by sw587@cam.ac.uk — last modified by nls37@cam.ac.uk Dec 19, 2018

**Consent**

Any document given to a participant explaining an investigation must not be difficult to understand; without a proper understanding there cannot be real consent. The document should explain adequately what will take place in the investigation, and an explicit statement should normally be included in documents given to participants or potential participants that participation in the investigation is voluntary. A summary consent form is available online here (<https://www.aha.cam.ac.uk/downloads/participantconsentform-experiments>).

**Participation and Withdrawal**

Participants must be able to decide not to complete a screening questionnaire, etc. (such as would be employed to identify members of a suitable experimental population), or not to return it if they do not wish to do so, either before or after seeing the form. Participants must be able to withdraw after completing the screening questionnaire. A participant has a right to withdraw retrospectively as a result of debriefing, and in such circumstances any records, film, video- or audio-recordings or notes etc., must be destroyed.

**Confidentiality**

Personal information is confidential and should ensure complete anonymity, unless otherwise agreed in advance.

**Experimental Design – Deception**

Deception must be avoided where possible but if essential to the study—and it often is necessary to withhold from participants the precise subject of enquiry prior to an experiment—must be followed by debriefing which eliminates the deception. Withholding information, or misleading participants, is unacceptable if participants are typically likely to object or show unease once debriefed. Tests for the acceptability of deception should be (a) that when the manipulation or deception becomes known it is unlikely to cause significant distress, and (b) that the deception is necessary for the purposes and conduct of the research. In cases where some deception is necessary for a research project, investigators should be careful about the way and manner in which consent is obtained from participants. It would not be acceptable to invite participants to sign a consent form accompanied by words such as “it is just a consent form to show that you understand fully what it is all about”, in circumstances where there was deception about the purpose of the procedures. It would, however, be acceptable if participants were invited to sign a consent form to show that they understood what procedures would be used.

**Studies of Vulnerable Individuals or Children**

In cases where the study will involve participation by vulnerable individuals or children, formal approval must be sought from the Music Faculty Music Research Ethics Committee who will consult the Cambridge Psychology Research Ethics Committee (<https://www.bio.cam.ac.uk/psyres>) if necessary.

**General Guidelines**

For detailed guidance on the conduct of experimental research involving human participants, see the *BPS Code of Human Research Ethics* [*https://www.bps.org.uk/guideline/bps-code-human-research-ethics*](https://www.bps.org.uk/guideline/bps-code-human-research-ethics) *)*