

Championing Success of BME ECRs

8th BME - Early Career Researcher Hybrid Conference

Friday 5 July 2024
9am - 5pm

Greenwich University,
Queen Anne Court,
SE10 9LS



Welcome



Introduction from Professor Louise Owusu-Kwarteng

Associate Dean Student Success,
Faculty of Liberal Arts & Science,
University of Greenwich

Dear Esteemed Colleagues,

We would like to extend a heartfelt welcome to the 8th BME Early Career Researcher (ECR) conference, jointly hosted by The University of Greenwich in collaboration with The University of West London.

The focus of this year's conference is celebrating the success of BME ECRs and Postgraduate students. The event will include examples of how these groups have challenged the often-negative narratives that have been propagated about their educational outcomes at all levels.

With that said, it is important to recognise some of the challenges that BME Postgraduate students and ECRs face, such as the leaky pipeline between undergraduate and ECR level. That is the reduction in the number of BME students continuing onto Postgraduate Education or ECR level.

Many ECRs also face multiple pressures associated with completing applications for internal and external funds and sustained production of publications in high quality journals, amongst other things. These factors, combined with the current difficulties across the Higher Education sector, and the increasingly competitive Higher Education job market, can further impact on prospects. For BME postgraduates and ECRs, these problems are compounded by intersectional structural inequalities.

While we still have a great deal of work to do to address these issues, within our institutions we are working hard to ensure that all of our students and ECRs reach their full potential. Our approaches include inclusive curriculums at all levels, which centre the experiences of our students, and which will in turn reduce awarding differences, opportunities to enhance graduate employment and entry into further study and supportive postgraduates and ECR environments networks. Of key importance is our emphasis on celebrating our BME students at every opportunity, which is the core focus of the 8th BME ECR conference.

The conference will provide inspiring stories and insights from BME postgraduate students and ECRs, excellent networking opportunities, as well as sound guidance from Professor Marcia Wilson, our keynote speaker, conference organisers, Dr Myrtle Emmanuel and Dr Bernadine Idowu, all of whom have made outstanding contributions to research, teaching and student success, and whose impacts recognised locally, nationally and internationally. We hope that you enjoy the conference, and that you feel seen, heard and supported, and ready for your future endeavours.



**A message from
Dr Myrtle Emmanuel**

Associate Professor of HRM & Organisational Behaviour at University of Greenwich;
EDI Race Business Partner to Vice Chancellor;
Conference Host & Organiser

As the Race Business Consultant, it is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the 8th Annual BME ECR Conference hosted by the University of Greenwich.

This conference exemplifies the principles outlined in the University of Greenwich's Race Action Plan. By gathering today, we are fostering a culture of appreciation for our differences and learning from the lived experiences of our BME staff and students. This event visibly celebrates the remarkable BME community within academia and research. One of the key aims is to create and train BME Champions who can provide guidance and support to BME staff and early career researchers. Initiatives like this conference play a crucial role in nurturing an equitable and inclusive environment for or ECRs and PGRs from all backgrounds.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Dr Bernadine Idowu, the founder of this innovative conference. Your leadership and commitment to this cause over the past eight years have been instrumental. It is through such collaborations that we can collectively build a more equitable and inclusive academic landscape.

To our attendees, thank you for your presence here today and enjoy the day's insights and discussions, as well as our evening's networking and entertainment at the end of the day.

Schedule

- 8.30am - 9.30am** **Breakfast and registration**
- 9.30am - 9.35am** **Welcome by the Conference host**
Dr Myrtle Emmanuel Associate Professor in HRM and Organisational Behaviour, University of Greenwich
- 9.35am - 9.45am** **Welcome by the Founder of the Annual BME ECR conference**
Dr. Bernadine Idowu Associate Professor in Biomedical Sciences, University of West London
- 9.45am - 10am** **Opening address**
Professor Andrew Westby, Deputy Vice Chancellor at University of Greenwich
- 10am - 10.45am** **Keynote Talk**
Professor Marcia Wilson, Pro Vice Chancellor of Student Experience at London Metropolitan University
- 10.45am - 11am** **Break**
- 11am - 11.45am** **ECR research presentations**
(Parallel sessions)

