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| **Sample documents for Focus Groups**  These templates are to assist researchers who propose to use focus groups in their research methodology. We have suggested two options for participant confidentiality to enable you to choose what is most appropriate in terms of the nature of your research and the participants. Please make sure that any options you choose are consistently chosen throughout the document. |

Please note that withdrawal of an individual’s contribution to a focus group is only possible up until the commencement of the group discussion. Although the participants can choose to leave the focus group discussion at any time, it will be impossible to withdraw what has been said by them up to the point of their withdrawal as it will be incorporated into of the general discussion with other participants. This feature should be explained in the information sheet provided to your participants.

# Focus group guidelines

A document with proposed focus group guidelines should be uploaded to your Human Ethics application. Below are some suggestions of instructions to be included.

* [Please choose one of the following options for participant confidentiality depending on the topic of your research and who your participants are].

[EITHER]

Out of respect for others in the focus group please do not openly/freely share the information discussed in this meeting or who took part. Take a minute to consider the thoughts and feelings of others before repeating information outside of this focus group and how you repeat it.

[OR]

The research is not confidential, and you will be named in the final report.

* You do not need to agree with others, but you should listen respectfully as others share their views.
* We would like to hear a wide range of opinions: please speak up on whether you agree or disagree.
* There are no right or wrong answers, every person’s experiences and opinions are important.
* The meeting is audio recorded, therefore, please allow one person at a time to speak.
* Please turn off your phones or put them on silent mode while the meeting is going on.
* You can take breaks (e.g. toilet breaks, coffee break) as and when required while the focus group is in progress.



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| Participant Information Sheet Template   1. This template is to assist researchers in the development of a Participant Information Sheet involving a focus group. Please adapt this template to suit your specific participants and nature of the research. 2. Use language that is appropriate for your participants. For example, consider the different ways needed to clearly communicate to children as opposed to their parents, or to people with expertise in the area of study as opposed to people with no such expertise.      1. It may be necessary to provide more than one information sheet if you need to communicate to participant groups with different needs (such as parents/caregivers and children) or if your project involves different types of participation (such as questionnaires, interviews and focus groups). 2. If your research is being conducted in a specific organisation, you may need to gain organisational consent. See Information and Consent Form Template for Organisations, available on our website. 3. You may consider the following issues if your research involves Pacific Peoples participants or your research has an impact on Pacific Peoples: 4. If you are Pacific and are working with one or more Pacific community, you should have the opportunity to decide how you want to introduce and identify yourself (e.g. using your own specific cultural greetings and protocols); 5. If you are not Pacific, but are working with one or more Pacific community, you should consult with your supervisor (who would ideally be Pacific or have experience working with Pacific peoples) to know what is appropriate. If you are not a student, then you should consult with Pacific advisors who can ensure that the correct protocols are maintained. Importantly, non-Pacific researchers should be upfront about their positionality and their non-Pacific identity and should also consult the Pacific Research Guidelines; 6. If the proposal has an impact on Pacific peoples, you need to use your own cultural knowledge as a guide (if applicable) and should consult with your supervisors/advisors and the Pacific Research Guidelines. Importantly, the Pacific people/communities involved should be empowered to have ownership over the research at all stages, including deciding the research questions. 7. Statements in the template that are not appropriate for your particular research should be deleted before submitting your HEC application. 8. These guidance notes in yellow boxes should also be deleted. |



**[Add Project Title here]**

**INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS [for Focus Groups]**

[Please include a greeting that is most appropriate for your participants here]

[EITHER]

Hello

[OR]

Tēnā koe/ Tēnā koutou katoa

[OR]

[You may include an appropriate Pacific greeting(s) here. Such greetings need to reflect the diversity of Pacific Communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. You should be mindful that there are Pacific communities that do not have a large representation in Aotearoa New Zealand. So, you need to make sure to find out the appropriate greetings, if it isn’t on the list provided here, as the greeting is just the beginning of the cultural considerations that must be made. Some of Pacific greetings may include, but are not limited to: Talofa lava, Kia Orana, Malo e lelei, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Ni sab ula Vinaka, Malo nik, Halo ola keta,Mauri, Fakatalofa atu].

You are invited to take part in this research. Please read this information before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to participate, thank you for considering this request.

## [EITHER] Ko wai ahau / Who am I? [OR] Ko wai mātou / Who are we?

[Choose one of the following options and delete the other]

My name is [add name] and I am a [Honours/Masters/Doctoral] student in [add programme] at Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington. This research project is work towards my [thesis/dissertation].

[OR]

My name is [add name] and I am an academic staff member in [add programme] at Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington.

[OR]

[If you are a Māori researcher, you may choose to include mihi/pepeha here]

[OR]

[If your research involves Māori participants or has an impact on Māori, you may include mihi/pepeha here]

## He aha te whāinga mō tēnei rangahau /What is the aim of the project?

This project [explain the research purpose/topic in language appropriate to your audience].  
Your participation will support this research by [explain what the benefits are to the participant and/or to the research].

This research has been approved by the Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee [add Hōkai application reference i.e. HExxxxxx].

