

Appendix B

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research Study: Investigating Emerging Technologies Integration in Business Information Management Education: Improving Higher Education in a Selected South African Province.

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Mthokozisi Luthuli, Master of Management Sciences in Administration and Information Management

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Dr A. Epizitone

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:

Good day
Hope this letter finds you well

My name is Mthokozisi Luthuli (Student Number 21607585) a registered student in the Department of Information and Corporate Management for Doctor of Philosophy in Business and Information Management at the Durban University of Technology.

Invitation to the potential

I am conducting research that seeks to investigate the current landscape of emerging technologies and propose a framework for effectively integrating emerging technologies into Business Information Management teaching and learning practices at a selected province in South Africa. I kindly request you to participate in this study. Be assured that by taking part in this study, your responses will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity.

What is Research

Research is a planned and careful way of finding answers to important questions so we can better understand a topic and discover new knowledge. In this study, we are exploring how advanced digital tools—such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), and other emerging technologies—are being used in teaching, learning, and administration in universities. The goal is to understand how prepared institutions are, what challenges exist, and how these technologies can be better integrated to benefit both students and staff. You are being invited to take part because your experiences and insights are valuable. It is important that you understand everything about the study before you decide whether to join. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have—we want to make sure you are fully informed. You are welcome to take this information home, think it over, and discuss it with your family or friends. You are under no pressure to decide right away, and your participation is completely voluntary.

Summary of the Research:

This research explores the integration of advanced digital technologies within higher education institutions (HEIs). It addresses how centralised information management and limited cross-departmental collaboration have hindered their adoption. The study aims to assess current usage, institutional readiness, and the role of information management in supporting integration. It will also propose a strategic framework to guide the effective and equitable adoption of these technologies, ultimately enhancing educational outcomes and institutional innovation.

Objectives of the Study:

- To examine the current use of emerging technologies in South African HEIs.
- To identify challenges related to strategic information management and technological integration.
- To assess staff and student readiness to adopt these technologies.
- To propose a comprehensive integration framework to improve adoption, infrastructure, and policy.

Procedures to Be Followed:

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- Participants will be asked to complete an online survey and/or participate in a semi-structured interview.
- The survey will include both Likert-scale and open-ended questions related to technology usage, perceived effectiveness, readiness, and institutional support.
- Interviews will be conducted (where applicable) to gain deeper insights into participants' experiences and perceptions.
- All data collection tools (survey and interview guide) have been designed to align with the study's objectives and will be piloted for reliability.

Responsibilities of the Participant:

- Complete a 15–20-minute online questionnaire, and/or
- Participate in a 30–45-minute interview (if selected).
- Provide honest and thoughtful responses.
- No further follow-up or treatment is involved.

Venue and Data Collection Details:

- Surveys will be administered electronically using a secure platform (e.g., Microsoft Forms or Google Forms).
- Interviews will be conducted either face-to-face in a secure office setting or via video conferencing tools (e.g., MS Teams or Zoom), depending on participant preference.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria:

Inclusion Criteria:

- Be academic staff, administrative staff, or students currently affiliated with a higher education institution (HEI).
- Have had direct exposure to or involvement with emerging technologies (e.g., AI tools, VR/AR, blockchain, learning analytics) in the context of teaching, learning, or institutional operations.
- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Be able to provide informed consent and complete study activities in English.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Have only peripheral awareness of emerging technologies, with no direct interaction or implementation experience in a teaching, learning, or administrative context.
- Are employed in technical support roles only (e.g., IT maintenance), with no decision-making or strategic engagement related to teaching and learning practices or institutional planning.
- Are currently on leave, sabbatical, or otherwise inactive in their institutional role during the study period.
- Have any cognitive, linguistic, or technical barriers (e.g., inability to use digital tools required for data collection) that would interfere with meaningful participation.
- Are involved in the design or development of the technologies under study in a way that could introduce a conflict of interest or bias.

Explanation of Tools and Measurement Outcomes:

- The survey will measure frequency and effectiveness of technology use, perceived readiness, institutional support, and barriers.
- Interview responses will be used to contextualize and expand on survey findings through thematic analysis.

Randomization/Group Allocation:

- No randomization or group allocation will be used in this study, as it employs a non-experimental, exploratory design.

