ETHICS APPROVAL FORM

(UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS – APPLIED ENGLISH LINGUISTICS)

This form should be completed by undergraduate students whose coursework, capstone projects, or other research activities involve human participants, personal data, surveys, interviews, observations, experiments, or other activities that may raise ethical considerations.

The purpose of this form is to help students identify potential ethical issues in their projects and ensure that research is conducted responsibly, safely, and in accordance with the ethical standards of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). Completing this form also helps protect the rights, privacy, dignity, and welfare of research participants.

Before completing this form, students must first discuss their project with their course instructor or academic supervisor to determine whether any ethical concerns or approvals may be required. The completed form should be reviewed and signed by the course instructor or project supervisor, who will confirm that the ethical implications of the project have been appropriately considered.

How to Use This Form
This form consists of two review pathways:

Simplified Review Pathway

1. The student completes Section A (Project Summary), prepares the supporting documents listed in Section B (Required Appendices), and does declarations in Section C.
2. The student submits Sections A to C to the course instructor or supervisor.
3. The supervisor completes Section D (Supervisor Ethics Screening).
4. If the supervisor determines that the project is eligible for exemption or simplified review, and no further ethical concerns are identified, the project may proceed without completing Section E.

Enhanced Review Pathway

1. If the supervisor determines that the project requires additional ethical consideration, the student will be asked to complete Section E (Additional Ethics Review Information).
2. Section E provides detailed information on participant recruitment, consent procedures, privacy and confidentiality, data management, risks, safeguards, and other ethical considerations.
3. The completed form may then be reviewed by a second rater, the Department, Faculty, or other designated reviewer, as appropriate.
4. Additional revisions or formal ethics review may be required before the project can proceed.

Students must **NOT** begin recruiting participants or collecting data until any required ethics review and approvals have been completed.

For further guidance on research ethics, please refer to the CUHK Graduate School Guidelines and the CUHK Research Ethics website:

- https://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/download/VII-C.pdf
- https://www.research-ethics.cuhk.edu.hk/orktsResearch/

Section A. Project summary

A1 Particulars

Student Name (Last Name, First name, Middle name):	
CUHK ID:	
Course code and title:	
Title of the project:	
Type of project	☐ coursework ☐ Capstone project (ENGE 4700, ENGE 4701/ 4702) ☐ others, please specify: _____

A2 Research Objectives (maximum 200 words)

Briefly describe the purpose of the project and the research question(s) or objective(s) that the study seeks to address.

A3 Significance of the Study (maximum 200 words)

Explain the importance of the project and its expected contribution to knowledge, practice, education, policy, design, engineering, or other relevant areas.

A4 Research Methodology/ies (maximum 400 words)
Briefly describe the study design, participant group(s), recruitment procedures, research setting, data collection methods and instruments, participant activities, and expected duration of participation. Include a summary of the proposed data analysis and data management plan, including storage, security measures, retention period, and access arrangements.

Section B. Required Appendices Checklist: Your application must include the following attachments to be considered complete:

- [ ] **Appendix 1:** Draft Recruitment Posts / Advertisements.
- [ ] **Appendix 2:** Sample Informed Consent Form (Using the CUHK SBRE Template).
- [ ] **Appendix 3:** Research Instruments (e.g., Interview Guide, Survey Questionnaire).
- [ ] **Appendix 4:** Other supporting documents (if applicable)

Section C. Self-declaration

C1 Human Subjects and Ethics Declaration

Please select **one** of the following:

☐ **Category 1 – No Human Subjects and No Significant Ethical Concerns**
This project does not involve human participants, identifiable information about living individuals, or other significant ethical concerns. Examples include literary analysis, textual analysis, theoretical research, analysis of published works, or creative work that does not involve data collection from living individuals.

☐ **Category 2 – No Human Subjects, but Potential Ethical Considerations**
This project does not involve human participants, but may involve ethical considerations requiring review. Examples may include:

- Use of unpublished, private, or restricted materials;
- Analysis of potentially identifiable online content;
- Use of photographs, audio, video, or archival materials where permissions or privacy issues may arise;
- Research involving culturally sensitive materials or communities;
- Research involving potentially distressing, offensive, illegal, or harmful content;
- Other ethical issues not involving direct interaction with human participants.

