**HSS Ethics Committee: Exempt Review Approval Form**

There are two sections in this form. Please read through all instructions carefully.

**Instructions for Section A:**

There are four categories of Exempt Review. Please read through each category to determine the category of your research and if it qualifies for Exempt Review. If it does not qualify, please submit for Expedited Review or Full Review.

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| **Category 1: Anonymous Tests, Surveys, Interviews, or Public Observations** | **Category 2: Research in Normal Educational & Organizational Settings** | **Category 3: Secondary Research on Existing or Public Datasets** | **Category 4: Brief and Harmless Behavioural Interventions** |
| Research involves the use of anonymous tests (educational, cognitive, aptitude, achievement, diagnostic), surveys, interviews, and observations of public behavior in public spaces, and usability tests.**Form 1** | Research is within normal educational or organizational practices in established or commonly accepted settings.**Form 2** | Research involves conducting secondary research on existing data, including those that are publicly available (e.g., social media platforms) or existing data repositories. **Form 3** | Brief and harmless behavioral interventions are defined as brief in duration, harmless, not physically invasive, and are not likely to have a significant adverse effect on participants.**Form 4** |

**If your research qualifies for Exempt Review, please indicate the category of your research.**

[ ]  Category 1: Anonymous Tests, Surveys, Interviews, or Public Observations

[ ]  Category 2: Research in Normal & Organizational Settings

[ ]  Category 3: Secondary Research on Existing or Public Datasets

[ ]  Category 4: Brief and Harmless Behavioural Interventions

**Instructions for Section B:**

Complete the respective form for the category of your research. Fill up all the information required in the form.

In the Appendix Section, please append the following (in this order):

1. Informed consent forms
2. Briefing and debriefing sheet/scripts
3. All research materials and stimuli used in your study

**Section B: Exempt Review Approval Form**

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| **Study Team Information** |
| Name of Principal Investigator (PI):  |
| School / Dept:  | Email: |
| Name of Research Supervisor (If Applicable):  |
| School / Dept:  | Email: |
| **Research Team Members** |
| Names of Team Members  | Email  | School / Dept |
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| Project Start and End Dates:  |
| **Title of Research:**  |

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| **Summary of Research**  |
| 1. **Research Purpose, Aim & Research Question**

*Provide a brief summary to describe: (1) Importance of your research, (2) What gaps does research aim to address, (3) Research Question(s) and hypothesis (if applicable), and (4) Variables to be measured/examined. (200 - 300 words maximum)* |

Instructions: Please complete the respective form of your research category.

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| **Section B: Description of Exempt Review Categories – Form 1** |
| **Category 1: Anonymous Tests, Surveys, Interviews, or Public Observations****To qualify for Exempt Review:** * Research involves the use of anonymous tests (educational, cognitive, aptitude, achievement, diagnostic), surveys, interviews, and observations of public behavior in public spaces (including visual or auditory recording at a public place).
* Personal information is NOT identifiable and/or linked to the subjects.
* Where possible, informed consent (verbal or written) must be obtained.
* Research involving minors is limited to standardized tests (i.e., simple questions and short answer responses) or observations of public behavior in public spaces, without participation from research team.
* Research presents no more than minimal risk.

If there are video and/or audio recordings, informed consent should be obtained (as possible). Subjects must be allowed to withdraw from participation. For recordings in public spaces, research team must take necessary steps ensure confidentiality and anonymity of subjects being interviewed and/or observed. As much as possible, debriefing should be conducted.**Exclusions from Exemption (What is NOT allowed):*** Test, survey, and interview questions should NOT contain invasive and sensitive questions that may cause subjects to experience emotional distress or discomfort.
* Research and survey/interview questions should NOT be manipulated in order to elicit certain kinds of behaviors and/or perceptions or responses.
* Surveys / interview should NOT be combined with interventions and/or the collection of individually identifiable information.
* Information should NOT allow any direct or indirect identification of participants.
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[ ]  **Exempt Category 1: Anonymous Tests, Surveys, Interviews, or Public Observations**

Please check to indicate that your study **DOES NOT** :

