



Eliminating barriers to postgraduate research study in the West Midlands



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

027 MESSAGE VAULT

THAT'S ME!

ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDY
IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To realise Output 27, the Birmingham City University **That's Me!** project team has established a Microsoft Teams-based Message Vault as its central space for collaboration, communication, and project management. Introduced in September 2023, the Vault was designed to bring together the whole project team in a single, accessible and protected environment where resources can be shared, materials co-created, and updates provided in real time. It functions as the hub for day-to-day coordination, ensuring information is centralised and communication streamlined, and will act as a time capsule to inform project sustainability goals once the project lifecycle is complete.

The Message Vault has been integral to project activity. Through creating individual channels, it has enabled the project team to effectively manage activities and share resources in targeted ways. For example, bespoke channels have been created for each Action Research Team, Secondments (O9), Employer Board (O1), Peer Review, Data Management, Open Educational Resource Bridging Programme (O34), and Global Majority Steering Committee. Further, the space has been used as a repository for key documents, enabling team members to access shared documentation, such as Project Plans, Ethics documents (e.g., consent forms), and protocols. With such a rich resource, the Vault serves as a critical tool in inducting new team members.

Beyond its practical role, the Message Vault also embodies our commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and cross-departmental engagement. For example, members of BCU's Doctoral Research College, Marketing and Communications, Vice Chancellor's Office, and BCU Global Majority Steering Committee can access the Vault, enabling them to see work in progress, monitor developments, and contribute meaningfully to discussions. This openness strengthens collaboration, builds trust, and makes visible the co-creative process underpinning the project.

The Message Vault has also been a key vehicle for disseminating wider opportunities to project team members, especially postgraduate researchers. This has included signposting events, training, feedback loops; extending further opportunities for professional development, network creation, and upskilling.

As a result, the Message Vault is more than just a management tool; it demonstrates the project's ethos of collective working and accountability. By embedding it at the core of our processes, we have been able to support effective collaboration, respond quickly to challenges, and remain on track for the timely delivery of outcomes.