Expected Duration of Participant Commitment:

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- Survey: 15–20 minutes
- Interview: 30–45 minutes.

Approximate Number of Participants:

- The study aims to engage 385 participants across multiple South African HEIs, depending on access and response rates.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:

There will be no risks or discomfort to participants, and they may withdraw at any time without penalty or giving reason should they encounter any discomfort related to the study

Explain to the participant the reasons he/she may be withdraw from the Study:

Participants may withdraw at any given point should they feel uncomfortable continuing with the research and there will not be any adverse consequences to their actions.

Benefits:

This study will result in a PhD thesis which will outline the current landscape of emerging technologies and propose a framework for effectively integrating emerging technologies. Most importantly this study aims to add to the body of knowledge and reduce the knowledge gap in the field of educational technology apropos to the integration of emerging technologies into teaching and learning. The findings, theories and recommendations may also be employed in future studies.

Remuneration:

There are no monetary or other kinds of rewards for taking part in this study.

Costs of the Study:

Participants will not be expected to cover any cost of the study.

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality of participants is guaranteed as the participants will not be requested to fill in their names or contact details or any pinpointing information that will be presented in this study.

Results:

The findings of this study will be disseminated through academic publications, conference presentations, and the final PhD thesis. Participants will be provided with a summary of the key findings upon request. Should any significant new findings emerge during the course of the research that may influence participants' willingness to continue or benefit their understanding of the topic, these findings will be communicated directly to the participants via email or other preferred means of contact, where consent has been granted.

Research-related Injury:

While the nature of this research poses minimal to no physical or psychological risk, should a participant experience any form of distress or adverse reaction related to the research process, they are encouraged to inform the researcher immediately. No compensation is provided for such instances; however, participants will be referred to appropriate support services (e.g., student counselling units or mental health resources) where applicable. There are no alternative procedures required for participation in this study.

Storage of all electronic and hard copies including tape recordings

All research data, including electronic files, hard copies, and any audio recordings (if applicable), will be securely stored for a period of five years following the completion of the study. Electronic data will be stored on a password-protected computer and backed up on an encrypted external drive. Hard copies and recordings will be locked in a secure cabinet accessible only to the researcher and the supervisor. After the five-year retention period, all data will be permanently destroyed. Digital data will be deleted using secure erasure software, and physical materials will be shredded.

Persons to contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:(Supervisor and details) Please contact the researcher on 21607585@dut4life.ac.za or 065 501 1884, my supervisor on Ayogebohe@dut.ac.za or 031 3730 5655) or the DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the Acting Director: Research and Postgraduate Support on researchdirector@dut.ac.za



CONSENT

Full Title of the Study:

Names of Researcher/s:

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Mthokozisi Luthuli, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance
Number: _____,
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant Thumbprint	Date	Time	Signature /	Right
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I, _____ (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Full Name of Researcher	Date	Signature
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Full Name of Witness (If applicable)	Date	Signature
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Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)	Date	Signature
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Please note the following:

Research details must be provided in a clear, simple and culturally appropriate manner and prospective participants should be helped to arrive at an informed decision by use of appropriate language (grade 10 level- use Flesch Reading Ease Scores on Microsoft Word), selecting of a non-threatening environment for interaction and the availability of peer counselling (Department of Health, 2004).

If the potential participant is unable to read/illiterate, then a right thumb print is required and an impartial witness, who is literate and knows the participant e.g. parent, sibling, friend, pastor, etc. should verify in writing, duly signed that informed verbal consent was obtained (Department of Health, 2004).

If anyone makes a mistake completing this document e.g. a wrong date or spelling mistake, a new document has to be completed. The incomplete original document has to be kept in the participant's file and not thrown away, and copies thereof must be issued to the participant.

References:

Department of Health: 2004. *Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Structures and Processes* <http://www.doh.gov.za/docs/factsheets/guidelines/ethnics/>

Department of Health. 2006. *South African Good Clinical Practice Guidelines*. 2nd Ed. Available at: http://www.nhrec.org.za/?page_id=14

NOTE: Information in brackets in the Letter of Information is to be used as a guide in completing the Letter of Information. This information as well as the general section at the end of the Letter of Information and Consent document must be deleted before attaching the document to the PG 2a.