

Ethical considerations

Your research project is unlikely to result in any major ethical issues, but please read what follows in order to acquaint yourself with some of the current thinking about the ethics of doing research. Not all of what follows may be applicable to your research.

This document **MUST** be read in conjunction with the Universities [Research Guidance](#)

Ethical considerations are paramount. They need to be fully discussed with your tutor before setting out on your project. Any concerns which are relevant to your investigation should be noted and will constitute an important aspect of your final discussion. For example, particular issues concerning the involvement of children or vulnerable adults need to be thought through carefully; likewise, issues around discussion of sensitive topics; issues around intrusion, if observation strategies are employed, and so on. All these matters need to be addressed before you set about collecting data. Evidence of in-depth reflection on ethical issues should be clear in your final report.

There are certain generally accepted guidelines governing research practice of which you must be aware:

- 1. Consent**

As much information as possible should be provided to participants so that they can give - or withhold - their agreement to participate. Establishing consent is not always a straightforward business and requires careful and perceptive handling.

- 2. Deception**

Intentional deception of participants about the purpose and general nature of the investigation should normally be avoided. If your project involves withholding any information from your participants, you must discuss this in detail with your tutor before going ahead.

- 3. Debriefing**

At the end of the study you should give participants any further information needed to complete their understanding of the nature of the research, what you hope to do with it, and how it might affect them personally at any later date.

- 4. Rights to withdraw from the investigation**

Participants have the right to drop out of the study at any time and this must be made clear to them from the outset. Remember that participants also have the right to withdraw consent retrospectively and require that their data be destroyed. They should be informed about this and enabled to take appropriate action.

- 5. Confidentiality and/or anonymity.**

These issues should be fully discussed with prospective participants. You need to be very clear about how 'confidentiality' and 'anonymity' are different, and what guarantees you will - and conversely will not - be able to give to participants in terms of respecting either, or both, of these.

- 6. Protection of participants from physical and mental harm during the investigation.**

This is essential. It may appear to be a rather extreme consideration in relation to the small-scale research project, but you must think carefully about any levels of stress or distress which participation might cause for your participants either during or after the research.

Computing Department Ethical Check List

Sensitivity to Multicultural Issues

When constructing interview schedules, questionnaires or other data-gathering instruments, it is important to be sensitive to different cultural perspectives. Depending upon the nature and location of your research, the following issues should be considered:

1. Your own prejudices and biases.
2. Though we may strive to be objective, we all have our own, often unacknowledged, prejudices. They may relate to a person's age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or marital, parental or socio-economic status.
3. Sensitivity to the language used in the research process to describe the different groups involved: e.g. Are explicitly derogatory terms used in describing children or adults from 'other' groups? Are subtly derogatory terms used, such as 'these people' when describing participants in a project?
4. Is the language used in data-collection instruments accessible and understandable to all participants?
5. Are members/representatives of all groups of participants involved in planning, implementing, and reviewing results from the research?
6. Have multicultural issues been addressed openly at all stages of the research?
7. Does the group of participants represent the cultural diversity of the institution/area? What implications may this have for the research findings?
8. Could the results of the research be viewed differently by different cultural groups? What has been done to ensure that their perspectives have been included?

Stage 1 Self-Assessment

Part A

If your research involves human participants, are any of the following concerns relevant?	
Yes /No	1. The involvement of vulnerable participants or groups, such as children (under the age of 16), people with a learning disability or cognitive impairment, or persons in a dependent relationship?
Yes /No	2. The sensitivity of the research topic, e.g. the participants' sexual, political, or legal behaviour, or their experience of violence, abuse or exploitation?
Yes /No	3. The gender, ethnicity, language, or cultural status of participants?
Yes /No	4. The use of deception, trickery, or other procedures that may contravene participants' full or informed consent, without timely and appropriate debriefing, or activities that cause stress, humiliation, or anxiety, or the infliction of more than minimal pain?
Yes /No	5. Access to records of personal or other confidential information, including genetic or other biological information, concerning identifiable individuals without their knowledge or consent?
Yes /No	6. The use of intrusive interventions, such as the administration of drugs or other treatments, excessive physical exertion, or techniques such as hypnotherapy without the participants' knowledge or consent?
Yes/No	6. Research related to the NHS is strongly advised to seek advice from their supervisor before commencing the project

If you have answered 'Yes' to any of the questions then the project is considered to be of **high ethical risk** and may need to be approved by the Departments Ethics Committee.
Please discuss your project with your supervisor.

Computing Department Ethical Check List

Part A

If your research involves human participants, are any of the following concerns relevant?

Otherwise, your project may be considered **low ethical risk**. Please sign below and submit your self-assessment document to your supervisor and upload it to BB.

Approval for Low Risk Research Projects

I can confirm that : (confirm you have read these)

- | | |
|---|----------|
| - I have read the Edge Hill University Framework for Research Ethics
https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/document/research-ethics-policy/ | YES / NO |
| - I have read the Computing Departments Ethics Policy Document (see BB). | YES / NO |
| - I agree to abide by their principles | |

Your Signatureⁱ



Your name

Chinonso Uche

Date:

5 July 2024

Supervisor's Signatureⁱⁱ

Supervisor's name

Prof. Ella Pereira

Date