Supervising Black Geography PhD researchers in the UK: Towards Good Practice Guidelines

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Introduction

This report summarizes research on the supervision of Black Geography PhD students in UK universities, to explore PhD students and supervisors' experiences, as well as their perspectives of good practice in supervision. PhD supervision is one of the least-discussed areas of higher education teaching, despite its crucial role in nurturing the academic trajectories of PhD researchers. Scholars have documented the relatively low recruitment, low funding, and high withdrawal rates of Black PhD students across all disciplines (Williams et al, 2019). In particular, in Geography, there is a well-documented need for stronger recruitment and retention of Black PhD students (Desai, 2017), and especially as the discipline pushes for wider representation, including the development of the field of Black British Geographies (Noxolo 2020), becomes more urgent. This research and report aim to deepen understanding of the supervision experiences of Black PhD students in Geography and produce guidelines on best practices in supervision. This research and the development of guidelines for the supervision of Black Geography PhD students in this report, aim to benefit future Geography students, both PhD students and the undergraduates who learn from their research. The report discerns the supervision experiences of PhD researchers and the impacts of supervision styles and practices on Black PhD students' recruitment, retention, and success. This report also gathers the research participants' suggested guidelines on good practice in the supervision of Black Geography PhD researchers, drawn from Black PhD researchers' and Black PhD supervisors' own lived experiences and insights.

Literature Review

The structures of racial discrimination and exclusion fail to encourage, and at worst, deter Black students from succeeding in their courses and aspirations toward pursuing postgraduate qualifications. This has direct implications on students arriving to the PhD in the first place and creating representative spaces for learning where students feel they can thrive. Across disciplines, statistics demonstrate that Black students are more likely than their white counterparts to pursue a first degree in a higher education institution, yet by the time of completion, their white counterparts are more likely to achieve a first class or upper second class (Arday, 2017). Black British doctoral students are then underrepresented at the PhD level (Shilliam, 2014). Further, compared to other ethnic and racial backgrounds, Black PhD researchers have the highest rate of working in paid employment alongside their PhD research activities (52 percent, compared to the average rate of 42 percent across all other groups) (Pitkin 2020, p. 36).

The supervisor role is an 'institutionally defined responsibility' within the UK doctoral research structure and the increasing bureaucratic structuring, insight, and surveillance of PhD programs, and this role is important for emotional and motivational support for PhD researchers (McAlpine & McKinnon, 2013). The presence, support, and longevity of Black staff members, who work with PhD

researchers as supervisors and mentors, is a critical support mechanism for Black postgraduate researchers. Yet previous research has evidenced the marginalization and disparities that Black academics face in higher education, which produces the 'poor representation' of BME staff in academia (Arday, 2017). From less likelihood to occupy professorial positions, to navigating wage disparities with their counterparts, and less likely to be employed on open and permanent contracts, while also navigating their own experiences of overt and covert racial discrimination and exclusion within the academic environment (Alexander and Arday, 2015; Bhopal 2014). These challenges to Black staff career progression also factor into PhD researchers' experience, particularly in availability to mentor because of the small number of these academics who actually exist in academia. Research demonstrates this to be important to research supervision: In a small study with BME doctoral researchers, many of the students who had access to senior BME academic as mentor considered themselves 'fortunate' and that this support was 'particularly beneficial,' because of the similarity of experience that can enlighten BMEs as they attempt to navigate academia (Arday 2017, p. 7).

Aspiring PhD researchers use a range of personal and academic criteria, such as geographic location, disciplinary and departmental fit, family responsibilities, funding, before they choose a supervisor (McAlpine and McKinnon, 2013). While the supervisor's administrative responsibilities and support is essential to PhD researchers' experience, research also demonstrates the need to take into consideration how PhD researchers' background and identity characteristics influence their supervisor expectations (Heath, 2002) as well as the importance of pastoral care and support throughout the PhD process (Barnes, WIlliams and Archer, 2010).

For example, a research study conducted with Black and Brown engineering PhD researchers found that these individuals felt better supported by supervisors who included pastoral care into their supervision approaches (Walsh, 2010). This shows how inequalities in staff recruitment (Williams et al, 2019) also contribute to the relatively low recruitment and retention rates that universities maintain for Black PhD students - Black academics are also 'chronically under-represented' in the Geography discipline specifically, and across all disciplines in UK higher education institutions generally (Desai, 2017).

The increasing internationalization of higher education system reflects the growing proportion of international students within total student populations in universities in the UK, as well as in the US and Australia (Madge, Raghuram and Noxolo 2009). Kidman, Manathunga and Cornforth's (2017) research on PhD supervision relations within the context of the contemporary colonial settler society (New Zealand) recognizes the persistence of 'neo-colonial knowledge relations' that shape and structure academic knowledge production generally and PhD supervision specifically (p. 1208). Recognizing the situatedness of the geographic discipline and PhD

supervision within geography within these epistemic imperial histories and realities is crucial (Kidman, Manathunga and Cornforth 2017; Esson et al, 2017). These structures and realities continue to shape international knowledge relations and impact both Black international and Black domestic students in what are predominantly white institutions in overlapping but also distinct ways. This requires an acknowledgement of these internationalization processes as part of the wider 'eduscape' that operates as the 'flow of educational theories, ideas, programs, activities, and research in and across national boundaries' (Beck, 2012, p. 142). These students are part of the 'international streams and migrations' propelled by these internationalization processes, and these students' actual experiences and sense of belonging in their academic homes depends on, among other things, their supervisory relationships, which are situated within intercultural tensions operating within and across the global north and global south; for example, supervisors' beliefs and attitudes, concerning the global south frequently play out within the supervisor-supervisee relationship when they have students from those regions (Kidman, Manathunga, & Cornforth, 2017).

In line with scholarship demanding substantive reflections on the ways the geographic discipline is implicated in the histories of colonialism and endurance of coloniality in the contemporary moment, it is important to recognize the oppressive, racialized structures within the discipline and embrace an anti-racist approach as a 'praxis that both reveals and seeks to address how forms of violence and 'microaggressions' experienced by Indigenous and racialised groups within the academy and in everyday life are both normalised and officially sanctioned by institutional arrangements' (Esson et al 2017, p. 385). This includes interrogating the role of whiteness within the political economy of the academy, and the ways that Black and Brown doctoral researchers are already subject to and forced to struggle with the realities of coloniality in everyday life (Esson et al, 2017). This is to expose the 'emotionally toxic material spaces' produced by racialised hierarchies and made invisible by liberal discourses (Mahtani, 2014). In predominantly white higher education institutions, Black researchers experience additional strains on their emotional and mental well-being that require additional support. For example, the everyday experiences of microaggressions being ignored, bullied and isolated within their departments are part of the differential treatments in a context of the subtle undertones of institutional racism and racial discrimination are at play, but can be hard to quantify, and produce feelings of isolation and exclusion (Arday, 2017; Tolia-Kelly, 2017). This is part of an ongoing recognition of individuals' different identities that is required, as well as the different locations within ongoing colonial knowledge relations that shape higher education context and the PhD researchers' experiences, including of supervision, in particular ways (Kidman, Manathunga, & Cornforth, 2017).

