

University of Westminster
University Research Ethics Committee

Application for Research Ethics

PART A

Section 1 – PROJECT AND APPLICANT DETAILS

1.1 Project Title: Gig Work Marketplace Software Project

1.2 Applicant Details

Name: Ms. Poddiewela Keerthirathna	University Email Address: w2027445@my.westminster.ac.uk
Contact Address: No.54, Mega Park, Halbarawa, Millewa, Sri Lanka.	Telephone Number: +94767500169
Faculty: School of Computer Science & Engineering	

Please check the relevant box:

Undergraduate ☐ Postgraduate ☒ MPhil/PhD Student ☐ Staff ☐

I confirm I have read the <i>University's Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research</i>	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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1.3 Supervisor/Dean of Faculty/Faculty Research Director details

Please note that all applicants with a supervisor(s) must ensure that the supervisor signs the declaration at the bottom of this page if completing Part A only or in **Section 10.3** if completing Part B

All **staff** must ensure that their Dean of Faculty, or Faculty Research Director (or nominee), as appropriate, signs the declaration at the bottom of this page if completing Part A only or in **Section 10.3** if completing Part B

Name: Ms. Dileeka Alwis	University Email Address: dileeka.a@iit.ac.lk
Faculty: School of Computing, Informatics Institute of Technology	Telephone Number: +94761490872

PART A (Continued)

Section 2 – Project Details

2.1 Please provide a description of the background with references to relevant literature (250 words maximum):

Gig work spans across a wide range of tasks, from handyman work, babysitting to online freelancing (De Stefano and Aloisi, 2018). Gig work representation in today's global workforce is elevating with technological advancement, emergence of the Gen Y and Gen Z workforce and the Covid-19 pandemic (Ray, Sengupta and Varma, 2024).

In this rapidly evolving gig economy, both employers and part-time workers struggle to find suitable matches efficiently. Employers face challenges in task outsourcing, while workers struggle to find flexible gigs that suit their requirements. Technology is called for in the gig economy for efficient work allocation.

This software development project intends to bridge this gap by developing a web application that connects employers with part-time workers. This digital platform will facilitate job posting, job picking by gig workers, and seamless communication between employers and workers. This solution enhances gig economy participation by narrowing its focus on gig work, unlike platforms that caters to both full-time and flexible jobs. Employers will benefit from efficiently sourcing reliable part-time talent. They can utilize this platform to outsource tasks, from household work to short-term professional work. Gig employees will pick those tasks to earn additional income by rendering the posted service.

2.2. Please provide a brief description and the aims of your study (250 words maximum):

The aims of the project are:

Aim 1 (PA1) – Design and develop a user friendly, simple and intuitive digital platform that enables seamless job posting for flexible employment opportunities.

Aim 2 (PA2) – Design and develop a user friendly, simple and intuitive digital platform that facilitates efficient job seeking for part-time workers.

Aim 3 (PA3) - Enhance communication between employers and part-time workers to improve task outsourcing.

2.3. Please outline the design and methodology of your study (include details of the selection and recruitment of participants (if any) and details of any invasive (e.g. blood samples, inhalation/ingestion of food and/or non-food products (in abnormally higher or lower levels than normal or a different form), or intrusive (e.g. questionnaires, focus groups, interviews, etc.) procedures [attach extra information as necessary] (400 words maximum in total):

Background reading of literature and review of existing gig work intermediary platforms is the most suitable methodology for requirements gathering, to finalize the features of this application. Literature review will involve reading journal articles, industry case studies and reports on gig work platforms. In depth research on existing platforms provide a deeper understanding and useful insights to develop a well rounded application. By reviewing similar applications, industry best practices can be identified. Background reading of literature will be highly useful to understand the common pitfalls of similar systems, which will improve the user friendliness of the application I am planning to develop. Also, reviewing literature will generate innovative ideas to differentiate this application from similar systems in the market.

2.4. Timescales

Start Date (DD/MM/YY): 09 / 12 / 2024

Estimated duration of work: 20 weeks (from 09/12/2024 to 28/04/2025)

