



Eliminating barriers to postgraduate
research study in the West Midlands



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

CAREERS SUPPORT SURVEY

CAREERS SUPPORT SURVEY FOR GLOBAL MAJORITY POSTGRADUATE RESEARCHERS

THAT'S ME!

**ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDY
IN THE WEST MIDLANDS**

A Survey for Undergraduate students and
Information Sheet
11 August 2025

That's Me! is funded by UKRI and The Office for Students



Research
England

Office for
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Name of Fieldwork Activity:

Careers for PGRs Survey

Content of the Activity:

Research Statement (50-100 words):

As part of conceptualising a professional development hub for PGRs, Birmingham City University and University of Wolverhampton will pilot a joint online guest speaker series focused on PGR careers in 2025. The aim is to provide opportunities for PGRs to learn about a range of careers, network with professionals from diverse backgrounds, and receive support on how to promote and apply the skills and knowledge their have developed during their doctorate in the workplace. This survey is the first step in designing the series. It aims to gain Global Majority PGR views on what delivery formats they prefer and what topics and speakers they would like to see represented within series. This survey will be

Contribution to project outputs: Confirm outputs in the table

Output	Output description
19	Allies, Coaches and Mentors Hub created
20	Allies, coaches and mentors identified and engaged with the Hub
34	Open educational resource created

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH ABOUT?

That's Me! Eliminating barriers to postgraduate research study in the West Midlands is a project that aims to explore the Global Majority postgraduate research experience, from applying for to being awarded a doctorate. The project is organised into three streams: Routes In, Routes Through, and Routes Out of study. Using research methods including focus groups, interviews, and arts based methods, we want to identify and address the challenges associated with postgraduate research, and so make positive changes to the research culture and community. These changes will benefit both universities and employers in the region. This project is co-led by Birmingham City University and the University of Wolverhampton. It is funded by the UKRI and Office of Students as part of a nationwide programme to widen participation in postgraduate research.

As part of the project, we are seeking to gather information from the That's Me! Employer Board. The aim of this is to understand how employees undertaking doctoral qualifications are supported and to also ascertain the perceived benefits and challenges of this study. That's Me! supports those from global majority backgrounds; therefore, we are specifically interested in collating information for this group.

There will be both closed questions (to help us gather statistical data) and open questions so that you can share your thoughts.

Global majority is a shortened version of the term 'people of the global majority'. We use it to refer to all ethnic groups except white British and other white groups, including white minorities. This includes people from black, Asian, mixed, and other ethnic groups who are often racialised as 'ethnic minorities'.

Design and delivery:

For surveys:

The survey instrument is available in Appendix A. This survey is expected to be live for data collection between 01/03/2024 to 31/03/2024.

Location:

Online (QuestionPro)

Logistical Requirements:

The survey will be promoted via internal communication methods at BCU.

Delivery team:

This activity will be delivered collaboratively between BCU's Routes Out Action Research Team and UoW External Workstream.

Budget:

This activity will offer participants the opportunity to be entered into a £50 Lovetoshop prize draw.

A postgraduate researcher is a student enrolled on a formal course at a university which focuses on the student completing an extended research project. Examples of qualifications postgraduate researchers may be enrolled on include MRes, MPhil and PhD.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You do not have to take part if you do not want to.

WHAT WILL MY INVOLVEMENT BE?

Your involvement is completing the survey.

HOW DO I WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

You are free to withdraw within three months of participating without giving a reason. To do so, email us with the completion receipt number issued to you upon completion of the survey. You will not be expected to disclose any personal or confidential information unless you choose to leave contact details. Withdrawing from the study will have no effect on you. If you withdraw from the study, we will aim to not retain the information you have given thus far, unless you are happy for us to do so.

WHAT WILL MY INFORMATION BE USED FOR?

We will use the collected information for training materials, project publicity, and research and policy publications produced as part of this project. For a full list of the outputs associated with the project, see webpage [<https://www.bcu.ac.uk/education-and-socialwork/research/practitioner-education-research-group/research-projects/thats-me-eliminatingbarriers-to-post-graduate-research>]. Our hope is that the information you provide us will help create more inclusive universities and businesses in the West Midlands.

WILL MY TAKING PART AND MY DATA BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL? WILL IT BE ANONYMISED?

Access to records from this study will be kept as confidential as possible. Only authorised members of the That's Me! Project team will have access to records. Your data will be anonymised: your name will not be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. All digital files, transcripts, and summaries will be given codes and stored separately from any names or other direct identification of participants. Any hard copies of research information will be always kept in locked files. Limits to confidentiality: confidentiality will be maintained as far as it is possible, unless you tell us something which implies that you or someone you mention might be in significant danger of harm and unable to act for themselves; in this case, we may have to inform the relevant agencies of this, but we would discuss this with you first.

WHO HAS REVIEWED THIS STUDY?

This study has undergone ethics review in accordance with the BCU Research Ethics Policy and Procedure.

