



Eliminating barriers to postgraduate research study in the West Midlands



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

028 WEBSITE AUDIT & RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT'S ME!

ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDY
IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

Amélie Doche, Alexa Celeste Jimenez Calderon,
and Siva Snegha Kannan
September 2025

Published by BCU

That's Me! is funded by UKRI and The Office for Students



Research
England

Office for
Students



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Birmingham City University (BCU) is both perceived locally and describes itself, according to its official website, as a 'large and diverse university'. However, as Ahmed (2012, 76) argues, claiming to be 'diverse' can, paradoxically, serve as a way of 'not doing diversity'. By asserting its diversity, an institution may imply that diversity efforts are already completed, leaving no further action to be taken. However, the funding provided to the **That's Me!** Project by UKRI and the Office for Students – carried out between BCU and the University of Wolverhampton – suggests that equality, diversity, and inclusion is an ongoing process. The **That's Me!** initiative develops strategies to support Global Majority students across the academic pipeline: from initial enrolment in doctoral programmes (**Routes In**), through the doctoral experience (**Routes Through**), to post-PhD career pathways (**Routes Out**). This report critically examines the inclusivity of BCU's website – an essential tool for prospective and current students, particularly during the enrolment phase and throughout the doctoral journey when access to information is crucial. As the university's primary digital interface, the website plays a pivotal role in shaping how welcome prospective Global Majority, disabled, and LGBTQIA+ students feel. Our audit of the BCU website is situated within what Strathern (2000) terms an 'audit culture' – a context shaped by the growing emphasis on quantification and performance measurement. This broader cultural shift, characterised by an expansion in both what and how we measure, has led Peter Miller (1994) to describe contemporary society as an 'audit society'. Our approach also responds to Ahmed's (2012, 99) observation – based on interviews with EDI practitioners in higher education – that diversity and equality remain insufficiently embedded within audit culture. This is significant, as universities tend to prioritise activities that are subject to audit, potentially sidelining those that are not formally measured or assessed (Ahmed 2012, 98). To the best of our knowledge, this report represents the first systematic attempt to formally evaluate the inclusivity of BCU's website.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, Sara. 2012. *On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Power, Michael. 1994. The audit society. In *Accounting as social and institutional practice*, edited by Anthony G. Hopwood and Peter Miller, 299-316. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Strathern, Marilyn. 2000. *Audit cultures: Anthropological studies in accountability, ethics and the academy*. London: Routledge.