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| [ ]  | Contain invasive, discomforting or sensitive interview or survey questions or stimuli that might cause subjects to experience distress or discomfort.*(Append all questions in Appendix section below)* |
| [ ]  | Involve sensitive topics, socially questionable, or highly personal issues  |
| [ ]  | Manipulate the environment to elicit certain behaviors and/or affect subjects’ responses or perceptions.*Describe the procedures of your study (i.e., explain step-by-step how are you collecting your data):*  |
| [ ]  | Contain individually identifiable data.*Describe what data you are collecting and how they are NOT individually-identifiable:*  |
| [ ]  | Record information in a way that subjects can be identified directly, or indirectly though other identifiers.*Describe how you are storing, cleaning, and analyzing your data to ensure confidentiality and anonymity:* |
| [ ]  | Put the subject at risk of harm, should there be any accidental disclosure of subjects’ responses or behaviors.*Describe how your study is of minimal risk:*  |
| [ ]  | Intrude into the privacy of subjects and/or cause discomfort, especially if video or audio recordings and/or observations are made. *Describe how the research team will ensure privacy and minimize discomfort of participants:*  |
| [ ]  | Include vulnerable populations (e.g., minors below the age of 16, individuals with special needs, individuals with known physical or mental health issues, older adults above the age of 60, individuals who might be socially disadvantaged, individuals who may lack the cognitive capacity to make informed decisions on whether to participate in the study, etc)*Describe: (1) who your participants are, (2) how many participants you plan to get, (3) how you will recruit them, and (4) how you will obtain informed consent.* |

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| **Section B: Description of Exempt Review Categories – Form 2** |
| **Category 2: Research in Normal Educational & Organizational Settings****To qualify for Exempt Review:** * Research is within normal educational or organizational practices in established or commonly accepted settings.
* Education research is on the effectiveness of normal instructional techniques, curricular, or classroom practices.
* Organization research is on the effectiveness of current organization policies, programs, and practices.
* Research must does not involve an increase of risk or discomfort beyond normal and routine practices.
* Research may also involve collection of data related to teacher/staff management, and/or student/employee knowledge, beliefs, or attitudes towards learning and the organisation, with informed consent given.
* All research data must be de-identified.
* Research must ensure that students and staff are not coerced into participating. Subjects must be allowed to withdraw from participation.
* If research involves video and/or audio recording, expressed consent must be obtained. As much as possible, debriefing should be conducted.
* Research presents no more than minimal risk.

**Exclusions from Exemption (What is NOT allowed):*** Research must NOT be on the evaluation of radically new or innovative practices or use of random assignment of participants to different instructional or operational practices for comparison.
* Research must NOT go beyond the regular scope of activity being studied that would be a deviation from normal educational or organizational practices.
* Research must NOT involve sensitive topics, socially questionable or highly personal issues.
* Research must NOT involve minors, except when the research team does not participate in the activities observed.
* For educational research, it must not adversely impact students’ learning environment, opportunities to learn the required educational content, and/or assessment outcomes.
* For organisational research, it must not adversely impact employee’s working environment, opportunities to develop professionally, and/or work performance outcomes.
* Analysis of student academic grades or staff performance outcomes must NOT be individually-identifiable.
* Research involving physical activity must NOT significantly alter or pose a level of risk to participants.
* Reseaarch must NOT involve deception or with-holding of information
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[ ]  **Exempt Category 2: Research in Normal Educational & Organizational Settings**

Please check to indicate that your study **DOES NOT**:

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| [ ]  | Go beyond the scope of the educational or organizational activity beyond normal and/or routine practices.*Describe how your research is within current educational/organizational practices:*  |
| [ ]  | Examine and/or evaluate radically new or innovative practices beyond current practices. |
| [ ]  | Significantly alter students’ current learning environments or employee’s work environment.  |
| [ ]  | Randomly assign students or staff to different approaches or programs for comparison.D*escribe the methodology and procedures of your research (i.e., Explain the design of your study. Explain step-by-step how you are collecting data):* |
| [ ]  | Involve sensitive topics, socially questionable, or highly personal issues.*(Append all materials in Appendix section below)* |
| [ ]  | Analyze academic grades or staff performance without it being de-identified.*Describe what data you are collecting and how it is not individually identifiable. Describe how you are storing, cleaning, analyzing your data to ensure confidentiality and anonymity:* |
| [ ]  | If you are conducting educational research, it must not adversely impact students’ learning environment, opportunities to learn the required educational content, and/or assessment outcomes. *Describe how your research is of minimal risk:*  |
| [ ]  |  If you are conducting organisational research, it must not adversely impact employee’s working environment, opportunities to develop professionally, and/or work performance outcomes*Describe how your research is of minimal risk:*  |
| [ ]  | Coerce individuals into participating, and that alternative options are provided for those who choose not to participate. *Describe: (1) who your participants are, (2) how many participants you plan to get, (3) how you will recruit them, and (4) how you will obtain informed consent.* |
| [ ]  | Use subjects’ information (e.g., individual responses, photographs, video-recordings etc.) without expressed consent from subjects. **Note:** For children below age of 16, parental consent must be obtained for video or audio recordings.  |
| [ ]  | Involve deception. |

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| **Section B: Description of Exempt Review Categories – Form 3** |
| **Category 3: Secondary Research on Existing or Public Datasets****To qualify for Exempt Review:*** Research involves conducting secondary research on existing data, including those that are publicly available (e.g., social media platforms) or existing data repositories (containing individually identifiable information, data, documents, records).
* Research with identifiable information should be recorded and handled by research team in a way that subjects cannot be identified directly or indirectly through identifiers.
* For continued use of identifiable information, prior consent MUST have been obtained from subjects for use in future secondary research.
* Research team must de-identify subjects as much as possible, and anonymity must be ensured. Once de-identified, subjects must remain anonymous.
* Research team must ensure that data is handled according to PDPA1, HBRA, and regulatory requirements in Singapore.
* Research presents no more than minimal risk.

