



# 3rd UKCGE Conference on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion in PG Research

Race and Ethnicity

Keynote: Professor **Lisa -Dionne Morris (LDM)**

Professor of Public & Industry Understanding of **Capability Driven Design**  
Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences



# “Working Beyond Academia, Different Routes”

Beyond Academia, Toward Equity: Inclusive Career Pathways for Postgraduate Researchers

I’m moving past the narrow focus on academic (university) jobs as the only measure of success.

Instead, I’m actively working to ensure that all individuals, especially those from underrepresented groups, have fair access, support, and recognition in a wide variety of rewarding careers.



# Question

"How can postgraduate researchers, especially **racially minoritised and international PGRs**, be supported to **translate their research capabilities** into equitable, sustainable careers beyond academia?"

**Answer:** (1) Support them by **calibrating** their research skills to the expectations, language and constraints of non-academic sectors,  
(2) engaging the right **constituent(s)** (supervisors, careers services, employers, affinity networks, sponsors) to remove systemic barriers for racially minoritised and international PGRs.



## Big Idea No. 1 Calibrating

This is about “**tuning**” what the researcher already has (**capabilities**) so it fits what sectors outside academia - recognise and reward.

## Big Idea No. 2 Constituent

Equity doesn't happen alone; it happens when the right people are in the loop. “Constituents” are the **actors** who can open or “**block routes**”.





# I Believe

We/I/you don't need "more talent", they already have it, but equity only happens when:

- (1) that talent is calibrated so others can see its value, and
- (2) the people and structures around them (the constituent(s)) actually choose to open the doors.



Think

Do

Feel

Fenton et al. (2024)

“When I came to university, that’s when the real shift came”



# Higher Education

Racially minoritised and international PGRs need  
their **skills translated** and their **access widened**.

Advance HE (2024)



# A Need for “Calibration + Constituents”

- A transversal skills framework for diversifying PhD employability, shows that PhD skills *are* highly portable but need to be explicitly mapped to industrial/employer needs → that’s your calibration evidence. Advance HE (2024)
- Researchers benefit from structured, embedded career learning and better labour-market information, i.e. they don’t lack talent, they lack organised routes and guidance → that’s support for building the right constituents around them. Vitae (2025)
- Documents differential experiences and satisfaction by ethnicity and programme, showing that minoritised PGRs face **systemic frictions**, so opening doors can’t be “generic.” That underpins the need for EDI-aware gatekeepers and sponsors → the constituent’s piece. UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE) (2024)



“Politeness and diplomacy are responsible for more suffering and death than all the crimes of passion in history...**Tell the truth.**”

— **Brad Blanton**, *Radical Honesty: How to Transform Your Life by Telling the Truth.*

## Radical Honesty

Proof of My Truth



# “Calibration + Constituents”: A true story

The Concept of “The Academic Janitor”

Last week - was a hard week.... *Standing Firm in Power and Pride*

BHM2025



My title is not "Academic Janitor!"  
It's Director of Internationalisation and  
Professor of Public & Industry Understanding of Capability Driven  
Design



The Concept of "The Academic Janitor"



“**The academic janitor**” describes racially minoritized, often female and early-career academics who perform undervalued intellectual, emotional, and cultural “**cleaning**”.

