



Growing Our Research Ecosystem

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Research ecosystem

Where are our hidden communities?

And perhaps more importantly, are we supporting them ... or unintentionally ignoring them?



Hidden communities



Hidden PGR communities exist

They form communities organically — around identity, culture, shared experiences.



Most are invisible

Because of that, they are often undervalued or unsupported.



But they matter!

These spaces are where belonging happens. Where identity develops.



What if we fund them?

Micro-grant model

Supporting hidden communities

Funding and endorsement help amplify minoritised and interdisciplinary groups within the research population.

PGR-led community building

The grant empowers PGRs to design and lead activities that foster academic and social connections.

Strategic shift in provision

The grant promotes co-creation mechanisms, shifting from provider-led to researcher-led development.



Research Culture and Community Grant

Funding Stream 1: PGR Researcher Development

- Supports the organisation of skills focused workshops, events, or initiatives.
- Grants of up to £500 per activity.
- Examples: analysis workshops, guest speakers, digital skills sessions, writing sessions.

Funding Stream 2: PGR Research Culture and Community

- Supports the delivery of PGR research culture and community building, well-being or social activities.
- Grants of up to £300 per activity.
- Examples: cultural events, get togethers, wellbeing enhancing activities.

Key principles & terms

Inclusivity

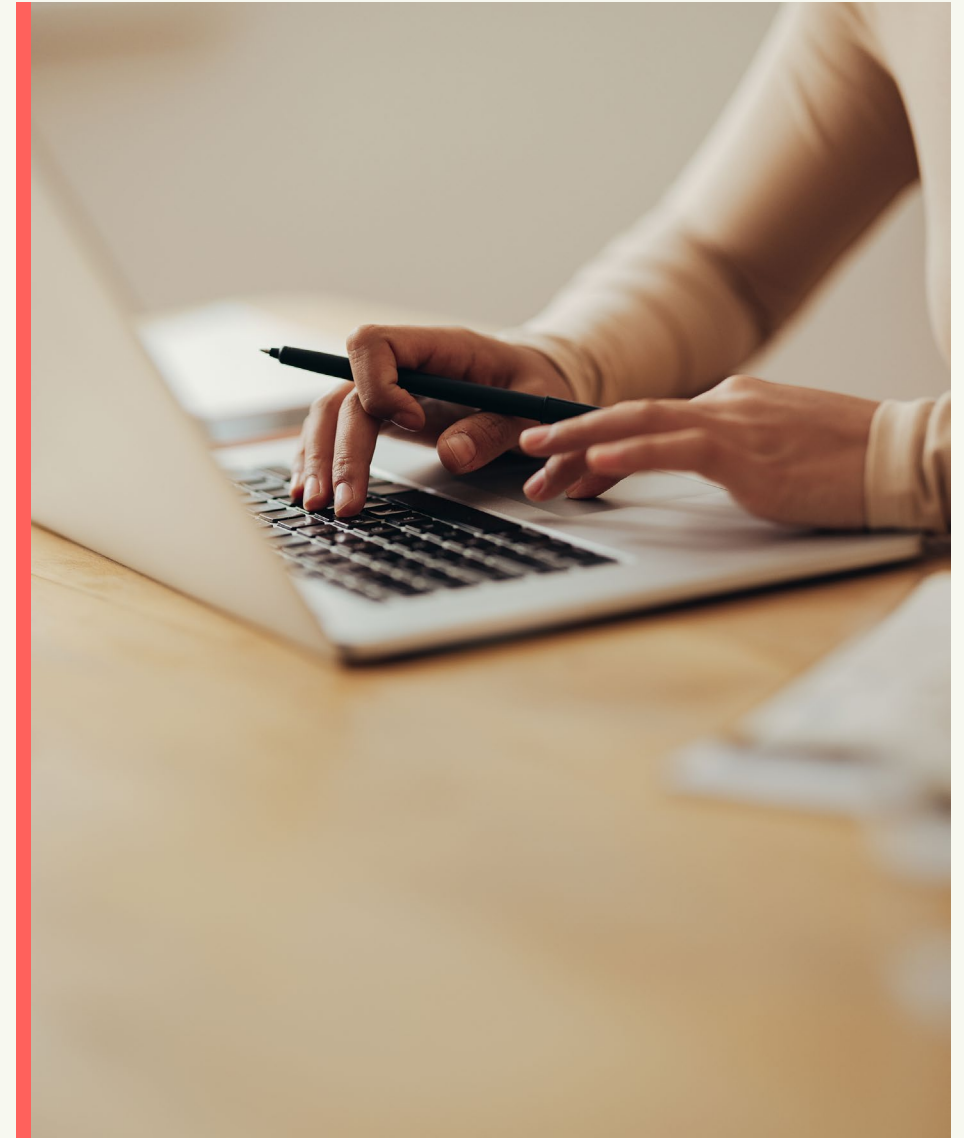
Activities must be open to the wider PGR/research community, fostering cross-cultural and interdisciplinary engagement.

