

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

RESEARCH STUDENTS

This form is to be completed by the student within **SIX** months for full-time students and **TWELVE** 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.

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

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.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

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**: "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".

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

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Shang Zhao			
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:	Education & Humanities			
4	Campus:	Swansea			
5	E-mail address:	2405657@student.uwtsd.ac.uk			
6	Contact Telephone Number:	07962640959			

For students:		
7	Student Number:	2405657
8	Programme of Study:	Full time EDD Doctorate in Education programme
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Dr Julia Holloway

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☒	NO	☐
					Date
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
Institute Research Committee		☐			
Other (write in)		☒	29/09/2025		

SECTION C: 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	British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research FIFTH EDITION (2024)	☒

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution					
2	Contact person name					
3	Contact person e-mail address					
4	Is your research externally funded?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	YES	☐	NO	☐
7		Employed	YES	☐	NO	☐
8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa	If YES then the permission question	YES	☐	NO	☐

	Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	below does not need to be answered.				
9	Has permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	☐	NO	☐

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☐
	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	An Investigation into the Implementation of Wales' Digital Competence Framework (DCF): Teacher Perspectives in Media Literacy Education			
2	Proposed start date:	6.2025	Proposed end date:	9.2025	
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the 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 The purpose of this research is to explore how the Digital Competence Framework (DCF) is being implemented in media literacy education in Welsh secondary schools, specifically from the perspectives of in-service teachers. Existing research highlights the increasing importance of media literacy in the digital age, and policies like the DCF position it as a central educational goal. However, there is a notable gap in empirical studies examining how teachers interpret and apply the DCF's media literacy components in practice. This qualitative study addresses that gap by using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with a small sample of secondary teachers who are actively engaging with the DCF. Through this approach, the research aims to generate in-depth insights into how the DCF is operationalized in classrooms, the challenges educators face, and the kinds of				

	support that facilitate its implementation. The study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge by offering grounded, practice-based evidence about the realities of implementing media literacy education within the Welsh education system. It addresses an area of increasing importance, given the rise of misinformation, digital manipulation, and the need for critical engagement with media content. Findings from this research may inform future professional development strategies, curriculum planning, and policy adjustments to strengthen digital and media literacy education across Wales. (this box should expand as you type)
4	Research Question Main question: How do in-service secondary teachers perceive and implement the Digital Competence Framework (DCF) of Wales in their classrooms, particularly regarding media literacy education? Sub-questions: • How do teachers understand the aims and significance of the DCF in the context of media literacy education? • In what ways do teachers incorporate media literacy elements of the DCF into their classroom practices? • What kinds of challenges, constraints, and enabling factors do teachers encounter when applying the DCF to media literacy teaching? (this box should expand as you type)
5	Aims of Research Activity This study aims to explore how in-service secondary teachers in Wales perceive and implement the Digital Competence Framework (DCF), with a specific focus on media literacy education. The research seeks to investigate how teachers interpret the DCF's goals, how they operationalize media literacy components in their classroom practices, and what challenges or enabling factors they experience in this process. By gaining insight into teachers' lived experiences and professional perspectives, this research aims to contribute practical and policy-relevant understanding to enhance the

	effective delivery of media literacy education under the DCF. It also aims to address a gap in the existing literature, which has paid limited attention to how the DCF is enacted in real teaching contexts, especially concerning students' development of critical digital and media skills. (this box should expand as you type)
6	Objectives of Research Activity • To examine teachers' understanding of the media literacy elements embedded within the Digital Competence Framework (DCF). • To explore how these elements are integrated into classroom practices by teachers in line with the DCF. • To identify the key challenges and enabling factors teachers encounter when implementing media literacy through the DCF. • To generate practical insights that may inform teacher training, curriculum development, and policy refinement to enhance the effective implementation of media literacy education under the DCF. (this box should expand as you type)
	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, 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.
7	This research will use qualitative methods to collect data from in-service secondary teachers in Wales. Two techniques will be employed: online questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The first stage will involve distributing an electronic questionnaire to approximately 30 teachers working in Welsh secondary schools. The questionnaire will be created and distributed via Microsoft Forms. The questionnaire will contain a combination of multiple choice, Likert scale questions and open-ended questions designed to gather information about teachers' understanding of the media literacy component of the Digital Competency Framework (DCF) and its implementation in the classroom. Participants will also be asked if they would like to participate in a follow-up interview.

