



Eliminating barriers to postgraduate
research study in the West Midlands



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

SECONDMENT SCHEME EVALUATION

IMPROVING 'ROUTES THROUGH' SUPPORT FOR DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS

THAT'S ME!

ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDY
IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

A Survey for Supervisor's and Participant
Information Sheet
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CONTENTS

FIELDWORK DESIGN.....

i

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

1

Data protection privacy notice

3

CONSENT FORM

4

RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIP SURVEY.....

5

Name of Fieldwork Activity:

Secondment Scheme Evaluation

Content of the Activity:

Research Statement (50-100 words):

This survey focuses on evaluating the That’s me! 2024 summer secondment scheme. This scheme offered Birmingham City University students (postgraduate taught and postgraduate researchers) and alumni (postdoctoral) the opportunity to transfer temporarily into the That’s Me! project team to undertake a mini project. Research Assistantships were envisioned as secondments in that they offered: (1) BCU students and alumni the opportunity to transfer temporarily into another role within BCU, namely the That’s Me! project team; (2) Opportunities for professional development, knowledge transfer between stakeholders, collaboration, and career advancement support; (3) An intervention to support the projects strategic goals through fresh insights, skills and additional workload capacity. The aim of our evaluation is to make recommendations to improve future such secondment-style schemes in the context of the That’s Me! project goals.

Contribution to project outputs: Confirm outputs in the table

Output	Output description
9	Secondment opportunities

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for considering participating in this study. This information sheet outlines the study's purpose and describes your involvement and rights as a participant if you agree to participate.

Birmingham City University is proud to partner with the University of Wolverhampton to deliver *That's Me! Eliminating barriers to postgraduate research study in the West Midlands*, a highly prestigious project funded by the UKRI and Office for Students as part of a nationwide programme to Widen participation in postgraduate research – UKRI. Our project approach aims to explore evidence bases that relate to the Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) experience, from recruitment to award, with a specific focus on the experiences of members of our community who identify as Global Majority.

BCU has organised its work into three action research teams that relate to key junctures of the PGR journey, namely Routes-In to study, Routes Through study and Routes Out of study. We want to investigate these areas across our PGR community using a variety of research methods. From this, we aim to develop impactful interventions that holistically improve our culture and community for everyone, and, in particular, our Global Majority community.

This survey focuses on evaluating the That's me! project's *Research Assistantship Scheme*. This scheme offered BCU students and alumni the opportunity to transfer temporarily into the That's Me! project team to undertake a mini project. Research Assistantships were envisioned as secondments in that they offered:

1. BCU students and alumni the opportunity to transfer temporarily into another role within BCU, namely the That's Me! project team;

Design and delivery:

For surveys:

The survey instrument is available in Appendix A. This survey is expected to be live from 16/09/2024 to 10/10/2024.

Location:

Online (QuestionPro)

Logistical Requirements:

The survey will be promoted via internal communication methods at BCU, specifically the That's Me! project team Research Assistant channel on Microsoft Teams.

Delivery team:

This activity will be carried out collaboratively by two academic staff member, one postgraduate researcher in the role of a Peer Researcher (a co-creator role focus solely on evaluation activities) and a Postdoctoral Research Assistant. The academic staff and Peer Researcher focused on survey design and dissemination, whilst the Peer Researcher worked with the Postdoctoral Research Assistant to analyse and report results.

Budget:

There is no budget required for this activity as voluntary participation was expected as part of the secondment scheme.

2. Opportunities for professional development, knowledge transfer between stakeholders, collaboration, and career advancement support;
3. An intervention to support the host institution's strategic goals through fresh insights, skills and additional workload capacity

The aim of our evaluation is to make recommendations to improve future such secondment-style schemes in the context of the That's Me! project goals. You will be asked to take part, in a survey about your experience/ knowledge of the research assistantship scheme. It should take approximately 10 to 20 minutes to complete. You can withdraw from the study at any point until 30/9/24, without having to give a reason. Withdrawing from the study will have no effect on you. If you withdraw from the study, we will not retain the information you have given thus far, unless you are happy for us to do so. We will use the collected information to produce a report evaluating the *Research Assistantship Scheme* and inform wider project activities, for example publications.

The 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 the files and any audio tapes. 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 kept in locked files at all times. 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.

This study has undergone an 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 questions by clicking the response Yes or No.

Yes No

- » 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 until the date provided above, 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 request that my information be attributed to me using my name when quoted in any research outputs wherever feasible.
- » 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.
- » I give permission for the (anonymised) information I provide to be deposited in a data archive so that it may be used for future research.

Name ID: initials and 4 last digits of your mobile (for example SJ 1507)

RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS SURVEY

What is your stage of study at the time of your Research Assistantship?

