UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

ETHICS FORM 3

FACULTY REVIEW

GUIDELINES

This form is for staff and doctoral students. It will help you set out the ethical aspects of your project that need to be reviewed. Before completing it, you need to:

1. Read *The University Research Ethics Policy*.

2. If you are a student, discuss the ethical aspects of your project with your supervisor.

It is your responsibility to follow the University's Policy on the ethical conduct of research and to follow any relevant academic guidelines or professional codes of practice pertaining to your study when answering these questions. This includes providing appropriate information sheets and consent forms and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data.

The questions in this proforma are intended to guide your reflection on the ethical implications of your research. Explanatory notes and further details can be found in the Policy document.

If any aspect of your project changes during the course of the research, you must notify the Chair of UREC.

SECTION 1

YOUR DETAILS			
1.1.	Your name**: Meadow Dallimore**		
1.2.	Your department: Video game Design		
1.3.	Your Faculty: Digital Media Design		
1.4.	Your status**:**		
		☒ Undergraduate Student	☐ Staff (Professional Services)
		☐ Taught Master	☐ Staff (Academic)
		☐ Research Degree Student	☐ Other (please specify below)
1.5.	Your university email address**: m.dallimore.21@unimail.winchester.ac.uk**		
1.6.	Your telephone number**: 07701 383193**		
	For doctoral students only:		
1.7.	Your degree programme**:**		
1.8.	Your supervisor's name**:**		
1.9.	Your supervisor's department**:**		
1.10.	Your supervisor's email:		

SECTION 2

	YOUR PROJECT		
2.1.	Project title: 'How are character design principles used to objectify female video game characters?'		
2.2.	Start date: 19/02/2024		
2.3.	Expected completion date: 13/05/2024		
2.4.	Expected location of data collection: On my personal laptop (*e.g. school, workplace, public place, University premises etc*.)		
2.5.	Has funding been sought for this research**?**		
		☐ Yes	☒ No
2.6.	If so, where have you applied for funding?		
2.7.	Has the funding been granted?		
		☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Pending
2.8.	Is the research collaborative? (*e.g. co-investigators from another institution, at or with another organisation or colleagues in another department*)		
		☐ Yes	☒ No
		If yes, which?	
2.9.	Is Disclosure and Barring Service clearance required for your study? *It is your responsibility to contact the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to confirm whether or not clearance is needed prior to commencing recruitment or data collection. More information* [*here*](here)		
		☐ Yes	☒ No
2.10.	Is a risk assessment required? *It is your responsibility to contact the Health and Safety Office at the University to confirm whether or not a risk assessment is required prior to commencing recruitment or data collection.*		
		☐ Yes ☒ No	☐ Pending
2.11.	Will your research be informed by guidelines from a professional association or specific, agreed standards of practice?		
		☐ Yes	☒ No
		If yes, which?	

SECTION 3

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please provide a brief description of your project in non-technical language (between 500-1000 words). This should include details of the research rationale, aim(s), research question(s), context (linking to some relevant literature), and methods (including details of participants, data collection (including examples /descriptions of any audio or visual stimuli to be presented to participants), data analysis) to be used. You should state any ethical issues that you have identified and how these will be dealt with. This overview should contain sufficient information to acquaint the reader with the principal features of the proposal. A copy of the full proposal may be requested if further information is deemed necessary.

Please use this section to list documentation that may be relevant to your application and append it to the submission (e.g. consent forms, information sheets, questionnaires etc.).

I am investigating the sexualisation and objectification of female video game characters. This includes the way they are presented to the player and audience, as well as the elements of their appearance like costume design. Through my prior research, I found that female characters were designed to appeal to male players, who are the primary target audience of video games. I found many instances of male gamers reacting negatively to progressive and realistic depictions of women, and positively to more sexual and objectified designs. I will be investigating if this is still the case among players in 2024.

