



# Resource Guide in Exploring Ethics

## A Practical Resource Guide for Tutors and Students

Dr. Alexandra J. Kenyon & Dr. Emma H. Wood

### Introduction

This Practical Resource Guide outlines the ethical issues that social science students need to consider when conducting research be it for their dissertation or for industry-based projects. Social science is a general term used for the study of society, consumers, employees and so on and the manner in which those people behave and how it affects the world around us. Researching “people in our world”, therefore, must be completed in a safe, fair and honest way. Whilst ethical policy for empirical research has been with us since the Nuremberg Code 1947, many universities have not yet developed resources in terms of practical ethical examples. Therefore, this Practical Resource Guide for Tutors and Students presents materials and examples for tutors of research methods and for undergraduate and masters students engaging in social science research. The Guide also contains background literature, power point presentations and practical examples.

All social science research raises many ethical issues such as informed consent, confidentiality and “doing research for the greater good”. Medical, sport and exercise research dealing with human enhancement, medicine, disease or gene therapy are surrounded in ethical issues which will NOT be included in this resource guide. The reason for this is that sport and leisure research may include physical or drug-related elements which require students to conform to specific ethical procedures which can be found, in part, at “Ethics and Sport” guide available via the HLST website.

This Practical Resource Guide will help staff and students who are studying social sciences in hospitality, tourism, entertainment, events, leisure and so on.

## **Contents of the Guide**

### **1. Background to Research Ethics**

- Guide 1 entitled Background to Research Ethics including case studies
- Slides to accompany the Guide

### **2. Informed Consent, Confidentiality and Anonymity**

- Guide 2 entitled Informed Consent, Confidentiality and Anonymity including worked examples
- Slides to accompany the Guide (see separate PowerPoint files)

### **3. Practical Examples**

- Participant Information Sheets
- Consent Forms

### **4. A Glossary of Terms**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Guide 1 Background to Research Ethics</b>	4
Background	4
Lessons Learned from Unethical Research Projects	6
The Nurenberg Code	6
Historical Case Study: Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro	8
Social Science Research	9
Case Study 1: The Blue Eyed/Brown Eyed Experiment	10
Case Study 2: Milgram - Obedience to Authority	12
Case Study 3: Laud Humphries Tearoom Research	16
Six Key Principles of Ethical Research	18
Conclusion	18
References	19
<b>Guide 2 Informed Consent, Confidentiality and Anonymity</b>	23
Background	23
Informed Consent	23
Case Study 1: An example of using Ground Work Questions - Kelly-Ann Borne's Street Interviews	25
Case Study 2 An example of using Ground Work Questions - Josh Castle's Questionnaire's	26
Gaining Consent	28
Part 1 – Participation Information	28
Part 2 – Actual Consent	29
Conclusion	30
References	31
<b>Guide 3 Glossary of Terms</b>	32

## Guide 1 Background to Research Ethics

The aim of this Guide is to provide an overview of the importance of ethical considerations within academic research.

### Background

It is a legal requirement not to exceed 70 miles per hour when travelling on a motorway in the UK. Drivers who are caught travelling at 90 miles per hour will be prosecuted. The legal system provides many *formal* rules and regulations for society to abide by designed to protect the members of that society. Running alongside the Law there are ethics and morals which also provide guidance for society to abide by. Ethics and morals, however, are *informal* ways of behaviour rather than *formal* legal rules. Therefore, ethics and morals are generally “unwritten” but ‘culturally known’ rules of right and wrong. Students wishing to attain a Foundation Degree, Honours Degree or Masters Award often complete an individual project where they conduct empirical research to demonstrate their data gathering and dissemination skills. All students must conduct empirical research ethically, morally and within the law.

Most universities have an Ethical Research Policy and documentation which enable researchers and supervisors to scrutinise research projects to ensure there is

“...regard for human dignity; care for human and animal welfare, consideration of risk, and informed consent of human subjects...”

(Leeds Metropolitan University, 2006: p. 2).

University policies, frameworks and procedures provide guidance to enable researchers to conduct research in an ethical manner. The policy handbooks are often drafted from a variety of principles outlined by Economic Social Research Council and The Social Research Association. Full guidelines from Economic Social Research Council and The Social Research Association are available in a downloadable format via the web address shown at the end of this report. The guidelines provide invaluable information as to the development and implementation of research in social sciences.

Research ethics conducted under the banner of medicine, sport and exercise will not be covered in this resource guide. Research exploring medicine, disease, endurance or body enhancements requires human subjects to consent to and participate in some form of experiment. To consult codes of conduct specifically written for research into sport and exercise see the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Declaration of Helsinki (health research), NHS National Research Ethics Service and British Psychological Society (which has a Sport and Exercise Psychology Division) web-links shown at the end of this report. The downloads available via the web-links provide a wealth of knowledge for conducting clinical trials, physical activities or performance research in an ethical manner. Additionally McNamee et al (2007) and McNamee (2005) recent publications referenced at the end of this report, will also guide students and researchers in sports and exercise.

Regardless of what subject matter students are investigating, conducting empirical research must be completed in an ethical manner. An ethical manner means student researchers must be honest, transparent and trustworthy whilst constructing the research process, conducting research with participants and publishing the data. More often than not ethical clearance is required before *any* empirical research takes place to check that ethical and moral principles are followed.

Not only that, but it is essential that the student makes it clear to the tutor the type of research being conducted, who with, when and why to enable tutors to make an informed decision as to whether a student *can* do or *is able to* do the research. Student researchers can be considered as a “junior apprentice” as they will not have the skills or judgements to complete certain research tasks. “Junior apprentices” will be denied the opportunity to conduct research where skills and judgements are insufficient.

For example, “junior apprentices”, be they students or “new researchers”, will be denied the opportunity to conduct research with children (under the age of 16) as defined by the Market Research Society ([www.mrs.org](http://www.mrs.org)). Research with children may take place with experienced researchers who are conducting research for the greater good of society, who understand the physical and psychological risks involved in the research and are competent in understanding ethnic, religious and cultural implications of involving children in research; further details are available via a download via Market Research Society - Conducting Research with Children and Young People (2006). Details of who, and who cannot, conduct research with children is included in the Ethical Research Policy published by the university.

Similarly, “junior apprentices” will be denied the opportunity to do certain kinds of research by their tutor where the “junior apprentice” places themselves in a “vulnerable” position. For example, inexperienced researchers should avoid research with participants who are drunk in a nightclub, may have taken drugs at an outdoor concert and so on.

In all instances where research is carried out, the physical and psychological *risk* of the researcher and the participants taking part in the research should be considered and discussed. If the *risk* is likely or is evident and the nature of the research is inappropriate “junior apprentices” should not be given ethical clearance.

It is also important to say at this stage that the law has stepped in to govern research activities by providing guidelines regarding a person’s freedom and the use of personal data respectively – see Human Rights Act 1998 and Data Protection Act 1998.

Despite the Human Rights Act and the Data Protection Act, at the present time there is no ethical governance or law that states how all empirical research projects must be managed or conducted. In many ways this is a good thing as laws and governance may restrict the researcher to such a degree that procedures become unwieldy and findings unnatural. However, undergraduate and postgraduate students do need clear guidance and this “Practical Resource Guide” will provide a suite of practical materials and case studies to enable research methods tutors, student researchers and their supervisors to conduct research in an ethical manner.

