



“Nudging to Increase Digital Skills in Higher Education Institutions” / Nudging 360



Nudging 360 Ethics Council Road Map

Prepared by ACEEU



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Background

Thaler and Sunstein (2008) defined their concept of nudge as “any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people's behaviour in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives”. For the authors, the nudging intervention should be easy and cheap for the recipients to avoid. Nudges have been implemented in the development of policies and in other fields linked to human behaviour, such as health, safety, and climate.

According to Weijers, de Koning and Paas (2021), nudging in the education field has been scarcely researched and it faces two main challenges. Firstly, the difficulty of creating nudges that meet the long-term behavioural change goals in educational settings, since nudging interventions research has mostly focused on short or immediate behavioural change (Weijers, de Koning & Paas, 2021). Secondly, there have been some criticisms that nudging could be misplaced and that it forces people to change their usual behaviour (Schmidt & Engelen, 2020). It is argued that nudging could be manipulative and that could undermine people's autonomy (Meske and Amojó, 2020).

Our Erasmus+ project “NUDGING 360” has been developed with the purpose of offering an opportunity to HE educators and HEI administrators to improve digital skills through the innovative application of nudging and self-nudging practices. Nudging 360 will meet the needs of HEIs and HE educators, and ultimately the needs of students, by motivating educators to increase their digital competencies in order to more effectively and efficiently deliver educational content digitally. These features make NUDGING 360 a unique PAN European pilot initiative with high impact potentials on addressing digital transformation through the development of digital readiness, resilience and capacity and on developing an ethical framework for developing nudging interventions in the education field.



How to use this toolbox

This toolbox should help you to develop an Nudging Ethics Council. The toolbox facilitates the creation of the conditions that are essential for the process of creating nudge interventions in Higher Education contexts. The toolbox contains roadmap for a successful Nudging Ethics Council creation. The roadmap is formed by xx steps that you can follow to build a successful council. At each step, you will step, you will have some tips and tricks to make your journey easier and to engage your members.

Why form a Nudging Ethics Council

An ethics nudging council is a small group of key actors that come together to promote ethical procedures in the development of nudging practices within Higher Education. It brings together a nudging and an ethical expert, HE Educators and Higher Education Users (optional) working on the development of a practical and theoretical ethical framework around Nudging in education settings.

We see the potential benefits from an effective ethic council as:

- Identification of the needs and ethical challenges facing Higher Education Institutions in the implementation of nudging practices.
- Creation of the definition of misconduct in nudging practices in the education field.
- Seeking creative solutions to the real social and economic challenges facing rural communities.
- Stimulating the creation of nudges that help the improvement or achievement of educational goals.
- Contributions to the ethical theoretical framework around the use of nudging in educational settings.

Who are the members

Type of potential members

One important step in stablishing a nudging ethics council is a proper selection of its members, you have to identify key actors for success.

We have grouped our members in the following categories:



Ethic expert

A person from outside of the academic unit with competence regarding with ethics or research integrity, it is advisable that covers the research subject. This member is key in for the council since he/she delimited the ethical framework around nudging and has access to legal advice in case is needed.

Nudging expert

Since nudging is still a concept under research, the council requires a researcher or nudging practitioner with at least two years of experience. It is crucial to have someone who understands the concept and its practicalities when is used in different context in terms of field and also if it is a physical or digital environment. It would be advisable to have experience in the education field.

Higher Education Educators

They are principal insiders in the Higher Education industry, who understands the context where the nudging are going to be implement and the challenges that the nudge could face.

Higher Education “Users”

It is advisable to include final users. They should be able to understand the principles of nudging and nudging methods to reflect on the possible ethical issues that the nudge might incur in.

Steps for an effective Ethics Council

1. Defining and map the education board responsible of the nudging strategy

The nudging ethics council should respond to an education department or dependency which is in charge of the research, implementations or use of nudges with educational purposes. Your mapping could start with delimitating the academic people who are going to be intervein according to the objective of using nudges. Whitin this area it is important to identify the Higher Education representatives in charge, since they would originate the Disciplinary Committee.

2. List your potential members

When compiling a potential partner list, it is more useful to start with a broader list (including at least 50 contacts) The following partners should be added to the list:

Higher Education Educators representatives

Researchers in the nudging field

Ethical experts already participating in the research education committees

Higher Education potential “users” within the academic community

OUR SUGGESTION: Have you heard about organic expansion?