I will reassure participants that their answers will be strictly anonymous and will be stored on a password protected computer at all times. Once my research is complete, the information will be used to inform a university project. I may turn data into graphs to display it clearly for my project. There will be no questions that could be used to identify participants.

I will also ask that no one under the age of 18 participates in the survey. The characters will come from a variety of genres, but most will be from 18 rated games. The costumes will not show nudity, but may contain shirtless male characters, and female characters showing cleavage.

The survey will show many characters, both male and female, in a variety of outfits. It will single out a few to the participant and ask how they think it presents the character. There will be both positive and negative tick boxes for this multiple-choice question. The user can select as many of these descriptions as they see fit. I would then ask the participant's personal favourite, and a box to explain why.

The survey will also ask the participant's gender identity and sexual preference, to investigate if there is a correlation between the gender of the player, and their outfit preferences. To respect privacy, both of these questions will include a 'prefer not to say' answer.

SECTION 4

REFINING THE LEVEL OF ETHICS REVIEW REQUIRED

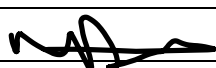|	*Please mark with an ⊠ as appropriate*	YES	NO
1	Does the research involve members of the public in a research capacity as co-researchers? (I.e. as in participant research where involvement extends beyond data collection)	☐	⊠
2	Is there a risk of over-disclosure that may put the participants at risk or cause them any anxiety?	☐	⊠
3	Will tissue samples (including blood) be obtained from participants?	☐	⊠
4	Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to participants? (E.g. to students at school, to members of self-help group.)	☐	⊠
5	Is the right to withdraw from the study withheld at any time, or not made explicit?	☐	⊠
6	Is there any reason participants may feel obliged to participate in the study against their will?	☐	⊠
8	Will the research involve administrative or secure data that requires permission from the appropriate authorities before use?	☐	⊠
10	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	☐	⊠
11	Are there payments to researchers /participants that may have an impact on the objectivity of the research?	☐	⊠
12	Is there any cause for uncertainty as to whether the research will fully comply with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2018)?	☐	⊠
13	Does any part of the project breach any codes of practice for ethics in place within the organisation in which the research is taking place?	☐	⊠
14	Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants? Please note: for fast track review, it is expected that the study will not involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind.	☐	⊠
15	Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?	☐	⊠
16	Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life? (E.g. involve prolonged or repetitive testing.)	☐	⊠
17	Does the project pose any potential or actual conflict(s) of interest for the researcher and /or stakeholders?	☐	⊠

If you answer <u>YES</u> to *any* of these questions, please use the next section to indicate which question you have said yes to, describe the ethical issue in the context of your study and how you will address it. If you have answered <u>NO</u> to all questions, complete section 6.

SECTION 5

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND AMENDMENTS
Use this space to address ethical issues highlighted by the checklist in section 4, or to amend an original submission.

SECTION 6

DECLARATION
I have read and understood the University of Winchester Research Ethics Policy and confirm that adequate safeguards in relation to the ethical issues raised by this research can and will be put in place. I am aware of and understand University procedures regarding Health and Safety. I understand that the ethical aspects of this project may be monitored by the University Research Ethics Committee. I understand my responsibilities as a researcher as described in the University of Winchester Research Ethics Policy. I declare that the answers above accurately describe the research as presently designed and that a new application will be submitted should the research design change in a way which would alter any responses given in Form 1 or here.
☒ I confirm that if a Risk Assessment is required I will complete it and have it co-signed by my Supervisor or Head of Department before data collection takes place.
☒ I confirm that, if DBS clearance is required for my project, then I will seek it before the start of my project.
☒ I confirm that my research does not include risks that might cause it to be excluded from coverage by the University's insurers.
☒ I confirm that I have appropriate insurance for this research.

Researcher's signature:	Date: 12/02/2024

In addition, for **students** (research): The student has the skills to carry out the proposed research. I undertake to monitor the student's adherence to the relevant research guidelines and codes of practice.

