

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:	Doctor Catherine Morgan

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)		☒	03/04/2025		

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:	A Comparative Study of Media Literacy Education in Finland and Wales			
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 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 study investigates how media literacy education is delivered in Wales and Finland, focussing on children under 16 in Wales. In today's digital world, young people face increasing challenges in recognising trustworthy information online, particularly through social media. Media literacy education plays a key role in helping them to think critically, stay safe online and use digital content responsibly. (this box should expand as you type)				
4	Research Question How is media literacy education delivered in Wales and Finland? How can lessons be learnt from Finnish practice to help improve media literacy education in Wales? (this box should expand as you type)				

5	Aims of Research Activity The aim of this study is to explore and compare the approaches taken by the two countries and to identify effective strategies that Wales can learn from in order to enhance its own educational practice. The study will examine the experiences of pupils and the views of educators in Wales, whilst drawing on existing research in Finland. Previous research has shown that Finland is a global leader in media education, with strong policy support and well-established classroom practice. In contrast, media literacy in Wales continues to develop within its wider framework of digital competence. However, there is limited research on how these policies are reflected in practice. This study aims to provide valuable insights into how media literacy education is currently delivered in Welsh schools and how it can be further improved by learning from Finland's more established system - supporting young people to become critically minded and knowledgeable digital citizens. (this box should expand as you type)
6	Objectives of Research Activity ● To collect data from Welsh students (under 16) through anonymous questionnaires; ● To conduct interviews with Welsh teachers and school leaders about how they teach media literacy; ● To analyse Finnish media literacy education using policy documents and existing academic studies. (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 study will use a mixed-methods approach, combining an anonymous questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to explore how media literacy education is delivered and perceived in Wales, while utilising secondary data to understand the situation in Finland. Through these methods, the researcher will be able to gather a wide range of trends and insights, leading to a richer understanding of the subject.

1. Questionnaires (Wales – students under 16)

A self-completion, anonymous questionnaire will be distributed to students under the age of 16 in selected Welsh schools. The questionnaire will include both closed-ended questions (Likert scale, multiple-choice) and a small number of open-ended questions to capture students' experiences, attitudes, and understanding of media literacy. Topics will include social media habits, awareness of misinformation, online safety, and any school-based media education they have received.

- **Target number:** 20-40 student responses
- **Distribution method:** Via school contacts, youth organisations, or online platforms (with school or parental support)
- **Consent:** Parental/guardian consent will be obtained in line with ethical and data protection requirements
- **Data type:** Quantitative (with light qualitative content)
- **Purpose:** To gain an overview of media literacy knowledge and experiences from a student perspective

2. Semi-Structured Interviews (Wales – teachers and school leaders)

Interviews will be conducted with 4–6 teachers and 4–6 school leaders (e.g., headteachers, media or ICT coordinators) who are involved in the delivery or planning of media literacy education in Welsh primary and secondary schools. The interviews will explore how media literacy is taught, what challenges educators face, and how current policy (e.g., Digital Competence Framework) is applied in practice.

- **Format:** In-person or online (depending on location and preference)
- **Duration:** Approximately 20–35 minutes
- **Recording:** Audio recordings will be made with participant consent, securely stored and anonymised following GDPR guidelines
- **Consent:** Written consent will be obtained prior to interviews
- **Purpose:** To gain deeper insight into the teaching context, pedagogical decisions, and strategic approaches to media literacy education

3. Documentary and Data Analysis (Finland)

Primary data will not be collected in Finland. Instead, the study will draw on existing academic research, government reports, policy documents, and international comparative data (e.g., from OECD or UNESCO) to build a detailed picture of Finland's media literacy education system. This will allow for cross-national comparison without additional ethical clearance for international fieldwork.

	Why Two Methods Are Used Using both a questionnaire and interviews helps balance breadth and depth. The questionnaire allows for a wider student sample, while interviews offer rich, context-specific insights from educators. This mixed approach is especially useful in education studies (Creswell, 2014), and will support triangulation of data. Questionnaires and interviews will involve different participant groups, ensuring that the study captures varied perspectives. (this box should expand as you type)
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
8	The research activities will take place in a Welsh educational environment and on a web-based platform. Specifically Pupil questionnaires: Questionnaires will be administered to under-16s through collaboration with primary and secondary schools and youth organisations in south and west Wales. Teacher and School Leader Interviews: These interviews will be conducted in person (in a school or community setting in Wales) or remotely via video conferencing platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, depending on participants' preferences and schedules. Participants are likely to come from mainstream primary and secondary schools in different parts of Wales, both urban and rural. Literature and policy analyses: Secondary sources related to the Finnish media literacy education system will be accessed through online academic databases and official government websites. No specific schools or organisations will be named in the study or any of the results. All data collection will take place in the UK and all procedures will comply with the University's ethical standards and GDPR requirements. (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 project does not involve the collection of any primary data outside the UK. However, secondary data relating to Finland will be used to support cross-country comparisons. This includes publicly available academic publications, government policy documents, curriculum guides and research