11.45am - 12noon	Q&A
12noon - 1pm	PGR panel discussion & Q&A Chaired by Professor Louise Owusu-Kwarteng, Associate Dean Student Success, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Science, University of Greenwich
1pm - 2pm	Lunch & Poster display
2pm - 3pm	In conversation with Senior Leaders 'Championing the successes of BME ECR' Chaired by Khi Rafe MA HRM Student
3pm - 3.15pm	Tea break & poster display
3.15pm - 3.45pm	Establishment of BME ECR Champions Scheme Professor Andrew Westby Deputy Vice Chancellor at University of Greenwich
3.45pm - 4.30pm	Narrative CV Kate Murray, Careers Consultant for Researchers
4.30pm - 4.45pm	Close Professor Gordon Ade-Ojo, Deputy Head, School of Education, University of Greenwich
4.45pm	Food Served
5.15pm	Band starts playing

What our 2023 attendees said

“ It was reaffirming ”

“ Yes I really believe that all graduates should be going to these conferences early into their career to help gain the necessary tools to be successful in academia. ”

“ This was my first and it was life changing! ”

“ This conference today has really inspired me and has unlocked another level in me. I am already a motivated person but now I feel I have the awareness to stay focused and claim my space within my role. My strategies to reach my goals are more clear and my voice feels stronger. ”



Profiles



Professor Andrew Westby

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Exchange)

University of Greenwich

Andrew has a BSc in Food Science and Microbiology (Leeds) and PhD in Food Technology (Reading). On completing his PhD, he joined the Natural Resources Institute of the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) in 1987, where he developed a research profile on tropical root and tuber crops working collaboratively with partners mainly in sub-Saharan Africa. NRI became part of the University of Greenwich in 1995. Andrew was promoted to Professor in 1998. In 2000 he became NRI's Director of Research leading the Institute's REF submissions in 2008, and then Director in 2010. He was promoted Deputy Vice Chancellor in 2022. Awards for work that Andrew has led include the 2014 Times Higher Award for International Collaboration of the year, the 2015 Guardian Award for Research impact and the 2016 Queen's Anniversary Award for Further and Higher Education. For 10 years he led a multi-country cassava development programme for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. He currently leads the UK Food Systems Centre for Doctoral Training.




Dr. April-Louise Pennant

Dr. April-Louise Pennant is a socially, politically engaged scholar-activist, public speaker, writer, and consultant who combines cutting edge research in the social sciences and humanities with education, policy impact and community engagement. She holds an ESRC-funded Ph.D. in Education from the University of Birmingham, UK, is a Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellow at Cardiff University, UK and a Research Associate in the Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation (CriSHET) at Nelson Mandela University, South Africa. She previously worked at the Welsh Government where she co-wrote the award-winning report *Running Against the Wind* and was part of the award-winning Anti-racist Wales Action Plan team. April-Louise is the author of *Babygirl, You've Got This! Experiences of Black Girls and Women in the English Education System* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2024). Ultimately, her work champions and centres Black voices, experiences, and contributions to reverse erasure and challenge dominant white narratives.

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Dr. Bernadine Idowu

I am the Founder and Chair of the the BME Early Career Researcher Conference, which is now in its 8th year and also of the Black in Biomedical Science conference now in its 2nd year. I am a King's College London graduate and conducted my PhD at QMUL. Currently, I am an Associate Professor of Biomedical Sciences and Course Leader within the School of Biomedical Sciences, UWL. I am also a visiting Senior lecturer within the Centre for Oral Clinical & Translational Sciences, King's College London. I am an award-winning scientist, having been a recipient of the Roger Cotton Prize. I also won an African Achievers Award in 2023 for my contributions to making an Academic Impact. I am the Founder of YACnCAY, a charity which celebrates 14 years Sept 2024, I freelance for the Guardian newspaper. I am a Principal Fellow of HEA and was elected to be a member of the Royal Society of Biology. I Co-Chair the Medical Research Council – Black in Biomedical Research Advisory Group, in 2023 the MRC committed £3.7 million over three years to fund initiatives to address the underrepresentation of people from Black heritage backgrounds in Biomedical research.