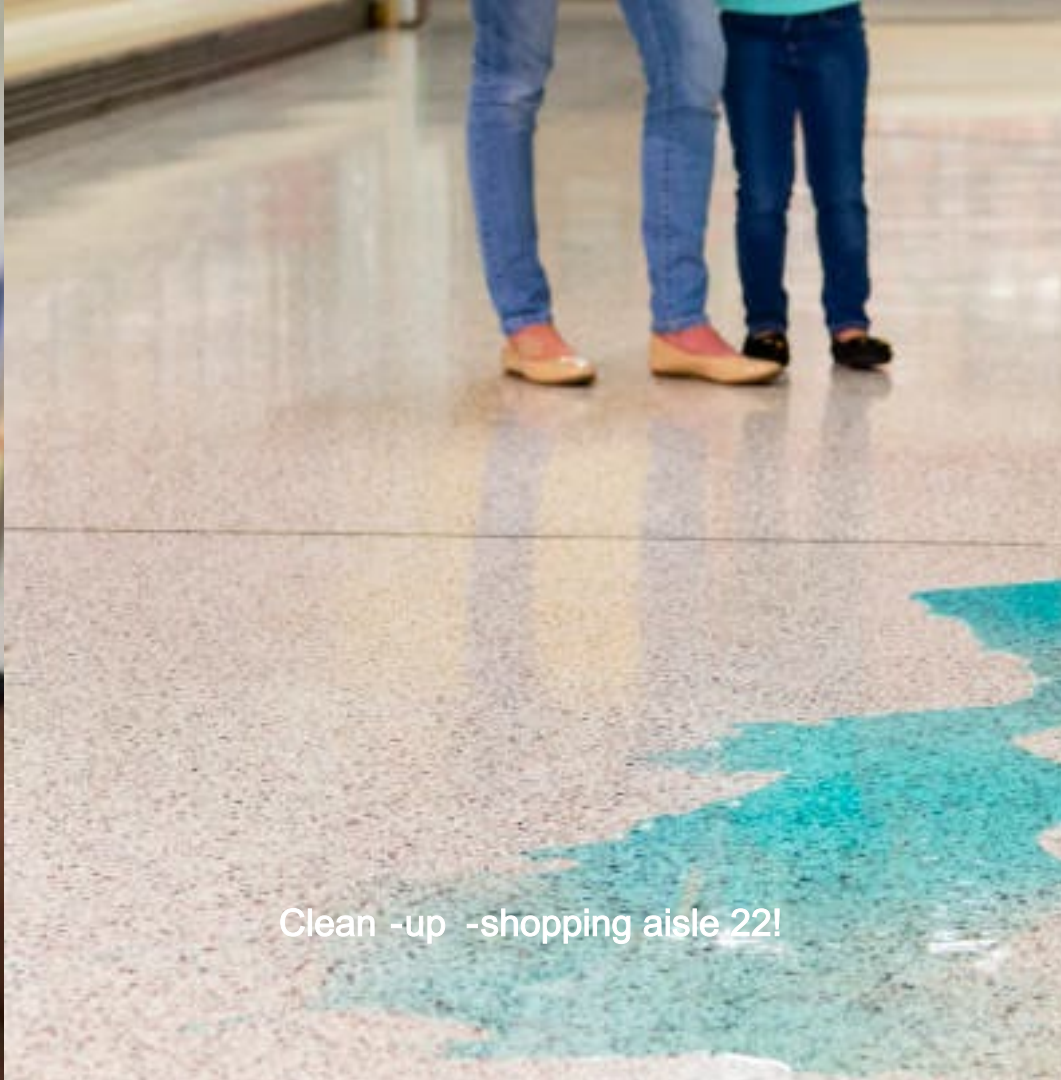
The hidden work that sustains equity and care in universities but goes **unrewarded**. The metaphor, explored in feminist and critical race scholarship (e.g. Ahmed, 2012; Bhopal, 2020; Mountz et al., 2015), critiques how academia relies on this invisible labour, sometimes called “academic housekeeping” or “equity fatigue.”





Again, my title is not "Academic Janitor!"  
It's Director of Internationalisation and  
Professor of Public & Industry Understanding of Capability Driven  
Design.

Clean it up yourself!



Clean -up -shopping aisle 22!



## Why It's a Problem

**Absorbs** time and emotional energy  
**without** recognition or workload credit.

**Labelled** “service,” not scholarship;  
**rarely counts** toward promotion or REF  
outputs.

**Invisible** , risky work , often done by  
those most affected by inequity.

**Sustains** institutional reputation but  
isn't formally rewarded .

Keeps equity goals alive **while others**  
benefit from the improved environment  
**to improve their employability skills**  
and build **evidence for promotions.**



Clean -up -shopping aisle 22!



# BFAN<sup>®</sup>

BLACK FEMALE ACADEMICS' NETWORK  
BY URM

Ahmed, S., 2012. On being included: **Racism and diversity** in institutional life. In On being included. Duke University Press..

Bhopal, K., 2025. **White privilege:** The myth of a post-racial society. Policy Press.

Mountz, A., Bonds, A., Mansfield, B., Loyd, J., Hyndman, J., Walton-Roberts, M., Basu, R., Whitson, R., Hawkins, R., Hamilton, T. and Curran, W., 2015. For slow scholarship: A feminist politics of **resistance through collective action** in the neoliberal university. ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies, 14(4), pp.1235-1259.

Docka-Filipek, D. and Stone, L.B., 2021. Twice a **"housewife"**: On academic precarity, "hysterical" women, faculty mental health, and service as gendered care work for the "university family" in pandemic times. Gender, Work & Organisation, 28(6), pp.2158-2179.