- » Postgraduate Taught Full-time
- » Postgraduate Taught part-time
- » Postgraduate Research Full-time
- » Postgraduate Research Part-time
- » Post-doctorate

What discipline are you presently studying in, or do you hold your doctorate in?

Do you identify as a member of the Global Majority? Global Majority refers to people who are "Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and or have been racialised as ethnic minorities" (Campbell-Stevens, 2020).

- » Yes
- » No
- » Prefer not to say
- » Unsure

On average, how many hours did you generally work each week as a Research Assistant?

How would you rate your overall experience of the Research Assistantship Scheme?

- » Excellent
- » Good
- » Average
- » Poor
- » Very Poor

How satisfied are you with the support provided during your Research Assistantship?

- » Very satisfied
- » Satisfied
- » Neutral
- » Dissatisfied
- » Very dissatisfied

To what extent did the Research Assistantship meet your expectations?

- » Exceeded expectations
- » Met expectations
- » Somewhat met expectations
- » Did not meet expectations

How would you describe the hourly rate you were paid as a Research Assistant?

- » Excellent
- » Good
- » Average
- » Poor
- » Very Poor

What did you like most about the Research Assistantship Scheme?

What did you like least about the Research Assistantship Scheme?

How could the Research Assistantship Scheme be improved?

How did you find out about the Research Assistantship Scheme?

- » BCU webpages
- » Social media
- » Moodle post
- » Doctoral Research College
- » A peer
- » Academic contact
- » Other (please specify)

How could we better promote similar opportunities in the future?

Why did you choose to apply for a Research Assistantship?
(Select all that apply to you)

- » Interest in the research/project topic
- » Desire to upskill
- » Rate of pay
- » Work hours
- » Opportunity to work with a specific mentor/supervisor/group
- » Advance my career/professional profile
- » Recommendation from a peer or academic advisor
- » Other(please specify)

How would you rate your experience of the recruitment process?

- » Excellent
- » Good
- » Average
- » Poor
- » Very Poor

How could we improve the recruitment process? (e.g., a different form of application packet, the introduction of interviews and/or applicant support sessions)

How would you rate your experience of the recruitment process?

- » Excellent
- » Good
- » Average
- » Poor
- » Very Poor

How would you rate your experience at the Online Induction Event?

- » Excellent
- » Good
- » Average
- » Poor
- » Very Poor

How could we improve Induction event? (e.g., hold in-person, structure differently)

Which mini project did you work on?

Did you work independently or with another Research Assistant?

- » Independently
- » With another Research Assistant

Not including your fellow Research Assistants, did you collaborate with any other people during your Research Assistantship?

- » Yes
- » No
- » If yes please specify with who.

How would you describe your collaboration experiences?

How clear were the goals and activities associated with your mini project?

- » Very clear
- » Clear
- » Somewhat clear
- » Not clear
- » Very unclear

How helpful was the Project Brief provided for your mini project?

- » Very helpful
- » Helpful
- » Somewhat helpful
- » Not helpful
- » Very unhelpful

How would you rate the resources provided for completing your mini project?

- » Excellent
- » Good
- » Average
- » Poor
- » Very Poor

What challenges did you face while working on your mini project? (Select all that apply)

- » None
- » Lack of resources
- » Limited time
- » Time management
- » Insufficient guidance
- » Technical difficulties
- » Collaboration issues
- » Other (please specify)

How could we improve support and guidance for mini projects?

How would you rate your experience of the Presentation Day?

- » Excellent
- » Good
- » Average
- » Poor
- » Very Poor

What was your favourite aspect of the Presentation Day?

How could we improve on the Presentation Day?

How much do you feel you have developed your knowledge about the following areas? Provide a rating from 1 to 5, where 1 is no improvement and 5 is a significant improvement.

- » The That's Me! Project
- » Inequalities relating to postgraduate research
- » The experiences and perspectives of Global Majority students
- » Higher education policy and practice
- » Equality, diversity and inclusion
- » Researcher integrity

How much do you feel you have developed your skills in the following areas? Provide a rating from 1 to 5, where 1 is no improvement and 5 is significant improvement.

- » Research skills
- » Analytical skills
- » Problem-solving
- » Time management
- » Communication skills
- » Teamwork
- » Project Management

What new knowledge and/or skills have you gained during the Research Assistantship?

How do you plan to apply what you have learned in your future academic or professional endeavours?

Based on your experience, would you take part in the That's Me! Project again?

- » Yes
- » No
- » Maybe

Based on your experience, would you recommend the Research Assistantship Scheme to other

- » Yes
- » No
- » Maybe

Are you happy to be contacted by the That's Me! Project Team in relation to

- » Yes
- » No

What is your preferred contact email address?