	reports on media literacy education in Finland. All sources used will be produced in accordance with local ethical and academic standards, such as those set by Finnish universities, research organisations or national educational institutions. In particular, Finland follows strict research integrity guidelines developed by the Finnish National Research Integrity Council (TENK), which outlines ethical principles for research involving human participants and data protection. This study will only cite sources that meet these standards, are ethically approved and publicly disseminated. No direct contact with Finnish participants or institutions will be made in this study, and no licences or additional permissions will be required for the use of publicly available documents. Therefore, there are no risks related to local law, culture or ethics associated with the use of Finnish data in this study. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
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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. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	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?	The study will involve approximately 20-40 pupils under the age of 16 and 8-10 adult participants, including 4-6 teachers and 4-6 school leaders (e.g. headteachers, digital or media co-ordinators). (this box should expand as you type)
11	Who will the participants be?	There will be two groups of participants: Group 1: Pupils up to the age of 16 in primary and secondary schools in Wales. I will be using an anonymous questionnaire as the primary data collection method. This format is age-appropriate for students, non-intrusive, and effective in collecting a variety of

		perspectives and experiences from a wider sample. Group 2: Teachers and school leaders in Welsh schools who are involved in delivering or planning media literacy education. I will conduct semi-structured interviews. These interviews will provide a deeper understanding of how media literacy is taught, the challenges they face and how they make sense of national curriculum policies such as the Digital Competency Framework. The interviews will allow for more nuanced responses and reflection on professional experiences. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
12	How will you identify the participants?	I will identify participants through schools and education networks in Wales. For student participants, I will contact schools via email or academic and professional connections. Participating schools will help distribute parental consent forms and anonymised questionnaires to pupils under the age of 16. For adult participants, such as teachers and school leaders, I will recruit through direct contact with schools and networks of educators, and possibly through snowball sampling, whereby initial respondents may recommend other relevant participants. In order to narrow down the group of participants, I will prioritise schools that have expressed a desire to participate and aim for diversity across urban and rural areas, primary and secondary schools, and Welsh- and English-speaking education. Among teachers and school leaders, I will focus on those who are actively involved in media literacy, digital competence or curriculum-related work. In each school participating in the study, I will work with staff to select a sample of pupils using either simple random sampling or convenience sampling, depending on which method is most appropriate for that school. This will ensure that the number of participants is within manageable limits, while providing a broad and relevant perspective for the study. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

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	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		
Risk to participants:		How you will mitigate the risk to participants:	

	1. Psychological stress and emotional distress: Adolescents may feel hesitant to discuss their experiences related to cyberbullying, online sexual harassment, and other forms of media usage, particularly if they have never shared such experiences with anyone before. 2. Risk of personal data leakage: Data collection may contain personally identifiable information (e.g., name, school, or family background), which, if not properly protected, could lead to the exposure of participants' identities. At the same time, because research involves cross-border studies, data may face legal or technical compliance issues when transferred across borders. 3. Group Dynamics in Focus Groups: When conducting group interviews, participants may experience conflict or discomfort due to sensitive topics, differences in opinions, etc. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	1. I will clearly state in the study description that participants can choose not to answer specific questions or withdraw from the study at any time without facing negative consequences. Additionally, I will collaborate with professional mental health organizations to prevent psychological harm to minors and provide contact information for psychological support resources at the end of the questionnaire or interview. 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, while respecting the privacy protection regulations of three countries, including but not limited to China's Personal Information Protection Law and Europe's GDPR. 3. I will inform interviewees of a clear code of conduct prior to the group interview to ensure respect between interviewees, and avoid potential conflicts when leading the discussion, and give interviewees a choice of interviews, and set up separate interviews for students who do not want to participate in the group interview. <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	

Procedures and support measures: This study may involve sensitive topics such as cybersexual harassment or cyberbullying. Participants will be informed of the potential study content and the emotional reactions it may elicit through an information sheet prior to the start of the study.

Support resources: The researcher will provide participants with the following resources: Save the Children Finland hotline and Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (MLL) in Finland provide support services for young people with online issues. The UK's NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) provides 24-hour online support Childline (0800 1111), and China's 12355 Youth Helpdesk and the China Youth Internet Association provide educational and support services for cyberbullying and sexual harassment. The research team will also provide educational and support services for participants who need them. The research team will also provide advice on mental health support for participants who need it.

Handling of sensitive information: If potential or actual violations of the law (e.g., cyber sexual harassment) are discovered during the study, the researcher will report them to the relevant organisations in accordance with the legal requirements of the participant's location, and provide participants with a full explanation of the process and support.

(this box should expand as you type)

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:

1. Risks to personal health and safety:

The researcher may need to travel to Finland and the UK to collect research data, and will need to work in unfamiliar environments facing language barriers, cultural differences, and unexpected situations.