Therefore, ethics, morals and law govern how students conduct their research projects; below are some definitions that will guide them.

- **‘Research ethics’** refers to the moral principles guiding research, from its inception through to completion and publication of results and beyond” Economic Social Research Council p. 7.
- **‘Morals’** is a general statement given to a general understanding of right and wrong. Morals are often “conceived” and created over time through a “living society”; philosophy or religion and are “housed” in an individual’s conscience. Researchers must conduct their research morally, with the notion of improving knowledge for the “greater good” as opposed to a mere desire to carry out investigations. In addition, researchers must abide by the law.
- **‘Law’** in this instance refers to the clear rules and regulations laid down to construct research such as abiding by the Data Protection Act, Human Rights Act and so on.

## Lessons Learned from Unethical Research Projects

Past research projects have taken place which were abhorrent and/or unethical.

The following examples, case studies and questions led to the formation of the ethical policies we see today. Medical research is dominant in the abhorrent and/or unethical research that has been conducted in the past and it is these cases, which highlight unethical processes used, that will be discussed in this report.

### The Nuremberg Code

Ethical conduct in applied research was ignored in the Nazi Concentration Camps. Horrific “scientific” research was conducted on Jewish citizens and other minority ethnic minority groups during World War II. Without the consent of participants scientific research included Malaria Experiments, Bone, Muscle and Nerve Regeneration, Bone Transplantation Experiments and Sterilization Experiments (Linder 2000). Following the Nuremberg Trials in 1947, an ethical code by which to conduct future biomedical research was established (see Table 1 The Nuremberg Code). This code was the foundation from which all ethical research codes have been formed be it social science or behavioural science. The Nuremberg Code (Table 1) uses the expression ‘experiment’ throughout. Social scientists tend not to use this term and prefer to use the general phrase “research” “investigation” and/or “research investigation”.

**Table 1 The Nuremberg Code**

1. The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential.
2. The experiment should be such as to yield fruitful results for the good of society, unprocurable by other methods or means of study, and not random and unnecessary in nature.
3. The experiment should be so designed and based on the results of animal experimentation and knowledge of the natural history of the disease or other

problem under study that the anticipated results will justify the performance of the experiment.
4. The experiment should be so conducted as to avoid all unnecessary physical and mental suffering and injury.
5. No experiment should be conducted where there is an a priori reason to believe that death or disability injury will occur; except, perhaps, in those experiments where the experimental physicians also serve as subjects.
6. The degree of risk to be taken should never exceed that determined by the humanitarian importance of the problem to be solved by the experiment.
7. Proper preparations should be made and adequate facilities provided to protect the experimental subject against even remote possibilities of injury, disability, or death.
8. The experiment should be conducted only by scientifically qualified persons.
9. During the course of the experiment the human subject should be at liberty to bring the experiment to an end if he has reached the physical or mental state where continuation of the experiment seems to him to be impossible.
10. During the course of the experiment the scientist in charge must be prepared to terminate the experiment at any stage, if he has probable cause to believe that a continuation of the experiment is likely to result in injury, disability, or death to the experimental subject.

Adapted from Hutton 2009

The Nuremberg Code may seem upon first reading to only apply to medical research; however, several aspects of this code have been used to guide students when conducting research for social science projects. These include:

1. The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential
2. The experiment (research investigation) should be such as to yield fruitful results for the good of society, unprocurable by other methods or means of study, and not random and unnecessary in nature.
4. The experiment (research investigation) should be so conducted as to avoid all unnecessary physical and mental suffering and injury.
9. During the course of the experiment (research investigation) the human subject should be at liberty to bring the experiment to an end if he has reached the physical or mental state where continuation of the experiment seems to him to be impossible.

It is important, therefore, that students gain consent from their participants, conduct research that is useful in the endeavour to provide knowledge, avoid physical and/or mental harm and ensure that participants are able to withdraw from the research at any time without detriment.

### **Historical Case Study: Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male**

Despite The Nuremberg Code the “Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male” failed to embrace the Code (see Historical Case Study below). This case study is formed from medical research with highly questionable ethics. However, for social scientists it is an historical case study that helps to provide a basis for social, behavioural and/or psychological research.

#### **Historical Case Study - Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male**

The United States Public Health Service (USPHS) conducted clinical research from 1932 to 1972. African American men from Tuskegee were invited to “Miss Rivers’ Lodge” where they would receive ‘special free treatment’. Miss Rivers was an African American nurse who played a pivotal role in the continuity between patients and doctors at the Tuskegee Institute where “Miss Rivers Lodge” was housed. The men were considered to be vulnerable as they were extremely poor and could not afford to pay medical bills. Their longitudinal treatment included free medical attention for minor ailments, free meals and free bus rides from their home to the Tuskegee Institute. The free examinations would seem like a ‘godsend’ from a trusted authority. The Negro men, who came voluntarily for the examination, were not advised they were taking part in research activities over a long period of time. They never knew they were being tested for syphilis and they were never advised if they had syphilis or not as results of the examination were kept from them. Below is a copy of the transcript from the “recruitment” letter.

**Macon County Health Department  
Alabama State Board of Health and U. S. Public Health  
Service Cooperating with Tuskegee Institute**

Dear Sir:

Some time ago you were given a thorough examination and since that time we hope you have gotten a great deal of treatment for bad blood. You will now be given your last chance to get a second examination. This examination is a very special one and after it is finished you will be given a special treatment if it is believed you are in a condition to stand it.

If you want this special examination and treatment you must meet with nurse on \_\_\_\_\_ at M. She will bring you to the Tuskegee Institute Hospital for this free treatment. We will be very busy when these examinations and treatments are being given, and will have lots of people to wait on. You will remember that you had to wait for some time when you had your last good examination, and we wish to let you know that because we expect to be so busy it may be necessary for you to remain in the hospital over one night. If this is necessary you will be furnished your meals, a bed, as well the examination and treatment without cost.

**REMEMBER THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE FOR SPECIAL FREE TREATMENT. BE SURE TO MEET THE NURSE.**

Macon County Health Department  
Hesse-Biber, & Leavy (2006) p. 85



Prior to the Tuskegee Trial treatment for syphilis was toxic and painful and patients could not be guaranteed that the dangerous drugs were effective. Similarly, there were a number of side effects to the toxic, painful treatment. The aim of the clinical syphilis trial was to ascertain if patients who had syphilis were “better off” not being treated. The research trial would also study the different stages of syphilis including a post-mortem study.

In 1947 treatment for syphilis changed from being toxic and dangerous to a simple course of penicillin.

The Negro Tuskegee Trial men were:-

- a) not advised about the new simple treatment
- b) were not told they had syphilis
- c) clearly they were not advised that syphilis was contagious
- d) and were not even advised they were the subjects of ‘an experiment’ as the above letter points out they thought they were receiving ‘special treatment’
- e) names of the participants were widely available within the hospital, therefore, there was a lack of confidentiality and anonymity
- f) Men came to know other ‘participants’ as they would meet on the ‘free bus’ or at the hospital – again lack of confidentiality and anonymity

As the case study shows that the participants were not clearly informed of the aim of the research; nor were they informed of the physical or mental risks involved to them, their sexual partners or their offspring. The continuation of the research with Negro men from Tuskegee became even more indefensible when penicillin was introduced in 1947 to treat syphilis. The results, from the continued research, therefore, became unnecessary in nature. And, because the participants were not aware they were being “experimented on” their *right* to bring the experiment to an end was violated.

