BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

A SURVEY FOR SUPERVISORS

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

Name of Fieldwork Activity:

Supervisor Survey

Content of the Activity:

Research Statement (50-100 words):

This is a survey to go out to all PGR supervisors within BCU. The survey will collect data about supervisor demographics, including whether they identify as Global Majority, their supervision workload and experiences and how this relates to Global Majority supervision. Data collected includes the number of UK or non-UK Global Majority PGR students currently and previously supervised as well as experiences of the application process at BCU and how that might relate to Global Majority applicant experiences.

Data collected will allow us to explore how informal enquires are managed, reasons why applications are rejected, views on the process and difficulties broadly, as well as whether there are differences in the pattern of Global Majority supervision between different staff members.

A standard consent and debrief is included. The only forced responses are the consent questions and the unique participant ID. All other questions allow participants to skip and not answer if they would prefer reducing any ethical issues around harm.

Contribution to project outputs: Confirm outputs in the table

Output	Output description
3	Report on barriers (stand-alone and interrelated)
5	Equitable inclusive supervisory good practice document
6	Inclusive PGR online application processes established
11	Recommendations for enhanced EDI training and policies

For surveys:

The survey instrument is available in Appendix A. This survey is expected to be live from 28/02/2025 with the opportunity to extend as needed.

Location:

Online (QuestionPro)

Logistical Requirements:

The survey will be promoted via internal communication methods at BCU

Delivery team:

This activity will be carried out collaboratively by one academic staff member and two postgraduate researchers from the Routes In Action Research Team. One member will lead on creating, editing, launching, and monitoring the survey using QuestionPro, while all team members will contribute to data analysis and reporting.

Budget:

This activity will offer participants the opportunity to be entered into a £50 Love2Shop prize draw. Participants who are then part of later research stages will be compensated as part of the project standard incentive.

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for considering participating in this study. This information page outlines the study's purpose and describes your involvement, and your rights as a participant if you agree to take part. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

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 of 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, those with Global Majority status. 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'".

This survey focuses on the experiences of current PGR Supervisors at BCU. It is open to any member of BCU staff who is currently on a PGR supervision team (as Director

of Studies, Supervisor, Advisor, Mentor) or has been a member of a PGR supervision team in the past. You will be asked questions about your background, nationality and Global Majority status, current supervision workload and experience, as well as your thoughts and experiences about BCU processes relating to postgraduate research, including applications.

The aim of our evaluation is to gain a better understanding of our current Global Majority PGR supervision experiences and application processes from the perspective of staff. Similar work is also being done qualitatively, and from the perspective of students, potential applicants and the wider community. We will also aim to use this information where possible to make suggestions for improving application processes and supervision experiences.

You can withdraw from the study at any point until *[10/3/2025]*, 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.

The collected information will be used to inform the *That's Me!* project's outputs, including a report on barriers to recruitment, a supervisory good practice document, recommendations for inclusive PGR online application processes, and recommendations for enhanced EDI training and policies.

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 data. Your data will be anonymised – your name will not be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study.

All digital files 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. This study has undergone an ethics review in accordance

with the BCU Research Ethics Policy and Procedure.

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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 scienti c 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 questions regarding this study please contact the project leads, Sarah Cooper and Oliver Carter at **Sarah.Cooper@bcu.ac.uk** & **Oliver.Carter@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 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 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

» I understand that any personal information that can identifyme, will be kept con dential 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.

Please create a unique Name ID using your favourite colour and 4 last digits of your mobile (for example Green1507). Please make a note of this and use this if you need to contact the research team to request the withdrawal of any data.

SURVEY FOR SUPERVISORS

Section 1

What is your gender?

- » Male
- » Female
- » Non-Binary
- » Prefer to to say
- » Other

What is your current role?

- » Lecturer
- » Research Fellow
- » Senior Lecturer
- » Senior Research Fellow Associate Professor/ Reader
- » Professor
- » Prefer not to say
- » Other

How old are you?

[   ]

What is your nationality?

[   ]

How many years has it been since your doctorate was awarded? Please count from the year award and round to the nearest whole number.

[   ]

Where did you study for your doctorate?

- » UK
- » EU
- » Non UK, Non EU institution

For the purpose of the That's Me! Project Global Majority status is considered to refer to individuals who are "Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and or have been racialised as 'ethnic minorities'." Global Majority individuals may be UK based (UK domicile or hold UK nationality) or non-UK based (International).

Based on this do you consider yourself to be a Global Majority member of staff?

- » Yes - I consider myself to be a UK domiciled Global Majority member of staff
- » Yes - I consider myself to be an International Global Majority member of staff
- » No

What faculty are you based in?

- » ADM
- » BLSS
- » CEBE
- » HELS
- » Other

Which College are you based in?

[   ]

Section 2

The questions in this section focus on the details of your current and past supervision, including supervision of Global Majority PGR students.

How many students do you currently supervise as a Director of Studies?

[ ]

How many students do you currently supervise as 2nd or 3rd supervisor?

[ ]

How many supervision teams are you part of as mentor or advisor?

[ ]

According to the That's Me! definitions previously provided, are any of the PGR students you supervise Global Majority PGR students?

» Yes

» No

How many are UK domiciled Global Majority PGR students? These are students that identify as Global Majority and hold UK/British nationality.

[ ]

How many are International Global Majority PGR students?

