Form for Self-Assessment of Ethical Issues in Degree Projects[[1]](#footnote-2)

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| Date: |  |
| Title of the degree project |  |
| Student(s): |  |
| Student’s/Students’ e-mail address: |  |
| Degree program: |  |
| Education cycle: |  |
| Supervisor: |  |
| Supervisor’s e-mail address: |  |

This form is the basis for ethical reflections linked to your degree project. The intention is that students go through the form and then have a dialogue with their supervisor(s). If necessary or in doubt, the course examiner should be included in the discussion.

Ethical reflection is necessary in all degree projects, and it is especially important for degree projects that involve people in various ways. Issues that need to be considered include information about the study, consent, confidentiality, the type of data to be collected and how the study may affect the people involved.

Degree projects at Jönköping University must comply with the ethical principles expressed in the Swedish Law (2003:460) concerning the ethical review of research involving humans and biological material from humans, which process sensitive personal data or personal data about violations of law involving crimes, judgments in criminal cases, criminal procedural coercion or administrative deprivation of liberty. The law is also applied to research that involves physical intervention on a research subject or is carried out according to a method that aims to affect the research subject physically or psychologically or that involves an obvious risk of harming the research subject physically or psychologically[[2]](#footnote-3). Research that concerns humans, biological material, and sensitive personal data needs to go through an ethical review.

Degree projects are not normally considered research, and the intention is not for the results to be published in a scientific journal, which means that ethical review might not be necessary. Should one be collecting data in another country other than Sweden, one should, however, consider checking specific ethical regulations of that country. Even so, degree projects that include this type of data should be avoided or carried out only after special consideration.

Ethical self-review and basis for reflection

The student(s) fill(s) in the form and discuss it with her/his/their supervisor(s). If any of the questions are answered "not sure", "yes" (questions 1-12, 21) or "not sure" or "no" (questions 13-20), then an ***in-depth ethical reflection*** must be carried out involving the student and supervisor, and if necessary, the examiner should preferably be involved. If necessary, the course examiner should be involved. ***In-depth ethical reflection*** should include questions such as the following:

* how can ethical risks and problems be managed?
* how the study should be modified to counteract identified risks, or
* whether the study should be carried out as a degree project at all.

In the concluding comment, there is an opportunity to state, for example, why certain questions in the form may be difficult to answer depending on the nature of the degree project.

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| **Sampling** | | **Yes** | **Not sure** | **No** |
| 1. | Does the study intend to process what the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) [[3]](#footnote-4) considers to be sensitive personal data, i.e., data that **at some stage** can be linked to a person and that reveals racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, or information about an individual’s health or sex life? |  |  |  |
| 2. | Does the study intend to collect and process personal data relating to violations of the law that involve criminal offenses, convictions in criminal proceedings, penal law sanctions, or administrative deprivation of liberty? |  |  |  |
| 3. | Does the study include participants who can be identified as a vulnerable group and/or individuals in a dependent relationship to the principal investigator or the person recruiting (requesting) or carrying out the data collection? |  |  |  |
| 4. | Does the study include children (persons under the age of 15)? |  |  |  |
| 5. | Will the study involve individuals with limited autonomy (for instance individuals with cognitive difficulties, minors), whose understanding of the meaning of the consent is limited? |  |  |  |
| 6. | Will the study involve individuals that belong to a particularly vulnerable or disadvantaged group in society (e.g. ethnic, socioeconomic, diagnose specific, sexual orientation, or other minority grouping)? |  |  |  |
| 7. | Does the study entail a physical intervention on the participants e.g. any type of physical examination or sampling (also that which is included in standard procedures but also part of the research)? |  |  |  |
| 8. | Are there any risks for the participants, of being harmed physically or psychologically? |  |  |  |

