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Coursework: Ethics form

Submission Deadline: Fri 28th Oct 2022 00:00

Personal tutor: Dr Justin Tumlinson

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Individual ethics form for research carried out in BEMM466J Business Analytics Projects at The University of Exeter

There are **six steps** you need to complete.

1. **Download** a copy of this ethics form
2. **Add** your initials to the end of each page to show you have read them, following any URL links to deepen your understanding.
3. **Complete** and sign the 'About your project' section on page 10
4. **Send** the completed 'About your project' section to your supervisor and ask them to check and add their signature and date – allowing them at least 48 hours for them to respond.
5. **Submit** the completed ethics form (*without appendices*) to eBart by the deadline, which is **15/07/2022**.
6. **Create** a series of participant information sheets and consent forms, as relevant.

We expect all students to be aware of the University of Exeter Research Ethics Framework, and to have read the University of Exeter 'Good Practice in the Conduct of Research' code of practice which you are expected to abide by. This site also outlines the process and potential consequences in cases of research misconduct. Find these at: <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/cgr/researchethics/integrity/>

More specifically you will find more information related to ethics in the Business School Research Ethics Page here: <https://vle.exeter.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=1978>

Key ethical principles of research include:

Autonomy – the participant should normally be fully aware of the purpose of the research, be free to take part without coercion or penalty and be able to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without the threat of any adverse effect. Please note that for anonymised data it will not be possible for participants to withdraw their data once the data has been collected.

Beneficence – the research must be worthwhile in itself and have potential beneficial effects (directly for the participant or for the public good) that outweigh any risks, the methodology must be sound so that best results will be yielded.

Non-maleficence – any possible harm must be avoided or mitigated by robust precautions. This may be particularly important if the research involves the use of animals or the participant group could be considered to be in a vulnerable situation because of their location, economic, social, or health status.

Confidentiality – participant personal data should normally remain unknown to all but the research team; it must be collected, stored and destroyed appropriately. Limits to anonymity and confidentiality, for example when disclosure of risk of harm is required, must be clear and transparent to everyone involved in the research.

Integrity – the researcher must be open about any actual or potential conflicts of interest and must conduct their research in a way that meets recognised standards of research integrity and good stewardship. The University of Exeter encourages anyone who witnesses research misconduct or poor research practice, or who experiences or witnesses discrimination, harassment, or bullying to report their concerns.

→ **Please initial this page here to confirm you have read it: SS**

Ethical restrictions – what is not permissible in this module

Restrictions that apply to research practices while COVID19 restrictions are in place.

For projects conducted as part of this module, there must be:

- **No** face-to-face research – unless you have applied for the ethical review of your research
- **No** travel or visits as part of your research

Many approaches are permitted and encouraged, and these are explored across your programme as a whole.

When you conduct research with participants **online** (interviews, focus groups, or surveys):

- you must follow the university's [guidance for research online](#) (e.g. on permitted platforms, apps and good practice in relation to participant data). For more information see the [Guidance and templates for research online](#).

National ethical restrictions for student research projects

Research with the following groups requires external review by national ethics committees and is not normally available to students:

NHS patients, staff, data or facilities (includes contractors providing services under contract with care services or commissioners)

UK Social Care organisations or service users (includes contractors providing services under contract with care services or commissioners)

Clinical Trials of Investigational Medicinal Products, Medical Devices or Gene Therapy Medicinal Products

The prison service, offenders or participants on probation

Any member of the research team or participants who are members of the Armed Forces or their entitled dependents

Participants aged 16 or over who may lack capacity to give fully informed consent or who may lose capacity to give fully informed consent during study

Further University of Exeter restrictions for research on this module

This module has not sought or been granted ethical approval for research with the following research practices, participants and topics. These are considered 'high risk' by the University Ethics Framework and require an individual application to the Ethics Committee for project review, which is not available for work on taught modules.

The following research practices should **not** be used:

- Covert research in an online environment (unless there are no privacy restrictions or logins required to access the online material).
- Research in which participants will be named
- Deception about the purpose of study
- Financial incentives
- There are some non-anonymised datasets which require permission from appropriate authorities before use (e.g. the National Pupil Database). We cannot authorise use of these datasets.

***Supplementary information for research participants during COVID-19 restrictions.**

Under the ethical approval granted to this module, **No face-to-face research, travel or visits are allowed** for undergraduates or post-graduate taught students when Covid-19 restrictions are in place.

