



Eliminating barriers to postgraduate  
research study in the West Midlands



BIRMINGHAM CITY  
University

# FIELDWORK DESIGN TEMPLATE

INTERVIEWS WITH POSTGRADUATE  
RESEARCHERS ON EQUALITY, DIVERSITY  
AND INCLUSION (EDI)

## THAT'S ME!

ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO  
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDY  
IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

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## Name of Fieldwork Activity:

Postgraduate research (PGR) interviews on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).

## Content of the Activity:

**Research Statement (50-100 words):** Summarise the fieldwork activity, including information about target groups. This will be used as part of promoting fieldwork. Please draft in appropriate terms.

To gain insights from existing doctoral research students, the Routes Through Action Research Team will conduct individual interviews with Postgraduate Research students (PGRs) who identify as being from Global Majority backgrounds. These interviews will allow PGRs to share their views and experiences on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) challenges and opportunities while capturing their opinions on recommendations for enhanced EDI training and policies at Birmingham City University.

## Contribution to project outputs:

Output	Output description
3	Report on barriers (stand-alone and interrelated)
4	Set of recommendations for new approaches according to intersectionality
5	Equitable inclusive supervisory good practice document
7	Induction processes redeveloped
11	Recommendations for enhanced EDI training and policies
22	Placement opportunities, shared training and development sessions
29	Case studies sharing learning and challenges and how these were overcome

## Design:

**Facilitation Plan:** Describe the planned approach for facilitating the fieldwork, including a structure (e.g., introductions, question themes and prompts, role of the moderator and any physical or virtual prompts or stimuli to be used).

### **Recruitment, Consent and Participant information Sheets**

A snowballing sampling technique will be applied. The facilitator will first send targeted emails to Birmingham City University peers. Following their expression of interest, the facilitator will ask peers to signpost other PGRs within their network to the facilitator on a non-obligatory, no-pressure basis to request information about the That's Me! Project and this fieldwork activity. Upon receiving expressions of interest, the facilitator will forward the project's approved consent form and participant information sheet to potential participants to inform them of this activity while emphasising that they are under no pressure to participate.

Within this email, the facilitator will inform participants that they can ask questions by email or arrange a team chat before agreeing to participate. The facilitator will also outline in the same email that consent will be obtained/confirmed on the day of the interview by the facilitator. It will be outlined to the participant that consent will be obtained and recording orally via Microsoft Teams. The facilitator will record themselves reading each consent item to the participant, along with the participant's response to each statement. Upon receiving their interest in participating, the facilitator will arrange a time and date for the interview with the participant and forward a link to Microsoft Teams.

### **Interview Structure**

Once recording begins and before the interview commences, the facilitator will ask the participant if they have read and understood the participant information sheet, invite any questions, and clarify any uncertainties accordingly. Following this, the facilitator will obtain the participant's informed consent verbally as described above, providing moments for the participant to seek any clarification.

The facilitator will then start the interview by asking EDI-related questions (see below). As these will guide the discussion on EDI-related issues, the facilitator will remain alert to any sensitive or concerning issues that may arise. In response, the facilitator will check with the participant if they are happy to continue with the interview or if they require further support with raising any issues. The facilitator will liaise with the appropriate *Routes Through Research Action Team* leads accordingly. At the end of the interview, there will be a few minutes for debriefing, and participants will be signposted to support services detailed on the debrief sheet.

## Facilitation Plan continued:

Questions	Prompts
What does equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) mean to you?	Race, gender, sexuality, disability, or any other characteristic?
2 Can you describe any EDI-related challenges or opportunities that may impact your PGR experience?	<p>Challenges - personal experience of witnessing bias, discrimination, process/ system to report this, support received and outcome?</p> <p>Opportunities - that encourage a sense of belonging, e.g. prayer room, any other material or imagery across campuses or on website that reflection diversity, training opportunities?</p>
How prepared do you feel your supervisors are in acknowledging and responding to EDI-related issues for global majority PGRs?	<p>E.g. a situation where supervisors effectively addressed an EDI-related issue and the impact it had.</p> <p>E.g. any instances where supervisors did not adequately acknowledge or address EDI-related issues? What could have been done differently?</p>
In what ways do you perceive the PGR study environment at BCU as inclusive, and where do you see opportunities for improvement?	<p>How represented do you feel by the university in terms of EDI? E.g. EDI and sense of belonging for the GM PGRs. Do events promote a sense of belonging? Events, opportunities, prayer rooms etc</p>
How valuable are the university's resources in helping you secure opportunities after completing your degree?	<p>Fair opportunities provided in consideration of intersectionality</p> <p>What is currently being offered, where are the opportunities and challenges, what improvements could be made?</p>
What changes or initiatives would you suggest to improve EDI at the university to enhance the PGR experience?	<p>Elaborate on what is working for inclusivity and what needs to be improved. Staff training, systems development, complaints procedure, accessibility, do library resources have a wide representation of EDI authors and material?</p>

**Duration:**

60 minutes

## Delivery Information:

**Location:** Specify the location(s) where the fieldwork will be conducted, including any details about the venue or facilities.

To encourage participation from PGRs across faculties and campuses, interviews will be held online using Microsoft Teams

Suggested slots – Mondays and Fridays between 12pm-3pm, commencing and reoccurring from Monday 19th August.

**Logistical Requirements:** [List any logistical requirements for the fieldwork, such as equipment, seating arrangements, refreshments, creative resources etc.]

Technical support will be required for setting up the MS Forms sign up and consent process, and guidance on the use / storage / transcription of MS Teams recordings in line with revised ethical approval and TM data-management protocols.

The facilitator will conduct interviews in a safe, quiet, private space with stable internet connection to conduct interviews.

**Delivery team:** Identify the members of the research team involved in delivery of the fieldwork, along with their roles and responsibilities.

Neesha Sahota (Postgraduate Researcher)

**Budget:** Provide an overview of the budget for the fieldwork, including any expenses related to participant compensation, materials, etc.

Incentive vouchers for participants, in line with the project's budget protocol.