

Recruiting Students as Participants in a Research project

There are currently many opportunities for students enrolled at the University to be participants in research projects carried out by staff and students at the University.

The following general principles apply:

1. The University encourages students to participate in research during their time at the University, provided that this does not impact negatively on academic studies.
2. The recruitment of student participants must follow exactly the same ethical considerations as those for recruitment of non-student participants (as laid out in the University's Research Governance policies).
3. Recruitment materials (e.g. posters, circular emails) and plans for advertising will normally be reviewed as part of the University's ethical review process (either by a C-REC or through a School review process). Recruitment may NOT commence until ethical approval has been granted for the project.
4. Schools are encouraged to provide a dedicated platform for recruitment materials to be made available. As a matter of courtesy, researchers should notify Schools before distributing recruitment materials.
5. Guidance and policy relating to recruiting students to participate in research must apply uniformly across the University.

For further guidance on recruiting participants, see below:

Good Practice Guidelines For The Production Of Posters, Leaflets And Emails for Participant Recruitment

Good Practice Guidelines For The Production Of Posters, Leaflets And Emails for Recruiting Research Participants

Recruitment of participants should be undertaken in such a way that participation is truly voluntary and there is no coercion, either explicit or implicit.

Posters and leaflets may be used to recruit participants. The material can fall into several categories:

- Posters displayed within the University
- Posters displayed in other institutions (although recruitment on NHS premises would normally require NHS REC approval)
- Leaflets
- Advertisements in newspapers, magazines etc.

Care should be taken when writing copy to consider the nature of the target group, and ensuring that appropriate terminology is used. This is especially important for material likely to be seen by vulnerable groups, and especially for advertisements that are to be published in large circulation magazines etc.

Characteristics of a good poster/leaflet or advert

The material should be easy to read, with a short clear heading in the form of an invitation and may include illustrations. Sufficient information should be given for potential participants to know roughly what is involved. Adequate information for making contact should be given. Reimbursement of costs and payment for time may be mentioned but must fall within the University's guidance

Requirements

The posters/leaflets must meet the following requirements:

- They must comply with the University's guidance on reimbursement and financial incentives (i.e. Payments may be made to participants for reimbursement of travelling, out-of-pocket expenses and compensation for time. Incentives should not persuade a participant to volunteer against his or her better interests or judgement, induce a participant to risk harm beyond what is normal for that person, or to volunteer more frequently than is advisable).
- A copy of the poster/leaflet must be submitted with the ethics application;
- You must state on the poster/leaflet the name of the ethics committee or School who has given the project ethical approval;
- You must notify the School where you intend to display the poster and you will need to obtain permission to display in other institutions outside University of Sussex.
- You should make it clear on the poster what the time frame is for recruitment, and a date when the poster / leaflet will be removed. You should remove the poster by the end date marked on your poster. If you are unable to do so yourself, you should ask a deputy to do this for you.

Recruitment emails

Circular emails should meet with all requirements in guidelines for posters. Additionally, they should be short, the subject box should contain a word or two about the study followed by ' – circular'. The following text is provided and may be included at the start of the email.

'Circular email for use for recruitment of volunteers for study, approved by University of Sussex..... (put the name of the C-REC or the name of the School who approved the project). This project contributes to the University's role in conducting research, and teaching research methods. You are under no obligation to reply to this email, however if you choose to, participation in this research is voluntary and you may withdraw at anytime.'

Acknowledgements: King's College London, University of Birmingham