

Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

Your Participant Information Sheet should include the following sections:

1. Title of project

This does not have to be identical to the title on your application form, if you think that would give away your hypothesis.

2. Introduction

Provide a brief background to the study, including a statement of why you are carrying out this study.

3. What will I be asked to do if I take part?

- Briefly describe the tasks the participant will be asked to do. Avoid terms such as 'you will have to' or 'you will be required to'. Choose instead, 'you will be asked to' or 'you will be requested to'.
- If using a questionnaire give examples of the range of questions which will be asked, not just the most innocuous ones.
- Give an indication of the total time your participant will spend completing the study.
- If there are likely to be any risks to the participant, these should be clearly stated.
- If you are working with children, you should direct your information sheet to the parent, rephrasing e.g. "what will I be asked to do?" to "what will my child be asked to do?" If the children are very young (up to age 5 or 6), you should also provide an additional sheet detailing how you would present/explain your project to the child in terms suitable for his/her age. If the child is older (aged 7 or above) you should design a simple information sheet in addition to the sheet for parents. See section 2.2 above "Projects involving vulnerable groups" for further information.

In note 4 below, choose either a) or b) and delete the other paragraph:

4a) Will my data be anonymous?

Anonymity means that you CANNOT match the participants to their responses. They will sign a consent form, but this will not be cross-referenced with their questionnaire or other response sheets. Once the two have been separated, you will not be able to identify an individual's data in order to destroy it. State what method will be used to ensure anonymity and how the data will be used and stored. ALL PROJECTS SHOULD BE ANONYMOUS UNLESS YOU CAN JUSTIFY OTHERWISE.

4b) Will my data be confidential?

Confidentiality means that you CAN match participants to their responses, but you will not pass on or publish the data without first protecting participants' identities. You will also be able to identify an individual's data in order to destroy it. State what method will be used to ensure confidentiality and how the data will be used and stored.

5. Do I have to take part?

a) If you have used the 'anonymity' paragraph, include a statement along the lines of: "You do not have to take part in the study. If you decide to take part and then later change your mind, either before you start the study or during it, you can withdraw without giving your reasons, and, if you wish, your data will be destroyed. We will not be able to destroy your data after completing the study, because we will not keep a record of your personal details which is linked to your responses. However, we would like to reassure you that this means your identity is completely protected."

b) If you have used the 'confidentiality' paragraph, include a statement along the lines of: "You do not have to take part in the study. If you decide to take part and then later change your mind, either before you start the study, during it or afterwards, you can withdraw without giving your reasons, and, if you wish, your data will be destroyed."

6. Where can I obtain further information if I need it?

Give your name and contact details (official University of Trento email address) so that the participant can ask further questions before deciding whether or not to take part. For your own security, do not give a personal mobile number or personal email address for contact details. If you are an undergraduate or postgraduate student you should also state who is supervising you, and give their contact details. If you think participants might be upset by the content of the study, include a phrase such as "If you are upset or concerned by any of the issues raised in this questionnaire/study, please contact ..." and add the name of your tutor or supervisor. You could include a sheet with the contact details of relevant support groups or advice centres if you wish.