**Exclusions from Exemption (What is NOT allowed):*** There must NOT be any follow-up contact with individuals, unless required by law.
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[ ]  **Exempt Category 3: Secondary Research on Existing or Public Datasets**

Please check to indicate that your study **DOES NOT**:

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| [ ]  | Contain individually identifiable information (as much as possible). *Describe: (1) where you are collecting data from, (2) what data you are collecting and (3) how it is not individually identifiable:*  |
| [ ]  | Violate subjects’ confidentiality and anonymity.*Describe how you are storing, cleaning, analyzing your data to ensure confidentiality and anonymity:*  |
| [ ]  | Violate regulatory requirements (e.g., PDPA, HBRA, or other legal requirements in Singapore) |
| [ ]  | Put the subject at risk of harm, should there be any accidental disclosure of subjects’ responses or behaviors. *Describe how your study is of minimal risk:*  |
| [ ]  | Require research team to have follow-up contact with subjects (unless required by law or if prior consent has been given).*If follow-up contact is required, describe how participants will be contacted:*   |

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| **Section B: Description of Exempt Review Categories – Form 4** |
| **Category 4: Brief and Harmless Behavioral Interventions****To qualify for Exempt Review:** * Brief and harmless behavioral interventions are defined as brief in duration, harmless, not physically invasive, and are not likely to have a significant adverse effect on participants.
* Participants must be an adult and must provide consent before proceeding with the study.
* Information obtained is not individually-identifiable.
* Any disclosure of the participants’ responses outside of the research will not put the participant at any risk of harm (e.g., criminal or civil charges, financial harm, employability, or reputation).
* Research may involve deception if the participants provide consent and authorization to deception through a prospective agreement (e.g., informed consent) to participate in research in which he or she will be unaware of or misled, regarding the nature and purpose of the research. Debriefing must be provided.
* Research presents no more than minimal risk.

E**xclusions from Exemption (What is NOT allowed):*** Research must NOT be with children or vulnerable populations.
* Research must NOT require decision-making on behalf of the participant by a legally authorized representative.
* Research must NOT involve medical tests, procedures, or devices (e.g., Fitbit, VR headsets etc.)
* Research must NOT involve deception without prospective consent and agreement.
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[ ]  **Exempt Category 4: Brief and Harmless Behavioral Interventions**

Please check to indicate that your study **DOES NOT**:

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| [ ]  | Involve participants engaging in sustained behavioral interventions in duration. D*escribe the methodology and procedures of your research (i.e., Explain the design of your study. Explain step-by-step how you are collecting data):**(Append all materials in Appendix section below)* |
| [ ]  | Involve harm or be physically invasive. *Describe how your research is of minimal risk:*  |
| [ ]  | Involve medical tests, procedures, or devices (e.g., Fitbit, VR headsets etc.) |
| [ ]  | Have a significant adverse effect on participants. |
| [ ]  | Have individually-identifiable information. *Describe: (1) where you are collecting data from, (2) what data you are collecting and (3) how it is not individually identifiable:* |
| [ ]  | Include children or vulnerable populations (e.g., minors below the age of 16, individuals with special needs, individuals with known physical or mental health issues, older adults above the age of 60, individuals who might be socially disadvantaged, individuals who may lack the cognitive capacity to make informed decisions on whether to participate in the study, etc)*Describe: (1) who your participants are, (2) how many participants you plan to get, (3) how you will recruit them, and (4) how you will obtain informed consent.* |
| [ ]  | Involve deception without prospective consent and agreement (with debriefing provided). *If research involves deception, justify why deception is needed. Describe how participants will be informed prospectively and be debriefed. Attach all informed consent and debriefing sheets in Appendix section.*  |

**Declaration**

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| I declare that the information provided is true and accurate at the time of submission. I am responsible for the conduct of the study, in upholding research ethics, to protect the rights and welfare of my research subjects. I declare and confirm that failure to comply with national and institutional regulations and policies, may be subjected to disciplinary action and the suspension or termination of this research. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Name & Signature of Principal Investigator** **Date of Form Submission**  |

**Appendix**

Please append the following (in this order):

1. Informed consent forms
2. Briefing and debriefing sheet/scripts
3. All research materials and stimuli used in your study