

Guidance for student leads: BDC support for PGR Clubs and Networks

This guidance provides more detail on support described in [BDC Framework of Support for PGR clubs and networks](#) and is aimed at PGR student leads of PGR clubs and networks who have been approved for BDC support.

1. How do I request support for my club or network?

To qualify for BDC support and funding, your club or network will need to be approved and added to our list of 'official' BDC-supported clubs/networks. See 2.1 of the framework for eligibility.

Complete the [annual request for support for PGR network](#). This must be done annually.

2. What's expected of the network/club leads?

In order to receive financial and logistical support you will need to complete a few tasks. These are not intended to be time-consuming or too formal but will assist with ensuring your network or club is adequately supported.

Event organisation

See section below for details.

Network/Club leadership

- You are responsible for organising your club/network events (see event organisation support below) and promoting the BDC Clubs and Networks Code of Conduct. Other codes of conduct cannot be used without approval
- Ideally, you will have at least 2 leads for your club or network.
- If possible identify who might take over if you need to leave and let us know in advance if you will step down as we can help you promote the role to the community.
- For network leads: Attend 3x 45 minute meetings with BDC and APVC each year, to share knowledge and best practice, and also raise issues.

Reporting

- Write a short report – 1-2 side of A4 – of activity at the end of the year – [Annual report – PGR club or network](#)
- Take attendance at events to include in your report
- Take photos during at least one event and ensure permissions granted by subjects, for promotion – these might be shown on website or shared. (Use our permissions form). We are aware this will not be appropriate for all clubs or networks – please do chat to us about this if you are unsure.

What is not expected?

- The primary aim of a Network is as a peer support group that aims to foster connection among postgraduate research students. There are no advocacy expectations on network leads. If students do want to take on advocacy work, this is outside of their role in terms of BDC expectations. However, there will be some provision to ensure that any issues that are raised through the course of network or club activity are escalated to relevant decision makers (see section 4 below).
- Network members should not be asked to provide time, insight or expertise to university projects unless they are reimbursed for their time. This work will be separate to their role in the network or club. To help us understand how Network members might collaborate, they should be provided with a short description of the proposed activity, what involvement or input is being requested from the Network, any specific action items, and the anticipated timeline.

3. What support will I receive?

Bristol Doctoral College can provide support and advice with basic tasks including room bookings. Some guidance is outlined below but please get in touch if you have any questions: bdc-engagement@bristol.ac.uk

- Strategic support from a named staff member from the Bristol Doctoral College – including troubleshooting issues, raising problems, support with planning events, budget planning and shaping programme of activity, as needed, navigating asks on their time and advocating for themselves,
- Advocacy support: While advocacy is not part of the role of network leads, the BDC will provide escalation routes if there are any issues raised by network attendees that feel like they need broader institutional attention. These will include a touchpoint with a manager within the Doctoral College to flag any issues, and then 3x meetings with the Doctoral College and Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (PGR) where key issues can be raised and are also a chance to share experiences with other leads and consider intersectional approaches to networking
- Training and support with navigating running a network: running events, facilitation, leadership, establishing boundaries in the role, etc.
- Guidance and training on common processes and tasks, including booking rooms and catering (see supporting guidance and documentation in Annexe 1)
- Logistical support from a named staff member from the Bristol Doctoral College – although networks and clubs will be expected to book rooms and catering themselves, BDC can assist if there are any issues.
- Communications and marketing support from the BDC Comms and Engagement team, including: help with sharing network and club events with all PGRs via the BDC Bulletin, social media and other channels, including guidance and best practice.
- Code of conduct and support with managing inappropriate behaviour
- Signposting for wellbeing or pastoral issues

Financial support

The Bristol Doctoral College provides financial support to networks and clubs for catering and other materials, up to a limited amount. It may also be possible to secure funding for your own projects via other funding sources.

We provide a small budget per year for catering, materials and other smaller requests. Budget allocation as follows:

- £500 per academic year for a network (we provide enhanced financial support for networks as they are of strategic importance in supporting identity groups that may feel marginalised or less well-supported by general provision)
- £300 per academic year for a club

It is the Club or Networks' responsibility to manage, and not exceed the budget, but the BDC staff will check ERP transactions quarterly and feedback budget position. The BDC will provide Leads with a budget code and provide a template for keeping track of their spend?

