

Research Proposal

Research Methods in Health, Outdoor Education and Physical Literacy

BMOE7014

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AI Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the use of Adobe Acrobat AI Assistant

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How do novice and experienced outdoor instructors differ in their perceptions of risk?

Literature Review

Risk is both inherent and pedagogically essential to outdoor learning. Meaningful outdoor experiences often require engagement with uncertainty and potential hazard; these are the defining features of authentic adventure (Barry, Collins and Grecic, 2023; Clinch and Filimonau, 2017; Christian, Berry and Kearney, 2017; Ewert and Sibthorp, 2014). Boyes and O'Hare (2003) imply that a misjudgement of risk in the outdoors can result in either unnecessary exposure to danger or excessive conservatism, whereby challenge is constrained and the educational value of the experience is diminished. Both objective and subjective or perceived risk are defined as the probability of negative outcomes weighted by their severity (Wolff, Larsen and Øgaard, 2019). In an outdoor learning context, this calculation is mediated through instructors' interpretation of environmental cues, participant capability and pedagogical intent; risk is dynamically assessed and continually recalibrated within professional judgement and decision-making processes (Smith and Wilkinson, 2020; Martin et al., 2017; Galloway, 2002). Further research complicates this view, suggesting also that risk is socially constructed and institutionally influenced (Clinch and Filimonau, 2017; Connolly and Haughton, 2017). Therefore, instructors' risk perception may differ due to professional identities, epistemological beliefs and developmental stage (Barry, Collins and Grecic, 2023; Demirhan, 2005).

Risk assessment is consistently identified as a critical variable in outdoor decision-making (Smith and Wilkinson, 2020; Martin et al., 2017). It is considered that leader expertise in decision-making is gained through practice in a variety of environments, tasks and contexts (Collins et al., 2021; Collins and Collins, 2013). Galloway (2002) theorised that there are cognitive differences between expert and novice outdoor leaders which shape their decision-making, suggesting that experts draw on intuitive, recognition-based judgements grounded in deep tactical understanding, whereas novices rely more heavily on prescriptive rules. However, this emphasis on expertise and intuition risks idealising expert judgement and dismisses systematic biases. McCammon's (2004) analysis of heuristic traps in avalanche incidents illustrates that experienced practitioners are not immune to flawed risk appraisal.

Experience may enhance cue recognition, but it may also entrench assumptions and overconfidence. Naturalistic Decision Making (NDM) provides the dominant explanatory framework for risk appraisal; NDM characterises decision-making in high-stakes, ill-structured and dynamically changeable environments (Klein et al., 1993); features that outdoor contexts frequently exhibit. Professional Judgement and Decision Making (PJDM) extends NDM by embedding these cognitive processes within professional responsibility and pedagogical intent (Collins and Collins, 2015). Collins and Collins (2013) argue that effective risk management involves a considered exploitation of risk to optimise learning, rather than simple risk avoidance. This highlights that risk perception directly shapes how challenge is structured and delivered by outdoor professionals.

Despite growing research on outdoor instructors' professional judgement, significant gaps remain. Contemporary research explicitly calls for further study of instructors who are competent but not yet expert, noting the importance of understanding different developmental stages (Barry, Collins and Grecic, 2023; Mees, Toering and Collins, 2022). While previous studies have compared expert and novice decision-making processes (Galloway, 2007; Mees et al., 2020), limited research has explored how instructors at differing experience levels construct and perceive risk itself within a PJDM framework. Without examining this, PJDM risks presuming a linear progression of expertise based solely on experience, rather than accounting for the contextual and developmental factors that shape how instructors perceive and enact professional judgement.

Existing research has utilised diverse methodological approaches; earlier studies have adopted structured measures to identify statistically significant differences in risk perceptions and judgement processes between novice and expert practitioners (Galloway, 2007; Demirhan, 2005). While these designs enable measurable comparison, they conceptualise contextual variables as stable and quantifiable constructs, thereby detaching perceptions and decision-making from the dynamic and uncertain realities of outdoor practice. Consequently, they provide limited insight into the subjective processes through which outdoor leaders interpret and justify risk within professional practice. More recently, research in adventure tourism (Clinch and Filimonau, 2017) and Forest School contexts (Connolly and Haughton, 2017) have adopted qualitative methodologies to explore instructors' perspectives on risk, however they do not investigate whether those perceptions

shift as instructors gain more experience. This proposed research study builds upon this foundation while extending it to explore whether expertise reshapes risk perception and subsequent professional judgement.

