

Application Form for Ethical Clearance for Research Involving Human Participants

School of Natural and Rural Systems Management

It is the responsibility of the School of Natural and Rural Systems Management, through its Research Committee, to assess, and, where appropriate, approve the 'ethical conduct' of research activities. This applies to research involving human subjects conducted by undergraduate, honours, masters and PhD students (coursework and research). For research on animals and plants, the School has arranged for the School of Animal Studies to be the approving body for ethical clearance.

Working with their course convenors or advisors, students are expected to seek ethical approval for any relevant research they conduct. Applications for ethical clearance for research including human participants can be downloaded from the School web site (www.nrsm.uq.edu.au) and should be forwarded to Prof Helen Ross, Chair of the School's Research Committee.

The rationale for ethical approval is to ensure that the *process* of research is conducted 'ethically' responsibly, and mindful of courtesy, protection of privacy and not exploitative of participants. This mainly involves establishing procedures for the informed consent of those subjects involved in the research, as well as appropriate handling of research findings (e.g. secure storage of data, confidentiality where agreed etc).

Researchers undertaking fieldwork that involves *contact with human subjects should complete an application form*. In the type of work associated with research within the School, this often includes questionnaires and/or interviews. These require ethical clearance.

Passive observation of human subjects in a public arena, or research involving accessing public documents does not require ethical approval.

The procedure for obtaining ethical clearance involves:

1. Being familiar with the University's policy on research ethics (see website: www.uq.edu.au/research/orps/?id=5064&pid=5256)
2. Filling out the enclosed application form and submitting this for approval to the Chair of the School Research Committee, Prof Helen Ross.
3. Enclosing with the application form a sample Research Information Sheet and Informed Consent Form (where applicable) (see below).

The application will then be reviewed by at least one member of the Research Committee who will, if necessary, seek clarification of the application with the applicant and their principal advisor, before making a recommendation to the Chair. The recommendation may include review by the whole Research Committee.

Further information may be obtained from the Chair of the School Research Committee, Prof Helen Ross (ph. 07 5460 1648 or hross@uqg.uq.edu.au);

or from:

The Ethics Officer, Michael Tse
Office of Research and Postgraduate Studies
Ph. 07 3365 3924
humanethics@research.uq.edu.au

Further information on ethics clearance is at:
www.uq.edu.au/research/services/human



THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

School of Natural and Rural Systems Management

Ethical Research Application Form ¹

Project title

The attitudes and behaviours of employees in small-scale private trading enterprises (SPTE's) after they experienced the transformation from large state-owned enterprises (LSOE's): A Case study in Xinjiang Province, China

Project location (e.g. institutions, communities)	Xinjiang Qiyuan Imp. & Exp. Corp. Ltd. and Xinjiang Jinyi Import. & Exp. Corp. Ltd. Urumqi, Xinjiang , P.R.China	Project duration	August-September 2006
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Investigator	Liang Shuang		
Student No.	40906706		
Contact details of investigator	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Fax</i>	<i>Email</i>
Degree enrolled	Master of Rural system management		
Co investigators (if applicable)			
Supervisor/s	Dr. Gerry Roberts		
Contact details principal supervisor	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Fax</i>	<i>Email</i>

Answer all of the following questions

1. Provide a brief description of your research (what you will do, with whom, where etc)

(At least 200 words please)

This research will be conducted in Xinjiang province in China. Participants include the staff of two small private Import and Export company which transferred from state-owned company: Xinjiang Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Import and Export Corp. Ltd.in 2000, officials in Xinjiang Foreign Trading Bureau, officials in Xinjiang provincial government, staff from two state bank, and some clients of those two company. Face to face in-depth interview will be carried out by investigator and participants in order to get information from those people who have been involved in the transformation above mentioned. Their experiences and perception about the transformation and the development of small private companies will contribute to the research problem. Since the transformation from state-owned enterprises to private enterprises is a realistic and on going event in China

¹ See final page.

