



Ethical Statement

This document details the ethical standards which are required for experiments carried out at, and under the auspices of, **EXEC**, the *Centre for Experimental Economics* at the University of York. Any experimentalists carrying out experiments at **EXEC** will be required to sign their agreement with this form and give a copy to the Director of **EXEC**. If an experimentalist does not feel able to sign their agreement with this form, perhaps because he or she is doing experiments of a different type, then he or she will have to seek special permission from the ELMPs Ethics Committee of the University of York (Economics, Law, Management, Politics and Sociology Ethics Committee).

General Principles

Experiments carried out at **EXEC** should obey the following rules.

1. The purpose of any experiment

Experiments should be carried out for scientific reasons, usually for testing economic theories under controlled laboratory conditions. The ultimate objective is publication of articles in scientific journals.

2. The experimentalist in charge

For any experiment, the person responsible for the experiment should be explicitly named to the Director of **EXEC** (who should give his or her approval to the experiment), and should sign his or her agreement with this form. He or she will be held responsible for any breach of these rules.

3. Voluntary participation

Subjects in experiments should be participating voluntarily and under no compunction to participate. Subjects will be invited to participate in an experiment through an e-mail sent by the *hroot* system (see below) to people who have voluntarily registered on the database. All registrants have the right, and know that they have the right, to decline any invitation to any experiment. When subjects attend an experiment and are paid, the receipt form that they will be asked to sign will also include a statement that they participated voluntarily. People on the *hroot* register are recruited by e-mail shots to all members of the University of York and there is a requirement that all registrants have a standard York e-mail address – that is, one ending in @york.ac.uk. After participation in any experiment, subjects will be asked to sign a form which certifies that they participated voluntarily, and is a receipt for any payment that they received.

4. The tasks involved

The tasks that subjects will be asked to do will not require any physically stressing manual effort and will not impose any physical or mental pain or suffering on the subjects. Usually experiments involve subjects sitting at a computer terminal and responding to problems of an economic nature, though some experiments will require subjects to answer to a non-computerised questionnaire, by filling in some form. There will be no attempt to physically measure subjects' physical or mental state; no medical intervention of any type will be used.

5. The duration of the experiment

In the invitation to the experiment subjects will be told of the expected duration of the experiment, usually under two hours.

6. Payment

Subjects will be told exactly how they will be rewarded for participation in the experiment. Normally the payment will be in money, paid at the end of the experimental session. Often there will be a show-up fee which participants will be paid irrespective of their performance. In addition there will usually be an additional payment which depends upon the subjects' performance in the experiment, the performance of other participants in the experimental session, and often on a random factor. Any random factor will be explained to the subjects, and any random device will be explained honestly; there will be no manipulation of any random device (other than seeding a random number generator) and no subject's payment will be manipulated downwards in a fraudulent or deceptive manner by any experimentalist. If a subject wishes to leave the experiment before the session is completed he or she will be allowed to do so, and their payment will be the show-up fee told to them at the beginning of the experiment. Subjects will be asked to sign an **EXEC** receipt for any payment that they receive and these receipts will be the responsibility of the experimentalist in charge of the experiment. These receipts will not be linked in any way to the data from the experiment and will not be used in any publications in any way that could identify individual subjects.

7. Confidentiality

While subjects will be recruited using the *hroot* (Hamberg registration and organization online tool) system from a database of potential participants (which identifies participants and their contact details), and while data from experiments (including the subjects' performance in an experiment for which they volunteered, and possibly their responses to questionnaires) will be recorded in databases, the two databases (that of *hroot* and that from the experiment) will *never* be married together. Only data from the experiments (and not that from *hroot*) will be published. This guarantees that published data will be anonymous and that no individual can be identified from published results. Confidentiality will thus be ensured.

8. Lack of deception

All subjects will be given clear and written instructions describing what they are being asked to do in the experiment. While they will not be told the purpose of the experiment (in a scientific sense) there will be no deception of the subjects. If any subject has any question concerning the experiment, except those relating to the scientific purpose of the experiment, they will be given an honest answer. If any subject wishes to leave at any point in the experiment, they will be free to do so, and they will be given the show-up fee detailed in the call for the experiment; they will usually not be entitled to any further payment if they have not completed the experiment, irrespective of the time that they have spent in the laboratory.

9. Complaints

Subjects who feel that they have been unfairly treated in any experiment will be referred to the representative of the ELMPS ethics committee in the Department of Economics and Related Studies, who will investigate the complaint. Members of EXEC will fully cooperate in any such investigation.

10. Ejection from the experiment

The experimentalist reserves the right to exclude or reject any subject from the experiment if the subject does not respect the rules of the experiment. This is usually only the case when a subject is disruptive or communicates with other subjects (or people outside the laboratory) when the rules say clearly that they should not. Under these circumstances, the show-up fee may not be payable.

11. Additional information given to the subjects

Occasionally subjects ask additional information – usually about the purpose of the experiment – that experimentalists are reluctant to give until the end of all the sessions relating to a particular experiment. This is to prevent early subjects changing the behaviour of later subjects, which may defeat the point of the experiment. Experimentalists reserve the right not to give such information until the end of the experimental sessions, and to give information that is only relevant to what subjects need to know in order to complete their experimental session. However, it is expected that when the data has been analysed and the results of the experiment written up, the resulting article(s) and data will be put in the public domain and made available to all.

12. Data from the experiment

Most journals now require that any data used in a published paper are put in the public domain and are made available to all. Data from **EXEC** experiments will respect this rule, but the data will be made publically available in such a way that anonymity is preserved (see point 7 above).

13. **EXEC** will make an annual report at the end of each academic year to the ELMPs ethics committee which will set out the number of experiments and participants, as well as highlighting any issues and problems which have arisen.

Certification

The form on this page should be completed and signed by any experimentalist responsible for running experiments in the **EXEC** laboratory. A copy should then be given to the Director of **EXEC**.

“I the undersigned certify that the experiments that I will run in the **EXEC** laboratory and under the auspices of **EXEC**, will be carried out in full conformity with the ethical statement above, and I will be personally responsible that they will be so.”

Descriptor of the set of experiments being run.....

Name of person responsible for running the experiments.....

E-mail address.....

Period over which the experiments will be run.....

Signature of person responsible for running the experiments.....

Signature of Director of **EXEC**.....

Date.....