Understanding instructors' perceptual differences has clear practical implications. Clinch and Filimonau (2017) argue that such research enables outdoor providers to better understand the needs of their workforce, thereby enhancing the safety of both instructors and participants. Given that high-quality professional judgement contributes to the safety of participation in outdoor adventure, instructors must develop the metacognitive awareness, anticipatory thinking, and reflective capacity that underpin effective PJDM in dynamic environments (Mees, Toering and Collins, 2022; Collins and Collins, 2021). These competencies require deliberate and structured development (Smith and Wilkinson, 2020), therefore, understanding how instructors perceive and interpret risk across career stages may inform targeted training approaches that effectively scaffold and strengthen PJDM in outdoor leaders.

This study aims to examine risk perception as a component of professional judgement, exploring whether developmental differences in expertise shape how outdoor instructors interpret and enact risk within their practice. Drawing on instructors' lived experiences and the meanings constructed within their professional contexts, this study further aims to critically consider how variations in developmental stage and associated constructions of risk may inform instructor training and development and contribute to the ongoing refinement of PJDM within outdoor education.

Theoretical and Methodological Basis

This study is positioned within a bounded relativist ontological framework; this perspective recognises that while hazards are acknowledged within the outdoor industry as materially present, their meaning and significance are interpreted and constructed through individual instructors' experiences and perceptions (Moon and Blackman, 2014; Slovic, 1987). This positioning acknowledges that novice and experienced instructors may legitimately perceive the same environmental conditions in qualitatively different ways. Aligned with this ontological stance, this study adopts a constructionist epistemology, recognising that

knowledge of risk emerges through the interaction between instructors and their professional practice (Crotty, 1998). Given the emphasis NDM and PJDM place on context and responsibility (Collins and Collins, 2015; Klein et al., 1993), this approach effectively captures the complexity of the factors that impact how instructors construct meaning and interpret risk, which subsequently influences their practice.

Methodologically, this paradigm supports an interpretive qualitative design, utilising semi-structured interviews; this approach facilitates rich, reflective accounts of participants' experiences, enabling exploration into how instructors rationalise and reflect upon risk in practice, and aligns with related previous research (Smith and Sparkes, 2016; Mees, Toering and Collins, 2022; Christian, Berry and Kearney, 2017; Clinch and Filimonau, 2017; Zink and Leberman, 2001). The aim is not to determine whether one perception is 'correct', but to understand how experience shapes the construction of risk and its integration into professional judgement. Purposive sampling ($n = 3$) will be adopted to allow comparison across developmental stages of professional practice and to ensure quality in terms of the participants' self-reflective abilities (Nash et al., 2012). Although this approach limits representativeness as participants are chosen based on researcher judgement, it aligns with interpretivist methodology, which prioritises depth and contextual understanding through the selection of information-rich cases (Patton, 2002). The proposed selection criteria are consistent with established approaches used to parameterise leader expertise in comparable outdoor research (Barry, Collins and Grecic, 2023; Mees et al., 2020; Nash et al., 2012). The following criteria will be applied for all participants: (1) active engagement in outdoor instruction, (2) working independently in sole charge of a group during an adventurous activity, and (3) have a willingness to discuss their professional practice. Subsequent criteria will be applied to categorise instructors' experience levels shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Operational criteria for categorising instructor experience levels.

Professional Experience		Qualification Endorsement
Novice	Less than 3 years of practice following National Governing Body (NGB) accreditation	Hold a minimum of one NGB qualification that enables independent leadership of a group for an adventurous activity (e.g.: PSI, LCMLA)
Proficient	Minimum of 5 years of practice following NGB accreditation to operate in more challenging environments, and, being in position of seniority within their organisation	Hold three or more NGB qualifications that enable independent leadership of a group for a range of adventurous activities (e.g.: ML, RCI, VCML)
Expert	Minimum of 10 years of practice following senior NGB accreditation.	Hold a senior-level NGB qualification (e.g.: (W)MCI, CIC).
<i>PSI = Paddlesport Instructor; LCMLA = Local Cave and/or Mine Leader Award; ML = Mountain Leader; RCI = Rock Climbing Instructor; VCML = Vertical Cave and/or Mine Leader; (W)MCI = (Winter) Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor; CIC = Cave Instructor Certificate;</i>		

A reflexive practice will be adopted; the principal researcher's personal assumptions, feelings and beliefs about the research subject and process will be documented in a reflexive journal, and regularly revisited throughout interviews and analysis. This process enhances transparency and may enable deeper engagement with the data collected by openly acknowledging the researcher's interpretive role within the study, and also facilitates critical reflection on the research process (Tufford and Newman, 2010).