In the second stage, **semi-structured interviews** will be conducted with a smaller sample of approximately 4 to 6 secondary teachers who express interest in further participation. Interviewees will be selected to reflect a range of teaching backgrounds and school contexts. I will use platforms such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom to conduct online interviews and develop a flexible interview guide based on the results of the questionnaire. Each interview is expected to last between 20 and 30 minutes and will be audio recorded with the participant's consent.

Why Two Methods Are Used

The use of these two methods allows for two-tiered data collection. The questionnaire provided breadth by capturing patterns and variations across a wider range of teachers, while the interviews added depth by exploring the reasons, experiences and contextual factors behind these patterns. This sequential design follows the principle of methodological complementarity (Greene et al., 1989) and the initial results of the questionnaire informed the focus and direction of the interview phase.

Meanwhile, in this study, given that the implementation of the DCF as a research object exhibits a dual nature—encompassing both teachers' general understanding of the policy and their actual practices in specific teaching contexts — a more comprehensive understanding of the DCF's implementation in media literacy requires integrating macro common trends gathered via questionnaires with micro individual differences uncovered through interviews. By combining these two methods, the study achieves both breadth and depth in its analysis. Therefore, only through the integration of both approaches can the study acquire research data that is both broad and profound.

(this box should expand as you type)

Location of research activity

Identify all locations where research activity will take place.

8

The study will be conducted in Wales, UK. An online questionnaire will be distributed electronically via Microsoft Forms, allowing participants to complete it at a time and place of their convenience. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted online (using platforms such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom) or face-to-face, depending on participants' preferences and schedules. If a face-to-face interview is requested, the interview will take place in a quiet, private and neutral location mutually agreed upon by the researcher and the participant. Every effort will be made to ensure the privacy and comfort of participants during the

	interview process, whether online or offline. No research activities will be conducted on school premises during instructional hours, except in cases where prior explicit permission has been granted by the institution and the participant. (this box should expand as you type)
	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. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this.
9	(this box should expand as you type)

10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT publicly available?	NO	☒
		YES	☐
11	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. (this box should expand as you type)		

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	YES	NO
12	A prosperous Wales	☒	☐
13	A resilient Wales	☐	☒
14	A healthier Wales	☒	☐
15	A more equal Wales	☒	☐
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☒
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☒	☐
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	A Prosperous Wales - By investigating how media literacy education is delivered in schools, this research is helping to improve the educational attainment and digital skills of young people in Wales. Equipping pupils with the ability to critically evaluate digital content		

will help them with lifelong learning and future employability in a digital society.

Healthier Wales - Media literacy is closely linked to emotional well-being and mental health. Helping young people to recognise misinformation, avoid harmful online content and understand digital risks can help develop healthier digital habits and reduce the negative impact of online media.

A more equal Wales - By including the perspectives of learners, teachers and school leaders from a range of school settings, this study highlights possible differences in access to media literacy education in different communities. The findings may help to promote more equitable access to digital skills and information literacy for all learners.

Globally Responsible Wales - This project draws on Finnish best practice to encourage international learning and intercultural awareness. It also supports the development of ethical and informed digital citizens who are able to participate responsibly in the global digital environment.

(this box should expand as you type)

SECTION F: 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: (this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

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

SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

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: (this box should expand as you type)		

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?	Up to 30 in-service secondary school teachers working in Wales will be invited to complete an online questionnaire. From those who have indicated a willingness to be interviewed, approximately 4 to 6 will be selected for follow-

		up semi-structured interviews. The total number of participants in the study will be no more than 30 as the interviews will be drawn from the questionnaire respondents. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
11	Who will the participants be?	This research will involve in-service secondary school teachers working in Wales, who are currently engaged with the implementation of the Digital Competence Framework (DCF) , particularly in areas related to media literacy education. This group has been selected because teachers play a central role in interpreting and enacting curriculum frameworks such as the DCF. While the framework applies across all school levels, secondary school teachers are more likely to address the more complex and critical aspects of media literacy — such as evaluating online content, understanding bias, and digital citizenship — which aligns closely with the focus of this study (Buckingham, 2006; Livingstone & Third, 2017). References : Buckingham, D. (2006) Defining digital literacy – What do young people need to know about digital media? <i>Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy</i>, 1(04), pp.263–277. doi:https://doi.org/10.18261/issn1891-943x-2006-04-03. Livingstone, S. and Third, A. (2017). Children and young people’s rights in the digital age: An emerging agenda. <i>New Media & Society</i>, [online] 19(5), pp.657–670. doi:https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816686318. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
12	How will you identify the participants?	Participants will be identified through professional networks, school websites, and teacher associations in Wales. An open call for participation will be distributed online, inviting secondary school teachers to take part in the questionnaire.