*Note:* Following the Tuskegee Syphilis Study the National Research Act, Belmont Report, National Human Investigation Board and Institutional Review Boards were formed.

## **Social Science Research**

In terms of social science, three research projects stand out which have unethical elements; these are outlined below. It is important to look at past research projects that raised ‘alarm bells’ in terms of ethical procedure, learn from them and form relevant ethical policy.

### **Case Study 1: Elliot - Blue Eyed/Brown Eyed Experiment**

The second research project, the Blue Eyed/Brown Eyed Experiment, occurred in the 1960s. The experiment involved research with children. At that time clear guidelines provided by committees such as the Market Research Society (UK) conducting research with children and young people (March 2006) were not available, however, the basic moral and ethical “unwritten” rules should have been adhered to.

#### **Case Study 1: Blue Eyed/Brown Eyed Experiment**

##### **The Procedure of the Research**

On the 5th April 1968 Jane Elliott began an experiment with primary school children. She looked at the students she had and divided them into two groups. One group of children had blue eyes and the other group had brown or green eyes. Elliott gave all the blue-eyed children a green armband to wear so that they could be identified easily. Elliott advised all of her students that blue-eyed children were inferior because they were not as clean or as clever as brown-eyed children. Her explanation for the superior/inferior nature was due to melanin. Melanin, Elliott explained, chemically affects the colour of a person’s eyes, hair and skin and their intelligence. Therefore, people with darker eyes have more melanin in their body which creates, through a chemical reaction, higher intelligence. The teacher went on to say that brown-eyed people are better than blue-eyed people. She went further to say that blue-eyed people do nothing but ‘sit around’ or ruin nice tasks. On top of that blue-eyed children had to use paper cups at the water fountain. When asked “why?” a brown-eyed child suggested it was because ‘they’ (brown-eyed children) may ‘catch’ something; Elliott nodded.

Elliott noted very quickly (after play-time break) that a chasm had formed between the two groups. She also noticed that very able blue-eyed children were getting simple multiplication sums wrong and shy brown-eyed children were becoming leaders and ordering the blue-eyed children to apologise for behaviours that they did not like. The following Monday the roles were reversed; the blue-eyed children became the superior people and the brown-eyed children were the ‘unintelligent’ people. Elliott noted that when the roles had been reversed the blue-eyed children were less aggressive to the brown-eyed children and suggested that because the blue-eyed children had felt abuse they did not want to inflict that on others.

##### **Context**

The experiment or exercise (as Elliott prefers to call it) occurred following the death of Martin Luther King. A student asked Jane Elliott for an explanation as to why King had been shot. Elliott stated to the class that to understand what it is like to be a negro boy or girl they would have to ‘experience’ it. All children agreed willingly to participate.

Elliott’s objective was to ‘prove’ that racism exists between white and black people. Elliott continues to practice her ‘exercises’ in businesses throughout the World.

A video of Jane Elliot's A Class Divided – parts 1 and 2 are available via the links below

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCjDxAwfXV0>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWbxv4vIHe0&feature=related>

Bloom (2005); Horowitz (2008);

**The following questions arise regarding the ethics surrounding Elliot's experiment, these include:**

1. Did the children have the capacity to consent to such an experiment?
2. Did the children clearly understand the objectives of the research?
3. Would the results provide meaningful knowledge to improve society?
4. Was the method used necessary?
5. Did the children suffer physical harm?
6. Did the children suffer mentally?
7. Could the children withdraw from the research at anytime?

These and many other questions can be raised concerning Elliot's experiment and the subsequent exercises she continues to perform today in business situations. This experiment also highlights many questions that Foundation Degree, undergraduate and postgraduate students should ask themselves as they prepare to undertake their own empirical research.

**Note:** Research with children by undergraduate students is not encouraged/allowed in many UK Universities; yet research with children by postgraduate students is allowable in some cases. It is the task of the tutor and the Ethics Co-ordinator/Committee to ensure the nature of the research is acceptable. Each student conducting empirical research should consult their university's Ethical Policy.

## **Case Study 2: Milgram - Obedience to Authority**

In 1963 Stanley Milgram wanted to research certain types of behaviour relating to authority. To do this he set up an experiment studying whether or not subjects would inflict pain on people if instructed to do so by authority figures.

### **Case Study 2 Milgram - Obedience to Authority**

#### **The Procedure of the Research**

##### **Recruitment**

Milgram recruited participants to his experiment through an advertisement in a newspaper and small direct mail campaign. Within the recruitment stimulus material he offered a payment of \$4.50 for one hour's 'work'. The recruitment stimulus told readers that the 'work' was taking part in an experiment that was considering the relationship that punishment has on learning.

The newspaper article advised readers that they would be either the teacher or the learner – roles would be assigned 'on the day'.

##### **Role Assignment**

Upon arrival at the venue (Yale University) all participants were advised that they would get paid because they had arrived to take part in the experiment and could leave at anytime. The Experimenter placed participants into pairs to assign the role of teacher or learner. Participants chose a piece of paper from a hat to determine their role. However, all pieces of paper had the word teacher written on them. One participant of the pair was in fact an "accomplice" to the experiment and it was imperative that the "accomplice" was the learner. The 'other' participant was the person who had been recruited via the advertisement or direct mail campaign and was the 'naïve' participant.

##### **Role of the Learner**

After roles had been 'assigned' the Experimenter took both participants to an electric chair. The Experimenter strapped the learner (accomplice) to the chair with wrist straps to prevent excessive movement or escape. Both participants were advised that the electrodes attached to the wrist straps delivered electric shocks and the electrode paste would help to prevent burns or blisters to the skin. Additionally, they were advised that the wires attached to the electrodes fed through to the Shock Generator which was in an adjoining room. The Experimenter described a question and answer session. The teacher would ask questions and the learner would respond by pressing one of four buttons. Each button pressed by the learner would light up one of four numbered quadrants located on top of the Shock Generator.

##### **Role of the Teacher**

The Experimenter then took the teacher into an adjoining room. The teacher's role was to ask the learner questions via a one-way intercom and administer shock treatment whenever the learner gave an incorrect answer. Throughout the question and answer session the teacher sat in front of the Shock Generator. The Shock Generator had 30 lever switches number 1 to 30 (left to right). The first left hand lever was labelled 15 volts; the second lever switch

was labelled 30 volts, the third 45 volts. Therefore, from left to right the voltage label increased by 15 volts finally ending in a lever switch labelled 450 volts on the last right hand lever switch. In addition to the numerical voltage labels, written labels were shown. Moving from left to right these labels were Slight Shock, Moderate Shock, Strong Shock, Very Strong Shock, Intense Shock, Extreme Shock Intensity Shock, Danger, Severe Shock and the final two switches were marked XXX.

The Experimenter advised the teacher to give an electric shock if the learner gave an incorrect answer. More importantly, after each incorrect answer the teacher must move to the next higher voltage lever switch and before administering the shock the teacher must advise the learner what the shock voltage level is.