Methodology

This research begins with an attentiveness to the realities of institutional and interpersonal racism in exploring how different Black students' PhD experiences and trajectories are shaped. As a research project focused on exploring the supervision experiences of Black (African and Caribbean) PhD researchers in Geography, this research included interview conversations with a small sample of individuals who are all African and Caribbean descent, with British and various African citizenships. Over a two-month period (April and May 2021), Victoria, a Nigerian-American and PhD Candidate in Urban Studies and Planning, conducted 10 one-on-one semi-structured interviews completed through virtual video conferencing over a four-week period. The research participants were six PhD researchers, one early career researcher (ECR), and three PhD supervisors. Doctoral research students involved were British and African nationals studying at different universities across the UK who are in the geography discipline. The supervisors are all academics in the geography discipline who possess several years of experience working in UK universities.

The interview guide used for this research posed similar questions to the PhD researchers and supervisors but tailored to their specific roles. Questions focused on the overall areas of supervision experience; experiences, observations, and impressions of race and racism, both at an individual and departmental level; the extent of support received at different steps within the PhD process, from applying, selecting a supervisor, and applying to scholarships all the way to planning their post-PhD careers; and recommendations for good practice. PhD researchers and the ECR were asked about their lived experiences and impressions on their experience as PhD researchers, and PhD supervisors were asked to reflect on their roles, lived experiences, and observations from supervising Black PhD researchers. The interviews lasted between 60 to 120 minutes. The semi-structured interview approach allowed for dynamic, rich interviews in which the interviewees were able to share their perspectives in a private and safe space. The interview process was also framed as a conversation, with the interviewer (Victoria) and interviewees working through each topic in the interview guide and sharing aspects of their own lived experiences of supervising PhD researchers and being supervised as a Black PhD researchers. For example, in addition to listening to and holding space for interviewees' experiences, Victoria (the report author) also shared with interviewees her own experiences navigating race and racism as a Black PhD researcher and international student in UK academia, which includes struggles with her initial primary supervisor and ultimately changing supervisors and changing departments in her university. In writing of this report, space is given to represent the PhD researchers' and supervisors' experiences in their own words as much as possible, including with extended quotations.

Interviewees were ensured that as part of their participation, measures would be taken to ensure their anonymity. In order to mask the identities of participants in this report, individuals' identifying characteristics, including gender, are concealed.

Black PhD researchers and Black PhD supervisors

The Black PhD researchers who participated in this research embody a range of identities, and they draw connections between their identities, positionalities, and their individual lived experiences moving through their research programmes. To provide context for this report, which focused on the supervision experiences of Black PhD students in Geography, this section provides a snapshot of the diversity of the Black PhD researchers who participated in this research study. These descriptions are based on how these individuals, both current and former PhD researchers, interpret and articulate their own identities, circumstances, and PhD experiences. While statistics typically merge these various groups together into a single demographic ('Black'), these interviewees' self-identifications and the various emphases they place on aspects of their own experiences demonstrate the multiplicity of their Black identities and experiences, which they frame as shaped by nationality, class, gender, age, and other differences.

Four Black British students of Afro-Caribbean heritage (two women and two men) participated in this research, all of whom come to the discipline of geography after studying in other related areas. One is a mature student coming from a working-class background who came to the PhD after working in the professional sector for several years, who previously started the PhD at one university but after an unsatisfactory experience, including with supervisors, withdrew and took up PhD study at another UK university. Another recently completed their PhD degree and is now a postdoctoral researcher and said that 'Being Black is important to everything I do.' The fourth participant started the PhD as self-funded and works part-time to help cover their educational costs.

> **A snapshot of a Black British PhD Researcher in Geography**
> One of the Black British (Afro-Caribbean) PhD researchers comes from a working-class background and described how these elements of identity and upbringing shape their isolation at their current (Russell Group) university: At their previous institution, a post-1992 city university, they felt a sense of belonging because 'there's a lot of people like you who come from like working class backgrounds...you have people from different ethnicities, but everyone sort of came from a similar issue or working class background and the parents did similar jobs sort of things.' They described the current PhD experience as 'isolating,' and attribute this isolation to both racial and class bases: 'I don't think they [my classmates] understand what being from a working class or from a background where things are difficult is.' Whereas they see their

classmates who are able to depend on parents for financial support, 'that's never happened for me,' they say, and they describe consistently working through their masters degree and now also working part-time during the PhD. 'The big issue for me is there's no sort of, well, there is a class awareness [except] a middle class, but there's no sort of working-class awareness.'

In their current university, they find that nearly all the Black students whom they encounter are overseas students. They describe how this produces an alienating experience: 'I haven't found anyone who's Black British Caribbean, and who's actually from the UK and Caribbean background...a lot of the people who are Black I've come across are often overseas students. So, in that regard, that's where I've sort of noticed that I'm a little bit different.' A further isolation they describe is in how this translated to research interests within the department, with a similar underrepresentation in Caribbean-focused geographic research: 'My community is quite often overlooked,' they said.

A snapshot of a Black British PhD Researcher in Geography
Another Black British individual is studying in the same city where they have previously lived. They consider their PhD experience to be a 'double-edged sword.' On one hand, the PhD process has provided 'the finances, the time, and the space' to widen their knowledge, find their own niche, and improve their skills and has been 'liberating.' Yet within the wider institutional and structural context, including COVID-19, Black Lives Matter protests, and university strikes, they have experienced deep isolation and feel out-of-place as a Black student moving between the local neighbourhood and the university, experiencing constant microaggressions, and being ID checked on campus. In addition, they mentioned their hyperawareness and hypervisibility as a Black individual working on their research topic, which is sensitive to racial issues, and researching and moving within their university, which they consider to be a racially hostile space.