If you wish to conduct face-to-face research then you will need to make a separate research ethics application that could take between 4-8 weeks to gain approval. **Submitting an ethics application when Covid-19 restrictions are in place is not recommended, because it will take you beyond the time frame of your module assessment deadline.**

For those students who seek to gain approval for face-to-face research during the period when Covid-19 restrictions are in place the following instructions apply. You must:

- follow the published guidance on the University webpages and also relevant government guidance;
- follow the University guidance published for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students:
https://universityofexeteruk.sharepoint.com/sites/PlaceBasedLearning/SiteAssets/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=/sites/PlaceBasedLearning/SiteAssets/SitePages/Process-and-procedure/FieldWork_RoadMapOutofLockdown3v4.pdf&parent=/sites/PlaceBasedLearning/SiteAssets/SitePages/Process-and-procedure;
- use the modified consent form which includes instructions to participants regarding coronavirus. This form is in addition to your participant information sheet, which must also be provided to participants. The CV-19 form is available here: <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/cgr/researchethics/secure/templates/>
- minimise risk of infection to participants by following the UK government guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>:

As of July 2021 we will ask participants to:

- Self-screen for new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19 before each visit to the campus/research site
- Maintain social distancing wherever possible
- Wear a face mask or face covering where social distancing is not possible
- Maintain good personal hygiene, including proper hand washing, cough/sneeze etiquette, avoid touching the face, eyes, nose and mouth
- Have hand sanitizer available at all access points
- Use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment to protect ourselves and others from the spread of the virus while within the research environment
- Regularly and frequently clean/disinfect high-touch locations in all shared spaces and avoid sharing workstations/equipment
- EITHER maintain a contact record of each participant and staff member present at each visit, OR ask you to 'check in' using the official NHS QR code to provide a contact trace to Public Health England

Please note that if your research is completely online with no face-to-face contact, then the advice contained on this page does not apply to your research.

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Participants

People in the following categories may **not** be recruited for research in this module:

- Those under 18,
- Are other than healthy volunteers,
- Participants who are unable to give informed consent, and,
- Participants who may be in a vulnerable position (those with cognitive impairment at the time of the research, e.g. due to health condition, emotional state, alcohol or drug use; in potentially unequal relationships with researchers by virtue of their location, economic, social, language or health status).

The following research topics should **not** be studied in this module, except when using anonymised secondary data that is in the public domain:

- Discussion of sensitive or potentially sensitive subjects, including health conditions, which participants may find difficult or embarrassing to discuss,
- Research with the potential to undermine the 2010 Equality Act, which gives people the right to protection from prejudice around age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation,
- Where there is a risk of disclosure of illegal activity,
- Where there is a risk of reputational harm to the participants, researcher or University, and,
- Where there is a risk of negative environmental impact (e.g. generating disruption to businesses in their daily operations).

Guidance on asking participants about their gender and sexuality

Biological sex: is assigned at birth and denotes chromosomal and hormonal profiles and differentiated physical characteristics.

Intersex: refers to a range of physical, hormonal and/or chromosomal characteristics that do not fit the typical definition of male or female bodies.

Gender: is a social construct. Gender identity can align with the biological sex assigned at birth or can differ from it.

Guidance for Researchers asking about Sex and/or Gender in Psychological Research

- Be clear on the difference between sex and gender.
- It is most usual to ask people about their gender. Where this is done, the researcher should not assume that gender will be binary. Best-practice would be to allow the person to input their own gender into a blank box, or to provide additional options that account for non-binary gender identities.
- When asking questions about gender it is advisable to allow an option of 'prefer not to say'.
- When asking questions about gender you must consider the relevant cultural and legal aspects in the country in which you are conducting the research. For example, if the research is taking place in a country where LGBTQ+ identities are not recognised or illegal you must seek a full ethical review and ask your supervisor and/or module leader for advice.
- Only ask about sex assigned at birth if it is relevant to your survey objectives. Normally, asking about gender will be sufficient for most Business School research.

One way a question about gender could be worded is pasted below as an example:

How would you describe your gender?

- ☐ Male (including transgender men)
- ☐ Female (including transgender women)
- ☐ Prefer to self describe as _____ (non-binary, gender-fluid, agender, please specify)
- ☐ Prefer not to say

One way a question about sex assigned at birth could be worded is pasted below:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Intersex
- ☐ Prefer not to disclose

Additional considerations

Where your research involves assigning males and females to different conditions or treatments of an experiment, consider beforehand how non-binary participants will be treated during this process. It is not acceptable to screen non-binary participants out from your study on the basis of their gender.

