Information and consent

STEM Researchers' Experiences Working in UK Higher Education Sector

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What is this survey about?
This survey is part of a wider program of research funded by the EPSRC, examining the experiences of STEM researchers at different career stages in the UK higher education sector. This research will further our understanding of some of the factors influencing retention and career progression in the sector. The survey has received ethical clearance from the Psychology Ethics Committee at the University of Bath.

What do I have to do to take part?
The questions are straightforward and there are no right or wrong answers. We do not foresee that participation in this survey will cause any discomfort or distress. It will take approximately 10 minutes and on completion you will have the option to be entered into a draw to...

What will happen to the information I provide?

Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You may omit to answer questions and you may also withdraw participation by not completing the survey.

Please note that your survey responses will remain completely anonymous. Any potentially identifying information (e.g., IP addresses) will not be kept. The online servers used to store the data associated with this project are GDPR compliant.

Once the project is completed, the survey data will be kept securely by the University of Bath for at least 10 years. If you give your consent, it may be used by other genuine researchers, with the University of Bath's approval, under the strict rules governing the confidentiality of your information.

Ethical conduct of research

The University of Bath attaches high priority to the ethical conduct of research. We therefore ask you to consider the following additional points before indicating your consent by ticking the box at the bottom of the page. If you have any concerns related to your participation in this study please direct them to the Chair of the Department of Psychology Research Ethics Committee, email: psychology-ethics@bath.ac.uk.

Please also feel free to contact Dr Blackwood to express your views, to ask questions, to ask for a copy of the results, or if anything goes wrong.

Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Dr Leda Blackwood

l.blackwood@bath.ac.uk

By selecting the box below, you consent to participate in the study on the basis that:

1.   You have been informed about the study and the sorts of questions/tasks it involves

2. You may omit questions you do not wish to answer

3. You may stop the study at any time by not completing the online responses

4. Only de-identified data will be used for analysis and archival purposes

5. The de-identified data will be kept for at least 10 years before being destroyed

◯ Yes, I consent to continue

◯ No, I do not wish to continue

Current employment status

First, we want to know a few things about your current position in the Higher Education sector. If you are concerned that an answer might identify you, please feel free to skip the question.

Which university do you currently attend / work in?

[   ]

What is the main area of STEM in which you are studying and / or are employed?

◯ Biological sciences (e.g., biology, pharmacology, etc.)

◯ Computer sciences (e.g., computer science, artificial intelligence, etc.)

◯ Engineering (e.g., mechanical, electronic, etc.)

◯ Mathematical sciences (e.g., mathematics, statistics, etc.)

◯ Physics (e.g., physics, astrophysics, etc.)

◯ [   ] Other (please specify)

What is your current role/position?

○ PhD Student

○ PostDoc

○ Teaching Fellow

○ Senior Teaching Fellow

○ Research Fellow

○ Senior Research Fellow

○ Lecturer

○ Senior Lecturer

○ Associate Professor/Reader

○ Professor

○ [   ] Other

Is your role part time or full time?

○ Full time

○ Part time

○ I prefer not to say

Are you on a fixed-term or open ended contract?

○ Fixed term (for a set period of time)

○ Open ended (continuing / does not have an end date)

○ I don't know/not applicable

○ I prefer not to say

In total, how long (months and years) have you been employed in the Higher Education sector on fixed-term contracts?

In total, how many fixed-term contracts in the Higher Education sector have you had (including your current contract)?

Academic identity and career

Now please think about your identity as an academic in your field and workplace and indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
I can always be myself around other academics	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I sometimes hide aspects of my identity to avoid negative attention from academics	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Being an academic is an important part of my self-concept	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have a lot in common with the average academic	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am considered to have academic expertise	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel a strong sense of belonging as an academic	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
Sometimes I think other academics doubt my credentials	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I sometimes feel on the periphery as an academic	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other academics recognise me as a valued member	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am typical of most academics	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Thinking about your career as an academic thus far, and how you see your future, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Someone like me can succeed in an academic career	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I like this career too much to give it up	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am satisfied with my chances for getting ahead in an academic career	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sometimes I doubt whether I will succeed in an academic career	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
From my observations, there is bias in academic promotions processes	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Most of my academic career has been a natural progression from the previous step	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
From my observations, there is bias in academic recruitment processes	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I've stayed in academia because it was the easiest option/I couldn't think of another option	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Academic recruitment processes select the best person for the job	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If I could do it all over again, I would choose to work in a different profession	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

○ Not working in a STEM field

○ Working in a STEM field but NOT in academia

○ Working in a STEM field in academia

Please explain why?

