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2024

# REVERSE MENTORING PACK



**That's Me!**

*Eliminating barriers to postgraduate research study in the West Midlands*

# ABOUT THE PROJECT

**'That's Me! Eliminating Barriers to Postgraduate research study in the West Midlands'** is a collaboration between Birmingham City University and the University of Wolverhampton. Seeking to foster a more **inclusive** and **supportive** environment for postgraduate researchers in the West Midlands, the project will address barriers and challenges faced by PGRs at different stages of their journey, from application to completion and beyond.

**The Reverse Mentoring Programme is one aspect of this project.**

## ABOUT THE PILOT

The Reverse Mentoring programme offers a unique opportunity for PGRs to engage in a **mutually beneficial** mentoring relationship. In this approach, **Global Majority students** will serve as **mentors to staff** members at BCU, providing insights into their unique perspectives, experiences, and challenges within academia. The pilot has been **co-designed with PGRs**, to ensure that the programme works for them and their career aspirations, and to create the best possible chance for the mentor/mentee relationship to be beneficial for both parties, and work towards creating positive change in the PGR experience at BCU.

# INTRODUCTION



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# THAT'S ME REVERSE MENTORING SCHEME OUTLINE



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# OBJECTIVES & SUCCESS METRICS

The That's Me! Reverse Mentoring Scheme aims to foster an environment where PGRs can have their voices heard and their lived experiences recognised.

## PRIMARY OBJECTIVES\*

*\*of the pilot*

- **Amplifying** the voices and \_\_\_\_\_ of PGRs within the organisation.
- Reporting on these voices in Senior Leadership (SL) meetings to ensure they are **taken into account** in decision-making processes.
- Ensuring that the **lived experiences** of participants in the Global Majority are acknowledged, trusted and valued.
- Provide a platform and role for PGRs to feel **empowered & confident** in their expertise and experiences as well as a development opportunity for their \_\_\_\_\_.
- Evaluating the **impact** of the programme on both mentors and mentees as well as the institution
- Feedback from participants regarding their sense of empowerment and confidence.
- Potential areas for further development and expansion of impact



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# INDUCTION SESSION

**In Person Session:** 23 May 2024  
**Online Session(s):** TBC

The induction session for mentors includes several key components designed to prepare them for their roles:

- Mentors have the opportunity to ask questions in a "speed dating" format, putting the onus of directing the conversation and agenda on them rather than the mentees.
- A discussion of privilege in doctoral study and the research landscape to ensure participants understand the issues that impact PGR's interactions, experiences and perceptions within the university.

## MEETING STRUCTURES

Image of the Agreement?  
Potentially the Meeting Diary?

Mentors take the lead in setting the agenda, choosing meeting locations, and guiding the focus of the meetings to specific topics or policy.

Provision of structured opportunities for mentors to share their experiences.

Confidential discussions signed off through an agreement that states when/where it is appropriate to share information with the wider community to maintain trust.



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# MENTOR SUPPORT

## Support Available to the PGRs

To ensure mentors are well-supported, the following structures are in place:

- Facilitating access to internal services and resources
- Providing mentors with access to all parties leading on Reverse Mentoring:
  - Routes Through Lead
  - Research Associate
  - PGR Research Associate
- Creating Access to Peer Support through group check-ins for mentees.
- Referring Mentors to BCU Mental Health Support Teams, where necessary.
- Referring Mentors to External Mental Health Support, where necessary.



*Credit: Canva*



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# DATA COLLECTION

Providing reflective questions at the start to guide mentors' and mentees' thinking and self-assessment.

