

DECISION MAKING TREE

Do I need to be concerned about any ethical ramifications of my project and if so, where do I go?

1) Does your project involve human participants (e.g., are you observing, surveying, or interviewing other people)?

☐ No: You do not need to continue this tree or fill out the subsequent application form.

☒ Yes: All research projects involving human subjects in principle are ethically challenging because human beings are being used for some purpose other than their own benefit (whether this be gathering new scientific knowledge or a student's educational needs). That does not mean such research cannot be done in an ethically sound manner. But whenever another human being is being used for somebody else's benefit, that human being's dignity is at risk. Continue to Q2.

2) What is the role of these other people in the research project?

☐ Consulted experts. You are engaging others because they have expertise that you cannot -- or not as easily -- find in the published literature (in the same way as you could ask your professors for advice). In this case, the people you are consulting are analogous to members of the research team. Unless they explicitly insist otherwise, you should properly acknowledge their contribution to your research in the same way as you would scholars whose published ideas you are citing. As long as you do this, there are not likely to be significant ethical challenges and you do not need to continue this tree.

☒ Research subjects. You plan to derive primary data about other people by observing, surveying, interviewing, or experimenting on them. Continue to Q3.

3) Does your research involve a medical intervention or is your study population selected specifically because of a particular medical condition?

☐ Yes. You will need to get approval from one of the Medical Ethics Review Committees of the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences to proceed.

Unless your project is part of a larger study that has already been approved by the aforementioned ethics committee, we strongly recommend NOT to proceed with your project in its current format because at a minimum your project will suffer serious delays to secure ethics committee approval (and you may not be approved). If you nevertheless want to proceed with your proposed project, we recommend that you complete the form below and send it to the Recsys Ethics Advisory Committee so that we can advise you on next steps.

☒ No. Continue to Q4.

4) Does your research involve minors (<16 years)?

☐ Yes. You are likely to need approval of one of the official UM ethics committees. Unless your project is part of a larger study that has already been approved by the appropriate UM ethics committee, we strongly recommend NOT to proceed with your project in its current format because at a minimum your project will suffer serious delays to secure ethics committee approval (and you may not be approved). If you nevertheless wish to proceed, we recommend that you complete the form below and send it to the Recsys Ethics Advisory Committee so that we can advise you on next steps.

☒ No. Continue to Q5.

5) Does your research involve particularly vulnerable adults? Check all that apply:

☐ People with dementia, intellectual disability, or other mental health conditions impacting their ability to fully understand or freely decide to participate.

☐ Refugees, undocumented immigrants, persecuted minorities, or prisoners.

☐ Indigenous minorities.

If you checked any of the above, you are likely to need approval from one of the official UM ethics committees. Unless your project is part of a larger study that has already been approved by the appropriate UM ethics committee, we strongly recommend NOT to proceed with your project in its current format because at a minimum your project will suffer serious delays to secure ethics committee approval (and you may not be approved). If you nevertheless wish to proceed, we recommend that you complete the form below and send it to the Recsys Ethics Advisory Committee so that we can advise you on next steps.

☒ None of the above. Continue to Q6.

6) Is your involvement of other human beings limited to observing them in their public behaviour (e.g., you are observing and categorizing how people use a particular public space such as a museum or a city square)?

☐ Yes. Provided you are not recording people by video or photography, and you are not otherwise identifying the people you are observing, there are not likely to be significant ethical challenges and you do not need to continue this tree.

☒ No. Continue to Q7.

7) Is your involvement of other human beings limited to an anonymous survey on a harmless topic?

☐ Yes. You do not need to continue this tree provided you and your supervisor can assure that:

- The survey does not delve into topics that can be distressing or otherwise harmful to respondents.
- The results are collected fully anonymously (no personally identifiable information is being collected, including IP addresses).
- You have made it highly unlikely that the respondents can later be reidentified (e.g., through combinations of collected information).
- The respondents are not in any way cajoled to participate in the survey (e.g., through a payment).

☒ No. Fill in the ethics review request form that is available on Canvas.