Funding competition

To improve access and participation for Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups in postgraduate research study

Issued jointly by the Office for Students and Research England

Contents

Foreword

A great deal has happened in the time leading up to the publication of this funding competition that has focused the world upon racism and inequality across the globe. The killing of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter demonstrations taking place in the US, UK and other parts of the world have prompted considerable discussion of, and actions to eliminate, racial inequality, including how we should tackle individual and institutional racism where it is present in our culture, systems, and structures.

The global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has resulted in our everyday working and personal lives being turned upside down, as we live under social distancing restrictions to slow the spread of the virus. Sadly, the global pandemic has highlighted the very real impact of the complex systemic social inequalities linked to ethnicity upon different groups.[1]

It is in this context that we launch this funding competition and it is particularly fitting that we are now asking English higher education providers how these particular inequalities in higher education might be addressed. We know this initiative alone will not eradicate inequality for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students in postgraduate research (PGR) study; however, we hope we can support the sector to make transformational changes through the funding of individual projects, developing evidence for the sector and supporting students and project staff in the process.

Throughout the development of this funding competition and in response to our early communications, it is clear that there is appetite for this initiative throughout the sector. We encourage applicants to be ambitious when thinking about what might change, as well as encouraging institutions to consider how they can support their initiatives to make those changes long lasting. This will include facilitating the difficult conversations that will be needed throughout the lifetime of these individual projects and beyond.

By **David Sweeney**, Executive Chair, Research England, and **Chris Millward**, Director for Fair Access and Participation, Office for Students

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[1] See
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908434/Disparities_in_the_risk_and_outcomes_of_COVID_August_2020_update.pdf [PDF];
See
https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/coronaviruscovid19relateddeathsbyethnicgroupenglandandwales/2march2020to15may2020;
See
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/892376/COVID_stakeholder_engagement_synthesis_beyond_the_data.pdf [PDF];
See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus/coronavirus-case-studies/Black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-students-coronavirus-case-studies/.

Summary

1. Persistent inequalities exist throughout higher education for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students. Some of the inequalities that are present for Black, Asian and minority ethnic undergraduate students[2] – such as the current gap (2018-19) in degree outcomes (1st or 2:1) between white students and Black students of 22.1 percentage points[3] – are reflected in the underrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students in postgraduate research (PGR) students.[4] PGR students are also researchers and teachers, and play an important role in supporting the research and academic talent pipeline. Supporting access and successful participation for Black, Asian and minority ethnic PGR students is crucial – both to improve opportunities for current generations, and to increase the flow of talent into academic careers, which has been identified as important to addressing attainment gaps.[5]

2. The Higher Education Research Act 2017 (HERA)[6] makes provision for both UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the Office for Students (OfS) to work together on shared agendas. One of the areas in which we have committed to working together is to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in higher education and links through to academic and research careers.

3. Research England (RE) (a council within UKRI) and the OfS are launching a joint funding competition for project proposals to improve access and participation for Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups in PGR study in the English higher education sector.

4. We are interested in projects that aim to provide evidence of effectiveness and impact on improved access and participation for Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups in PGR study. We expect projects to aim to provide exemplars of effective practice and/or transferable insights across the higher education sector.

   Together we are making available up to £8 million for this scheme. Bids will be considered for:

   - a minimum of £200,000

   - a maximum of £400,000 for bids from single institutions

   - a maximum of £800,000 for bids from multiple institutions.

5. Bids may be made for projects of a duration of up to four academic years. The funding is revenue only; capital funding is not available to support equipment or infrastructure costs.

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[2] For more information, see www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/effective-practice/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-students/.

[3] See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/measures-of-our-success/participation-performance-measures/gap-in-degree-outcomes-1sts-or-21s-between-white-students-and-black-students/.

[4] The OfS has published equality and diversity data that can be filtered by postgraduate levels of study: see www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-data/.

[5] For more information on Black, Asian and minority ethnic student attainment at UK universities, see: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/closing-the-gap and www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/effective-practice/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-students/.

[6] See http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/29/contents.

Funding may not be used to create individual PGR student positions (e.g. to offer individual PhD positions or studentships). However, funding may be used to provide appropriate bursaries or financial support for individuals to improve access or participation in PGR study (e.g. grants that provide opportunity for individuals to travel to prospective universities).

