Hello and welcome to Education Outreach’s ‘Research Ethics’ presentation. My name is Sarah and I am a senior education outreach officer at the University of Leeds. Today I will be discussing the importance of research ethics and the key frameworks and theories that support practicing ‘good’ research ethics in academic writing.

Today’s session will cover:

• What Ethics Are
• The main Ethical frameworks
• Ethics in your research
• Collecting information ethically

Understanding research ethics and the impact it can have on your academic life will help you grow and develop as a researcher throughout your time at University.

Ethics is defined as the philosophical study of the moral value of human conduct and of the rules and principles that ought to govern it; moral philosophy. Ethics is also defined as ‘a social, religious, or civil code of behaviour considered correct, especially that of a particular group, profession, or individual. The word ethics finds its roots in the Greek word ‘ethikos’ meaning character. Ultimately ethics are used to guide research in a way that would be considered morally correct.

How does ethics relate to your research? As researchers we must consider the rightness and wrongness of our actions, as researchers, in relation to; the living things whose lives we are studying, to our colleges and tutors, and to anyone sponsoring your work. Naivete about ethics itself is considered unethical.
Slide Five

The type of ethics you will work with and consider depends mainly on the size of your research project and institution you are studying/working for. There are four main ethical frameworks/stages of ethics. These are procedural ethics, situational ethics, relational ethics, and exiting ethics.

Slide Six

Procedural ethics constitutes the framework that large organisations need to follow. The organisation will have an ethical review board which will ensure all their research adheres to the following guidelines:

- Do no harm
- Avoid deception
- Negotiate informed consent
- Ensure privacy and confidentiality

Ultimately research participants have a right to know the nature and potential consequences of the research.

Slide Seven

Situational ethics constitutes the framework that considers individual circumstances or situations. Remember that every situation is different, and researchers will have to respond to this in their ethical reviews. What might have once been considered ethical, may no longer be ethical – so keep questioning your research.

Slide Eight

Relational ethics constitutes the framework that deals with the people, living things, or participants of research. Researchers have a duty of care to their participants and should consider:

- Allowing them to feedback/raise issues at any point
- Using pseudonyms instead of the participants’ real names
- Allowing the participants to edit oral interviews once they are typed up into a transcript
- Giving them the opportunity to ‘opt out’
Slide Nine

The last stage or ethical framework is exiting ethics. During exiting ethics researchers must consider how their research may be read, understood and used after the data collection stage. Researchers must consider:

- How the research may impact participants
- How the research may impact readers
- How the research may impact the wider community

Slide Ten

You can ensure that your research is ethical by considering the following:

- Honesty
- Rigour
- Transparency
- Open Communication
- Care
- Respect

Slide Eleven

The six key principles of ethical research are

1. Research should be designed to ensure integrity and quality
2. Research staff and subjects must be informed fully about the research
3. The confidentiality of the information and the anonymity of the 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 the research must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit

Slide Twelve

As a researcher you should make sure that any research you collect is done so in an ethical manner and stored in a way that supports the ethical frameworks we have just discussed.
Slide Thirteen

A lot of research is collected via surveys so you must design your survey well to ensure that it fits within ethical frameworks. Take extra care not to frame questions in a way that might prompt specific answers. You should also consider the wording on participant information sheets and consent forms. If you are collecting sensitive or personal information it must comply with GDPR guidelines.

Slide Fourteen

Gathering data online can also provide ethical roadblocks, just because data is published online doesn’t mean it has been ethically source and approved. Think about how you might obtain informed consent from online participants. You can get more information by reading the Association of Internet Researchers Ethics Guide.

Slide Fifteen

Oral interviews provide many ethical considerations. Ensure that the interviewee knows that they are being recorded and you have obtained their consent. Stop recording if the interviewee asks to stop the conversation or seems distressed. You must send the interviewee the finished transcripts and get their consent to publish any material collected. They should also have the option to remove the information they have given you at any time.

Slide Sixteen

You must follow GDPR guidelines when storing any information you collect. Any information which could enable the identification of participants must stored securely and password protected. Keep all documentation in one place, preferably on a hard drive and not cloud storage. All data must be kept for three years.

Slide Seventeen

Even if your research does not involve human or living participants there are still many ethical questions that you may have to ask yourself during the research process. Think about:

- Are you collecting data? If so, what kind and where form?
- What method of data collection are you planning to use?
- How will you store this data?
- Could anyone be affected (either positively or negatively) by your research?
Who might it effect and how? Can this be avoided?

**Slide Eighteen**

Remember:

- Good research is ethical research – they cannot exist without each other
- Ethical research should be designed to ensure integrity and quality
- Research participants should be fully informed and have given their written consent
- You must consider how your research might harm your participants and take the steps to avoid this
- You should make sure that your methods of collecting data are fair, sensitive and transparent

**Slide Nineteen**

You can find out more about research ethics on the links listed below.

- Research Ethics MOOC [https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/research-ethics-an-introduction](https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/research-ethics-an-introduction)
- The Research Ethics Guidebook [http://www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk/](http://www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk/)
- The Wellcome Trust: EPQ Ethics Guide [https://wellcome.ac.uk/sites/default/files/wtp057673_0.pdf](https://wellcome.ac.uk/sites/default/files/wtp057673_0.pdf)

**Slide Twenty**

Thank you for listening and have a lovely day.