This University requirement for ethical approval is not directly about your research area, methodologies and methods. These are matters for you to determine with your advisors! However, this form is about ethical issues that may/will arise from your chosen methodology and methods. In completing this form, the emphasis must be on ethical issues, and all parts of the form should be completed with this in mind. Explanation of methodological approaches and methods should be sufficient for reviewers to clearly understand the ethical issues that might arise from your chosen area of research.

and impacts those people involved in many aspects, especially in their attitudes and behaviors in starting new careers, it is worth exploring how people react in this kind of change and how their reactions of change impact their behaviors in the new situation in order to provide understanding and suggestions for the similar situations in the future.

2a. Who are the participants/research subjects?

Participants include the staff of two small private Import and Export company which transferred from state-owned company: Xinjiang Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Import and Export Corp. Ltd. in 2000, officials in Xinjiang Foreign Trading Bureau, officials in Xinjiang provincial government, staff from two state bank, some clients of those two company, some ex-staff in Xinjiang Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Import and Export Corp. Ltd.

2b. How will they be recruited?

They will be shown the Research Information Sheet and Informed Consent Form at site and asked them to decide to take part the research voluntarily.

3. Provide a summary of the ethical aspects in this project².

- In-depth Interview may cause some issues related to the privacy and comfort with providing information, especially on the aspects of incomes and personal life.
 - The change is strongly linked with the political reform in China, the informants will be asked the perceptions about the transformation which is related with the political issues.
 - People will be asked to tell the story about their personal experiences during the change, which they could have sensitive feelings about.
 - If people are unhappy with the change it may create some discomfort for them however it may also provide an outlet for them to raise concerns.
 - Since the investigator is an ex-staff member of Xinjiang Cereals, Oils, Foodstuffs Company and is working for one of the private companies in this research project currently, the ex-staff who are working in another company could regard the investigator as the competitor. On the other hand, the ex-staff who are working in the same company with the investigator might have some misgivings to share their experiences.
 - People who quit from the private companies might be reluctant to provide their perceptions of the development of the former company.
-

4. Provide a summary of methods that will be developed to address each of the ethical concerns identified in 3. above.

- The informants will be informed in written and/or verbal form of the nature and purpose of the research as well as how the information they will provide will be treated. All will be in their own language to ensure the explanation is clear enough.
 - In-depth interview will be conducted individually and the informants will be asked for permission of recording dialog when sepcific topics are mentioned.
 - Privacy will be addressed by the confidential procedures at the beginning of the interview which means that all information obtained from the informants will be anonymous and will not be accessible to anybody except the researcher.
 - Discomfort with the change will be addressed by listening empathically with their discomfort
 - The researcher will emphasize her neutral state and attitude in this study when she contact with the informants and ensure the information and standpoints they give will not be used for other purposes or influence their work situations.
 - To further respect anonymity, the stories will not be presented as individual stories of the staff. Rather the stories will be presented as an amalgamation of the different experiences of people.
 - People will be informed to provide or keep any information they have without any pressure and predudice from the researcher.
-

5. How will informed consent be obtained from participants? ³

- Verbally
 In writing
 Via computer
 Via QPWS or other permit (be specific)
-

² The issue here is that there are a range of ethical issues that arise in research that may be directly related to the research, or hidden, or incidental. We are not interested in preventing genuine research of a sensitive nature. On the contrary, such research can be a vital part of any environmental or social study. The issue is to ensure that the researcher is fully aware of the possible consequences of their research and develops appropriate methodologies and mechanisms to address each and every possible ethical situation that might arise. Carefully consider all possible ramifications of your research, both intended and unintended. Think about issues of personal distress, topic relevance, cultural appropriateness, gender sensitivity, age related concerns, power relationships and inequalities, privacy etc. If you are not sure of what should be considered here, go to any methodological text; for example Silverman, D. (2005) Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook. London: Sage Publications. See also footnote 6.

³ Participants must fully understand the implications of their involvement, acknowledging that for some methods, full disclosure is not appropriate to the research.

Other (be specific)

6. Provide details of procedures for establishing confidentiality and protecting privacy of participants⁴.

6a. Nature of consent to participate

Via informed consent

Via gatekeeper⁵

Other (be specific)

6b. Will participants be identified in your report?

De-identified (all data will be made anonymous) The interview transcripts will be numbered and only the researcher will have a record of name and number matches. This too will be destroyed at the end of the project.