Supervisor's signature:	Date:

Please submit this form along with Form 1 to your nominated Ethics Lead.

Please remember to append any forms or documents that may be relevant to your application (e.g. consent form, information sheet, questionnaire(s) etc.). Your form cannot be considered unless it is submitted with the required supporting documentation. Omitting to do so will delay the ethics review process.

APPENDIX – SURVEY QUESTIONS

Video Game Costume Design

This survey will ask the participants' opinion on multiple outfits and designs for video game characters.
This is for research purposes, and will inform my final project at university.

All answers will be stored on my personal laptop, which will remain password protected at all time. participants will be kept anonymous.

Participants will be shown pictures of video game outfits, from games of varying genres. Most of these games will be 18 rated, so I request that all participants are aged 18 or older. Do not participate in this survey if you are under 18 years old.

One final thing, please be 100% honest with your answers, and a huge thank you for participating! Feel free to contact me at meadowlin@btinternet.com with any questions.

meadowdallimore@gmail.com Switch accounts

Not shared

Please look at the outfits below. You will be asked questions about them, feel free to refer back to the images as needed.

Character: Kratos God of War Ragnarok (2022)

How do you think outfit 3 presents the character? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Strong
- ☐ Weak
- ☐ Appealing
- ☐ Unappealing
- ☐ Realistic
- ☐ Unrealistic
- ☐ Attractive
- ☐ Unattractive
- ☐ Capable
- ☐ Incompetent
- ☐ Prepared
- ☐ Unprepared
- ☐ Empowered
- ☐ Objectified
- ☐ Masculine
- ☐ Feminine
- ☐ Other: _____

How do you think outfit 4 presents the character? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Strong
- ☐ Weak
- ☐ Appealing
- ☐ Unappealing
- ☐ Realistic
- ☐ Unrealistic
- ☐ Attractive
- ☐ Unattractive
- ☐ Capable
- ☐ Incompetent
- ☐ Prepared
- ☐ Unprepared
- ☐ Empowered
- ☐ Objectified
- ☐ Masculine
- ☐ Feminine
- ☐ Other:

Which costume is your favourite, and why?

Your answer

Which costume do you think is the character's default costume?

○ Outfit 1

○ Outfit 2

○ Outfit 3

○ Outfit 4

Please look at the outfits below. You will be asked questions about them, feel free to refer back to the images as needed.
Character: Ada Wong Resident Evil 4 (2023)

How do you think outfit 1 presents the character? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Strong
- ☐ Weak
- ☐ Appealing
- ☐ Unappealing
- ☐ Realistic
- ☐ Unrealistic
- ☐ Attractive
- ☐ Unattractive
- ☐ Capable
- ☐ Incompetent
- ☐ Prepared
- ☐ Unprepared
- ☐ Empowered
- ☐ Objectified
- ☐ Masculine
- ☐ Feminine
- ☐ Other:

How do you think outfit 4 presents the character? (Tick all that apply)

☐ Strong

☐ Weak

☐ Appealing

☐ Unappealing

☐ Realistic

☐ Unrealistic

☐ Attractive

☐ Unattractive

☐ Capable

☐ Incompetent

☐ Prepared

☐ Unprepared

☐ Empowered

☐ Objectified

☐ Masculine

☐ Feminine

☐ Other: _____

Which costume is your favourite, and why?