Three PhD researchers who are African (two women and one man) also participated in this research. Two of the researchers completed their master's degrees at UK and European universities and are financially supported by scholarships. One of these researchers came to the PhD after a few years working professionally, and both said they have become aware of their racialized-as-Black identity when they came to the UK for study. One of the researchers explained their situation saying that they have to navigate being 'a student from the global south...in the country of a former

colonizer.' One researcher is a British citizen, immigrant, and a mature student who embarked on the PhD following a successful professional career.

> **A snapshot of a Black African PhD Researcher in Geography**
> Married with children and having lived long-term in the UK, this individual connected their positionality as a mature student, a Black African, and professional-turned-researcher to their 'very very difficult' PhD experience. The individual described how their initial supervisors 'talked down' to them: 'Maybe they're used to talking to younger students...As an older student, it's very very difficult, because you find that you're actually not respected according to your experience,' they said. Further, the researcher described feeling their university and their supervisors didn't consider the needs and particular situations of mature students. This individual also expressed feeling 'very alone' due to minimal university and supervision support: 'It was like starting kindergarten and you don't have any friends,' they said to describe their experience.

The three Black supervisors have each supervised a range of PhD researchers, and for each of them, this had included a small number of Black PhD researchers. Each of the supervisors shared their own experiences navigating the politics of their departments and also of supervision as Black academics. For example, one supervisor described experiencing different forms of marginalisation within their department, including being passed over for promotions. Another pointed to their experience of being the only Black academic in their department. Another supervisor pointed to their own PhD experience, where they saw the struggles of international Black and Brown (Asian) PhD researchers in the department, as a key motivation for supporting Black PhD researchers now: 'I really knew what to do, but they didn't. Some of them left without getting their PhDs. So after that, I suppose my experience made me more determined to make sure that Black PhD students who come in, actually leave with a PhD, even those not supervised by me,' they said. All of the supervisors described various ways they informally supervise, support, and hold space for Black PhD researchers, from meeting with them, talking about their work and providing feedback, listening to their experiences navigating academia, all without taking any formal credit as supervisor.

Getting to the PhD: Supervisor selection and applying

> 'When I approached potential supervisors, they didn't take me seriously...I had to go through [multiple] PhD applications...it was only after successively applying [and] then gaining funding that I was taken seriously.'
> - Black British PhD researcher in Geography

For many of these PhD researchers, the process of selecting a research supervisor began before they started their PhD programmes. The PhD application process typically overlaps with supervisor selection, and individuals shared that they formed supervision teams through a range of entry points and different possible encounters. While some individuals continued supervision relationships first shaped during masters study, others met their supervisors at conferences and formed relationships from there. Still others discussed approaching supervisors based on shared research interests. Across these experiences, the researchers described a potential supervisor's interest (or disinterest) and support as critical factors that contribute to their possibilities of becoming a PhD researcher, in securing funding, and in supporting their progress in or flight from a PhD programme.

One Black British PhD researcher described their experience applying several times to PhD programmes before shifting their approach in supervisor selection. Initially, they identified potential supervisors based on shared research interests. They initially began searching for supervisors on the basis of a shared or similar research interests, but said, 'I quickly found out that thematic research interest wasn't enough to support my specific research project looking at Black experiences and aspects of Blackness...when I met them and explained my project to them, there was a dissonance. There was a mismatch in what they were recommending me to read and what I wanted to read, as well as their approach.' It was in attending a Black in Academia conference[1] that they experienced a changing point, and they count this experience as 'one of the biggest influences on my supervisor choice.' Through their participation in this conference, they learned about the unwritten nuances and the informal processes of supervision selection - for example, rather than knocking on the door of the supervisor to introduce themselves, emailing the potential supervisor in advance with writing to explain their research interests and tentative ideas for PhD research. Only after attending a Black in Academia event on Black students' supervision experiences did they decide to tailor their supervisor search to finding someone who was also Black and uses this critical approach in their research: The event 'kind of had me thinking that I needed somebody that has a focus in Blackness as my primary supervisor. And when I say Blackness, specifically I mean Blackness as far as where it was in the research, it could be in their research interests, or in their work, or even in their references. It was pretty much prioritizing somebody who can guide me in that aspect without me having to feel as though it was secondary or tangential.'

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[1] Black in Academia is a series of informational events on postgraduate research education and careers in academia. The series is organised by Leading Routes, a Black-led initiative that works to prepare and support the next generation of Black academics: https://leadingroutes.org/

This individual also pointed to numerous aspects of the PhD application process that are not transparently shared or made clear, yet expected as a priority. 'You should know how to do certain things, you should know how to fill out an application, how to make a proposal before you've come to [the supervisor]...sometimes that meant that I met supervisors and I didn't have those material together, I was discredited or pushed aside and told to come back.' They were also told that on the basis of their credentials - having a merit as opposed to distinction on their previous degree - that they would be competing with other applicants with first class and distinctions. 'When I approached potential supervisors, they didn't take me seriously.' They acknowledge that they didn't know whether it was on account of their Blackness, but that it took several years of applying and asking for references to feel they were taken seriously, and having to learn in the process - 'learning how to apply, learning the syntax of the language, learning how to read the social situation of who to approach and how to approach them,' they said. This individual was also advised to begin the PhD as a self-funded student and then apply for funding in the second year. 'It was only after successively applying, year after year after year and then gaining funding that I was taken seriously.'

In contrast, two African PhD researchers continued this relationship with masters supervisors into formal PhD supervision. These experiences also overlapped with that of a PhD research supervisor, who said that in their department, a number of African students pursue postgraduate taught programmes and then seek to continue on to PhD study. Both of these PhD researchers described receiving support from their PhD supervisors in their application process, as well as in their scholarship process, including detailed feedback on drafts of PhD research proposals. The Black British early career researcher had also previously studied with the person who would become their PhD supervisor, during their university studies. They chose this person as supervisor on this basis as well as because the supervisor is a widely recognized scholar in their area of research and said they received support from her supervisor when applying to the PhD.

Another Black British researcher described choosing their current PhD supervisor because they felt that the individual, who is also Black, not only understood their work and research interests, but also felt that this individual 'will help me, [they] understand] what I'm doing.' This connects with how this same individual described feeling deeply supported by their lecturers in their previous undergraduate and masters studies, which they also described as more representative of working-class and racial backgrounds. At these institutions, they said, they 'always felt like the lecturers were rooting for you…I feel like throughout the whole educational system, they're probably the people who have known me best, because there's been so much back and forth and exchange.'