"BFA we are not "Academic Janitors"





## Big Idea No. 1 Calibrating

Calibrating means:

- Translating thesis/research tasks into sector language (policy, NGO, industry, start-up)
- Matching level (so a PGR isn't underselling at "assistant" level)
- Making it visa-/context-aware for international researchers
- Naming EDI barriers explicitly so the advice isn't "race-neutral" when the system isn't.

So: same capability, different framing and level, that's calibration.



Define: To mark units of measurement on an instrument such so that it can

measure accurately



# Mapping “Academic Janitor” Skill Cluster to Transferable Value Beyond Academia (Calibrating)

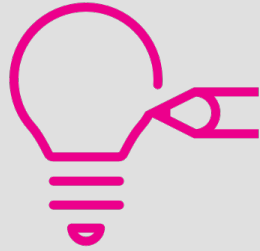
Academic Janitor Skill Cluster	Key Capabilities & Behaviours	Mapped Employability Skills / Attributes	Transferable Value Beyond Academia
1. Relational & Emotional Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active empathy and emotional literacy</li> <li>Conflict mediation and interpersonal sensitivity</li> <li>Boundary -setting and resilience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional intelligence (EQ)</li> <li>Teamwork &amp; collaboration               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conflict resolution</li> </ul> </li> <li>Resilience and wellbeing management</li> </ul>	Builds psychologically safe teams, improves morale, and enhances leadership in people -focused sectors (e.g. HR, healthcare, management).
2. Cultural & Equity Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EDI fluency and bias recognition</li> <li>Inclusive pedagogy and cultural humility</li> <li>Policy literacy (Athena Swan, REC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversity, equity &amp; inclusion leadership               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethical reasoning</li> </ul> </li> <li>Intercultural communication</li> <li>Stakeholder engagement</li> </ul>	Supports equitable organisational change, global teamwork, and corporate social responsibility goals.
3. Administrative & Organisational Repair Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process mapping and systems thinking</li> <li>Hidden administration and crisis triage</li> <li>Change management &amp; problem solving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic planning</li> <li>Process improvement</li> <li>Project management</li> <li>Operations and governance literacy</li> </ul>	Transfers to project, programme, or operations management in complex organisations.
4. Communication & Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diplomatic communication and negotiation</li> <li>Translational writing for diverse audiences</li> <li>Sponsorship, mentoring, and mediation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication &amp; negotiation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership &amp; influence</li> </ul> </li> <li>Report writing &amp; presentation</li> <li>Networking &amp; stakeholder management</li> </ul>	Enhances policy influence, partnership building, and internal/external communications.
5. Reflexivity & Ethical Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-awareness and moral courage</li> <li>Critical reflection on institutional systems</li> <li>Ethical stewardship &amp; integrity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical thinking</li> <li>Values -based leadership               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethical decision -making</li> </ul> </li> <li>Self-management &amp; adaptability</li> </ul>	Aligns with governance, ethics, and sustainability leadership roles across public and private sectors.





# Mapping “Academic Janitor” Skill Cluster to Transferable Value Beyond Academia (Calibrating)

	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Transferable Value Beyond Academia</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Builds psychologically safe teams, improves morale, and enhances leadership in people -focused sectors (e.g. HR, healthcare, management).</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Supports equitable organisational change, global teamwork, and corporate social responsibility goals.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transfers to project, programme, or operations management in complex organisations.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Enhances policy influence, partnership building, and internal/external communications.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Aligns with governance, ethics, and sustainability leadership roles across public and private sectors.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Transferable Value Beyond Academia	Builds psychologically safe teams, improves morale, and enhances leadership in people -focused sectors (e.g. HR, healthcare, management).	Supports equitable organisational change, global teamwork, and corporate social responsibility goals.	Transfers to project, programme, or operations management in complex organisations.	Enhances policy influence, partnership building, and internal/external communications.	Aligns with governance, ethics, and sustainability leadership roles across public and private sectors.
Transferable Value Beyond Academia							
Builds psychologically safe teams, improves morale, and enhances leadership in people -focused sectors (e.g. HR, healthcare, management).							
Supports equitable organisational change, global teamwork, and corporate social responsibility goals.							
Transfers to project, programme, or operations management in complex organisations.							
Enhances policy influence, partnership building, and internal/external communications.							
Aligns with governance, ethics, and sustainability leadership roles across public and private sectors.							