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Personal working style and opportunities

Here we are interested in your preferred working style and your experiences working with others.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I find it easy to articulate my ideas to people more senior than me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I prefer to work independently and alone	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel comfortable working in a group	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I find it easy to articulate my ideas to strangers	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I rarely get credit for my work or ideas	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I thrive in a competitive environment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can challenge ideas of people I work with	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I prefer to work in collaboration with others	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I thrive in a diverse and collaborative environment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Think about yourself in comparison to others at your career stage. If something does not apply to you, please select "not applicable".

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I have opportunities to build professional social networks	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have opportunities to be involved in research grant applications	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have a clear understanding of how to advance in my academic career	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have opportunities to attend external activities (e.g., conference attendance, workshops, meetings)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have opportunities to collaborate on publications	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am encouraged to take up career development opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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Workplace diversity and culture

In this section we are interested in your perceptions of the organisational culture in your workplace. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers; we are just interested in what you think.

Overall, what is your view about the level of diversity in your work place?

○ Not diverse enough

○ An appropriate level of diversity

○ Too much diversity

Please explain your answer?

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Thinking about your workplace and how you see people being treated, please respond to each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
My line manage / supervisor makes sure everyone has the same support and opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Overall, I think that people are treated equally on their merits	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
People with different backgrounds are treated fairly	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
There are role models from diverse backgrounds	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
There is a fair division of rewards and opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
There is a fair division of 'desirable' and 'undesirable' tasks	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
More needs to be done to encourage diversity and inclusiveness	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

When you think about the culture in your workplace, how do you feel?

				Neutral				
Angry	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Calm
Included	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Excluded
Accepted	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Rejected
Insecure	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Confident
Hopeful	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Hopeless
Happy	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Sad
Dissapointed	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Pleased

Safe   ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯   Intimidated

Still thinking about the culture in your workplace, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
People tend to be very competitive	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
There is a spirit of collegiality and support	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
You need to be part of a clique or aligned with a powerful individual or group to have influence	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
A good work-life balance is encouraged	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel that I am listened to when I give my opinions (e.g., in a workplace meeting or forum)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Offensive language and behaviour are not accepted (e.g., inappropriate images or comments, unwanted or degrading behaviour or interactions)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Collaborative working is valued and supported	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Social activities (e.g. parties, team building) are welcoming to all	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Bullying and harassment

In this section, we are interested in whether you have personally experienced and / or witnessed the kinds of behaviours that can create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work-related social or academic environment.

Note: This includes behaviours on and off-campus (e.g., at work-related social events and conferences) as well as on social media.

Have you personally experienced and / or witnessed insulting or offensive remarks or behaviours?

	Experienced being done to me				Witnessed being done to someone else			
	Never	Once	More than once	Frequently	Never	Once	More than once	Frequently
Offensive remarks, jokes, harassment or bullying **based on socio-economic background**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offensive remarks, jokes, harassment or bullying **based on ethnicity**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Experienced being done to me				Witnessed being done to someone else			
	Never	Once	More than once	Frequently	Never	Once	More than once	Frequently
Offensive remarks, jokes, harassment or bullying **based on religion**	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Offensive remarks, jokes, harassment or bullying **based on disability**	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Offensive remarks, jokes, harassment or bullying **based on gender or sexuality**	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

If you have experienced or witnessed any of the above, please describe in as much detail as you can (e.g., what happened, who was there, how did you feel, how did you respond).

COVID-19

On balance, how do you think COVID-19 will affect your academic career?

Much worse for my career	Slightly worse for my career	No effect	Slightly positive for my career	Very positive for my career
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

On-line meetings and workshops

In this section, we are interested in people's experiences of participating in academic events designed to develop collaborative research ideas and activity (i.e. NOT conferences and seminars but events where you spend significant time working on research challenges with people that you have not worked with before).

Before we proceed, have you had any of the experiences below in the last 2 years (tick all that apply):

☐ Participated in an **off-line** (in-person) academic event of this nature

☐ Participated in an **on-line** (virtual) academic event of this nature

☐ Known about but decided not to attend an **off-line** event of this nature

☐ Known about but decided not to attend an **on-line** event of this nature

☐ I have not known about any such events in the last 2 years

What factors have prevented you attending such off-line event(s)? *(Is there anything that would have made it more likely you would attend?)*

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What factors have prevented you attending such on-line event(s)? (Is there anything that would have made it more likely you would attend?)

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Thinking about your experience of attending **off-line events** designed to develop collaborative research ideas and activity, to what extent do you agree with the following?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
It has been easy to advance my research interests	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have often felt excluded or on the periphery	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have found it easy to express my opinion and be listened to	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other participants generally take me seriously and make me feel valued	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have found it difficult to meet people with whom I might collaborate	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with people I know	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have enjoyed the opportunity to meet new people and develop my networks	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The experience has made me feel more positive about my future in academia	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Thinking about your experience of attending **on-line events** designed to develop collaborative research ideas and activity, to what extent do you agree with the following?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
It has been easy to advance my research interests	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have often felt excluded or on the periphery	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have found it easy to express my opinion and be listened to	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other participants generally take me seriously and make me feel valued	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have found it difficult to meet people with whom I might collaborate	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with people I know	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have enjoyed the opportunity to meet new people and develop my networks	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The experience has made me feel more positive about my future in academia	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

From your perspective, what are the main advantages and disadvantages of attending events designed to develop collaborative research ideas and activity, on-line?

