

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: Can Yang

Tutor: Carys Kennedy

Date: 09/11/2025

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

Expanding Knowledge Systems in Graphic Design Pedagogy through Field Research and Alternative Archival Encounters

This project investigates how engaging students with a single counter-archive can challenge the Eurocentric structures that dominate graphic design education. It explores how a visit to one local community or independent archive can introduce decolonial perspectives, expand students’ understanding of research, and prompt critical reflection on what counts as design knowledge. The research uses an Action Research framework to observe how direct engagement with non-institutional archives can reshape research habits and knowledge systems in design pedagogy.

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

- Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Translated by Eric Prenowitz, University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Didi-Huberman, Georges. *Images in Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz*. University of Chicago Press, 2012.
- Rose, Gillian. *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*. 4th ed., Sage, 2016.
- Gubrium, Aline, and Krista Harper. "Participatory Digital Research Ethics." *Participatory Visual and Digital Methods*. Left Coast Press, 2013, pp. 45–69.
- On the Notion of Counter Archive." ICI Berlin Repository, ICI Berlin, 29 Apr. 2021, oa.ici-berlin.org/repository/doi/10.25620/e210429_07. Accessed 28 Sept. 2025.
- Caswell, Michelle, and Marika Cifor. "From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics: Radical Empathy in the Archives." *Archivaria*, vol. 81, 2016, pp. 23–43.
- Ludovico, Alessandro. "Chapter 3: Activist Post-Truth Publishing." *Using Senses, Software, and Archives in the Twenty-First Century, Tactical Publishing*, 2024, pp. 93–128.
- Abdulla, Danah. *Design Otherwise: A Decolonial Design Research PhD*. 2019, www.dabdulla.com/Design-Otherwise-PhD-research. Accessed 28 Sept. 2025.
- Escobar, Arturo. *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds*. Duke UP, 2018.

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

The project will focus on a single, structured archive visit day with students, supported by guided reflection and analysis.

Planned actions include:

- Conducting a focused literature review on counter-archives and decolonial design pedagogy.
- Coordinating one field visit to a selected archive (the Living Refugee Archive and Asymmetry Art Foundation).
- Facilitating reflective exercises immediately following the visit, where students record their thoughts and responses to the materials encountered.
- Collecting anonymised student reflections and researcher field notes as the primary data set.
- Analysing this data to identify how the experience shaped students' understanding of knowledge systems in design.

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.

- Graduate Diploma and MA Design Students (18+) – Primary participants who will take part in the archive visit and submit anonymised written or verbal reflections about their learning experience.
- Course Leader and Colleagues – Provide pedagogical guidance, support ethics procedures, and contribute to reflective discussions.
- Archivist or Community Partner – Offers contextual insight into the archive and its history; their contributions will be acknowledged respectfully and with consent.
- All participants will be adults. The research will be participatory and non-extractive, ensuring that community partners' intellectual and cultural labour is properly recognised.

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

Potential risks:

- Travel and navigation during the off-site visit.
- Accessibility barriers (physical access, environmental conditions).
- Emotional discomfort when engaging with sensitive or traumatic archival material (e.g. relating to migration, displacement, or colonial histories).

Preparation and mitigation:

- A risk assessment will be completed in line with UAL's Health and Safety guidance before the visit.
- Accessibility needs will be reviewed in advance, following the UAL Disability Inclusion Toolkit (Planning Academic Visits) to ensure equitable participation.
- Students will receive a pre-visit briefing about site conditions, content sensitivity, and support resources.
- Debrief and group reflection sessions will follow the visit to support emotional wellbeing.
- Accessibility of archival sites (physical access, environmental conditions).
- Emotional demands of engaging with materials that may relate to trauma, displacement, or colonial violence.

Preparation will involve risk assessments following UAL health and safety standards, briefing students before visits, and ensuring there are clear channels for support. I will also remain attentive to the emotional well-being of students when discussing sensitive archival material.

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>

Data collected:

- Anonymised **student reflections** (written or audio).
- **Researcher field notes** from the archive visit.

Data protection measures:

- Informed consent obtained from all participants before data collection.
- All data anonymised at the point of transcription; pseudonyms used if needed.
- Digital data stored on password-protected UAL OneDrive folders accessible only to the researcher.
- Physical notes stored securely and destroyed after digitisation.
- Data retained for the duration of the PgCert and deleted within 12 months of project completion.
- Sensitive or personal information will not be shared outside the project without explicit permission.

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

Ethical practice will be embedded throughout the project, guided by decolonial, participatory, and feminist ethics frameworks:

- Informed Consent and Autonomy – Participants will receive clear information about the project aims and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence.
- Anonymity and Respect – Reflections will be anonymised; archivists and community contributors will be credited appropriately and only with consent.
- Wellbeing and Emotional Safety – The researcher will remain alert to the emotional demands of engaging with sensitive materials. Debriefing sessions, group reflections, and signposting to UAL wellbeing services will be provided as needed.
- Power Dynamics – As the researcher is also a lecturer, attention will be given to minimising power imbalance. Reflection activities will be framed as collaborative learning rather than assessment.
- Cultural Sensitivity and Reflexivity – Decolonial research requires self-awareness and care in handling cultural materials. The researcher will maintain a reflexive journal documenting positionality, ethical decisions, and emergent issues.

The project prioritises non-extractive and reciprocal research, ensuring that both students and community partners benefit from the shared learning process and that all engagements are grounded in respect and accountability.

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