

PG1 - FULL RESEARCH PROPOSAL

This form is to be completed by both the student and supervisory team within **THREE** months for full-time students and **SIX** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course.

Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (<https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk>).

This document is also available in Welsh.

Student Details

Student Family / Surname:		ZHUANG	
Student Given / First name:		XINYUE	
Student Number		2517519	
Start Date	01/02/2026	End Date	01/02/2030

PhD by Research	PhD Practice Based	PhD by Published Works	Professional Doctorate (including DBA, DProf, Ed D)	MPhil by Research	MPhil Practice Based
☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
MA by Research	MSc by Research	MRes			
☐	☐	☐			

Proposed Research

Current Proposed Title (20 / 30 words):
Designing Beyond Proof: A Practice-Based Investigation into Ethical Interpretation, Care and Uncertainty in Ambiguous Relational Situations within Educational Contexts
Background & Context (approx. 500 words)
Design has long been recognised as a discipline that works with complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty. Rather than seeking immediate solutions, design often begins by exploring situations that are incomplete, contested or still emerging. Educational practice shares many of these characteristics. Teachers are required to make everyday decisions about participation, wellbeing and relationships in contexts where information is often partial and meanings remain uncertain. In contrast, legal systems are guided by a different ethical commitment: decisions that affect people's rights and responsibilities should be supported by sufficient evidence and due process. Although design, education and law all seek fairness, they approach it through different ways of knowing and acting. My own academic and professional experiences across these three disciplines have shaped the development of this research. My undergraduate education in design introduced me to creative inquiry and the value of questioning assumptions. Studying law as a second degree deepened my understanding of evidence, procedural justice and the ethical responsibility to avoid premature judgement. Later, while working as a

design teacher in an international school, I encountered situations in which these different perspectives became difficult to reconcile. Many relational experiences within educational settings do not emerge as clearly identifiable events. Instead, they develop gradually through subtle changes in participation, communication or social relationships. Such experiences often resist formal documentation, yet they may significantly influence students' sense of belonging, safety and engagement.

Recent research in educational technology and artificial intelligence has increasingly sought to make these invisible patterns visible through behavioural analytics, predictive modelling and automated detection systems. While these approaches may support early identification of potential concerns, they also raise significant ethical questions. Behavioural data can indicate that something may be changing, but it cannot, by itself, explain what those changes mean. Silence, withdrawal or reduced participation may reflect exclusion, anxiety, cultural difference, personal preference or many other possibilities. Treating behavioural traces as objective evidence risks reducing complex human experiences to measurable indicators and may unintentionally shift educational care towards monitoring, classification and surveillance.

This research therefore argues that the central challenge is not simply how relational harm can be detected more accurately, but how uncertainty itself can be interpreted ethically before it is reduced to evidence, labels or systems of surveillance. Rather than asking how design might produce more reliable judgements, the project asks how practice-based design can create conditions for careful interpretation, dialogue and collective reflection when certainty has not yet been reached. In doing so, the research seeks to reposition design not as a technology for solving uncertainty, but as a methodology for engaging with it responsibly.

By bringing together perspectives from design research, legal thinking and educational practice, this project aims to contribute to emerging discussions on design ethics, relationality and educational care. It proposes that the originality of practice-based design lies not in replacing human judgement, but in supporting more reflective, ethically informed and context-sensitive ways of responding to ambiguity. Ultimately, the research asks not how uncertainty can be eliminated, but how we might learn to work with it responsibly before certainty arrives.

Aims and Objectives (approx.. 250 – 500 words)

Research Aim

This research aims to investigate how practice-based design can create conditions that support ethically informed responses to ambiguous relational situations in educational contexts before uncertainty is prematurely transformed into evidence, labels or surveillance. Through practice-based inquiry, the project seeks to develop a design framework for ethical interpretation that enables educators to engage with uncertainty in reflective, context-sensitive and relationally responsible ways.

Objectives

1. To critically examine how uncertainty, evidence, care and ethical interpretation are conceptualised across design research, education, legal studies and related interdisciplinary literature.
2. To investigate how educators currently recognise, interpret and respond to ambiguous relational situations in everyday educational practice.
3. To develop a series of practice-based design interventions that encourage dialogue, reflection and collective interpretation rather than diagnosis or automated classification.
4. To examine how these interventions influence educators' interpretive practices, ethical reasoning and responses to uncertainty through participatory workshops and reflective evaluation.
5. To synthesise the findings into a practice-based design framework for ethical interpretation that supports educators in responding to ambiguous relational situations without reducing uncertainty to evidence, labels or surveillance.

Proposed plan of work including timetable

Proposed plan of work

No.	Chapters	Details	Timeline
1	Introduction	Refine the research background, research questions, aims, objectives and overall research framework.	02/2027-03/2027
2	Literature Review	Conduct an interdisciplinary literature review across practice-based design research, care ethics, socio-legal studies, educational research and theories of interpretation.	03/2027-06/2027
3	Methodology & Ethics	Finalise the research methodology, obtain ethical approval and prepare interview and workshop materials.	06/2027-07/2027
4	Exploratory Interviews	Conduct semi-structured interviews with educators to explore how ambiguous relational situations are recognised, interpreted and responded to in educational practice	08/2027-10/2027
5	Practice-Based Design Inquiry	Develop and facilitate participatory workshops using speculative scenarios, conversational artefacts, visual mapping and reflective design activities.	11/2027 – 01/2028
6	Qualitative Data Analysis	Analyse interviews, workshop discussions, participant reflections and design documentation through thematic analysis and reflective practice.	02/2028 – 04/2028
7	Framework Development	Synthesize findings into a Design-Led Framework for Ethically Informed Responses and formulate transferable design principles.	05/2028 – 06/2028
8	Framework Refinement	Refine the framework through critical reflection, iterative design development and supervisory feedback.	07/2028–08/2028
9	Discussion & Contribution	Discuss the theoretical, methodological and practical contributions of the research.	09/2028
10	Conclusion	Complete the conclusion, limitations and recommendations for future research.	10/2028
11	Research Writing	Complete the first full draft of the thesis.	Before 10/2028

12	Revision & Editing	Revise the thesis following supervisory feedback and prepare the final manuscript.	10/2028-01/2029
13	Final Submission	Final proofreading, formatting and submission of the doctoral thesis.	Before 02/2029

Proposed methodology (approx. 500 words):

This research adopts an interpretivist and practice-based research paradigm, recognising that ambiguous relational situations in educational contexts do not possess a single objective meaning but are understood through situated interpretation, dialogue and reflection. Rather than seeking to establish definitive methods for identifying relational harm, the study investigates how practice-based design can create conditions that support ethically informed responses before uncertainty is prematurely transformed into evidence, labels or systems of surveillance.