[text box]

Demographics

You are almost done! We just need to ask you some questions that are important for us understanding the demographics of who has completed this survey and also how different groups might have different perceptions or experiences.

Remember, if there are questions you do not want to answer for whatever reason you can skip them (or indicate prefer not to say) and move on to the next question.

What is your age? (Numbers only)

[input box]

What is your gender?

○ Woman

○ Man

○ Transgender woman

○ Transgender man

○ Questioning

○ [   ] Other (please specify)

○ Prefer not to say

Overall, to what degree do you think your gender has had an impact on your working life?

Some positive impact	Virtually no impact	A slight negative impact	A moderate negative impact	A large negative impact
○	○	○	○	○

Which of the following terms best describes your sexual orientation?

○ Heterosexual (straight)

○ Homosexual (lesbian or gay)

○ Bisexual

○ Asexual

○ Questioning

○ [   ] Other (please specify)

○ Prefer not to say

Overall, to what degree has your sexual orientation had an impact on your working life?

Some positive impact	Virtually no impact	A slight negative impact	A moderate negative impact	A large negative impact
○	○	○	○	○

What is the highest level of education completed by either of your parents/carers?

○ Secondary School

○ FE College/6th Form

○ Undergraduate Degree

○ Postgraduate Degree

○ PhD

○ Prefer not to say

Overall, to what degree has your parent/carer's level of education had an impact on your working life?

Some positive impact	Virtually no impact	A slight negative impact	A moderate negative impact	A large negative impact
○	○	○	○	○

What is your marital status?

○ Not married / not in a civil partnership

○ Married or in a civil partnership

○ Prefer not to say

Do you have caring responsibilities for dependent children and/or adults? (answer as many as apply to you, and include the number of dependents in the boxes if you wish)

☐ No

☐ [   ] Yes - children aged under 11

☐ [   ] Yes - children aged between 11 and 18

☐ [   ] Yes - adult dependents (e.g. partner, parents)

☐ I prefer not to say

Overall, to what degree has having caring responsibilities for dependent children and / or adults had an impact on your working life? (Please answer based on your experiences prior to COVID-19).

Some positive impact	Virtually no impact	A slight negative impact	A moderate negative impact	A large negative impact
○	○	○	○	○

Are you a British citizen?

○ Yes

○ No

Which of the following terms best describes your ethnicity?

○ White British

○ Other White background

○ Black British

○ Other Black background

○ Asian British

○ Chinese

○ Other Asian background

○ [   ] Mixed background (please specify)

○ [   ] Other background (please specify)

○ Prefer not to say

Overall, to what degree has your ethnicity had an impact on your working life?

Some positive impact	Virtually no impact	A slight negative impact	A moderate negative impact	A large negative impact
○	○	○	○	○

Do you have a disability?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Prefer not to say

Does this involve any of the following (tick as many as apply)

☐ A specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D

☐ A social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder

☐ A long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy

☐ A mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder

☐ A physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using arms or using a wheelchair or crutches

☐ Deaf or a serious hearing impairment

☐ Blind or a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses

☐ A disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed above

Overall, to what degree has your disability/disabilities had an impact on your working life?

Some positive impact	Virtually no impact	A slight negative impact	A moderate negative impact	A large negative impact
○	○	○	○	○

Block 8

Thinking about your responses in this section, please add any additional comments regarding what has impacted either positively or negatively on your working life.

Thinking more broadly, in your view, what is the most important issue affecting retention and career progression for Early Career Researchers in STEM?

Block 10

DEBRIEFING FORM: Dimensions of Group Characteristics

Thank you for participating in this study which is part of a program of EPSRC research looking at how to increase diversity in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) academic fields. The results of this research will be disseminated through scientific publications and reports. A summary of results will be placed on the project's website, which you can access here: www.bath.ac.uk/projects/reimagining-recruitment.

Please do not hesitate to contact us:
email: reimagining_recruitment@bath.ac.uk if you require more information, or to provide comments or communicate concerns. If you prefer, you can also contact the principal investigator directly: Dr Leda Blackwood (l.blackwood@bath.ac.uk).

For ethical concerns, you can contact the Chair of the Psychology Ethics Committee at the University of Bath, psy-ethics@bath.ac.uk).

Dr Leda Blackwood
University of Bath

Please click on ARROW below to submit the survey and have your responses recorded.

You will automatically be redirected to a separate page where we will ask for your details to go into the draw for one of ten £50 vouchers.

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