Who can apply? (Eligibility for funding)

6.   This funding opportunity is open to lead higher education providers who:

   a. are in the 'Approved (fee cap)' category of the OfS Register as at 22 October 2020[7] and

   b. are eligible for RE funding, as detailed in RE's published terms and conditions.[8]

7.   Providers may only lead on one bid (individual or collaborative) and may be involved in up to three other bids as a partner; therefore no more than four bids in total.

8.   Third sector organisations are eligible to participate as partners in up to three bids.

9.   Providers from other UK nations may partner on bids but are not eligible for funding.

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[7] See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/.

[8] See https://re.ukri.org/finance/terms-and-conditions-of-research-england-grant/.

How to apply (Bidding process)

10. To apply for this funding, complete the bid template (Annex A)[9] and email it to pgrcompetition@officeforstudents.org.uk by **midday on Thursday 27 May 2021.**

11. The OfS will handle the bids and share any submitted information securely with RE. Further information on the data sharing agreement between the OfS and RE is detailed in the privacy notice in Annex A.[10] For the successful projects, the funding awards will be made by RE and will be subject to terms and conditions of grant, including regular monitoring processes.

12. Funding will be awarded to the successful proposals on the following basis:

    a. We will allocate between £200,000 and £800,000 per project, though we expect bids requesting the full amount to involve collaborations across multiple higher education providers.

    b. Bids should demonstrate strategic commitment from all partners involved. We expect an appropriate level of co-investment to be provided by the higher education providers and external partners involved in the bid. This may be through cash investment or investment in kind. While we will not set a specific required ratio of co-investment, we will seek the rationale for the amount specified and how this demonstrates commitment to the project, to future sustainability and to risk sharing, alongside OfS and RE funding.

    c. Whilst we are seeking strategic co-investment, we are conscious of the significant pressures faced by the higher education sector and the economy due to the coronavirus pandemic. Bids should set out a clear rationale for the level of co-investment; if only limited co-investment is possible please explain why, including how the activities in the bid will be sustained beyond any funding period.

    d. We anticipate funding a number of projects to explore a balanced range of interventions and activities across the broadest portfolio possible. The final number of funded projects will depend on the quality of bids received, available funding, and the judgements and recommendations made through the assessment process.

    e. Collaborative bids must be led by an eligible lead provider for funding purposes (see paragraph 6). Providers may not act as the lead on more than one bid. English providers not eligible for OfS or RE funding, including organisations awaiting registration decisions, can be partners in bids.

13. Projects may run for a maximum duration of four years (2021-2025). There is no minimum duration, but we will only fund viable projects which will deliver value for money and which, according to the consideration and judgements through the assessment process, most

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[9] The bid template (Annex A) is available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/improving-access-and-participation-for-minority-ethnic-groups-in-pgr-study/.

[10] Available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/improving-access-and-participation-for-minority-ethnic-groups-in-pgr-study/.

effectively meet our priorities and criteria (see 'Priorities' section) and will have a demonstrable impact on our objectives. Funding will be provided during the third quarter of 2021.

14. We expect projects to articulate a robust evaluation strategy, as outlined in the competition criteria, for activities within their proposals. As detailed in the bid template at question 7, Annex A, we will also expect funded proposals to include a fully articulated theory of change, baseline and outcome measures and a plan for dissemination of lessons learned, project outcomes, resources or case studies.

15. We will commission an independent evaluation of the programme. A condition of funding for the successful bidders will be that all partners and providers fully engage with the external evaluators and support the evaluation process throughout. We may require projects to amend their proposed evaluation plan prior to the commencement of funding. This approach will be adopted to help improve reliability and comparability of results across the funded projects. Projects will be supported by the external evaluators when amending their evaluation plans.

Timeframe

Date	Activity
22 October 2020	Call opens
26 November 2020	Online event for interest bidders
Midday, 27 May 2021	Deadline for bids to be submitted to the OfS
June – July 2021	Assessment process
July 2021	Panel meeting to review and recommend bids for funding decisions, and communication to bidders
September 2021	Funding available Projects must commence First evaluation meeting
September 2025	Projects must conclude Funding ends
March 2026	End of project reports due

Bid assessment

Our approach

16. Bids will be assessed in relation to their alignment with our priorities and the extent to which they meet the assessment criteria.