The research is grounded in practice-based design inquiry, understanding design not simply as the production of artefacts but as a way of generating knowledge through iterative making, critical reflection and collaborative sense-making. Within this project, design practice functions simultaneously as a research method, a mode of inquiry and a means of producing theoretical insight. This methodological position reflects the view that ethically informed responses to complex educational situations cannot be developed through theoretical analysis alone but emerge through situated practice, dialogue and reflective engagement.

The study will be conducted through four interconnected stages. The first stage consists of an interdisciplinary literature review, establishing the conceptual foundations of the research. Literature from practice-based design research, educational research, care ethics, socio-legal studies and theories of interpretation will be critically examined to explore how concepts such as uncertainty, evidence, relationality, care and ethical judgement have been understood across different disciplines. This stage will also identify the limitations of current approaches that emphasise behavioural prediction, automated detection and algorithmic classification.

The second stage involves qualitative empirical exploration through semi-structured interviews with educators. These interviews will investigate how teachers currently recognise, interpret and respond to ambiguous relational situations in everyday educational practice, particularly in circumstances where concerns exist but sufficient evidence has not yet been established. Rather than seeking objective accounts of particular incidents, the interviews aim to understand educators' interpretive practices, ethical reasoning and everyday decision-making under conditions of uncertainty. Findings from this stage will inform the subsequent design inquiry.

The third stage forms the core of the research and adopts an iterative practice-based design approach. A series of participatory workshops will be developed in collaboration with educators. These workshops will employ speculative scenarios, visual mapping, conversational artefacts and collaborative design activities to facilitate collective sense-making around ambiguous relational situations. Importantly, the workshops are not intended to produce correct diagnoses or objective classifications. Instead, they investigate how different forms of design practice can create opportunities for ethical interpretation, dialogue and reflective responses before formal judgement becomes possible.

Throughout the design process, artefacts, workshop outcomes and researcher reflections will be systematically documented as research data. Reflective practice will accompany each design iteration, enabling continuous refinement of both the design interventions and the emerging conceptual framework. This iterative process acknowledges that knowledge develops through cycles of making, reflection and reinterpretation rather than through linear problem-solving.

The final stage focuses on qualitative analysis and theoretical synthesis. Interview transcripts, workshop

discussions, participant reflections and design artefacts will be analysed using thematic analysis alongside reflective analysis of the design process. Rather than evaluating the effectiveness of a particular intervention, the analysis will examine how practice-based design contributes to collective sense-making, ethical interpretation and educator responses under conditions of uncertainty. The findings will be synthesised into a Design-Led Framework for Ethically Informed Responses to Ambiguous Relational Situations, together with a set of design principles that may inform future practice-based design research and educational practice.

The methodological contribution of this research lies not in developing a system capable of identifying relational harm, but in demonstrating how practice-based design can generate knowledge by creating conditions for collective sense-making before uncertainty is reduced to evidence, labels or surveillance. In doing so, the research contributes a Design-Led Framework for Ethically Informed Responses that extends current discussions in practice-based design research, educational care and socio-legal thinking.

Introductory bibliography:

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Zimmerman, J., Forlizzi, J. and Evenson, S. (2007) 'Research Through Design as a Method for Interaction Design Research in HCI', *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, pp. 493–502. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1145/1240624.1240704> (Accessed: 8 August 2026).

Facilities and resources available for the investigation: please indicate if you expect to need any special resources

This research will primarily utilise the facilities available through the University, including library resources, online academic databases (such as Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR and ACM Digital Library), specialist design studios, workshop spaces and digital fabrication facilities where appropriate.

The study will require access to qualitative data analysis software (e.g. NVivo), visual design software (e.g. Adobe Creative Suite, Figma and Miro), and secure institutional data storage for research materials.

Empirical research will involve interviews and participatory workshops with educators. Recruitment will take place through educational institutions and professional networks, subject to institutional permission where required.

Ethical approval will be obtained through the University's research ethics process before any data collection begins. All participants will receive information sheets and provide informed consent. Participant anonymity, confidentiality and secure data management will be maintained throughout the project in accordance with University policies and GDPR requirements.

The research is expected to be conducted primarily within the UK. Should opportunities arise to collaborate with international educational institutions, additional ethical approval and institutional permissions will be obtained prior to commencing any overseas fieldwork.

No specialist laboratory equipment is anticipated beyond the facilities routinely available within the School of Design.

Special Issues

This project includes significant non-written research outputs as part of its practice-based methodology. These may include design artefacts, visual mapping, speculative scenarios, participatory workshop materials and reflective documentation developed throughout the research process. These outputs will function as research data as well as vehicles for generating knowledge through design inquiry.

The project is an individual doctoral research project and is not part of a larger collaborative research programme.

Although the primary research is expected to take place within the UK, the study may involve participants from international educational contexts where appropriate. Any research conducted outside the UK will be subject to additional ethical approval and institutional permission.

Because the research involves interviews and participatory workshops with educators, ethical approval will be sought before data collection begins. No research involving minors is currently proposed. Should future developments require engagement with children or young people, an amendment to the ethical approval process will be submitted before such research is undertaken.

At present, no restriction on access to the final thesis is anticipated.

Language in which submitted

The thesis will be written in [please tick as appropriate]:

Welsh ☐

English ☒

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

In line with [UWTSD guidance](#), Generative AI will be used in this thesis for the following purposes:

	Tick ✓	YES	NO
RESEARCH	I intend to use Generative AI to support my research, including searching for bibliography, using tools to summarise, compare and interrogate materials.	☐	☒
STRUCTURE	I intend to use Generative AI to support structuring my thesis submission, including creating a draft argument structure, identifying parts and headings, etc.	☐	☒
PROOFREADING	I intend to use Generative AI to check my own text/creation for grammatical and syntactical mistakes, including translation and rephrasing of my own work within specific standards.	☒	☐
WRITING	I intend to use Generative AI to create text for submission.	☐	☒
CREATIVE	I intend to use Generative AI to create creative materials, such as images.	☐	☒
PROGRAMING	I intend to use Generative AI to create and check code.	☐	☒
NONE	I do not intend to use any type of Generative AI support. This includes research support, structure support, writing/proofreading support and creative support.	☐	☒

Note: any use of Generative Artificial Intelligence will need to be considered and noted in the research ethics application.

Intellectual Property IP

Tick ✓

	YES	NO
It is anticipated that Intellectual Property (IP) will be produced as a result of this research, other than copyright.	☒	☐
If yes, is the IP already subject to a separate agreement with a third party (e.g. employer, sponsor or external funder)? If so please provide details below	☐	☒
Is the research dependent upon background IP owned by: If so, please provide details below	UWTSD ☒	A third party ☐
Text box will expand		

Tick ✓

I understand that:	YES	NO
If any party other than the student is likely to be involved in the development of IP a separate IP agreement will be needed and it may be necessary for the student to assign the IP rights to the University.	☒	☐
If there are no third parties involved in the creation of the IP the student is deemed to own the IP, however should the student wish to commercially exploit their IP and require the assistance of the University to do so, they will be required to assign their IP to the University. https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/iiced/protecting-innovation-and-creativity---intellectual-property/	☒	☐

Student Signature

Signature or Print Name:	Xinyue Zhuang	Date: 08/08/2026
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Supervisory Team

Has the student proposed a viable research project that is appropriate for this programme that should be supported by the Institute?	
Supported: ☐	Not Supported: ☐

Authorisation

Director of Studies	Print Name and Signature:	Date:
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Institute Manager of Research Degrees	Signature or Print Name:	Date:
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**Once complete, submit this form via the MyTSD Doctoral College Portal at
(<https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk>).**

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL – INTRODUCTORY NOTES

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**:

"[C]reative 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 (academic staff or support staff);
- Individuals holding honorary title from the University;
- Postgraduate research students;

In all of these cases ethical review is required regardless of discipline.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the **lead researcher**.

