



# RESEARCH ETHICS



## WHAT ARE RESEARCH ETHICS?

“Research ethics are the moral principles that govern how researchers should carry out their work.”

Wellcome Trust (2014) *EPQ Ethics Guide*. Available at: [https://wellcome.org/sites/default/files/wtp057673\\_0.pdf](https://wellcome.org/sites/default/files/wtp057673_0.pdf) (Accessed: 29 June 2021)

## WHY DO WE NEED RESEARCH ETHICS?

We need research ethics “to protect the dignity, rights and welfare of research participants.”

World Health Organization (undated) *Ensuring ethical standard and procedures for research with human beings*. Available at: <https://www.who.int/activities/ensuring-ethical-standards-and-procedures-for-research-with-human-beings> (Accessed: 29 June 2021)

## ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

These 4 ethical principles have been produced by The British Psychological Society and are recommended for use by AQA, particularly for students studying the EPQ. There is some overlap between the 4 principles.

The British Psychological Society (2018) *Code of Ethics and Conduct*. Available at: <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-code-ethics-and-conduct> (Accessed: 30 June 2021)

### RESPECT

Consideration and dignity of the impact on all involved in your research to include -

- privacy and confidentiality.
- consent.
- impacts on the broader environment living or otherwise.
- avoid issues of power and coercion.
- awareness of the importance of compassion.

### INTEGRITY

You must be –

- honest, truthful and accurate with your findings.
- consistent with words, decision, methods and outcomes.

You must NOT –

- be biased.
- make assumptions when interpreting data.
- plagiarise.

### RESPONSIBILITY

You must have consideration for –

- the well-being of all parties involved in the study.
- the wider impact of the study’s findings.

You must NOT –

- abuse the trust of others.

### COMPETENCE

You must ensure that you have the appropriate inter-personal skills and maturity to undertake the research proposed.



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## PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

### Golden rules

1. Participants should not be exposed to greater harm, physically or psychologically than they would be in their everyday life.
2. Participants need to give informed consent to take part.
3. Participants need to be aware of their right to withdraw.
4. Participants need to be aware of the confidentiality and anonymity policies being adopted.

### INFORMED CONSENT

Informed consent is permission from participants to take part in your research, knowing what they are required to do, the rationale for the study, why they have been selected, and how the data will be collected and stored.

Participants should be advised if there are any risks involved.

It is not considered ethically appropriate for informed consent to be given by those deemed vulnerable – minors, patients and prisoners.

### RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

Participants should be made aware that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

### CONFIDENTIALITY & ANONYMITY

This policy protects participants and their right to privacy.

Confidentiality means the researcher will preserve the identity of the participant by using a code or pseudonym.

Anonymity means that no-one knows the participants identity including the researcher.

Be mindful of this when using online surveys.

### GREAT WEBSITES

These websites offer great hints and tips so just take from them what is useful for your situation.

[https://wellcome.org/sites/default/files/wtp057673\\_0.pdf](https://wellcome.org/sites/default/files/wtp057673_0.pdf)

<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20and%20Conduct%20%28Updated%20July%202018%29.pdf>

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/research-project>