Project Management

Organisers must design, promote, deliver, and evaluate projects, gaining transferable skills and experience in project management and reflective evaluation.

Innovation

Activities should not duplicate those already on offer, encouraging innovation and aligning with institutional goals.



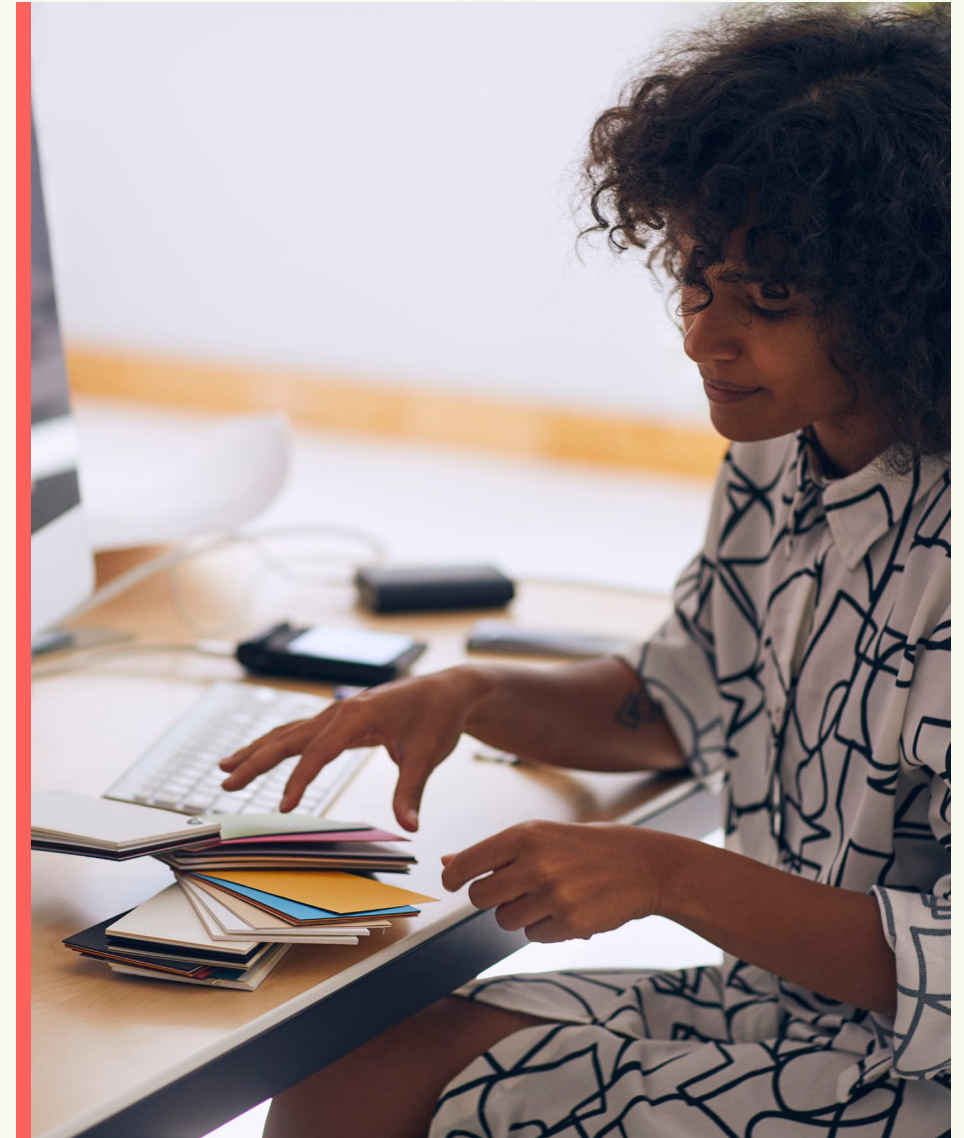
Selection & Implementation

Once grants are awarded, we provide:

- detailed post-award guidelines
- tailored support to PGR project leaders
- practical coaching on project management and budgeting

We also encourage reflective practice by requesting to complete an evaluation report after the delivery of the event.

PGRs have the opportunity to develop leadership, organisational and evaluation skills.



Scale of the grant

Grant Scheme Growth

The grant scheme expanded in the past two years

- 2024-25: 13 PGR projects
- 2025-26: 17 PGR projects and 10 ECR projects

Demand and Confidence

Rising project numbers reflect strong demand and institutional confidence in the grant scheme's value.

Diversity and Reach

Funded projects span faculties, career stages, and cultures, enhancing the research ecosystem's diversity.



The key is trust

Small funding amounts empower motivated PGRs to create significant cultural and community impact.



The grant signals university trust and value for PGR-led cultural and community initiatives, legitimizing their work.



With trust comes autonomy.
PGRs become co-creators of research culture, not just participants.

Why this matters

Research Culture

Research culture strongly impacts researcher wellbeing, productivity, and retention, making it essential for a thriving academic environment.

