



GENERATION DELTA

Retention and Progression
Training Resources



Laying the foundations for a long-term increase in the number
of racially minoritised women in England's professoriate.



FOREWORD



On behalf of Generation Delta, I am delighted to present these training resources which have emerged directly from the Workshops organised by this project and held around the country between 2022 and 2025 to understand and enhance the experience of racially minoritised women students at the post-graduate research level. They are designed with the needs of these women in mind, but we hope they will help all those wishing to pursue a research career in higher education.

The contents of the following pages can be used by individuals or in groups, in academic and non-academic settings. The materials can be used separately or as a whole package, at any pace and as often as necessary - the videos can be watched and the activities completed in multiple settings - in a classroom or individually at home. By curating the materials in this way, we hope to make the valuable information that they contain as accessible as possible to encourage women wherever they are to consider a future in academia, as per our goal to nurture the next generation of racially minoritised professors.

It just remains to say that we hope that you enjoy engaging with and benefit from the use of these materials. We are grateful to our institutional support groups, the Generation Delta Advisory Group, Generation Delta Champions and all who participated in our workshops, roundtables and conferences over the past four years. None of this would have been possible without your support.

Sincerely,

Leyiola Solanke

GENERATION DELTA TEAM

Principal and Co-Investigators



Professor Donna Chambers
Co-Investigator, University of Sunderland



Professor Uma Kambhampati
Co-Investigator, University of Reading



Professor Shaofeng Liu
Co-Investigator, University of Plymouth



Professor Amaka Offiah
Co-Investigator, University of Sheffield



Professor Farzana Shain
Co-Investigator, Goldsmiths, University of London



Professor Iyiola Solanke
Principal Investigator, University of Leeds

Project Team



Dr Dami Folayan
Senior Research Fellow



Dr Monica Bernal Llanos
Senior Research Fellow



Dr Anna Horn
Project Manager



Mr Olumide Solate
Project Administrator



Ms Godstime David
Freelance Videographer

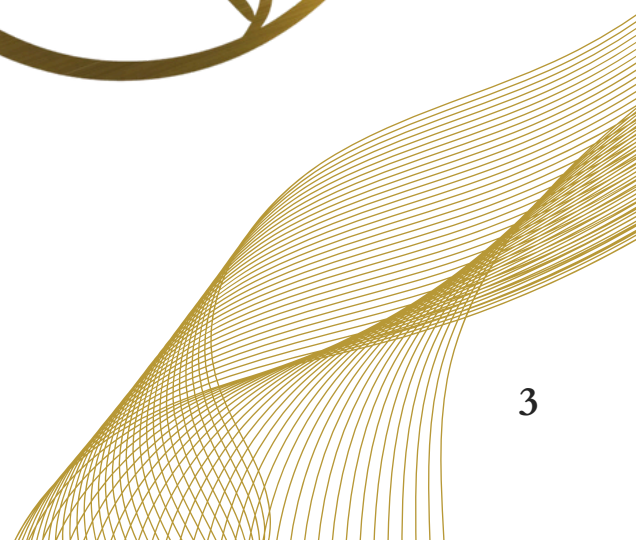


Dr Queenie Eng
Former Project Manager



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. OVERVIEW
2. VIDEO HUB
3. SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES
4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



OVERVIEW OF TRAINING RESOURCES

The Aim

Generation Delta is an action research project with the aim of improving the experiences and outcomes of racially minoritised women in postgraduate research studies (PGR) in England through targeted interventions at three key phases of the PGR life cycle: Access to Academy (A2A), Retention and Progression (RaP) and Training for Careers (T4C).

During the funding period of 2022-2026, we facilitated student workshops and cross-institutional staff roundtables aligned with these three key phases to make change at both individual and institutional levels. Phase I (2022-2023) formed an exploratory period to define what students wanted from tailored training sessions aimed at women from racially minoritised backgrounds. Phase II (2024-2025) implemented student-informed topics into training sessions.

Generation Delta recognises that thriving in academia requires navigating both visible and hidden challenges. These materials address the retention and progression of racially minoritised women in doctoral programmes. While retention and progression are often treated as a neutral academic metric, students shared how these metrics are deeply shaped by intersecting forces of race, gender, and institutional culture. These training resources bring together lessons from the workshops and are organised into two sections 'Video Hub' and 'Supporting Activities'. Pairing both Generation Delta videos and participatory activities provide intersectional insights into retention and progression, calling on institutions to rethink how they support students throughout their PGR journey.



[Watch: Introduction to Generation Delta](#)
[by Professor Iyiola Solanke](#)



Who These Resources Are For

These training resources have been designed by Generation Delta based on the knowledge and experience generated over a four-year period, during which the six Generation Delta project partners held collaborative workshops and roundtables with racially minoritised women postgraduate research students (from universities across England) and staff (from the institutions of the project partners), respectively. They are intended for use by anybody whose responsibilities include the training and development of racially minoritised women undertaking postgraduate research programmes.

Trainers and all who use these resources should be committed to Generation Delta's fundamental principles of racial and gender equity, diversity (recognising the value of individual differences) and inclusion (creating environments where all participants feel safe, valued, listened to and heard).

Using These Training Resources

These resources are organised into two sections: 'Video Hub' and 'Supporting Activities', designed to inform, reflect, and support action to improve the outcomes and experiences of racially minoritised women in PGR studies.