17. Our assessments and decisions will be conducted with the aim of delivering a portfolio of projects that collectively meet the aims of the scheme. It is our intention to support a high-quality, diverse and innovative portfolio of projects that deliver and demonstrate activities across different types of providers, places, approaches, academic subjects, across Black, Asian or minority ethnic groups, and stages of the PGR student lifecycle.

18. As the funding competition is intended to address several complementary priorities, an expert funding panel will review proposals and make recommendations for funding as to the portfolio of bids that, in its expert judgement and taken together, best meet the criteria for the competition and address the range of priorities set out below. Bid criteria have been designed to align with the strategic approach to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) of both Research England and the OfS. Further information is set out in the 'Supporting information' section (paragraphs 34-43).

Priorities

19. Bids must meet one or more of the following priorities:

    a. To stimulate innovation, scale up and/or distribute effective practice in increasing access and participation for Black, Asian and/or minority ethnic groups in PGR study.

    b. To ambitiously address evidenced issues of inequality across the PGR student lifecycle that create barriers for students from Black, Asian and/or minority ethnic groups

    c. To collaborate strategically to embed EDI across the sector to improve access and participation for Black, Asian and/or minority ethnic groups in PGR study.

Assessment criteria

20. All bids for this funding competition will be considered and assessed against the following criteria:

    a. The extent to which the bid considers one or more aspects of the student lifecycle for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students, and the extent that the impact of this approach is sustained beyond the life of the project:

        i. Improving access (the number of students applying for and entering into research)

        ii. Improving and enhancing the PGR student experience

        iii. Diversifying and improving routes into research and teaching careers.

b. The extent to which the proposal is founded on engagement with and advice from Black, Asian and/or minority ethnic students in the design, development and/or delivery of key activities, where it is appropriate.

c. The extent to which activities test new and innovative approaches or significantly extend or scale up from existing practice.

d. The extent to which the bid will contribute to better understanding of evidence and effective practice and how this could shape future policy and practice across the sector.

e. The extent to which the proposal demonstrates a rigorous approach to the design of the project, the evaluation of its success, continuous improvement in project delivery and ongoing monitoring. The ambition and innovation in the bid should be underpinned by appropriate risk management and mitigations. The bid should include a tangible strategy for how the impact of proposed activities will be demonstrated, through clearly defined and measurable outcomes and targets.

f. Delivery of value for money for RE and the OfS, as demonstrated through:

   i. The scale of deliverables and intended outcomes, against the funding requested

   ii. Cost-effectiveness of the proposed approach, how the funding requested is intended to be used, and the activities it will support

   iii. An appropriate level of co-investment provided (please see paragraphs 12b and 18c for further information on expectations of co-investment)

   iv. Sustainability beyond the lifetime of the funded project.

g. The ambition and likelihood that the activities will secure a significant change in current practice and continue to sustain improved access and participation rates for students from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds in PGR study, over the medium to long term.

Further requirements

21. Funding may **not** be used to:

    a. Create individual PGR student positions (e.g. to offer individual PhD positions or studentships) as the purpose of this funding is sit alongside existing sector investments in PGR studentships. However, funding may be used to provide appropriate bursaries or financial support for individuals to improve access or participation in PGR study (e.g. grants that provide opportunity for individuals to travel to prospective universities).

    b. Conduct exploratory research (beyond applied evaluation).

    c. Support current and/or ongoing activities which will happen without the funding.

22. Providers may only lead on one bid (individual or collaborative) but may be involved in up to three bids as a partner; therefore no more than four bids in total.

23. Projects should focus upon UK domiciled students (as defined by HESA[11]).

Additional guidance and recommendations

24. The following paragraphs indicate our expectations and ambition for the programme. Bids will **not** be assessed against this additional guidance.