### **The Question and Answer Task**

The instructions are as follows:

1. The teacher begins by reciting a list of paired words.
2. The learner learns them.
3. The teacher reads the first of the word pair and then reads out four words; the paired word is contained within the four words
4. The learner chooses the correct paired word from the four words provided.
5. The learner presses the button to light up the up one of four numbered quadrants located on top of the Shock Generator.
6. If the answer is correct the teacher moves to the next word pair
7. If the answer is incorrect the teacher advises the learner of the shock voltage level and administers the shock.

### **The Learner “accomplices” Role**

The “accomplices” were required to perform at a ‘chance level’ and indeed they ‘performed’ very poorly on the “dummy run” by scoring only 3 out of 10. The “accomplices” received shocks of 15 volts for the first question they got wrong, 30 volts for the second, 45 for the third and shocks of 105 volts for the 7<sup>th</sup> question they got wrong. The learner “accomplices” had no verbal communication with the teacher but could pound the wall between themselves, the teacher and the Experimenter vigorously with their feet. The accomplices were asked to pound the wall when they received shocks of 300 volts and 315 volts. After shocks of 315 volts the “accomplices” were told to no longer pound their feet, nor press any buttons to give an answer. In reality and unbeknownst to the ‘teacher’ no shocks were received.

If the teacher turned to the Experimenter for advice at any time during the shock treatment the Experimenter has four scripted responses, stated in the following order:

1. Please continue
2. The experiment requires that you continue
3. It is absolutely essential that you continue
4. You have no other choice, you must go on

## Results

Following the experiment the teachers answered a questionnaire. The teachers were convinced that the learners were receiving shock treatment and felt 'extreme pain' (with few exceptions).

The teachers showed extreme behaviours including lip-biting, sweating, stuttering and nervous laughter. Three subjects had seizures; one seizure was so bad the experiment was halted. Fourteen out of the 40 participants eventually defied the Experimenter and refused to go on. Five stopped at 300 volts (Intense Shock) and after the learner had banged the walls. Eight stopped between 315 & 360 volts (Extreme Intensity Shock) with a further teacher refusing to go on after 375 volts (Danger Severe Shock). This means that 26 teachers were fully obedient and continued to the end of the experiment, administering shocks of 450 volts (XXX level).

Returning to the Nuremberg Code 2 – this experiment yielded fruitful results that were invaluable in terms understanding human behaviour as well as stimulating debate for the good of society. For example, many people were shocked that the teachers were inflicting unbelievable pain on the learner with no moral judgement whatsoever. The strength of obedience to instructions from a person in authority was incredible. The teachers inflicted pain on other people despite 'knowing' from an early age that it is not acceptable to hurt people. They continued to inflict pain even when they were suffering mental and/or physical stress through lip biting, nervous laughter or seizure

Despite the insights into human behaviour and obedience a further debate occurred considering the unethical practices of the experiment.

Milgram 1963, Sturt 2008

Several questions arise from the unethical practices surrounding Milgram's experiment, these include:

1. Participants consented to an experiment regarding learning; they did not consent to an experiment regarding their own obedience, therefore, were participants misinformed/deceived regarding the experiment's objective?
2. The participants consented to giving electric shocks to the learner; however, no electric shock was ever administered. Should the participants have been informed that no "actual" electric shock would be inflicted?
3. Was the deception outlined in the previous two questions necessary? Would they have behaved differently if they had known the experiments objectives and the 'actual' shock treatment?
4. Participants were filmed without their knowledge, should they have been advised beforehand?
5. Did the researcher consider the physical risk of the participants?
6. Did the researcher consider the mental risk of the participants?
7. The participants were offered money for their 'work', they were also advised that the money would be paid just for arriving at the research centre, however, did the four scripted prompts used by the Experimenter cause social pressure which may have made withdrawal seem impossible?

8. Was a detailed debriefing and explanation sufficient to overcome some of these issues?

Note: in terms of confidentiality; Milgram did not use the names of participants, however, the filmed experiment was shown on national television and is still available for educational purposes. After the experiment had finished Milgram debriefed the participants and left them in no doubt over the fact that the learner had received no actual electric shocks.

Clearly these questions point to similar elements shown in Elliot's Blue Eyed/Brown Eyed Experiment – the elements deal with:-

### **Ethical Elements of Milgram's Obedience to Authority Research**

1. Informed Consent
2. Research results providing useful knowledge for the good of society
3. Risk from mental or physical harm
4. The chance for participants to withdraw at anytime
5. Confidentiality

### **Case Study 3: Laud Humphries Tearoom Research**

The final case study, like Milgram's research, provided society with an insight into hitherto 'unknown' behavioural activities. However, there are a number of unethical practices contained within the case study which undergraduate and postgraduate students must avoid to ensure that their research shows integrity, honesty and quality.

#### **Case Study 3 Laud Humphries Tearoom Research**

##### **Procedure of the Research**

Humphries conducted two studies; for ease the umbrella term 'Tearoom Research', will be used when referring to the combined research study. The first of the two studies was a "covert observational" study of 'Impersonal Homosexual Behaviour' and the second was a 'Health Survey' using a 'face to face' questionnaire.

##### **Impersonal Homosexual Behaviour in Tearooms**

Humphries conducted covert observational research in male public toilets (known as Tearooms) to study the impersonal sexual behaviour of homosexual men. Researchers who conduct ethnographic or observational research do so to study the behaviours of cultural groups through direct access and observation from within. To ensure Humphries was accepted by the homosexual group he became a "Watch Queen" a 'look out' for police, vice squad or any other impending danger. Humphries was in fact arrested during his "watching hours". He was arrested for loitering. Humphries also took details of the car registration number of those men who had visited the Tearooms. He asked the police to provide him with the names and addresses of the owners of the car registrations. Humphries did not advise the police why or where he had got the car registration numbers.

##### **'Health Survey'**

Humphries visited each home of the homosexual men he had observed in the Tearooms under cover of being a participant in a 'Health Survey'. The survey was completed, asking for details regarding, family background, personal health, marital relations and friendship networks. Humphries identified himself fully to some of the men who were completing the 'Health Survey' that he was a social scientist and had observed their behaviour in Tearooms; further in-depth interviews took place with some of those participants. The Health Survey was genuine in terms of asking questions about health – however, the underlying motivation for the research was to reveal that homosexuals were "normal" people and not "deviant" and this was not revealed to the participants.

##### **The Context**

Social science research of sexual behaviours of consenting adults in a caring, sharing relationship through marriage often raises eyebrows; research into sexual behaviours of homosexuals in public toilets caused a major outcry. The outcry came from researchers who felt Humphries had tarnished the reputation of social researchers by acting in a sly, underhand, deceptive manner. Others strongly objected to the research because homosexuality was



a crime at that time which means not only was homosexuality against the law but Humphries as a social researcher had aided and abetted a criminal act by being the 'Watch Queen'.

There were assumptions, prior to the publication of Humphries findings, that homosexual behaviour of this nature was conducted by depraved psychotic men working in the shadows of normality. Humphries stated that homosexuals using Tearooms were often married, white, conservative, middleclass churchgoers.

Jackson & Verberg (2007), Babbie (2004), Goodwin, et al (1991), Humphries (1970)

Once again the procedures laid out in the research study raise ethical questions. Using the Ethical Elements listed above, Humphries Tearoom Research will be discussed.