Ethics

In addition to adopting a reflexive practice, this study will adhere to UWTSD and BERA (2024) guidelines, and all data will be stored securely in accordance with GDPR requirements. Participation will be voluntary, based on informed and ongoing consent, with the explicit right to withdraw. Given the principal researcher's established presence within the local outdoor education industry, and potential dual role as employer or professional peer, particular consideration will be given to mitigating a perceived power imbalance. Recruitment materials will emphasise that participation, non-participation, or withdrawal will not affect professional relationships or employment opportunities. Confidentiality will be maintained during data collection by conducting interviews in suitable locations, mutually agreed with each participant, to ensure comfort and safety. In the reporting of the research

findings, all potentially identifiable contextual details will be anonymised to minimise the risk of inference within the local outdoor professional community.

WORD COUNT: 1456.

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Appendix 1: Research Project Schedule

	Week commencing:								
	16 Mar	23 Mar	30 Mar	06 Apr	13 Apr	20 Apr	27 Apr	04 May	11 May
Prepare interview resources									
Conduct interviews									
Data analysis									
Electronic poster									
Reflective paper									

Appendix 2: UWTSD Ethics Form

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: “creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications”. As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the “principal researcher”.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Shannon Atkins
2	Student Number:	2501565
3	Email address:	2501565@student.uwtsd.ac.uk
4	Programme of Study:	MA Outdoor Education
5	Supervisor:	Dr Nalda Wainwright

SECTION B: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.		
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice		☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy		☒
3	BERA Ethical Guidance for Educational Research		☒
4	Institute for Outdoor Learning Code of Professional Conduct		☒

SECTION C: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	How do novice and experienced outdoor instructors differ in their perceptions of risk?		
2	Proposed start date:	16 March 2026	Proposed end date:	11 May 2026
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words in each section)			

	Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the three points below: • <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> • <i>Proposed Research Question</i> • <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> • <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how <u>Existing Research</u> has informed the proposed activity and explain • <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> • <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>
3	Purpose of Research Activity See research proposal. This study aims to explore how risk is constructed and understood by novice and expert outdoor instructors, recognising that risk is not only an objective reality but also shaped by experience and professional identity. By examining these differences, this research seeks to identify how perceptions of risk evolve across three different developmental stages and how this impacts decision-making in dynamic outdoor environments. Ultimately, the purpose of this study is to explore insights that may inform instructor training and development, supporting more effective professional judgement and safer, more educationally meaningful outdoor practice.
4	Research Question How do novice and experienced outdoor instructors differ in their perceptions of risk?
5	Aims of Research Activity 1. To explore how novice and experienced outdoor instructors differ in their perceptions of risk, and how these differences influence professional judgement and decision-making within outdoor practice.
6	Objectives of Research Activity 1. To examine how outdoor instructors at different experience levels construct and interpret risk within their professional practice. 2. To investigate how differing perceptions of risk influence instructors' professional judgement and decision-making (PJDM). 3. To consider how differences in risk perception can inform instructor training, development, and the refinement of PJDM in outdoor education.
	Proposed data collection methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity to collect data, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here, but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
	Data will be collected using semi-structured interviews which will follow a guide of open-ended questions designed to explore participants' perceptions of risk, decision-making processes, and

7	professional experiences. All interviews will be audio recorded (with participant consent) and later transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. Audio recordings and transcriptions will be stored securely in accordance to GDPR on the UWTSD University Office 365 system.
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SECTION D: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☐	☒
2	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
3	Use of focus groups?	☐	☒
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☐	☒
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.	☐	☒
	Details of any other primary data collection method:		

If you have ticked NO to every question then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and you may skip section E and continue to section F.

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION E: Intended Participants

	Who are the intended participants:	YES	NO
1	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.	☐	☒
	Details of any other participant groups:		

	Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
10	How many participants are expected?	3
11	Who will the participants be?	Active Outdoor Instructors.
12	How will you identify the participants?	Participants will be identified through convenience, purposive sampling, utilising the principal researcher's existing professional connections within the local outdoor education community. Potential participants will be approached directly based on prior working relationships and knowledge of developmental stage.