## Research Partnerships & Collaborations



Priorities in Academic & Industry Research 1: **Exploitation**  
Concept of the “*Team*” in research  
(discrimination and intersectionality)



Priorities in Academic & Industry Research 2: **Neglected**  
People from vulnerable communities incorporated into the research  
(pregnant women, indigenous populations/first settlers, etc.)



Priorities in Academic & Industry Research 3: **Sustainable Data**  
Global Collaboration and Co-Creation (Open Access)  
(Research Culture Award, Ethnic Excellence Training Programme)

HORIZONS HORIZONS Horizons Institute Leeds 141 followers 21h • 🌐

“It’s important that we conduct research and gather data in a way that is responsive to the country’s cultural practices. For example, we needed to interview mothers about their health and that of their children, so I imagined a person-to-person interview. But our partners were aware of the different cultural behaviours in different provinces.” - [Professor Lisa-Dionne Morris](#)

Find out more about how Professor Lisa-Dionne Morris is working alongside researchers in [#Kenya](#), [#Nigeria](#) and [#SouthAfrica](#) to design new person-centred methods of communicating health information to families:  
<https://lnkd.in/gwvjJpJf>

[#Research](#) [#HealthResearch](#) [#HealthCommunication](#) [#GlobalCollaboration](#)  
[#Transdisciplinary](#) [#Interdisciplinary](#) [#HealthInformation](#) [#FamilyHealth](#)





## Visting Professor/Capability Workshops/Seminars/Consultancy





# Intersectionality

Kimberlé Crenshaw , refers to the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, gender, and sexuality , as they apply to an individual or group, creating overlapping and interdependent systems .



# Positionality      Definition

Refers to a researcher's **social and professional identity** and how that influences their **perspective, relationship** with participants, and **interpretation of data** . It acknowledges that researchers are never fully neutral, their **positionality** shapes how they see and are **seen in** the research **process** or **spaces** .



# LDM's Identity Shift





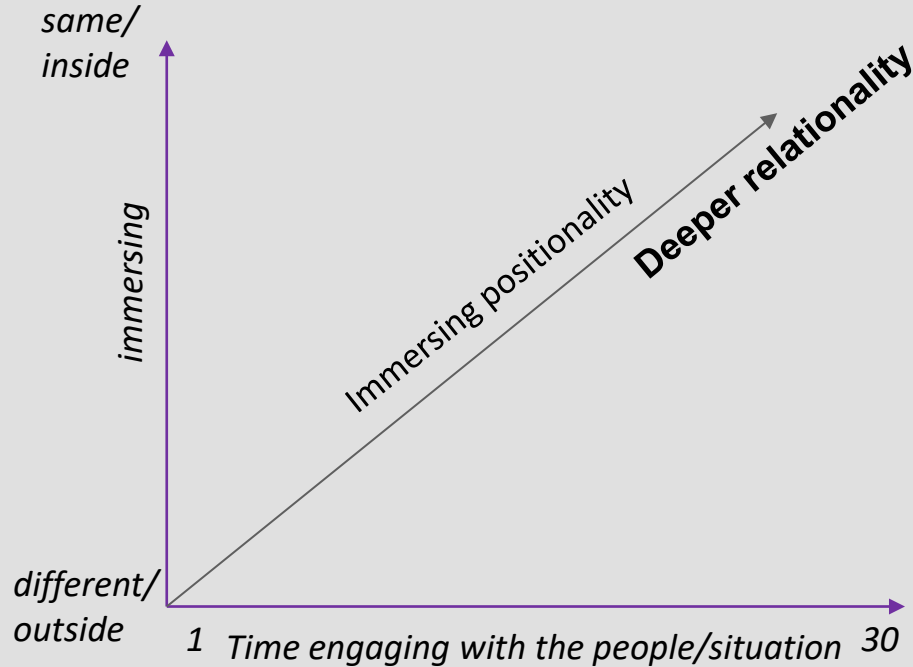
# Relationality

# Definition

The understanding that who we are and how we know the world are shaped through our relationships with others, people, communities, institutions, and environments. It challenges individualism by emphasising interconnection, responsibility, and mutual influence in learning, research, and identity.



# LDM's Positionality Shift



(De la Harpe, 2024)



# Researcher's Identity

Identity is **not a binary state** but something that continues to develop and expand based on interactions with others within a context ( Wilson, C., Janes, G. and Williams, J., 2022).

Insider versus outsider is **not an either -or state** , but instead when an outsider becomes more immersed in the insider's situation.