### **Ethical Elements of Humphries Tearoom Research**

#### **1. Informed Consent**

- Participants were not informed of the main objective of the health survey research project and not informed at all about the Impersonal Homosexual Behaviour in Tearooms research
- Consent was not requested or gained
- Participants were not asked to give permission for their car registration number to be taken
- Participants were not advised that the taking of car registration number details was to seek their name and address in the future

#### **2. Research results provide useful knowledge for the good of society**

- Homosexuality was brought onto the public agenda and more US states reviewed or withdrew sodomy laws.
- Changed the view of the type of person that was homosexual

#### **3. The research process showed risk of mental and/or physical harm to the participants and the researcher**

- The participants were being observed, therefore, they were not taking part in anything that they did not wish to (Nuremberg). But Humphries placed himself at risk – as he was arrested by the police. If he had been “found out” not to be a “Watch Queen” he might have encountered a backlash from the men he had been “watching” in the public toilets.
- Participants may have suffered mentally when Humphries the “Watch Queen” arrived on their doorstep to conduct research about Health. Humphries did write in his journal that no participant who took part in the face to face interview was distressed by Humphries previous persona of “Watch Queen”

#### **4. The chance for participants to withdraw at anytime**

- Participants did not know the Tearoom research was taking place, therefore, had no opportunity to withdraw (cf *Tuskegee Syphilis Trial*)

## 5. Confidentiality and Anonymity

- Humphries did not reveal the names of participants in his findings and kept details of names and addresses confidential.

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) has recently published their own ethical framework. From that the following extract has been taken to show the ethical elements they feel are necessary:

### **Six key principles of ethical research that the ESRC expects to be addressed, whenever applicable:**

1. Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity and quality
2. Research staff and subjects must be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved. Some variation is allowed in very specific and exceptional research contexts for which detailed guidance is provided in the policy guidelines
3. The confidentiality of information supplied by research subjects and the anonymity of respondents must be respected
4. Research participants must participate in a voluntary way, free from any coercion
5. Harm to research participants must be avoided
6. The independence of research must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit

Economic & Social Research Council (2005) p.1

## **Conclusion**

The case studies given above raise questions as to ethical procedures. The questions seemed to hinge on similar ethical elements. From those elements a number of research organisations specific to social science have provided frameworks for Foundation Degree, undergraduate and post graduate students to refer to in their own research pursuits.

See Power Point Slides '*1. Background to Research Ethics*' for slides which accompany this Guide

## References

Babbie, E. (2004) Laud Humphreys and Research Ethics *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* Vol. 24 No. 3/4/5 pp. 12-19

Bloom S. G. (2005) Her Bold Experiment to Teach Iowa Third Graders about Racial Prejudice Divided Townspeople and Thrust her onto the National Stage. Decades Later, Jane Elliott's Students Say the Ordeal Changed them for Good <http://bama.ua.edu/~sprentic/695%20Jane%20Elliott%20profile.pdf> [accessed 6<sup>th</sup> July 2008]

British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (2006) <http://www.bases.org.uk/pdf/Code%20of%20Conduct%20MASTER.pdf> [accessed 28<sup>th</sup> May 2008]

Data Protection Act (1999) [http://www.ico.gov.uk/what\\_we\\_cover/data\\_protection.aspx](http://www.ico.gov.uk/what_we_cover/data_protection.aspx) [accessed 15th July 2009]

Declaration of Helsinki (2008) <http://www.wma.net/e/policy/b3.htm> [accessed 13th February 2008]

Economic Social Research Council (2005) [http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/ESRC\\_Re\\_Ethics\\_Framework\\_tcm6-11291.pdf](http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/ESRC_Re_Ethics_Framework_tcm6-11291.pdf) [accessed 13<sup>th</sup> May 2008]

Goodwin, G. A. Horowitz, I. L. & Nardi, P. M. (1991) Laud Humphreys; A Pioneer in the Practice of Social Science *Sociological Inquiry* Vol. 61 No. 2 May pp. 139-147

Hesse-Biber, S. N. & Leavy, P. (2006) *The Practice of Qualitative Research* London: Sage Publications

Homan, R. (1992) *The Ethics of Social Research* (Paperback) United Kingdom: Longman Group

Horowitz, C. F. (2008) Jane Elliott and her Blue-Eyed Devil Children: The Totalitarian Roots of Diversity Training National Legal and Policy Centre <http://www.nlpc.org/view.asp?action=viewArticle&aid=1851> [accessed 6<sup>th</sup> July 2008]

Human Rights Act (1998) [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1998/ukpga\\_19980042\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1998/ukpga_19980042_en_1) [accessed 15th July 2009]

Humphreys, L. (1970) *Tearoom Trade Impersonal Sex in Public Places* London: Duckworth

Hutton J. L. (2009) <http://www.ccsr.ac.uk/methods/events/Durham/documents/Nuremberg.pdf> [accessed 14th February 2009]

Jackson, W. & Verberg, N. (2007) *Methods: Doing Social Research 4 Edition*  
Canada: Pearson Education

Leeds Metropolitan University (2006) Policy, Framework Principles & Procedures for  
Research Ethics (internet)

[http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/teaching/tfn/index\\_acad\\_princs&regs.htm](http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/teaching/tfn/index_acad_princs&regs.htm) [accessed 1st  
May 2008]

Linder, D. (2000) The Nuremberg Trials (internet)

<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/nuremberg/NurembergDoctorTrial.html> [accessed 15th July 2009]

Market Research Society (2006) Conducting Research with Children and Young  
People

[http://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/downloads/revise/active/children\\_young\\_people\\_mar06.pdf](http://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/downloads/revise/active/children_young_people_mar06.pdf) [accessed 3rd July 2009]

McNamee, M., Olivier, S. & Wainwright, P. (2007) *Research ethics in exercise, health and sports sciences* London: Routledge

McNamee, M. (2005) Ethics and Sport

[http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/resource\\_guides/ethics\\_and\\_sport.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/resource_guides/ethics_and_sport.pdf) [accessed 20th June 2009]

Milgram, S. (1963) Behaviour Study of Obedience *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* Vol. 67 No 4 pp 371-378

Sturt, G. (2008) Milgram, Behaviour Study of Obedience <http://www.garysturt.free-online.co.uk/milgram.htm> [accessed 14th May 2008]

The Social Research Association (2009) <http://www.the-sra.org.uk> [accessed 13<sup>th</sup>  
February 2009]

McNamee, Mike, Ethics and Sport Resource Guide

[http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/resource\\_guides/ethics\\_and\\_sport.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/resource_guides/ethics_and_sport.pdf) [accessed 3rd December 2009]

## Additional References

British Educational Research Association

<http://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/category/publications/guidelines/> [accessed 13<sup>th</sup> May 2009]

The British Educational Research Association provides a range of publications dealing specifically with research into education. However, the guidelines, particularly the publication regarding ethics, continue to address the ethical policies and procedures required when studying social science. Many publications are free and downloadable.

Economic and Social Research Council

<http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/index.aspx> [accessed 13th May 2009]

The Economic and Social Research Council is an organisation that is accessible for students, academics, the general public and the public sector. Students and tutors will find the publications accessed by the “general public” tab very useful when considering ethical procedures and principles. Publications are free and downloadable.

