



BGRS Conference 2020

Save the date for the BGRS Postgraduate Research Conference: 22-23 April 2020.

2020 will mark the 100th anniversary of Birkbeck joining the University of London, and the 75th anniversary of our first PhD. To celebrate these milestones as we approach the College's 200th year, the BGRS is organising a centenary conference, led by current PhD students and doctoral alumni.

Provisionally entitled #BBKConversations, it will be a great opportunity for the whole Birkbeck postgraduate research community to engage with the big issues of the day. The steering committee are in the early stages of planning the conference, but we need your help to shape it.

Over the course of two days, we hope to arrange lectures, workshops and maybe an exhibition, using our current research as well as the work of alumni to frame some big #BBKConversations.

Below are some themes the committee has come up with, but we would really like your input. What do you want to discuss and focus on? We are looking for exciting and innovative ways to bring together researchers in business, humanities, social sciences, STEM, and everything in between.

What can I do to make the conference a success?

Whether or not you want to take an active role in the conference, please put the 22nd and 23rd of April in your diary. If you would like to join the committee, propose a theme or participate in one of the #BBKConversations, please contact the BGRS Manager Tim Hoe (t.hoe@bbk.ac.uk). Get in touch with any and every idea no matter how big or small, and let's make this a great conference.

Planning workshop: 4 December

The conference committee will hold a [workshop on the 4th of December](#) from 15:00 to 17:00 in Clore 101 - this is open to anyone who would like to contribute to planning and organisation of the conference.

Suggested themes

- **If Birkbeck did not exist would we need to invent it?**
What is the relevance of Birkbeck's mission and its particular character in relation to society today?
- **What have Birkbeck's contributions to society and to research been?**
The conference could showcase this in relation to alumni. What should Birkbeck's future research focus be?
- **What are the historic and current roles for Birkbeck in terms of activism and research?**
Birkbeck has a radical history but should a university be radical?

- **Is London a global city-state? If so, is that good or bad for the UK?**

It was agreed that the relationship between education, social mobility and migration could be explored in the context of London and the rest of the UK.

- **Access and engagement. What is the future of the university in relation to race and migration, borders and decolonisation of the curriculum?**

What does a modern doctoral graduate look like and what journeys have led to our research students coming to Birkbeck? It would be interesting to explore some of the different stories and the role of a PhD in different cultures, with opportunities to interact and to explore these issues further at the conference.

- **What are the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research?**

This could work as a debate - with representatives from both sides.

- **What role does objectivity play in research?**

How does storytelling and narrative relate to research? What is reality – and what are the consequences of choices made when framing research?

- **What relevance do issues of privacy and digital data have in research?**

This could include discussion of artificial intelligence, deep learning, big data and ethics.

Best wishes

The BGRS Postgraduate Research Conference planning committee