The supervisors shared their specific strategies of supporting Black applicants as potential PhD researchers. As one supervisor said, once a Black applicant

approaches them, if it looks like they could work with the researcher, based on the research topic, they work with the individual to make sure their application is of standard, in order to help them get acceptance as well as a scholarship. Many departments look for applicants to have earned distinction in their masters to consider them for the PhD programme, yet this supervisor pointed to a trend within their university where they noticed Black masters students often being marked below distinction, which would make it difficult for them to pursue a PhD:

> 'I always say you have to get distinction in your masters, you know, if you've studied in [my university], right, and you want to do a PhD... I've noticed here, a trend in particular departments is that if the students, they will not give a mark… I don't know, maybe it's unconscious or not, or conscious, but these students will get marked 68 for either their overall assessment or for their dissertation - 70 is a distinction - and it's really interesting, how many Black students get 68, or even lower, even though they want to stay on to do a PhD and the department knows… I've looked at their dissertations, and I'm really taken aback and I just said, 'I don't really know the marking conventions in your department, but as far as I'm concerned, this is really good work.' That's what I normally say. I mean, I then have to make a case to my department and I will say, 'I've reviewed the work.' And I write a report on the student's work and I say, 'Well, for me, actually, this is work that is of quality that should get a distinction and suggests to me that the student can actually do doctoral research.' And that's how they're taken.'
> - Black PhD Supervisor in Geography

One supervisor pointed out that they have worked only with Black African PhD students and that no Black British individual has approached them to take up or PhD, nor has a Black British individual pursued a PhD in their department since they joined several years ago. Another supervisor shared being impeded from forming supervision relationships with Black PhD researchers within their department, despite sharing research interests. As they explained, the Black PhD researchers are often steered toward other supervisors within their department:

> 'Whenever there's a really good development student, other people, white people, jump in and take them. I never ever have been asked to be second supervisor or anything. And you know what happens when one of them leaves, they suddenly say, 'Could you take all the second supervisees?' when the student's one year away from finishing. Never would they invite me to be

- Black PhD Supervisor in Geography

Funding the PhD

The PhD researchers come from and are in a variety of financial positions. Some individuals fund their studies through part-time work, loans, some through family support, while others have university, research council, or other scholarships to support their research. One Black British PhD researcher with funding support expressed appreciation for their scholarship, and they pointed out that this funded support provides the necessary 'finances, the time, and the space to dedicate to and improve' their research. Two African researchers interviewed in this research received support from their supervisors on scholarships during their applications process, and this included writing support letters for their scholarship applications. This support was an element in these two individuals' success as they earned full scholarships for their PhD research.

Yet some individuals pointed out that the scholarships process is not easy to understand or navigate, especially for those who do not possess existing institutional connections or an academic network. One Black British PhD researcher shared that they came to the PhD and scholarships application processes without previous knowledge on strategies and resources, nor did they know anyone who had completed their PhD. They relied on internet sources and the university websites for information on scholarships, which they found 'quite confusing.' Because of the difficulty and time working on their PhD application and scholarship applications simultaneously, they mostly forewent scholarship searching. Now undertaking their PhD research, work part-time, with a student loan and a scholarship to cover their school fees and living expenses. They explained that they always have to manage the demands of their part-time employment alongside their training and research activities, and said: 'I think it's quite hard as well and everyone around is sort of on a scholarship.' Another has been on their own to search for funding opportunities. They have funded their PhD research through work opportunities and at times by depending on their spouse for financial support, and they expressed how they have had to spend time away from their research and writing in order to look for funding support, in comparison with other classmates with full funding support who are able to devote more attention to their research work.

The ECR described the stress they experienced trying to complete the PhD before their scholarship funding ran out and seeking out further funding during their programme. These funding limits constrained the expansiveness of their intellectual inquiry during their PhD research: 'Because of also like the class I'm from, so I think that also had an impact because that didn't allow me to be expansive in a certain way. And it was really stressful, like, trying to finish before my funding ran out. It was

extremely stressful.' Through their doctoral funding, the ECR was supposed to have opportunities to apply for further funding for research activities. In their third year, they had issue where their supervisor didn't support them in getting additional funding through their sponsor because the supervisor was already challenging this sponsor for another one of their PhD researchers: '[They were] in a battle with the same body for another PhD student. And I really was annoyed at that because I was like, just because you're fighting for them for this doesn't mean that you shouldn't be fighting them for me. Because I need the money to finish my research as well,' they said, and had to pay out-of-pocket to for some of their research activities as a result.

The research supervisors pointed out international students' difficulties in accessing PhD funding, and that it can also difficult for PhD supervisors to also support international students in securing PhD funding and scholarships. Because of limited funding pools for international students, they need to be 'savvy,' for example, like a PhD researcher of theirs to who negotiated a funding increase from the university and also found a work opportunity that enabled them to cover their cover living costs. Another supervisor pointed to the complications of how home fees scholarships are advertised, which appeal to international students who then apply and can struggle to pay the difference between the level of home fees and their international student fee rates: 'I prefer that you do not advertise them because that [international] student is then going to kind of assume that you [as supervisor] will help and you will waive the difference and the university just refuses to, it's been absolutely adamant that it won't. And it's very uncomfortable, both for the academic staff member who's fighting the university try and get this to happen, but also for the student to who you know, ultimately has to find that money. So then it will be the student who has access to that difference through loans or through whatever, and it automatically starts to limit the position of the student,' explained the supervisor.

Supervision relationships

One research supervisor acknowledged that for Black PhD researchers, knowledge expertise in a supervisor, while certainly important, can sometimes be a secondary concern and that Black PhD researchers they have encountered also often 'want somebody who looks like them and can share some of their experiences.' Of the researchers interviewed, two have Black supervisors, and the supervisor's comment reflects the sentiment expressed by a Black British researcher who is grateful for their Black supervisor who is from a similar (Black British) background. The researcher said in addition to the technical support that their PhD supervisor provides, including support on trainings and preparing for fieldwork activities, this shared background means their supervisor understands their work 'a bit more, so it's easy to discuss things with [them]...It's almost like you can talk about experiences and they've been through similar experiences, if that makes sense… I think that's one of the things I've benefitted from the most really.' The other researcher with a Black supervisor expressed that their supervisors are consistently available and

supportive in reading written work, responding to comments, and signposting opportunities, but feel they have a very 'professional' relationship and that their pastoral care is left to the university. With this professional relationship with supervisors, this researcher expressed they don't feel they can bring to their supervisors the struggles from their everyday life, such as the microaggressions they experience within the university.

