Research Ethics 2 ECTS
Outline – Aalto University

Course Content

Workshop 1 and 2

At the beginning of Workshop 1 the group will together choose key themes to cover during the contact teaching. You are expected to arrive at the workshop with three ethical questions or concerns related specifically to your research work or your research field generally. It is helpful to look at the online material in some detail prior to the workshop to develop your questions.

The workshop is designed using team-based learning principles and will be using digital groupwork tools including Flinga and Presemo. All you need is something connected to the internet – laptop, pad or smartphone.

During the workshop you will be working in groups around questions and case studies related to the topics you have chosen. Short lectures on key topics will also be included. At the end of the workshop 1 you will be given a homework task to complete prior to the next workshop.

Online course material

The online course has four sections. Sections are independent and follow a research project lifecycle. The sections build theoretically on each other in a sequential manner. Each section will include online lecture material, reading material, and assessment tasks.

Course literature consists of book chapters, scientific articles (max 100 pages) and web-based material. All literature for the course is available on the course platform in e-format.

Section A: Ethical theory and importance of research ethics

This section focuses on developing skills to analyse and recognise ethical challenges in research. This section also provides guidance and practice for recognising ethical principles and questions in research practice. The student will engage with different perspectives on ethical questions in research and reflecting on how these perspectives apply to their own research, ethical thinking, and more generally in their field of study.
Section B: Planning for ethical research

This section focuses on ethical questions that arise at the planning phase of research. These include ethical aspects on data acquisition and management; conflict of interest, need for ethical license or ethical review; data ownership; working with others; applying for research funding; working in a research groups; and preparing to publish. The students explore the research planning process from an ethical perspective and learn to recognise different questions that apply to their own research work and to research in general. During the section students apply the learning to their own research planning identifying and clarifying ethical elements in that plan.

Section C: Research practice and ethics

This section focuses on the ethical questions arising from doing research work. These include collecting data, collegial openness, dealing with ethical problems as they arise, supervision, misconduct of fabrication and falsification, and dealing with misconduct claims. The students reflect on and analyse the potential ethical challenges for their research work and seek ways to primarily prevent them or if necessary, how to resolve issues in an ethically appropriate manner aligning with Responsible Conduct of Research guidelines.

Section D: Sharing research results in an ethical manner

The last section focuses on sharing research results either via peer-reviewed publications or more openly with the society through media and expert roles. The topics covered in this section include plagiarism and misappropriation, authorship, peer review, choice of journals, dealing with the media and being an expert. The students expand their ethical analysis from their own research work towards the interaction of research and society. Through engagement with the ethical perspective and questions presented, they start to develop their ability to identify how ethical guidelines define their broader researcher role.