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A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a diverse group of people, likely researchers or students, looking at a computer screen. A woman in the foreground is smiling and looking intently at the screen. Other people are visible in the background, also focused on their work.

Researcher Academy

Supervising postgraduate researchers from diverse backgrounds

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Introduction



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Introduction

The Researcher Academy welcomes you to this Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) guide for supervisors. Postgraduate researchers (PGRs) make up 8.5% of the student population at the University of Nottingham and PGR support needs can differ significantly from those in the undergraduate community.

For PGRs from diverse backgrounds there can be additional challenges that arise during their period of doctoral research. This awareness-raising guidance has been created specifically for staff who supervise PGRs. It follows consultation with PGRs across the University who identify as coming from a diverse background, discussions with supervisors and advice and expertise from specialist services within our University community. Increased awareness and engagement with EDI issues will allow supervisors to effectively support their diverse supervisees and feel more able to make appropriate adjustments when needed. It will help supervisors to advocate on behalf of their PGRs and create a more supportive environment for all.

This guide gives some helpful pointers of things to consider when supervising PGRs. It is designed to act as a starting point for colleagues to learn more about the challenges that PGRs from diverse backgrounds could face whilst conducting their research at University. We would encourage everyone to use training and development opportunities, from both within and outside of the University to grow their knowledge further. Further reading and other resources are listed in this guide if you would like to read more on any of the subjects covered. Please also feed ideas and concerns back to the Researcher Academy, your Researcher Academy Faculty Lead, your School PGR Directors, EDI Coordinators and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

There are as many different student experiences as there are PGRs at the University of Nottingham – this guide highlights areas for consideration which have been raised by PGRs themselves during consultation, but the best advice will always be to actively listen to and engage with your supervisees to understand their individual circumstances and support them effectively.

Many thanks,

Sandra Rose and Alice Haslam
PGR Welfare and EDI Officers
Researcher Academy



Alice Haslam



Sandra Rose

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What are protected characteristics?



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What are Protected Characteristics?

There are nine characteristics protected from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment*
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

* At the University, you will see the term trans being used rather than gender reassignment. We recognise that trans people hold a variety of identities, some of which may not be related to gender reassignment, and that some people may identify as neither male nor female. Trans is used at the University as an inclusive ‘umbrella’ term for anyone whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. For a more detailed explanation of the protected characteristics we recommend this **resource** (click to activate).

In order to acknowledge the specific challenges faced by our University community in terms of their identity, the University of Nottingham also recognises the

following characteristics as significant and affords PGRs in these groups the same protection from discrimination:

- Linguistic diversity
- Socio-economic background
- Neurodiversity
- Caring responsibilities
- Temporary impairment

This guide will give an overview of some of these characteristics, in order to provide guidance and improve understanding of the most commonly presented characteristics.

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What are Protected Characteristics?

Identity

While the protected characteristics give us a framework to think about diversity and identify some of the most common groups who experience discrimination, it is important to also consider individual identity and how this impacts on their experience as a doctoral researcher. Supervisees may fall into many of the above groups, or identify more strongly with some than others, increasing their exposure to potential discrimination (see the Intersectionality section of this guide).

Consultation for this guide brought out a strong theme of identity being very important to postgraduate researchers and that they would value supervisors getting to know more about their personal identity and background in order to support them better.

Spending some time, particularly at the start of their research degree, to talk about them as a person and not just in terms of their doctoral research is hugely helpful. It can result in more awareness about their background and whether they may need more of the support detailed in this guide.

This can also be a good time to look at the boundaries and limits of the role. While there is a pastoral element to the supervisor role, some supervisors are more comfortable with this than others. Knowing when and where to signpost on to specialist help is crucial for your own wellbeing and that of your supervisee – see the ‘signposting to support services’ section of this guide. Being clear on the expectations of the supervisor/supervisee relationship from the start, including processes and procedures we all need to follow, is also very helpful when PGRs are coming to research from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

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Intersectionality



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Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a term that was coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. It refers to the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender, and how they apply to a given individual or group in creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Supervisors should be aware that their supervisees may face multiple disadvantages because of their identities and should be open in attempting to understand how their PGRs are managing these sometimes interrelated, but also sometimes distinct, considerations.

Kimberlé Crenshaw gives a powerful account of intersectionality in her Ted Talk: [here](#) (click to activate).

How can intersectionality affect a PGR?

Below are a couple of examples of identities where overlapping protected characteristics can create increased levels of disadvantage and a lack of belonging.

A black female PGR is working on a project which is based in a laboratory or office where the majority of other colleagues are white and male. For that individual her lived experience of working and thriving in that environment will be different to that of a white

female, or a black male in the same environment. She may experience bias and a lack of belonging due to being female or black, and in reality, she is likely to experience both.

A PGR is disabled and also comes from a low socio-economic background. Those two aspects of their identity are likely to have put them at increased disadvantage, compared to a disabled PGR from a higher socio-economic background or a PGR from a low socio-economic background without a disability. Being aware of this can help you to provide support more effectively.

Ways you can help

- Being aware of intersectionality is an important starting point to help us understand and better support those PGRs who it affects
- Think about a PGR’s identity and acknowledge that we may not know all of their identities but that each one will have impacted on them
- We should all strive to make research environments and culture inclusive and welcoming to all; this will benefit everyone
- Be open to listening to the voices of those most affected by issues and be willing to advocate on their behalf
- Seek to collaborate with people from different backgrounds to help diversify thinking and ideas

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Considering EDI in the context of research supervision



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Considering EDI in the context of research supervision

This guide is designed to support your consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion in the context of research supervision. You may recognise all of the following as part of your identity as a member of a supervisory team:

Mentor

As a mentor, you support your supervisee’s success by helping them to develop the skills they need and providing a safe space within the relationship for them to ask questions and learn from your knowledge and experience.

Sponsor

As a sponsor, you support your supervisee’s success by giving them access to opportunities, sharing your networks and making introductions that will help them to build their career.

Advocate

As an advocate, you support your supervisee’s success by acknowledging and respecting their work and abilities, speaking positively about them to others and representing their needs and interests.

It is important to note that while there is a focus on individual identities within this guide, we recognise

that supervision is undertaken as part of a supervisory team and also may include management of a group dynamic if you have more than one PGR or they are part of a wider research group.

It is important to think about the role of the supervisor in this context, beyond the one-on-one relationship with an individual supervisee.

