



Eliminating barriers to postgraduate
research study in the West Midlands



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

FIELDWORK DESIGN TEMPLATE

DOCTORAL RESEARCH COLLEGE (DRC)
STAFF FOCUS GROUP

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:

Doctoral Research College (DRC) Staff Focus Group

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 focus group will be held with DRC Officers and Administrators to canvas their views and gain insights from their experiences of supporting supervisors and postgraduate researchers at Birmingham City University.

Contribution to project outputs:

Output	Output description
5	Equitable inclusive supervisory good practice document
6	Inclusive PGR online application processes established
11	Recommendations for enhanced EDI training and policies
14	Home-from-home spaces

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 focus group will be facilitated by the Routes Through Action Research Team. Whilst postgraduate researcher team members have been involved in the activity design, they will not be present to avoid any potential conflicts of interest for staff who may be engaged in supporting them in their postgraduate research studies. The focus group will be audio-recorded, as well as collecting data through post it notes, and summary notes co-created with participants. No catalyst or other resources will be used.

Focus Group Structure

Introductions

This will be brief as it is assumed that the DRC staff will know one another, and most will be aware of the That's Me! Project. The facilitators will introduce themselves in context and explain the purpose of the focus group as being to solicit their experiences and opinions as expert professional services colleagues in their roles as DRC Officers and Administrators. They will also remind participants that their contributions to the project will be anonymised and explain the purpose of audio-recording and note-making, and how those items will be managed subsequently.

Questions

Questions will then be themed around:

- » Their awareness of additional support and provision for postgraduate researchers and postgraduate research training opportunities (beyond supervision).
- » Communication around review/progression monitoring expectations.
- » Their experiences with admissions for international students, including the student visa process.
- » Their experiences of problems faced by, and potential barriers for, Global Majority postgraduate researchers.
- » What are the issues they face around monitoring of supervisor training/skills?
- » How important do they see Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is to the DRC?
- » Their reflections on the data-gathering exercise the DRC have undertaken for the That's Me! Project (challenges, surprises, ideas going forwards etc).

Close

We will thank participants and summarise our co-created initial key take-aways. We 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 minutes

Delivery Information:

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

Postgraduate Research Hub (DRC main office space) at Birmingham City University.

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

Approved recording device.

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

Dr Fadia Dakka

Professor Kirsten Forkert

Dr Jacqueline Taylor

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.