*Developing relationships characterised by integrity, mutuality, and **holding oneself morally accountable to others bridges identity*** (Cunliffe and Eriksen, 2011).

Wilson, C., Janes, G. and Williams, J., 2022. Identity, positionality and reflexivity: relevance and application to research paramedics. *British paramedic journal* , 7(2), pp.43-49.  
Cunliffe, A.L. and Eriksen, M., 2011. Relational leadership. *Human relations*, 64(11), pp.1425-1449.

(source De la Harpe, 2024)



Oppression is not a zero-sum -game  
for marginalized communities

"Your silence will not protect you"

Gender & Power

"This is a White male world"





## Big Idea No. 2 Constituents

Equity doesn't happen alone; it happens when the **people are in the loop**. "Constituents" are the actors who can open or block routes: supervisors, doctoral schools, careers services, alumni, **employers who understand visas**, EDI/HR teams, and identity **-based networks**.

Bringing them in means:

- supervisors stop treating **non -academic routes as failure**
- careers services** tailor support for racially minoritised and international PGRs
- employers get clearer, more diverse **talent pipelines**,
- networks/sponsors help people **into rooms** they couldn't reach.

Calibrating fixes the **fit**; constituents fix the **system around the person**.

You need both for equitable, sustainable careers beyond academia.

Define: An able to make or change a political constitution



A political constitution is one in which those who exercise political power are held to constitutional account



# Why is this significant?

Calibrating fixes the *fit*; constituents fix the *system around the person* .

You need both for equitable, sustainable careers beyond academia



# RACE AND ETHNICITY IN PGR

**Diversity statistics** –how many faculty members are Black, Asian, etc. This is relevant because PGR has historically lacked lived experience of racial and ethnic diversity.



**Representation in rankings** – It could point to whether departments with more racial and ethnic diversity among faculty and students are recognised or discussed in the PGR.

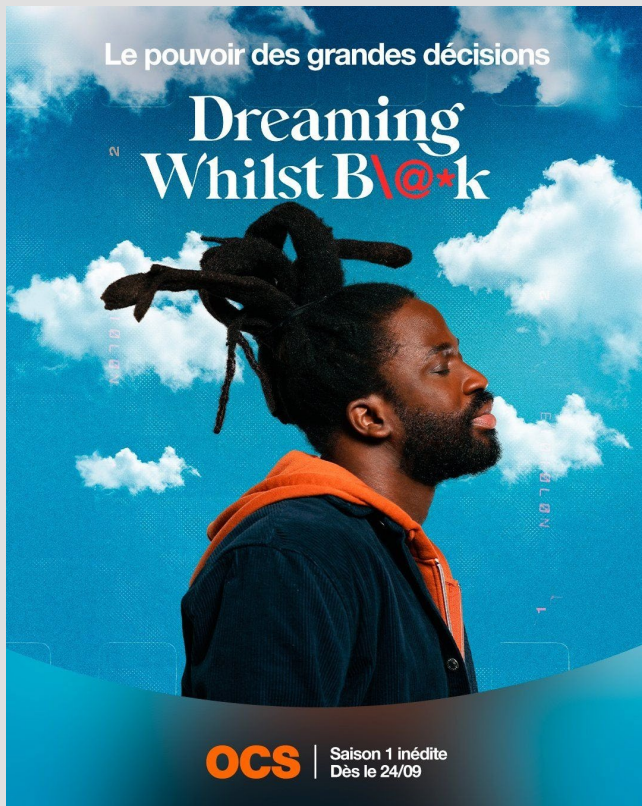


**Critique or supplement to PGR** –  
•Not adequately accounting for racial and ethnic diversity in its evaluations.  
•Overrepresenting programmes that are less diverse.  
•Ignoring philosophers who work on race, ethnicity, or related social topics.



**Topical focus in philosophy** – How well departments or universities support research and teaching in the philosophy of race, ethnicity, or related areas