As such, ask yourself:

- Do all my researchers have a fair level of access to the support they need from me? This may mean that some PGRs require more of your time than others at different points in their research to ensure that they are able to succeed
- Do I give all my supervisees access to the same opportunities in a fair way? This may include attendance at conferences, opportunities to teach or invitations to networking events
- Do I advocate effectively for all my supervisees, considering their diverse identities to ensure an inclusive environment? This may include changing the timing of a meeting which a PGR cannot attend due to care responsibilities, proactively raising issues of access for a disabled PGR during a lab move or speaking up against a microaggression you witness in the workplace

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Age



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Age

The nature of postgraduate research means that PGRs begin their research journey at various ages. Some may come directly from their undergraduate studies, while others may return to University after a long break, or via non-traditional routes. Age is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and discrimination based on age is unlawful so having an awareness of how best to support PGRs from a variety of different age groups is helpful. Bias or microaggressions related to age are not always directed toward older people, sometimes we can make assumptions or unconsciously hold biases against younger people – for example, perceiving that a younger PGR has less expertise in an area of research or that their opinion is less valid.

Balancing research with other commitments

Many PGRs will start their programme already juggling several responsibilities. This could be caring commitments that compress the time they have available for their research. They may be married or in long-term relationships, so need to balance those commitments with the demands of their research. On top of this, they may have part-time jobs that they

need to maintain to ensure they can afford to complete their doctoral programme. The timetable for a PGR can feel like an overlapping jigsaw – one where, try as they might, they sometimes cannot make the pieces fit together.

Ways you can help

- Listen and be empathetic. Demonstrate that you understand their situation and ask questions to help understand it if you don't. Be mindful that different age groups face different demands
- If you can't meet face to face because of your supervisee's commitments, offer virtual meetings via video or audio call
- Be prepared to be flexible with their research requirements (and to advocate for them with others within the school or faculty). Offering flexibility on timing of meetings etc is hugely helpful in managing these additional commitments

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Age

Previous academic experiences

Postgraduate researchers are likely to have had different experiences of education prior to starting their doctorate. They may have come from different grounding institutions or have studied abroad and be unfamiliar with Nottingham’s policies and support networks. They could have a gap in their education meaning they need to refresh their academic skills. They may not have undertaken a master’s course and find that many others in their cohort have. Being aware of these variations can help you to provide any additional support required.

Ways you can help

- Don’t assume a previous level of study or that a PGR will already know where to access support. Making sure they know how to access help when they need it and not just during induction week is important. The section on ‘Signposting to support services’ in this guide has lots of useful information on this. Click [here](#) to view
- Value their previous knowledge and experience, and what this can bring to their research. Offer encouragement and validation rather than specific instruction where appropriate
- Allow time to talk through how to approach studying at doctoral level, and how your supervisee can find other support instruction where appropriate

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Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Researchers



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Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Researchers

Around 15% of postgraduate researchers identify as BAME. With approximately 1 in 5 students at the University identifying as BAME, it’s important that supervisors develop their understanding of some of the issues their supervisees can face and may raise in support conversations.

Racism

Universities are stereotypically seen as being liberal places, where tolerance and diversity is championed and celebrated. However, there are significant issues related to racism within our diverse community at the University of Nottingham. Racism is a societal system which centres around whiteness through financial, academic, media and criminal justice systems. It is important to understand the broad context because hate crimes do not happen in a vacuum.

We firmly believe greater diversity within a PGR community generates better research, knowledge that is more reflective of current society, and is fundamental to our understanding of universities as public institutions. As Sir Paul Nurse emphasised in his review of research councils:

“Diversity should be protected in researchers, approaches and locations – recognising that novel approaches and solutions to problems sometimes emerge more readily outside the mainstream.” [1]

[1]**Report** (click to activate)

By growing our understanding, we can help to prevent hate crimes, and fully support and safeguard PGRs that are at risk of experiencing them. Both on and off campus, PGRs could be subject to racism and supervisors should be ready to support their supervisees as well as actively engage in embedding anti-racism within their own practices.

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Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Researchers

Ways you can help

- Commit to growing your knowledge and developing an active understanding of what racism is and how it operates in universities
- Set high expectations for inclusivity within your research group from induction onwards
- Offer support for researchers in scenarios where they don't see themselves represented, such as conferences and seminars. Consider how teaching activity such as leading seminars, bench supervision for junior students, or poster presentations can include more BAME representation
- Don't be a bystander. Call out racism when you see it. Ensure your supervisees know that it is not just their responsibility to safeguard themselves from racism. Learn more about active bystander training (check Central Short Courses for further training opportunities). Link [here](#) (click to activate)
- Learn more about criticisms of counterterrorism and anti-radicalisation laws, and how, whilst it is a safeguarding measure, the Prevent duty can be felt to have a negative effect on some PGRs. More information on the Prevent duty is [here](#) (click to activate)

- Be aware of the potential wellbeing issues that racism can cause for BAME researchers– including anxiety and other mental health issues and refer onwards to other support within the University such as the Support and Wellbeing Network or Counselling Service as necessary. Link [here](#) (click to activate)
- Support your supervisee to report any incident to the University via methods outlined on the Harassment and Hate Crime [webpage](#) (click to activate).
- Understand why PGRs might be hesitant to report incidents and the institutional barriers to reporting incidents. If someone does not want to report an issue, try to find other ways to support them
- Direct your supervisee to the BAME Officer and student network where they can connect with peers who can support them
- Follow up with your supervisee to track the progress of any incident report. This is particularly vital where cases are taken through formal structures

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Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Researchers

Intersectionality from a BAME perspective

Recognising that the challenges for BAME researchers from the UK might be different to those experienced by BAME international researchers gives an insight into intersectionality and how it affects our doctoral candidates. We need to think about these issues separately and understand where issues are compounded and overlapping. The barriers and challenges are wide ranging: being judged on accents and skin tone, moving from a more racially diverse part of the UK to somewhere with fewer BAME people in the community, lack of support systems and role models, unfamiliar systems, power dynamics – these are things experienced by both groups which compound to make their experience at University more challenging. For more information refer to the Intersectionality part of this guide.

Ways you can help

- Welcome challenges from BAME researchers about their academic experience, and proactively ask for their input. Advocate for them and raise their points through the appropriate channels. Feedback to your supervisees on any progress so that they can feel reassured that their input has been taken forward meaningfully
- Actively listen to what your supervisee is saying about their experience of university. Even if they are not stating directly what they think is wrong or unhelpful about the university experience, they may be giving you clues about what they think needs improvement. Try to pick up on these to validate your supervisee’s experience
- Start a dialogue with colleagues about the points your supervisee has raised. Everyone can make improvements locally that support a better experience for BAME researchers. For example, this could include seeking out more sources written by BAME academics or increasing BAME representation on annual review panels or at PGR symposiums
- Look at what your local school, faculty or DTP EDI groups are working on in terms of attainment gap activity. Consider how you can support these objectives

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Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Researchers

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are defined as “everyday verbal or non-verbal slights, indignities, put downs or insults that people of colour, women, LGBT populations or those who are marginalised experience in their day-to-day interactions with people.” Microaggressions work to perpetuate the marginalisation of groups using hostile, derogatory, or negative messages. Microaggressions marginalise, other and exclude by perpetuating existing racist tropes.