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

For most projects you will only need to complete sections in the main part of the form. A few projects will need more detailed ethical consideration and will need you to fill in sections in an appendix. At some points in this form you will be asked questions about your research in the following way:

1	Does your research involve <<something specific>>?	YES	Click to continue to appendix <<N>>	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix <<N>>?	YES	☐	NO	☐

Clicking in the appropriate box will take you to the appropriate location in the text. At the end of each appendix is a box. Clicking on this will return you to the question that originally took you to the appendix.

Return to the main form

NB These clickable links will only work if you are editing the document in the desktop version of Word, not the browser version. Please download and save the form before editing it.

Guidance notes are provided as comments or as text **IN GREEN** throughout this form. Please ensure that the comments are removed and that the green text is replaced by your own text or removed as appropriate BEFORE submitting this form.

Please ensure that you have read the UWTSD Research Ethics and Integrity Policy and the UWTSD Research Data Management Policy BEFORE submitting this form.

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

SECTION A: About You (Lead Researcher)

1	Full Name:	XINYUE ZHUANG			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☐	Postgraduate Research Student
3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	Art and Design			
4	Campus:	Swansea College of Art			
5	E-mail address:	2517519@student.uwtsd.ac.uk			
6	Contact Telephone Number:	+4407434851809			
7	Project Title	Designing Beyond Proof: A Practice-Based Investigation into Ethical Interpretation, Care and Uncertainty in Ambiguous Relational Situations within Educational Contexts			
8	Proposed Start Date	01/02/2027	Proposed End Date	01/02/2029	
For students:					
9	Student Number:	2517519			
10	Programme of Study:	Art and Design			
11	Director of Studies/Supervisor:				

SECTION B: Grant or Contract Funding

1	Has your research been awarded, applied for, or intend to apply for external funding?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 1	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 1?	YES	☐	NO	☒

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

Ethical Guidance Documents

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 Policy	☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	☒
3	UWTSD Open Access Publications Policy	☒
4	UWTSD Export Control Policy <i>Required if Appendix 8 completed</i>	☐
5	UWTSD Trusted Research and Innovation Policy <i>Required if research is taking place outside the UK</i>	☒
6	British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research	☒
7	UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018	☒

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

1	Does your research involve collaborating partners at another institution or organisation?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 2	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 2?	YES	☐	NO	☒

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

Aims, Vision and Approach of the Research (maximum 200 words per section)

Please outline what are you hoping to achieve with your proposed work and how will you deliver it?

1	Research aims and objectives
Aims: This research aims to investigate how practice-based design can support ethically informed responses to ambiguous relational situations in educational contexts, particularly where educators may need to respond before sufficient evidence or certainty is available. Rather than developing systems for detecting, diagnosing or classifying relational harm, the research explores how design can create conditions for reflection, dialogue and collective sense-making. Objectives: 1. Examine how uncertainty, evidence, care and ethical interpretation are understood across design, education and socio-legal research. 2. Explore how educators recognise, interpret and respond to ambiguous relational situations in everyday practice. 3. Develop practice-based design activities that facilitate dialogue, reflection and collective sense-making without requiring participants to reach definitive judgements. 4. Investigate how these activities influence educators' interpretive and reflective practices. 5. Synthesise the findings into a Design-Led Framework for Ethically Informed Responses to Ambiguous Relational Situations.	
2	Vision

Educational practice frequently requires educators to respond to complex relational situations without complete knowledge of what has occurred. Existing approaches may emphasise evidence, behavioural identification or technological detection, yet subtle experiences such as exclusion, withdrawal or changing peer relationships may remain difficult to interpret and should not be prematurely classified.

This research addresses the space between ignoring uncertainty and converting it too quickly into judgement. It proposes practice-based design as a means of creating reflective spaces in which educators can consider multiple perspectives, discuss uncertainty and explore ethically informed responses without being required to establish a definitive interpretation.

The research has the potential to advance design knowledge by examining design as a form of ethical and collective sense-making rather than primarily as a problem-solving or detection activity. Its anticipated contribution is a transferable design-led framework that may support more reflective, context-sensitive and relationally responsible educational practice.

3 Approach

This research adopts an interpretivist, practice-based design approach combining qualitative inquiry with iterative design practice. Semi-structured interviews with adult educators in the UK and/or China will explore how ambiguous relational situations are recognised, interpreted and responded to in everyday educational practice. Findings will inform participatory design workshops using fictional or speculative scenarios, visual mapping, conversational artefacts and reflective activities to facilitate collective sense-making.

Interview and workshop data will be analysed thematically, alongside reflective analysis of the design process and generated artefacts. These methods are appropriate because the research seeks to understand situated interpretations and ethical reasoning rather than establish objective classifications.

Potential risks include participant discomfort, confidentiality, unintended disclosure of identifiable information, and linguistic or contextual differences across research settings. These will be managed through informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymisation, secure data management, appropriate translation where required, and guidance discouraging disclosure of identifiable individuals or cases.

Findings will inform iterative design development and a Design-Led Framework for supporting reflective and ethically informed responses to uncertainty in educational practice.

4 Location of research activity

Identify all locations where research activity will take place.

- University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD), UK – research development, analysis and design activities
- Selected educational institutions in the UK – subject to institutional permission
- Selected educational institutions in China – subject to institutional permission and relevant ethical approval
- Online – using UWTSD-approved platforms where remote interviews or research activities are required

5	Will any of your research be undertaken outside of the UK?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 3	NO	Continue to the next section
6	Have you completed any of appendix 3?	YES	☒	NO	☐

SECTION F: Research Methods

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: Participatory design workshops will be used as a primary data collection method. Adult educators will engage with fictional or speculative relational scenarios through activities such as visual mapping, conversational artefacts and reflective design exercises. The workshops will explore how participants interpret uncertainty, consider multiple perspectives and collectively develop ethically informed responses. Data may include workshop discussions, researcher field notes, participant-generated visual or written materials, and reflective documentation of interactions with design artefacts. Participants will be informed of the research purpose and the forms of data being collected, and no covert observation will take place. Participants will be instructed not to include identifiable information about students, colleagues or other third parties in workshop materials or discussions.		☒	☐

SECTION G: Research Participants

Research participants include people who will be taking part in your research as providers of research data (e.g. being interviewed, answering questionnaires, or doing user testing of hardware or software). This includes animal participants.

