# High responsibility: The ethics of researching a MOOC about research ethics

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We wanted:

- To research what participants said in response to activities based on a research ethics framework

Why:

- To find out from a diverse group of people how the framework could be used and adapted

The issue:

- How should we gain consent ethically from participants on a course about research ethics?

Our options:

A. Be transparent. Ensure all participants know our plans for their participation in a course and a research study from week 1 – *would this restrict engagement/make them cross?*

B. Introduce the idea in week 1 that participants will be invited to consent to research in week 6 after they have been able to benefit from the course – *would they opt out?*

C. Introduce the idea in week 1 that participants will be invited to consent to research in week 6. Create a learning opportunity reviewing T and C to discuss what turning from course to research participant feels like – *would they opt out/feel cross/offer insights?*

Their responses:

'I don't think all deception is always unethical in research

'Although I recognize the legality of having lengthy terms and conditions (in your case 6000 words) I severely question the ethical dimension of producing and using them when you know quite well few people read and understand them in the entirety…So in a way, your use of them in a course on ethics is itself unethical' (week 6)