	The inclusion criteria will be clearly stated: participants must be currently teaching in a Welsh secondary school and have experience with the DCF in their teaching practice. From the questionnaire responses, those who indicate willingness to be interviewed will be considered for follow-up. A purposive sampling approach will be used to select 4 to 6 interview participants based on relevant factors such as subject taught, years of experience, and diversity of school contexts (e.g., rural vs. urban). This approach helps ensure that a range of perspectives is captured while keeping the sample size manageable for in-depth qualitative research. Selection is not intended to represent all teachers statistically, but to explore diverse individual experiences in depth. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
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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			
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>				

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			
<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>				

SECTION H: 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. 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	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Full risk assessment completed and appended?</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>☐</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>No</td> <td>☒</td> </tr> </table>	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	Yes	☐		No	☒
Full risk assessment completed and appended?	Yes	☐					
	No	☒					
2	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information <table border="1"> <tr> <td> Risk to participants: 1. Psychological stress and emotional distress: Teachers may feel uncomfortable reflecting on their professional challenges, particularly when discussing sensitive issues such as institutional constraints, lack of training, or perceived shortcomings in implementing the DCF. Additionally, they may feel concerned about being identified—either during the interview process or through published results—especially if their comments are critical of school policies or teaching practices. </td> <td> <i>How you will mitigate the risk to participants:</i> 1. I will clearly state in the study description that participation in the study is entirely voluntary. Participants will be informed that they may skip any question or withdraw from the study at any point during the data collection process, without providing a reason and without facing any negative consequences. In addition, they will have the option to withdraw their data up to two weeks after data collection is completed, before analysis begins. The research questions will not focus on personal performance, but rather on system-level experiences to reduce individual pressure. For face-to-face interviews conducted offline, locations will be carefully chosen to ensure privacy and anonymity - e.g. quiet public places where participants are unlikely to be recognised. Participants will also be </td> </tr> </table>	Risk to participants: 1. Psychological stress and emotional distress: Teachers may feel uncomfortable reflecting on their professional challenges, particularly when discussing sensitive issues such as institutional constraints, lack of training, or perceived shortcomings in implementing the DCF. Additionally, they may feel concerned about being identified—either during the interview process or through published results—especially if their comments are critical of school policies or teaching practices.	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to participants:</i> 1. I will clearly state in the study description that participation in the study is entirely voluntary. Participants will be informed that they may skip any question or withdraw from the study at any point during the data collection process, without providing a reason and without facing any negative consequences. In addition, they will have the option to withdraw their data up to two weeks after data collection is completed, before analysis begins. The research questions will not focus on personal performance, but rather on system-level experiences to reduce individual pressure. For face-to-face interviews conducted offline, locations will be carefully chosen to ensure privacy and anonymity - e.g. quiet public places where participants are unlikely to be recognised. Participants will also be				
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	2. Risk of personal data leakage: Data collection may include personally identifiable information (e.g. name, school, or teaching subject), which, if not properly protected, could risk breaching participant confidentiality. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	reminded that their identity will not be disclosed in any form in the final report and that the quotes used will be fully anonymised and untraceable. 2. I will remove all obvious direct identifiers after data collection and replace the real identity of respondents with a code known only to me. When faced with data storage and transmission issues, I will ensure that data is stored in encrypted devices and transmitted through secure channels. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
3	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	
	This study does not involve minors or illegal or highly sensitive incidents from participants' personal experiences. However, discussions about media literacy education may cover sensitive topics such as cyberbullying, misinformation, or harmful online content. Participants were given the option to skip answering any questions they felt uncomfortable with in the questionnaire and interview. A list of relevant specialist mental health support services will be provided to participants at the end of the interview. These services offer free, confidential advice and support for education professionals who may experience emotional distress or stress related to their work. These include: • Education Support (for teachers) - https://www.educationsupport.org.uk • Mind Cymru (mental health in Wales) – https://www.mind.org.uk • Samaritans (available 24/7) – 116 123– https://www.samaritans.org • NEU Teacher Helpline – https://neu.org.uk • NASUWT Wellbeing Support – https://www.nasuwat.org.uk <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	

