

In this document, the TU/e Ethical Review Board would like to provide a clarification for Industrial Design students. Due to the nature of the iterative design process, ID students often do exploratory research. When this is the case, students are not required to follow the ERB procedure.

We define the following aspects of exploratory research:

- The research is used to investigate a problem which is not yet clearly defined and thus helps shape the direction of a project.
- Or, the research can be characterized as informal, and can include discussions/interviews/questionnaires with other students, healthy adults, or experts
- The research is not used to directly answer a defined research question.

Examples of exploratory research are:

- You want to interview (talk to) some friend/people in your network about an idea you have for a prototype or on what they think of a certain topic, but you do not yet know if this will be the direction your project will go in. Most likely a more structured follow up interview takes place at a later time.
- You want to get the opinion or experience of some experts (via a short talk or questionnaire) on your project/topic, which will help shape the way your project will go and will help you define a research question later on.
- You have made some rudimentary (e.g. paper) prototypes and ask a couple of people for their opinion, so that you can further develop the prototype.

Examples of what is not exploratory are:

- Any type of user testing
- Structurally collecting data to answer your research question
- Collecting of sensitive personal data that will be used in your report

If you are not sure if your research is explorative, please talk to your squad leader. You may also contact [ID.ERB@tue.nl](mailto:ID.ERB@tue.nl)