It is also advisable to pre-screen the items used in established survey instruments to ensure that they do not inadvertently make outdated, and inappropriate, assumptions (e.g. that people of one gender will be sexually attracted to people of a different gender).

My commitments

As an individual researcher

- That I will uphold the ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, confidentiality and integrity as described on the first page and as set out in the University of Exeter Research Ethics Framework.
- I understand that where live human participants are involved in research that project information sheets and consent forms are typically required as a means to show that participants are giving 'informed consent' – they know what they are being asked to do, and what happens with their data, and how they can withdraw; and that they have agreed to take part without coercion or fear of penalty.
- I will use my professional judgement and seek advice from the module leader on any issues to do with client confidentiality.
- I act professionally in how I treat fellow members of a research team.
- I uphold high standards of personal and online communication (i.e. you should adopt language and a tone that is professional and respectful to all parties).
- Each member of a research team takes responsibility for understanding and acting in ways that uphold the ethical and integrity of the research process.
- I raise any concerns about unethical conduct with the module convenor and my supervisor.
- I will uphold standards of academic rigour and integrity and will not plagiarise or collude, especially when drawing on shared research materials in writing my individual assessments.

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Ethical considerations for research

This section of the pack outlines ethical considerations for various kinds of research practices and our expectations of how these will be negotiated in this module.

Is your research using social media, blogs, and websites?

Some research uses online ‘archives’ of webpages, images, and documents. Where there are no live human subjects providing new data, these can be considered as exempt from requirements to secure consent using project information sheets or consent forms – so long as safeguards are followed. However, the extent to which social media and other online platforms can be considered public is a complex and contested area of ethics.

It is not appropriate to gather data (text or images) from a social media profile without consent if the account is private or can only be accessed through being a ‘friend’ with the person on the site or, for example, where a login is required to a moderated online forum, chat room, or protected blog.

For those with public profiles, we would still encourage you to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of all people uploading content, unless they are public figures (e.g. politicians, activists, actors, celebrities). You should attribute authorship for content in the most relevant format for your study. This may depend on the kinds of material you are using, and the ways in which you are using it. You should devise strategies to respect the privacy of people posting comments in contexts not intended for research, and protect them from any distress or damage.

You should bear in mind that many demographic characteristics cannot be verified from online information, so caution is required in any study seeking to infer links between, for example, gender and online activity. You **should not**, however, use material or posts from anyone that can identified as being under 18.

Is your research using newspaper archives and policy documents?

The ethical issues surrounding the use of newspaper archives are similar to the use of historical archives (below). It is important to consider how individuals, places, and events are reported and represented, and whose voices are heard/silenced. You might also come across personal data in newspaper articles – in the text of an article, or in photographs featuring identifiable individuals.

When using government, policy, or consultancy reports, it is important to ask questions of the materials. So you might think about the wider context (e.g. political, cultural, economic, legal) of the report – for what purpose was the report produced? when was it produced? You might also think about the audience – who is the report trying to persuade (and why)?

These materials are usually put together by groups or organisations for free use and circulation. Although the use of newspaper archives and policy documents do not require project information sheets or consent forms, you should still observe appropriate ethical protocols, and reference these materials correctly.

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Is your research using contemporary datasets?

The use of existing datasets does not typically require project information sheets or consent forms as there are no live human subjects who are providing new data as part of the research encounter. However, you should carry out checks to ensure that your research does not pass thresholds that would trigger the need for further ethical review.

When using datasets, you should assure yourself that adequate ethical protocols were used in putting the data together. In particular, you should seek to find out what kind of consent was secured from participants when data were collected. This may shape what you are able to do with the data.

You should not use any non-anonymised datasets which require permission from appropriate authorities before use (e.g. the National Pupil Database). This requires a higher level of ethical review.

Finally, you should also ensure that no individuals are identifiable through the combination of data that you use in your project. For example, some combinations of data, such as partial postcode and birthday, geolocation, or unusual occupation can be enough to breach personal data protection requirements.

Is your research using historical archives or oral histories?

When using historical archives and oral histories for research, it is important to think about the ways in which you are representing past lives or topics that might affect people living today. This might include descendants of people who you might be studying. It is also important to remember that living people might be included in oral history archives. It is part of our ethical duty to undertake sensitive and appropriate research, which is critical, but is fair. There are many areas where our research can discuss and make visible relationships of power in society. As researchers, we are also in a position of power to represent these, using the residues of the past that people have left behind.