## Meeting Records

- Encouraging both mentors and mentees to document reflections and insights from individual sessions to track progress and outcomes.
- One document with notes and reflection questions to be signed off on by mentor/mentee.
- No record for TM/Research Project – just as a record keeping exercise and to encourage reflective practice



## Final Discussion & Debrief

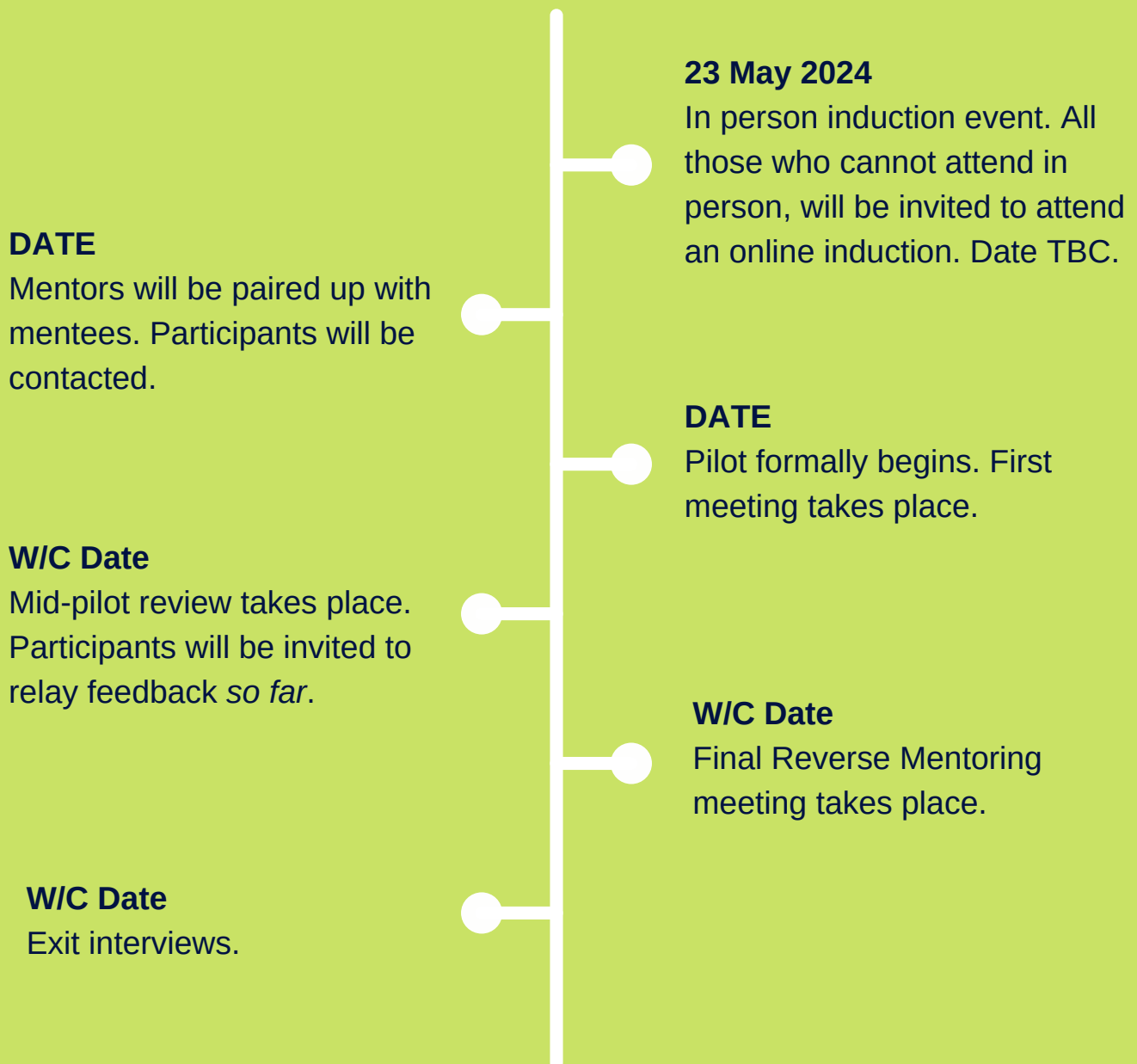
At the conclusion of the mentoring cycle, a final discussion and debrief session will be conducted to:

- Compare initial expectations with current experiences.
- Reflect on what participants have gained from the program.
- Identify and discuss any issues encountered during the mentoring relationship.
- Take forward suggestions and ideas to the next iteration



# TIMELINE OF THE PILOT

This is an estimated timeline. The pilot is set to run from **May 2024** till **September 2024**.



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# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & RESOURCES



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# FAQS

**Do I have to attend the meetings in person?**

We encourage *at least one* of the meetings to be in person, but online meetings are allowed!

