FIELDWORK DESIGN TEMPLATE
DOCTORAL SUPERVISOR FOCUS GROUP

THAT'S ME!

ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDY IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

Name of Fieldwork Activity:

Focus groups with doctoral supervisors.

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.

The Routes Through Action Research team want to learn from doctoral supervisors at Birmingham City University about their experiences of supervising postgraduate researchers on PhD and Professional Doctorate programmes. As part of the That's Me! project we are focused on trying to reduce and address any barriers experienced by postgraduate researchers and/or their supervisors in relation to issues of equity, diversity and inclusion. We are particularly interested to know about challenges supervisors have faced, and their reflections on the support and development Birmingham City University offers our doctoral supervisors. We are holding two online focus groups, one open to all supervisors across BCU and one aimed specifically for supervisors in Law, Business, Health, and Education disciplinary areas as disciplines identified in the original That's Me! Project design.

Contribution to project outputs:

Output	Output description
5	Equitable inclusive supervisory good practice document
11	Recommendations for enhanced EDI training and policies

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 pre-focus group materials

The team envisage recruiting via targeted emails sent using the Doctoral Research College's existing faculty-based supervisor distribution lists as well as a dedicated call in the Tiger Today staff newsletter. As the focus groups will be held online, we envisage using an online sign-up process that combines gathering informed consent using Microsoft Forms. Copies of the template consent statement will then be sent to participants as part of confirmation along with a link to the online meeting. We will not use calendar invites as these would enable participants to see who else has signed up in advance, which could impact on attendance rates for example if someone felt their area was already well-represented. As part of the confirmation email, we will also signpost participants to the *Policy for the Support and Development of Academic Staff Supervising Research Degrees* available on I-City and request that they read it in advance of attending.

Facilitation

The focus group will be facilitated by the Routes Through Action Research Team. The focus group will be recorded through Microsoft Teams, as well as collecting data via summary notes created by the facilitators and collating any comments in the meeting chat. Any summary notes will be digitised and stored securely in OneDrive, with physical copies destroyed in line with ethical approval.

Structure

Introductions

Facilitators will briefly outline the context of the That's Me Project, introduce themselves, and explain the purpose of the focus group as being to solicit their experiences and opinions as supervisors of postgraduate researchers. We will also remind participants that their contributions to the project will be anonymised and explain the purpose of recording and note-making.

Question themes

The team has designed the question themes to closely match those being used in the two sets of focus groups with postgraduate researchers. The questions will be themed around:

- » What does Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) mean in relation to postgraduate research study?
- » Their experiences of being allocated as a supervisor/selecting postgraduate

Facilitation Plan continued:

researchers, and the degree to which EDI is an active concern.
- » Supervisory relationships and the extent to which they differ across supervisions.
- » Their approaches to discussing areas of concern with their postgraduate researchers.
- » Examples of barriers experienced in their supervisory practice.
- » Their experiences of problems faced by, and potential barriers for, Global Majority postgraduate researchers as a specific group.
- » Their awareness of other resources and support for postgraduate researchers at Birmingham City University.
- » Their reflections on how they learnt to supervise.
- » Their participation in Birmingham City University supervisor development activities (cf. the policy shared in advance) and recommendations for support for doctoral supervisors.

Close
Facilitators will thank participants and summarise our co-created initial key take-aways. They will remind them of the anonymisation of contributions, and the withdrawal process as well as signposting as appropriate to other university services and support for issues that may have arisen.

Duration:

60 mins

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

To encourage participation of academic staff across a multi-campus university the focus groups will be held online using Microsoft Teams.

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

Technical support for setting up the Microsoft Forms sign up and consent process, and guidance on the use / storage / transcription of Microsoft Teams recordings in line with ethical approval and That' data-management protocols.

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

Hannah Roberts (Postgraduate Researcher)

Dr Sian Vaughan

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

None, in line with the project's budget protocol.