Experiences of learning to code: Participant Information and Informed Consent

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information.

What is the purpose of this project?

The purpose of this project is to help teachers and researchers better understand students' experiences of learning to code and developing as programmers, by asking the students themselves. This is a research project, and we intend to submit an article based on our findings to a peer-reviewed journal.

The nature of the research is exploratory. Our goal is to uncover a range of experiences and perspectives, not to formally test any hypotheses or make generalisable claims.

We expect that teaching staff at the University of Edinburgh take an interest in our findings. However, it is important to understand that teaching staff will not know which students have taken part in the study, and that taking part will have no effect whatsoever on your grades.

What will the interview be like?

We are inviting participants to take part in a one-to-one interview over Microsoft Teams. These will be more like a conversation than a formal interview; we are interested to hear about your experiences, not to judge you!

The interview will be conducted by one of our three researchers, who are familiar with the courses but are not involved in any teaching at the University.

How does the interview data get processed?
Recording and transcription

The interview will be recorded and transcribed using Microsoft Teams' automatic transcriptions. This recording is saved automatically within Teams, using the University of Edinburgh's cloud storage provided by Microsoft Office 365. You can read the privacy document here.

After the interview, the interviewer will listen back to the recording and perform a series of actions to ensure that the resulting transcript is accurate, and that any identifiable information has been removed:

1. They will double-check that the automatic transcription is accurate, and correct it where appropriate.

2. They will change any mentioned names to pseudonyms (fake names) to protect identities.

3. They will redact any portions of the transcript that contain information that may be used to identify an individual, be they a student or a teacher, taking care to preserve the original meaning of what

was said wherever possible.

The modified, redacted transcript will then be downloaded, <u>and the original interview recording and transcript deleted</u>.

Analysis and reporting

The redacted interview transcripts will be interpreted and analysed qualitatively by the interviewer and the Research Assistants.

When it comes to reporting on our findings, where appropriate, we may include selected quotes from the redacted versions of the interview transcripts in order to illustrate themes or concepts.

Are there any possible risks or disadvantages in taking part?

We have identified the main risks to student participants as resulting from the identification of individuals in the study by teaching staff. For example, the participant could discuss a moment in which cheating occurred during assessed work, and if the Course Organiser found out they might be tempted to take action or treat the participant unfavourably in future.

For this reason, we have strict protocols in place to ensure that all participants remain anonymous to any teaching staff. These include

1. The fact that <u>the interviewer is the only person who knows the identity of the participants, and has no involvement in teaching</u>.

2. The way that <u>interview transcripts are redacted to ensure anonymity</u>.

3. The immediate <u>deletion of the original interview and transcript</u> after the redacted version has been completed.

Our judgement is that, with these protocols in place, <u>the possibility of a negative outcome for participants is extremely minimal.</u>

Will I be reimbursed for my time?

Yes. You will receive a £20 Amazon gift voucher which will be sent to the email address you provided shortly (we anticipate within 1-2 weeks) after your interview.

What if I want to withdraw from the study after the interview?

You have the right to withdraw consent for your data to be used after your interview, provided you let us know within a time frame that makes opting out practically possible. Ideally, this would be within one week of your interview, but sooner is better.

1. **Within one week of your interview:** If you withdraw consent within one week of your interview we guarantee that none of the information you provide will be used. All of your data, including anonymised and redacted transcript, will be deleted immediately.

2. **More than one week after your interview:** If you withdraw consent more than one week after your interview there is a high chance that we have already invested considerable time transcribing and analysing the information you provided, and it becomes increasingly difficult to extract and disregard your data. However, upon your instruction we will not use quotes from your interview in any published work.

3. **From late October 2024 onwards:** Please understand that <u>it will not be possible to opt out once we have submitted our article for publication in late October.</u>

You may also request that certain parts of your interview are not quoted.

I have further questions - who can I ask?

If you have any questions that you feel have not been sufficiently answered above, please reach out to Joe Marsh Rossney at jmarshr@exseed.ed.ac.uk.
Please do not contact other staff members about this project, since it is important that any participants remain anonymous to teaching staff.
However, if you have an ethical concern that you would like to raise with someone other than Joe Marsh Rossney, you can contact the school's ethics officer at ethics@ph.ed.ac.uk.

1. I have read and understood the above and wish to continue to the Informed Consent form. *

  ○ Yes

  ○ No

2. I understand that participating in the research involves taking part in an interview which is expected to last approximately 30 minutes. *

○ Yes

○ No

3. I understand how my data will be processed during the research. *

○ Yes

○ No

4. I understand the risks associated with participating in this study. *

○ Yes

○ No

5. I understand that my words may be *anonymously* quoted in academic publications, internal reports and presentations. *

○ Yes

○ No

6. I have been given the opportunity to ask any further questions and have had these questions answered to my satisfaction. *

○ Yes

○ No

7. I understand that if I wish to withdraw consent *after* the interview, I can contact Joe Marsh Rossney (jmarshr@exseed.ed.ac.uk) who will carry out this request as described in the Participant Information Sheet, and subject to the limitations outlined therein. *

○ Yes

○ No

8. Please provide your contact email or UUN. *