Sense of Belonging

Feeling valued and connected helps PGRs engage confidently with research and fosters supportive academic communities.

Identity Development

Participating in initiatives helps PGRs develop professional identity as researchers and community members beyond being students.

Strategic Investment

Supporting bottom-up initiatives strengthens research culture, contributing to an inclusive and sustainable research environment.

Examples of funded projects



Culture on a Plate

Activity: The cultural exchange through food sparked curiosity and appreciation for different traditions, enriching the research culture with a sense of inclusivity and community.

Number of attendees: 30+

- Food as cultural exchange
- Storytelling through food
- Inclusive community impact



AND COMMUNITY PGR EVENT

Culture On A Plate

Join us for an inclusive community event where we share meals and cultural stories, fostering connections across disciplines!

- For PGR Students and Staff
- Bring a dish and share its story
- Enhance belonging and build friendships

Free registration
Voucher for food providers

Location: P218 Poole House,
Talbot campus
Time: 12: 00 to 14: 30
Date: 11th December 2024

Our food is
provided by PGRs
fresh cooked

FOOOD!!!

Enjoy this event and boost BU community!
Supported by Doctoral College



Migrant and Ethnic Minority Identities

Designed and led by individuals with lived experience, the event created space for conversations that were grounded in real-world knowledge and accountability to the communities most affected.

Number of attendees: 20+

- **Bringing practitioners and researchers together**
- **Bridging academic and policy contexts**

Feedback from Organiser:

“One of the most impactful aspects was the strong sense of trust and openness in the room. Participants felt able to speak honestly, knowing their voices would be respected and heard.”



International Day of Living Together in Peace

Celebration of the United Nation's International Day of Living Together in Peace. This year's theme was Building Trust through Dialogue, Inclusion and Reconciliation.

Reflective space for cross-cultural engagement among staff and PGRs

Feedback from organiser:

"One research seminar may cannot solve these global issues, but it can create a meaningful space for respectful dialogue, reflection, and connection across different cultures, communities, and experiences of staff and students at BU."



Romani Awareness Workshop

The workshop addressed Romani discrimination, stigma, and inclusion to promote awareness within the university community.

Significance of visibility

Recognising International Romani Day signalled institutional support for Romani identities and diversity in academia.

Supporting structural change

Micro-grants enable initiatives that address inequalities and broaden diversity narratives in institutions.



The poster features a decorative border with blue and green floral patterns. At the top left is the Bournemouth University logo (BU BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY). To its right, text reads "Supported by the Doctoral College PGR Research Culture and Community Grant". In the center is the Romani flag (blue and green horizontal stripes with a red wheel in the middle). Below the flag, the title "PGR Romani Awareness Workshop" is written in a stylized, gothic font. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner of the central text area. At the bottom, the date and time "April 8th, 1-2 pm, FG04" are displayed, followed by a small green floral ornament.

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PGR Research Culture and Community Grant

**PGR Romani
Awareness
Workshop**

April 8th, 1-2 pm, FG04

Baduanjin for a body-mind reset

Activity: The session introduced a traditional Chinese Qigong practice combining movement, breathing, and mental focus.

Number of attendees: 20+

Culturally grounded wellbeing activities can enrich research culture, supporting both mental health and intercultural learning.

Wellbeing Benefits
&
Cross-Cultural Engagement

Break Free from Sedentary

Baduanjin (八段锦) for a Body–Mind Reset

Tuesday, 28th April, 13:00–15:00pm

Fusion Building F305, Talbot Campus

Baduanjin (八段锦) is a traditional Chinese qigong practice with eight gentle movements.

Slow-paced and beginner-friendly, it's ideal for anyone who sits for long periods—helping relax the body, ease tension, and refresh the mind.

All welcome | Easy to follow |
Wear comfortable clothing

BU BOURNEMOUTH
UNIVERSITY



Paint and Sip to Summer

Activity: The event combined creativity and relaxation in the BU Community Garden during World Wellbeing Week.

Number of attendees: 30+

Holistic researcher development

Creative wellbeing activities complement traditional development, supporting holistic growth for researchers.



Impact of the grant

- The grant scheme contributes to measurable institutional impact validated by PRES rankings for research community and culture.
- The grant scheme is part of a wider support ecosystem enhancing PGRs experiences and cultural initiatives.
- Supporting co-creation fosters a positive research culture with tangible benefits.

POSTGRADUATE

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

SURVEY

BU PRES 2025 rankings

■ **2nd** for Research Community

■ **4th** for Research Culture

Final Considerations

**Role shift for developers?
From providers to enablers,
supporting rather than
directing research culture-
making.**

- Small funding amounts can create large cultural impacts when combined with trust and autonomy.
- Postgraduate researchers value contributing to their communities, showing creativity and leadership when supported
- Growing a research ecosystem requires patience, trust, and collaboration across all levels of the institution.



Any questions?



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