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Debriefing Letter for Studies Involving Deception Template

This template has been designed to meet current regulatory and ethical standards effective as of September 2024.

# Important things to remember when completing your consent form:

* You must add all relevant institutional logos into the header.
* You must add a version date in the footer. Only one version date should be listed. This document version date will be listed on the approval letter from the Research Ethics Office (REO).
* You must use the term “participant”, not “subject”.
* You should use simple (lay) language at a grade 6-8 reading level ([instructions for assessing reading level](https://support.microsoft.com/en-au/office/get-your-document-s-readability-and-level-statistics-85b4969e-e80a-4777-8dd3-f7fc3c8b3fd2#:~:text=In%20your%20Word%20document%2C%20select,reading%20level%20of%20your%20document.)).
* You must fully write out all acronyms and abbreviations when they are first used.
* You must make sure the size and font of the text are consistent (Open Sans, black, 10pt, as per [Queen’s Brand Central](https://www.queensu.ca/brand-central/visual-identity/typography)).
* You must check that page numbers in the footer are correct after you have completed the form and removed all unnecessary sections (including these instruction pages).

# Instructions for how to use/modify/alter this template:

* **Plain Text -** You should not remove plain text. This text represents Queen’s University’s approved template wording that should not be altered.
* **Text in yellow highlight -** Provides you with an instructional prompt to adapt/alter that area of text to reflect your research study. If the text is applicable to your study, you must change it to black text with no highlight. If the text is not applicable to your study, delete it.
* Comment Boxes - Provide you with instructions and, in some cases, suggested text/examples that you should use only if relevant to your study. If the text is not applicable to your study, do not include it. Please remove all instructional comment boxes from your consent form before you attach it to your application form.
* Any items/sub-items not applicable to your study can be removed from the document; adjust the numbering accordingly.

These pages provide you with directions for navigating/altering this document/form.

You must remove these pages when you have completed the form. [Remove this box]

DEBRIEFING LETTER FOR STUDIES INVOLVING DECEPTION

**Study title: [Insert details] should match the title on the ethics application**

**Principal Investigator: [Insert details]**

**Name & Affiliation: [Insert details]**

**Mailing Address: [Insert details]**

**Email: [Insert details]**

**Co-Investigator(s)/Supervisor: [Insert details]**

We express our sincere gratitude for your engagement in our study and thank you for dedicating your time to assist us with our research. When you began the study, you were told that the purpose of this project was to [insert purpose] of research originally presented to participants. However, the study was more complex than we initially described. We are interested in [insert background information] about your research and general aims. In this study, we are investigating whether [insert purpose of the study] and main hypothesis.

During your participation, you were asked to [insert study procedures]. We told you that we were analyzing [insert study objectives] that were originally presented when you were doing this [insert task]. In fact, we were evaluating [insert true purpose] of experiment/tasks performed by participants.

Some participants in this study were selected/randomized because they had experienced [insert description of condition], and others were selected/randomized because they had not experienced any of these situations. You were in the insert criteria condition. This means you were [insert explanation of condition].

We could not share all the study details with participants upfront because it might have affected how they behaved during the study, making it hard to get accurate answers to our research question. We did not tell the whole truth about the study on purpose (this is called deception) because we wanted to see how people would naturally act and think without knowing our real goals. We expected that by [insert deception] used in the study you would [insert expected results] and justification for using deception. We are sorry for omitting some details and giving you fictional information about the study's purposes and tasks. Now that we have explained the purpose more fully, we hope you understand the need for deception. Also, please know that most [insert area] of research, e.g., Psychology research does not involve deception.

We would just like to re-iterate a few things:

1. The purpose of this study was [insert true] purpose of the study.
2. Briefly summarize the study procedures and how deception was used, providing explanation of the true purpose of the study.