They could be things like:

- Telling a BAME researcher that “You’re actually really well spoken” which could indicate that the speaker didn’t expect English to be their first language, or that the speaker has lower expectations of BAME colleagues
- Assuming that a Muslim woman wears the hijab because she was forced to
- A black British PGR, born and raised in the UK, being asked “But where are you really from?” ‘Where are you from originally?’ or ‘Where are your parents from?’. While asking about someone’s heritage may just seem like a way of getting to know them, there is an underlying message that non-white must mean foreign, and thereby that whiteness equals belonging.

Microaggressions can be experienced by any PGR who has any protected characteristic as part of their identity – they are not solely racial. They can often be perpetuated by allies in the response to racism or complaints from BAME students – sometimes unintentionally undermining or playing down the concern. As a supervisor, it is important that you understand this if you are dealing with complaints or concerns.

Ways you can help

- Listen to and validate your supervisee’s feelings – don’t attempt to diminish, minimise or dismiss their concern
- Find out more about microaggressions and how they are experienced by researching the subject online. The LMA Hub has some helpful [resources on this](#) (click to activate)
- Direct your supervisee to the BAME Officer and student network where they can connect with peers who can support them
- Any PGR who has issues or concerns regarding harassment, bullying or victimisation can also seek impartial and confidential support from the University’s Dignity Advisors [here](#) (click to activate)

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Caring Responsibilities



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Caring Responsibilities

Caring and childcare responsibilities can affect any individual, and any person with caring responsibilities will need appropriate support regardless of age, gender or other factors.

Some PGRs will commence their PhD already having childcare or parental responsibilities, or they may become a parent or gain childcare responsibilities during their doctorate. Your supervisee could have children of various ages, so it's important not to assume that your supervisee has young children only for example. Having school-age, or teenage children creates different challenges to having a young child.

It is useful to have an awareness of the connected responsibilities that looking after children brings. Juggling drop-off and pick-up arrangements can be complicated and change on a daily or weekly basis depending on the family situation of your supervisee. Plans can change at short notice due to illness – that of the child, childminder or relative looking after the child.

As well as having children, PGRs may have caring responsibilities which involve caring for other family members or partners who may be elderly, disabled or otherwise in need of specific care. This brings its own challenges, such as co-ordinating external care providers, supporting at medical appointments or having to change plans at short notice due to a crisis or emergency situation.

Ways you can help

- Flexibility is key - if your supervisee needs to get children to school, arriving for a 9am supervision or lab meeting can be incredibly difficult. Being flexible around timings for meetings and their format (online / audio call etc) can be very helpful
- Have an open conversation about how your supervisee's caring responsibilities impact on their daily life. This will be different for each individual so asking 'what would help' is a good starting point for getting appropriate adjustments in place
- Be understanding about last minute changes to arrangements and look at ways plans can be adapted / time made up later etc to allow for this. Building in some contingency to deadlines and time pressured activities could also be useful
- The University's policy on pregnancy and maternity also covers support available for anyone going through the adoption process, as well as advice on paternity leave and support while a partner is pregnant. [Link here](#) (click to activate)

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Disability including neurodiversity



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Disability including neurodiversity

The University of Nottingham supports all PGRs who self-define as having a disability which could include long-term medical conditions, hidden illnesses, mental health conditions, autistic spectrum disorders, specific learning differences, and sensory impairments. Be aware that many disabilities may be invisible or hidden.

12% of UoN PGRs declared a disability in 2018-19. It's helpful to be aware that some PGRs may not choose to declare a disability at the beginning of their doctoral programme. Others may have felt they managed their undergraduate studies without the need for additional support but this may change as they progress through their PhD and manage the demands of their research.

Creating an environment which encourages any PGR with a disability to seek support is important. The University of Nottingham requires students to provide appropriate evidence of their disability in order to access specialist support services.

Disability Support Services

Disability Support Services provide specialist support and advice for any PGR who considers themselves to be disabled, including those who have long-term medical conditions. They can also provide advice on Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) which is a non repayable fund to help cover extra costs incurred during a PGR's period of doctoral research.

Please encourage any postgraduate researchers who have a disability or long-term medical condition (including a mental health condition) to meet with Disability Support to look at how best they can be supported during their studies. Find out more **here** (click to activate).

Disability Support Services can put together a support plan, based on evidence provided and discussions with the researcher, which details the adjustments required. This can be shared with anyone involved in supporting their research, teaching activity, lab work or other activity where reasonable adjustments need to be made.

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Disability including neurodiversity

Accessible resources

Be mindful that some supervisees may have difficulties in accessing hard copy, printed materials. Providing electronic or online resources, which the postgraduate researcher can access in advance and adapt to suit their specific needs, can enable them to carry out their research more effectively. If your supervisee has teaching responsibilities, consider if they would benefit from using alternative formats to prepare teaching or seminar material and be aware that they may not be able to access other people’s information easily.

- Accessible electronic resources can enable PGRs to use assistive technology to interact with the materials enable PGRs to use assistive technology to interact with the materials and change things like the font, font size and colour
- The University has an Alternative Format Service (AFS) that produces accessible materials for PGRs who cannot access standard resources. The service also provides advice and guidance to staff who wish to make their own work more accessible
- PGRs can access the AFS via referral from the Disability Support Services team. To find out more visit this [link](#) (click to activate)

Ways you can help

- Encourage your supervisee to share what works for them
- Encourage your supervisee to use the accessibility tools already built into Microsoft products such as using headings in the navigation pane
- Be aware of the assistive technology which we have available at the University (Text Help Read and Write Gold and MindView are networked. [Link here](#) (click to activate)
- Be aware that the library offers a wide range of support. To find out more visit this [link](#) (click to activate).
- Signpost your supervisee to the Support for your Studies [pages](#) (click to activate)

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Disability including neurodiversity

Physical accessibility

Physical locations pose different challenges for postgraduate researchers who have limited mobility. This could mean that some PGRs have difficulties getting to and from meetings or working environments for a wide variety of reasons, for example, building works or lifts being out of order, and that this could potentially cause additional stress and concern for disabled researchers. Also be aware of working environments – are any reasonable adjustments required to enable your supervisee to work comfortably and safely?

Consider if your supervisee will require any reasonable adjustments to carry out research outside of their usual working environment such as during fieldwork or attending a conference.