Two African PhD researchers described how their supervisors demonstrate an investment in their growth and success in their PhD programmes, from bringing them into research projects and for one individual, in also supporting them in writing publications. Upon their arrival to start PhD study, their supervisor connected them with different research groups, and supported them as they think through methodological approaches for their research. Yet for one of these African PhD researchers, while they feel their supervisor is generally supportive, they also describe navigating challenging power dynamics in the supervision relationship because of the close control the supervisor imposes. As they said, this 'robs me of my agency within the PhD research and even within the other things that we're working on that are outside of the PhD research.' One researcher critically reads their own positionality into the way the supervisor brought them into a research project, knowing their African identity would be 'sexy' for the funding proposal. Although the supervisor promised a voice in the project, the individual said they do not feel this has been the case in practice. This individual said they are learning how to navigate, push back, and manage their supervision relationship.

Another researcher shared difficulties navigating power dynamics in their relationship with their supervisor, first because their supervisor had an intended trajectory in mind for them: 'I found interesting when someone has an idea of where you should go, and I think it's easy as a student, to kind of get swept up in that person,' they said. Then, while their supervision experience overall was fine, a major incident was that their supervisor plagiarized and published an aspect of their own doctoral research. Further, when the researcher tried to bring this complaint to their department, the incident was swept under the carpet due to the profile of the supervisor. Already managing their anxiety around finishing their PhD on time, and considering whether pursuing this complaint and the associated emotional drain would delay the progress, researcher said, at this point, they simply wanted 'to get out' of the PhD. They further learned that their supervisor was known for plagiarizing researchers' work.

Both PhD researchers and supervisors pointed to the contentions around academic writing that emerge within the PhD process. For example, one supervisor described their co-supervisor criticizing their Black African PhD researcher whose writing was not in an 'academic style.' While the supervisor acknowledged that the PhD researcher's writing could have been stronger, they also wondered 'would they [co-supervisor] be saying this in this way if it was a white British student who was writing

in this way?' This supervisor also pointed to another instance of a co-supervisor directing a Black African PhD researcher toward European theorists to use in their work situated in an African country. Recognizing that many of the department's PhD researchers who come from abroad, including from African countries, may not be aware or comfortable or challenging their supervisor, these interactions play into power dynamics that reinforce a supervisor-supervisee hierarchy and can shape the PhD researcher's writing, knowledge trajectories, and scholarship.

One Black British PhD researcher pointed out how academic writing expectations and narrow understandings of knowledge that emphasize the western canon can deeply limit a Black PhD researcher's academic voice:

> 'Me and my mates, we talk, and we share information through a stream of consciousness. So, we just talk, man, and you're reasoning, right, you just reason, *boom boom boom boom*, you're speaking. That's a form of knowledge man, that's a form of epistemology, but it's discarded because I don't speak in that kind of way that you sort of, kind of, have been trained to speak. I'm not allowed to think like that, but we're still doing the same thing, and I think if you're a young Black kid, especially from the UK, so you know, coming from a very diverse background and then not kind of from the traditional linear route into the PhD… So, some people might have the ability to talk and explain a PhD, but when it comes to writing, and I'm speaking about my interviews, it took me a year to learn how to write again. And it's a very painful process, man…Because your PhD speaks across purposes. It's supposed to be something that you do, but you can't really talk how you would write, you have to write in an academic way, right? Very narrowly. So you think well, on one hand you're telling me to do me and be reflexive, where the next minute you're telling me I have to conform [to the conventions of academic writing]… Which is it? And ultimately what matters is the conforming because these people have the stamp of an impartial PhD, right? So it raises questions about the diversity of the academic voice, right. And so, the academic voice is, essentially, like whiteness is invisible so white voice, right? But our forms of knowledge, young, young Black people, we create other forms of knowledge that are not considered 'canon,' in inverted commas. So, for example, like, spoken word or poetry and all these kinds of things that we do are forms of knowledge too that say stuff, it's not considered canon so our PhD, until we write it and get it stamped, it's not official knowledge, man. And I think the

supervision needs to have that kind of flexibility [to consider these as valid forms of knowledge].'
- Black British PhD researcher in Geography

A Black African PhD researcher who is an immigrant to the UK also pointed to the tensions of writing within a challenging supervision experience. First, in their first year, their main supervisor was inconsistently available and on leave for a prolonged period of time due to illness, and the researcher was left by both their supervisor and the department to flounder, with slow progress in starting and writing their research. Upon returning, the researcher experienced 'difficult problems to reconnect back again [with the supervisor] …my writing became an issue where I was told that there might be [a learning difficulty]. I think, that was the downside of everything,' they said.

This researcher, a non-native English speaker who speaks multiple languages and has operated in English in professional settings, was referred by their supervisor to learning services in their university. This was part of a larger pattern of issues with their supervisor, who also abruptly requested a supervisory change. The researcher is now working with other supervisors, which they count as a positive experience with better support. For example, after the departure of that supervisor, this researcher now has supportive supervisors who encourage her research and writing. The researcher said this supervision change has transformed her relationship to supervising: 'Now, since my first supervisor dropped, I don't feel anxious when I'm going to supervision, whereas before I used to feel anxious, I used to listen, I never used to say anything. In the day I said something was the day my supervisor dropped [me], but now I go into supervision looking forward to it.' The researcher also emphasized, concerning PhD writing: 'We need to balance academic writing with writing that's relatable to the people whom we write about.'

As one PhD researcher said, 'supervisors have a lot of power. And it can be detrimental to your work in future where you want to get into academia… I found it a very difficult process for myself, and a lot of tears, a lot of crying, I would say. And it's hard to believe that basically, the strong woman narrative of Black people, for somebody to be crying just because of a PhD, but you feel you are not worthy. And you try hard, you work hard, you try very much.'

In their experiences, these PhD researchers point to the emotional dimensions of these supervision relations. The supervisors interviewed also expressed a range of experiences. One supervisor pointed out the 'thrill' of supervising Black PhD researchers, who tend to pursue unique topics and approaches that are often 'Black centred, or more African-centred.' In their department, they noted a trend where African students pursue postgraduate taught (masters) courses and then intend to stay on for the PhD. In some cases, they observed Black PhD researchers who struggle with lack of engagement and support from their

supervisors, whose supervisors don't give sufficient attention to their work, and when the PhD researchers take a different approach from supervisor, finishing the degree on bad terms, which can typically lead to bad career prospects for that PhD researcher.

