**Human Research Ethics Approval for ENGR 240**

Please note that as soon as anyone (students; faculty) engage human subjects *who are not enrolled in the course itself* for research purposes, no matter how informal it may seem, ethics approval is required. To meet such contingencies, we worked with HREB, giving us a somewhat blanket approval, with certain specifications.

For now, the scope of HREB’s ethics approval for ENG 240 allows you, as students, to conduct **surveys** and **interviews** with individuals outside of the course as long *as you follow the proper guidelines* (i.e. you must seek proper consent from participants and give them clear information about the nature of your project). Protocols for this are outlined in Ch. 5.4 of [*Technical Writing Essentials,*](https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/technicalwriting/chapter/researchethics/)the course's online open-source textbook.

So, yes, you can use interviews (whether in person or via email) and survey methods, so long as you (a) request permission and (b) present a “disclosure” statement identifying who you are, which course you’re working with, instructor name, and the purpose of the interview/ survey as the case may be.

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If you do choose to move interviews and surveys into the broader public arena (including online social media platforms such as Facebook, Reddit, or any other such), you must abide by the given ethics guidelines. This does add an extra layer of work, so it's fine if you want to keep your surveys within the scope of our two ENGR 240 sections. Either option is fine. But if you do want to expand outside of our course, you need to do it properly.

Don't hesitate to check in with me if you've got any questions: my role is to support your learning for the course in whatever way I can.

**Sample Scripts to Provide Disclosure and Gain Informed Consent**

**Request to interview someone, either in-person or via email**: Please use and adapt the following template when sending someone a request for information in relation to your course-based project:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

I am a student in this semester’s [*name and number of the course*], taught by [*instructor’s name and department*]. As part of our term project, we are researching [*describe your research project*].

As your field of work/expertise is related to our project, I was hoping you might have some time to [*describe nature of requested interaction: in person/by telephone/skype, via email, etc.*] with me about [*specify topic you want to discuss; you might add specific kinds of questions you will have*].

I would very much appreciate any time you can have available. If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact the course instructor, [*give instructor’s name, department, and email*].

[*Polite closing, ending with your name and signature*]

**Requesting Online Survey Participants:** Please use the following script to introduce an online survey that you intend to create and send out to gather information for your course-based project:

My name is [*give your name and email contact]*, and I am a student in [*course name and number]* researching [*briefly* *describe your project*]. To gather data, our survey asks you to answer [*give # of questions*] on [*give general sense of what you’ll be asking about*].

This survey will take approximately \_\_\_\_ minutes to complete, and is entirely voluntary. By completing the survey, you are giving informed consent to have your responses used in our study. If you would like further information about this project, please contact me or the course instructor, [*give instructor’s name, department, and email*]

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**Use Survey Monkey, UVic’s Online Survey Provider, to Create your Surveys:** The [SurveyMonkey service](about:blank) that UVic subscribes to provides enterprise level features at no additional cost to students or staff; for privacy and confidentiality purposes, it stores *all survey questions and responses only in Canada*. The service includes the following key features:

* Building powerful surveys, forms, questionnaires, and polls
* Friendly drag and drop interface
* Sharing and collaboration between groups
* All-in-one solution to collect data online, offline, and via mobile devices
* Ability to generate reports, analyze and backup survey data

If teams wish to send surveys to students enrolled in the two sections of the course (70 students), please create the survey, then send me the link, and I will send out a link to the survey via a CourseSpaces Announcement that will go to both sections.

If you wish to post your survey on a social media platform, please send me a link to the survey first, and as your instructor I will quickly vet it before it goes out “live.”