	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
13	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
14	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
15	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
16	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
17	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☐	☐	☒

18	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
19	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☐	☐	☒
20	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
21	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
22	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
	N/A			

	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☒	☐
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
	N/A			

SECTION F: Anticipated Risks

	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them.	
1	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information. If you have identified in section D that there are no participants then enter N/A and go skip to question 3.	
	Risk to participants: Perceived power imbalance between the principal researcher and participants. Given the principal researcher's existing role within the local outdoor education community, participants may view the principal researcher as an employer or professional peer. This may lead to participants feeling pressured to take part, or to provide responses they perceive as professionally acceptable rather than fully honest.	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to participants:</i> Right to withdraw, without consequence: participation will be voluntary, and it will be made explicit that participation, non-participation, or withdrawal will have no impact on professional relationships or opportunities. To minimise any perceived reputational risk, participants will be assured that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers, and that the study is focused on understanding individual perspectives rather than evaluating competence. All data will be anonymised, and identifiable details will be removed in reporting to protect participants' professional identities.

2	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities While the research does not intend to explore highly sensitive or personal topics, discussions around professional practice and risk may lead to participants reflecting on challenging or uncomfortable experiences. Participants will be informed in advance that they are not required to answer any questions they find uncomfortable and may pause or stop the interview at any time. If a participant becomes distressed during the interview, the interview will be paused or terminated. In the event that a participant discloses information that raises serious concerns, such as harm to others, the principal researcher will follow appropriate BERA and UWTSD guidelines. This may include breaching confidentiality where there is a duty of care to report such information to relevant authorities or organisations. Participants will be made aware of these limits to confidentiality prior to giving consent. The principal researcher will seek guidance from the research supervisor and relevant institutional bodies before taking action, and all decisions will be carefully documented.	
3	Risks to the investigator For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
	Risk to the investigator: Disclosure of sensitive information during interviews; participants may share information regarding unsafe practice or professional conduct, which could place the principal researcher in a position of ethical responsibility. Conflict of interest; the principal researcher operates within the same professional community and may hold, or in future hold, responsibility for recruitment or employment decisions. There is a risk that participants' responses could consciously or unconsciously influence the principal researcher's professional judgement outside of the study.	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:</i> Principal researcher will follow UWTSD, BERA and IOL guidelines, including acting in line with any duty of care where necessary, and adhering to the stated limits of confidentiality. Principal researcher will maintain clear boundaries between the research and professional roles, ensuring that data collected is used solely for the purposes of the study. All data will be anonymised. Reflexive practice will also be used to critically monitor and manage potential bias throughout the research process.
4	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to the University: Reputational damage arising from the conduct of the principal researcher during the study; failure to adhere to ethical, professional, or data protection standards could negatively impact the UWTSD's reputation.	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the University:</i> Principal researcher will adhere to UWTSD ethical guidelines and ongoing reflexive practice.
5	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment:	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to environment:</i>

	Research activity does not pose any direct environmental impact.	Any minor environmental considerations i.e. travel to interview locations, will be minimised where possible.
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SECTION G: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

If you have identified in section D that there are no participants then enter skip this section and continue to section H.

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	Participants will be provided with principal researcher's academic UWTSD email address which they can contact for any feedback or results of the study.
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	Potential participants will receive a Participant Information Sheet outlining the study's purpose, procedures, time commitment, and right to withdraw without consequence. It will explain confidentiality, anonymisation, and GDPR-compliant data storage. Written informed consent will be obtained prior to interviews, with verbal consent reconfirmed at the start of recording. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions before consenting, and may withdraw their data without consequence until the stated withdrawal deadline.
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	Anonymity will be offered to all participants and no real names or organisations will appear in any academic reports. Participants will be assigned pseudonyms, and potentially identifying contextual details will be generalised or omitted to reduce the risk of inference within the local outdoor education community.

SECTION H: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	YES	NO
1	<i>"Personal data" means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.</i>	☒	☐
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	Personal data will include participants' consent forms and information in the audio recording of interviews, such as professional role, years of experience, and qualifications relevant to categorising experience level. This data is necessary to recruit eligible participants and for		

	categorising instructors according to the operational experience criteria outlined in the study. All data will be securely stored, anonymised during transcription, and processed solely for the purposes of this research project. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted.		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
3	“Special category data” means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects’ – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),	☐	☒
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4	N/A		

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☐	☒
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
10	“Cloud” storage or websites?	☒	☐
11	Other – specify:	☐	☒
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	All data will be kept in password protected cloud storage on the UWTSD University Office 365 system which will not be shared. All participants will be assigned pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality and this list will be kept securely in the password protected folder. Use of data analysis software on the principal researcher’s personal laptop will only involve anonymised transcripts; this laptop is password protected.		