1	Does your research involve human or non-human participants?	YES	Continue this section	NO	Click to continue to section N
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Participant numbers and source

How will you ensure an appropriately convened sample group in order to meet the aims of the research? Give details for subgroups separately, if appropriate. How will any potential pitfalls, for example dual roles or potential for coercion, be addressed?

1	How many participants will be recruited and how was the number decided upon?	Approximately 15–25 adult educators will be recruited across the study. This sample size is considered appropriate for an in-depth qualitative, practice-based design study, where the aim is to generate rich and situated understanding rather than statistical generalisation. Participants may contribute through semi-structured interviews and/or participatory design workshops. Recruitment will proceed purposively, with the final number informed by the quality and relevance of the data generated, practical feasibility, and the extent to which sufficient thematic depth has been achieved. Participants may be recruited from educational contexts in the UK and/or China.
2	Who will the participants be?	Participants will be adult educators (aged 18 or over) with current or recent professional experience in educational settings. This may include teachers, tutors and other education professionals whose roles involve supporting or responding to interpersonal and relational situations within educational practice. Participants may be recruited from selected educational institutions in the UK and/or China. Students and other individuals under the age of 18 will not be recruited as participants. Participation will not require educators to disclose identifiable information about individual students, colleagues or specific incidents.
3	How will you identify the participants?	Participants will be identified through purposive recruitment based on their professional experience in education. Potential participants may be approached through participating educational institutions, professional educational networks and relevant professional contacts. Where an institution assists with recruitment, a gatekeeper may distribute the research invitation on the researcher's behalf rather than providing employees' personal contact details directly to the researcher. Participation will be entirely voluntary. Institutional managers or senior colleagues will not be informed about who chooses to participate unless participants themselves choose to disclose this. No individual will be pressured to participate through their employment relationship.
4		Individuals under the age of 18 will be excluded because the

	Will you be excluding any groups of people, and if so what is the rationale for that?	research focuses specifically on educators' professional interpretation and response practices rather than children's direct experiences. Individuals without relevant educational experience will also be excluded. This boundary is intended to maintain alignment with the research questions and to minimise unnecessary ethical and safeguarding risks associated with directly involving children or young people. No participants will be excluded on the basis of gender, ethnicity, nationality or other characteristics unrelated to the research aims.
5	Will the research involve any element of deception? If yes, please describe why this is necessary and whether participants will be informed at the end of the study	No deception will be used. Participants will receive clear information about the purpose, procedures, use of data and their rights before providing informed consent.
6	Describe whether participants will be able to withdraw from the study, and up to what point (eg if data is to be anonymised). If withdrawal is not possible, after a certain point, explain why not.	Participants will be free to decline to answer any question, pause or leave an interview or workshop, and withdraw from the study without providing a reason and without penalty. Participants may request withdrawal of their identifiable research data up to two weeks following their final research activity. After this point, data may have been anonymised and incorporated into the wider analysis, meaning that individual contributions may no longer be identifiable or practically removable. This limitation will be clearly explained in the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form before participation.
7	How long will the participant have to decide whether to take part in the research?	Potential participants will normally be given at least seven days to consider the Participant Information Sheet before deciding whether to participate. They will have the opportunity to ask questions before providing informed consent. No pressure will be placed on individuals to make an immediate decision.
8	What arrangements have been made for participants who might have difficulties understanding verbal explanations or written information, or who have particular communication needs that should be taken into account to facilitate their involvement in the research?	Research information will be provided in clear and accessible language. Participants conducting the research in China will be offered appropriate Chinese-language versions of the Participant Information Sheet, Consent Form and relevant research materials where required. Participants may communicate in the language most appropriate to the approved research arrangements. Reasonable adjustments will be considered for participants with communication or accessibility requirements, including additional time, accessible digital materials, breaks, or alternative formats where practicable. Participants will be encouraged to inform the researcher of any requirements before the research activity.

SECTION H: Research with Vulnerable People

1	Are your participants classed as vulnerable people?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 4	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 4?	YES	☐	NO	☒

SECTION I: Research Involving Animals

1	Are your participants non-human animals?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 5	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 5?	YES	☐	NO	☒

SECTION J: Research with the Prison Service or the Probation Service

1	Are your participants staff or offenders within the Prison Service or the Probation service?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 6	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 6?	YES	☐	NO	☒

SECTION K: Health and Social Care Research

1	Are your participants selected due to their health or social care needs?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 7	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 7?	YES	☐	NO	☒

SECTION L: Types of Personal Data

Personal Data		YES	NO
Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018)?			
1	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 and transcription of such are considered to be personal data. If you ticked YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:	☒	☐
The research will collect limited personal data necessary for recruitment, informed consent and qualitative analysis. This may include participants' names and contact details during recruitment and consent, limited professional information such as role and experience in education, audio recordings of interviews and, where appropriate, workshop discussions, and transcripts derived from these recordings. These data are necessary to manage participation and to understand participants' accounts in relation to their professional educational contexts. Direct identifiers will not be included in research outputs. Contact and consent information will be stored separately from research data, and research materials will be pseudonymised and subsequently anonymised wherever possible.			

Special Category Data		YES	NO
Does the research involve the processing of special category data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018)?			
2	Racial or ethnic origin	☐	☒
3	Political opinions	☐	☒
4	Religious or philosophical beliefs	☐	☒
5	Genetic, biometric or health data	☐	☒
6	Sex life or sexual orientation	☐	☒
7	Trade union membership	☐	☒
If you ticked YES to any of questions L2-L7, provide a description of the data and explain why this special category data needs to be collected to support the research and that it is in the public interest to do so:			
8	N/A – The study is not designed to collect or process special category personal data. Participants will not be asked to provide information concerning racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, health, genetic or biometric information, sex life or sexual orientation, or trade union membership.		
9	Please describe how the research has been designed to gather the minimum amount of personal data necessary for the specified research purpose:		
The study has been designed to collect only personal data necessary to address the research questions and administer participation. Data collection will be limited to contact and consent information, relevant professional information (such as educational role and experience), interview and workshop contributions, participant-generated materials, and audio recordings where consent has been provided. The research will not routinely collect participants' home addresses, dates of birth, personal identification numbers, financial information, special category data, or other information unrelated to the research aims. Participants will be instructed not to disclose identifiable information about students, colleagues or other			