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 www.uwl.ac.uk/staff/bernadine-idowu



Ebony Nepaul

Ebony is a recent graduate from Girton College, University of Cambridge and holds an MPhil in Sociology alongside a BA(Hons) in Sociology from Aston University. Both her undergraduate and graduate research focuses on the media representations of Black women across western societies. She is passionate about challenging harmful and dominant narratives that inform the experiences of many racialised communities in Britain, and most recently Ebony has ventured into the world of equality, diversity and inclusion within workplace.

Ebony is committed to ensuring that opportunities within the world of work are accessible to all, and that that in so doing, employees are enriched and dignified within that work environment.

Profiles



Professor Gordon Ade-Ojo

Gordon Ade-Ojo is a Professor of Language and Literacy Policy in Lifelong Learning and Deputy Head of the School of Education at the University of Greenwich. Gordon's teaching interests include Language and Literacy development and, Language and Literacy Teacher Education. He is the programme Director for Doctorate in Education Programmes (EdD & PhD), and has supervised 15 doctorate students to successful completion. Gordon has over 90 items listed in his research profile including peer reviewed articles, books, book chapters and monographs of funded projects. Gordon has received funding for projects including from ERASMUS and the World Bank. Gordon is currently working on two projects: Using simulation in ITT and Impact of Pupil Premium on Academic progression. He is an expert evaluator for the European Council. Gordon holds the Principal Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy, is a Founding Fellow of the Chartered College of teaching and a Fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA).



Kate Murray

Kate Murray is Careers Consultant to the Action Research on Research Culture project at the University of Cambridge, which is conducting research on structural issues affecting researchers' careers, such as recruitment and precarity. She is a highly experienced careers consultant for researchers, previously working at King's College London and Queen Mary University of London. In her role at Cambridge, Kate reads Narrative CVs in order to give feedback to experiment participants, creates materials to support the roll-out of this new form of application, and engages widely with the community across the UK to support adoption. Excitingly, Kate has also been awarded funding to do a full-scale survey of Cambridge postdoc destinations. Kate was previously Co-Chair of the national Task Group for Researcher Careers Consultants, where her work included a survey of careers provision across 100 institutions, and supporting and developing the community of practitioners.

 [linkedin.com/in/ktamurray](https://www.linkedin.com/in/ktamurray)



Khi Rafe

Khi Rafe is a dedicated Senior HRM Professional in training at Greenwich University and brings a real passion for fostering inclusive workplaces to the forefront of her career. Currently pursuing an MA, Khi's academic journey is driven by a profound interest in the intersection of education and its impact on post-Windrush generations. Khi's research focuses on understanding the coping strategies deployed by Black African and Caribbean women within workplace environments, navigating the intricate web of structural inequalities and intersectional relationships that create oppressive and discriminatory experiences.

With a commitment to empowerment and advocacy, Khi seeks to uncover insights that not only shed light on the challenges Black women face in the workplace but also pave the way for transformative change. With a solid foundation in HR management and a scholarly curiosity that knows no bounds, Khi aspires to utilise her skills and knowledge to spearhead initiatives that challenge the status quo and its 'isms'.



Professor Louise Owusu-Kwarteng

I am a Professor in Applied Sociology, and Associate Dean for Student Success in the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Greenwich, where I have worked since 2005. My research challenges negative narratives around Black academic attainment. Other research interests include around ethnicity and identity, and sociological auto/biography. I was also the Undergraduate Research director for my faculty between 2018-2022. In this role I oversaw 25 Staff-Student collaborative projects and shared best practice at Council of Undergraduate conferences in the US. Everything I do informs my teaching, support of students and work as an Associate Dean.

I am a just about bass player, with a 'diverse' music taste, ranging from late 60s African highlife, 90s rave and hip hop to 2010s bass house and anything in between. I like football (sometimes!!) – and have been a Nottingham Forest Supporter since I was 4. Naturally I am very pleased about our relatively recent promotion to the Premiership after 23 years!