Fleming, S. & Jordan, F. (2006) *Ethical Issues in Leisure Research* University of Brighton: LSA Publication No. 90

This book contains eight chapters containing ethical issues in gaining consent, researching children, participant observation and anonymity. The book provides theory, practical guidance and “live” situations making it useful and accessible to students and tutors alike.

Kenyon, A. J. (2006) Exploring Phenomenology Research *International Journal of Market Research* Quarter 4, Vol. 46 Issue 4, p427-441

This article provides a brief outline of ethical considerations in a “live example” of research that has been conducted. It also provides a method for choosing and recruiting participants.

Market Research Society <http://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/guidelines.htm> [accessed 9th July 2009]

The Market Research Society (MRS) is an association providing researchers with a resource bank of material including - Guidelines, Frequently Asked Questions, Regulations and an A-Z repository. The A-Z repository is particularly useful source of downloadable documents including material entitled “Code of Practice for Conducting Market Research in Town Centres” to “Employee Research” “Internet Research” to “Qualitative Research Techniques” to “Questionnaire Design Guidelines” to “The Responsibilities of Interviewers”. The MRS provides students, academic researchers and industry researchers with guidelines and opinions across many aspects of research and legal frameworks.

Their materials are free and downloadable. The MRS also gives guidance on specific questions via the telephone or e-mail. Note: The MRS guidance is an excellent source for researchers. However, it is important to compare guidance offered by the MRS with the university’s Ethical Research Policy as there may be differences. For example, in the Guidelines for Conducting Research with Children and Young People B.27 on page 12 the MRS states that when interviewing a 14 year-old in a public place parental consent is not required. However, this is at odds with some university Ethical Research Policies which consider the definition of children and young people to be those over the age of 16. The university Ethical Research Policy will override guidelines from “outside” sources.

McNamee M. J. & Bridges D. Eds. (2002) *The Ethics of Educational Research* London: Blackwell Publishing

This book is mainly based on Educational Research, however, it is an excellent book in terms of underpinning the notions of ethics, the dilemmas of obtaining consent and the choices that a researcher makes when dealing with research methods. The book refers to Action Research and Ethnography which are inaccessible to “junior

apprentices”; however, this resource would be useful to tutors who wish to provide details of *all* research techniques and methods.

Resnick D. B. (2007) *What is Ethics in Research and Why is it Important?*  
<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/bioethics/whatis.cfm> [accessed 4th July 2009]

This short article provides a sound basis of what ethics in research is – highlighting integrity, honesty, confidentiality, competence and legality. It also advises that ethics in research is important in that it helps to promote truth – as opposed to information which carries a “hidden agenda” and enables the researcher and participant to cooperate together through mutual trust and respect.

Social Science Research Council <http://www.ssrc.org/> [accessed 15<sup>th</sup> August 2008]  
The Social Science Research Council is an international independent, not- for-profit organisation. It prides itself on fostering innovative research on topical public issues. Publications include books regarding social and cultural issues and a newsletter detailing current affairs, social movement and economics. The materials are free and downloadable.

## Guide 2 Informed Consent, Confidentiality and Anonymity

The aim of this Resource Guide will be to outline issues regarding informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Students undertaking research in the areas of hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism must be aware of these issues to ensure their conduct is ethical and fair.

### Background

Guide 1 provided background information as to why it is important, in pursuit of knowledge, to be aware of the ethical and moral issues surrounding those people who take part in the research activity. The ethical elements stemming from the Nuremberg Code and those highlighted in the Social Science case studies are the focus of this Guide. The ethical elements that will be discussed are 'informed consent', 'confidentiality' and 'anonymity'. These elements were born from medical research but have been 'imposed' onto research conducted by students and scholars in the field of Social Science. It must be noted at this point that whilst the adherence to specific ethical policies and codes is paramount, researching *people and their behaviour* brings a whole host of context specific dilemmas. However, this Guide, and the accompanying power-point slides, endeavour to provide some foundational information regarding the rights of the participant before, during and after the research has taken place. The rights of the participant include: being informed, not being subjected to physical or mental risk, being given the opportunity to withdraw and providing information which will remain private through confidentiality and anonymity procedures. These rights are in line with the ethical elements shown in Guide 1.

### Informed Consent

#### The Ground Work

It is important to protect the rights of the people or organisations who are going to take part in the research process, be it the researcher (the student researcher) or the participants. The clearer both parties are as to the nature and reason for the research, the more likely there will be a successful outcome.

Therefore, to ensure the researchers (the students) understand the nature and reasons for their research they need to ask themselves these questions-

**Who?**

**What ?**

**How?**

**When?**

**Where?**

These questions 'come from' the ethical elements identified in *Guide 1 – Background to Research Ethics*

**Who** is going to conduct the research – the undergraduate/postgraduate student only or will the undergraduate/postgraduate student take a friend or colleague with them?

**Who** will be responsible for collecting the data, storing the data, analysing the data, destroying the data and publishing the data?

**Who** else will have access to the data?

**Who** is going to take part in the research – the sample – on their own or with others? If with others, who are the others?

**Who** else is involved in the research? e.g. just people from Organisation X or Club B or several organisations within the North East?

**What** is the research going to be about?

**What** will the participant be required to do? On their own or with others?

**What** physical or mental risks may befall the participant?

**What** physical or mental risks may befall the researcher?

**How** long will the research take? 4 minutes, 1 hour?

**How** often will the participant need to take part? Once, twice, over a period of a month?

**How** will the data be collected? By voice recording/camera, written notes, hand-written questionnaires etc

**How** can the participant withdraw from the research by e-mail, in person, by phone?

**How** will data remain anonymous and confidential?

**When** can the participant withdraw from the research? Immediately, within 2 weeks, etc

**When** will participants have chance to ask questions of the researcher?

**When** will the results be published?

**When** will the raw data be destroyed?

**Where** will the research take place? Date, Time, Place

**Where** will the results be published?

**Where** else will the results be used?

By being able to answer these questions the researcher will be able to provide clear information to the participant. Clarity of the information is important because the researcher is asking the participant to 'open up', give answers and share thoughts and feelings. Researchers who cannot answer the above questions are not ready to prepare a research proposal and certainly not ready to conduct research.



<p><b>Case Study 1: An example of using Ground Work Questions - Kelly-Ann Borne's Street Interviews</b> (use as a handout with PowerPoint presentation or in workshop)</p>	
<p><b>Who</b> is going to conduct the research – the undergraduate/postgraduate student only or will the undergraduate/postgraduate student take a friend or colleague with them?</p> <p><b>Who</b> will be responsible for collecting the data, storing the data, analysing the data, destroying the data and publishing the data?</p> <p><b>Who</b> else will have access to the data?</p> <p><b>Who</b> is going to take part in the research?</p> <p><b>Who</b> else is involved in the research?</p>	<p>Kelly-Ann Borne Undergraduate Student, Centre for Hospitality and Retailing Leeds Metropolitan University</p> <p>Kelly-Ann Borne and Alex Foster will be collecting the data. Kelly-Ann Borne will be storing, analysing, destroying and publishing the data. Dr. Alexandra J. Kenyon (Lecturer and Supervisor) Leeds Met</p> <p>Individuals on their own 100 equal split between Male and Female in two cities within North of England</p>
<p><b>What</b> is the research investigating?</p> <p><b>What</b> are the participants required to do? On their own or with others?</p> <p><b>What</b> physical or mental risks may befall the participant?</p> <p><b>What</b> physical or mental risks may befall the researcher (see Risk Assessment Handout)?</p>	<p>To investigate participants' understanding of Junk Food</p> <p>Answering questions about junk food</p> <p>No physical or mental risks – if participant appears to become anxious the researcher will terminate the questioning and thank the participant.</p> <p>Kelly-Ann Borne and Alex Foster will be together at all times. They will advise the Supervisor when and where the research will take place. They will telephone before the research takes place and at 1 hour intervals. They will also telephone the Supervisor upon completion. Research will take place in easily accessible locations, where all participants are in full view of 'other shoppers' in the city.</p>
<p><b>How</b> long will the research take?</p> <p><b>How</b> often will the participant need to take part?</p>	<p>Research will take approximately 8 minutes</p> <p>One interview only</p>

