

Ethical Action Plan (500-750 words)*

This document is a chance for you to **begin shaping your project** while thinking through its ethical considerations, implications, and responsibilities. We know this might feel early in your action research journey, but this short plan is here to help pin down your ideas and work-in-progress.

Use whatever writing format that suits you - lists, bullet points, statements or paragraphs - and follow the suggested links stated alongside some of the questions for guidance.

A good starting point is the [BERA Guidelines for Educational Research, fifth edition \(2024\)](#) alongside the ['Ethics Files and Resources'](#) on Moodle.

When you're ready, email your draft to your allocated tutor **48 hours in advance of your first group tutorial** in the week commencing **6 October 2025**, so it can help guide the focus of discussions and support your project development.

Name: Max Ferguson

Tutor: John O'Rielly

Date: 20/11/2025

- 1. What is the working title of your project?** Also write a few sentences about the focus of your project.

How does early industry exposure in the first year prepare students from diverse backgrounds for later collaborative units and professional expectations in years two and three, and how can its impact on confidence, belonging, and readiness be observed or evaluated over time.

This project will explore how structured early engagement with industry-facing practices shapes students' confidence, sense of belonging, and preparedness for collaborative and externally focused work in subsequent years. The intervention builds on a redesigned first-year unit that incorporates industry-relevant experiences, including gallery engagement and collaborative production. The research seeks to observe and reflect on student responses without disrupting existing teaching structures.

- 2. What sources will you read or reference?** Share 5 to 10.

BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (5th ed., 2024)

UAL Ethics Files and Resources (Moodle)

Literature on belonging in higher education (e.g., Thomas, 2012; Gravett & Ajjawi, 2021)

Research on confidence and creative identity in art and design education

Scholarship on authentic and industry-based learning

Critical pedagogy and inclusive curriculum design

3. What action(s) are you planning to take, and are they realistic in the time you have (Sept-Dec)?

The proposed methods are intentionally low-risk and embedded within normal pedagogic activity:

Non-intrusive classroom observations across first-year groups

Notes on student engagement, confidence, and interaction in gallery settings

Reflective workshop with second-year cohort

Facilitated discussion on experiences of industry-related learning and progression

These actions are realistic within the timeframe as they align with scheduled teaching and do not require additional sessions outside timetabled activity.

4. Who will be involved, and in what way? (e.g. colleagues, students, local community...). Note, if any of your participants will be under the age years of 18yrs, please seek further advice from your tutor.

Participants will include:

First-year BA Photography students (observational context only)

Second-year students participating in a reflective workshop

Teaching colleagues (indirectly, through shared teaching spaces)

All participants will be over 18 years of age. No external community members or minors will be involved.

The first-year students will not be individually identified or assessed for research purposes.

Observations will focus on group dynamics, modes of engagement, and patterns of participation rather than individual profiling.

The second-year workshop will involve voluntary participation. Students will be informed clearly that the reflective discussion forms part of a research-informed teaching inquiry and that their contributions may be anonymised and referenced in written reflections.

5. What are the health & safety concerns, and how will you prepare for them?

- <https://canvas.arts.ac.uk/sites/explore/SitePage/42587/health-and-safety-hub>
- <https://canvas.arts.ac.uk/sites/explore/SitePage/45761/health-and-safety-policies-and-standards>

As the research activity is embedded within standard teaching contexts (classrooms and gallery visits), no additional physical risk is anticipated beyond normal course delivery.

- Preparation will include:
- Adhering to UAL health and safety policies for off-site gallery visits
- Ensuring appropriate risk assessments are already in place for scheduled trips
- Maintaining clear group communication and supervision in external settings
- No experimental or physically intrusive activity will occur.

6. How will you manage and protect any physical and / or digital data you collect, including the data of people involved?

- <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024-online#consent>
- <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024-online#privacy-data-storage>

The project will generate observational field notes and anonymised workshop reflections.

Data management procedures will include:

- No audio or video recording unless explicitly consented to in writing
- Anonymisation of all student references at the point of note-taking
- Use of pseudonyms or cohort descriptors where necessary
- Secure digital storage on password-protected institutional systems
- No storage of identifiable personal data on personal devices
- Deletion of raw notes following completion of assessment and any required retention period

The research will comply with GDPR principles and BERA guidance regarding consent, privacy, and data storage.

Participants in the second-year workshop will receive clear written information outlining:

- The purpose of the research
- How their reflections may be used
- Their right to withdraw contributions
- Assurance that participation or non-participation will not affect assessment or progression

7. How will you take ethics into account in your project for participants and / or yourself?

- <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024-online#responsibilities-participants>
- <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024-online#responsibilities-sponsors>
- <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024-online#responsibilities-wellbeing>
- See [Emotionally Demanding Research](#) PDF on Moodle

This project operates within a context where I am both teacher and researcher. Particular attention will therefore be paid to power dynamics.

Key ethical commitments include:

- Ensuring voluntary participation in reflective discussions
- Avoiding any perception that engagement impacts grading
- Making clear distinctions between teaching activity and research reflection
- Remaining attentive to emotional responses when discussing confidence or belonging

Discussions of belonging and professional identity may surface vulnerability or past negative experiences. I will approach such moments with care, avoid pressing students for disclosure, and signpost appropriate support services if required.

I will also remain reflexive about my dual role. Observational notes will include consideration of my own pedagogic influence and assumptions. The project aims to evaluate a teaching intervention, not individual student capability.

The research does not seek to measure students against deficit narratives. Instead, it aims to understand how structured exposure to professional contexts may support inclusive progression pathways.

* The form itself is around 300 words, so with your additions the total length will come to a maximum of about 1,050 words.