Your answer

Which costume do you think is the character's default costume?
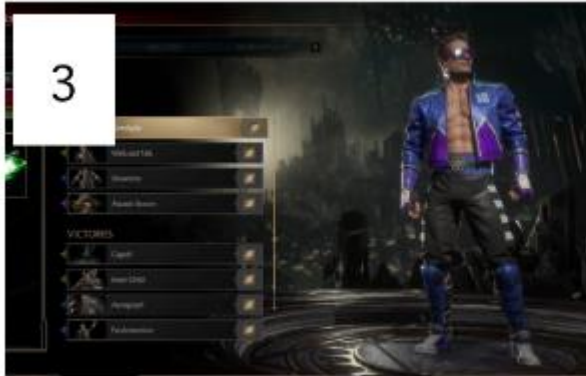
○ Outfit 1

○ Outfit 2

○ Outfit 3

○ Outfit 4

Please look at the outfits below. You will be asked questions about them, feel free to refer back to the images as needed.
Character: Johnny Cage Mortal Kombat 11 (2019)

How do you think outfit 4 presents the character? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Strong
- ☐ Weak
- ☐ Appealing
- ☐ Unappealing
- ☐ Realistic
- ☐ Unrealistic
- ☐ Attractive
- ☐ Unattractive
- ☐ Capable
- ☐ Incompetent
- ☐ Prepared
- ☐ Unprepared
- ☐ Empowered
- ☐ Objectified
- ☐ Masculine
- ☐ Feminine
- ☐ Other: _____

How do you think outfit 2 presents the character? (Tick all that apply)

☐ Strong

☐ Weak

☐ Appealing

☐ Unappealing

☐ Realistic

☐ Unrealistic

☐ Attractive

☐ Unattractive

☐ Capable

☐ Incompetent

☐ Prepared

☐ Unprepared

☐ Empowered

☐ Objectified

☐ Masculine

☐ Feminine

☐ Other: _____

Which costume is your favourite, and why?
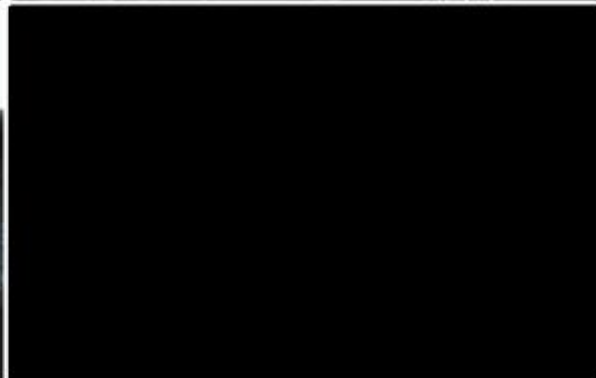
Your answer

Which costume do you think is the character's default costume?

○ Outfit 1

○ Outfit 2

○ Outfit 3

○ Outfit 4

Please look at the outfits below. You will be asked questions about them, feel free to refer back to the images as needed.

Character: Quiet Metal Gear Solid Phantom Pain (2015)

How do you think outfit 3 presents the character? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Strong
- ☐ Weak
- ☐ Appealing
- ☐ Unappealing
- ☐ Realistic
- ☐ Unrealistic
- ☐ Attractive
- ☐ Unattractive
- ☐ Capable
- ☐ Incompetent
- ☐ Prepared
- ☐ Unprepared
- ☐ Empowered
- ☐ Objectified
- ☐ Masculine
- ☐ Feminine
- ☐ Other: _____

How do you think outfit 1 presents the character? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Strong
- ☐ Weak
- ☐ Appealing
- ☐ Unappealing
- ☐ Realistic
- ☐ Unrealistic
- ☐ Attractive
- ☐ Unattractive
- ☐ Capable
- ☐ Incompetent
- ☐ Prepared
- ☐ Unprepared
- ☐ Empowered
- ☐ Objectified
- ☐ Masculine
- ☐ Feminine
- ☐ Other: _____

Which costume is your favourite, and why?

Your answer

Which costume do you think is the character's default costume?

○ Outfit 1

○ Outfit 2

○ Outfit 3

What is your gender identity?

○ Male

○ Female

○ Non-binary

○ Prefer not to say

Which genders are you attracted to?

○ Men

○ Women

○ Both

○ Neither

○ Other

○ Prefer not to say

Thank you so much!
This will be used for my final project, and I am very grateful for your participation! If you have any further questions, contact me at

meadowlin@btinternet.com