Definition: organic expansion means first involving directly accessible actors, and then requesting new members from the network of the actors who have already joined (or committed to) ethics councils in education contexts.

The interest of potential members to join nudging ethics council is significantly higher if the request is initiated via an informal network instead of a formal request. By applying the “snowball” principle, starting from a smaller, personally known and committed group, may lead to a dynamic and fast increase of the ethics council through the exploitation of the network of contacts.

3. Prepare your documentation

Before initiating any activities, it is important to prepare your documentation We know that no one “bureaucracy, however, they are essential for the good functioning of operations Some documents that need to be prepared are a Commitment Agreement, a Letter of intent, and organisation protocols of the council.

<p>A letter of intent (LOI) is a document declaring the intent and interest of one member about the rural council. An LOI is commonly used as an initial proposal to join the council and it is in the form of a letter. Also, it is not a binding contract which means any member can voluntarily leave the council without any legal consequences.</p>	<p>A Commitment Agreement is a written agreement between the council members outlining the terms and details of an understanding. It outlines what are the roles of members and in the council and how the members can collaborate for the success of the project. Again, it has no legal binding. .</p>
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4. Put together your offer

Before contacting potential members, it is important to clarify the ways that members can be involved in the council and how they can contribute to the implementation of the project When we say “we refer to these opportunities and “ways to be involved” which can be offered to the council members. To define the offers, it is practical to identify what benefits can different members get from being involved in the council.

<p>Ethic expert: Ethic expert will benefit through (1) enriching the ethical guidelines for implementing nudging in educational environments (2) gaining practical understanding and expertise in nudge</p>	<p>Nudging expert: Nudging expert will benefit through (1) gaining access to real nudging scenarios and the ethical challenges they could face, (2) increasing practical knowledge in their field of expertise</p>
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implementation (3) contributing to the nudging ethical research field	(3) gaining access to and building long-term relationships with stakeholders involved in nudging strategies.
Higher Education Educators The HE Educators will benefit through (1) extracting nudging applicable knowledge in their own areas of expertise (2) enriching their teaching exercise with nudging practices.	Higher Education “Users” The HE users will benefit gaining skills and knowledge on (1) nudging (2) ethical practices in the education field and behavioural change.

5. Send collaboration invitations and select the members

After you have identified potential council members, it is time to get in contact with them. In line with the message, you can include information to motivate their participation such as how they can help to tackle nudging ethical challenges in the education field.

The HE dependency in charge of the nudging project should select the council members and the Associate Member to represent them.

6. Terms of reference and Train committee members

It is the first occasion for the nudging ethics council to meet. During this event the members will be made public and presented to each other, the identified challenges and vision for the process at stake will also be known, and the whole process will be introduced to the members. With that in mind, this event is also a good opportunity to first make them decide who is going to be the Chair, Vice Chair and Administrator. Secondly, the council will for the first time get foundational understanding of the unit topic, and get into literature case studies.

Objective of the committee, functions, and duties, reporting lines and responsibilities should be shared with the selected Council.

A. Chair and Vice-Chair

- Representing the Council to the consortium
- Chairing Council meetings (General Assembly)
- Ensures Timely response to the ethical review applications
- Communicates any suggested sanction to the Disciplinary Committee
- Preparing the Council’s annual activity report

B. Administrator

- Documents the Council meetings and the deliberations and outcome of ethical issues in the ethical review application

C. Other Members (HE Educators)

- Attending council meetings (with voting rights)
- Voting on ethical reviews

D. Associate Member



- Will conduct at least 4 regular meetings with the council members to establish best practices and ethics guidelines.

7. Identify guiding principles

Depending on the topics involved in the nudging. The guide would support identifying, analyzing, and resolving ethical and values dilemmas. For example, Guidelines for Research Ethics in Science and Technology or Public Health Code of Ethics.

8. Write a committee charter

Describe the purpose, processes, and structure of your committee. The document should explain the rationale for the council and highlight the key components of the deliberative process.

9. Establish committee procedures:

- a. Determine what criteria must be met for the council to review a case
- b. Council should acknowledge that final decision-making authority rests with the Discipline Committee
- c. Decide how results of committee deliberations and decisions will be documented.
- d. Develop appropriate forms to accompany council processes

References

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