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The BCU Research Privacy Policy can be found at:

<https://www.bcu.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/policies-and-procedures/privacy-notices/research-participants>

The legal basis used to process your personal data will be *Students* "Legitimate interests". The legal basis used to process special category personal data (e.g. data that reveals racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, health, sex life or sexual orientation, genetic or biometric data) will be for scientific and historical research or statistical purposes.

To request a copy of the data held about you please contact:

informationmanagement@bcu.ac.uk

If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the conduct of this research, please contact the BCU Ethics Team at BCU_Ethics@bcu.ac.uk. If you are happy to take part in this study, please complete the consent sheet on the next page.

CONSENT FORM

Please answer the following question to confirm your understanding and consent.

- » I have read and understood the study information or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
- » I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and that I can withdraw from the study up to three months after completing the survey without having to give a reason.
- » I understand that the information I provide will be used for reports and academic publications and that the information will be anonymised unless I explicitly request not to be anonymised.
- » I agree that my (anonymised) information can be quoted in research outputs, using a pseudonym that I choose myself.
- » I understand that any personal information that can identify me, will be kept confidential and not shared with anyone other than authorised members of the That's Me! Team.

Unique Identifier. Please insert a unique identifier (your favourite colour and animal e.g., orangefish) to help us identify your response should you wish to withdraw.

Participants in this survey can be entered into a prize draw for a £50 Love2Shop voucher. If you would like to be entered into the draw insert your email here so we can contact you, if you win.

CAREERS SURVEY

Section 1 - About your study

Please answer the following questions about your study at BCU. Your answers will help us to identify whether our faculties, full-time and part-time student groups, and home and international student groups have specific needs and preferences.

Which Birmingham City University Faculty are you based in?

- » Art, Design and Media
- » Business, Law and Social Sciences
- » Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment
- » Health, Education and Life Sciences
- » Unsure

What is your Mode of Study?

- » Full time
- » Part time
- » Unsure

What is your Mode of Study?

- » Full time
- » Part time
- » Unsure

Section 2 - Timing and availability

Please answer the following questions about your time and availability. Your answers will help us to try and schedule the series at times that work best for postgraduate researchers. Please answer the following questions:

What days of the week are most convenient for you to attend online sessions? (Select all that apply)

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| » Monday | » Friday |
| » Tuesday | » Saturday |
| » Wednesday | » Sunday |
| » Thursday | |

What time of day works best for you to attend online sessions? (Select all that apply)

- » Morning (weekday) (9:00 AM - 12:00 PM)
- » Early Afternoon (weekday) (12:00 PM - 3:00 PM)
- » Late Afternoon (weekday) (3:00 PM - 6:00 PM)
- » Evening (weekday) (6:00 PM - 8:00 PM)
- » Morning (weekend) (9:00 AM - 12:00 PM)
- » Early Afternoon (weekend) (12:00 PM - 3:00 PM)
- » Late Afternoon (weekend) (3:00 PM - 6:00 PM)
- » Evening (weekend) (6:00 PM - 8:00 PM)
- » Other (specify below)

Section 3 - Session format

Please answer the following questions about format. Your answers will help us to try and design sessions that are engaging for postgraduate researchers. Please answer the following questions:

Which session format do you prefer? (Select all that apply)

- » One-on-one interviews with guest speakers
- » Interactive workshop (e.g., with learning activities)
- » Presentation with interactive Q&A
- » Panel discussions with multiple speakers
- » Other

What is your preferred session length?

- » 45 minutes
- » 60 minutes
- » 90 minutes
- » Other

What groups would you like to see represented within the series?
(Select all that apply)

- » Care leavers
- » First-generation graduates
- » International professionals
- » LGBTQ+ community members
- » Global Majority (people who are Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the Global South, and/or have been racialised as ethnic minorities)
- » People with caring responsibilities
- » People from different religious backgrounds
- » People from working class backgrounds
- » People who have studied as mature students
- » People with disabilities
- » Women
- » Other

What employers would you like to see represented in the series?
(Select all that apply)

- » Academia
- » International organisations
- » Government/Public Sector (e.g., NHS, education, local authorities)
- » Non-profit/Non-governmental organisations
- » Private Sector (e.g., technology, healthcare, nance, legal services etc.)
- » Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (business)
- » Other

What topics would you like to learn about? (Select all that apply)

- » Career development and planning
- » Employer recruitment practices
- » How to promote your doctorate (knowledge and skills) to employers
- » Mental health and well-being at work
- » Networking strategies
- » What employers are looking for/recruitment practices
- » Work-life balance
- » Support for CVs, cover letters and interviews
- » Transitioning from academia to industry
- » Other

Section 3 - Other thoughts

Please share any other thoughts you have about the series idea.

Is there anything else you would like to share about your preferences for the series?

Do you have any suggestions for potential guest speakers?

Do you have any suggestions for what we could call the series?