**How long do the meetings have to be?**

Meetings should last around one hour. Though mentors are welcome to discuss the potential for longer meetings.



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# EXTRA INFO & MATERIALS

## Empowerment Through Exchange: Reverse Mentoring Reflection

Welcome to the Reverse Mentoring Reflection form. This diary serves as a platform for both mentors and mentees to reflect on their collaborative journey towards eliminating barriers to postgraduate research study in the West Midlands.

The Reverse Mentoring Team will **not** have access to this document, they are for your own records.

### Guidance

This reflective exercise is designed to facilitate thoughtful consideration and learning from each mentoring session. While both mentors and mentees are encouraged to engage in this process, the primary focus is on the mentees (faculty staff members) to document their reflections.

Please remember that the completion of this reflection is the responsibility of the mentee. Once completed, the reflection form should be signed off by the PGR mentor, indicating their acknowledgement and validation of the mentee's record.

### Contact and Wellbeing Support

Should you have any concerns regarding your participation in the Reverse Mentoring program or if you require additional support for your wellbeing, please do not hesitate to reach out to the person you feel most comfortable with via email or teams:

Dr Karen Patel  
Programme Lead  
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Melissa Oleschuk  
Research Associate  
(PGR)  
[Melissa.Oleschuk@mail.bcu.ac.uk](mailto:Melissa.Oleschuk@mail.bcu.ac.uk)

Members of the Reverse Mentoring Team

Your wellbeing and comfort are of utmost importance to us, and we are committed to providing a supportive and inclusive environment throughout your involvement in the programme. Therefore, if it becomes necessary to seek external support, such as contacting the BCU Mental Health team or other external mental health services, we are prepared to take appropriate measures.

Additionally, we have established a Peer-to-Peer network for mentors who may benefit from connecting with their peers for support, guidance, or sharing of experiences. If you

## Mid-Pilot Review and Reflection – MENTEE

### Introduction

As we reach the midpoint of our Reverse Mentoring Pilot, we invite you to take this opportunity to reflect on your experiences and share your insights. For privacy, both Mentors and Mentees are asked to fill out their own forms, which are separate from the diary document, but they have been circulated concurrently. There is no need to share your reflections with your mentor or the Reverse Mentoring Team. This is just an opportunity to capture your thoughts, feelings, and ideas which you will be able to share during our Mid-Pilot Check-in.

The questions (and of course sections) are only prompts, if you wish to disregard them and carry out self-guided reflection, there is a designated section at the end of the document.

### Progress and Insights

- How has your understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by PGRs from the global majority evolved through this mentorship?
- Can you share any significant insights or learning moments that have emerged during your sessions?

### Challenges and Solutions

- What challenges have you encountered in your role as a mentee? How have you addressed or plan to address them?
- Are there any particular issues or barriers that need immediate attention from the Reverse Mentoring Team?

## Session Reflexive Diary

## Mentee Mid-point Reflection

## Mid-Pilot Review and Reflection – MENTORS

### Introduction

As we reach the midpoint of our Reverse Mentoring Pilot, we invite you to take this opportunity to reflect on your experiences and share your insights. For privacy, both Mentors and Mentees are asked to fill out their own forms, which are separate from the diary document, but they have been circulated concurrently. There is no need to share your reflections with your mentee or the Reverse Mentoring Team. This is just an opportunity to capture your thoughts, feelings, and ideas which you will be able to share during our Mid-Pilot Check-in.

The questions (and of course sections) are only prompts, if you wish to disregard them and carry out self-guided reflection, there is a designated section at the end of the document.

### Progress and Insights

- How has your understanding of the academic environment and its impact on PGRs from diverse backgrounds evolved through this mentorship so far, if at all?
- Can you think of any significant insights or learning moments that have emerged during your sessions?

### Challenges and Solutions

- What challenges have you encountered in your role as a mentor? How have you addressed or plan to address them?
- Are there any particular issues or barriers that need immediate attention from the Reverse Mentoring Team?

## Mentor Mid-point Reflection



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**Welcome** to the That's Me! Reverse Mentoring Programme, we're so excited for you to participate in this important pilot project.

## Contact

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**THANK YOU!**



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