If any of the tasks in this study caused you to feel uncomfortable, please feel free to contact [insert name] of Principal Investigator, anytime at [insert phone number] (for privacy reasons, do not include personal contact number) or [insert Queen’s email]. You can also contact my supervisor, insert supervisor name, at insert phone number and Queen’s email address.

Your identity is confidential. The data will be stored with all identifying information removed. Data will be stored for at least [insert time period]and only [insert who will have access to data] will have access to it.You can request your data be removed from the study up until [insert date]; it is not possible to withdraw your data once papers have been submitted to publication.

Because there are some things about the study that we did not tell you before you started, it is important that you do not talk to other people who might participate in the study at some point. If people know specific details about what we are looking for, it could influence the results, and the data we collect would not be reliable.

Some things in the study are different from what we first explained, we have another consent form for you to read and sign if you are willing to allow us to use the information that you provided. This form is a record that the purpose of the study has been explained to you, and that you are willing to allow your information to be included in the study.

This study has received ethical approval by the **[select one of the following]** Queen’s University Health Sciences and Affiliated Teaching Hospitals Research Ethics Board (HSREB) **OR** Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board (GREB). Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the **[select one of the following]** General Research Ethics Board (GREB) at 1-844-535- 2988 (Toll free in North America) or email [chair.greb@queensu.ca](mailto:chair.greb@queensu.ca) **OR** The Queen’s University Health Sciences and Affiliated Teaching Hospitals Research Ethics Board (HSREB) at 1-844-535-2988 (Toll free in North America) or email HSREB@queensu.ca.

For all other questions contact[insert researcher name and contact information].

We are grateful for your involvement and sincerely hope you found this experience interesting.

**POST-DEBRIEFING CONSENT FORM FOR STUDIES INVOLVING DECEPTION (IN-PERSON STUDIES)**

**Study title: [Insert details] should match the title on the ethics application**

**Principal Investigator: [Insert details]**

**Name & Affiliation: [Insert details]**

**Mailing Address: [Insert details]**

**Email: [Insert details]**

**Co-Investigator(s)/Supervisor: [Insert details]**

During the debriefing session, I discovered that the researchers needed to conceal the true purposes of the study. I understand that this was necessary because having full information about the actual purpose of the study might have influenced the way in which I responded to the tasks, potentially compromising the validity of the results. To ensure that this did not happen, some details about the study's purpose were either initially omitted or presented in a way that slightly misrepresented the true objective.

I have now received a complete verbal and written explanation as to the actual purpose of the study and have had an opportunity to ask any questions about this and to receive acceptable answers to my questions.

I have been asked to give permission for the researchers to use my data (or information I provided) in their study and agree to this request. I am aware that I may withdraw this consent by notifying the Principal Investigator of this decision.

This study has received ethical approval by the **[select one of the following]** Queen’s University Health Sciences and Affiliated Teaching Hospitals Research Ethics Board (HSREB) **OR** Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board (GREB). Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the **[select one of the following]** General Research Ethics Board (GREB) at 1-844-535- 2988 (Toll free in North America) or email [chair.greb@queensu.ca](mailto:chair.greb@queensu.ca) **OR** The Queen’s University Health Sciences and Affiliated Teaching Hospitals Research Ethics Board (HSREB) at 1-844-535-2988 (Toll free in North America) or email HSREB@queensu.ca.

For all other questions please contact[insert Principal Investigator name and contact information].

**Participant's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Participant's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

**Principal Investigator’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Principal Investigator’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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

**POST-DEBRIEFING CONSENT FORM FOR STUDIES INVOLVING DECEPTION (ONLINE STUDIES)**

( ) YES ( ) NO I read the Debriefing Letter.

**POST-DEBRIEFING CONSENT FORM**

( ) YES ( ) NO I have questions about the use of deception in this study and would like to be contacted by one of the researchers to discuss these.

If yes, please enter your name and phone number and/or email in the textbox below.

(text box)

( ) YES ( ) NO I give my permission for the researchers to use my data and/or the information I provided through the online survey for this study.