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| **Sample selection continued** | | **Yes** | **Not sure** | **No** |
| 9. | Will the study use biological material that can be traced to an identifiable individual or deceased person (e.g., blood samples or tissue specimens)? |  |  |  |
| 10. | Will personal data be processed in the study?  (Personal data is all information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual, including various data that together can lead to a certain person being identified. Processing personal data means everything that can be done with personal data. This can, for example, be collecting, registering, storing, merging, deleting, or printing the data.) |  |  |  |
| **If you answered yes to question 10, also fill in the information below[[4]](#footnote-5)** | | | | |
| Purpose of handling personal data: | | | | |
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| Which type of individual categories will be covered (e.g. employees, students, members of the general public. Be as specific as possible and indicate for example “employees of company X”)? | | | | |
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| What personal data will be collected? (e.g. name, email address, age, racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, health or sex life) | | | | |
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| **Informed consent** | | **Yes** | **Not sure** | **No** |
| 11. | Does the information letter contain persuasive wording (which assumes that the person will or should participate in the study and which does not fully show respect that it is voluntary to participate, for example mildly persuasive wording such as "thank you in advance")? |  |  |  |
| 12. | Can voluntariness be questioned (e.g., vulnerable groups, such as children, people with cognitive impairment or mental disabilities, or individuals in a dependent relationship to the principal investigator, such as a patient or student)? |  |  |  |
| 13. | Will informed consent be obtained as a part of the study (in other words, will the participants receive full information about the study and/or the opportunity to opt out from participation? |  |  |  |
| 14. | Is it clearly stated in the written information to the participant that participation in the study is voluntary? |  |  |  |
| 15. | Is the study described in such a manner so that the participants understand its purpose and structure, and what participation in the project entails (accounts for what is expected of the participant, has adapted easy-to-understand language without technical terms or professional jargon, possible risks during or as a result of participating are described)? |  |  |  |
| 16. | Is it clearly stated that the participants may choose not to participate, without any consequences for service, care or treatment, or, if relating to students, for their grades? |  |  |  |
| 17. | Is it clearly stated that the participants may discontinue the participation at any time and without the need to state any reason, without any consequences for service, care or treatment or, if relating to students, for their grades? |  |  |  |
| 18. | *Please answer only if the study includes children under the age of 15*: Is informed consent also obtained from the legal guardians? |  |  |  |

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| **Confidentiality and participant's safety** | | | | |
| 19. | Describe how confidentiality is protected during data collection, as well as when handling data during and at the end of the project. (How is data stored during data collection and analysis? Are existing resources at JU used for storage, password-protected recording, and storage equipment? Is data deleted after the thesis has been examined? Determine the appropriate time for deletion) [[5]](#footnote-6) | | | |
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| **Confidentiality and participant's safety (cont.)** | | **Yes** | **Not sure** | **No** |
| 20. | Will the results/findings be described in such a manner that the participants cannot be identified in the study? |  |  |  |
| 21. | Will personal data be disseminated to third parties, i.e., outside JU, or even to another country?5 |  |  |  |
| **If you answered yes to question 21, then please state to which organization or/and which country:** | | | | |
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**Comment:**

**The above questions are carefully reviewed, truthfully answered and discussed with supervisor(s).**

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| Place and date: |  | | |
|  | **Signature Student** |  | **Signature Supervisor** | |
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**Signature Examiner (in case the examiner has participated in the discussion)**

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1. The form also applies to quality improvement projects in health care and social welfare. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/lag-2003460-om-etikprovning-av-forskning-som\_sfs-2003-460/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. GDPR is an abbreviation for General Data Protection Regulation (EU’s data protection regulation) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. When processing personal data, the follow-up questions to question 10 must also be answered in order to fulfil the requirement for registers when processing personal data, according to art 30 of the general data protection regulation (GDPR) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. When processing personal data, the follow-up questions to questions 19 and 21 must also be answered in order to fulfil the requirement for registers when processing personal data, according to art 30 of the general data protection regulation (GDPR) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)