

Ethics Guidelines SFM

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Project:		
Name:	Date:	Nr.

Does the research involve human participants or data on identifiable human subjects?

no →

No checklist required

tick →

↓ yes

Is your situation listed as "exempt"?

yes →

Put the checklist on file

tick →

↓ no

Fill in the checklist.
Are some of the answers "yes" or "uncertain"?

no →

Put the checklist on file

tick →

↓ yes

Submit the checklist to the ComCoor.
Is the ComCoor completely satisfied that all concerns addressed by the questionnaire have been considered and are dealt with?

yes →

Put the signed checklist on file

tick →

↓ no

Contact the Ethics Commission of the University of Neuchâtel

tick →

List of **exempt cases**:

- literature review → no checklist required
- secondary data where individuals are not identifiable → no checklist required
- review of legal texts → no checklist required
- project proposal → no checklist required, but may be advisable

Common cases:

- expert interviews → checklist required, ensure informed consent and confidentiality
- individual interviews → checklist required, ensure informed consent and confidentiality
- focus group interviews → checklist required, ensure informed consent and confidentiality
- survey experiments → checklist required

Checklist: Identifying Potential Issues (Part 1)

	Yes	Uncertain	No
Does the research involve vulnerable groups? (e.g. children, young adults, learning disability, people with a dependent relationship with investigator, people who may find it difficult to give informed consent)			
Does the research involve sensitive topics? (e.g. sexual behaviour, illegal behaviour, religion, political behaviour, experience of violence, abuse, exploitation, discrimination, gender status, ethnic status)			
Does the research involve secure or administrative data where individuals can be identified?			
Does the research involve groups where permission of a gatekeeper is required (e.g. some ethnic communities)			
Does the research involve active deception without full and informed consent?			
Does the research involve the induction of pain or humiliation?			
Does the research involve members of the public without their consent? (e.g. participant observation, covert observation)			
Does some research take place outside Switzerland? (local practices, local sensitivities)			
Does the research involve the recording of audio or visual material where individuals may be recognizable, and there is a risk that these recordings are accessible to third persons or the public? (e.g. transmission, storage)			
Does the research potentially put the investigator at risk? (greater than normal daily activities)			
Are there other ethical issues involved in the project?			

Dealing with Ethical Issues (Part 2)

If some of the questions above have received an answer *yes* or *uncertain*, please also fill in this part 2 and submit it with the checklist to the ComCoor.

Description of research	
Aims and justification of research	
Duration of data collection	
Participants involved (kind, number)	
Are participants paid or rewarded	
Methods used (include questionnaires, interview guidelines, debriefing, monitoring, etc. and describe analysis undertaken)	
Investigators' qualifications, experience and skills	
Dissemination of results	
Potential benefits of research	
Risks to participants	
Potentially adverse/unexpected outcomes	
Data access and storage	
Implications of future and secondary use of the re-search material	
Steps taken to address ethical issues	
Read and Approved by ComCoor	
Comments	
Neuchâtel,	Date
Name	Signature

General Principles

All research projects should undertake an ethical check as outlined in this document, including student projects.

- no harm to subjects and researcher
- potential benefits to subjects (avoid “extraction” mindset)
- informed consent should normally be obtained: participants should be aware of nature of research and their involvement; participants have a right to withdraw consent at any time without giving any reason
- accordance to relevant law and legislation
- researchers must respect the rights, dignity, and interests of participants, including assurances of confidentiality and anonymity
- research involving children should obtain consent from both the parents and the children, consistent with their capacity
- reduce likelihood that research experience is disturbing to participants and others
- avoid actions that may have deleterious consequences for researchers who come after or undermine reputation of the discipline
- ensure that funders appreciate the ethical obligations of researchers

We explicitly recognize that the researcher may not always be in control of the situation when carrying out fieldwork.

This document draws on and acknowledges other ethical guidelines (BSA 2002; VIU 2015; Oxford Brookes 2015; LSE 2014; Nottingham 2014; Leicester 2015; Cambridge 2014; Humphreys 2014; Gilbert 1996; Smith 2021; Salganik 2017).

References

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