Writing a Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

The participant information sheet should be designed so that potential participants of your research project can give informed consent to participate in the project.

The application form contains a template of the participant information sheet outlining the minimum information that is required, and the template should be used by all staff and students. However, you may used the items listed below as a guide as to what additional information may be required in the statement. This list is for your own reference. Do not submit this with the application form.

The participant information sheet must be written in language that potential participants could reasonably be expected to understand.

It must be free from coercive language and promises that cannot be kept or unjustified claims of benefits.

Does your explanatory statement meet the following criteria?

- Clear identification of the University as the responsible institution (normally use letterhead).
- The short title of the project exactly as it appears on your application form, name of principal investigator.
- A statement of the purpose of the study, the inclusion and exclusion criteria.
- A detailed explanation, where relevant, of how the researcher will contact/has been able to contact the participant(s) and what groups of people will be/are invited to participate.
- A description of the presence or absence of possible benefits for participants and/or society in general.
- A description of any reward, financial or otherwise, to the participants.
- An outline of all methods or procedures involving the potential participant.
- An indication of the expectations of the potential participant: time involved, level of inconvenience and/or discomfort and any payment offered.
- A list of all possible or reasonably foreseeable risks of harm or possible side effects to the potential participant (outlining likely incidence and severity).
- Contact details of someone who will answer any inquiries about the research.
- A statement of where the records will be stored and details of access and destruction.
- A clear statement that participation is voluntary, that participants may withdraw at any stage, or avoid answering questions which are felt too personal or intrusive, and an assurance that this will not affect future treatment (where applicable).
- An indication of whether participants will be informed of overall results, or any which might affect them personally, and what debriefing procedures are available for those who withdraw (where appropriate).
- Details of what sort of publications other than the current thesis/report might arise from the research and whether anonymity will be maintained.
- Where the participants may not speak English, a translation of the explanatory statement and consent form by an independent and qualified translator must be provided. Arrangements for lodging written complaints with the Committee must be made and described in the explanatory statement. It is suggested that it would be helpful to give participants a card containing the address and title of the project in English and the language in which interviews are being conducted and explaining that written complaints should be sent to the address. The card should be included so the relevant project can be traced.

Further use of data
If you want to have the option to use the data for other purposes, or for the data to be available to other researchers, you must obtain explicit permission by describing what you want the participants to agree to and asking for permission on the consent form.

**The University complaints clause:**
Participants can complain about the study if they don't like something about it. Please include the following text in your explanatory letter:

If you would like to complain about any aspect of the study, City University London has established a complaints procedure via the Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee. To complain about the study, you need to phone 020 7040 3040. You can then ask to speak to the Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee and inform them that the name of the project is:.................................

You could also write to the Secretary at:
Anna Ramberg
Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee
Research Office, E214
City University London
Northampton Square
London
EC1V 0HB
Email: Anna.Ramberg.1@city.ac.uk