

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

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

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

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

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

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Fakrul Islam
2	Student Number:	2510584
3	Email address:	2510584@student.uwtsd.ac.uk
4	Programme of Study:	MBA International Business
5	Supervisor:	Ghulam Mujtaba

SECTION B: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.	
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice	☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	☒
3	UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018	☒
4	<i>British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2024)</i>	☒

SECTION C: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	The Role of Social Media Advertising in Shaping Consumer Purchase Decisions Among Young Consumers in the United Kingdom		
2	Proposed start date:	14 July	Proposed end date:	3 September
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words in each section) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the three points below: • Purpose of Research Activity • Proposed Research Question • Aims of Research Activity			

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	• <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how Existing Research 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 This research aims to investigate how social media advertising influences consumer purchase decisions among young consumers in the United Kingdom. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and YouTube have become important marketing channels through which organisations communicate with consumers using personalised and interactive advertisements. Although previous studies have shown that advertising characteristics such as credibility, informativeness, entertainment and personalisation influence consumer behaviour, existing findings remain inconsistent and are largely based on studies conducted outside the UK. Consequently, there is limited evidence explaining how these advertising attributes collectively shape purchase decisions among young UK consumers. The proposed research will collect primary quantitative data through an online questionnaire administered to young consumers aged between 18 and 34 years residing in the United Kingdom. Statistical analysis will be undertaken using IBM SPSS to examine the relationships between advertising attributes and consumer purchase decisions. Existing literature, particularly studies based on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, provides the theoretical foundation for this research by explaining how external advertising stimuli influence consumers' internal evaluations and subsequent purchasing behaviour. However, previous research has mainly focused on purchase intention, influencer marketing or social commerce rather than actual purchase decisions within the UK context. The findings are expected to contribute to the academic literature by providing updated empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of different social media advertising characteristics. Practically, the study will assist marketers and organisations in designing more effective social media advertising strategies that better engage young consumers and support informed marketing decision-making.
4	Research Question Primary Research Question How does social media advertising influence consumer purchase decisions among young consumers in the United Kingdom? Sub-questions 1. How does advertising credibility influence consumer purchase decisions among young consumers in the UK? 2. How does advertisement informativeness influence consumer purchase decisions among young consumers in the UK? 3. How does advertisement entertainment influence consumer purchase decisions among young consumers in the UK? 4. How does advertisement personalisation influence consumer purchase decisions among young consumers in the UK?
5	Aims of Research Activity Aim 1 To examine the role of social media advertising in shaping consumer purchase decisions among young consumers in the United Kingdom. This aim will be achieved through the following objectives.
6	Objectives of Research Activity 1. To examine the influence of social media advertising credibility on consumer purchase decisions among young consumers in the United Kingdom. 2. To investigate the effect of advertisement informativeness on consumer purchase decisions among young consumers in the United Kingdom. 3. To evaluate the influence of advertisement entertainment on consumer purchase decisions among young consumers in the United Kingdom. 4. To examine the effect of advertisement personalisation on consumer purchase decisions among young consumers in the United Kingdom.
	Proposed data collection methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity to collect data, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed.

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	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	Primary quantitative data will be collected using a structured online questionnaire. The questionnaire will be administered electronically through an online survey platform such as Microsoft Forms or Google Forms. A survey link will be distributed via social media platforms, university networks and online communities to recruit eligible participants. The target population consists of young consumers aged between 18 and 34 years who currently reside in the United Kingdom and actively use social media platforms. Participants will be recruited using convenience sampling because it provides an efficient method for accessing respondents within the available time and resources. Approximately 100–150 completed questionnaires will be collected. Before accessing the questionnaire, participants will be presented with a Participant Information Sheet explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality arrangements and researcher contact details. Participants will then provide informed consent electronically before proceeding to the questionnaire. The questionnaire will contain two sections. The first section will collect basic demographic information, including age, gender and level of social media usage. No directly identifiable personal information, such as names, addresses, telephone numbers or email addresses, will be collected. The second section will include closed-ended statements measuring the study variables using previously validated five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The questionnaire will measure social media advertising credibility, advertisement informativeness, advertisement entertainment, advertisement personalisation and consumer purchase decisions. No interviews, focus groups, observations or experiments will be conducted as part of this study. No audio recordings, video recordings or photographs of participants will be collected. The research involves only anonymous questionnaire responses. Completed questionnaires will be downloaded and stored securely on password-protected university-approved electronic storage accessible only to the researcher and supervisor. All data will be anonymised before analysis and handled in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the University's Research Data Management Policy. The collected data will be analysed using IBM SPSS to produce descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis to address the research objectives. The data will be retained only for the period required by university regulations before being securely deleted.