<p><b>How</b> will the data be collected?</p> <p><b>How</b> can the participant withdraw from the research?</p> <p><b>How</b> will data remain anonymous and confidential?</p>	<p>Tape recording</p> <p>Withdrawal via e-mail</p> <p>See Anonymity and Confidentiality section below</p>
<p><b>When</b> can the participant withdraw from the research? Immediately, within 2 weeks, etc</p> <p><b>When</b> will participants have chance to ask questions of the researcher?</p> <p><b>When</b> will the results be published?</p> <p><b>When</b> will the raw data be destroyed?</p>	<p>Withdraw from research immediately and up to 2 weeks from date of interview</p> <p>Immediately and at end of interview</p> <p>Initially in June 20xx (hand-in date for dissertation). Up to 2 years after 2 weeks after date of interview</p>
<p><b>Where</b> will the research take place? Date, Time, Place</p> <p><b>Where</b> will the results be published?</p> <p><b>Where</b> else will the results be used?</p>	<p>On high street – between Dec 20xx and Jan 20xx, Leeds &amp; Manchester</p> <p>In dissertation</p> <p>Academic papers</p>

**Case Study 2 An example of using Ground Work Questions - Josh Castle's Questionnaire's** (use as a handout with PowerPoint presentation or in workshop)

<p><b>Who</b> is going to conduct the research?</p> <p><b>Who</b> will be responsible for collecting the data, storing the data, analysing the data, destroying the data and publishing the data?</p> <p><b>Who</b> else will have access to the data?</p> <p><b>Who</b> is going to take part in the research? <b>Who</b> else is involved in the research?</p>	<p>Josh Castle – Undergraduate Student Leeds Metropolitan University, Centre for Hospitality and Retailing</p> <p>Josh Castle will be responsible for collecting, storing, analysing, destroying and publishing the data</p> <p>Dr. Alexandra J. Kenyon (Lecturer and Supervisor) Leeds Met</p> <p>Individuals male and female Up to 140 individual in two large organisations in Leeds</p>
--	---

<p><b>What</b> is the research investigating?</p> <p><b>What</b> are the participants required to do?</p> <p><b>What</b> physical or mental risks may befall the participant?</p> <p><b>What</b> physical or mental risks may befall the researcher (see Risk Assessment Handout)?</p>	<p>Alcohol advertisements and alcohol consumption</p> <p>Complete a questionnaire on their own</p> <p>No physical or mental risks will befall the participant</p> <p>No physical or mental risks will befall the researcher</p>
<p><b>How</b> long will the research take?</p> <p><b>How</b> often will the participant need to take part?</p> <p><b>How</b> will the data be collected?</p> <p><b>How</b> can the participant withdraw from the research?</p> <p><b>How</b> will data remain anonymous and confidential?</p>	<p>Up to 15 minutes</p> <p>Once only</p> <p>Questionnaire</p> <p>Withdrawal via e-mail</p> <p>See Anonymity and Confidentiality section below</p>
<p><b>When</b> can the participant withdraw from the research? Immediately, within 2 weeks, etc</p> <p><b>When</b> will participants have chance to ask questions of the researcher?</p> <p><b>When</b> will the results be published?</p> <p><b>When</b> will the raw data be destroyed?</p>	<p>Immediately or within 1 week of research</p> <p>Following research</p> <p>Initially in June 20xx (hand-in date for dissertation). Up to 2 years after</p> <p>2 weeks after date of interview</p>
<p><b>Where</b> will the research take place? Date, Time, Place</p> <p><b>Where</b> will the results be published?</p> <p><b>Where</b> else will the results be used?</p>	<p>In two large organisations in Leeds. Participant Information sheet given w/c 10<sup>th</sup> January 20xx, Questionnaire and Consent Form given w/c 17<sup>th</sup> January 20xx.</p> <p>In dissertation</p> <p>Academic papers</p>

Adapted from Kenyon, A. J. (2004)

## Gaining Consent

Researchers require participants to give their consent before research takes place\*. The mechanics of gaining consent has two simple parts,

1. Participant Information
2. Actual Consent.

### **Part 1 - Participant Information**

All researchers need to provide their participants with information about the study, before the research takes place. Researchers who do the ground work and are able to answer the questions above will be able to provide their participants with an acceptable participant information sheet.

It should be noted that the participant information sheet should have a “reasonable” amount of information on it. *Full or complete information* may be unattainable and information providing extensive detail may make the research ‘look’ frightening or laborious so that participants may not wish to take part (Pedroni & Pimple 2001). A further consideration is how the information provided may affect their responses. If any aspect of the research is kept from the participant at the data gathering stage it is necessary to brief them thoroughly afterwards and gain consent at this stage for the data to be used.

The participant information sheet will be given to the Participant before the research takes place; this can be immediately before as in Case 1 or several days before as in Case 2. The reason that the participant is provided with a participant information sheet is so they can read, reflect and understand what they have taken part in/will take part in – as per the Nuremberg Code 1.

See Guide 3 – Practical Examples for ‘live’ participant information sheets, consent forms, verbal participant information.

The participant information sheet needs to be clear and written in a language that the participant will understand (Richie & Lewis 2003). Keep information simple, without deceiving the participant. For example:

“I will ask you questions about choosing holidays and how prices and added value offers help you decide on which holiday you will choose”.

Rather than

“I am conducting a quasi-phenomenological examination into consumer’s subjectivity to price comparison advertising and acquisition value perceptions in holiday purchase decisions.”

### **Voluntary Consent**

Researchers must recruit participants voluntarily. Participants must not be coerced, manipulated, bribed or “feel obliged” to take part in the research. Additionally, participants must not feel that they will be ostracised or punished for not taking part.

### ***Gatekeepers***

Often undergraduate and/or postgraduate research takes place in businesses or other organisations. So permission is required to conduct research “within the building/location”. Therefore, consent is not only required from the participants but also the gatekeeper. Gatekeepers include, for example, the restaurant manager, Leeds United human resources department, a travel company call centre manager or night-club owner. These gatekeepers are responsible for the health and wellbeing of their staff and customers so it is essential that the gatekeepers are approached and permission sought to conduct research with participants before the research is due to take place.

### ***Decision Making Capacity/Vulnerable Groups***

It is unlikely that students, undergraduate or postgraduate, will undertake research projects with participants who are ‘vulnerable’ or do not have the capacity to give consent. Vulnerable groups include children under the age of 16, people with mental illnesses, homeless people, people dependent on drugs and so on. It is imperative that Foundation Degree, undergraduate and postgraduate researchers discuss their objectives very carefully with their supervisor as it is unlikely that they will have the skills or experience to conduct research with vulnerable groups. Many university Ethical Policies will not allow undergraduate researchers to conduct research with vulnerable groups.