However, supervisors also described the dynamics of white privilege that can sometimes shape supervision relationships. For example, one low point for a supervisor was being approached by a Black individual with a proposal to undertake a PhD, who had first submitted their proposal to a white colleague who 'didn't think much of it [their proposal]. After the supervisor worked closely with the individual, providing critical feedback and support to help them get the proposal 'to a point where it was ready to be submitted to the department,' the individual then approached the white colleague for supervision. '[They] decided… that [they] needed a white person on board, and brought [the white colleague] in,' the supervisor said. '[They] obviously thought for [their] own legitimacy within the Academy [of their country] and needed to have a white person on board. So, I could understand what [they were] doing,' they said.

All of the supervisors said that they received no formal training on supervising Black PhD researchers and have rather taken active steps to learn how to do this, including through informal support. They described building these skills across their experiences supervising, both formally and informally, Black PhD researchers One supervisor mentioned that much of their own guidance in this regard has come from other scholars, nearly all of whom have been women of colour.

Revealing and navigating race and racisms

Across conversations with both PhD researchers and supervisors, many of the PhD researchers and supervisors described the various contours of racial dynamics that frame their experiences, from shaping the research possibilities for international students, the complications of ethics and risk assessments, as well as everyday interactions and encounters. Many, but not all, of the PhD researchers involved in this research described expending an inordinate amount of emotional labor navigating experiences of racism and racist academic structures, which frustrates, blocks, and hinders their academic progress. One researcher said that they haven't had any racist experiences, and that people in their department and cohort overall have been 'friendly' and 'welcoming.' The researcher, who largely works away from their university, doesn't get as involved with their PhD cohort, as they typically work from home both before and during the with COVID pandemic and lockdown.

Both PhD researchers and supervisors discussed the various dynamics and politics that shape the flexibility of Black PhD researchers research trajectories during their programmes. For one Black African PhD researcher, their doctoral funding conditions requires that their research has a clear 'development' impact. The

individual explained how this requirement serves to narrow the approaches, topics, and intellectual risks they feel they can take in doctoral research: 'I wish I had the freedom to just play and explore, whereas I feel like because of my positionality, I have to constantly be thinking about how is this benefiting my country,' they said. Further, as an African national, unequal international visa regimes constrain the flexibility of their travel for research. 'I would have to justify the heck out of that [conducting research in a European country] before I even get visa access and all of those things. Whereas it's not the case for your white British or European student who wants to come and do research in my home country.'

A supervisor pointed out a related issue concerning ethics approvals for Black African PhD researchers to conduct fieldwork in their home countries. While these African researchers can easily travel home for holidays and their departments and universities won't mind, in their experience, it took months for one of their African students to gain ethical approval to conduct research in their home country where they have lived their entire life.

These experiences and navigations of racism are also everyday interpersonal encounters as they move through their campus environments. The ECR researcher shared that during their PhD they experienced multiple microaggressions, many of which they could no longer recall, saying 'I have blocked a lot of things out of my memory.' Yet they did mention, with regards to being a Black researcher in a predominantly white space and its colonial history that 'the antiblackness is etched into the walls' through being tokenized in a context of the lack of Black and Brown students, and their constant awareness of having to prove themself as a Black researcher.

One Black British PhD researcher described their experiences of being stopped on campus and ID checked by campus security: 'At the time you know it's the same thing, 'Something has happened in the area, you fit the description,'' they said. The PhD researcher shared that they have done the necessary paperwork to file the complaints, and they described how these microaggressions accumulate, how they carry these encounters with them, which contribute to a sometimes 'depressing' academic experience:

> 'These types of, you know, microaggressions, if you would term it, is that institutional experience of racism. It affects me. In one word, it's depressing. It's depressing…You're already highly aware, or, you know, you already feel hyper visible, and then [when these incidents happen] you come to question whether maybe this is just something that you're reading into... But then you have an everyday kind of encounter like that with the security or the police. Sometimes it can even just come up from kind of unconscious biases that other people have in a predominately

white space where you're the only kind of token in the room, and I'm talking about lecture or seminar series where Blackness is spoken about often as the object and not the subject of discussion. But you're the token Black person in the room, and you hear other people's unconscious biases come out in seminar discussions where you're discussing key questions around race and identities. I feel like that in itself is an institutional experience of racism, because I'm the only Black person in this room, and I'm having to sit down and essentially, sit down and hear these violent things that if I had my choice, I probably wouldn't listen to you. But the issue with that is, this is the academy, this is the place for debate. This is the place for free speech. So, what does that mean when you are the one token person in the room or maybe one of few tokens in the room, you know?'
- Black British PhD researcher in Geography

One Black African PhD researcher described receiving different treatment from their white male classmate in their first-year upgrade:

'The questions that I was being asked, I felt those were not the same as the questions that were being asked of a white male counterpart, who would be interviewed at a similar time. And it felt like the people who are on my interview panel, initially they expected me not to know as much as I did know. Then, as the interview progressed, it seemed like they were like, 'Oh, okay, okay, you're good, you know this stuff.' So, I just felt like that assumption, that you're not given the benefit of the doubt, possibly because of your background. I was just comparing. If I didn't have the direct comparison with my colleague who was white and male, I might not have been as aware of these things, and I might have thought, 'Oh they're just innocent questions.' But sometimes even the way that the questions were phrased, I felt trivialized the work that I was doing… And then in another instance, I was asked why I had to bring up the fact that I was a Black African woman, and if I didn't feel like I was just politicizing it, when we should try and keep things as neutral as possible… And I felt a little bit targeted, because that white male colleague was including interviews with people of other races in his research, and he was not drilled as much about his positionality, when obviously his positionality is something that even gave him power to those spaces and access to those people that he probably wouldn't have had if he weren't white. So, in that

instance I felt very aware of my race, and where I was coming from. And I did bring this up with my supervisor afterwards, and they assured me that they [examiners] were nice people and didn't mean any offense, as they were sure it was nothing. Which also heightens the experience. You know it's a microaggression, but you know, being told to brush it under the carpet, because it's probably no big deal. But you know. You know what you felt when those things were said, it's just difficult to articulate them in a clear way.'
- Black African PhD researcher in Geography

The PhD researcher went on to describe spending time away from their PhD research and writing as they thought, worried about, and processed this experience, yet they shared feeling there were multiple barriers to reporting: 'There's so much evidence you have to provide, so it puts you in this place of second guessing yourself and wondering whether it's even worth reporting it. But by not reporting it, am I then allowing this environment to continue for other students of colour who are coming behind me and who probably experienced the same thing, like am I failing them?'