Ways you can help

- The University provides guidance on Disabled Access to facilities via its website. Make sure that your supervisee is aware of this. Find out more [here](#) (click to activate)
- If your supervisee is required to complete a placement as part of their PhD, consider if any adjustments will be required on location or at their accommodation if they are undertaking a placement away from Nottingham

Ways you can help

- If the access problem relates directly to buildings used for school or faculty activities, raise the issue with the chair of your Faculty Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion group or Disability Liaison Officer. Ask them to keep you informed of any progress and to let you know what you can do to help progress the concern
- As your PGR’s supervisor you should have access to their Support Plan – check this for recommendations relating to physical accessibility

Neurodiversity

The University’s EDI Strategic Delivery Plan 2019 makes specific reference to ensuring that students, PGRs or staff who are neurodiverse feel supported. If you are supervising someone who has dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, ADHD, identifies as being Autistic, or any other neurodivergent condition, they may need support during their period of research. All PGRs who have a diagnosis can get support from Disability Support Services. Please also be aware that the University is also committed to supporting PGRs who may be neurodivergent but have not yet received a formal diagnosis.

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Disability including neurodiversity

Ways you can help

- Consider styles and ways of communication, both written and verbal – what feels right for you may feel uncomfortable for a neurodiverse PGR. An open conversation about preferred communication styles is a good starting point, along with a discussion about the expectations and boundaries of the supervisor / supervisee relationship
- Consider the sensory environment of the workplace/areas where supervision meetings may take place – for some neurodiverse PGRs the sensory environment can have an impact on levels of stress and anxiety (strong lighting or loud environments for example)
- Consider social expectations on your supervisee – be aware that for some supervisees social expectations could be a source of worry rather than fun. Have conversations about how this can be managed - for example, a clear invitation to a specific, time-bound event can work well. Recognise that a reluctance to engage socially does not imply dislike or rudeness
- The Autism Social Network gives PGRs with autistic spectrum conditions a positive way to meet others and obtain peer support
- Advanced planning can help a neurodiverse PGR feel more comfortable; try to schedule things in advance where possible and limit last minute changes if you can

- Refer to the Disability Support Services team for advice on reasonable adjustments via a Support Plan
- ‘Neurodiversity at Nottingham’ is an Microsoft Team site providing research updates, resources, discussion and support around neurodiversity. You don’t need to be neurodivergent to join the team and it’s a way for staff and PGRs to discuss issues related to neurodiversity at Nottingham – click the Neurodiversity at Nottingham MS Teams link and request access if you would like to join. [Link here](#) (click to activate)

Disability Liaison Officers

The University has well-established support in place for PGRs with disabilities, and there are specific staff members you can speak with. Each school appoints a Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) to provide a source of reference, advice and guidance for members of staff and students in the school about disability issues and support.

Some schools have a DLO specifically assigned to support PGRs. Anyone who is concerned about a disability may approach the DLO directly or may be referred by another member of staff. A full list of DLOs can be found [here](#) (click to activate).

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International Researchers



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International Researchers

Around 45% of the PGR population at the University of Nottingham are international. These researchers come from over 150 different countries and are essential in creating the vibrant PGR community that we have on campus. However, they may also need support with specific concerns to ensure they have a great experience here.

Culture shock

Culture shock is described as a state of psychological and physical disorientation when one finds themselves in a new environment, culture and situation. Things like loss of social support, independence and a potential limited ability to communicate – all contribute to the feeling of culture shock. Every PGR is different and can experience these challenges in a variety of ways, but amongst the main symptoms of culture shock are depression, fatigue and insomnia, loss of self-confidence, anxiety, fear, isolation, loneliness and confusion.

Postgraduate researchers may have completed their previous studies in other countries with different research cultures, which may add to the experience of culture shock. They may put higher expectations on themselves and think that they should settle more quickly, but it can still be very disorientating. Feedback from international PGRs has shown that they have been surprised by how much culture shock has affected them.

Ways you can help

- Listen and provide space for reflection (especially during the first few weeks). This can help with the feelings of isolation that living in a new country can bring
- Help your supervisee to understand that these feelings are normal – most people moving to a new country feel the same and it’s important to talk about it, share experiences and give themselves time to adapt
- Offer help in finding a support system – by joining a club, society or volunteering project and finding others with similar interests. The International Student Network is a student-led network run by and for international students. Link [here](#) (click to activate). You could also put them in touch with the Students’ Union’s International Officer who provides democratic representation for international students on issues faced on campus. Encourage them to engage with these societies even if they feel they are ‘not for’ PGR students – they are open to all and it will increase opportunities to build networks and make diverse friendships
- Check whether they are aware of the Global Buddies programme. This is a Students’ Union initiative that pairs incoming international students with current students for peer-to-peer support and social activity. Find out more [here](#) (click to activate)

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International Researchers

Research expectations

It can be helpful to remain aware that there can be a mismatch between a PGR’s expectations and an organisation’s way of working, dependent on their prior experience and context. For example, expectations around staff support, academic requirements and conventions and research culture can vary considerably depending upon the PGR’s country of origin and the education system within that country.

This can be especially pronounced at postgraduate level where researchers arrive with previous experiences of higher education as a point of comparison.

Anything you can do to support greater understanding by introducing and explaining the expected research requirements and culture and relating it to PGR’s pre-existing knowledge is very helpful. Language differences may add a further level of potential difficulty. Even though every PGR at the University of Nottingham must meet a required level of English, some technical or specialist English might still be unfamiliar.

Ways you can help

- Avoid assumptions by asking questions which ascertain prior level of knowledge. Take opportunities to clarify and understand any differences in the PGR’s knowledge and expectations about research practices and consider how you can best put in place training and development opportunities to address these, either directly or by making use of relevant support services and wider opportunities
- Ensure that all materials are available online or in written form. PGRs who have English as a second language find it incredibly helpful to revisit their learning experiences to ensure that they have properly understood the material covered. Providing written follow up after supervisions or lab meetings, to summarise the points covered and expectations going forward can be very helpful
- Where possible, be clear and use plain English with all supervisees, and where needed try different ways of explaining unfamiliar concepts
- If your supervisee needs more support with their English skills you can signpost them to CELE who offer various courses and sessions to support with this. Link [here](#) (click to activate)
- Consider if language could create a barrier for an international PGR and make them less likely to volunteer for teaching opportunities or to present at a conference. Encourage them to participate in these activities as a way of building confidence

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International Researchers

International staff role models

The importance of role models has been identified against a range of protected characteristics as they provide living examples that achievement in a certain area is possible and that any barriers currently perceived are not insurmountable. International PGRs may benefit from talking with staff or fellow researchers who have been through similar experiences. This can be particularly useful if your supervisee has expressed an interest in progressing to a specific career path or has aspirations for an academic career.

