



**BASIC AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
(BaSSREC)**

REVIEWER REPORT

Researcher: _____

Project Title: _____

Ethics Number: _____

Reviewer: _____

The following subsections provide reviewers with guidance to remind them about important ethical issues that applicants are expected to address in their ethics applications. Reviewers may simply select the appropriate option (Yes; No; N/A) next to each of the comments below. Reviewers are, however, encouraged to provide additional comments if required to assist the BaSSREC chairperson and the applicants to address particular concerns or to complement the applicant on a good application.

1. Aims, background and significance

Criteria	Yes	No
The study aims are clearly specified.		
The candidate provides an adequate background to the proposed study.		
Comments or questions		

2. Scientific design and procedures

Criteria	Yes	No
The applicant provides an adequate discussion of and justification for their chosen scientific design.		
The rationale and details of research procedures are adequately described and acceptable. These include, among others, further details about the sampling procedures, methods of data collection and data analysis.		
The principal and co-investigators (including students and/or fieldworkers collecting the data) have appropriate academic credentials and/or experience to conduct this study.		
Adequate measures are in place for data-monitoring (e.g. the reliability, validity and/or trustworthiness of the data).		
Comments or questions		

3. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criteria	Yes	No	N/A
The selection of participants is appropriate for the question being asked.			
The inclusion and exclusion criteria (if applicable), are clearly stated and reasonable (in-keeping with the principal of distributive justice).			
If there are vulnerable groups included, is the inclusion of vulnerable populations justified?			
If yes, are adequate safeguards included to protect their rights and welfare?			
The researcher has taken steps to ensure that the participants' decision to enrol will not be influenced by their potential relationship to the researcher, i.e. if any potential participants are in a dependent relationship with the researchers or persons recruiting for the study (e.g. student/lecturer, doctor/patient, and employer/employee).			
Comments or questions			

4. Recruitment and enrolment

Criteria	Yes	No	N/A
The applicant clearly identifies how and by whom prospective participants will be identified for recruitment into the study, i.e. the step-by-step recruiting process is discussed and justified.			
The location, setting, and timing of recruitment are acceptable.			
The recruitment methods are discussed (e.g. the materials to be used such as flyers, posters, or advertisements).			
The recruitment material is attached to this application (if applicable).			
The attached recruitment material is in order.			
The study requires NWU Gatekeeper Approval, i.e. reference should be made to gaining NWU Gatekeeper Approval from the NWU Registrar directly following the ethics approval.			
Comments or questions			

5. Risks and benefits

Criteria	Yes	No	N/A
The applicant has adequately identified, evaluated and described the potential risks and benefits associated with the study (e.g. physical, psychological, social, and economic, etc.). This speaks to the importance of observing the ethical principles of non-maleficence and beneficence.			
The applicant adequately identifies the risks to the community or a particular group of individuals (e.g. stigmatisation).			
The location of the study is adequate to assure participants' safety and comfort.			
The applicant provides clear explanations of how potential risk will be minimised/managed.			
The applicant attached written proof of agreement from potential counsellors, psychologists and/or social workers who are willing to assist participants when requested (if applicable).			

The risks are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits.			
Reference is made to Covid-19 risks and its mitigation (if applicable).			
Comments or questions			

6. Gaining informed consent

Criteria	Yes	No	N/A
The applicant clearly identifies who will obtain informed consent from the prospective participants, i.e. the step-by-step informed consent process is discussed and justified.			
The applicant clearly identifies how the above person(s) will obtain informed consent from the prospective participants, i.e. the step-by-step informed consent process is discussed and justified.			
The process minimises the possibility of undue influence/coercion.			
The process provides sufficient time, privacy and an adequate setting for participants to decide whether to consent.			
The applicant will appoint a translator to ensure that participants clearly understand their role in the study and the consent process (if applicable).			
The applicant used and attached the prescribed BaSSREC informed consent leaflet to the application.			
The language used in the consent forms is appropriate for participants' level of understanding.			
The risks and mitigation strategies align directly with those identified in the ethics application form and research proposal.			
Reference is made to the fact that informed consent and participation are voluntary.			
Comments or questions			

7. Anonymity, confidentiality and privacy

Criteria	Yes	No	N/A
The applicant adequately describes the measures to protect participants' privacy.			
The applicant adequately describes the measures to protect participants' anonymity.			
The applicant adequately describes the measures to protect participants' confidentiality.			
The protocol describes how written records, video or audio-recordings will be secured (i.e. storage and its or final disposal). Please note: Data should be safely stored for a period of five (5) years.			
Comments or questions			

8. Reimbursement

Criteria	Yes	No	N/A
The applicant adequately discusses how they will avoid out-of-pocket expenses and costs incurred by participants (e.g. travel expenses, parking costs, data-costs for virtual interviews and lost wages).			
Will participants be compensated for their participation?			
If participants are compensated for the study, is this reasonable?			
Comments or questions			

9. What happens at the end of the study?

Criteria	Yes	No	N/A
The applicant adequately discusses how findings from the study will be disseminated to the wider research community (e.g. peer-reviewed scientific journals, conference presentation, and internal report).			
The applicant adequately explains how they will inform participants about the findings of the study.			
Comments or questions			

10. Conflicts of interest

Criteria	Yes	No	N/A
Do any of the persons involved in the design, research process or analysis of the research have any proprietary interests (e.g. royalties, patents, trademarks, copyrights or licensing agreements) involving any agent, device or software being evaluated in the study?			
If yes, is this adequately justified by the applicant?			
Comments or questions			

11. Additional comments or questions

Comments or questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please complete the BaSSREC Rebuttal Report and submit along with the full BaSSREC application upon resubmission. Highlight all changes made in the relevant documents in YELLOW. • Ensure that the content of the BaSSREC application form, research proposal and consent/assent documentation align directly. • Please consult the BaSSREC website for further information: http://humanities.nwu.ac.za/basic-and-social-sciences-research-ethics-committee-bassrec

12. Final assessment

Risk level (check X)

No risk	
Low risk	
Minimal risk	
Medium risk	
High risk	

I recommend for the application to be (check X):

<p>Approved: Accept unconditionally.</p>	
<p>Conditional approval with minor changes: Accepted with minor changes as indicated on report (for final assessment of the chairperson/BaSSREC nominee). <i>The full application should be resubmitted via email to the BaSSREC administrator and on the InfoED system under the existing application.</i></p>	
<p>Deferred with major changes: Revised protocol must be sent to the chairperson and reviewers. <i>The full application should be resubmitted on the InfoED system under the existing application.</i></p>	
<p>Deferred with major changes: Revised application to be tabled at a full committee meeting. <i>The full application should be resubmitted via email to the BaSSREC administrator and on the InfoED system under the existing application.</i></p>	
<p>Disapproved: Risks significantly outweigh the benefit or value of the knowledge to be gained; there are significant ethical concerns or questions that make the study unacceptable.</p>	
<p>Referred to another Research Ethics Committee (e.g. HSSREC or HREC) for review (please motivate below).</p>	