

# Requirements and recommendations

## Ethical guidelines for internal assessment

The IB acknowledges that individual cultures have different interpretations of how ethical issues should be resolved in relation to the simple experimental study. Based on feedback from examiners, it is evident that a clear set of guidelines is needed for teachers and students when they are considering possible topics for the simple experimental study.

The following guidelines should be applied to all experimental studies.

- Any experimental study that creates anxiety, stress, pain or discomfort for participants must not be permitted.
- Any experimental study that involves unjustified deception, involuntary participation or invasion of privacy, including the inappropriate use of information and communication technology (ICT), email and the internet, must be avoided. There may be rare occasions when such infringements cannot be avoided, in which case the approval of other experienced psychologists should be sought before proceeding. (See the psychology forum on the online curriculum centre (OCC) for further guidance.)
- All participants must be informed before commencing the experimental study that they have the right to withdraw at any time. Pressure must **not** be placed on any individual participant to continue with the investigation beyond this point.
- Each participant must be informed of the aims and objectives of the research and must be shown the results of the research.
- Young children should not be used as participants. Experimental studies involving children need the written consent of parent(s) or guardian(s). Students must ensure that parents are fully informed about the implications for children who take part in such research. Where an experimental study is conducted with children in a school, the written consent of the teachers concerned must also be obtained.
- Participants must be debriefed and given the right to withdraw their own personal data and responses. Anonymity for each participant must be guaranteed.
- Teachers and students must exercise the greatest sensitivity to local and international cultures.
- Students must avoid conducting research with any adult who is not in a fit state of mind and cannot respond freely and independently.
- If any participant shows stress and/or pain at any stage of an experimental study, the investigation must finish immediately, and the participant must be allowed to withdraw.
- Non-human animals must not be used for experimental study.
- All data collected must be kept in a confidential and responsible manner and not divulged to any other person.
- Students must regard it as their duty to monitor the ways in which their peers conduct research, and to encourage public re-evaluation of any research that contravenes these guidelines.

Experimental studies that are conducted online, using ICT methods, are subject to the same guidelines. Any data collected online must be deleted once the research is complete. Such data must not be used for any purpose other than the conduct of the experimental study.

**Students found to have carried out unethical work will be awarded no marks for the internal assessment component.**