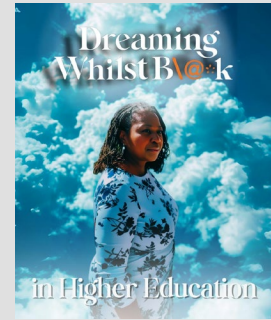
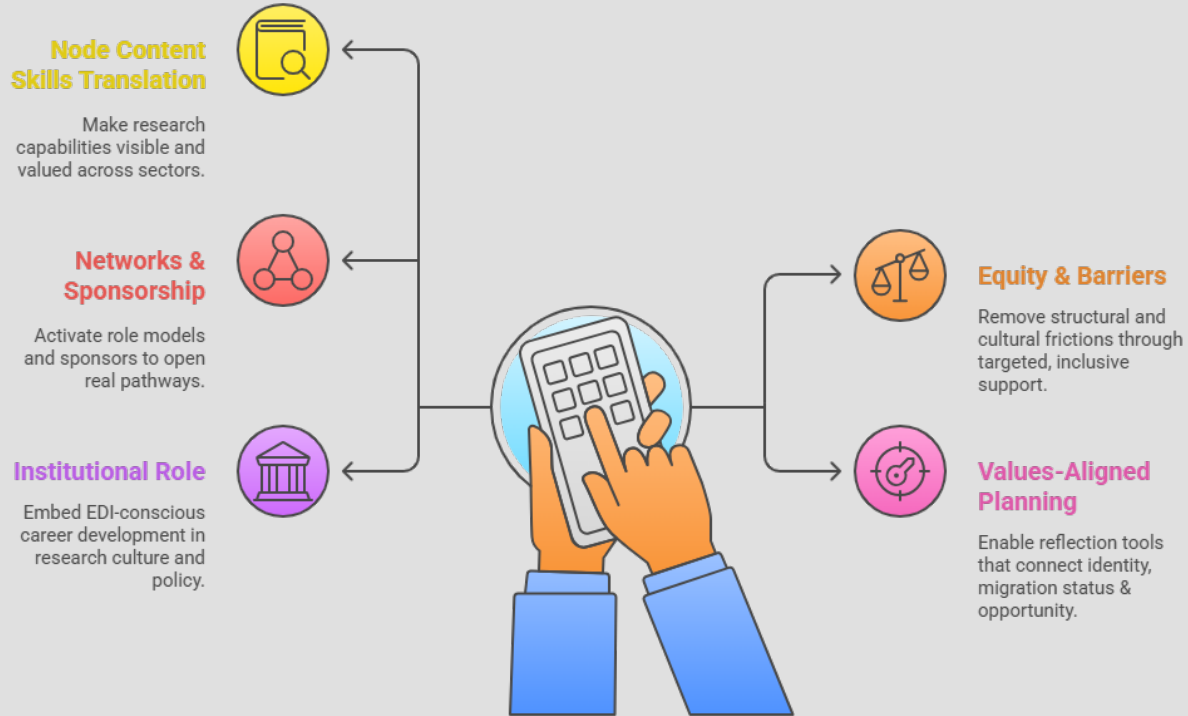






## “Calibration + Constituents”

### EDI Initiatives





## Navigating Non-Academic Career Paths

### "Calibration + Constituents"



#### Skills Translation

Identifying and showcasing transferable research skills to employers.



#### Equity & Barriers

Addressing structural and cultural barriers faced by minority PGRs.



#### Networks & Sponsorship

Leveraging networks and mentorship to enhance career awareness.



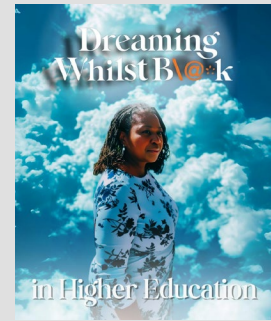
#### Values-Aligned Planning

Creating personalized career plans that align with individual values.



#### Institutional Role

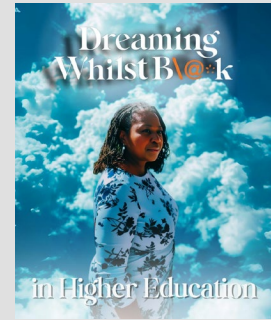
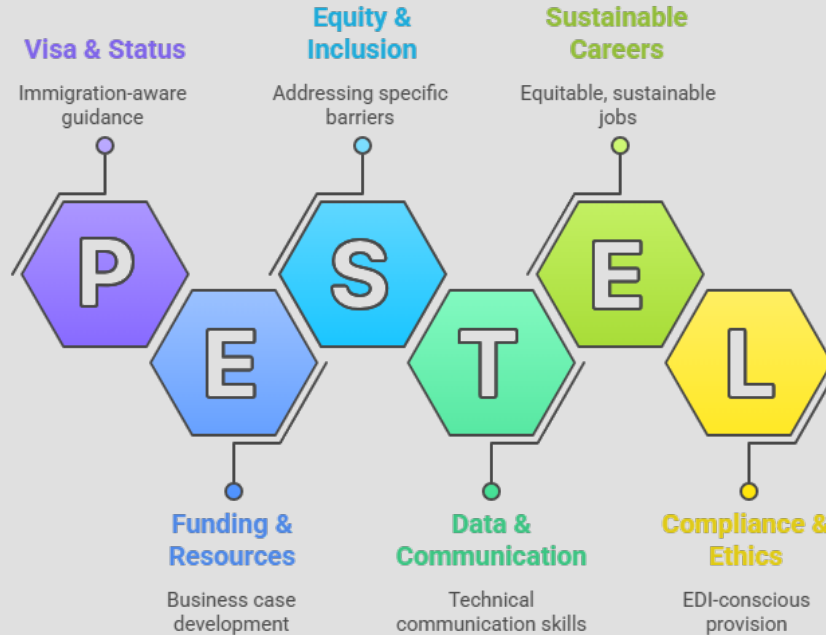
Embedding EDI-conscious career development within university culture.