## Ka pēhea tō āwhina mai / How can you help?

You have been invited to participate because [explain why participant has been approached/selected/eligibility criteria of participants].

If you agree to take part you will be part of a focus group [specify location of focus group]. I will ask you and other participants questions about [add a description in one or two sentences]. The focus group will take [specify length of focus group session]. I will [audio/video] record the focus group with your permission and write it up later.

[Please choose one of the following options for participant confidentiality depending on the topic of your research and who your participants are].

[EITHER]

Out of respect for others in the focus group please do not openly/freely share the information discussed in this meeting or who took part. Take a minute to consider the thoughts and feelings of others before repeating information outside of this focus group and how you repeat it.

[OR]

The research is not confidential, and you will be named in the final report.

You can withdraw from the focus group at any time before the focus group begins. You can also withdraw while the focus group it is in progress. However, it will not be possible to withdraw the information you have provided up to that point as it will be part of a discussion with other participants.

## Ka ahatia ngā kōrero ka tukuna mai / What will happen to the information you give?

[Choose one of the following options and delete the others]

[EITHER] This research is confidential[[1]](#footnote-1)\*. This means that the researchers named below will be aware of your identity but the research data will be combined and your identity will not be revealed in any reports, presentations, and publications. However, you should be aware that in small projects your identity might be obvious to others in your community [include this statement if it could be relevant for your research].

[OR]

The research is not confidential, and you will be named in the final report.

[OR]

You will not be named in the final report but your organisation will be named.

Only my supervisors and [include if you are a student], the transcriber (who will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement) and [if an external transcriber is to be used]. I will read the notes or transcript of the focus group. The focus group transcripts, summaries and any recordings will be kept securely and destroyed on [insert date].

## He aha ngā hua o te rangahau / What will the project produce?

The information from my research will be used in [my Honours/Masters/PhD dissertation/report] [AND/OR] [a report to XXX and/or reports, conference presentations, and publications].

## Ki te whakaae mai koe, he aha ō mōtika hei kaitautoko i tēnei rangahau / If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?

You do not have to accept this invitation if you don’t want to. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:

• choose not to answer any question;

• withdraw from the focus group while it is taking part. However, it will not be possible to withdraw the information you have provided up to that point;

• ask any questions about the study at any time;

• read over and comment on a written summary of the focus group [if one will be produced and is going to be offered];

• be able to read any reports of this research by emailing the researcher to request a copy.

## Mehemea ngā pātai, he raruraru rānei, me whakapā ki a wai / If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact [either/me]:

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| **Student:**  Name:  University email address:  [Note: students should not provide personal cell phone numbers] | **Supervisor:**  Name:  Role:  School:  Phone:  [first.last]@vuw.ac.nz |

## He kōrero whakamārama mō HEC/ Human Ethics Committee information

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington HEC Convenor, Associate Professor Rhonda Shaw, by emailing [human-ethics@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@vuw.ac.nz).



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| Participant Consent Form Template   1. This template is to assist researchers in the development of a Participant Consent Form involving a focus group. Please adapt this template to suit your specific participants and nature of the research. 2. It may be necessary to provide more than one consent form if you need to communicate to participant groups with different needs (such as parents/caregivers and children) or if your project involves different types of participation (such as questionnaires, interviews and focus groups). 3. Statements in the template that are not appropriate for your particular research should be deleted before submitting your HEC application. 4. These guidance notes in yellow boxes should also be deleted. |



**[Add Project Title here]**

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN FOCUS GROUP**

This consent form will be held for [a minimum of five] years.

Researcher: [Add Name, School], Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington.

• I have read the Information Sheet and the project has been explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions at any time.

• I agree to take part in a [video/audio] recorded focus group.

I understand that:

• [EITHER]

Out of respect for others in the focus group I will not openly/freely share the information discussed in this meeting or who took part. I will consider the thoughts and feelings of others before repeating information outside of this focus group and how I repeat it.

[OR]

The research is not confidential, and I will be named in the final report.

• I can withdraw from the focus group while it is in progress. However, it will not be possible to withdraw the information I have provided up to that point as it will be part of a discussion with other participants

• The identifiable information I have provided will be destroyed on [insert date].

* The findings may be used for a [Honours/Masters/PhD dissertation/report/a report to XXX and/or reports, conference presentations, and publications].

• [Focus group notes/recordings] will be kept confidential to the researcher and the supervisor [include if you are a student] and the transcriber [if an external transcriber is to be used].

* [Organisational consent has been provided and the organisation will/will not be named in any of the reports] [include if relevant].

• [EITHER] My name will not be used in reports and utmost care will be taken not to disclose any information that would identify me.

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| • | [OR] I consent to information or opinions which I have given being attributed to me in any reports on this research. | Yes o | No o |
| • | I would like a summary of the focus group: [if one will be produced] | Yes o | No o |
| • | I would like to receive a copy of the final report and have added my email address below. | Yes o | No o |

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of participant: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Contact details: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1.  Confidentiality will be preserved except where you disclose something that causes me to be concerned about a risk of harm to yourself and/or others. *[include if appropriate for your research]* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)