4	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: Personal safety during fieldwork: If any in-person interviews are conducted in unfamiliar environments, there may be low-level risks associated with travel or working alone. Emotional distress: The researcher may encounter emotionally charged or critical reflections from participants regarding workload, institutional pressures, or negative professional experiences, which could cause secondary emotional stress. Risk of accusation or misinterpretation: Discussing school-related challenges or frustrations could lead to misunderstandings, including potential accusations of misrepresentation or unethical conduct if proper boundaries and transparency are not maintained. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:</i> - In-person interviews will only be conducted in safe, public, and mutually agreed-upon locations. The researcher will notify a trusted contact of the meeting time and location in advance and avoid conducting interviews alone in private or unfamiliar spaces. - The researcher will maintain emotional self-awareness during interviews and schedule time for reflection and debriefing after potentially sensitive conversations. Support will be sought from academic supervisors if needed. - All interactions will follow strict ethical guidelines. Clear information sheets and consent forms will outline the scope of the study, and all data will be anonymised. Transparency with participants will be maintained throughout the process to reduce the likelihood of misunderstanding or misrepresentation. The researcher will avoid making judgments or personal interpretations during interviews, and will ensure that any quotes used are de-identified and contextually accurate. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

5	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to the University: 1. Negative public opinion: the university's reputation is tarnished as a result of leakage of respondents' privacy and data due to my mishandling and other issues in the study. 2. Ethical compliance issues: an alleged unethical situation in the research could lead to the university facing scrutiny and criticism. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the University:</i> 1. I will ensure that the process of the study is transparent, and that the guidelines of the University Ethics Committee are strictly adhered to, to ensure that all operations are in compliance with laws, regulations and university rules. At the same time, I will strengthen the review of the study before publication to ensure appropriate content. In addition, if problems arise, i will actively co-operate with the University's Media Relations Department in order to minimise the damage quickly. 2. I will ensure that a detailed ethical application form is submitted to the University prior to the commencement of the study to ensure that it is approved by the University. Also, follow the steps in the study as a way of self-censoring and monitoring all operations for ethical compliance. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
6	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: 1. Use of Paper: The use of paper questionnaires or materials in the research process may lead to unnecessary waste of paper, indirectly increasing the consumption of forest resources. In addition, improperly disposed of waste paper may add to the burden of landfills, further impacting carbon emissions and environmental health.	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to environment:</i> 1. I will make more use of digital forms, such as digital devices to collect and consolidate data in lieu of paper documents. If paper must be used, recycled and reclaimed paper will be chosen and will not be over-printed. Also recycle paper after it has been used.

	2. Travel to Meetings: Face-to-face interviews or meetings may require travelling across regions, resulting in a significant carbon footprint. The travelling process may have a negative impact on the environment due to increased aircraft and vehicle emissions or energy consumption. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	2. I will ensure that unless necessary, I will give priority to online platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc. to conduct interviews or discussions and reduce the need for travelling. If offline interviews are really necessary, I will give priority to public transport to reduce per capita carbon emissions. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
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	Disclosure and Barring Service			
	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
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☒	☐
8	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 I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	By explaining to participants the purpose of the study and how the data they provide contributes to the study ensures the transparency of this study and guarantees that the study fulfils its strict ethical responsibilities, the required feedback includes the following points: 1. Timing and planning: During data collection, participants will be invited to leave their email addresses voluntarily if they are interested in learning about the study's final results. They will be informed that the study will be completed within a specific timeframe, and once the research is finished, those who express interest will receive a summary of the findings via email. This approach respects participants' right to access the results while allowing them to decide whether they want to be contacted further. 2. Confirmation in qualitative research: If the respondents are quoted directly in the research report, it is necessary to check the quotes with the respondents to ensure that the direct quotes are correct in order to improve the accuracy of the research. 3. Responding to questions: Provide appropriate answers to respondents' questions and concerns about the results in order to establish a good relationship of trust with the

	respondents and to ensure the integrity of the ethical guidelines. 4. Acknowledgement: To express gratitude to the respondents for their participation in the study and to recognise their contribution to the study as a sign of respect. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
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.
	How information will be provided to potential participants: A detailed Information Sheet will be provided to all potential participants prior to the start of data collection. The sheet will include the following: • Purpose and objectives of the study. • The person conducting the study and their contact information. • Specific tasks to be completed by the participants. • How the data will be handled, including how it will be stored, analysed and reported. • The guarantees related to confidentiality and anonymity and their limitations. • The voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw up until two weeks after the data collection phase ends. After this point, data analysis and report writing will begin, making withdrawal no longer possible. • Any risks or benefits that may be associated with the research. Arrangements for providing consent: 1. Online Questionnaire: As the questionnaire is anonymous and involves minimal risk, participants will not be asked to sign a formal consent form. Instead, an electronic information sheet will be displayed on the first page of the questionnaire, outlining the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, data protection measures, and participants' rights. Participants will be informed that by clicking "Next" to proceed with the questionnaire, they are providing their informed consent to take part in the study. 2. Semi-Structured Interviews: Participants selected for follow-up interviews will be asked to read a separate participant information sheet and sign a written informed consent form before the interview takes place. This form will confirm that they understand the nature and purpose of the study, agree to audio recording, and are aware of their rights. Participants may choose to skip any questions or withdraw from the study at any point during the data collection process. They