third parties. Fictional or speculative scenarios will be used in workshops where appropriate to minimise the collection of unnecessary third-party personal data.			
10	Demonstrate that the processing is not likely to cause substantial damage or distress to individuals and that their interests will be safeguarded:		
The processing of personal data is not expected to cause substantial damage or distress. The principal foreseeable risks relate to accidental identification, disclosure of professional experiences, or unintended inclusion of identifiable third-party information. These risks will be minimised through data minimisation, informed consent, pseudonymisation and anonymisation, secure storage, restricted access to research data, and separation of identifying information from research data. Participants will be asked not to identify students, colleagues or institutions unnecessarily when discussing professional experiences. Quotations used in research outputs will be anonymised and reviewed to remove information that could reasonably enable identification.			
11	Demonstrate that the data will not be used to take any action or make decisions in relation to the individuals concerned:		
Research data will be used solely for academic research, analysis and dissemination. It will not be used to evaluate participants' professional performance, make employment or disciplinary decisions, assess individual students or colleagues, or make automated or algorithmic decisions about any individual. The purpose of the research is to understand patterns of interpretation, reflection and design practice at a research level rather than to assess, rank or classify individual participants or third parties.			
12	Data should be anonymised wherever possible, either at point of capture or once collated. If the data cannot be anonymised, and if pseudonymisation is not possible, demonstrate why that is possible. If special category data cannot be anonymised, explicit consent to share that data must normally be obtained.		
Personal identifiers will be removed from research data as early as practicable. During data collection and initial analysis, participants will be assigned unique participant codes or pseudonyms. The key linking participant identities to these codes, where required for withdrawal purposes, will be stored separately and securely from the research data. Transcripts, researcher notes and participant-generated materials will be reviewed to remove or generalise names, institutions, locations and other potentially identifying details. Following the withdrawal period and where continued identification is no longer necessary, research datasets used for analysis and dissemination will be anonymised wherever possible. Audio recordings will not be used in publications or presentations to identify participants.			
13	If special category data cannot be anonymised, will you obtain explicit consent to share that data?	YES ☐	NO ☐
			N/A ☒

SECTION M: Participant Information and Consent

Information for participants It is normally expected that those participating in research should do so having given their informed consent. If this is not appropriate or practical, explicit justification must be provided, in line with prevailing disciplinary conventions. Please note however, that informed consent to participate in the research is separate from consent to process (e.g. collect, analyse, store, reuse or share) personal data, as the University's lawful basis for processing personal data in research activities is part of its 'public task'.		YES	NO	N/A
1	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
2	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
3	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
4	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
5	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☒	☐	☐
6	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
7	Will participants be made aware of how you will treat any information that may reasonably be considered as confidential?	☒	☐	☐
8	If your research requires your participants to sign up for a service provided by an external company or organisation will you inform them that their data may be stored and processed outside UWTSD?	☐	☐	☒
9	Will you give participants the UWTSD Privacy Notice for Research?	☒	☐	☐
If you have answered NO to any of questions M1-M9, please provide justification detailing why this is necessary for the research.				
10	N/A – no questions M1–M9 have been answered No.			
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 the research begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded.				
11	Potential participants will receive a Participant Information Sheet explaining the purpose of the research, what participation involves, expected time commitments, research methods, potential risks and benefits, data collection and use, confidentiality, withdrawal arrangements, and researcher contact details. Information will be provided in an appropriate language, with Chinese-language materials available for participants recruited in China where required. Potential participants will normally be given at least seven days to consider the information and will have an opportunity to ask questions before deciding whether to participate. Written informed consent will be obtained before any interview, workshop, observation or audio recording begins. Consent will be treated as an ongoing process, and participants may decline to answer particular questions, take a break or stop participating without giving a reason. Participants will be informed that identifiable data may be withdrawn up to two weeks after their final research activity. After this point, data may have been anonymised and incorporated into analysis and may no longer be practically identifiable or removable.			

Confidentiality: Confidential information refers to information that can be related to an identifiable individual, whether living or deceased, which is not in the public domain and which is given with the expectation that it will be kept confidential. Under Common Law when an individual entrusts a researcher or research team with confidential information, the team must handle this in line with 'reasonable expectations'. In other words, confidential information should only normally be shared when there would be 'no surprises' for the individuals concerned. Where participants would not expect the researcher to be sharing their confidential information with others, researchers can manage their expectations by informing them of their intentions (e.g. in the participant information sheet or during discussions about participation) and asking them if they are happy with these plans. They should understand what is being proposed and what this might mean for them, before they decide whether the researcher can share their confidential information with others.

Please detail how you will treat confidential information:

12	All participant information will be treated confidentially and accessed only by the researcher and, where necessary and appropriate, authorised members of the supervisory team in accordance with UWTSD requirements. Contact and consent information will be stored separately from research data. Participants will be assigned codes or pseudonyms during transcription and analysis, and identifying details will be removed or generalised wherever possible. Audio recordings, transcripts, researcher notes and participant-generated materials will be stored securely using UWTSD-approved systems and protected from unauthorised access. Participants will be asked not to disclose identifiable information about students, colleagues or other third parties. Any inadvertently disclosed identifying information will be removed from transcripts and research materials where practicable. Research outputs may include anonymised quotations and representations of participant-generated materials. Participants will be informed of this before consent is obtained. Information will not be shared in identifiable form unless required by law or where an applicable safeguarding or legal obligation overrides confidentiality.
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Copies of any written consent form, written information and all other explanatory material should accompany this application. If you have included these then please list the documents included here.

13	Participant Information Sheet Participant Consent Form Participant Recruitment / Invitation Material Semi-Structured Interview Guide Participatory Design Workshop Information / Activity Guide Sample Workshop Scenario Materials
14	Consent form attached?
	YES ☐ NO ☒ N/A ☐

SECTION N: Research with Potential Military Application

1	Does your research have any potential military application?	YES	Click to continue to appendix 8	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 8?	YES	☐	NO	☒

SECTION O: Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

Use of generative AI and other AI-based tools 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.		YES	NO	N/A
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	Generative AI may be used in a limited supportive capacity for proofreading, language refinement, translation and rephrasing of the researcher's own non-sensitive text. It will not be used to generate research findings, analyse or classify participant data, process personal or sensitive information, or make decisions about participants or third parties. Interview transcripts, audio recordings, participant-generated materials and other identifiable or confidential research data will not be uploaded to public generative AI systems. Any use of generative AI will follow current UWTSD guidance and relevant research integrity and data protection requirements.			

