

Ethics

- Primary ethical consideration
- Activities requiring ethical consideration
- Principles of ethical conduct
 - Respect for persons
 - Consent
 - Privacy and confidentiality
 - Research merit and safety
 - Beneficence
- Resources
- Studio 6 ethical process

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What is Ethics?

The field of ethics, also called moral philosophy, involves systematising, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behaviour.

(Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy)

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Primary Ethical Consideration for Research Involving Human Participants

The primary purpose of ethical principles and associated guidelines for research involving humans is the protection of the welfare and rights of participants in research

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Activities Requiring Ethical Consideration

- Ethical consideration should be given to almost any work involving human experimentation
 - interviews
 - questionnaires
 - ethnographic studies
 - evaluation of user interfaces
 - ...

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Principles of Ethical Conduct: Respect for Persons

- Treat individuals as autonomous agents
- Persons with diminished autonomy are entitled to protection
- Respect for the inherent dignity and rights of the person
- Do not see participants as a means to an end

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Principles of Ethical Conduct: Consent

- Consent should be obtained before conducting research (there are exceptions)
 - should be clearly established and externally verifiable
- Provision of information at participants' level of understanding
 - purpose, methods, demands, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, possible outcomes
- Voluntary choice
 - to participate; to stop participating at any time
 - no coercion
- Children require parental consent

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Obtaining Consent

- Consent should be informed
 - provide information of what is expected of participants
 - inform participants of their rights (withdrawal, privacy & confidentiality etc.)
- Consent should be externally verifiable
 - have participants sign to acknowledge that they are participating voluntarily

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Principles of Ethical Conduct: Privacy and Confidentiality

- Researchers must strive to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of personal information
- Information issues
 - storage, access, use, publication, disposal
 - identified, potentially identified, de-identified
- Research participants should be offered access to results

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Ensuring Privacy and Confidentiality

- Do not divulge the names of participants in written report
- Do not discuss the results with others in a way that identifies participants

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Principles of Ethical Conduct: Research Merit and Safety

- Research should be justifiable in terms of its potential contribution and be based on sound research background
- Research proposed must not be flawed
- Risks of harm must be balanced with potential benefits
- Qualified personnel must conduct the research

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Getting it Right

- Participants should not be subjected to poorly designed research that is likely to fail
 - this is a waste of their time and of potential participants for others
- Make every effort to be as well prepared as possible
 - use a script to ensure that the right process is followed and nothing is forgotten

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Principles of Ethical Conduct: Beneficence

- Minimise possible harm whilst maximising possible benefits
- Harm
 - physical, psychological, emotional distress, discomfort, economic or social disadvantage
- Dignity over benefits

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Resources

- ITEE school ethics committee
 - Inf Env members: Greg Hooper, Peta Wyeth
 - Office of Research and Postgraduate Studies human ethics site: www.uq.edu.au/research/services/human/
- Other documents on ethics
 - National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (NSECRIH)
 - UQ Interpretations of the NHMRC National Statement

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Studio 6 Ethical Process

- Each student to work with their advisor to complete the ethical application by week 4
- We would provide help filling out the application to those who need it
- Each ethical application should be reviewed by 2 academics comprising at least 1 member of the ethics committee and a member of the Studio 6 teaching staff
- Peer review process rather than adversarial process
- If necessary, an application may be referred by the initial reviewers for wider review
- In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to refer an application to a full ethics committee

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Project Aims

- 3) Provide a summary of the project in 'every-day/lay language'
- 4) What is/are the specific aim(s) of the project

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Research Plan and Benefit

- 5) Give full details of the research plan
- 6) Explain briefly the benefit of the project

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Special Circumstances

- 13) Does the project involve any of the following procedures?
If YES, give details
 - a) The possibility of physical stress/distress, discomfort
 - b) The possibility of psychological/mental stress/distress, discomfort
 - c) Deception of/or withholding information from, participant at **ANY** stage of the project
 - d) Participant involvement by any "Vulnerable Groups" (children, intellectually or mentally impaired, medically dependent, dependent or unequal relationships, collectivities, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders)

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Risk

- 14) Indicate what you think is the level of risk for prospective participants against the scale below
 - Extreme risk
 - High risk
 - Some risk
 - Minimal risk
 - No foreseeable added risk above the risks of everyday living

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Participants

- 1) Who are the participants
- 2) How will participants be recruited
- 7) How will informed consent be obtained from participants
- 8) Provide details of procedures for establishing confidentiality and protecting privacy of participants
- 12) Give details of how feedback will be available to participants
- 15) How has the possibility of withdrawal from the project been addressed

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Data

- 9) Provide details of data security and storage
- 10) In what form will the data be collected
 - Identified
 - Potentially identifiable
 - De-identified
- 11) In what form will the data be stored and/or accessed
 - Identified
 - Potentially identifiable
 - De-identified

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Attachments

- 1) Consent Form
 - 2) Information Sheet
 - 3) Questionnaire *(if applicable)*
 - 4) Gatekeepers
(letter of authority and recognition from an organisation of ANY type involved with the research on the project)
- Edit and include ethical paragraph at the bottom of all consent forms, information sheets, & questionnaires provided to participants

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