A printed form will be given to the participants in their own language. I will answer any questions they have before asking them to sign if they find it suitable enough to sign.

Identified if requested⁶

7. Provide details of data collection⁷, security and storage⁸

Data stored at UQ for duration then destroyed The researcher will ensure that the interviewees thoroughly understand their confidentiality and privacy in providing information before starting the in-depth interview. As well, the interviewees will be asked the permission of recording the interview in e-format. All data collected through the interviews in the hard copy and e-copy can not be accessed by unauthorized people. Hard copy data will be stored at UQ for required duration and then destroyed. E-copy data will be destroyed as soon as the information is recorded in hard format.⁹

Data stored elsewhere (state where) for duration then destroyed ⁸

Other (be specific)

⁴ Check relevant boxes and provide explanations of the procedures.

⁵ For example, an organisation that is hosting your research; however, while a gatekeeper may facilitate access to participants, informed consent is always (except in exceptional circumstances) necessary.

⁶ Usual practice is not to identify participants, to protect their privacy. However, in some contexts participants may appreciate being listed in an acknowledgements page, or having their names given as 'pers. Comm'.

⁷ This should be covered by your methods and methodology. Return to items 3 and 4 if you now think of ethical issues that might arise in data collection.

⁸ An issue here is securing the data and maintaining confidentiality. This is required at the collection and storage stages. Remember, you may have hard copy of interviews and e-copy. Any record that identifies the participant is a risk to be considered. Consider if you really need to identify the participant; will a code suffice? How will you ensure this can not be accessed by unauthorized people! Also, when you collect your data are others present who may not be subject to ethical considerations. How will you address this! Some of these issues are also methodological! Reconsider items 3 and 4.

⁹ Describe storage format and security measures.

8. Give specific details of whether and/or how feedback will be available to participants.

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Feedback via report ¹⁰ | <input type="checkbox"/> Via special publication |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Via visit | <input type="checkbox"/> Via conference ¹¹ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Via video/audio | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No feedback will be provided (Give justification) | |

9. Does the project involve any of the following issues? ¹²

- YES**, detail strategies to minimise ethical issues that might arise. **NO**, go to 10.

The possibility of psychological/mental stress/distress or discomfort

Informants who are unhappy with the changes could have psychological stress or discomfort when they are asking to provide their feelings and perceptions about the research topic.

Participant involvement by any “Vulnerable Groups” (e.g. Aboriginal/TSI, abused, children, etc)

Other (be specific)

10. Indicate what you think is the level of risk for prospective participants against the scale below and provide a brief justification for your assessment.

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extreme risk ¹³ | <input type="checkbox"/> High risk |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Some risk Some participants as Item 9 mentioned may have ethical issues which cause some risk to them, however the risk could be minimised through the strategies described in item 4. | <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal risk |

11a. For all projects that relate to, or involve, vulnerable groups, outline all additional ethical issues that need to be considered as a consequence of the special needs of these groups and detail how you propose to address them?

N/A

11b. For all projects that relate to, or involve, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, outline any additional ethical issues that need to be considered as a consequence of the special needs of these groups and detail how you propose to address them?

N/A

Have you also attached?**If ‘no’ briefly give reason ¹⁴**

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Informed Consent Form (see below) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. Research Information Sheet (see below) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3. Inquiry Instrument (e.g. Sample questionnaire) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

¹⁰ For example, personal, community, wider public.

¹¹ Identify conference.

¹² Cross-reference to item 3.

¹³ ‘Extreme’ will definitely apply to any legal or community requirement/expectation for privacy (e.g. medical records and the high likelihood of obtaining this information purposefully or accidentally). The researcher must have a strategy in place in this eventuality. Informed consent is only a start to addressing these issues.

¹⁴ ‘Have not completed as yet’ is not acceptable.

