

Student Interview Protocol
Discussion Guide
National Ethics Project

The protocol covers the following themes: 1) students' understanding of ethics education at their institutions; 2) students' understanding of the concept of ethics; 3) career aspirations; 4) the relationship between ethics and their future career; and 5) institutional messaging around ethics. The protocol is useful for understanding students' perceptions of ethics and ethics education across institutional contexts, and it is designed to elicit rich participant responses.

The focus of the exact order of topics covered as well as the timing for each will vary depending on the respondent's level of engagement. Some topics may not be covered in every session, but across all the sessions we will have a better sense of what's happening in the respondents' minds. The nature of ethnography is to allow the respondent to lead. All of the issues in the guide will be addressed, but not necessarily in the order outlined.

The National Ethics Project's Student Interview Protocol was designed by Vida Mia Garcia, Design Thinking Consultant. [More info can be found here.](#)

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES - ETHNOGRAPHY

- Determine how students productively engage with ethics at [your institution]
- Evaluate alignment of instructors' and administration's goals with students' perceptions of learning experiences
- Identify promising approaches to ethics education at [your institution]

INTRODUCTION, SET UP AND WARM-UP (5 MIN)

- Interviewer(s) will introduce themselves as part of a team of researchers interested in learning more about how students understand ethics at [your institution].
- We will thank participants for spending time with us and will explain how this type of research session works:
 - This is conversation, no right or wrong answers, we're interested in what you think and feel. The best answer is your truth.
 - You're under no obligation to answer any of our questions, and if there's anything you feel uncomfortable addressing just let us know. We're following your lead. You're also free to end the interview at any time.
 - This interview is confidential and any information from the interview or direct quotations we might use will be anonymous.
 - In terms of where this information will end up, we hope to write papers for academic journals, share findings at conferences, and create websites and databases with information about curriculum design
 - If you need to stop for a bio break, or to grab a drink, totally fine!
 - Interviewer will note the recording devices we're using and get verbal consent.
 - Do you have any questions for us?

- We'd love to start out by getting to know a little bit about you and your life at [your institution]. To begin, would you please introduce yourself officially on the recording?
Tell us your name, your year and major, and where you're from.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU (10 MIN)

- If you weren't talking with us today, what would you be doing?
- What's a typical day like for you? Walk me through it, from when you get up to when you go back to bed.
- What do you do for fun?
- What made you choose [your institution], out of all the schools you could have chosen?
- And what got you interested in studying [major]?
- If a really good friend were to tell me about what you value, what would they say?
 - Has that always been the case, that you value [reflect language back to respondent]? How would you say what you value most has shifted over time?

EXPOSURE TO ETHICS EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS (15 MIN)

We mentioned that we're doing research about ethics and ethics education at [your institution].

- We're really curious: How do you think about or define "ethics"?
- What are the ways that "ethics" has been an explicit part of your educational experience here at [your institution]? More formally, we mean, such as in the classroom or as part of a course.
 - Are there any courses where ethics was a part of the curriculum? Which ones?
 - How did ethics figure into that class?
- When did you take that class/those classes?
- Were there any other courses where ethics was a part of the curriculum? What were they?
 - And when did you take those (what semester/year)?
- So how would you describe some of the ideas or frameworks you've learned about ethics from these classes?
- What's been the most valuable takeaway from these specific pieces of your education?

EXISTING INFORMAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (10 MIN)

- What are the ways that "ethics" has been an explicit part of your informal educational experience here? For example, as part of your residence hall activities, or as part of a student group you work with.
- What messages, if any, do you think the University is trying to communicate to students about ethics?
 - What gives you that sense / where are you getting that message from?
- Are there any other opportunities or activities that you feel you have at [your institution] to think about ethics-related questions or issues? What are they?

POST GRADUATION PLANS (15 MIN)

- So I wanted to go back to what you said in the beginning of our conversation, about the reasons why you chose to major in [major]. What sorts of jobs are you most interested in once you finish school?
 - What makes those jobs so compelling or exciting to you?
- And I know it's maybe a little early for this question, but how would you describe the kind of career you want to have? [Let them describe. If it doesn't come up organically, probe:]
 - What are you looking for in a job? In a career?
 - And it's definitely early for this question, but: imagine you are at the end of your career, about to retire. As you look back, what will make you feel proudest about your professional life? What will have made it a success? [Let them define "success" however they wish.]
- Okay so let's circle back to the topic of ethics and tie all this up! How do you see yourself integrating the learning you're doing in your classes (with respect to the ethics material) or applying it to the "real world" beyond school?
 - [If it doesn't come up] How about in your job, for example?
 - Sounds like you think this will/won't be helpful. Tell me more about that.
- Has anything you learned at [your institution] shifted the way you think about your future plans? How so?
 - What about your career plans? Have they been affected at all? How?
- What about some of your friends at [your institution]? What sort of careers are they interested in pursuing?

CLOSE OF SESSION (5 MIN)

Thank you again for taking the time to be with us today! We so appreciate you sharing your thoughts and experiences with us.

- As we wind up our conversation, is there anything you wish we'd asked about?
- Is there anything you want us, a group of folks thinking about tech ethics education, to know? You have our ear! What would you like to tell us?