

Faculty of Social Sciences – Research Ethics Questionnaire

Department of Communication

(Note: Further information is available via <https://sowi.univie.ac.at/en/research/research-ethics/> and on the website of the Department of Communication)

A) Checklist (Interviews, Survey, Experiment)	Yes	No	Unsure	Does not apply
A.1. Are persons going to participate in the study that cannot provide their informed consent themselves? (e.g., persons below the age of 15, persons that are not legally able to give their informed consent)				
A.2. Are people participating in the study that belong to a particularly vulnerable group? (e.g., clinical samples, persons with learning disabilities, hospitalized or imprisoned persons)				
A.3. Is it necessary that persons participate in the study without being informed about their participation, i.e. without having given their consent by this time? (e.g., in the case of covert observation)				
A.4. Is it necessary to not fully or honestly inform participants or mislead them regarding the purpose and/or content of the study before taking part? (e.g., when a cover story is necessary to keep participants in ignorance of the study purpose in order to answer research questions and/or test hypotheses)				
A.5. Are participants confronted deliberately with false information? (e.g. stimuli about fake brands, fake news)				
A.6. Is it necessary to ask questions that may prompt participants to disclose possible illegal or unlawful behavior?				
A.7. Can it be expected that participants experience emotional stress, anxiety, exhaustion, pain or other negative effects that exceed what can be expected in everyday life?				
A.8. Are participants in the study given drugs, placebos or other substances?				
A.9. Do participants have to undergo any invasive or potentially harmful or disturbing procedure(s)?				
A.10. Can any stimulus or material used in the study cause damage to the reputation of an organization, person or brand?				
A.11. Are personal data collected that cannot be processed in an anonymized manner? (e.g. photos, audio or video recordings of participants)				
A.12. Do participants receive a financial compensation that considerably exceeds the average amount of EUR 15 per hour?				
B) Checklist (Content Analysis)	Yes	No	Unsure	Does not apply
B.1. Are contents analyzed that are not publicly accessible? (e.g. e.g., closed forums or communities)				
B.2. Does the content originate from young individuals (< age 15) or vulnerable persons?				
B.3. Are non-anonymized contents on sensitive issues communicated to third parties? (e.g., mental health, political attitude)				
B.4. Are personal data collected that cannot be processed in an anonymized manner? (e.g., photos, audio or video recordings of participants)				
B.5. Do coders have to analyze disturbing material? (e.g., pornographic content, violent content)				
C) Checklist (Data Management)	Yes	No	Unsure	Does not apply
C.1. Do you infringe upon the legal guidelines of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR/DSGVO) regarding handling and storing the data?				

D) Further Concerns	Yes	No	Unsure	Does not apply
D.1. Does your research pose any risks to your own physical or psychological wellbeing , or that of others working with you?				
D.2. Do you have any other ethical concerns arising from this study beyond those discussed above?				
D.3. Do you have the need for support and supervision to reflect on ethical challenges which come up during the research process beyond that currently provided to you?				

Guidelines for the Research Ethics Questionnaire

D) Further Concerns

D.1. Physical or Psychological Wellbeing

When designing a research project, it is important to reflect upon potential risks of physical or psychological harm for ourselves and others working with us. This includes members of our research team as well as people involved in supporting positions, such as transcribing and coding data. We should take necessary precautions and build appropriate support mechanisms to ensure such individuals' wellbeing. Peer or supervision meetings can, for instance, help in coping with emotionally challenging situations and prevent physical harm.

Examples: We must inform the people working with us about potentially disturbing content of our data (e.g. discussions on the experience of violence) before they start working and make sure they can stop working if they are uncomfortable with it. When studying, for instance, criminal activities or working with persons with mental health problems in the form of aggression issues, we need to put precautions for avoiding harm in place.

D.2. Other ethical concerns

There might be elements within and beyond the research design, the effects of the research and the use of data which are not covered by this standardised ethics screening. It is our obligation as researchers to reflect upon potential blind-spots which incur in our project. This question was included in this questionnaire to encourage the possibility to get in touch with your supervisor/other researchers to collectively reflect on other ethical concerns you might have.

D.3. Support and supervision for reflection

Ethical reflection is an ongoing endeavor also after ethical approval has been given at the beginning of a project. We as researchers should have the possibility to discuss upcoming ethical challenges in adequate spaces such as analysis groups, research ethics seminars, etc. In case of junior researchers, supervisors are important contact persons to discuss ethical challenges; some research projects may however require additional contact persons as supervisors and project coordinators may have a scientific self-interest in the project which contradicts ethical concerns of the researcher.