## “Calibration + Constituents”

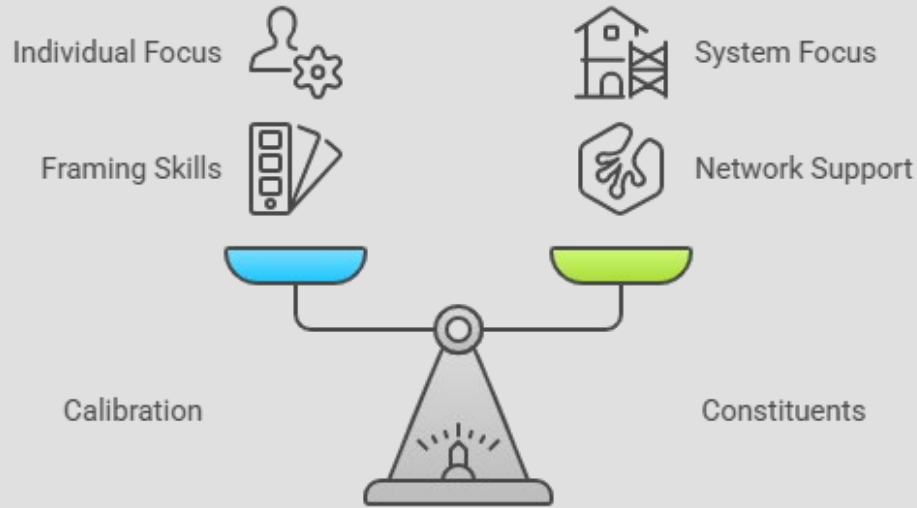
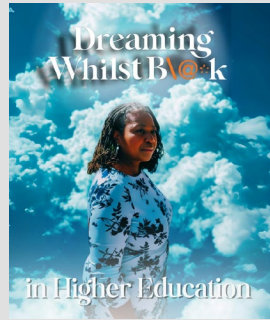
### PGR Career Support Challenges