Section P: Research Data Management Plan

1	Data Summary
The research will generate primarily qualitative and practice-based research data. This will include audio recordings and transcripts of semi-structured interviews with adult educators; researcher field notes and reflective documentation; audio recordings and notes from participatory design workshops where consent has been provided; participant-generated materials such as visual maps, written responses and annotations; and documentation of design artefacts developed through the research. Administrative data will include participant contact details, consent records and limited professional information necessary for recruitment and contextualisation. Research may take place in the UK and/or China. No direct research data will be collected from children or young people.	
2	Responsibilities
The doctoral researcher will have primary responsibility for the day-to-day management, organisation, security, documentation and appropriate disposal or preservation of research data, under the guidance of the supervisory team and in accordance with UWTSD research ethics and data management requirements. Educational institutions providing access to participants or research sites will not routinely receive or manage identifiable research data. Where supervisory access to research data is necessary, access will be limited to authorised members of the supervisory team and handled through appropriate UWTSD-approved systems.	
3	Assessment of existing data
The study will primarily generate new qualitative data and will not rely on existing identifiable participant datasets. Published academic literature, policy documents and publicly available educational or professional guidance may be used as secondary contextual sources. Existing literature provides substantial knowledge concerning educational relationships, care, evidence, ethical judgement and design practice, but does not provide the situated empirical and practice-based data required to investigate how educators engage with ambiguity through the proposed design activities. Primary data collection is therefore necessary to address the research questions.	
4	Management and curation of data
Research data will be organised using a consistent file-naming and version-control system. Each participant will be assigned a unique participant code, which will be used across transcripts, field notes and related research materials. Identifying information and consent documentation will be stored separately from research data. Audio recordings will be transcribed and transcripts checked before analysis. Identifying details concerning participants, institutions or third parties will be removed or generalised where practicable. Workshop materials and design artefacts will be digitally documented and linked to appropriate participant or session codes without unnecessary personal identifiers. A structured research log will document data collection, transcription, anonymisation, analysis and significant methodological decisions.	
5	Quality assurance of data

Data quality will be supported through consistent interview and workshop procedures, researcher field notes, accurate documentation of research activities and systematic checking of transcripts against audio recordings where appropriate. Participant-generated materials will be documented promptly and linked to the relevant research session using non-identifying codes. Analytical quality will be supported through systematic thematic analysis, reflective documentation, comparison across different forms of qualitative data, and regular discussion of developing interpretations with the supervisory team. Changes to coding, design activities and methodological decisions will be documented to maintain an appropriate audit trail.	
6	Short-term data storage During the research, digital data will be stored using secure, password-protected and UWTSD-approved storage systems wherever practicable, with access restricted to the researcher and authorised supervisory personnel where required. Identifying information and consent records will be stored separately from pseudonymised research data. Where data are collected during fieldwork in China, identifiable research data will be kept to the minimum necessary and handled in accordance with the approved international research and data protection arrangements. Data will not be transferred through personal social-media accounts, public generative AI systems or other unapproved services. Appropriate secure transfer and backup procedures will be confirmed in accordance with UWTSD requirements before overseas data collection begins.
7	Long-term data storage and preservation Data considered to have long-term research value may include appropriately anonymised transcripts, selected anonymised participant-generated materials, research documentation and design artefacts necessary to support the doctoral thesis and related publications. Direct identifiers, contact information and raw identifiable materials will not be retained longer than necessary for the purposes for which they were collected. Long-term research data will be stored or archived using appropriate UWTSD-approved facilities. Before preservation or sharing, datasets will be reviewed to remove identifying information and to determine whether further disclosure-control measures are required. Data will be retained for the period required by the applicable UWTSD research data management and retention requirements, after which data without continuing research or legal value will be securely deleted or destroyed.
8	Documentation and metadata Documentation accompanying the research data will include participant and session codes, data collection dates, data type, relevant methodological context, file version information, anonymisation status and analytical documentation where appropriate. A research log and data inventory will be maintained to record the creation, processing, organisation and status of research files. Documentation will provide sufficient contextual information to support interpretation of retained data while avoiding unnecessary personal or identifying information. Where anonymised data are prepared for preservation or sharing, appropriate metadata and explanatory documentation will be created in accordance with relevant repository and UWTSD requirements.
9	Data sharing

Identifiable or confidential participant data, raw audio recordings and consent records will not be made openly available. Research findings will primarily be shared through the doctoral thesis, academic publications, conference presentations and appropriate research or design outputs using anonymised and aggregated material.

Where appropriately anonymised research data or design materials have potential value for future research, their suitability for controlled or open sharing will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking account of participant consent, confidentiality, the risk of deductive identification, institutional requirements and relevant data protection obligations.

Participants will be informed during the consent process about how anonymised quotations and participant-generated materials may be used in research outputs. No identifiable data will be shared publicly without an appropriate lawful and ethical basis.

10	Copyright and intellectual property ownership
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Copyright and intellectual property arising from the research will be managed in accordance with applicable UWTSD policies and relevant legal requirements. The researcher will clarify ownership and permitted use of researcher-created design materials and research outputs.

Where participants create visual, written or other materials during workshops, the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form will explain how these materials may be analysed, reproduced or represented in the thesis and related research outputs. Participant-generated materials will not be assumed to transfer unrestricted intellectual property rights to the researcher solely through participation.

11	Resources
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The project will require secure digital storage, appropriate recording equipment, transcription and qualitative data management facilities, and resources for securely documenting participant-generated and practice-based materials. UWTSD-approved institutional systems will be used wherever appropriate.

Additional resources may include encrypted or password-protected equipment for overseas fieldwork, secure backup arrangements, translation of participant-facing materials between English and Chinese, and travel associated with fieldwork in China. Data management requirements will be reviewed before overseas data collection begins. No unusual large-scale data storage requirements are anticipated, and data management costs are expected to remain proportionate to a qualitative doctoral research project.

SECTION Q: Risk Assessment

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.			
If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.			
1	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	YES ☐	NO ☒
Risks to participants, researchers, and the University			
2	Social risks: <i>disclosures that could affect participants standing in the community, in their family and their job.</i>	YES ☒	NO ☐
<i>Risk:</i> Participants may discuss professional experiences concerning difficult or ambiguous relational situations in educational settings. If identifiable comments about colleagues, institutions or professional practices were disclosed, there is a potential risk to participants' professional relationships, reputation or employment. There is also a potential risk of perceived pressure to participate where recruitment is facilitated through an educational institution or professional contact.		<i>How will you address any risks?</i> Participation will be entirely voluntary and will not affect participants' employment, professional relationships or standing within their institution. Where institutions assist with recruitment, invitations will normally be distributed by a gatekeeper without disclosing to managers who chooses to participate. Participants will be instructed not to identify students, colleagues or institutions unnecessarily. Research data will be pseudonymised and subsequently anonymised wherever possible, and identifiable details will be removed or generalised from transcripts and research outputs. Interviews will be conducted privately, and research findings will be reported in a manner that prevents individual responses from being attributed to identifiable participants or institutions.	
3	Legal risks: <i>activities that could result in the participant, researchers and / or University committing an offence; activities that might lead to a participant disclosing criminal activity to a researcher which would necessitate reporting to enforcement authorities; activities that could result in a civil claim for compensation</i>	YES ☒	NO ☐
<i>Risk:</i> Potential legal risks relate primarily to the accidental collection, disclosure or inappropriate processing of personal or confidential information, including identifiable information about participants or third parties. As part of overseas fieldwork, there is also a need to ensure compliance with applicable UWTSD requirements and relevant local institutional and legal requirements. Although the research is not designed to elicit information about criminal activity, an unexpected disclosure could potentially raise legal or safeguarding obligations that limit		<i>How will you address any risks?</i> Written informed consent will be obtained before data collection or recording. Participants will be informed about the scope and limits of confidentiality and will be discouraged from disclosing identifiable information about students, colleagues or third parties. Research data will be minimised, pseudonymised and securely stored using UWTSD-approved systems. Access will be restricted to the researcher and authorised supervisory personnel where necessary. No confidential participant data will be uploaded to public generative AI systems or transferred through unapproved personal platforms. If an unexpected disclosure raises a potential legal or safeguarding obligation, the researcher will not make	