☐ **Category 3 – Human Participants and/or Human-Subject Data**
This project involves human participants and/or information about living individuals, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, recordings, social media interactions, creative workshops, or collection of personal information.

C2 Potential Eligibility for Exemption or Simplified Review
☐ Educational research involving routine educational practices and **adult** participants only.
☐ Surveys, interviews, educational tests, or observation of public behaviour involving **adults** with minimal risk (non-vulnerable groups, etc.) and no identifiable data.
☐ Benign behavioural interventions involving consenting **adults** with minimal risk.
☐ Secondary analysis of publicly available or de-identified data involving **adults** with minimal risk.
☐ Minimal-risk research involving **adult** participants only.
☐ None of the above / Not applicable (need to go through further review/explanation)

C3 *Student Declaration*
By signing this form, I confirm that the information provided is true, accurate, and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Name of the student	**Signature of the student**	**Date signed**

After completion, please send this signed form (Sections A to C) with the appendices to your supervisor's email and wait for review results and approval (if given).

Section D. Supervisor Ethics Screening
(To be completed by the Course Instructor / Supervisor after reviewing Sections A and C and the supporting documents in Section B)

D1. Initial Ethics Determination

☐ The project does not involve human participants, human data, or human biological materials, and no further ethics review is required.
☐ The project does not involve human participants, but further ethics consultation/review is recommended (e.g., corpus data, social media data, etc.)
☐ The project involves adult and/or non-vulnerable human participants and/or identifiable human data and requires further ethics review consideration.
☐ The project involves non-adult and/or vulnerable human participants and/or identifiable human data and requires further ethics review consideration.

D3. Supervisor Recommendation

☐ Eligible for exemption or simplified review. No further ethics review required. Student does not need to complete Section E. Student should submit signed form (without Section E) to English@cuhk.edu.hk and their supervisors. The student may proceed with the project as described.

☐ Refer to second rater for enhanced review. Student should complete Section E and get further approval.

Comments:

Supervisor Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Section E. Additional Ethics Review Information
(To be completed only if requested in Section D.)

E1 Participants, Recruitment and Communication
Describe:

- The participant population and estimated number of participants;
- How participants will be identified, contacted, recruited, and enrolled;
- The communication channels that will be used (e.g., email, WhatsApp, WeChat, Zoom, face-to-face, social media);
- Any existing relationship between the researcher and participants (e.g., teacher-student, supervisor-employee) and how voluntary participation will be ensured.

If the study involves minors (under 18 years old), persons with disabilities, individuals with mental health conditions, or other vulnerable populations, explain:

- Why their participation is necessary;
- How they will be recruited;
- What additional protections will be implemented; and
- How consent from parents, guardians, caregivers, or legally authorized representatives will be obtained, where applicable.

E1.1 Required Appendices
Please attach all relevant Participant Information Sheets, Consent Forms, Parent/Guardian Consent Forms, Institutional consent forms, and Assent Forms. Please send these appendices along with Section D to your supervisor via email.

E2 Research Activities and Participant Experience

Describe in detail what participants will be asked to do, including:

- Surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, experiments, recordings, online activities, or other procedures;
- The expected duration and frequency of participation;
- Any collection of personal, identifiable, or sensitive information;
- Any potentially sensitive, distressing, or controversial topics that may arise.

Explain why these procedures are necessary to achieve the objectives of the study, and how you will mitigate risk/harm.

E2.1 Recruitment and Communication

E2.1.1 Recruitment Strategy (Describe the recruitment approach (e.g., class announcements, email invitations, social media posts, personal contacts), and how you will mitigate risk/harm.

E2.1.2 Communication Channels (Describe the planned channels for contacting and interacting with participants, e.g., official CUHK email, WhatsApp/WeChat, Zoom, or face-to-face), and how you will mitigate risk/harm.

E3. Compensation and Incentives
Describe any incentives, compensation, reimbursements, gifts, vouchers, course credit, or other benefits that will be provided to participants. If no compensation will be provided, please state "None." Explain why the proposed compensation is appropriate and how it will avoid creating undue influence or pressure to participate.

