



Eliminating barriers to postgraduate research study in the West Midlands



BIRMINGHAM CITY
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019, 020 BLUEPRINT FOR A PGR ROUTES OUT HUB

THAT'S ME!

ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDY
IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

Dr Jacqueline Taylor, Dr Kamaira Jones
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document presents a blueprint for a **Routes Out Hub** to support Global Majority Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) in the West Midlands region in navigating what we are calling the “Routes Out” of PGR study, defined as the pathways to employment and employment pathways after completing a doctorate. It connects with multiple other **That’s Me!** Outputs: Secondments (O9), Employer Board (O15), Baseline Data, University Hospitals Birmingham Case Study and Barriers to Recruitment Reports (O16, O17), Inclusive Workforce Strategy (O18), Research Exchange (O21), Reverse Mentoring (O30, O31), Portfolio Review (O32), Pre-doctoral Bridging Programme (O33). This document is underpinned by analysis triangulated from four key areas: 1) multiple systematic literature reviews to situate the proposal for a hub in relation to previous and current debates and contexts; 2) participatory creative methods and interventions; 3) employer perspectives gathered through surveys, interviews and **That’s Me!** employer engagement events; and 4) alumni perspectives collected through online interviews.

In enhancing the employability of Global Majority PGRs specifically, this Blueprint considers the lived experiences of these minoritised groups alongside employers’ perceptions of PGR studies (and PGRs) to develop a Routes Out Hub as a space that supports and connects current PGRs, PGR alumni, universities and employers. In doing so, this document is structured via three areas: 1) contextualising the need for a Routes Out Hub in line with the UK researcher development landscape, UK Government drivers to increase the number of PGRs and the barriers experienced by Global Majority PGRs, 2) conceptualising a hub as an interconnected nexus between stakeholders and 3) the components of a PGR Routes Out Hub as centred on multiplicity, exchange, accessibility and co-creation.

The key headlines of this document are centred around establishing a PGR Routes Out Hub as an interconnected conceptual and functional space, whereby:

- The Hub is underpinned by a total commitment to anti-racism, decolonisation and an ongoing, reflexive and evidence-based approach to equality, diversity and inclusion informed by and informing best practice.
- Its activities are devised with Global Majority and other minoritised PGR groups modelled on the co-creative ethos of **That’s Me!** and steered through lateral leadership and a non-hierarchical organisational model.
- Employers have access to practical tools and resources to enable 1) inclusive recruitment and development practices and 2) knowledge of PGR study, benefits of employing PGRs and supporting staff to undertake PGR study.
- Multiple employment pathways, that include research and/or that leverage the skills of PGRs both inside and outside of academia, are accessible and visible to PGRs, PGR alumni, universities and employers.
- Opportunities for PGRs and employers to network, connect and collaborate (i.e. mentoring, placements, exchange events, industry-sponsored doctorates) are fostered, enabling meaningful and reciprocal knowledge exchange.
- PGRs and alumni are empowered to translate the skills and experience gained through PGR study (and in navigating their Routes Out) to employers through dedicated resources and opportunities facilitated by the Hub.