25. We recommend consideration of the broader literature and evidence, including, but not limited to: UKRI's EDI evidence reviews,[12] the thematic bibliography focusing upon Black, Asian and minority ethnic participation in postgraduate education, published by the UK Council for Graduate Education,[13] and Leading Routes' report on the 'Broken Pipeline'.[14]

26. We are keen to fund a range (scope and scale) of approaches and activity to test interventions and innovations across types of providers, places, approaches, academic subjects, Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, and stages of the PGR lifecycle. These might include, but are not restricted to:

    a. Engaging and supporting current and future PGR students, including those on undergraduate courses and taught postgraduate courses to access and successfully participate in PGR study.

    b. Supporting culture change (e.g. addressing the systemic barriers faced by students at different stages of study, adopting an inclusive approach, consideration of the impact of role models and staffing and the broader environment).

    c. Addressing the intersection of ethnicity with other student characteristics (such as protected characteristics or underrepresented groups)[15] where gaps in representation at PGR level have been identified.

    d. Innovations which deliver changes from existing practice, such as:

        i. Specific and targeted approaches aimed at creating and encouraging opportunities for underrepresented groups in PGR study to promote diversity and inclusion, including through positive action initiatives[16]

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[11] See https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c18051/a/domicile.

[12] See https://www.ukri.org/about-us/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/strengthening-our-approach/.

[13] Available at http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/article/ukcge-publishes-bame-participation-in-postgraduate-education-the-442.aspx.

[14] Available at https://leadingroutes.org/the-broken-pipeline.

[15] See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/access-and-participation-glossary/.

[16] It is the responsibility of the lead applicant to ensure that such initiatives are compliant and are delivered in line with the relevant equality legislation. This includes the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and positive action under sections 158 and 159 of the Equality Act 2010. In all cases there should be a demonstrable disparity for the protected characteristic in question and the lead applicant must be able to justify the use of positive action as a preferential tool and should be able to evidence the desired impact against the set target category after implementation of the initiative.

ii.　Increasing access from non-traditional routes (e.g. mature students, students from industry, and from a diversity of undergraduate backgrounds and institutions)

iii.　Inclusive teaching and learning practices

iv.　Academic supervision practices

v.　Improving mental health and wellbeing (where appropriate, and not duplicating the work of the current Catalyst-funded projects which address the mental health and wellbeing of postgraduate researchers)[17]

vi.　Innovation in PGR study admission processes

vii.　Information advice and guidance, pastoral support and improving the student experience

viii.　Learnings from providers' access and participation plans, which commonly refer to inclusive learning and teaching practices, strategies to address attainment and progression gaps and providers' equality objectives

ix.　Supporting Black, Asian and minority ethnic PGR students in relation to evidenced inequalities arising from the coronavirus pandemic.

c.　Projects that scale up existing or planned activities or pilot them with different student groups.

d.　Targeted and focused evaluation which extends the evidence base in line with the aims of this call.

27.　Although the focus is on PGR study, bids may include additional activities or learnings from graduate employers or professions. Bids that incorporate learning from practice outside the UK would be welcomed. We expect effective practice to include those responding to and informed by the needs of Black, Asian and minority ethnic student populations. A robust evaluation approach should be outlined within this bid, as required by the assessment criteria. The evaluation should run throughout the lifetime of the project and be proportionate in time and resource to the overall activities proposed. You should specify meaningful and measurable outcomes that your project can bring about.

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[17] For details see https://re.ukri.org/research/postgraduate-researchers/.

Assessment and monitoring

28. Bids will be assessed internally by both OfS and RE officers in the first instance. The assessment criteria will be equally weighted and individually scored. An overall score will be attributed to each application. Bidders should ensure that each criterion is fully addressed. An external panel of key stakeholders will then review the process and consider which bids should be recommended for funding. The panel will particularly consider our aim to fund a portfolio of projects (considering our key objectives, including regional spread, diversity of providers, diversity of activities, diversity of academic subjects and diversity of student groups involved). Please note that all bids will be shared across RE and the OfS, and with the expert panel as necessary.

29. The panel will reserve the right to call bidders for interview, where this would help inform final recommendations. We will contact any bidders directly if an interview is required.

30. Following the panel's recommendations, both the OfS and Research England will follow their respective schemes of delegation when making final decisions on funding. For the OfS, on the basis of the scheme of delegation agreed by the OfS Board on 22 September 2020[18], the Director of Resources and Finance has delegated authority to the Director of Fair Access and Participation to make decisions for this funding competition.

31. Funded proposals will be subject to individual monitoring arrangements depending on the level of funding awarded and our assessment of risk. We will issue award letters setting out the terms and conditions of the funding, which must be formally agreed before funding payments start. We will take a risk-based, proportionate approach to monitoring, to ensure value for money and the delivery of targets, objectives, outputs and outcomes. We will undertake visits to and meetings with projects to better understand the activities, impacts and outcomes and to support analysis and dissemination.