E4 Informed Consent
Indicate the proposed consent process:

☐ Written consent
☐ Oral consent
☐ Online consent (e.g., click-through consent)
☐ Parent/Guardian consent
☐ Child assent
☐ Request for waiver of consent

Describe:

- How participants will be informed about the study;
- Who will obtain consent;
- When and where consent will be obtained;
- How participants will be informed of their right to refuse participation or withdraw without penalty;
- How consent records will be maintained.

If a waiver of consent is requested, provide a justification.

E5 Privacy, Confidentiality and Data Management

Describe:

- What information will be collected from participants;
- Whether the data will be anonymous, confidential, or identifiable;
- Whether audio, video, photographs, screen recordings, or online communications will be collected;
- How privacy and confidentiality will be protected;
- Where data will be stored and secured;
- Who will have access to the data;
- How long the data will be retained; and
- How the data will be destroyed, archived, or anonymized after the project is completed.

Justify why the proposed arrangements are appropriate for the level of risk involved.

E6 Risks, Benefits and Safeguards

Identify and assess any potential risks to participants, including physical, psychological, emotional, social, educational, professional, reputational, legal, or privacy-related risks.

For each identified risk, explain:

- Why the activity is necessary for the study;
- The likelihood and severity of the risk;
- The measures that will be taken to minimize the risk;
- The procedures that will be followed if a participant experiences distress, discomfort, or harm.

Describe any expected benefits to participants and/or society, and how you will mitigate risk/harm.

E7 Additional Ethical Considerations

Describe any other ethical issues relevant to the study and how they will be addressed. Examples include:

- Use of artificial intelligence tools;
- Social media or online research;
- Deception or incomplete disclosure;
- Cross-cultural or international participants;
- Conflicts of interest;
- Future use, sharing, or publication of data.

Where applicable, explain why the approach is necessary and what safeguards will be implemented.

E8 Declaration

Student Declaration

By signing this form, I confirm that the information provided is true, accurate, and complete to the best of my knowledge. I agree to conduct this project in accordance with the research ethics policies, guidelines, and applicable requirements of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). I understand my responsibility to protect the rights, dignity, safety, privacy, and confidentiality of all participants and to obtain any necessary approvals before commencing research activities. I further acknowledge that departmental, course, or supervisory approval does not exempt me from complying with applicable ethical requirements or from my responsibility to conduct the research ethically.

Name of the student	**Signature of the student**	**Date signed**

After completion, please send this signed form with the appendices to your supervisor and wait for review results and approval (if given).

E9 Supervisor Review and Review Results

Review Outcome

Please select one:

☐ ***Approved.*** The ethical considerations associated with this project have been adequately addressed. The student may proceed with the project as described.

☐ ***Approved with Minor Revisions.*** The student may proceed after addressing the comments and recommendations below to the satisfaction of the supervisor.

☐ ***Major Revisions Required.*** The student must revise the application and resubmit it for further review before commencing the project.

☐ ***Not Approved.*** The project may not proceed in its current form.

Comments

Supervisor and Reviewer Declaration

By signing below, we confirm that we have reviewed this application and the accompanying materials. To the best of our knowledge, the ethical considerations associated with this project have been appropriately considered and addressed. We have provided our recommendations regarding the level of ethics review required. This endorsement does not replace or supersede any additional ethics review or approval that may be required by the Department, Faculty, University, or relevant ethics committee.

Name of the instructor/supervisor	**Signature of the instructor/supervisor**
Name of the second grader (for ENGE 4700, 4701, 4702)	**Signature of the second grader (for ENGE 4700, 4701, 4702)**

Important Note to Students

Approval by the Department, course instructor, supervisor, or reviewer does not transfer responsibility for the ethical conduct of the project. Students remain responsible for conducting their research in accordance with applicable ethical requirements and for protecting the rights, dignity, privacy, confidentiality, and safety of all participants. Particular care should be taken during fieldwork, data collection, data storage, and dissemination of findings to ensure that participants are not exposed to unnecessary risk or harm.

Once signed by both graders, please submit the fully signed form to English@cuhk.edu.hk and your supervisor's email.