

Art and Design Research Ethics

PGCFAV1006

MODULE DESCRIPTOR

ECTS credits¹	5	Programme	MLitt, MRes and PhD Professional Certificate in Art and Design Research Ethics Professional Diploma in Art & Design Research
NQF level	Level 9	School	School of Visual Culture
Stage	1	Module Co-ordinator	Dr Lisa Godson
Trimester	1	Module Team	School of Visual Culture staff
Contact	Neasa Travers, School Secretary: visualculture@staff.ncad.ie		
Responsibility	The NCAD Academic Council and School of Visual Culture Board have responsibility for this module.		

1. Introduction

This module will explore ethics in relation to art and design research. As well as investigating commonly understood and formal definitions of research ethics which include principles such as voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, potential for harm, and results communication, it will equip participants with knowledge of key ethical debates within research and practice, and enable them to reflect on the ethos and ethics of their own work and that of others.

It will also consider the tension between conventional and well-established ethics frameworks and concepts such as 'truth' and 'consent' in fields of practice such as contemporary art and speculative design which embrace controversy, para-fictionality, self-experiment, etc.

This module will present an opportunity for participants to connect their research practice in art or design to broader considerations of ethos and ethics. Developing insights into what is required to design an ethical research project, they will be able to articulate an ethical stance in relation to their own practice and in relation to key principles as formulated in various domains including arts organisations and governmental agencies. In this way, participants will achieve an extended framework for understanding of notions of 'risk' and 'impact'.

Indicative Content

Defining Research Ethics and Research Integrity

This session will address accepted understandings of research ethics starting with the Nuremberg code of 1948. It will trace the development of research ethics over time to include various principles promoted in different jurisdictions and fields including an exploration of the programmes promoted by EUREC (European Network of Research Ethics Committees) as well as different arts organisations.

¹ European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, where 60 ECTS credits equate to the workload of a full-time academic year (two trimesters)

It will consider the impact of present challenges such as 'big data' and generative AI to existing ethics frameworks for research.

Working with the Experience of Others

This class explore ethical issues involved when research involves testimony, particularly concerning traumatic events or experiences. What rights are claimed and/or breached when artists and designers represent or mediate the experience of others? This session will involve a consideration of best practice in interviewing – drawing from the frameworks of oral history - as well as critical reflection on 'conflicts of interest'.

Authorship and Collaboration

In this session, some of the ethical issues which arise when conducting research that involves working with others will be considered. This may be through peer collaboration or through practices that seek to serve particular user groups and stakeholders. It will also explore the ethics of authorship in creative practice, and in particular the phenomenon of the self-experiment in art and design practice.

The Ethics of the Non-human

This class will explore the questions which arise when art and design research engages with the non-human: what 'rights' do materials and animals have? And how can they be respected by artists and designers when conducting research or realising works? What obligations do we have to consider the effects of our actions on the environment and those humans and non-humans that we share it with?

Being Original – Plagiarism as Academic, Legal and Aesthetic Category

In this session participants will examine claims for research originality and what that means across different domains including humanities, sciences and creative practice. It will also explore why plagiarism is deemed an academic crime and a breach of IP as well as the ways in which the copy in various forms has been deemed a valuable aesthetic strategy within contemporary culture.

Intersectional Research

This session will explore how, in undertaking ethical research, it is important to be able to assess how certain social categories and subjectivities have been privileged while others have both lacked representation or othered. It will examine the racial, gendered and ableist norms that need to be addressed to create ethical research in art and design. The class will explore contemporary critiques of the ways research and creative practice can be exclusionary or damaging, and address strategies that might be taken to understand and challenge this.

2. What will I learn?

On successful completion of this module students will have achieved the following:

1. UNDERSTANDING of the development and operation of established frameworks for research ethics.

2. UNDERSTANDING of the ethical challenges which have been encountered in contemporary art and design research practice.
3. CRITICAL ASSESSMENT of the approaches taken to calculate / understand ethics risks in art and design.
4. SELF-REFLECTION on the ethical dimensions of their own practice as art or design researchers.
5. PREPARATION of practical tools and materials that can be used in conducting ethical research.

3. How will I learn?

This module will be taught in six 3-hour sessions. Students will prepare for these classes by reading set texts in advance.

Learning tool	Hours
Tutorial support	18
Specified Learning Activities	18
Autonomous Student Learning	64
Total Workload	100

4. What learning supports are provided?

Students will have access to a suite of workshops and tutorials provided by Linked-In Learning; the full facilities of the library; and a dedicated Canvas classroom.

5. Am I eligible to take this module?

Module Requisites and Incompatibles

Pre-requisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Incompatibles	None
Prior learning	None
Recommended	<p>For MLitt, MRes and PhD students, it is recommended that one of the following modules is also studied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PGVC1001 Introduction to Research Methods • PGCFV1005 Intro to Research Methods for Art & Design

6. How will I be assessed?

Participants will write and research a 2,000 word text that will take the form of a case study exploring one or more of the themes which have been raised in the classes in this module.

Assessment tool	% of final grade	Timing
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Case study	100%	At the end of the module
Total	100%	

Assessment tool	Learning Outcomes assessed
Assignment	All learning outcomes

7. Feedback, results and grading

The assignment which constitute this module will be assessed on a Pass/Fail basis. Written feedback will be supplied.

8. What happens if I fail?

Resit Opportunities

Students will be given resit opportunities at the next available opportunity (typically the next trimester).

9. When and where is this module offered?

The module is delivered during Trimester 1 (September to January) or Trimester 2 (January to May) in Visual Culture lecture and seminar rooms, and online.

10. How will I have the chance to evaluate the module?

It is important to NCAD that students inform the development of teaching and learning at It is important to NCAD that students inform the development of teaching and learning at NCAD. We encourage all students to communicate their concerns and their observations about their study to members of staff so that any changes can be made in a timely manner.

About two-thirds of the way through the year, a student forum will be convened to gather students' comments about their study and the delivery of the programme. In addition, at the end of Trimester 2, students have the opportunity to complete an online evaluation of their study and experience at NCAD. These evaluation events are important to current and future students, to ensure we can enhance the delivery of programmes at NCAD.

In addition, you are invited to discuss your experience on the module with your lecturers at any point during the year. You can also relay your comments to the class student representative who will communicate your comments to the staff.

**For further details on the content of your module and teaching arrangements,
consult your Programme or Module Handbook**