Speaking from their own experience, the Black African immigrant PhD researcher said:

'Most of it [racism] is done covertly, and non-covertly sometimes… throughout the programme, if you look at yourself and think, would it have happened if I was not Black and a woman? I don't think it would have happened for me that way. Because when I compare with my colleagues who are white in human geography, it would never have happened to them…But then I can't complain and say it's racism. Because some people that are supervising you are human geographers, they research things about poverty, they research racism, they go to Africa. They're white, but they go to Africa and do a research about the disparities of people, poverty, a lot of other things which go with human geography. So, for you to balance the fact that in human geography, seeing, as you know, there are very, very few Black geographers. So, we need to look at it deeply, and not just underestimate the fact that there are people who are researching, but why is it so white and other disciplines have a proportional rate of Black people... So, it leaves you wondering whether, in my experience, things like this, even if I reported them - I went and reported them! - and they said, 'We should have an informal

One PhD supervisor shared how one of their Black African PhD researchers, in the course of coming to the UK and working through the PhD programme, grew to recognize not interpersonal racism and also structural racisms that they were experiencing. The supervisor also mentioned the structural ways in which racism operates for PhD students, where a large number of Black PhD researchers work in addition to their studies, which impacts their health, wellbeing, and takes time away from their academic work. In addition, the supervisor discussed how their Black African international students must be constantly preoccupied with their visa status in the UK, with the worry of whether they will be able to secure a job in the UK to stay on, which adds stress from the very beginning of their studies. In addition, if or when they leave to return to their home countries (or elsewhere), this means these Black students, who were contributing diversity through their presence in the discipline, are also now absent. The supervisor also pointed to the UK Home Office surveillance requirements as part of the administrative supervision of these Black African PhD researchers and international students, and the requirements to logging meetings for the UK Home Office checks, and the supervisor described the strongly worded email notices that their African PhD researcher has received with threats to the researchers' visa status for non-compliance as 'deeply disturbing.'

On 'inclusive' and 'antiracist' environments

Many of the researchers and supervisors considered their departments to be inclusive, specifically towards gender and creating space for (white) women in academia but did not consider their departments to be actively antiracist. One Black British researcher said they considered the department inclusive: 'by nature of fact its geography, 'you kind of have to be open to the world to do geography,' they said. One Black African PhD researcher shared that their department was not antiracist when they started their PhD research, but that the department is now trying to be antiracist and inclusive because of the Black Lives Matter movements and protests. Through new forums and groups on race and decolonizing the curriculum, the department is making efforts to address its inequalities. The ECR didn't consider their department to be inclusive or antiracist, pointing out that their subfield was already 'an exclusive subject.'

A Black African researcher said their department isn't antiracist, saying: 'To be antiracist, it has to be explicit, you can't just be neutral in the background...On inclusive, I think that a lot of the responsibility is left to us as students like to do our own cohort building particularly in human geography.' This perspective was echoed in an interview with a supervisor, who also pointed to students' efforts and actions as the key movement in their department and university. The supervisor said their

department isn't inclusive nor antiracist at the moment, due to the fact that these actions are coming from students, not necessarily from the department of staff. The supervisor also extended this critical point to the academic spaces of geography conferences in which PhD researchers are expected to attend, present their network, build connections with other students and scholars, and learn about emerging areas in their areas of interest. These white geography conferences present 'an alienating experience' for Black students, the supervisor said.

As another PhD supervisor pointed out, while their department claims to be inclusive and antiracist, the supervisor judged this by the outcomes to say this is not the case. The supervisor rather characterized their university as 'ill-equipped' to support students experiencing racism. As the only Black staff member in their department, the supervisor said further:

> 'For me, you can't tell me that we're an inclusive department and antiracist when there's only one Black person in your department. You can say you are, you can say to me all day long, but I'm not going to believe that, because I look around me and I see what's going on…I've never seen a shortlist for a job in academic position with a person of colour... Either they're telling me that we're inferior, we're not incapable of applying for these positions, or your processes are racist and inform racist outcomes... I've never come across a Black British PhD student in my department, it's all international students of colour. So that tells me that your process can't be inclusive on racial lines because I'm not seeing the people coming through. When they look for them, when they think of inclusivity and EDI, the first thing that comes to mind is gender. That's what they gravitate towards, and for them gender doesn't mean Black women. So, I would say they're inclusive in certain ways, but in terms of race and racism…for me the reality and rhetoric is different things…while I think there is an antiracist narrative, it's not being reflected in the reality of the things that I'm seeing in terms of staff, and also PhD students.'
> – Black PhD supervisor in Geography

One Black British PhD researcher considered their department to be 'inclusive,' but pointed to the lack of pastoral care to support Black researchers in their struggles within the academy, saying: 'I feel that if my department was an anti-racist environment, I'd have pastoral care that is specified to Black students or Black PhD researchers.' The research also pointed to the lack of staff and student racial representation in their department as further evidence of lack of antiracist action. These experiences demonstrate that despite the widespread discussions and commitments concerning anti-racism and EDI commitments, and a spirit of 'progressive liberalism' within academic department, many Black PhD researchers and Black supervisors continue to feel that little has structurally changed to improve their circumstances, representations, and everyday experiences within the academy.

Supporting PhD Researchers

The Black supervisors interviewed described multiple ways in which they perform additional labor beyond the scope of their administrative roles to support Black PhD students, including providing pastoral support and research support to those they do not directly supervise. This includes support to PhD researchers in their discipline and in other disciplines. One supervisor described their experience providing pastoral care to students not their own. The supervisor explained that Black students, even from other disciplines, have come to them for assurance that the racism they are experiencing isn't just in their own heads. While they acknowledge that the university provides good training to PhD researcher on general topics such as research methods and publications, the supervisor tries to support Black students with additional networking, recognizing they have to work extra hard. These efforts and energies are met with mixed responses, as this supervisor who makes an effort to support students not their own also described how one of their supervisees expressed feeling that they as their assigned PhD researcher don't have enough time to feel supported.

Another supervisor similarly described doing extra work supporting Black PhD students not their own in their department: 'I don't get the credit, but I meet the students to talk about their work, to give them feedback. I do push them to get the work done, and to do it to the best of their ability.' This is grounded in their own previous PhD experience, where they described consistently observing that international Black students received poor supervision, were often on their own, and didn't know how to navigate the academic system as they had been able to.