Statement of Investigator ¹⁵

I have reviewed the University’s policy and guidelines on ethical research Yes No

In designing this research, I have paid particular attention to the ethical issues relevant to:

- the methods and protocols to be used for this research Yes No
- the questionnaire/s to be used for this research Not applicable Yes No
- the interview questions to be used for this research Not applicable Yes No
- the process of obtaining informed consent from participants Yes No
- the procedure for maintaining confidentiality and protecting privacy Yes No
- the approach to providing feedback to participants Not applicable Yes No
- other matters relevant to the ethical conduct of this research Yes No

Specify

I confirm that the proposed research meets the ethical requirements of the University of Queensland and that I have fully considered all foreseeable ethical ramifications of my research both intended and unintended.

Signature of investigator:

Date:

Statement of independent reviewer of inquiry instruments ¹⁶

I have reviewed:

- the University’s policy and guidelines on ethical research Yes No
- the methods and protocols to be used for this research Yes No
- the questionnaire/s to be used for this research Not applicable Yes No
- the interview questions to be used for this research Not applicable Yes No

I confirm that the inquiry methods, protocols and inquiry instruments meet the ethical requirements of the University of Queensland.

Signature of independent reviewer:

Position and affiliation:

Date:

¹⁵ Your role, and the purpose of this form, is to clearly indicate to the Ethics Committee that you are aware of your ethical obligations.

¹⁶ Your role is to ensure that procedures and research instruments meet the ethical requirements of the University. You may be the only independent person to review the detail of the research. You must consider the ethical requirements assiduously.

Statement of supervisor¹⁷

I have reviewed

- the University’s policy and guidelines on ethical research Yes No
- the methods and protocols to be used for this research Yes No
- the questionnaire/s to be used for this research Not applicable Yes No
- the interview questions to be used for this research Not applicable Yes No
- the process of obtaining informed consent from participants Yes No
- the procedure for maintaining confidentiality and protecting privacy Yes No
- the approach to providing feedback to participants Yes No
- other matters relevant to the ethical conduct of this research Yes No

Specify

I confirm that the proposed research meets the ethical requirements of the University of Queensland and that this application adequately describes actual and potential ethical issues that might arise and how it is planned to address these issues.

Signature of supervisor:

Date:

Ethics Committee Review

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2
Name		
Comment		
Recommendation		

Ethical clearance

The School of Natural and Rural Systems Management Research Committee has reviewed the ethical issues relating to this research against The University of Queensland’s policy and guidelines on such matters. The Committee confirms that the research meets University requirements.

Ethical clearance is granted subject to (mark as necessary)

- additional independent review of the inquiry instruments
- sighting of the inquiry instruments by the research committee
- sighting of the informed consent form by the research committee
- sighting of the research information sheet by the research committee
- other special requirements or clarifications as listed below

.....

.....
 Chair of Research Committee or their delegate

Date

¹⁷ Ultimately, you will be held responsible for any breaches of the University’s ethical protocols. The Ethics Committee relies on your judgement. You must consider the ethical requirements assiduously and honestly.

Informed Consent Process

Information

To give 'informed consent' participants must be given sufficient information about the research to make an informed decision on whether to participate. Usually this will require information on the nature of the research (its purpose), how data will be used and secured to ensure confidentiality, and the time or other commitment required. In most cases it is useful to provide your research subjects with an information sheet describing the project and ethical steps you are taking to protect their interests.

Consent

Consent represents a 'contract' between the researcher and the participant. You, as the researcher, have an obligation to the participant and the University to fulfil any commitment made when providing information to the potential participant and meet University ethical requirements.

Consent may be given verbally or formalised by the participant with their signature on a consent form. Verbal consent is often appropriate, for example, when undertaking questionnaire surveys where voluntary participation is indicated simply by participation. Formal signed consent is usually appropriate, for example, where in-depth interviews are conducted with individuals.

So, while signed consent is preferred, it may be waived where this is considered culturally inappropriate, where participants are illiterate, or for certain forms of data collection (e.g. street polls). In addition, some potential participants may feel threatened/disempowered by an excessively formal Informed Consent process. The best approach for your research should be discussed with your Advisors.

Note that it is possible to combine the information sheet and consent form into a single document, provided you leave one copy with the participant for future reference. It is also useful to provide a means of reporting back to participants as a gesture of good-will.