Ways you can help

- The University is a culturally diverse place and there are colleagues or fellow researchers who might have experienced similar feelings in adjusting into UK academic life. Use your own experiences or speak with colleagues that have an international background to see if there is value in creating connections between them and your supervisee
- Similarly, find out who the lead staff member for international students is in your school and discover what they are doing currently to support PGRs so that you can share this information with your supervisee

- Where possible, be clear and use plain English with all supervisees, and where needed try different ways of explaining unfamiliar concepts
- Offer to connect your supervisee with specific colleagues so that they can share their experiences and help people to understand how they can progress their career aspirations or simply answer questions about their journey to date

Signposting to international specific support

Other areas of support specifically focused on international students across the University include:

- Visa and Immigration team based in Cherry Tree Lodge on University Park
- International Chaplaincy – a multi-faith team that specialise in dealing with faith-related queries and pastoral support for all faiths or none, and provide various social activities

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LGBTQ+



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LGBTQ+

As a supervisor you may not know if a PGR identifies as part of the LGBTQ+ community. It is always good practice not to make assumptions around anyone’s identity, including if they are LGBTQ+ but instead create a welcoming and supportive environment for all backgrounds and identities. An understanding of gender, sexuality, pronouns and identity will aid in providing the best support to all supervisees.

What is LGBTQ+?

The Equality Act 2010 defines sexual orientation as orientation towards people of the same sex (lesbian or gay), orientation towards people of a different sex (heterosexual), and orientation towards people of the same sex and different sex (bisexual or pansexual). We recognise that sexual orientation covers a wide range of identities and the term LGBTQ+ is used as an ‘umbrella’ term for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

Many people use the term ‘Queer’ as an additional umbrella term for the LGBTQ+ movement. The acceptability of this term varies between communities, with many supporting its use and others not.

UK culture can often assume that people are heterosexual as default and it’s always worth being aware of the many different ways people may identify – as lesbian/gay (those attracted to people of the same sex/gender), as bisexual (attracted to people of both the same and different sex/gender), asexual or aromantic (someone who doesn’t experience sexual or romantic attraction), pansexual (not limited in sexual choice with regard to biological sex, gender, or gender identity) and many other nuanced variants of sexuality.

Ways you can help

- Make no assumptions regarding any of your supervisees
- Use any opportunity to create and enhance a supportive environment for PGRs to be open about their feelings and their identity. This could be in simple visible cues or by making positive statements of support as part of introductory meetings or in a research group meeting
- Listen carefully to what your supervisees are saying about their identity and how they think this is affecting their experience
- Signpost PGRs to the LGBTQ+ Officer, their official elected representative in the Students’ Union, and LGBTQ+ Students’ Network who can provide more information and peer support. There are also a range of online resources available from charities like Stonewall that can help

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LGBTQ+

Gender

Sex and gender are not interchangeable words. The distinction between sex and gender differentiates someone’s biological sex (that is their reproductive system and secondary sex characteristics) from their gender (that is the personal, societal and cultural identity ascribed via their gender expression). Gender can be defined as personal relationship with masculinity, femininity, both or neither. Gender consists of gender identity, which is a person’s internal perception and experience of their gender; and gender expression, which is the way a person presents their gender. Currently, UK law only recognises gender as binary – people can only be either a man or woman. However, gender is not binary, and people can be non-binary or genderqueer. Gender is usually culturally determined and is different from sex (assigned at birth). It is often incorrectly assumed to match a person’s perceived sex at birth.

Some people don’t identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. Trans is the umbrella term generally used to describe someone who does not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. Not all those who identify as gender non-conforming would call themselves trans though.

Not all trans individuals have, will, or wish to undergo gender assignment surgery. Some transgender people do have surgery, others can’t or have no desire to. If someone is transgender this does not tell you about

their sexuality, so it’s important not to make any assumptions.

People who have transitioned to a different gender are likely to describe themselves as having a trans-history rather than being trans, but equally may not choose to disclose their history. This is a personal matter and again it is important not to make assumptions.

Pronouns

Personal pronouns replace someone’s name and in English, refer to a person’s gender in a conversation (e.g. ‘she’, ‘he’ or ‘they’). It is best practice to ask someone for their pronouns if unknown. It’s important to use the correct pronouns, and essentially the correct pronouns are those that someone chooses to use.

Ways you can help

- Include your own pronouns in email signatures, inductions, documents
- Use the pronouns that your supervisee asks, use them also when talking about a supervisee if they are not there
- If you have doubts you can use ‘they/them’

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Mental Health



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Mental health

Mental health issues can affect anyone, and it may be that as a supervisor you are the first person that your supervisee comes to for help.

Under the Equality Act, mental ill health is included within disability as a ‘protected characteristic’ and as such, PGRs with a diagnosis of a mental health difficulty can access support from the Disability Support Team. It’s also important to acknowledge though, that mental wellbeing affects every one of us and there is excellent support available at the University for anyone who is struggling with their mental health, with or without any kind of formal diagnosis. It’s also useful to consider that during a long period of research, a PGR’s mental health will naturally fluctuate – they may experience significant life events such as relationship breakdowns, bereavements, or illness. The pressures of undertaking a programme of doctoral research will also bring its own mental health struggles and PGRs may experience feelings of stress, anxiety and low mood. Worries about perfectionism, motivation, imposter syndrome and concerns around productivity in their work can also lead to a decline in mental health.

Ways you can help

- Encourage a work-life balance and try not to model unhealthy working practices. Even small changes can foster a better work life balance such as taking lunch breaks or regularly leaving on time in the evening

- Normalise conversations around mental wellbeing – it’s a normal experience to have periods of time when your mental wellbeing is affected, and everyone experiences this at different points in their life. Feelings of low mood, stress and anxiety are very common and affect all of us. Being open about this helps to destigmatise discussions around our mental wellbeing
- Dynamics within the supervisory relationship can sometimes be a source of stress or worry for PGRs – aim to maintain an open and honest dialogue between supervisor and supervisee, and be open and receptive to feedback
- If a supervisee talks to you about their mental health or difficulties they are experiencing, listen. This in itself can be a powerful act and will help your PGR to feel heard. You may feel tempted to try and ‘solve’ some of the problems you hear but it is not always possible or ultimately helpful. Instead, encourage them to access further support from the University’s specialist services and their GP. This also helps you to protect your own wellbeing and not take on too much of an emotional load
- If are concerned that a PGR may be at risk or their behaviour appears significantly odd or unusual, they may require help more promptly from the University’s specialist support services. In these situations, it’s helpful to understand the limits around confidentiality and that it’s necessary to share information with other services when a PGR needs immediate support. Don’t be tempted to take on too much of that support role yourself. Please refer to the ‘Signposting to Support Services’ section of this guide for specific advice on what to do if you have identified a concern with your PGR

