



Eliminating barriers to postgraduate
research study in the West Midlands



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

PROJECT BRIEF

PRE RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMME

THAT'S ME!

ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDY
IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

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AIM

To support the Chair of the Pre-Research Degree Working Group to research Master of Research provision and Open Access Bridging Programmes across the sector, aligning with both That’s Me! and Birmingham City University’s (BCU) organisational goals relating to diversity and representation.

OUTLINE

In February 2024, BCU formed a working group to explore the potential for creating a BCU-wide Master of Research (MRes) framework to enhance routes-in to postgraduate research (PGR) study. This work was also prompted by the That’s Me! project, which includes the design of a 180 credit pre-research degree programme. The working group has agreed to explore both MRes programmes and open access bridging programmes aimed at supporting those wanting to undertake a research degree, particularly from a Global Majority background. The researcher will work with the working group’s chair to evaluate sector approaches to MRes’ and open access bridging programmes. This will involve looking at what other institutions offer and producing a report and presentation on their findings, including a series of recommendations for BCU by the end of July 2024.

It is expected the project will have three main phases:

- 1. **Evaluation** of MRes’ and open access bridging programmes across the sector, reviewing course webpages.
- 2. **Present** initial findings to the working group in mid-July.
- 3. Compilation of **findings** and **recommendations** for BCU in a **report**.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1. What MRes provision is offered across the UK HEIs sector and how are the courses structured?
 - 2. What open access bridging Programmes are offered by UK HEIs, specifically those aimed at preparing students for PGR study, and how are they structured?
 - 3. How might such provision benefit students from a Global Majority?
 - 4. Based on the findings from the research, what models and best practices should BCU consider when designing both an MRes framework and an open access bridging programme?

METHODS

This project will take a qualitative approach, with the research undertaking an evaluation of UK higher education institution’s (HEI’s) MRes programmes and open access bridging programmes.

OUTCOMES

- 1. A presentation on the project’s findings to the working group.
- 2. A report that summarises the findings the research project and offers recommendations for best practice.

INDICATIVE TIMELINE AND MILESTONES

The table below provides indicative expectations as the project progresses through its main phases. This can be negotiated with the Research Assistant as relevant to their time commitment and project progress. The period will be scaffolded with support and engagement opportunities.

Date	Activity
June 17 - June 24	Induction / Phase 1
July 8	Evaluation of programmes
July 15	Presentation to working group
July 22	Report writing
July 29	Delivery of Outcomes