

Researcher-Led Initiative Fund Application Form

Thank you for your interest in applying to the Researcher-Led Initiative (RLI) Fund.

Applications are invited from University of Sussex doctoral researchers and early career research staff for funding to support short-term, well-defined training and development, public engagement, and mental health, wellbeing and community projects.

The deadline for applications is **Thursday 30th April 2020**.

Please ensure that you have read the [guidance](#) before completing your application.

1. Name

[REDACTED]

2. Sussex e-mail address

[REDACTED]

3. Contact telephone number

4. School and department of lead applicant

Life Sciences

5. Are you a doctoral researcher or early career research staff?

Doctoral researcher

Type of activity

Do you wish to apply for funding for mental health, wellbeing and community, public engagement, or training and development?

Mental health, wellbeing and community initiative

About the mental health, wellbeing and community initiative

Title of initiative

BAME role models in science

When is the proposed initiative running?

On a single date

Date

29/07/2020

Mental health, wellbeing and community initiatives must fit into one of five themes.

Select one of the options below. Please explain your rationale when prompted.

Creating community belonging

Yes

Please explain your rationale

Research demonstrates that structural inequalities lead to BAME PhD students lacking a sense of belonging at university. In particular, a lack of role models can result in BAME students not feeling part of their School and academia in general. Within the School of Life Sciences, we have very few BAME academics, and so our BAME students struggle to see themselves as future scientists, in academia or elsewhere. For example, one Black PhD student has commented that it took 3 months before they saw a

BAME person in the School. Experiencing this at the start of a PhD can increase that sense of isolation and increase the chance of people dropping out of their studies.

The project aims to address that by highlighting BAME scientists who work across the sector, including Life Sciences Alumni. It will provide a community for BAME PhD students that the School and University can't provide (due to a lack of BAME academics/professional services staff), and build connections between current BAME PhD students so they can share challenges, experiences and build a support network.

Cultivating time to breathe

No

Celebrating self and successes

No

Encouraging life outside of research

No

Sharing PhD/ECR experiences

No

How will your initiative promote awareness of, support, or improve the mental health and wellbeing of Sussex researchers, or foster a research community?

By featuring BAME scientists in a range of scientific roles, I will be building an extended research community for our students. This currently isn't possible in the School, because there are so few BAME academics, particularly Black British. I hope that by providing stories of career pathways and the opportunity to ask these scientists questions, our students will see that there are many opportunities for them in science, maintaining their motivation and engagement with their research. I will follow up the project by arranging informal gatherings of BAME PhD students, to continue fostering the community.

Who is the target audience of your activity, and how will you engage with them effectively? If your focus is on a specific group of researchers, how could your initiative be rolled out to others?

Primary audience: BAME PhD students in Life Sciences. Engaged and promoted through the BAME Ambassadors, the School newsletter, School Reps, the Research and Enterprise Coordinator and the