Using the Video Hub

This section presents selected recordings from Generation Delta's RaP workshops. The videos highlight key markers of retention and progression, such as upgrades or title transfers, alongside deeper, often intangible factors impacting racially minoritised women such as institutional racism and microaggressions. Divided into two subthemes 'disrupting invisible barriers' and 'demystifying academic metrics', these resources offer both practical insights and critical reflections to support equitable academic journeys.

Using the Supporting Activities

This section offers a curated selection of participatory activities from Generation Delta's RaP workshops. Designed to complement the video recordings, these activities encourage critical engagement, discussion, and collective reflection. They prioritise well-being and self-determination, while also providing practical tools and skills for trainers to support the retention and progression of racially minoritised women in academia.



Video Hub:

Disrupting Invisible Barriers in PGR Studies

This subtheme highlights the emotional, racialised, and gendered realities often obscured within institutional narratives of academic success. It brings to the surface the hidden labour and resilience required to navigate the higher education academy as a racially minoritised woman.



Trailblazers in Community

Dr Kendi Guantai emphasises how transformation comes from fostering community care and courageously occupying and excelling in spaces not built for racially marginalised people.

VIDEO DURATION: 13:43



Understanding Racism

Dr Gloria Botchway explores the definitions of racism and microaggressions, highlighting their psychological and professional harms for racially minoritised women.

VIDEO DURATION: 22:05



Responding to Microaggressions

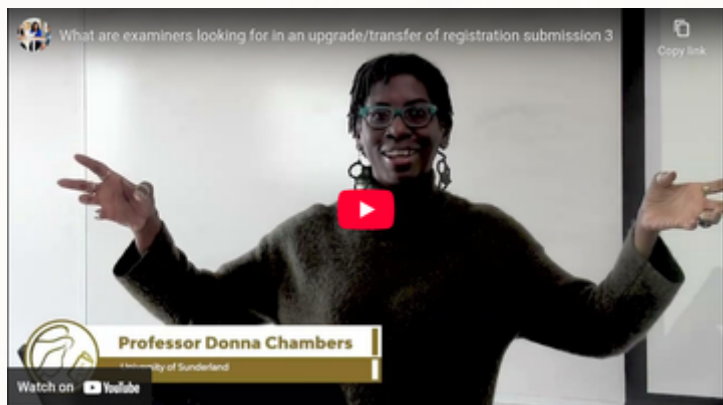
Professor Claudia Bernard critically examines how to identify experiences of microaggressions and strategies on how to address them.

VIDEO DURATION: 16:09

Video Hub:

Demystifying Academic Metrics in PGR Studies

This subtheme focuses on formal progression markers such as upgrades, milestones, and assessments by clarifying expectations and outlining strategies for success within institutional frameworks, while also providing guidance on navigating complaints procedures.



The Initial Review

Professor Donna Chambers unpacks what examiners are looking for at the early review stage using criteria from the University of Sunderland. The initial review at this university can take place at 4 months into a full time PGR programme.

VIDEO DURATION: 06: 44



Preparing for the Upgrade

Professor Amaka Offiah uses the upgrade/confirmation form from the University of Sheffield to illustrate what to expect from the upgrade/confirmation exam which takes place at this university around 12 - 15 months into a full time PGR programme.

VIDEO DURATION: 08:17



Complaints Procedure Overview

Jo Nuckley of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education outlines the current complaints procedures in England.

VIDEO DURATION: 19:36

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

Creating an Interactive and Participant-Centred Workshop

Generation Delta workshops are designed to be interactive and to encourage reflection, skill-building, and collective learning. A central feature of the workshops is to create “safe and brave spaces” — structured, respectful environments that encourage open, honest and courageous dialogues about personal and academic challenges.

Below are selected participatory activities utilised in Generation Delta workshops. These activities are designed to centre students’ voices and lived experiences, offering alternative ways of learning that validate emotion, encourage critical thinking, and promote self-determination.

CV Surgery

- A practical session focused on strengthening academic CVs and recognising unique contributions.
- Resource requirements: examples of senior academic CVs from different subject areas and disciplines as well as participants own CVs.

Poetic Inquiry

- This is a creative method that invites participants to express their experiences and insights through poetry. More information on the method can be found in [Poetic Inquiry as Research: A Decolonial Guide](#), edited by Heidi van Rooyen and Raphael d’Abdon.
- Participants can be introduced to the activity at the start of the session and invited to compose their own poem shortly before the session ends
- Resource Requirements: writing paper and pens

Letter Writing Exercise

- This is a short reflective writing task where participants articulate future goals and/or aspirations relating to their work. It is a useful exercise to conduct as the workshop’s last activity. Students compose letters to themselves and place them in sealed self-addressed envelopes. The sealed envelopes are collected by the facilitator who must commit to posting these letters to the students three months later.
- Resource requirements: writing paper, pens, envelopes and stamps.



Acknowledgements

Generation Delta extends immense gratitude to the: Advisory Board, Generation Delta Champions, Research Assistants, participants in the Brave Space Mentoring Programme, Institutional Steering Committees and Workshop participants and speakers.

Guest speakers featured in the Retention and Progression Training Resource:

Claudia Bernard (Goldsmiths, University of London), Gloria Botchway (Nortumbria University), Jo Nuckley (Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education), Kendi Guantai (University of Leeds)

Publication Date: September 2025

Generation Delta

For any queries or additional information, please contact:

 generationdelta@leeds.ac.uk  generationdelta.leeds.ac.uk/

 @Generation Delta  @generationdelta.bsky.social