



Eliminating barriers to postgraduate
research study in the West Midlands



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

FIELDWORK DESIGN TEMPLATE

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH AND STAFF
EXIT SURVEY AND INTERVIEWS

THAT'S ME!

ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDY
IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

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Research
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Name of Fieldwork Activity:

Postgraduate Researcher and Staff Exit Survey and Interviews

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.

This research explores the experiences of staff and postgraduate researchers who participated in the That's Me Project, a collaborative initiative aimed at challenging barriers to doctoral study and fostering more inclusive research environments. The activity will target staff and postgraduate researchers who were involved in the project in any capacity.

Participants will be asked to complete an online survey via QuestionPro and may also take part in a voluntary follow-up interview.

- » The survey will take approximately 10–15 minutes to complete.
- » The optional interview will last around 30mins.

The survey will collect:

- » Demographic data (optional and anonymous).
- » Information about participants' involvement in the project.
- » Reflections on their experiences, the project's impact.
- » Perspectives on institutional change and inclusion.
- » Final thoughts and feedback.

Through semi-structured interviews, the study investigates participants' motivations for joining the project and the personal, academic, and institutional impacts of their involvement.

This research contributes to understanding how inclusive, participatory projects can shape researcher development, challenge structural inequalities, and inspire institutional transformation in postgraduate education.

Contribution to project outputs:

Output	Output description
34	Open educational resource created

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).

The That's Me! project aims to explore barriers to postgraduate research (PGR) study. As the project nears completion, it is important to capture the experiences of PGRs and staff who have participated in any capacity.

Survey

Eligible participants are staff and PGRs previously and currently involved in the That's Me! project. Recruitment will be conducted via email, with a detailed Participant Information Sheet. Interested individuals will be asked to return a signed Consent Form.

Before completing the online survey (hosted on QuestionPro), participants will see a summary outlining the survey's purpose and objectives. The survey collects reflections on project involvement, impact, and experiences, and takes approximately 10–15 minutes to complete.

At the end of the survey, participants will be invited to take part in a follow-up interview. They can either contact the lead researcher (EA) directly or opt to share their contact details through the survey. These interviews will offer an opportunity to provide more in-depth insights into their experiences with the project.

Interview:

As part of scheduling the interviews, EA will share a brief Participant Information Sheet and Consent forms for the interviews. Each interview will follow a similar structure.

EA will ask participants if they are happy to be recorded on Teams to be transcribed on Mac Whisper for analysis process. EA will begin recording and notify participants. EA will introduce herself to begin to build rapport with participants. Following this, participants will introduce themselves and EA will explain the purpose of the interviews. EA will ask participants how they self-identify ethnically.

Participants are first invited to reflect on their doctoral journey and what drew them to the project, including any barriers they felt were relevant to their experiences. The interview includes the nature of their participation—whether through workshops, mentoring, co-

Facilitation Plan continued:

design, or other collaborative activities—and how these engagements influenced their sense of identity, belonging, and confidence as researchers.

The questions further explore how participation may have shifted relationships with supervisors, peers, or academic staff, and whether new insights, tools, or strategies emerged from the project. Importantly, the interview assesses how the project amplified underrepresented voices and whether participants have observed any institutional changes—such as shifts in attitudes, language, or supervision practices.

Finally, the interview seeks forward-looking reflections: what participants would advise others considering similar initiatives, what they felt was missing, and what messages they believe staff and institutions need to hear to better support PGRs from diverse backgrounds.

At the end of the interviews, EA will remind participants of their right to withdraw and the last day to do so (two months from the interviews). EA will thank all participants for their time and involvement and stop the recording. The incentive vouchers will be distributed by EA.

Duration:

Survey: 10-15 minutes

Interview: 30- 45minutes

Delivery Information:

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

Survey will be delivered on Question Pro and interviews via Microsoft Teams.

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

Dr Eli Ashong

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.