
Plan Overview

A Data Management Plan created using DMPonline

Title: Assessing Future Skills Gaps and Readiness in the UK Maritime Sector: Automation, Digitalisation, MASS, and Green Transition.

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Project abstract:

This study explores future skills requirements and current skills gaps across the UK maritime sector. Using an anonymous survey of maritime professionals and stakeholders, it examines perceptions of emerging skill priorities, the adequacy of current training provision, barriers to skills supply, and the sector's readiness for automation, digitalisation, MASS, and decarbonisation. The research also considers which occupational groups and subsectors are most affected and what interventions may be most effective in closing identified gaps. Findings will contribute to understanding how the UK maritime workforce can be better prepared for future operational, technological, and regulatory change.

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Assessing Future Skills Gaps and Readiness in the UK Maritime Sector: Automation, Digitalisation, MASS, and Green Transition.

Data Collection

What data will you collect or create?

This project will collect primary quantitative data through a structured online questionnaire survey administered via Google Forms. Primary data will be collected and stored in digital formats. Google Forms automatically generates a linked Google Sheets spreadsheet, which will serve as the primary dataset in **.xlsx** format for analysis.

How will the data be collected or created?

Primary data will be collected through a structured online questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The survey link will be distributed through professional networks, LinkedIn, maritime industry associations, and university contacts through purposive and snowball sampling. All responses will be collected anonymously. We will not ask for or store any personal identifiers such as names or email addresses. Google Forms will automatically record responses in a linked Google Sheets file, which will serve as the raw dataset.

Documentation and Metadata

What documentation and metadata will accompany the data?

Basic metadata will comprise: the title of the study; the name of the researcher; the date of data collection; the method of collection (online survey via Google Forms); the target population; the number of responses received; the geographic focus (UK maritime sector); and the version number of the dataset. Metadata will be documented in a README file that will be kept with the dataset in the project folder on the University of Plymouth OneDrive.

Ethics and Legal Compliance

How will you manage any ethical issues?

This study involves primary data collection from human participants and has been submitted to the University of Plymouth Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Business Research Ethics Committee for ethical review.

The following ethical safeguards have been put in place:

- **Informed consent:** All participants will read a participant information statement at the start of the Google Form and must actively confirm their consent before proceeding. Participation is entirely voluntary.
- **Anonymity:** The survey does not collect names, email addresses, or any direct personal identifiers. Responses cannot be traced back to individuals. Participants are advised not to include identifying information in any open-text responses.
- **Data minimisation:** Only data directly relevant to the research objectives will be collected, in line with UK GDPR data minimisation principles.
- **Secure storage:** All data will be stored in the researcher's password-protected University of Plymouth OneDrive account and will not be shared with third parties.
- **Right to withdraw:** Participants are informed that they may exit the survey at any time before submission. Due to full anonymity, data cannot be withdrawn after submission, and participants are clearly informed of this before consenting.
- **No sensitive data:** The survey does not cover sensitive topics such as mental health, personal finances, medical information, or other high-risk subject areas. All questions relate to professional perceptions of sector-level skills and workforce readiness.

How will you manage copyright and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues?

The primary survey data collected through this project is original research generated by the researcher and remains the intellectual property of the researcher, subject to any institutional policies of the University of Plymouth regarding student research outputs.

Storage and Backup

How will the data be stored and backed up during the research?

All primary data files will be stored on the researcher's University of Plymouth OneDrive. A secondary backup copy of the cleaned dataset and key project files will also be kept by the researcher on a password-protected personal device, and manual exports of the Google Sheets data will be done at key project milestones.

How will you manage access and security?

The project data will be accessible only to the researcher and the project supervisor. The University of Plymouth's OneDrive account is protected using the researcher's institutional login details, with two-factor authentication where available. Data will not be shared with third parties or persons outside of the project team.

The survey data is fully anonymous and does not contain sensitive personal information, so the risk to security is considered to be low. However, normal security procedures will continue throughout the project.

Selection and Preservation

Which data are of long-term value and should be retained, shared, and/or preserved?

The outputs of the highest long-term value from this project are the cleaned and anonymised primary dataset (Google Sheets export in .xlsx format) and the final dissertation document. In accordance with the University of Plymouth's research data retention policy for student projects, these will be retained for a minimum of one year from the submission and final assessment of the capstone project.

All primary data files will be permanently and securely deleted from OneDrive and any backup copies at the end of the retention period. As this is an independent postgraduate capstone project, there are no contractual, funder, or regulatory requirements for longer retention.

What is the long-term preservation plan for the dataset?

This project is not intended to deposit data in a formal public data repository, as this is a student project at a capstone level, and the data volume and scope do not warrant institutional archiving. The primary dataset will be stored in the University of Plymouth OneDrive for the required retention period and then securely deleted.

If the findings are then developed into a publishable output, then anonymised data could be deposited in an open repository such as the UK Data Service or Figshare at that point, subject to appropriate ethical and institutional approvals.

Data Sharing

How will you share the data?

As a capstone project and in accordance with the promise made to participants that data would only be used for this research, the main dataset will not be made available publicly during or after this project. The final dissertation will be submitted to the University of Plymouth and may be available through the institutional repository of the university following the normal procedures for postgraduate submission. Findings will be reported in an aggregated and anonymised format.

The raw dataset will be accessible to the project supervisor for supervision and verification. There is no plan for broader data-sharing during the active research period.

Are any restrictions on data sharing required?

Data sharing is restricted for the following reasons:

- **Participant consent:** Participants were informed that their anonymous responses would be used exclusively for this research project. Public release of the dataset, even in anonymised form, falls outside the scope of the consent obtained and would not be appropriate without further ethical review.
- **Capstone project scope:** As a student capstone project, this study is not subject to funder data sharing mandates requiring open access to research data.

Responsibilities and Resources

Who will be responsible for data management?

The researcher (Chukwudi Agbo) holds primary responsibility for all aspects of data management throughout the project, including:

- Designing and administering the survey instrument
- Collecting, storing, and backing up the dataset
- Cleaning and analysing the data
- Maintaining the data dictionary and README documentation
- Ensuring compliance with ethical approval conditions, UK GDPR, and University of Plymouth data management policies
- Securely deleting data at the end of the retention period

The project supervisor holds an advisory and oversight role, with read-only access to the dataset for the purposes of supervision and verification. The supervisor does not hold primary responsibility for data management activities.

What resources will you require to deliver your plan?

All resources are available at no additional cost to the student through the University of Plymouth's existing institutional provision.