

# DECOLONISING TRAINING PROJECT:

## STUDENT PARTNER AGREEMENT & ROLE INFORMATION



### Overview

The Doctoral College is pioneering a new and exciting project to support the decolonisation of their researcher training provision.

‘Decolonisation’ within Higher Education involves institutions making a conscious effort to ensure that our education and knowledge is informed and framed by different cultures, and not just represented by (white Western) individuals and traditional views. This allows our service and support to be more relatable, inclusive and better tailored to the diverse identities within our research community.

We want to improve the cultural inclusivity of our Researcher Development Programme workshops and resources by inviting PGRs to help us develop new methods and perspectives to guide our future training design. It is hoped that this will lead to the production of a ‘playbook’ on inclusive training for other institutions to follow, as well as making a wider contribution to Surrey’s research culture.

A crucial step is the recruitment of eight current Surrey PGRs from Black Asian Minority Ethnic backgrounds<sup>1</sup> in a fixed-term paid role to support the Office for Students (OfS) funded *Decolonising Training project*. As student partners, they will work collaboratively with training officers in the RDE team. They will provide their varied perspectives, challenge our unconscious assumptions, and help us to develop a sustainable and equitable partnership model. The PGR partners will specifically help us to address issues of race equality, as well as considering paths toward more equitable training.

We are focussing particularly on Black British PGR students in this project because of the consistent under-representation of all Black British subgroups within Doctoral Research Degrees at Surrey. Within this we recognise the importance of the heterogeneity between Black Caribbean, Black African and Black mixed groups. We are committed to challenging under-representation and marginalisation in the support and training offered to postgraduate researchers.

This document sets out the major elements of the role and the expectations on PGR partners.

### Role Description

As a PGR partner you will assist with a review of one current RDP training workshop in the Doctoral College, for both in-person and online delivery, and any relevant supporting documentation (such as workshop materials and resources).

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<sup>1</sup> We acknowledge the inadequacy of the term “BAME” for many aspects of cultural and racial heterogeneity and identity. It is used here as the currently accepted policy term rather than a true descriptor.

You will receive an information session and training at the start of the programme to make sure you understand what is involved and feel well-equipped to discuss and contribute to effective changes. There will be a range of supports available to you throughout (see Support Network section below) to ensure this work does not impact on your wellbeing or PhD research progression.

Your involvement in this project is designed to offer you valuable professional development in communication skills, consultancy and education content design, and knowledge in a sought-after and rapidly growing policy area. Although not a formal part of the role, you may be involved and acknowledged in future publications arising from the project.

For this 2022 project, groups of two PGR partners will be paired with two DC training officers (staff members) to form a partnership team. Over a series of meetings they will together evaluate and critique training content for a specific workshop. PGR partners will act as sounding boards, bringing into focus areas where the current provision is lacking, poorly designed, not inclusive or inaccessible. They will make suggestions on how the training can be redesigned to improve the sense of belonging for BAME researchers. In a collegial setting, we will collaborate to develop decolonisation blueprints for future design, as well as concrete changes to the existing materials. At the end of the project, PGR partners will attend an evaluation session where they can feed back on the partnership project itself, as well as its outcomes.

The total time commitment for PGR partner work on this project is 17 hours, inclusive of any preparation work in addition to attending partnership meetings, training and evaluation sessions. The majority of the work will be scheduled over summer 2022.

## **Timeline**

Milestone elements (provisional timings)

April-May 2022 – Recruitment of PGR partners

May-June 2022 – Selection, Introductions and PGR partner training

June-Aug 2022 - Decolonising co-creation meetings and redesign

Aug-Sept 2022 - Project Evaluation and Partner Survey

## **Commitment**

This project is the outcome of a major successful funding application from the Office for Students and is a flagship programme for the University that may lead to important subsequent initiatives. We also want to offer you the best possible support and acknowledge the emotional labour and time commitments involved. For these reasons we ask you to assert your commitment by considering the statements below. We also include a job description, details of remuneration, and details of available support and resources.