## **Part 2 - Actual Consent**

Consent can be given in writing and/or verbally. It is preferable to gain consent in writing, or in the case of an online questionnaire through action (see Guide 3 Practical Examples). Written consent is advantageous because it increases the likelihood that the participant understands what they are participating in and the rights that they have. Additionally it helps to protect the researcher should their be any accusations of unfairness at a later date (Wiles et al 2005)

The consent form will contain all the information that is included in the participant information sheet for the sake of consistency, honesty and fairness. These should be made available to the student’s supervisor to validate their research. However, they must be held in a secure place in line with the confidentiality and anonymity processes described below.

(\*Prior consent is not always required for covert/observational research. However, undergraduate and postgraduate students will need to consult their university’s Ethics Policy to establish if they are able to complete covert research)

### ***Confidentiality and Anonymity***

Foundation Degree, undergraduate and postgraduate researchers will usually advise their participants that the information they provide will be anonymous and confidential; which in turn assures the participant’s privacy. One way in which to avoid breaching confidentiality statements is to anonymise data. This can be done by using pseudonyms or codes – e.g. in qualitative depth interviews participants could be given “new names” from Tom to Brad or Jessica to Abigail. Researchers should also provide “new names” if participants disclose names of colleagues, managers or

friends. It should be noted that a change of name will not equal full anonymity. If, however, names of organisations, job title are also changed (but not rank, location etc) the level of anonymity can improve. Therefore, Jessica can be changed from  
From - Jessica, Sales Assistant, JJB Sports Leeds  
To - Abigail, Retail Assistant, Sports Retailer, North of England  
See *Guide 3 Practical Examples* for some anonymity examples.

Care must also be taken if anonymity could be compromised by implication. For example, ‘the marketing director of the UK’s leading energy supplier’ would be easily identifiable to many in the industry and beyond.

Confidentiality statements, therefore, give assurance that the information provided by the participant will not be attributed to them when the results are published either directly or indirectly. Care is needed particularly with the storage of data (Social Research Association 2003).

For example, paper questionnaires are frequently coded. They often have a coded consent form attached. The questionnaire and consent form need to be separated from one another as soon as possible. Consent forms need to be deposited in a secure place away from the questionnaire – so that the two could not be linked. Questionnaires should be keyed into the appropriate statistical package – and given a “new code” – known only to the researcher and supervisor. If the participant, within two weeks, or such time given, wishes to withdraw their data the researcher and supervisor must be able to comply.

A similar procedure in terms of consent forms and voice or video recordings is necessary for qualitative data. Data and consent forms must be stored and retained in secure places away from each other.

## **Conclusion**

It is important that all researchers are clear as to the nature of their research; answering the Who, What, How, When Where questions will help them towards a clear understanding. When researchers are clear they can provide relevant participant information and the participants in turn will be able to give their informed consent. The participant information sheet should give the necessary details as to the purpose of the research, who will be participating in the research, what the participants will be asked to do and how their privacy is protected. The participant information sheet will be given to the participant to keep for their information. The researcher will also ask for participants to sign a consent form to increase the likelihood of participants understanding and accepting what is being asked of them and to protect the researcher should they be accused of unfair practice at a later date.

**See Power Point Slides “2. Informed Consent, Anonymity and Confidentiality” for slides which accompany this Guide**

## References

Pedreoni, J. A. & Pimple, K. D. (2001) A Brief Introduction to Informed Consent in Research with Human Subjects Web-Bases Seminar on the Ethics of Research with Human Subjects <http://poynter.indiana.edu/sas/res/> [accessed 15<sup>th</sup> July 2009]

Kenyon, A. J. (2004) [Exploring phenomenological research](#). International Journal of Market Research, 2004 Quarter 4, Vol. 46 Issue 4, p427-441

Ritchie, J. & Lewis (2003) Qualitative Research Practice A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers London: Sage Publications

Social Research Association (2003) Ethical Guidelines <http://www.the-sra.org.uk/documents/pdfs/ethics03.pdf>

Wiles, R., Heath, S. Crow, G. & Charles, V. (2005) Informed consent in Social Research: A Literature Review ESRC

## Guide 3 Glossary of Terms

### ***Children and Young People***

Children and young people are classified aged 18, 16, 14 or 12 (dependent upon the subject matter). Specific ethical policies will apply.

### ***Confidentiality and Anonymity***

Foundation Degree, undergraduate and postgraduate researchers will usually advise their participants that the information they provide will be anonymous and confidential; which in turn assures the participant's privacy. One way in which to avoid breaching confidentiality statements is to anonymise data. This can be done by using pseudonyms or codes.

### ***Data Protection Act***

Researchers, organisations, businesses, schools and “anyone” who holds personal information on another must comply with eight principles, to ensure the personal information is:

- Fairly and lawfully processed
- Processed for limited purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate and up to date
- Not kept for longer than is necessary
- Processed in line with a person's rights
- Secure
- Not transferred to other countries without adequate protection

The Act also gives an individual the right to access their personal information held on computer and/or most paper records.

### ***Decision-Making Capacity/Vulnerable Groups***

It is unlikely that students undergraduate or postgraduate will undertake research projects with participants who are ‘vulnerable’ or do not have the capacity to give consent. Vulnerable groups include children under the age of 16, people with mental illnesses, homeless people, people who are dependent upon drugs and so on.

### ***Ethical Research Policy***

Documentation written for students, researchers and academics which ensures their research project is completed with “...regard for human dignity; care for human and animal welfare, consideration of risk, and informed consent of human subjects...”

### ***Gatekeepers***

Often undergraduate and/or postgraduate research takes place in businesses or other organisations. Therefore, permission is required to conduct research “within the building/location”. Therefore, consent is not only required from the participants but also the gatekeeper.



### ***Human Rights Act***

The Human Rights Act (1998 in the UK) details the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the European Convention on Human Rights. The rights affect people in many ways including matters of life and death, what can be said and done, a person's beliefs and the right to a fair trial.

### ***Informed Consent***

Informed consent is an ethical requirement whereby a person gives consent to take part in research activities based upon a clear appreciation and understanding of the research, what they will be asked to do, where they will do the research and how their research data will be used and disposed of.

### ***Junior Apprentice***

A researcher who is completing primary research for the first time or is inexperienced in research tasks, methods, techniques and/or research situations.

### ***The Nuremberg Code***

Following unethical research in Nazi concentration camps an ethical research code was formed. The Nuremberg Code is the foundation from which all ethical research codes have been formed be it social science or behavioural science.

### ***Research Ethics***

Research ethics is an umbrella term identifying the need for research to be conducted in an honest, fair, objective, open, confidential and respectful way with consideration of intellectual property, falsification, and suppression of data, to name just some of the elements required.

### ***Social Science***

The study of society, consumers and/or employees and the manner in which those people behave and how it affects the world around us.

### ***Voluntary Consent***

Researchers must recruit participants voluntarily. Participants must not be coerced, manipulated, bribed or "feel obliged" to take part in the research. Additionally, participants must not feel that they will be ostracised or punished for not taking part.