32. Members of the funded projects will be required to participate in a network, to share information and learning between themselves and with RE and the OfS. The OfS and RE will commission an independent evaluation of the competition and will notify the successful bidders of this work accordingly. We expect all funded bidders to work with us and the evaluators in an open and transparent way throughout, to share expertise, learning and effective practice for the benefit of students and the wider higher education sector, and to provide detailed analysis of successful and unsuccessful activities to understand lessons learnt. RE and the OfS will work together throughout this scheme to avoid unnecessary duplication of reporting and evaluation arrangements.

33. All bidders must engage with the programme evaluator who will work to identify outcome indicators, successes and challenges across the portfolio. The evaluation of this initiative is intended to produce insights that could be embedded within access and participation practice for PGR students that would enhance and articulate better the returns on investment from public funds.

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[18] See https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/61967279-3461-4576-adda-44febab76f86/scheme-of-delegation-22-september-2020.pdf [PDF].

Supporting information

34. The Higher Education Research Act (HERA) 2017[19] makes provision for UKRI and the OfS to work together on shared agendas. This was further developed through a signed collaboration agreement[20] in 2018. One area in which we have committed to working together is the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion in higher education and links through to academic and research careers. This work also fits closely with Research England (RE)'s equality, diversity and inclusion principles[21] and the OfS's access and participation reforms.[22]

35. For the OfS, ensuring equality of opportunity for PGR students is fundamental to our ambition that future generations should have equal opportunities to access and succeed in higher education, and to achieve successful and rewarding careers. RE is equally committed to equality of opportunity for all to flourish and succeed in an environment that enables them to do so. PGR study sits at the nexus of these organisational responsibilities.

36. PGR students are those registered on research-based programmes (e.g. MPhils and PhDs at Level 7/8, (as defined by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland[23]). These programmes are fundamental to the research and higher education teaching talent pipeline and are the dominant pathway to research careers. Whilst only a small proportion of postgraduate researchers become permanent academic staff, PGR students or recently qualified researchers (postdoctorates) also contribute to undergraduate teaching. This means that in addition to the intrinsic value of their individual student experiences and their career progression, they can play an important role in supporting access, experience and success of future students.

37. Students access PGR study directly from undergraduate studies, via postgraduate taught degrees (PGT) and through professional pathways. Typically, students access PGR study directly from an undergraduate or PGT course. As an undergraduate degree is the dominant entrance requirement into PGR study, known factors that influence success and experience across the undergraduate and PGT student lifecycles impact the student pipeline to PGR study and the research and teaching workforce.[24]

38. There are existing frameworks that require providers to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in PGR study admissions, progression and outcomes. These include, but are not limited to, the OfS conditions of registration, the UK Quality Code for HE[25] and associated guidance, and UKRI and RE conditions of funding.

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[19] See http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/29/contents.

[20] Available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/partnerships-and-collaboration/agreements/.

[21] See https://re.ukri.org/research/equality-and-diversity-and-the-research-base/.

[22] See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/transforming-opportunity-in-higher-education/.

[23] See https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks.

[24] For more information see www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/.

[25] See https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code#.

39. In 2018-19, 59 per cent of PGR students were UK domiciled, compared to 85 per cent of all undergraduates. PGR students made up 4.5 per cent of the total student population in 2018-19.

40. The funding landscape for PGR students is complex, with students either supporting themselves, obtaining studentships through research funding bodies (such as Research Councils, and large research foundations such as Wellcome Trust) or organisational sponsorship (such as their place of work). There is limited reliable data across the sector on funding sources for PGR students.

41. The available data shows that the known inequalities at undergraduate level are compounded at PGR level. Equality and diversity data[26] over time shows a small trend towards increased diversity amongst the PGR student population; however, there is relative consistency in the difference in representation for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students compared to white students.