- ☐ I respect other people's points of view
- ☐ I appreciate that people have different feelings and behaviours
- ☐ I recognise and value other people's contributions

- ☐ I am able to provide honest, constructive feedback
- ☐ I abide by rules of information privacy and confidentiality
- ☐ I have considered the time and energy it will be necessary to give this project over a number of months
- ☐ I am interested in improving Surrey's research culture and sense of belonging for myself and other ethnic minority PGRs
- ☐ I am interested in helping to make Surrey's Research culture more inclusive
- ☐ I have a willing interest in the Race equality and Decolonisation in HE agenda
- ☐ I am confident and willing to explore topics that may challenge current ways of working and explore racial inequalities in academia and the institution. I am aware that I will be supported during this process to ensure my wellbeing and personal comfort levels are considered at all times
- ☐ I understand that some aspects of this work could be emotionally challenging, and that a range of support services will be available to me when I need it

### **Application:**

We have a short online application form for PGRs to fill in if they are interested in becoming a partner on this project. Deadline is Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May. The link for the form is as follows:

[Student Partner form](#)

### **Payment / Remuneration**

We recognise that the demands for decolonisation initiatives and making progress on racial equality disproportionately fall on those affected by and already disadvantaged by the system. A partial means of addressing this is to ensure reasonable financial recognition for the work involved.

You may claim for time spent on this project, including attending formal meetings, production of materials and delivery of training. The maximum total commitment is anticipated to be 17 hours.

**Hourly rate: £17.02**

(Based on current Unitemps rates, grade 3.6)

### **Support Network Contacts for PGR Partners**

We hope that the project will be a rewarding experience for our PGR partners, but we also understand that discussions on race can be triggering. Every student partner will have different preferences in terms of who they would feel comfortable to approach if any issues arise. Below is a support network list of individuals who are all happy to support you should you need to speak to someone during the course of the project. The list includes external parties who are not associated with the Doctoral College, to help with confidentiality and impartiality. Should you specifically wish to speak to a 'BAME' individual, these are marked with an asterisk.

### **Primary contacts for PGR partners**

\*Jay Rowe – Project manager for Shine Scholars programme, Doctoral College

[jay.rowe@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:jay.rowe@surrey.ac.uk)

\*Neelam Wright - EDI and Project lead

[Neelam.wright@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:Neelam.wright@surrey.ac.uk)

### **EDI team**

[edi@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:edi@surrey.ac.uk) (for confidential consultation regarding EDI related concerns)

Emily Williams – Head of EDI and Academic Lead for Race equality

Kate Gleeson – Director of Doctoral College

### **Student Union contacts**

[University of Surrey Students' Union \(ussu.co.uk\)](http://University of Surrey Students' Union (ussu.co.uk))

Meghan (VP voice) [ussu.vpvoice@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:ussu.vpvoice@surrey.ac.uk)

\*Ajay (SU President) [ussu.president@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:ussu.president@surrey.ac.uk)

**Wellbeing centre** (inc. specific Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic race discrimination advisors)

\*Steve Elliot

**\*SEED network** (Surrey Embracing Ethnic Diversity Network for Black, Asian Minority ethnic staff and research students)

SEED Steering Group contacts: \*Namy Yu, \*Aqila Kaleem, \*Anand Ahankari

To connect and join SEED, please email: \*Kaya Holder

Alternatively, email: [edi@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:edi@surrey.ac.uk)

Further Contacts to consider:

\*PGR rep (and SEED member) for example, Jacob Hiles

Clare Wunderly (Head of Researcher Development and Employability)

Associate Deans for Doctoral College for each faculty

\*External counselling services: <https://www.sharongreencounselling.com/>

Your supervisory team may also be helpful in terms of managing this work around your PhD

Report + Support service (formal process for reporting harassment, bullying and racism with a confidential anonymous option to protect identity of person reporting)

Report + Support - University of Surrey

Bullying and Harassment policy (TBC due summer 2022 – contact Doctoral College to enquire)

\* Shijia Yu - Finance/PGR payment queries for this project

IOE - Karen Gravett (For questions about partnership pedagogy)

\*Institute Of Education – Anesa Hosein – Academic in Inclusive education

\*Pro VC Education, Osama Khan (for matters for Executive Board's consideration; please arrange a meeting via his PA: [k.lascelles@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:k.lascelles@surrey.ac.uk))

Doctoral College Careers consultants: Emma Francis and Rana Marrington – career development support for PGR partners