[ ]

From which regions are your Global Majority PGR students from? Please select all that apply.

» North America

» Central America

» South America Caribbean

» North Africa

» Central Africa

» Southern Africa

» Middle East

» South East Asia

» East Asia

» Russia

» Australasia and the Pacific

» Europe

» UK

Approximately how many PGR students have you supervised in the past? Not including current students. Please count both PGR students who completed their studies and those who did not.

[ ]

Approximately how many PGR students have you supervised in the past? Not including current students. Please count both PGR students who completed their studies and those who did not.

[ ]

Approximately how many of your past supervised PGRs students were International Global Majority students?

[ ]

Please use this section if you wish to expand on any of your above answers concerning your current or past supervision, or provide any additional information you feel may be relevant.

Section 3

The questions in this section focus on your experiences of the informal and formal application processes for PGR students. This covers up until the point of making a formal application via University Admissions.

What are the ways that you most commonly hear about applications? If other please provide a short answer.

- » Directly from the Doctoral Research College
- » Directly from the applicant
- » Forwarded by Research Degree Co-ordinator or College PGR Lead Forwarded by colleague
- » Approached directly by applicant
- » Through scheme or training programme
- » Through an employer or sponsor
- » Other

Over the past 12 months approximately how many informal enquiries about PGR study have you received?

Over the course of an academic year, approximately how many times do you reply to informal enquiries about PGR study from:

- » Current BCU Undergraduate or Postgraduate Taught students
- » Former BCU Undergraduate or Postgraduate
- » Taught students Employers or Sponsors on behalf of an individual
- » Applicants who are completely unknown to you

Do you respond to all informal enquiries?

- » Yes
- » No

What are the reasons for not replying to all informal enquiries? Please select as many as appropriate

- » Lack of time
- » Poor fit for research expertise
- » Not enough information provided
- » Initial contact too general or lacking key information
- » Proposal or draft not included
- » Informal enquiry appeared to be made by mistake (wrong discipline or information)
- » Other

How important/influential to the success of an application do you believe making informal enquiries is?

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
» UK applicants					
» UK Domiciled Global Majorityapplicants					
» International Global Majority applicants					

Are there particular types of proposals you like or dislike ? For example full time or part time, specific methodologies, self funded or not, single discipline or inter-disciplinary etc. If so why?

Please use this section if you wish to expand on any of your above answers concerning informal PGR enquiries and contact, or provide any additional information you feel may be relevant.

Section 4

The questions in this section focus on the post application, interview, and decision making stages of PGR applications, including rejections and feedback. This covers from the point a formal application has been made, the interview process, and up to the point a formal offer is made.

In your experience, what are the most common reasons for rejecting an applicant – once they have officially applied

- » Issues with the quality of proposal
- » Prior qualifications not meeting requirements
- » Incomplete application
- » Lack of expertise in the applicant's subject area
- » Supervisory workload capacity
- » Concerns over the UK equivalence of the applicants quali cations Concerns over visa eligibility
- » Potential issues with the affordability of PGRs fees
- » Other

In your experience, what are the most common reasons for rejecting an applicant – after they have been interviewed?

- » Issues with the quality of proposal
- » Prior quali cations not meeting requirements
- » Incomplete application
- » Lack of expertise in the applicant's subject area
- » Supervisory workload capacity
- » Poor communication Skills
- » Poor presentation or response to questions
- » Differing expectations over what PGR study involves
- » Applicant lacking key skills or experience for PGR study Concerns over visa eligibility
- » Concerns over the UK equivalence of the applicants quali cations Potential issues with the affordability of PGRs fees
- » Other

Over the past 12 months, how many times have you rejected an application because of potential concerns with fees or visas?

Over the past 12 months how many times have you offered feedback (written or verbal) to unsuccessful applicants?

- » Unsuccessful at informal enquiry stage
- » Unsuccessful after formal application
- » Unsuccessful after interview

Is there anything you would like to feedback on about the application and interview process?

Is there anything you would like to feedback on about the application and interview process?

Please use this section if you wish to expand on any of your above answers concerning applications and interviews, or provide any additional information you feel may be relevant.

Section 5

How would you rate the application and interview process at BCU?

	Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent	N/A
» All student backgrounds						
» For UK students						
» For UK domiciled Global Majority students						
» For International Global						

How would you rate the available support for guiding applicants through the application and interview process?

	Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent	N/A
» All student backgrounds						
» For UK students						
» For UK domiciled Global Majority students						
» For International Global						

How confident are you at guiding International applicants with matters relating to international fees, qualifications, and visa requirements?

Not very confident	Somewhat lacking in confidence	Neutral	Somewhat confident	Very confident	N/A

How would you rate the available support for guiding international applicants through the funding and visa process?

Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent	N/A

How would you rate the available support for guiding international applicants through the funding and visa process?

» Yes

» No

How would you rate the available support for guiding international applicants through the funding and visa process?

Please use this section if you wish to expand on any of your above answers concerning the BCU application and interview process, and the support/ training provided. Or if you wish to provide any additional information you feel may be relevant.

Thank you for taking part in the *That's Me! Supervisor Survey*. Please make a note of the unique identifier you created at the start. You will need this when contacting us if you have any specific questions or wish to withdraw your data and participation.

We may contact you in the future about opportunities to take part in the research such as interviews or focus groups. We will attempt to offer opportunities that align with the preferences you have selected.