How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:

1. I will familiarise myself with the laws and regulations, cultural background and general safety knowledge of each place in advance before travelling. At the same time, liaise with local organisations, schools or communities in advance and establish cooperative relationships to ensure the safety and convenience of the visit. In addition, always choose public places to conduct interviews to ensure personal safety. Interviews online should ensure the

	2. Risk of physical harm: The researcher may experience negative emotional reactions such as sudden emotional outbursts from participants, leading to potential physical conflict, and possibly leading to longer term psychological harm. 3. Risk of being accused of harm or misconduct: Because this study involves minors and sensitive topics such as cyberbullying and cybersexual harassment, the researcher may be misinterpreted as invading privacy, leaking information, or triggering emotional harm, and may be accused of violating ethical and moral norms due to improper operation. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	security of the platform to avoid data leakage. 2. For offline interviews involving sensitive topics, I will learn about the physical and emotional conditions of the interviewees beforehand and work with mental health professionals to identify high-risk participants and avoid risks. Meanwhile, I will reserve ways to deal with conflicts before the interview. 3. I will strictly adhere to research ethics guidelines (e.g. BERA and UWTSD ethics policies) and ensure that all participants clearly understand the research process and their rights. In addition, record all communication and consent documents using standardised informed consent and data protection processes. Also, always work transparently with third parties (e.g. schools, parents or statutory authorities) and avoid contact with minors alone. <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.	How you will mitigate the risk to the University: 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

	2. Ethical compliance issues: an alleged unethical situation in the research could lead to the university facing scrutiny and criticism.	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, we 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.
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. 2. Travel to Meetings: Face-to-face interviews or meetings may require travelling across regions (especially for internationally collaborative cross-national studies), resulting in a significant carbon footprint. The travelling process may have a negative	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to environment:</i> 1. I will make more use of digital forms, such as online questionnaires and 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. 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

	impact on the environment due to increased aircraft and vehicle emissions or energy consumption. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	transport to reduce per capita carbon emissions. We will also optimise our travel plans, for example, by scheduling the Finnish and UK studies in the same period of time to reduce carbon emissions from flights. <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. Form and content: Informing the results in a way that is easily understood by the respondents, for example, in this study the presentation and summary report on the study for the adolescents and the education stakeholders, because of the difference in comprehension between the two, it is important to differentiate between the two in terms of form. 3. 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. 4. 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. 5. 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: Participants will be required to sign a written informed consent form with the above information to confirm that they fully understand the study and are participating voluntarily. In the case of online surveys, consent will be obtained electronically via an on-screen consent statement prior to the start of the survey, e.g., by clicking on the 'Next' button, the participant is providing consent. Handling of special cases: Minors or participants with limited cognitive abilities: consent will be obtained through a guardian or legal representative and appropriate forms of assent will be sought from the minor, e.g., through verbal confirmation. Where it is difficult to obtain written consent: when dealing with participants who are unable to provide written

consent, verbal consent will be used and the consent process will be recorded to ensure compliance with data protection legislation. For example, the consent process will be audio recorded and clearly stated before the interview begins.

Records compliant with data protection legislation: All records of consent will be kept appropriately in accordance with relevant data protection legislation (e.g. GDPR). Written consent forms and electronic records will be stored securely and access will be restricted to authorised personnel only. Consent documentation will clearly state what the data will be used for and the participant's right to withdraw consent within two weeks after the data collection phase is completed.

(this box should expand as you type)

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, to broader categories (e.g., “education policymaker,” “curriculum designer,” or “adolescent aged 15 – 17”).
- Assigning each participant a unique code (e.g., P01, P02) 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 and their academic supervisor. 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.

Where anonymity cannot be provided:

Full anonymity cannot be guaranteed for certain participants in this study—particularly policymakers and R&D (Research and Development) practitioners—because their professional roles may be recognisable in the research context. In such cases, care will be taken to refer to participants using general role descriptions (e.g., “curriculum advisor” or “education technology officer”) rather than personal names or specific institutions, to reduce the likelihood of identification.

Prior to participation, these individuals will be asked to sign a written consent form that includes the following statement:

"I understand that due to the specific nature of my professional role, full anonymity in the outputs of this study may not be possible. I consent to being referred to by my job title instead of my name and understand that the information I provide will be used solely for academic research purposes with a commitment to confidentiality."

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.

(this box should expand as you type)

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 personal data as defined by GDPR and the DPA. This		

	includes participant names, demographic information (e.g., age, gender, educational background), and audio recordings collected during semi-structured interviews and focus groups. These data are critical for my doctoral research, as they provide detailed insights into participants' perspectives and experiences regarding media literacy education. The personal data will allow for meaningful analysis and interpretation, particularly in exploring patterns and themes relevant to the research objectives. <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	The research involves asking participants about their physical or mental health or condition. This is essential to explore how adolescents' current states—such as their susceptibility to internet addiction or experiences with cyberbullying—may relate to media literacy education outcomes. Understanding these aspects is critical for identifying patterns and factors that influence their online behaviour and engagement. <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 an encrypted USB drive and OneDrive cloud storage. Both storage locations are 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 USB drive is fully encrypted to protect the data in case of theft or loss. OneDrive also 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.

(this box should expand as you type)

Data Protection			
		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. Catherine Morgan , 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 and supervisor. 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. Allow time for potential scholarly dissemination (e.g., conference presentations, publications) after project completion. 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.uwtss.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.uwtss.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: 3/4/2025

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.