We need to ensure that we respect people and the lives that they lived in the past by researching carefully and considering how our practices of representation might affect the ways in which they are thought about in the present, and how our research might also have an effect on people living today. You need to think about how you might ensure that you present your research appropriately for audiences that might find your work upsetting. You might find that people could experience your research through a range of emotions. For example, you might find a very negative story that might be sensitive for current descendants. In these situations, the ethical responsibilities are to ensure that you do justice to those who were silenced in the past, and to develop a strategy to address the pain that people might experience in the present.

Although you might not need a formal consent form or information sheet, the ethical responsibilities of the historical researcher are important to address as you plan your research.

University of Exeter Library Research Resources: <https://libguides.exeter.ac.uk/business>

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Is your research using photography, art, or infographics?

The ethical issues around acquiring (and using) visual data share similarities with some other methods – for example, the importance of informed consent, and anonymity and confidentiality. However, issues such as copyright, and the extent to which it is permissible to make use of publicly available visual imagery (without consent and without anonymization), make some of these considerations more complex.

Videos, films, and photographs often include identifiable individuals, including those who may not be able to give consent for the materials to be used (for example, young children). They may also reveal or include discussion of information which has legal protections, called ‘personal data,’ which includes details about a participant’s racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religion, membership of a trade union, health, sex life, or criminal activity.

Where the visual materials are part of a publicly accessible archive (including digital archives – such as [BoB](#), ‘[on demand TV and radio for education](#)’, and websites that do not require registration or a login) it is not normally required to seek consent.

You should not be using images from sources that would require registration or a login where this may create the impression that posters do so privately and where consent would normally be needed.

Copyright is normally assigned to the person who made the visual material. If the material were to be reused in some way (such as published in an academic journal), it would be expected that permission were sought from the copyright holder to reproduce the image. The law is complex here, but there are [exceptions to copyright](#) that would often include the uses that students undertake as part of their research projects. Here though good practice would always be to include the source of the image.

For the purposes of this project any visual material provided by participants directly for the purpose of the research project must be anonymised as well as the place (such as by blurring faces and identifying information).

This applies to photographs/videos you take, or that participants take, or that form part of a social media feed that they have given specific permission for you to access. For the purposes of this module, you may not use photographs/videos taken by you or participants that includes other people unless each person pictured has given their own consent for a picture which includes them to be part of the project. Please remember that during COVID-19 restrictions, no face-to-face research, or research that involves visits or travel is permissible.

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Is your research using talking with participants to generate data?

This could include online interviews and focus groups following the university's [guidance for research online](https://www.exeter.ac.uk/cgr/researchethics/secure/guidanceforresearchonline/), such as using MS Teams, or your University Zoom account – you should not use a private account. For more information see: <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/cgr/researchethics/secure/guidanceforresearchonline/>

You need to consider how you will recruit participants in an ethical way such that they do not feel under pressure to take part – this can be difficult to negotiate with friends who may feel they 'owe' it to you to take part. You should also be clear on what basis you include or exclude participants, and to be aware of the limitations (as well as benefits) of your networks and the effects this could have on your data.

Participants should feel comfortable in the location of conversation and in the context of online conversations you should consider participants' privacy (suggesting blurring backgrounds, and whether you or they are likely to be overheard which could compromise confidentiality).

You should start by seeking to set participants at ease and outline the way the conversation works and reiterate the key elements of the project information and consent. You should make it clear to participants that they do not have to answer questions and can leave the conversation at any time. If you become uncomfortable at any point you, likewise, can cease the conversation. Although you should not be seeking to address a subject that might provoke distress you should be ready to signpost participants to advice and wellbeing services.

In focus groups, you should make clear that participants should respect others' confidentiality by not discussing or repeating what people said outside of the focus group. You may wish to invoke the [Chatham House Rule](#).

Informed consent should be provided in a written form. A project information sheet is provided and the reader is given an opportunity to gain clarification about anything that is unclear. The participant is then asked to sign a consent form to indicate whether they are – or are not – providing their informed consent to all or some of a project.

You can use the information and consent sheets provided below, or if you would rather provide online information and gain consent online, please follow the guidance in the '[Online Interviews Information and Consent Template and Instructions](#)' found here:

Is your research using an online survey with participants to generate data?

In an online survey, participants must decide whether to take part on the basis of the written information provided and unless they get in touch, it can be more difficult to be sure they understand the context of the project and the questions themselves. This is why checking the information and consent sheets and piloting the survey is crucial to ensure the questions make sense, and also that the data will be meaningful.