confidentiality.		an independent legal determination but will seek appropriate guidance through UWTSD supervisory, ethics or relevant institutional procedures before taking further action.	
4	Economic harm: <i>financial harm to participant, researcher and / or University through disclosure or other event.</i>	YES ☐	NO ☒
No significant economic harm is anticipated. Participation will involve a proportionate time commitment, which will be communicated in advance, and participants may decline, reschedule or withdraw without penalty. Participants will not be required to purchase equipment or incur significant personal costs as part of the research.			
5	Reputational risk: <i>damage to public perception of University or the University / researchers' reputation in the eyes of funders, the research community and / or the general public.</i>	YES ☒	NO ☐
Risk: There is a potential reputational risk if participants, educational institutions or cultural contexts are represented in a way that is perceived as inaccurate, judgemental or identifiable. This is particularly relevant because the research concerns ethically sensitive professional practices and may take place across educational contexts in the UK and China. There is also a potential reputational risk to the researcher and University if findings are overstated, culturally insensitive or presented as evaluations of particular schools or individuals.		How will you address any risks? The research will not evaluate or rank individual educators, schools or national education systems. Findings will be presented as situated and interpretive rather than as definitive judgements about institutions or cultures. Institutions and participants will be anonymised wherever possible, and quotations or case descriptions will be reviewed for deductive identifiability. The researcher will maintain reflective documentation and discuss developing interpretations with the supervisory team to reduce overstatement or inappropriate generalisation. Any comparison of different research contexts will be undertaken cautiously and will not frame the project as a simplistic comparison of national educational systems.	
6	Safeguarding risks: <i>Risk to young people, vulnerable adults and / or researcher from improper behaviour, abuse or exploitation. Risk to researcher of being in a compromising situation, in which there might be accusations of improper behaviour.</i>	YES ☒	NO ☐
Risk: The research will recruit adult educators only and will not directly involve children or vulnerable adults as participants. However, because participants work in educational settings, there is a possibility that a discussion could inadvertently include information suggesting that a child or another person may be at risk of serious harm. There is also a risk that identifiable information about students could be unintentionally		How will you address any risks? Participants will be clearly instructed not to disclose names or other identifiable details of students, colleagues or third parties. Interviews and workshops will focus on professional interpretation and fictional or speculative scenarios rather than requiring detailed disclosure of real cases. The Participant Information Sheet will explain that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed absolutely where	

disclosed during discussion of professional experiences.		information indicates an immediate or serious safeguarding concern or where disclosure is legally required. If such information arises, the researcher will pause the research discussion where appropriate, avoid conducting an independent investigation, document the issue appropriately and seek guidance through UWTSD supervisory and relevant institutional safeguarding procedures. No direct interviews or research activities will be conducted with children or young people under the current study design.	
7	Sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics. <i>If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics 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.</i>	YES	NO
		☒	☐
<i>Risk:</i> Discussion of exclusion, difficult relationships, uncertainty, care and ethically challenging educational situations may cause temporary emotional discomfort or prompt participants to recall upsetting professional or personal experiences. Participants may also feel uncomfortable discussing uncertainty in their own professional judgement. The researcher may experience emotional strain through repeated engagement with accounts of difficult educational experiences.		<i>How will you address any risks?</i> Participant-facing information will make clear that potentially sensitive relational topics may be discussed. Participants will not be required to disclose personal experiences of bullying, trauma or victimisation. Fictional and speculative scenarios will be used where appropriate to create distance from personal experiences. Participants may decline to answer any question, pause an activity, take a break or withdraw without giving a reason. The researcher will monitor signs of discomfort and will pause or stop a session where appropriate. Research activities will be scheduled to avoid unnecessary emotional intensity or excessive consecutive sessions. The researcher will use supervisory discussion and reflective practice to manage the emotional impact of working with sensitive material.	
Health and safety risks			
8	Location hazards: <i>for example: fire; visiting or working in participant's homes; working in remote locations and in high crime areas; overseas travel; hot, cold or extreme weather conditions; working on or by water. Also hazardous work locations, such as construction sites, confined spaces, roofs or laboratories. For overseas travel, researchers will need to check country / city specific information, travel health requirements and consider emergency arrangements as part of their research planning. In all cases the University's International Travel Policy must be followed.</i>	YES	NO
		☒	☐
<i>Risk:</i>		<i>How will you address any risks?</i>	

Fieldwork may involve travel to educational institutions in the UK and China. Potential risks include overseas travel, unfamiliar locations, local transport, illness, disruption, personal security risks and emergency situations while travelling or working away from the University.		Before overseas fieldwork, the researcher will review current UK Government travel advice and relevant local information, confirm institutional access and research permissions, maintain appropriate travel insurance and establish emergency contact arrangements. Research activities will take place in appropriate professional or institutional settings rather than participants' private homes. Travel itineraries and relevant contact details will be retained appropriately, and the researcher will follow UWTSD requirements for international travel and overseas research. Any location-specific risks identified once Chinese research sites and cities have been confirmed will be reviewed before fieldwork begins, and an additional travel or fieldwork risk assessment will be completed if required.	
9	Activity hazards: <i>for example: potentially mentally harmful activities; distressing and stressful work and content; driving; tripping or slipping; falling from height; physically demanding work; lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling loads; night time and weekend working.</i>	YES ☒	NO ☐
<i>Risk:</i> The primary activity-related risk is psychological or emotional strain associated with repeated discussion and analysis of sensitive relational experiences, uncertainty and educational harm. There may also be ordinary low-level risks associated with extended interviews, workshops, travel and prolonged computer-based transcription and analysis.		<i>How will you address any risks?</i> Research activities will be proportionate in duration and include appropriate breaks. Participants will be able to stop or pause participation at any point. The researcher will avoid scheduling excessive numbers of sensitive interviews or workshops consecutively and will use supervisory support and reflective documentation to monitor researcher wellbeing. Normal good practice for travel, workspace safety and prolonged computer use will be followed. Additional activity-specific controls will be introduced if later design activities create new risks not covered by the current assessment.	
10	Machinery and equipment: <i>for example: ergonomic hazards, including computer workstations and equipment; contact with electricity; contact with moving, rotating, ejecting or cutting parts in machinery and instruments; accidental release of energy from machines and instruments.</i>	YES ☐	NO ☒
The research does not involve specialist machinery, laboratory equipment or hazardous equipment. Normal computers, audio-recording devices and standard design materials may be used, subject to ordinary workplace and ergonomic safety practices.			
11	Chemicals and other hazardous substances: <i>the use, production, storage, waste, transportation and accidental release of chemicals and hazardous substances; flammable, dangerous and explosive substances; asphyxiating gases; allergens; biological agents, blood and blood products.</i>	YES ☐	NO ☒

