School of Computer Science & Informatics
Ashton Street, Liverpool, L69 3DR

Computer Science Project Modules
Participant Information Sheet

You are invited to help with activity that forms part of an undergraduate or postgraduate student project in Computer Science at the University of Liverpool. This could be one or both of the following.

- **Requirements Analysis** – Takes place at the start of a project to find out what users want a piece of software to do.
- **Software Evaluation** – Takes place at the end of a project to find out what users think about a piece of software that a student developed.

You will be asked to sign (or initial) a Participant Consent Form to indicate that you agree to take part in one or more of the following.

- **Interview** – You will be asked questions to find out what you want a piece of software to do (requirements analysis) or to find out what you think about a piece of software (evaluation).
- **Discussion** – This is very much like an interview but less structured. It might begin with a set of questions but you will be able to talk more freely about whatever you think is relevant.
- **Observation** – You will be observed as you use a piece of software or carry out a manual task, usually without any prompting or interruptions from the student.
- **Narration** – This is very much like an observation but you will be asked to talk aloud as you use a piece of software, to describe what you are doing and why you are doing it that way.
- **Questionnaire** – You will be asked to fill in a survey with a fixed set of questions. This might be on paper or online, and you might not need to be in the same room as the student.

In addition, the student might ask to make an **audio recording** or **screen recording** of whatever you say or do as you take part in any of these activities. Please note that students are not permitted to make video recordings. Usually the student will make written notes as you carry out the activity.

If the student has developed a mobile app, they might ask for your Apple or Google ID so they can add you to a list of permitted beta testers in the relevant app store. Your ID will only be used for this purpose and it won't be stored anywhere else or shared with anyone else. If you don't want to reveal your ID, you can take part in the activity by using the software on a device provided by the student.

Does the activity follow ethical guidelines?

The department has a collective ethical approval for requirements analysis and software evaluations involving the limited methods described above. The proposed activity has been checked by two academic members of staff, including the student's supervisor. If you are asked to carry out any other kind of activity, this has not been approved and you should bring this to the attention of the project coordinator. Contact details for the student, supervisor and coordinator should be clearly shown on the Participant Consent Form.

Where does the activity take place?

All activity must take place in the United Kingdom. If you are not in the UK at the time of the activity, please decline to take part. There are no other restrictions on where the activity can take place, but please exercise caution and ensure you feel comfortable with the proposed location before taking part.

Do you have to take part?

Participation is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. You don't have to complete the entire activity. You can do as much or as little as you like, and ignore any questions or tasks that you don't want to do.

Are there any risks in taking part?

There are no foreseeable risks from taking part in standard requirements analysis or software evaluation activities, since they involve only talking and observing. If you feel uncomfortable or disadvantaged at any point during the activity, you can ask to stop and withdraw.

Ideally you should evaluate software on a device provided by the student. If you are asked to install the software on your own device, please be aware that it might be incomplete or contain bugs. We cannot guarantee that the software will run error-free. The university is not liable for any damage to your device or the data stored on it. Proceed with caution and withdraw from the evaluation if you become concerned.

What will happen if you decide not to take part or withdraw?

You can decide not to take part in the project, or you can stop and withdraw at any time. If you withdraw after data has been collected, you can ask for it to be deleted if it hasn't already been aggregated, or you can allow the data to be used. Please confirm your choice with the student.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The university processes personal data as part of its research and teaching activities in accordance with the lawful basis of 'public task' and the university's purpose of "advancing education, learning and research for the public benefit". Under UK data protection legislation, the university acts as the Data Controller for personal data collected as part of the university's research. The project supervisor acts as the Data Processor for this project. Any queries relating to the handling of your personal data can be sent to them. Contact details are shown on the Participant Consent Form.

- **Personal data** – Collected during the activity and associated with your identity (initials or name, and any audio recordings of your voice).
- **Aggregated data** – Combines answers and comments from all participants (at which point your identity is removed and the data becomes fully anonymous).

How will your data be collected?

Requirements analysis is intended to find out what you want a piece of software to do. Software evaluation is intended to find out how well it works, how usable it is, things that could be improved, and so on. Your opinions and answers will be noted by the student as you take part in these activities. This might include written notes, electronic notes, audio recordings and screen recordings.

During an evaluation, the software itself might ask you to provide data as part of its operation. Please enter false data such as a fake name, dummy password, and so on. Do not enter any information that could be used to identify you. If you feel uncomfortable with anything that is being asked of you, please inform the student.

How will your data be stored?

While the activity is taking place, your answers might be written on paper or stored electronically. When participant data is aggregated, your personal data will be destroyed. Any data that you provide to software while you use it might be stored in a database or other electronic format, so please enter false data because it might be kept until all evaluation and testing is complete. Aggregated data and software data will be stored in line with the university's data protection policy until the dissertation has been marked. They will then be destroyed.

How long will your data be stored for?

Your personal data will only be stored for a short period before being aggregated. This will depend on how many other participants are involved in the activity but should be no more than a week or two. Aggregated data will be stored until the student has submitted their dissertation, then it will be destroyed. The dissertation itself (which could contain summaries and discussion of aggregated data) will be permanently archived on university systems.

What measures are in place to protect the security and confidentiality of your data?

If students use their own devices (such as a laptop or tablet) to make notes during the activity, these will be protected with a password and locked when not in use. Data will be transferred to university systems as soon as practically possible, which are protected by multiple layers of security and permanently monitored by our IT Services department.

Will your data be anonymised?

Yes. While the activity is taking place, the student will keep a note of who gave each response (so your data can be identified and destroyed on request). After aggregation, there will be no way to match your personal details to any of the collected data.

How will your data be used?

Your data will be aggregated with data from other participants, at which point your answers become anonymous and can no longer be associated with you. Tables of aggregated results might appear in the student's dissertation along with fully anonymised free-text comments, if you provide any.

Who will have access to your data?

While the activity is taking place, only the student will have access to your personal data. After aggregation, the student, their supervisor, and those marking the dissertation will have access to fully anonymised data.

Will your data be archived for use in other research projects in the future?

No. Your answers and comments will only be presented in aggregated form in the student's final dissertation. The dissertation will not contain any personal data and will not identify you.

How will your data be destroyed?

Paper notes will be physically destroyed by shredding. Data on disk will be destroyed using the 'permanent delete' option within the operating system, which typically involves overwriting the disk with random data.

Who do you contact for more information or to make a complaint?

In the first instance, you should discuss any concerns with the student conducting the activity. If you remain unhappy or need further information, you should contact the project supervisor and/or project coordinator. Contact details are shown on the Participant Consent Form.

If you feel that your concern has not been addressed, you should contact the Research Ethics and Integrity Office at **ethics@liverpool.ac.uk** (making it clear that you are writing about a student project in Computer Science).

The university strives to maintain the highest standards of rigour in the processing of your data. However, if you have any concerns about the way the university processes your personal data, it is important that you are aware of your right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office by calling 0303 123 1113.