# **Worksheet template – Identifying Mistakes in the process of Obtaining Informed Consent in VET Research**

**Title:** Identifying Mistakes in the Process of Obtaining Informed Consent in VET Research

**Purpose:** The worksheet presents a scenario involving research on the effectiveness of VET programs for unemployed individuals, specifically those with chronic health issues. The scenario describes the steps the researcher has implemented to obtain informed consent from the participants. Learners’ task is to identify any ethical mistakes or shortcomings in the process and explain why they are problematic.

**Steps to take:**

You are provided with the following scenario:

*A VET researcher is conducting a study on the effectiveness of VET programs for unemployed individuals, particularly those with chronic health conditions. The goal is to assess how well the programs help participants transition into employment. The researcher aims to collect data on participants' personal details, health conditions, training experiences, and employment outcomes.*

Read the steps the researcher has taken to obtain informed consent from the participants.

Identify and list the 8 mistakes or ethical shortcomings that the researcher has made in this process.

For each mistake explain why it is problematic and suggest alternatives to adhere to ethical standards for informed consent.

The steps that the researcher has taken to obtain the Informed Consent of individuals are outlined below:

* The researcher finds participants through an employment agency. He sends an invitation via email to individuals who are currently unemployed and have participated in a vocational training program within the past year. The email includes a brief description of the study and an invitation to participate.
* The researcher organizes a 15-minute group session at the VET center they work for to explain the study. They briefly describe the research objectives and the type of data that will be collected, but they emphasize that the study is low-risk and that participation will not affect participants’ access to future training programs or employment services.
* During the session, the researcher mentions that the study will require participants to share sensitive information, such as their employment status, salary, and health conditions., without providing a detailed explanation of how this data will be protected.
* At the end of the information session, a consent form is distributed to the participants. The form includes a brief statement that participation is voluntary, and that participants can withdraw at any time. The form is written in complex, technical language.
* Participants had 10 minutes to sign the form if they agree to participate.
* Those who complete the study will be entered into a raffle for a €100 gift card.
* Although the consent form mentions that participants can withdraw from the study at any time, the researcher does not provide a clear procedure for how they can do so. When one participant expresses concern about continuing, the researcher reminds them of the potential benefits of completing the study, rather than facilitating the withdrawal process.
* After obtaining the informed consent forms, the researcher starts collecting data through interviews and questionnaires. Due to unexpected circumstances, the research was extended by adding additional questions related to participants’ mental health, which was not written in the initial form. The researcher assumes that the initial form covers these changes and does not inform the group of participants about it.

**Deliverables:**

* The learner must fill in this worksheet, by identifying the 8 mistakes or ethical shortcomings that the researcher has made in this process.
* For each mistake they must explain why it is problematic and suggest alternatives to adhere to ethical standards for informed consent.

**Instructions for Completing This Worksheet:** *(for the participants)*

* Read the scenario carefully, focusing on the steps taken by the researcher in order to obtain informed consent.
* Read the instructions carefully to understand what is required to complete the activity successfully.
* Your response must cover all the three following aspects: the identified mistake, why it is problematic and a suggestion on how the obtaining informed consent steps can be implemented properly.