The research will not involve chemicals, biological agents, hazardous substances or related laboratory procedures.			
12	Physical agents: <i>for example: excessive noise exposure, hand-arm vibration and whole body vibration; ionising radiation; lasers; artificial optical radiation and electromagnetic fields</i>	YES	NO
		☐	☒
The research will not involve ionising radiation, lasers, excessive vibration, electromagnetic exposure or other hazardous physical agents.			
13	Environmental risks: <i>for example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems</i>	YES	NO
		☐	☒
No significant environmental risks are anticipated. The research does not involve activities expected to damage ecosystems, protected environments or natural habitats. Research activities will primarily consist of interviews, participatory workshops, design documentation and associated travel.			

SECTION R: Disclosure and Barring Service

Disclosure and Barring Service				
1	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☐	☒
2	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.			

SECTION S: 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 Policy which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
1	Name of applicant	XINYUE ZHUANG
2	Electronic or written signature of applicant:	
3	Date	
4	Name of Director of Studies	

5	Electronic or written signature of Director of Studies:	
6	Date	

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

1	☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
2	☒	I have completed all relevant sections of the form in full.
3	☐	I have attached a copy of the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) or Consent Form
4	☒	I have attached a completed copy of the Trusted Research and Innovation Checklist (where applicable)
5	☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate)
6	☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice
7	☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Data Management Policy
8	☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Export Control Policy
9	☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Open Access Research Policy
10	I have completed the following appendices:	1 ☐
		2 ☐
		3 ☒
		4 ☐
		5 ☐
		6 ☐
		7 ☐
		8 ☐

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk, with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

END OF MAIN FORM

APPENDIX 3: Research Undertaken Outside of the UK

A3.1	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. Describe the measures you have taken to comply with these and provide evidence of approvals etc. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this. If you have a local research supervisor or research advisor then please give their contact details here. Part of the proposed research may be undertaken in selected educational institutions in China. Specific institutions and locations have not yet been finalised and will be confirmed subject to institutional access, local permission and UWTSD ethical approval. The overseas research will involve adult educators only and may include semi-structured interviews and participatory design workshops. No children or young people will be directly recruited as research participants. Before any research activity begins, permission will be obtained from the relevant educational institution(s), and any applicable local ethical, institutional and legal requirements will be reviewed and followed. Particular attention will be given to informed and voluntary participation, confidentiality, data protection, cultural and linguistic sensitivity, and the potential disclosure of identifiable information concerning students, colleagues or institutions. Participants will be asked not to disclose names or other identifying details of students or third parties, and fictional or speculative scenarios will be used where appropriate to minimise this risk. Research materials and consent information will be provided in an appropriate language where required. Any translation between Chinese and English will be managed carefully to preserve participants' intended meanings while maintaining confidentiality. Research data will be anonymised and securely managed in accordance with UWTSD requirements and applicable data protection requirements. Details of the specific institution(s), location(s), local contact person(s), permissions and any additional local requirements will be provided once research sites have been confirmed and before overseas fieldwork commences. Relevant UK travel guidance and appropriate travel insurance will also be reviewed prior to travel.
A3.2	Responsible Research and Innovation If research is taking place overseas please refer to the UWTSD Trusted Research and Innovation Policy and complete the Trusted Research and Innovation Checklist and submit it with this form.
A3.3	Confirm that you have read the Trusted Research and Innovation Policy
	☒

If you are a postgraduate research student working with a research supervisor or research advisor at your local university then you do not need to fill in any more sections of this appendix.

If you are working in a research collaboration with an overseas partner please complete the remaining sections of this appendix.

[Return to the main form](#)

Organisational Details	
A3.4	Name of Organisation
A3.5	Country where organisation is based:

A3.6	Registration number and name of registration body (examples of relevant registration bodies are government, tax, corporation, charity, educational authority):
A3.7	What is the legal status of the organisation? (for example: public university, private university, charity, private company, non-profit making company, government research organisation, independent research organisation) Please include the date of foundation. Note: We may be required to ask for evidence of this at a later stage.
A3.8	Is your organisation affiliated to any other organisation? (i.e. is the organisation legally part of a larger organisation or a group of larger organisations).
A3.9	Name(s) of investigators in the organisation who will be responsible for the collaborative research and innovation

About New Partners			
A3.10	Why does a partner want to work with you?		
A3.11	What are they expecting in return for their financial support or involvement?		
A3.12	Is the organisation associated with a country which may be viewed as hostile to the UK or one which has different democratic and ethical values from our own? If you have ticked YES, please briefly describe below how you will maintain the UK's democratic and ethical values within the research.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
A3.13	Has due diligence into the partner identified any involvement in research on behalf of the military or police with links to a hostile state? If you have ticked YES, please summarise below how you will prevent information from this research from being released to these organisations.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
A3.14	Set within the context of any information gained from due diligence, could your research be misused or have unintended applications which would be negative? If you have ticked YES, please summarise below how this might occur.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
A3.15	Are there any legal, regulatory or university policy constraints on undertaking your research with this partner? If you have ticked YES, please summarise these below.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
A3.16	Having considered the answers to questions A3.10-A3.15, are there potential reputational or ethical risks to you or the university? If you have ticked YES, please summarise these risks below.	YES	NO
		☐	☐

About Research Relationships		YES	NO
A3.17	Are the terms of any proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in keeping with the expectations of your department and university?	☐	☐
A3.18	Are you providing existing intellectual property (IP), research data, confidential or personally identifiable data to the project? If so, how is this going to be protected?	☐	☐
A3.19	Who will own any IP that is generated?		
A3.20	What plans do you have in place for protecting the resulting IP?		
A3.21	What contractual requirements are you able to put in place to protect the interests of your academic institutions?		
A3.22	What access will the research partner have to your IT network? If they do have access, what broader visibility might this provide?		
A3.23	Is there any physical separation or protection required between research in similar fields?		

About Existing Partners			
A3.24	Would proceeding with the research raise potential conflicts of interest with existing research partners? If you have ticked YES, please explain these conflicts below.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
A3.25	Have you spoken with your existing partners about any potential conflict of interest? If you have ticked YES, please briefly summarise their response(s) below.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
A3.26	Does any non-disclosure agreement for this project include an expectation that you will need to provide visibility to existing partners? If you have ticked YES, please explain below how this will be managed.	YES	NO
		☐	☐
A3.27	Will this research breach any existing contractual agreements that you, your department or university already have? If you have ticked YES, please explain below how this will be managed.	YES	NO
		☐	☐

[Return to the main form](#)