SECTION D: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☐	☒
3	Use of focus groups?	☐	☒
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☐	☒
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☐	☒
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒

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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: Not applicable. Data will be collected solely through an anonymous online questionnaire.		

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

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

SECTION E: Intended Participants

	Who are the intended participants:	YES	NO
1	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.	☐	☒
	Details of any other participant groups: Not applicable. All participants will be adults (18–34 years old) capable of providing informed consent.		

	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?	Approximately 100–150 participants are expected to complete the online questionnaire. Participants will be recruited using convenience sampling through social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn), online communities and personal networks within the United Kingdom. Participation will be entirely voluntary.
11	Who will the participants be?	Participants will be young consumers aged between 18 and 34 years who currently reside in the United Kingdom and actively use social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook or YouTube.
12	How will you identify the participants?	Participants will be identified through online recruitment. The questionnaire link will be shared through social media platforms, online communities and personal or professional networks.

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	Before participating, respondents will confirm that they are aged 18 years or above and currently reside in the United Kingdom.
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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			
	Not applicable. All applicable questions have been answered "Yes." Question 17 is marked "Not Applicable" because this study does not involve observational research.			

	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			
	Not applicable. Participants will not receive payment, no specialist equipment will be used, there are no financial or commercial interests associated with the research, and no deception or concealment of the study aims will be employed. Data will be collected through an anonymous online questionnaire only. No audio recordings, video recordings or photographs will be taken.			

SECTION F: Anticipated Risks

	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them.	
1	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information. If you have identified in section D that there are no participants, then enter N/A and go skip to question 3.	
	Risk to participants: Although this study is considered low risk, participants may experience minor inconvenience or slight discomfort when answering questions about their attitudes towards social media advertising and purchasing	How you will mitigate the risk to participants: Participants will receive a Participant Information Sheet explaining the purpose of the study, what participation involves, and that participation is entirely voluntary. Electronic informed consent will be obtained before the

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	behaviour. There is also a small risk relating to data privacy because participants will provide responses through an online questionnaire. Participants may also feel they have to complete all questions once they begin the survey.	questionnaire begins. Participants will be informed that they may withdraw from the survey at any time before submitting their responses and may skip any question they do not wish to answer. No personally identifiable information (such as names, addresses, telephone numbers or email addresses) will be collected. Questionnaire responses will remain anonymous and confidential. All electronic data will be stored on password-protected devices accessible only to the researcher and supervisor and managed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the University's Research Data Management Policy.
2	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities	
	This research does not involve sensitive, illegal, embarrassing or potentially distressing topics. The questionnaire focuses only on participants' perceptions of social media advertising and consumer purchasing behaviour. No questions relating to criminal activity, health conditions, political opinions, religious beliefs, sexual behaviour or other sensitive personal matters will be included. Consequently, no specialist support services or referral procedures are anticipated.	
3	Risks to the investigator For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
	Risk to the investigator: The researcher may experience minor risks associated with managing participant data, maintaining confidentiality, and ensuring compliance with ethical and data protection requirements. There is also a possibility of time pressures during participant recruitment, data collection and analysis.	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:</i> The researcher will complete all required ethics and data management procedures before commencing data collection. Participant data will be anonymised and securely stored using password-protected electronic storage. The researcher will follow University ethical guidelines and UK GDPR requirements throughout the project. A structured research timetable will be followed to minimise workload pressures and ensure that all research activities are completed safely and professionally.
4	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to the University: Potential institutional risks include breaches of research ethics, data protection legislation or confidentiality, which could negatively affect the University's reputation. There is also a minor risk if participant information were handled inappropriately.	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the University:</i> The study will comply fully with the UWTSD Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice, the UWTSD Research Data Management Policy, UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Ethical approval will be obtained before data collection begins. Only anonymous data will be collected and securely stored. Research findings will be presented honestly and accurately without identifying individual participants or organisations.
5	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: The proposed study presents negligible environmental risk because all data collection	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to environment:</i> The research will minimise environmental impact by using electronic documentation and