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Signposting to Support Services

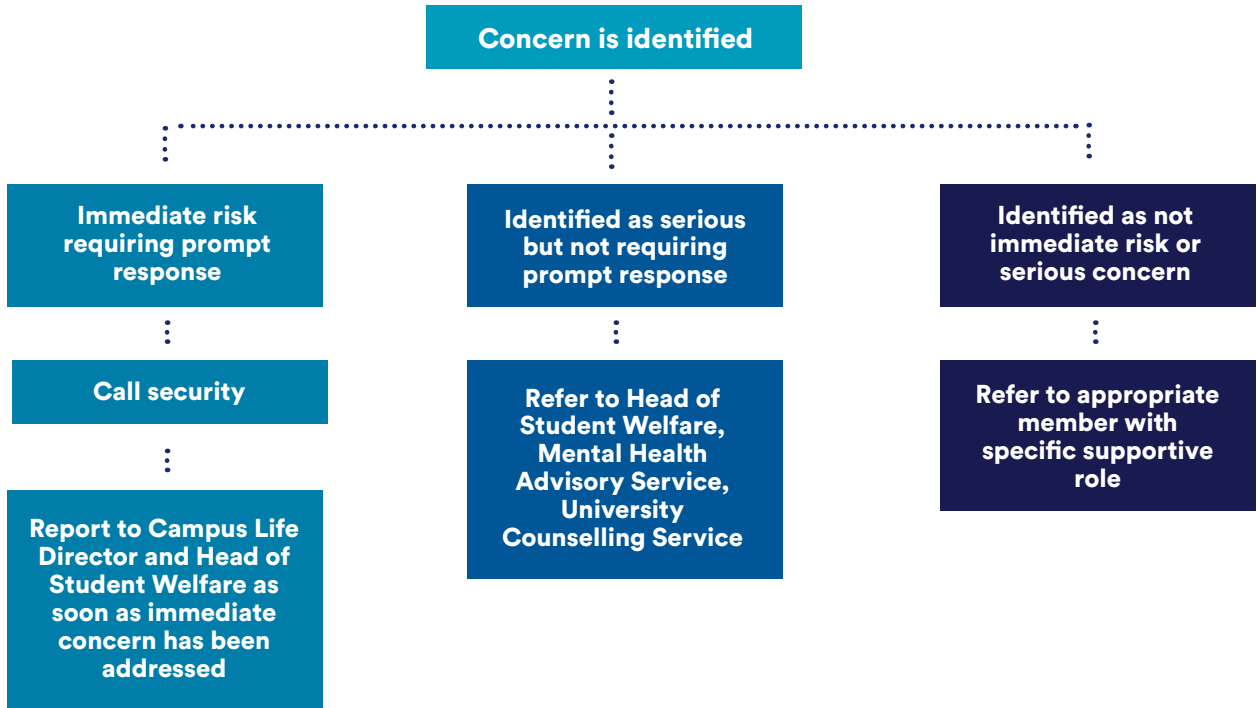
Identifying and responding to postgraduate researchers in difficulty

The first step in the process of assessment is to ascertain whether the concern requires a prompt response.

A prompt response is required if there is reason to believe that:

- they may be at risk of hurting themselves or someone else
- a PGR may be at risk of attempting suicide
- their behaviour appears to be significantly off and either this is not part of a longstanding problem or there may be a longstanding problem which has deteriorated: for example, the person appears highly agitated and out of touch with reality
- the PGR is not functioning effectively and is vulnerable to significant self neglect or exploitation by others
- the PGR has been a recent victim of, or is at risk of, serious assault

Steps to take having identified a concern with a PGR



In situations where there is an immediate risk of significant harm to themselves or others, call Security on extension 18888. The Security team will make an urgent response, including contacting emergency services as required. They will also ensure that appropriate staff members such as the Head of Student Welfare are drawn into the response to the situation.

Confidentiality and its limits

There are always limits to confidentiality and if a PGR shares information that indicates that they, or others are at significant risk, duty of care will over-ride confidentiality and the information will be passed on to the relevant services. It is helpful to make this clear to a PGR at the beginning of any conversations as this

prevents a PGR asking you to keep a confidence that you cannot.

If a PGR insists they need to talk to someone in confidence, it is advisable to direct them to the services on campus which are professionally bound to maintain a higher level of confidentiality; the GPs, Chaplains, Counsellors, the Mental Health Advisers, and Advisers within the Student's Union Advice Centre.

If the PGR is in immediate risk or serious concern, it is recommended to refer them to an appropriate staff member with specific support role.

Link to full guide for staff is available [here](#) (click to activate).

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Signposting to Support Services

Below are some examples of difficulties that PGRs may encounter and some of the services that you could refer them to for further help and support.

<p>There is anxiety about a particular research problem or academic issue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supervisory team• School Support and Wellbeing Officer (here)• Disability Support Services - if the researcher / PGR has a declared disability (here)	<p>The PGR has a significant mental health difficulty which is substantially impacting on one or more areas of functioning. Other support options have been tried or are not appropriate and the PGR requires specialist mental health support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental Health Advisory Service• GP or Cripps Health Centre• Disability Support Services (here)	<p>They PGR is experiencing a mental health crisis not requiring support from Security but immediate and urgent assistance is needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental Health Advisory Service duty worker	<p>The PGR has told you directly about a personal problem (e.g. bereavement, relationship breakdown)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supervisory team• School Support and Wellbeing Officer (here) (previously referred to School Welfare Officer)• University Chaplaincy (here)• University Counselling Service (here)	<p>They are an international PGR experiencing practical problems concerning immigration or academic issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student Services - Visa and Immigration team• Supervisory team• School Support and Wellbeing Officer (here) (previously referred to as School Welfare Officer)
<p>There is a disability related issue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disability Support Services team (here)• School Disability Liaison Officers	<p>They are facing accusations of academic misconduct or have some other difficulty relating to their research where they need impartial advice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student's Union Advice Centre (here)• School Support and Wellbeing Officer (here) (previously referred to School Welfare Officer)	<p>They are experiencing financial difficulties or have a query about money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student's Union Advice Centre (here)• Student Services Financial Support Team (here)	<p>There is an issue with their employment situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student's Union Advice Centre (here)	<p>The PGR states that they have been a victim of assault, harassment or a hate crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head of Student Welfare• Head of Security• Campus Life Director• Off-campus Affairs Team• School Support and Wellbeing Office (here) (previously referred to as School Welfare Officer)
<p>They are having a problem as a result of loss of motivation or difficulty concentrating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• University Counselling Service (here)• GP or Cripps Health Centre	<p>The PGR is concerned about religious or spiritual beliefs or is adversely affected by life events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chaplaincy (here)• Counselling Services (here)	<p>You have concerns about the PGR's psychological wellbeing and need further advice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• University Counselling Service (here)• Mental Health Advisory Service• GP or Cripps Health Centre	<p>There is an issue with their housing or accommodation (including problems with their housemate)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student's Union Advice Centre (here)• Off-campus Affairs Team• Hall pastoral team (if in University supported accommodation)• University Accommodation Office	<p>The PGR is concerned about their use of alcohol or drugs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GP or Cripps Health Centre• University Counselling Service (here)
		<p>There is a clear health problem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GP or Cripps Health Centre		

