?

4.4 Objectives of the investigation

- Are the objectives of the investigation and the hypotheses clearly formulated?

4.5. Dependent variables

- Are dependent variables defined?
- Are primary or secondary target variables (important for experimental design and power analysis) specified?

4.6 Predictors

- Are predictors—to be used in the hypotheses and thus in the statistical models—specified?

Please enter assessment here:

5. Target population and sample

Please assess the study in relation to the following points (5.1–5.3) and summarize your assessment in the comment field.

5.1 Inclusion criteria

- Is the target population clearly defined? Are details of the planned sample comprehensible?
- Are selection criteria clearly defined (age, gender, income, lifestyle, etc.)?

5.2 Exclusion criteria

- Are exclusion criteria clearly defined and justified (e.g., lifestyle, language, gender, etc.)?

5.3 Withdrawal from/discontinuation with experiment

- Are reasons specified that could cause participants not to continue?
- Is there a description of how participant withdrawal is dealt with?

Please enter assessment here:

6. Statistics and methodology

Please assess the study in relation to the following points (6.1–6.4) and summarize your assessment in the comment field.

6.1 Sample size

- Is the sample size justified in the context of the research question and the experimental design?
- Ideally, a power analysis should be conducted to calculate the necessary sample size based on a priori effect size as well as alpha and beta errors.

6.2 Handling of missing data

- Are strategies in place for dealing with missing data (including experiment withdrawals), so that results are not biased in data analysis?
- Is account taken of the number of participants that might withdraw and is the necessary sample size adjusted upwards accordingly?

Please enter assessment here:

7. Data and quality assurance

Please assess the study in relation to the following points (7.1–7.4) and summarize your assessment in the comment field.

7.1 Handling of data and archiving

- Is information available on the handling of collected data (storage, encryption/anonymization, archiving or destruction)?

7.2 Confidentiality and data protection

- Does the experiment guarantee confidentiality/anonymity in dealing with the collected data?
- What measures are taken to protect confidentiality?
- How and where are data "stored"?
- Are the data sufficiently secured against unauthorized use by unauthorized third parties?

7.3 Encryption/anonymity

- Are the data made anonymous or encrypted?

  Note: If the names of participants are saved, these must be stored in a separate file and kept on a hard disk at a secure location. This file contains a key variable that permits a link with the rest of the data to the corresponding person.

7.4 Archiving and destruction

- Is information provided on the archiving period and/or destruction of the data?

  Note: data and records should be kept in accordance with the agreement or for at least 10 years after completion of the experiment.

Please enter assessment here:

Could possible financing of the project by third parties result in a conflict of interest?

Please enter assessment here:

8. Final review

The project application will be assessed as follows: A. Accept

Commentary for classification A (optional):

Commentary for classifications B-D (mandatory):