	Data Protection		
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☐	☒
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒

15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☒	☐
19	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and/or any international equivalent):		
	Despite anonymisation, there is a small risk of deductive disclosure due to the distinctive sampling in this study. This study will therefore comply fully with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act (2018) and data minimisation principles will apply. All participants will be assigned pseudonyms at transcription, and identifiable contextual details will be generalised. Consent forms will be stored separately from transcripts and audio files on password protected cloud storage on the UWTSD University Office 365 system which will not be shared. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. In accordance with the DPA (2018), participants will have the right to ask to see what data is held relating to them, and this data will be deleted if the participant requests this before the deadline, in which case the data will not be used in the project.		
20	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	Principal researcher and research supervisor only.		
21	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	Principal researcher.		
22	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form.		
	All data will be kept in password protected cloud storage on the UWTSD University Office 365 system which will not be shared. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted.		
22	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtسد.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	☒	
23	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	☒	

SECTION I: Use of AI tools

Use of generative AI and other AI-based tools		YES	NO	N/A
There are a number of ethical issues relating to the use of generative AI and other AI-based tools, including data security, output bias, and output errors. In general you should assume that any generative AI or other AI-based tool that you pay to use is more secure and accurate than one which is free to use.				
Will the research use AI tools to do any of the following:				
1	Capture data?	☒	☐	☐
2	Generate and/or edit text?	☒	☐	☐
3	Generate graphics?	☐	☒	☐

4	Generate video?	☐	☒	☐
5	Generate sound/music?	☐	☒	☐
6	Generate code?	☐	☒	☐
7	Generate synthetic data?	☐	☒	☐
8	Analyse data?	☐	☒	☐
9	Analyse personal or sensitive data?	☐	☒	☐
10	Classify data?	☐	☒	☐
11	Do you intend to use the free version of any AI tools?	☐	☒	☐
If you have answered YES to any of questions O1-O11, please provide justification detailing why this is necessary for the research.				
12	Interviews will be recorded using the UWTSD University Office 365 system on Microsoft Teams, and transcriptions will be generated through Microsoft Teams' built-in AI transcription service. Transcripts will be reviewed and corrected for accuracy by the researcher before analysis, and all data will be stored securely in accordance with GDPR and university data protection policy.			

SECTION J: Declaration

The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtss.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/			
1	Signature of applicant:		Date: 10 March 2026
2	Supervisor:		Date:
3	Signature:		

Appendix 3: Participant Information and Consent Form

How do novice and experienced outdoor instructors differ in their perceptions of risk?

Principal Researcher:
Shannon Atkins
University of Wales Trinity Saint David
Contact: 2501565@student.uwtsd.ac.uk

Supervisor:
Dr Nalda Wainwright
University of Wales Trinity Saint David
Contact: n.wainwright@uwtsd.ac.uk

Purpose of the Study

Outdoor instructors regularly make decisions about safety, challenge, and learning in dynamic environments. This study aims to explore whether instructors with different levels of experience perceive and respond to risk differently, and how this may influence professional judgement and decision-making.

You have been invited because you are an active outdoor instructor who independently leads groups in adventurous activities.

Participation involves a semi-structured interview lasting approximately 30-60 minutes. The interview will explore your experiences as an outdoor instructor and how you interpret and manage risk in your professional practice. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to allow accurate transcription and analysis.

Participation in this research is voluntary. During the interview, you may refuse to answer any question or withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. Your decision to participate, not participate, or withdraw will not affect your professional relationship or opportunities with the principal researcher. To withdraw your data after the interview, please email the principal researcher on the contact details above. Due to processing and data analysis, the deadline for withdrawing from the study is 06 April 2026. If you would like to receive the summary of findings after the study is complete, this can be requested via the principal researcher's contact details above. If you have any concerns about this research study, please contact the research supervisor on the contact details above.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All information you provide will be treated confidentially.

- All data will be stored securely on a UWTSD password-protected drive.
- Interviews will be transcribed and anonymised; your name will not appear in any reports or publications and potentially identifying details will be omitted or generalised.
- Only the principal researcher and research supervisor will have access to the data.
- Data will be deleted after the completion of the research project, no later than 29 June 2026.
- Please note that confidentiality may be breached and relevant authorities notified if you disclose information that raises serious safety concerns, such as harm to others, in accordance with the researcher's duty of care and institutional guidelines.

Consent

Please tick the boxes to confirm your agreement:

- ☐ I have read and understood the information above.
- ☐ I understand that participation is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw.
- ☐ I consent to the interview being audio recorded.
- ☐ I understand that my data will be anonymised and stored securely.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research study.

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____