Section 3 - RISK OF HARM				
<p>NOTE 1: Where indicated below applicants should check if the research will require ethical approval from a National Research Ethics Committee via the Integrated Research Application System (IRAS) - nres.queries@nhs.net - http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics/</p> <p>NOTE 2: The University of Westminster holds a Human Tissue Authority Licence – This licence is specifically for tissue stored at 115 New Cavendish Street in accordance with the terms of the licence – Advice must be obtained from the University Human Tissue Designated Individual (N.Presneau@westminster.ac.uk)</p>				
RISK OF HARM (to self, colleagues, participants, environment or animals)		Yes	No	N/A
1	Will any pain or more than mild discomfort result from the study?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Could the study induce any psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive physical or psychological testing of human participants that may put someone at risk, e.g. use of treadmill?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Will the study involve raising sensitive topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use, revelation of medical history, bereavement, illegal activities, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Does your work involve any "relevant material" containing human cells (e.g. blood, urine, saliva, body tissues but NOT established cell-lines) from living or deceased persons (Such work must take account of the Human Tissue Act)? – See Note 1 and 2 above.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Will DNA samples be taken from human participants (Such work must take account of the Human Tissue Act)? – See Note 1 and 2 above.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Does your study raise any issues of personal safety for you or other researchers or participants involved in the project (Especially relevant if taking place outside working hours or off University premises)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Does your study involve deliberately misleading the participants (e.g. deception, covert observation)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Does your work involve administration of a food or non-food substance of a different type from or in abnormally higher or lower amounts than normal or one that is known to cause allergic reaction(s) or potential psychological stress?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Does your study involve issues relating to personal and/or sensitive data?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PARTICIPANTS (and/or their records/associated data)		Yes	No	N/A
Does your work involve any of the following:				
11	Human participants in a health and/or social care setting (e.g. patients, those attending day centres, community care, rehabilitation centres, etc., including in the NHS, other public, private and/or voluntary sectors)? – See Note 1 above.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Human participants who may be deemed vulnerable (e.g. children, people in poverty and/or with physiological or psychological impairments, persons attending rehabilitation centres, persons in easily identifiable positions that could be subject to victimisation, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Expectant or new mothers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Refugees/Asylum seekers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Minors (under the age of 18 years old)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	Participants in custody (e.g. prisoners or arrestees)? – See Note 1 above.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Participants with impaired mental capacity (e.g. severe mental illness, brain damage, sectioned under Mental Health Act, lowered or reduced sense of consciousness)? – See Note 1 above.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Animals (or animal tissue).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS		Yes	No	N/A
19	Will you provide participants with a Participant Information Sheet prior to obtaining informed consent which can be taken away by the participant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
20	Will you describe the procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
21	Will you obtain informed consent for participation (normally written)? OR in the case of using personal data previously acquired was consent given for the reuse of the data for other research purposes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
22	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason without any impact on their care, service provision etc.?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
23	Will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
24	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated as confidential and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
25	Will you offer feedback to participants at the end of their participation, upon request (e.g. give them a brief explanation of the study and its outcomes)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
26	Has external funding or collaboration been applied for/received, which requires	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	institutional ethical consideration or approval?			
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Useful links:

- <http://www.screc.org.uk/> - Social Care Research Ethics Committee
- <http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics/> - Human Research Authority decision tool to identify if research needs National Research Ethics Committee approval
- <http://www.nres.nhs.uk/applications/guidance/governance-and-directives/?entryid62=131341> – Governance Arrangements for Research Ethics Committees
- <http://www.nres.nhs.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=134016> - NRES algorithm “Does my project require review by a Research Ethics Committee”?
- <http://www.hta.gov.uk/policiesandcodesofpractice/codesofpractice.cfm> - Human Tissue Authority Code of Practice
- <http://www.hta.gov.uk> – Human Tissue Authority website
- http://www.rsclearn.mrc.ac.uk/MRC_HumanTissueAct/player.html - Medical Research Council online training course for Human Tissue Act.

What to do next:

- **If you have answered NO to questions 1-18 (inclusive) and YES to questions 19-25 (inclusive),** you do not need to complete the Full Research Ethics Approval Form (Part B). Please keep this form for your records, and do not submit to **Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC)** unless you require ethical consideration of your study, regardless of ethical implications, by an external body (question 26 has been answered YES). **A list of Faculty contacts is below.**
- **If you have answered YES to any of the questions 1-18 (inclusive) or NO to any of the questions 19-25** the Full Research Ethics Approval Form (Part B) **MUST** be submitted including Cover Sheet, Part A and Part B of the application form plus any required supplementary documents to the Secretary of the relevant Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC). **A list of Faculty contacts is below.**
- If you are applying for external Ethical Approval, please send a *copy* of the Conditions/Approvals letters to the **University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)** Secretary (this may include the original ethical application(s)). Where the external ethics committee/body has equal standing or primary jurisdiction, e.g. another University Research Ethics Committee or a National Research Ethics Committee, any approval will normally be received and noted by the University of Westminster Research Ethics Committee and further consideration may not be required. Where the external committee does not have equal or higher standing than the University Committee then the full ethical approval process at the university may still be required. Additional institutional compliance issues may need consideration by UREC.
- All Applications (dated, signed and authorised) and supplementary information or External Approvals should be sent to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) Secretary in *electronic format with a version number, document name and date and the Principal Investigator (or Undergraduate/Postgraduate Taught Student) name.* On receipt your application will be issued a unique reference number
- All new Applications should be submitted to a Research Ethics Committee (FREC or UREC) Secretary a minimum of 10 working days in advance of the Committee meeting date (earlier submission is recommended so that applications can be pre-vetted and obvious issues addressed before the application is considered by the Committee).

Contact details:

<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Chair</u>	<u>Secretary</u>
<u>Architecture and the Built Environment</u>	<u>Professor Nick Bailey</u>	<u>Colette Davis</u>
<u>Media Arts and Design</u>	<u>Dr Anthony McNicholas</u>	<u>Fauzia Ahmad</u>

<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Chair</u>	<u>Secretary</u>
<u>Science and Technology</u>	<u>Dr John Colwell</u>	<u>Mandy Walton</u>
<u>Science and Technology Psychology Department Sub Committee</u>	<u>Dr Laura Boubert</u>	<u>TBC</u>
<u>Social Sciences and Humanity</u>	<u>Professor Marco Roscini</u>	<u>Victoria Grey- Edwards</u>
<u>Westminster Business School</u>	<u>Petar Sudar</u>	<u>Haydn Worley</u>
<u>University Research Ethics Committee</u>	<u>Professor Graham Megson</u>	<u>Huzma Kelly</u>

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