

During your studies a subject may require you to undertake some learning activities that involve human subjects such as surveying, interviewing, recording, observing or photographing people. You should be mindful of the ethical implications of engaging with or observing people. Students carry obligations in undertaking any learning activity involving people and the following items should be considered in your work:

Confirm general consent. Research activity may occur within the public realm or on private property. Some municipal councils require approval to be obtained prior to such activity; with formal approval required for private property from the property owner. If research activity is undertaken in campus buildings, then approval should be sought via the appropriate Facilities Office prior to the activity proceeding. These protocols should be discussed with your subject coordinator or tutor.

Obtain informed participant consent. People have the right to know who is asking them to participate in a research activity, why they are being asked and how the data provided will be used. Following communication of this information they may freely choose to participate or not to participate. If someone chooses not to participate or to withdraw at any time, their decision needs to be respected and the data they provide should not be used. People should be advised if their input is to remain anonymous or if not, the form in which they will be identified – written consent should be obtained if they are to be identified. A background plain language statement outlining this type of information should be prepared for participants (guide template attached for discussion and amendment with your subject coordinator or tutor).

Respect persons, animals and the environment. Students must respect the rights and beliefs of others. You should be respectful and sensitive in your dealings and avoid any harmful or intimidating behaviour (e.g. engaging with people of diverse cultural and language backgrounds, coercing someone to participate, embarrassment, exploitation, sensitive to how someone would interpret what you say, do or the material you produce for field work). You should not be a nuisance or interfere with someone's rights to use and enjoy the space nor should you hassle them to participate in your study. It is generally possible to take photographs in a public place without asking permission. Some limitations apply such as obtaining participants consent if using images commercially, you may only photograph people on private property from public property and if photographing people on private property you need permission from the property owner to do so. People should not be able to be identified in images. Ensure that you maintain the confidentiality, privacy and intellectual property of others.

Follow proper practices for safety and security. Students should be aware to maintain their own safety and the safety of others (e.g. safety implications of undertaking an activity on your own, the location and the time of day). A formal Health and Safety risk assessment process may be required; this should be discussed with your subject coordinator or tutor prior to commencing your research. Safety and security also extends to the data itself, data should be safely and securely stored and inaccessible to anyone other than those authorised to access the material. Data should not be altered and on completion of the exercise raw data should be destroyed.

Maintain academic integrity and standards. Students must maintain academic integrity and respect and comply with the convention of academic scholarship.