

Template for Passive/Implied or Electronic Adult Informed Consent

The consent letter templates are provided as a guideline for researchers who have requested a waiver of informed consent. Insert the details that are specific to your study.

You do not have to strictly adhere to the format of the examples. However, if you make changes, ensure that they make the information more participant friendly, and that you have addressed all of the required elements.

Additionally, here are some tips for creating the consent form:

- ❑ Keep the document short, simple and stick to the facts relevant to participation. Do not add more information than is necessary, include a “sales pitch,” or attempt to influence the participant.
- ❑ Consent information should be written at an 8th grade reading level or below. Avoid use of technical terms. When using acronyms or abbreviations, spell out the full meaning the first time used.
- ❑ Compose the consent letter so that it speaks TO the participant, i.e. “You will be asked to...”
- ❑ See Basic Elements of Informed Consent for a more complete description of what should be included in each section
- ❑ See Basic Elements of Informed Consent for a more complete explanation of when a consent letter (or even briefer consent information) would be sufficient.
- ❑ See the BSU guide for Internet Research for more information about consent procedures for web based surveys and other types of internet research.

Example 1

Appropriate for a minimal risk electronic survey

You are invited to participate in a survey about . . . If you decide to participate in this study, your participation will involve . . . Although you may not personally benefit, this study is important to science/society because . . . There are no foreseeable risks, and you may refuse to answer particular questions or withdraw from this study at any time. Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology being used.

If you agree to participate, please click on the link below to continue to the survey. You will have the option to refuse to answer individual questions and may change your mind and leave the study at any time without penalty.

Example 2

Appropriate for a short, minimal risk, anonymous and objective survey, such as an opinion or reaction survey

Thank you for volunteering to respond to this XX minute survey about . . . Although you may not personally benefit, this study is important to science/society because . . . There are no foreseeable risks, your responses are anonymous, and you may refuse to answer particular questions or withdraw from this survey at any time.

Example 3

Appropriate for an anonymous survey that has personal questions or experimental content, but still has minimal risk

Dear Participant:

You are invited to participate in a research study designed to . . . or about . . . You will be asked to . . . Your participation in the study will last . . .

There are no foreseeable risks . . . or you may experience . . . This study is important to science/society because . . . Individually, you may benefit . . . or you may not benefit, personally by participating in this study.

The information you provide will be collected anonymously. Your name will not be included on the questionnaire, the written work or any of the materials used in this study. If the data should be published, your identity will not be revealed. The Department of Psychology or the University Institutional Review Board [*Insert sponsors of the research, if any, who will have access to identifiable data*] may inspect your records. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, but will be upheld to the extent permitted by law.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or discontinue your participation at any time without incurring any penalty or losing any benefits to which you are entitled. You are also free to decline to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to call [insert name of investigator(s) and contact information]. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the University Institutional Review Board office (508-531-1242) and will be given an opportunity to discuss any questions in confidence, with a member of the committee. This is an independent committee composed of faculty and staff of Bridgewater State University and its affiliates, as well as lay members of the community not connected with the institution. The committee has reviewed this study.

By turning the page and beginning the survey, you are acknowledging that your current questions have been answered in language that you understand.

Thank you for your help.