Profiles



Professor Marcia Wilson

Professor Marcia Wilson is a multiple award-winning academic leader and researcher who has pioneered programmes to address inequalities to improve the staff and student experience in the education sector. Her work has been used by Universities UK (UUK) in their initiatives aimed at tackling racism and she was a member of the Advisory group focusing on producing guidance for Tackling Racial Harassment in HE. Marcia has been recognised as a national Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) lead in the 'd&i Leaders Global Benchmarking Survey' in 2021 and 2023.

Before joining London Metropolitan University in September 2023, Marcia was the inaugural Dean of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at The Open University (OU) where she was a member of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team and she led on a number of cross-institutional projects including the creation of an Institutional EDI Plan.

Marcia is a regular speaker on Advance HE's 'Aurora' programme. She has recently delivered leadership presentations to the Premier League and is London Met's Academic Lead for the '100 Black Women Professors NOW!' programme created by the Women's Higher Education Network. She is regularly invited to speak on building anti-racist institutions and women in leadership.



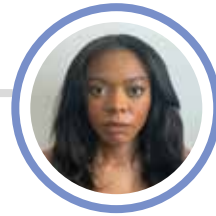
Dr Myrtle Emmanuel

Dr Myrtle Emmanuel holds the position of Associate Professor in HRM & Organisational Behaviour at the University of Greenwich, where she also serves in a seconded university-wide role as the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Race Business Partner. Her academic journey includes earning a PhD in Management from the Henley Business School at the University of Reading, focusing on 'The relational nature of Graduates' Career Management.' Her research and knowledge exchange pursuits span various areas, from exploring the working experiences of Windrush Nurses in Post-War Britain to addressing mental health disparities among African-Caribbeans in the UK. Myrtle is dedicated to combating racial inequalities in higher education, particularly in reducing the BAME graduate employment gap. Her impactful contributions are evidenced by her recent participation in a BBC New Thinking podcast discussing Caribbean health inequalities, as well as her success in securing funding from the Arts & Humanities Research Council for a project.



Omosalewa Sanni

Omosalewa Sanni is a 4th-year EdD student at the University of Greenwich conducting research on the impact of childhood and adolescent bullying on health, education, employment, and social lives among adult African immigrants in the United Kingdom. She grew up in Nigeria, where she obtained a BA in English Language before moving to the United Kingdom for her post-graduate studies in 2019. Before proceeding to the United Kingdom, she was the Vice Principal of a renowned secondary school in Lagos, Nigeria.



Rayann Bryan

Rayann Bryan is a PhD student at the University of Greenwich, investigating the experiences of Black Caribbean mothers and daughters who migrated to the UK during the Windrush era (1950s to 1960s). Beyond the academia, Rayann is the driving force behind the Thelma Matilda Alves Foundation, a Black women's mental health charity. As the founder and CEO, Rayann strategically applies Black feminist theory, providing a vital platform for support and empowerment for Black women in England. In both academia and advocacy, Rayann weaves a narrative of resilience and positive change.

 [@RayannBryan](#)

Profiles



Sodiq Ayobami Lawal

I am an international student from Nigeria, recently graduated with a degree in Economics from the University of Greenwich in the United Kingdom. Throughout my academic journey, I have demonstrated not only academic excellence but also a profound commitment to student welfare and advocacy. My dedication is to ensure the well-being of students and amplifying the voices of marginalized communities led to my election as a Student Union Officer at the University of Greenwich. My passion lies in advocating for the rights of minority ethnic groups, particularly the black community, within educational institutions. I envision a future where every student feels heard, valued, and empowered to succeed regardless of their background. Through my leadership and advocacy efforts, I aim to foster inclusivity, equality, and social justice within the university community, striving to create a more equitable and harmonious educational environment for all students.

Evaluation Survey

We would love your feedback on the 8th Conference 2024.
Please take a few minutes to complete the survey.

Scan the QR code below or visit:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/LW7ZYX9





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