As one PhD student said, '[our supervisors should] make sure that by the time you come out [of the PhD], you have a full basket of people that you've met and could work with together.' Another PhD researcher suggested that supervisors should attend at least one conference of their student to show support. This corresponds with the support that one supervisor said they provide to their students, supporting them in identifying and participating in academic conferences where they will feel supported as a Black PhD researcher, such as the American Association of Geographers conference, which has a greater number of Black Geographers, and a specific Black Geographies research speciality group. The supervisor also supports their Black PhD researchers in networking at academic conferences and other spaces. A few Black PhD researchers also discussed shaping their own collectives and communities of support, such as connecting with Black geographers and drawing on support from family and friends, as necessary spaces of emotional, intellectual support and well-being that enable them to move through their PhD programmes.

Planning post-PhD careers

Some of the PhD researchers, who are a year or two into their programmes, said they have not spent much time yet discussing their post-PhD plans with supervisors and whether they would like to proceed into an academic career. A couple of PhD researchers had just completed upgrade and had not yet spent much time talking with supervisors about future career. Many of the PhD researchers expressed uncertainly about continuing in academia after they complete their PhDs, while some have already decided they want to explore non-academic work opportunities, with one individual interested to explore the opportunities to work between both, if possible. As one researcher said, future planning not a prominent factor in their PhD experience at this moment. One PhD researcher said that they are still deciding what they want to do post-PhD, and is considering the research route, and hasn't at all discussed career interests with their supervisors. One supervisor pointed out that many PhD students from their department go on to pursue work outside of academia and in international organizations

Focus on good practice: Recommendations from PhD researchers and PhD supervisors

Drawing on their own lived experiences, the Black PhD researchers and supervisors interviewed in this research project share their own recommendations on best practices with the desire that they and other Black PhD students in Geography will be better supported toward completing their PhDs and moving into their chosen careers. This list of best practices joins together their recommendations:

Recognise that individuals arrive to the PhD through various routes. Not everyone is coming to PhD through in a traditional route: Individuals come to the PhD from working-class backgrounds, from professional careers, from different learning modes and with different strengths, abilities, and learning styles. The interviews demonstrate that supervisors should employ diverse approaches to understanding and working with Black PhD researchers, to 'recognize that everyone's not starting from the same position,' as one PhD researcher highlighted.

Support Black PhD students in understanding the PhD scholarships process and timelines. For many students, the PhD scholarships process remains unclear, which means they are unable to fully take advantage of applying and securing these opportunities, and some Black PhD researchers struggle to support themselves and navigate the stress of these financial responsibilities while pursuing the intellectual demands of their PhD research.

Advocate for students, especially to support them in getting funding and for opportunities. Supervisors must be advocates for their Black PhD students, often from when they first begin applying, and through various points of their PhD process.

Within this support, listen to your Black students and give students to understand their needs, and give them space to make their voice heard.

Don't take on so many PhD students if you are not able to give them the time they need. The PhD researcher who made this request also recognized that supervisors are overburdened with teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities.

Understand where your PhD students are coming from by getting to know the Black PhD researcher as a whole person, including outside their academic roles. Recognize students as individuals with individual needs and build an understanding of their lived experience, their socioeconomic background, and their life commitments outside of the PhD that they manage throughout their research trajectory. This was a consistent recommendation across many interviews with PhD researchers, that supervisors should genuinely check in with them, are sensitive to culture and the person, rather than using a one-size-fits-all supervision approach. Develop class and racial awareness, especially for Black students of working-class backgrounds, as one PhD student recommended. Recognize assumptions, especially financial assumptions, that you may have made about students' privileges and resources. As one PhD student said, 'Once you have an idea of who this person is, you know better how to support them.'

Recognize the politics and power dynamics surrounding the supervision relationship and understand that you as supervisor have a lot of impact on your Black PhD researchers. As one PhD researcher recommended, supervisors must reflect on their own position within the PhD researcher-supervisor power dynamics, alongside the unspoken expectations they might have. Recognize and support the Black PhD researcher's knowledge, which requires acknowledging and challenging the academic hierarchy of knowledge where supervisor is above student and that centres the western canon. Another PhD researcher recommended supervisors recognize that students' accomplishments separate from how you've supported them. One PhD researcher recounted an experience where, when they had arrived and the supervisor would introduce the PGR to department colleagues (staff members), saying 'Let me introduce you to my new PhD student. I just got [them] some funding.' While the PhD researcher recognized the supervisor had provided support as they wrote their application, these statements undermine their own work in securing this funding. Demonstrate integrity, and don't plagiarize your PhD researchers' work.

Acknowledge that Black PhD students live and research in an environment structured by racial inequalities and discrimination. Both PhD researchers and supervisors spoke to the need for supervisors to recognize the myriad ways that the everyday realities of racism impact Black PhD students. In a context where different PhD researchers expressed being gaslighted when speaking to their lived

experiences and having their complaints dismissed or minimised, they emphasize the critical importance of recognition and action. Supervisors should work proactively with Black PhD students to identify ways they can overcome these built-in barriers and impediments. As one PhD researcher clarified, this is not to suggest that one's supervisor should become their 'therapist.' This rather demands an acknowledgement of the world in which the PhD student lives. As one PhD researcher recommended, this demands that supervisors actively develop deeper awareness concerning how they as supervisors may be complicit in reproducing systems of inequality and exclusion.

Actively engage your Black PhD students about their career aspirations as an ongoing discussion. Have conversations with PhD student about career aspirations, whether academic or non-academic, throughout their PhD. Support them by developing the skills, networks, and understandings to navigate these career landscapes.

Nurture Black PhD students as emerging Geography scholars by supporting their work and creating space for their scholarship in the discipline. Support Black PhD students in creating their own supportive intellectual communities. Supervisors mentioned the importance of organizing and providing affirming spaces where Black PhD students can share and discuss their work. Both PhD researchers and supervisors mentioned the importance of supporting students in networking. For example, actively introducing and connecting their Black PhD students with other Black PhD students and Black scholars.

Seek out formal training on supervising Black PhD students. All of the supervisors interviewed said the repertoire of tools and strategies they have developed to support their Black PhD students were gained informally. They suggested training for supervisors to develop the tools and strategies to create an environment in which Black PhD students can thrive. PhD researchers also recommended the need for sensitivity training. Within the public discussions around this research,

For research councils and universities, build in firmer accountability for how well academics are supervising their PhD students. As one research supervisor pointed out, tying PhD researchers' supervision experiences to funding could be one way to influence supervisors to take greater care, accountability, and commitment to their Black PhD researchers.

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