FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The questions below are referenced to the appropriate sections/questions on the Ethics Form
For information regarding Data Protection and GDPR, please click [here].

RESEARCH & PARTICIPANT

Q. What is a gatekeeper?
A. The role of a gatekeeper is to protect the interests of the participants and to ensure that they are not under any pressure to participate. They act as a neutral buffer between the researcher and the participant. For example if a lecturer wanted to give a questionnaire to their students, the students might feel pressurised to take part. Therefore a third party (the gatekeeper) should distribute the questionnaires, thus removing the direct link between the researcher and the participant, thereby eliminating the pressure to participate.

Q. I am conducting a study that involves distribution of questionnaires for anonymous return. Do I need to obtain informed consent?
A. As long as the circumstances guarantee anonymity, return of the questionnaire itself implies consent and no separate form needs to be used.

Q. What circumstances might endanger anonymity of questionnaires and therefore require informed consent to be sought?
A. If the population surveyed and/or the nature of questions asked may be such that certain respondents can be identified by their responses. For instance, in surveys of practitioners which identify the employing institution, a particular institution may employ only 1-2 practitioners. It is important that questionnaires are designed in a way that avoids this sort of problem.

Q. I intend to distribute a questionnaire to students in TCD. Are there specific guidelines about how to distribute and collect this questionnaire?
A. First, you should consider the time that it takes to complete the questionnaire and whether therefore it can be completed immediately it is distributed. Second, you must recognise that completion and return during a scheduled lecture slot is usually impossible because it interferes with the teaching programme. If this seems to be the only way to handle the survey, then you need to consult the lecturer involved well in advance. Finally, anonymity may be perceived to be endangered if completed questionnaires are handed directly to the investigator. It is preferable to provide a lodgement box. If distributing by email the permission of the College Secretary is required.
**FUNDING & PAYMENT**

**Q.** Can I encourage enrolment in my study by offering participants payment?

**A.** Since it is a basic tenet of human research that subjects participate on a voluntary basis, it is not acceptable to provide direct payment. It is however appropriate to offer reimbursement of any expenses incurred in participation. It is also acceptable to enrol all participants in a raffle provided that any legislative requirements are complied with. The prize for such a raffle should be reasonable and not excessive in value.