Research Project Information Sheet

At a minimum, the basic elements of informed consent require the researcher to provide the participant with a **Research Project Information Sheet** which provides the research subject or informant with information on:

1. the title of the project
2. the purpose of the proposed study
3. the expected duration of their participation in the study
4. a clear and precise description of procedures for their involvement
5. a clear and precise description of any foreseeable risks due to their involvement in the study
6. the method used to maintain their confidentiality and privacy, along with the security of the data once collected and stored
7. a statement that their participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw at anytime without prejudice
8. the name and contact details of the appropriate person to answer any further questions they may have concerning their participation in the project
9. a statement on gaining feedback or results concerning either their individual involvement in the project or the completed study.

The information sheet must be written in a style and language suited to your research participants, and easily understood.

The **Research Project Information Sheet** should also contain the following paragraph.

This study adheres to the Guidelines of the ethical review process of The University of Queensland. While you are free to discuss your participation in this study with the researcher (contactable on), if you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact Professor Helen Ross on 07-54601648 or 0408-195324, or hross@uqg.uq.edu.au.

Example of acceptable Informed Consent Form

Name of Project

Investigator

Date

I agree to be involved in the above research project as a respondent. I have read the relevant research information sheet and understand the nature of the research and my role in it.

.....
Signature of research subject.

Please remove this page before submitting your application.



THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
SCHOOL OF NATURAL AND RURAL SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

Informed Consent Form

Name of Project: **The attitudes and behaviors of employees in small-scale private trading enterprises (SPTE's) after they experienced the transformation from large state-owned enterprises (LSOE's): A Case study in Xinjiang Province, China**

Investigator: **Liang Shuang**
Supervisor: **Gerry Roberts**

I, (name)....., agree to be involved in the above research project as a respondent. I have read the relevant research information sheet and understand the nature of the research and my role in it.

I would like to be acknowledged in the final report

I would like a copy of the report

Other _____

Date _____

Signature _____



THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
SCHOOL OF NATURAL AND RURAL SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

Research Project Information Sheet

Thank you for the interest in our study. This information sheet provides you with information about our project, and your right of participation. If you have any concern, please feel free to ask or contact us at the address attached in this sheet.

Project title: The attitudes and behaviors of employees in small-scale private trading enterprises (SPTE's) after they experienced the transformation from large state-owned enterprises (LSOE's): A Case study in Xinjiang Province, China

Investigator: Liang Shuang
Supervisor: Gerry Roberts

Purpose of the project

The project aims to contribute better understandings about how the employees' attitudes and behaviours influence the development of small private trading enterprises after they experienced the transformation from state-owned enterprises, and provide reasonable suggestions to the similar situation in the future.

The expected duration of your participation

The field work of the project will be conducted from August to September, 2006. Your involvement in the interview will last one to two hours. Further contact could happen after first interview to clarify details or if extra information is thought to be needed.

Your involvement

As a part of the studies, you will be one of the informants who provide information about your experiences and perceptions related to the research situations. Your involvement will be through an interview with the researcher.

Your right of participation

Your involvement in the study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your data at any time you wish up to when data is pooled without prejudice. Once you withdraw, all information provided by you will be destroyed and will not be used for any reason and any purpose.

Use of information

All information provided by you will be used for this study and only serve the stated purpose of the study.

What we will use to maintain your confidentiality and privacy

All information provided will be anonymous and confidential. Your name and other identifying information will not be shown to any one else except the interviewing researcher. The report will not refer to your name except in the acknowledgement if you wish. A written report of the study will be sent to you upon request.

This study adheres to the Guidelines of the ethical review process of The University of Queensland. While you are free to discuss your participation in this study with the researchers contactable via following address:

Liang Shuang
CRRI.Q School of NRSM
University of Queensland Gatton QLD 4343 Australia
Email: s4090670@student.uq.edu.au

Gerry Roberts PhD
Extension Specialist, West
Dept of Primary Industries and Fisheries
Email: gerry.roberts@dpi.qld.gov.au

If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact.

Prof. Helen Ross,
School of Natural and Rural Systems Management
University of Queensland Gatton QLD 4343
Email: hross@ugg.uq.edu.au
Tel: +61 7 5460 1648 or +61 408 195324

Date_____

Signature of Investigator_____