You should follow the university's [guidance for research online](https://www.exeter.ac.uk/cgr/researchethics/secure/guidanceforresearchonline/), such as using Microsoft Forms (and not Google Forms for example).

Most researchers will use the online '[Information and Consent Template and Instructions](#)' as the most straightforward and simple method of gaining informed consent. However, you can also use the participant information and consent template below.

Participants must opt-in to research through ticking boxes – continuing with a survey is no longer considered sufficient evidence of consent.

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Data protection and storage

This section refers to personal data. Personal data is defined as information relating to a living individual who can be identified from those data, and includes names, contact details, and medical information. Sensitive personal data includes details about a person's racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religion, membership of a trade union, health, sex life, or criminal activity.

You may also come across personal data in places other than, for example, datasets, or oral histories. You might find personal data contained in blog posts, or in testimonials collected by journalists. You must ensure that you observe appropriate ethical protocols when using this data.

If you pull together data from across different databases or datasets, you are responsible for how those materials are stored securely.

In protecting the data and storing data for the project you will:

- ensure personal data is kept confidential
- store personal data securely
- retain collected personal data for a specified period

You should make sure that the research study is compliant with the [General Data Protection Regulation 2018](#), and that necessary arrangements are made with regard to the storage and processing of personal information and generally, to ensure confidentiality of such data supplied and generated in the course of the research. For more information on GDPR for researchers please click [here](#).

BEMM466J SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

Students on this module must comply with the following instructions:

- When informing participants you must include a link to the privacy policy of the platform you are using. Research participants may wish to consult the privacy information for the platform you are using. For example:
 - Zoom: <https://zoom.us/privacy>
 - Microsoft: <https://privacy.microsoft.com/en-gb/privacystatement>
 - Qualtrics: <https://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/>
- You must not collect personal data (i.e. do not collect names, contact details, addresses or other identifying information such as employee numbers or specific job titles that would serve as unique identifiers).
- You must de-identify all data once it has been recorded by obscuring any personal names or other identifiers that would enable a third party to establish the identity of an individual.
- Do not share raw data in any form with any organisation or individual other than the client you are working with and/or your project supervisor. You are free to share the aggregated findings and results of your research with your client organisation, subject to any collaboration agreement or Non-Disclosure Agreement that may be in place.
- Any secondary data provided to you by the partner company must be stored and managed in full accordance with any non-disclosure agreements that the company has put in place with you.
- All data must only be stored on the University of Exeter OneDrive. If you do create temporary files on portable devices (e.g. mobile phones), then this data must be immediately transferred to the OneDrive and the files deleted from the portable device.
- All data must be stored until after the degree award, but must be completely destroyed by 1st November following the award of your degree.

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About your Project

Once signed, this page accompanies your project proposal

You would be expected to complete this ethics form **before** you carry out the bulk of your data collection and analysis and by the deadline set, whichever is sooner. However, you can begin to explore research materials and datasets as you work to complete this form.

Whilst much of the information on this page will be repeated in your final proposal, this is your opportunity to assure your supervisor that you have researched and considered the ethical implications of your study. Please complete the following 3 questions, sign and pass to your supervisor for their approval.

Summary of your research project

Title and problem statement/ research questions.

How does the Fibonacci Retracement tool compare to conventional statistical instruments in the stock market?

If statistically significant, could it be used to create a super-indicator for predicting trends?

Summary for any participants – what will taking part mean from the perspective of the participants?

If no participants then leave blank.

Summary of perceived ethical issues, and how they will be managed

Ethical issues:

Since the data sets are dependent on behaviour and that there is no one code of conduct that would satisfy all parties involved, the data sets are subject to competing duties to various constituents. Before investing in the stock market, one must investigate the firm and its business plan, rather than relying on the analysis of prediction tools. These tools are only for observing patterns/trends and are likely only partially correct. Since the market is reliant on public behaviour, it is probable that the trends are more influenced by the company's news and profitability. This project is meant to compare the accuracy of a retracement tool that is based on magic numbers vs the ones that are rely on statistics.

Is there a client Non-Disclosure Agreement in place for this project?

Please note: All research requires consideration of ethical issues.

Student: I confirm that I have read and understood the material included in this form and agree to act ethically and in according with the requirements set out here.

Student signature: Sachin Sharma

Date: 03/12/22

Supervisor: I confirm that I have reviewed the ethics form and this 'about your project' page in particular, and any participant information and consent sheets; that I have raised any issues needing correction or clarification; and that any issues have been addressed to my satisfaction.

Supervisor signature:
Ross Hollyman

Date: 5/12/22