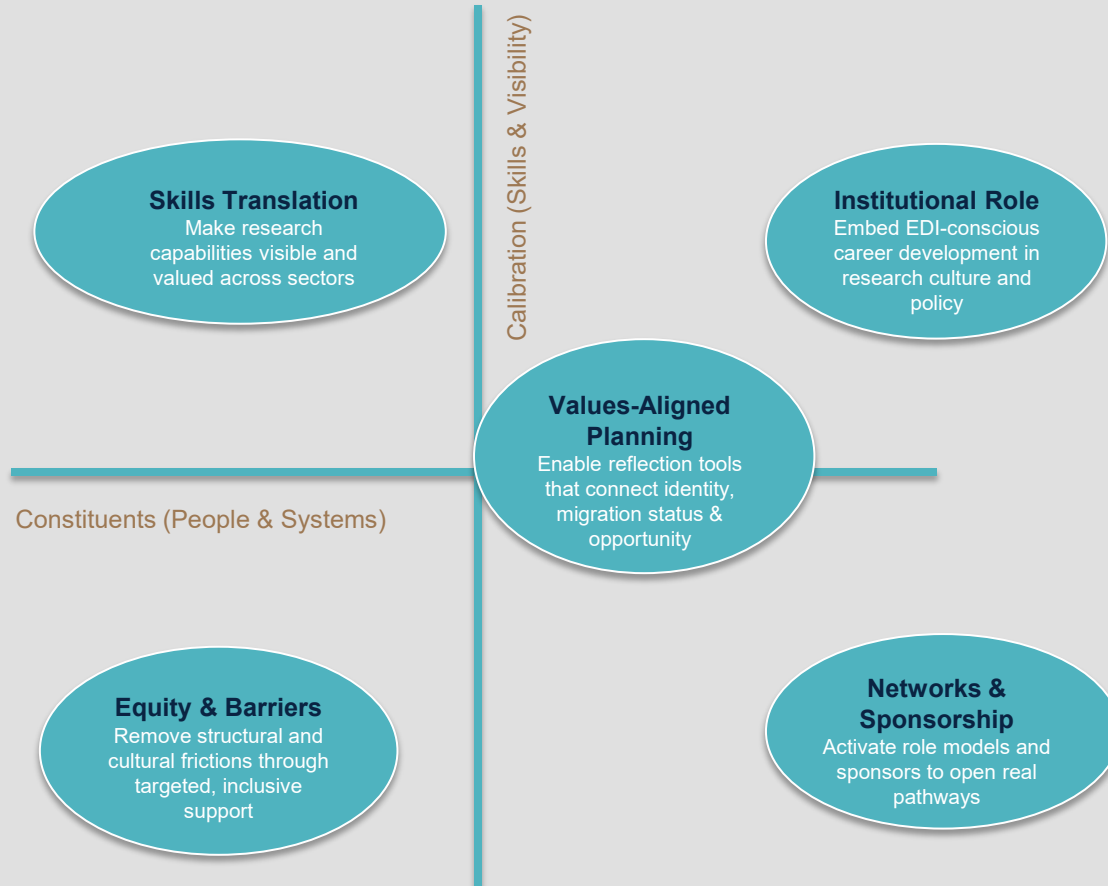
# Balancing Individual and Systemic Changes for Equitable Careers

“Calibration + Constituents”





# Beyond Academia: The Calibration + Constituents Model Workshops



Equitable careers happen when **research skills are calibrated** to sector needs **and key constituents open doors.**



# Beyond Academia: Building Equitable PGR Careers

Calibration + Constituents: Five Foundations for Inclusive Researcher Careers

## 1. Skills Translation (Calibrating)

Postgraduate researchers already possess highly portable capabilities, analysis, stakeholder engagement, project management, design and innovation, and dissemination, but these must be calibrated and translated into the language, value systems, and outcomes recognised by employers across industry, policy, NGOs, and entrepreneurship.

## 2. Equity & Barriers (Constituents)

Racially minoritised and international PGRs continue to encounter structural and cultural barriers in transitioning beyond academia; targeted interventions such as mentoring, sponsorship, visa-aware careers guidance, and inclusive funding models are essential to level access and ensure equitable opportunity.

## 3. Networks & Sponsorship (Constituents)

Access to professional networks, visible role models, and active sponsors plays a decisive role in shaping researchers' awareness of and confidence in non-academic career routes, turning aspiration into achievable mobility.

## 4. Values-Aligned Planning (Calibrating)

Effective career support empowers researchers to align career choices with personal values, identity, migration status, and life context, using practical tools that transform reflection into strategic, evidence-based career planning.

## 5. Institutional Role (Constituents + Calibrating)

Universities and doctoral schools have a shared responsibility to embed EDI-conscious career development within research culture and policy, ensuring that 'careers beyond academia' is recognised as a core dimension of researcher development and REF-aligned employability, not an individual hustle.



# I Argue

**Skills translation:** Which research skills (analysis, stakeholder engagement, project management, design/innovation, dissemination) are most portable to industry, policy, NGOs and entrepreneurship, and *how do we make that portability visible to employers?*

**Equity & barriers:** What specific structural and cultural barriers do racially minoritised and international PGRs face when pursuing non-academic careers in the UK, and *which interventions (mentoring, sponsorship, visa -aware guidance, inclusive funding routes) mitigate them?*

**Networks & sponsorship:** How do access to networks, role models and sponsors shape PGRs' awareness of and *confidence in non -academic routes?*

**Values -aligned planning:** What tools help PGRs build a personalised, values-aligned career exploration plan that *recognises identity, migration status, and location of opportunity?*

**Institutional role** : How can universities and doctoral schools embed EDI-conscious career development so that "careers beyond academia" **isn't just an individual hustle** but *part of research culture and REF -aligned employability goals?*



“Thank you, 3rd UKCGE Conference!”

Professor **Lisa -Dionne Morris (LDM)**

Professor of Public & Industry Understanding of **Capability Driven Design**