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Religion and belief



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Religion and belief

Religion and belief is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. This doesn't just apply to someone who identifies as religious; the protections also cover those who have no religion and include some non-religious philosophical beliefs (for example around animal rights). For a PGR who holds religious beliefs, these beliefs often hold a great deal of importance for them and help shape their identity and how they view themselves within the world. Religious communities often provide valuable support networks including social and mental health support which can be especially important if someone is away from home.

As with all protected characteristics it can be useful to view religious beliefs not as one equality strand which exists in isolation, but as another factor in an individual PGR's identity and experience. Valuing and acknowledging religious beliefs when supporting your supervisee can help them to feel better supported and give them an increased sense of belonging.

The University Chaplaincy Service can provide support for PGRs of faith or no faith. **Link here** (click to activate).

Ways you can help

- Be supportive of religious festivals or commitments which may impact on your supervisee – for example if a PGR is observing Ramadan this may affect their availability to attend an event or lead a seminar on a particular day
- Are people's religious beliefs taken into account when thinking of social events – for example what food is being served, or if there will be alcohol available. Could you vary social events to widen participation?
- Don't make assumptions on someone's religion or faith based on their ethnicity
- Have confidence in asking PGRs whether they have a particular faith and its impact on their lives - many may be concerned about the response they will receive if they raise the subject themselves
- Avoid making assumptions about what an individual PGR believes or holds important even if you know that they identify with a particular religious faith. In all religions there is a wide breadth of practice and belief
- If your PGR has experienced religious harassment encourage them to report this via the harassment reporting pages **here** (click to activate)

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Socio-economic Background



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Socio-economic Background

PGRs from lower socio-economic groups are under-represented at doctoral level and as such, they face specific challenges. Consultation for this guide found that PGRs who identify as coming from a lower socio-economic group experienced feeling isolated and had issues with confidence and self-esteem which may lead to them needing extra support.

Financial difficulties

Doctoral candidates from diverse socio-economic backgrounds often experience financial concerns. They may already have substantial debt from their undergraduate studies and may not benefit from the support of family in the same way as PGRs from more affluent backgrounds. At postgraduate level, expectations around foreign travel, attendance at conferences, and having funds available to cover costs before they are reimbursed can be particularly problematic.

Ways you can help

- Try not to make assumptions about a supervisee’s ability to take part in activities which involve a significant outlay of additional cost, such as fieldwork or placements abroad
- Make sure there is plenty of notice given for attendance at conferences, consider how long it may take to get funding / financial help to come through, and try to avoid initial outlay coming from the researcher if possible
- Make sure your supervisee is aware that there is financial support and advice on finances available from the University. Signpost them to the financial support team if they are experiencing difficulties. [Link here](#) (click to activate)
- Make PGRs aware of job opportunities within the school and via Unitemps which offers work opportunities on campus, or within the wider University
- Be sensitive to the fact that this could be embarrassing for them, or difficult to discuss

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Socio-economic Background

Insecurity / low self-esteem

PGRs who have come to University via less traditional routes, possibly via widening participation, have had a very different experience to their peers. They may have overcome many challenges to reach this point and feelings of inadequacy and worries about ‘fitting in’ are common. They may not have pursued a master’s degree, for financial or other reasons, and find themselves in the minority in this respect. For some PGRs, their access to opportunities may have been less compared to other postgraduate researchers. This can develop into feelings of imposter syndrome – of not being worthy of getting where they are despite proven achievements and measures of success.

This characteristic can also change over time, so an awareness of their current situation is important. As your supervisee progresses through their PhD, their socio-economic status is mutable and their feelings about their identity in relation to this can change.

Ways you can help

- Spend some time getting to know their background at the start of the supervisor relationship – discussion about their previous experiences and home life in an open and friendly manner can help understand the challenges they are facing at that time
- Help to build their confidence, simply being positive and encouraging about their abilities can be incredibly powerful – could your PGR take on some teaching responsibilities or supervise an UG project to help build their confidence?
- Encourage your PGRs to examine the ideas behind imposter syndrome – suggest they track and measure their success to build their confidence and self-belief
- Be aware that persistent feelings of unworthiness, or worthlessness can be a sign of depression or self-esteem issues. Signpost to support such as the Support and Wellbeing Network or the Counselling Service
- Encourage engagement with peer groups and activities within the school and the wider University – feelings of isolation can increase when feeling different to their peers in terms of socio-economic background

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Socio-economic Background

Role Models

PGRs in this group may be the first in their family to come to university and may lack family or other role models to act as a guide or sounding board. The importance of positive role models is beneficial in relation to a variety of protected characteristics and seeing a real-life example of someone from their background or with a similar lived experience is very empowering.

Ways you can help

- Help them to seek out others in the school or faculty who may have come into academia through alternative routes
- Encourage and be a positive role model. Be careful of language which reinforces elitism and be mindful of examples and sources used in supervisions, symposiums or research seminars – looking beyond privileged groups where possible
- Be aware of intersectionality and how multiple levels of discrimination can affect a PGR from a lower socio-economic background if they also identify with other protected characteristics

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Women postgraduate researchers

Over 48% of the PGR population at the University of Nottingham are women (this is compared to over 55% of the University student population as a whole). Whilst women’s access to, and achievement within higher education is seen as good, there are still many different barriers that women face whilst at University and deep concerns about the effect that sexism has both within academia and wider society. For example, women continue to be significantly underrepresented at PGR-level in Science and Engineering faculties.

Sexual discrimination

Sexism and sexual discrimination are often more subtle than outright misogyny and are experienced through a series of indirect factors that can impact a woman’s ability to fully participate in their research. Often a mixture of small things can accumulate and make it difficult for women to feel part of the PGR

community. Equity of experience can be achieved through consideration of the timing and scheduling of meetings, research seminars or supervisions. It is also important to consider the accessibility of conference attendance, fieldwork and the creation of supportive environments where all voices can be heard.