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	will be conducted online through an electronic questionnaire. No laboratory work, travel-intensive fieldwork, hazardous materials or environmentally harmful activities will be undertaken.	online survey distribution, reducing paper consumption and unnecessary travel. Digital storage will be used wherever possible in accordance with University data management procedures.
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SECTION G: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

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

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	Participants will receive a short debriefing statement immediately after completing the questionnaire. The debrief will thank them for their participation, remind them of the purpose of the research and explain how their responses will contribute to the study. Contact details for the researcher and academic supervisor will be provided should participants require further information or wish to ask questions about the research. Participants may contact the researcher to request a summary of the overall research findings after the dissertation has been completed.
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.
	Prior to accessing the questionnaire, participants will be presented with an online Participant Information Sheet describing the purpose of the study, eligibility criteria, expected duration, voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality arrangements, data storage procedures, potential risks and benefits, and researcher contact details. Participants will then complete an electronic consent form before accessing the questionnaire. Consent will be obtained by asking participants to confirm that they have read the information provided, understand the study, are aged 18 years or above, currently reside in the United Kingdom, and voluntarily agree to participate. Selecting the "I Agree" option and proceeding to the questionnaire will constitute informed consent. No data will be collected until consent has been provided.
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.
	Participation in this study will be completely anonymous. The questionnaire will not collect names, email addresses, telephone numbers, IP addresses or any other information capable of directly identifying participants. All responses will be assigned anonymous identification numbers for analysis purposes only. Electronic data will be stored securely on password-protected devices and accessed only by the researcher and academic supervisor. The data will be processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the University's Research Data Management Policy. Only aggregated statistical findings will be reported within the dissertation and any future academic outputs, ensuring that individual participants cannot be identified. Data will be retained and securely destroyed in accordance with University data retention requirements.

SECTION H: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	YES	NO
1	"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.	☐	☒

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	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	Not applicable.		
	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	Not applicable.		

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
6	University computers?	☒	☐
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
10	“Cloud” storage or websites?	☒	☐
11	Other – specify:	☐	☒
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	All research data will be stored electronically using password-protected University-approved cloud storage (e.g., Microsoft Office 365/OneDrive) and password-protected computers accessible only to the researcher and academic supervisor. Electronic files will be encrypted where appropriate and regularly backed up. Questionnaire responses will be downloaded without direct identifiers and participants will be assigned anonymous identification numbers during analysis. No paper records or audio/video recordings will be created. Any temporary files stored on a laptop will remain password protected and will be permanently deleted after the successful completion of the research in accordance with the University's Research Data Management Policy and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).		

	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?	☐	☒

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17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and/or any international equivalent):		
	Research data will be transferred electronically only through secure, password-protected University-approved storage systems. Electronic files will be encrypted where appropriate and accessible only to the researcher and academic supervisor. Anonymous questionnaire responses will be downloaded from the online survey platform and stored securely. No identifiable personal information will be collected or shared. Data will not be transferred outside the United Kingdom or shared with third-party organisations. All data processing will comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the University's Research Data Management Policy. Data will be retained until completion of the dissertation and any required examination period before being securely deleted in accordance with University requirements.		
20	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	- Principal Researcher (Student) - Dissertation Supervisor - Internal Examiner(s), if required for assessment purposes - External Examiner(s), if required under University examination procedures No other individuals or organisations will have access to the research data.		
21	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	The Principal Researcher will act as the primary custodian of all research data throughout the project. The academic supervisor will oversee compliance with University policies and ethical requirements where necessary.		
22	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form.		
	All research data will be stored electronically on password-protected University-approved cloud storage (Microsoft Office 365/OneDrive) together with password-protected computers used by the researcher. Files will be encrypted where appropriate and backed up regularly. No paper copies of participant data will be retained. Participants will be assigned anonymous identification numbers and no directly identifiable information will be stored with the questionnaire responses. Access to the data will be restricted to the researcher and academic supervisor. Data will be retained securely until completion of the dissertation, examination process and any required University retention period, after which all electronic files will be permanently and securely deleted in accordance with the University's Research Data Management Policy and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).		
22	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtسد.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	☒	
23	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	☒	

SECTION I: Use of AI tools

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

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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	Not applicable.			

SECTION J: Declaration

	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
1	Signature of applicant:	Fakrul Islam	Date: 16 July
2	Supervisor:	Ghulam Mujtaba	Date: 3 September
3	Signature:		