



# When samples go wrong

In the table below, I've given examples of issues that could arise when collecting data. Use the table below to record your thoughts about how these issues could have been avoided and what actions could be taken to mitigate them. A completed version of this resource is available for inspiration.

Issue	How could the researcher have avoided this issue? What action could now be taken to help mitigate the issue?
I wanted to gain school pupils' perceptions of work in a certain field. I shared a survey with teachers at a school and they shared it with pupils. After I completed my data analysis, I discovered that the teachers only shared it with pupils studying a subject they thought was relevant to the field of work. I do not have the views of the whole school population, just a certain group of pupils. My data suggest that an employment field is far more popular with young people than it is.	
I was worried I might not get a sufficient enough sample of responses to my qualitative survey, so I offered a gift voucher prize draw to incentivise the study. Some of the responses were not relevant to the project aims and had clearly been sent in just to enter the prize draw.	
I conducted a focus group but did not record the session, because I had someone assisting me recording data on the day. They wrote up the notes and destroyed the originals as per my data management plan. However, the file has corrupted and I have no record of the data obtained at the focus group.	



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Issue	How could the researcher have avoided this issue? What action could now be taken to help mitigate the issue?
I interviewed someone who had been my client previously, and whose background I knew quite a bit about prior to the interview. Therefore, I did not obtain details of their demographic information prior to conducting the interview. I have this information for all of my other participants.	

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