Ways you can help

- Make space for women’s voices to be heard. This is particularly important in environments that have a smaller percentage of women researchers
- Consider if your work environment is balanced across gender or is one gender more dominant? Could this affect someone’s experience of working there and make them feel isolated?
- When preparing activities, ask women to input their thoughts and feedback to highlight any considerations that may have been overlooked
- Consider what you can do to create a positive environment for contributions – helping PGRs to feel confident to speak up, lead seminars or present at conferences

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Women postgraduate researchers

Pregnancy, maternity and caring responsibilities

As a supervisor you have an important role in ensuring that the University’s policies are applied effectively for your PGR if they become pregnant or have childcare responsibilities during their studies. You can find the University policy **here** (click to activate).

Ways you can help

- Be aware of the University’s Policy on support for students (which includes PGRs) who are pregnant or have very young children (linked above)
- Ask how you can support their research more flexibly in relation to both the pregnancy phase and maternity. Parents will need time for medical appointments, whilst breastfeeding parents will need time to feed or express
- Identify where your local parenting rooms and breastfeeding friendly spaces are, so that you can signpost others to these as required. For example UoN cafés and shared spaces that are clearly signed to show that they are “Breastfeeding Friendly”. More information **here** (click to activate)

- Be aware of and implement Athena SWAN guidelines for scheduled events such as lab group meetings, research seminars and conference presentations to promote accessibility for those with caring responsibilities. Would it help your PGR to attend an event if they can have a later presentation slot for example? More information available **here** (click to activate)
- Encourage your supervisee to look at the support around childcare on campus. More information available **here** (click to activate)

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Women postgraduate researchers

Sexual harassment and assault

It is important to recognise that sexual harassment can affect PGRs from across a range of diverse backgrounds, irrespective of gender, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Unfortunately, instances of sexual assault and harassment can, and do, occur within the University environment. Global movements such as the #MeToo movement have raised the profile of concerns and have shone a spotlight on reporting harassment and challenging inappropriate behaviour. However, there is still work to be done.

As a University we have taken steps to address this area and to encourage PGRs to feel confident in coming forward to report their experiences.

Ways you can help

- Listen and validate your supervisee’s feelings – don’t attempt to diminish, minimise or dismiss their concern
- Support your supervisee to report the incident to the University via methods outlined on the Harassment and Hate Crime webpage [here](#) (click to activate)
- Show them the University’s Sexual Misconduct policy so that they can understand how cases reported will be handled. Link [here](#) (click to activate)
- Liaise with other colleagues with specific support roles such as Support and Wellbeing Officers or Sexual Violence Liaison Officers. If you are unsure of who would be most appropriate, please refer to the Identifying and Responding to Students in Difficulty guide. Link [here](#) (click to activate)
- Follow up with them to track the progress of their incident report. This is particularly vital where cases are taken through formal structures

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Further reading and learning resources

The University’s EDI Strategic Delivery Plan can be accessed **here** (click to activate).

The University’s LMA Hub has a comprehensive module on EDI. **Link here** (click to activate).

E-learning and Short Courses:
A range of training courses and e-learning options are available through the Professional Development Short-Course programme. More information available **here** (click to activate).

For further reading on specific topics feel free to explore the suggestions below.

BAME

Racial Microaggressions and Sense of Belonging at a Historically White University Lewis, Jioni & Mendenhall, Ruby & Ojiemwen, Ashley & Thomas, Merin & Riopelle, Cameron & Harwood, Stacy & Hunt, Margaret. (2019). **Link here** (click to activate).

Dear White People. (2014). [Film] USA: Justin Simien, and (2017). [TV programme] Netflix.

Eddo-Lodge, R. (2017). Why I’m No Longer Talking to White People About Race.

6 Action Items for White People in the Workplace and Beyond – Medium website.
Available **here** (click to activate).

DiAngelo, R. (2018) White Fragility: Why it’s so hard for white people to talk about racism

Wekker, G. (2016) White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race.

Accapadi, M.M., (2007) When White Women Cry: How White Women’s Tears Oppress Women of Color. Available **here** (click to activate).

Black and Minority Ethnic Participation In Postgraduate Research Working Group. Available **here** (click to activate)

Disability and neurodiversity

If you’d like to know more about the experiences of disabled people, the following resources are a good starting point.

Open Source resource ‘Birkbeck for All’ Joined up thinking on Accessibility – built in tutorials and advice. Available **here** (click to activate).

Autism Best Practice Guides. Available **here** (click to activate).

ADHD – information about ADHD and possible strategies. Available **here** (click to activate).

Explains the different software, including the built-in features in, for example like MS Word, and apps. Available **here** and **here** (click to activate).

Keep things together using Clipper. Available **here** (click to activate).

Mind mapping alternative to MindView7, web-based so can be used on students’ own devices. Available **here** (click to activate).

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Further reading and learning resources

Alternative read aloud software (Text Help ReadandWrite is available on networked computers), web-based so can be used on students’ own devices. Available **here** (click to activate).

International students

Further reading and learning resources If you’d like to know more about the experiences of international students coming to the UK, the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) provides a good starting point with a lot of info. Link **here** (click to activate).

LGBTQ+

If you’d like to know more about LGBTQ+ experiences, the following resources are a good starting point.

Education Beyond the Straight and Narrow – LGBT students’ experiences in Higher Education - NUS Research Report (September 2015) Available **here** (click to activate).

Support and advice on coming out – Stonewall. Available **here** (click to activate).

LGBT in Britain: University Report – Stonewall. Available **here** (click to activate).

Mental Health

For further information about mental health in Higher Education and resources for support please see the following.

Smithies, D. and Byrom, N. (2018) LGBTQ+ Student

Mental Health: The challenges and needs of gender, sexual and romantic minorities in Higher Education. [online] Kings College London and Student Minds. Available **here** (click to activate).

For useful signposting to self-help support, more information is available **here** (click to activate).

For NHS advice on mental health and wellbeing, visit this **link** (click to activate).

Socio-economic Background

Click **here** for further information about PGRs from lower socio-economic groups and the specific challenges they face.

Women

Further reading and learning resources If you’d like to know more about the experiences of women both within the HE sector and more broadly within society, the following resources are a good starting point.

How to Be a Workplace Ally - Lean In website. Available **here** (click to activate).

Hidden Figures. (2016). [Film] USA: Theodore Melfi
Bates, L. (2014). Everyday Sexism

The Guilty Feminist [podcast]

Criado-Perez, C. (2019) Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men



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