	may also request withdrawal of their data within two weeks after the interview, before data analysis begins. After this point, data will be analyzed and included in the findings, and cannot be changed retrospectively. Consent will be re-confirmed verbally at the beginning of each interview. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
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.
	Arrangements to ensure anonymity: In all forms of publication resulting from this study, participant information will be anonymised to ensure individuals cannot be identified. Methods of anonymisation in this study include: • Removing all direct identifiers, such as names, email addresses, and locations. • Modifying or generalising indirect identifiers, such as specific job roles, institutions, or age. • Assigning each participant a unique code (e.g., T01, T02) to track their data during analysis without linking it to their real identity. Arrangements to ensure confidentiality: All information provided by participants will be treated with strict confidentiality. Access to raw data will be restricted to the sole researcher. Digital data will be stored on password-protected and encrypted devices, while any physical materials (e.g., consent forms or printed notes) will be securely stored in locked cabinets. When findings are shared, they will be presented only in summarised or aggregated formats (such as statistical charts or thematic summaries), ensuring that no personally identifying details are disclosed. Right to withdraw: Participants will be informed that they have the right to withdraw their data within two weeks after their interview or questionnaire submission. After this period, data analysis and report writing will begin, and their data may be integrated into findings that cannot be retrospectively altered. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

SECTION J: 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	"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.	☒	☐
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	The research activity involves the collection of personal data as defined by the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. This includes participants' names (for consent and identification purposes), basic demographic information (e.g., age, gender, teaching subject, years of experience), and audio recordings from semi-structured interviews. Personal data will be used solely for the purpose of this doctoral research, in order to explore teacher perspectives on the implementation of media literacy education within the Digital Competence Framework (DCF). Only data relevant to the research aims will be collected. Audio recordings will be transcribed and anonymised, and all identifiable information will be removed during data processing. Data will be stored securely on encrypted, password-protected devices and cloud services compliant with university policy. Access to raw data will be limited to the researcher and supervisory team. Participants will be informed of their data rights, including the right to withdraw their data up to two weeks after collection. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
	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	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	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:		
	Data Storage: All data will be stored on OneDrive cloud storage. This storage location is password-protected, ensuring access is restricted to the researcher and supervisor. Backup Procedures: Regular backups will be performed to OneDrive to prevent data loss. Encryption: The OneDrive employs end-to-end encryption to safeguard data in transit and at rest. Password Protection: Access to both storage devices and accounts is restricted by strong, unique passwords, which will not be shared with unauthorized individuals. Anonymisation and Pseudonymisation: During the analysis phase, personal identifiers (e.g., names, demographic details) will be replaced with pseudonyms to protect participant identities. Data will be anonymized wherever feasible to further safeguard privacy. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

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	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
20	Data archiving?	☐	☒
21	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 any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	Dr Julia Holloway , Shang Zhao		
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	Shang Zhao		
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
24	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. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	The research data will be securely stored on OneDrive . Access is restricted to the researcher . In accordance with standard University policy and best practice in academic research, research data will be retained for a period of 5 years. The purpose of the 5-year retention period is usually recommended to ensure transparency and accountability in case the research needs to be reviewed, audited or externally validated after submission. I will allow time for potential scholarly dissemination, such as conference presentations and publications, after the project completion. I will protect the integrity of the research by retaining a verifiable copy of the original data in case questions, queries, or requests for clarification arise. After five years, the data will be securely deleted to minimise the risks associated with long-term data storage, such as leakage or unnecessary retention of personal information. This timeframe is in line with the principles of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) regarding data minimisation and storage restrictions. As the data collected will only be used for this particular study and will not be used for future research or archiving, there is no need to retain the data beyond this timeframe. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. (<i>Most relevant to academic staff</i>)		
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	☒

SECTION K: 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.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
1	Signature of applicant:	Shang Zhao Date: 28/5/2025

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:		Date:
3	Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		Date:
5	Signature:		

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

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☒	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate) ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT
☒	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.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.

RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY

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

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

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.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.