42. There are factors specific to PGR study which compound the underrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic student groups compared to the undergraduate student population:

    a. The majority of PGR study is undertaken at high tariff universities – and we know that there has been little change in Black, Asian and minority ethnic students' participation in PGR study in high tariff providers (15.7 per cent in 2010-11 compared to 17.1 per cent in 2017-18).[27]

    b. Degree outcomes of 1st or 2:1 are often the standard entry requirements for PGR study, and we know that the current gap in undergraduate degree outcomes (1st or 2:1) between white students and Black students (for 2018-19) is at 22.1 percentage points.[28]

    c. There is a known difference in Black, Asian and minority ethnic student participation at PGT level compared to the PGR student population. In 2016-17 Black students had the highest take-up of PGT loans (up to £10,000), and they have also seen the largest proportional increase in transition rates to PGT and the largest increase in numbers of students.[29] Students from ethnic minorities were more likely, in 2015-16, to directly progress to loan-eligible PGT than white students (within the first year).[30]

    d. There are known differences for UK domiciled PGR students by subject area and ethnic group.[31] Table 1 highlights differences in access to science, engineering and technology

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[26] Available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-data/.

[27] Data from internal analysis by the OfS on PGR students at high tariff universities is available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/postgraduate-research-students-at-high-tariff-providers/.

[28] See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/about/measures-of-our-success/participation-performance-measures/gap-in-degree-outcomes-1sts-or-21s-between-white-students-and-Black-students/.

[29] See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/the-effect-of-postgraduate-loans/.

[30] See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/the-effect-of-postgraduate-loans/.

[31] Data from the Advance HE Student Statistical Report 2018: www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ECU_students18.xlsx

(SET)[32] and non-SET subject areas at PGR level of study experienced by Black, Asian and minority ethnic students.[33] This is further compounded when comparing to the first-degree population.

Table 1: UK-domiciled students by subject area and ethnic group

Ethnicity	Discipline	Level of study	
Black		**First-degree students**	**PGR students**
	SET	6.9%	2.9%
	Non-SET	7.4%	4.3%
Asian		**First-degree students**	**PGR students**
	SET	11.7%	7.5%
	Non-SET	9.1%	4.6%
Chinese		**First-degree students**	**PGR students**
	SET	1.0%	1.8%
	Non-SET	0.7%	0.8%
Mixed		**First-degree students**	**PGR students**
	SET	3.7%	3.4%
	Non-SET	4.3%	3.3%
Other		**First-degree students**	**PGR students**
	SET	1.6%	2.2%
	Non-SET	1.4%	1.9%

e. The proportion of part-time PGR students who are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds steadily increased between 2010 and 2018, while the proportion of white PGR students participating in part-time study has decreased. The total number of PGR students studying part-time has decreased over the same period, indicating a change in study modes.[34]

43. Whilst there is some data collected on EDI for PGR students, there is limited specific and recent work on understanding the PGR student lifecycle. The detailed information around PGR study access has been drawn from work which was focused on PGR study as progression from first degree (HEFCE[35], 2016 transitions data). PGR study completion rates were

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[32] Whilst we normally reference science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in our work, this data is from the 2018 Advance HE student statistics, which uses the term 'SET'.

[33] The data presented in Table 1 uses Advance HE's reporting conventions for ethnicity.

[34] See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-data/.

[35] The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) was the predecessor of the OfS. The OfS took over many of its functions from April 2018.

addressed for a decade under HEFCE (2005, 2007 and 2012).[36] These reports highlighted factors which were known to impact on a student's chances of completion. The factors identified included mode of study, domicile, subject area, source of funding, age, ethnicity and qualifications on entry.

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[36] HEFCE 2005 PhD research degrees: Entry and Completion. HEFCE 2007 PhD research degrees, an update: Entry and Completion. HEFCE 2012 Rates of qualification from postgraduate research degrees. Projected study outcomes of full-time students starting postgraduate research degrees in 2008-09 and 2009-10.

Next steps

44. To apply for this funding, complete the bid template (Annex A), available to download from the OfS website.[37] Email the bid proposal to pgrcompetition@officeforstudents.org.uk by **midday on Thursday 27 May 2021.**

45. We plan to hold an online event on 26 November 2020 for interested bidders. Please register your interest at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/events/webinar-funding-competition-to-increase-access-and-participation-for-pgr-minority-ethnic-students/.

46. If you have any questions about this competition, please email pgrcompetition@officeforstudents.org.uk.

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[37] The bid template is available as Annex A at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/improving-access-and-participation-for-minority-ethnic-groups-in-pgr-study/.