

Questionnaire Participant Information Sheet

The Equator Project Mentoring Network

Legal basis for research

The University undertakes research as part of its function for the community under its legal status. Data protection allows us to use personal data for research with appropriate safeguards in place under the legal basis of **public tasks that are in the public interest**. A full statement of your rights can be found at <https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/privacy-notice/privacy-notice-for-research>. However, all University research is reviewed to ensure that participants are treated appropriately and their rights respected. This study was approved by UREC with Converis number ER81163387. Further information is available at <https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice>

Invitation to participate and rationale for selection

You are being invited to take part in a project where you will become part of a support mentoring network for ethnic minority staff, students and alumni. You will be either a mentee or mentor, and will meet with your pairing in online mentor meetings during the project. The project will investigate your experiences of being part of the support mentoring network, through feedback questionnaires and interviews with the project team. You have been asked to take part because you are an undergraduate or postgraduate student, graduate, or staff member who may benefit from being mentored/providing mentorship.

Background to the project

There is a well-documented racial diversity crisis in environmental research in the Global North. EQUATOR, a project funded by Doctoral Landscape Award holders (groups of universities funded by the Natural Environment Council to provide doctoral training), aims to increase participation and retention of students from ethnic minority backgrounds and improve equity in environmental research. The project will link three evidence-based interventions, to (1) improve engagement and participation, (2) remove barriers to access and (3) improve the experience and increase retention of ethnic minority students in environmental research. The latter of these strands of research involves a mentoring network of students, alumni, post-doc, academic and industry mentors.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide if you want to take part. A copy of the information provided here is yours to keep, along with the consent form if you do decide to take part. You can still decide to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, or you can decide not to answer a particular question.

What will I be required to do?

If you do take part you will be matched with a mentor/mentee and provided with code of conduct guidelines for the mentoring process. You will be asked to participate in **remote online** mentoring discussions over a **5 month period** from April to August 2026. You will be offered remuneration for your time. You will be asked to complete feedback questionnaires at the start and end of the mentoring process. The questionnaires will ask questions about protected characteristics, about any previous experience of mentoring, about your feelings of belonging/inclusion, and about your experiences of the mentoring project. The questionnaire will be completed anonymously, therefore once your questionnaire is submitted it will not be possible for you to withdraw your response.

The anonymous data collected will be stored on password protected Sheffield Hallam University drives which the research team will be able to access for analysis purposes. The raw data will be the responsibility of the project lead, Dr Natasha Dowey, and will be kept after the project has ended in order to enable the data to be used in other similar studies. The study findings will be used in reports, publications and presentations, and may be used to inform the design of future learning activities. The project team will ensure that no individuals will be able to be identified in any of the outputs of the project. Your engagement in this research has the potential to directly improve student experience and to inform and ensure 'best-practice' in future. If you are interested

in the results of the study you can ask to see a summary report by emailing the research team to request this.

If you have any questions, please contact SHU Project lead Dr Natasha Dowey
N.Dowey@shu.ac.uk

Details of who to contact if you have any concerns during or after the study are given below.

You should contact the Data Protection Officer if:

- you have a query about how your data is used by the University
- you would like to report a data security breach (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately)
- you would like to complain about how the University has used your personal data

DPO@shu.ac.uk

You should contact the Head of Research Ethics (Dr Mayur Ranchordas) if:

- you have concerns with how the research was undertaken or how you were treated

ethicssupport@shu.ac.uk

Postal address: Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield S1 1WBT Telephone: 0114 225 5555