

What's a PhD and who, and what are they for?

An exploration of public attitudes to PhD research programmes in Nottingham

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. We are conducting discussion groups, also known as focus groups, to find out how Nottinghamshire residents understand and view PhD degrees. We are recruiting around 40 people from communities across Nottinghamshire. The aim of this research is to identify how people from Nottinghamshire see PhD degree opportunities, and how far they are seen as valuable. It also aims to understand how local residents view the types of PhD research which are undertaken at local universities, and the extent to which people can find information about PhD degrees and research careers.

To take part in this research, you will need to attend one 90-minute focus group in November/December 2023. You will be offered the opportunity to do an online or in-person focus group, and will be encouraged to answer specific questions and discuss your responses with 7-8 other participants. You do not have to answer any questions that you are not comfortable answering. The focus groups will be audio-recorded to assist the researcher with note-taking.

You will receive a £20 electronic high street shopping voucher for taking the time to participate in this focus group, and share your views. This will be e-mailed to you after you have participated in a focus group.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide that after the focus group you no longer want to participate in this research, you are free to withdraw and your data will be removed from this study, but **you must inform us via email within one month of the focus group having taken place.**

Please note that your anonymity has been considered, and you will not be identifiable at any stage of the research or writing process, as pseudonyms will be used to refer to any participants within this study. Any concerns you may have concerning your anonymity should be discussed with me prior to you consenting to participate in this study.

The data generated in this study will be kept confidential and secure, and the research team will be the only individuals with full access to it. In accordance with UK Research Councils guidance and the NTU Records Retention Schedule, your data will be retained for ten years before being destroyed.

The data will be used to inform a research report for the funder, the Society for Research in Higher Education, and may be drawn on in future published academic papers. The main intended output from this research is a 'Pathways into Research' toolkit which aims to share information about access to PhD degrees and research careers. We are aiming to produce this toolkit collaboratively, with significant input from focus group participants. You will be contacted by email after the focus group to ask for any contributions to a draft outline of this toolkit, but this is not mandatory, and you may opt out. You will be asked to consent to receive any further information on this aspect of the research.

Please note that this project has gone through the relevant NTU research ethics procedures and has been given a favourable ethics opinion by Nottingham Trent University's Schools of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment, Art and Design, Arts and Humanities Research Ethics Committee.

Contact Information

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact:

Dr Rachel Handforth, Doctoral School, Nottingham Trent University, 50 Shakespeare Street, Nottingham, NG1 4FQ. Email: Rachel.Handforth@ntu.ac.uk +44 115 848 4111

If you want to speak with someone who is not directly involved in this research, or if you have questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact Jonathan Hoskin-Campion, Lead Research and Evaluation Coordinator (Access and Participation). You can contact him at +44 115 848 4712 or send an e-mail to jon.hoskin-campion@ntu.ac.uk

NTU Research Privacy Notice

The Research Privacy Notice outlines what NTU does with personal data and how we protect personal data and the rights of research participants during research activities in accordance with UK GDPR/ Data Protection Act 2018.

For more information regarding the RPN, please click on the following link:
<https://www.ntu.ac.uk/policies/research-privacy-notice>

Please contact NTU's Data Protection Officer (see details below) if:

- You have a question/query about how your data is being used by NTU;
- You would like to report a data breach (if you believe that your data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately);
- You would like to raise a complaint about how your personal data is being used by NTU

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