4. Step by step guide to organising an event

Once your event plan has been approved, you can use the following guidance to organise your events.

Please also to the useful guidance on organising a an inclusive and accessible event on the [PGR Clubs and Networks Resources webpage](#).

Booking a venue

You can book the PGR Hub Training Room 2.22 or Breakout room 2.21 for network or club events. Find out more on the [PGR Hub webpage](#).

Note there are limits on hub usage - booking out of hours will be more achievable for regular meetings due to use of hub for training activities during core hours.

If the hub is unavailable you can also try:

- [Room bookings](#) – search for available rooms on campus.
- Events team – [Contact us | Venues and Events | University of Bristol](#) – they can help with organising events / booking venues that need to be paid for on campus. However, they will charge for this, so you will need a larger budget.
- You might want to consider hosting an online event for those who aren't based on campus.

Promoting your event

Our Comms and Engagement team can help with sharing your events with all PGRs via the BDC Bulletin, social media and other channels, including guidance on how to write an effective newsletter items. Below are details of key channels that can be used and what we'll need from you.

Website

A description of your network/club and contact details for how to join to add to the [PGR Networks and Clubs webpage](#).

Events calendar & booking system

- Target connect can be used for Clubs to manage your event and is supported by BDC (contact us to find out more). However please note that attendance at an event will be added to the student record in Target Connect, so if your event is for an audience who identify with a protected characteristic you may want to use another booking platform
- For groups who wish to manage their own events – you can use Eventbrite but let us know once you've done this so we can add to our events calendar.
- Whichever method you use, please just ensure you keep a record of attendees from any events for reporting.
- We can also upload your event to our Events calendar, which is searchable via the BDC website.
- Details needed for Target Connect are: **Title, Date, Time, Long Description (100 words)**, which should include a call to action.
- Send event details to bdc-engagement@bristol.ac.uk **at least 2 weeks in advance**. Ideally, plan term events before term starts (e.g., Autumn events by early September) to allow time for promotion

BDC Bulletin

- This goes to all PGRs and is the best method for promoting your event.
- Required: **Title, Date, Time, Short Description (max 50 words) and booking link**.
- Bulletins are sent fortnightly on Tuesdays. Content deadline is the Wednesday before the send date (upcoming dates can be found on the [BDC Bulletin webpage](#))
- Content should be sent to bdc-engagement@bristol.ac.uk. Inclusion is subject to space; if not possible, we'll promote via other channels.

Posters

- Clubs should design their own promotional material e.g. posters, graphics for social media (we recommend Canva as it's free and simple to use)
- Committees are responsible for putting posters up. But if you can't print, please email the uob-pgr-hub@bristol.ac.uk for assistance.

Photography

- In order to feature your club on social media we will need at least one photo from the session per term. Please ensure that everyone in the photo consents to its use in promotional materials (internal and external channels). If you have any questions about this please contact bdc-engagement@bristol.ac.uk

Additional communication channels

Clubs and networks also allowed to set up a Teams Chat or WhatsApp group to keep in touch with your members. Please note that this would be voluntary for students to join. Below is guidance on using mailing lists and privacy

Guidance on using mailing lists and privacy

- Do not email students for things other than related to club
- Store data behind single sign on
- Delete data if not being used

Select and order catering

You can use approved suppliers to book food and drinks. Find out more about [approved suppliers on Sharepoint](#) and contact us for help raising an order for catering.

However, please note the budget provided by the BDC will most likely not cover a large volume of full catering orders through approved caterers. It is therefore sensible to try and purchase items such as crisps and snacks and reclaim where possible. (See section below on how to claim back).

Buy materials or other items

There are a range of different ways to purchase what you need for your club or society:

- **For university-approved suppliers:** BDC can assist with raising PO if you are ordering something from an approved supplier (contact bdc-engagement@bristol.ac.uk if you need help raising a PO)
- **For smaller items – including snacks and materials:** you can buy these yourself and expense back, using the budget code provided by the BDC [via MyERP](#).
- For more significant or start-up costs, we can use our BDC business card for some purchases – please contact the BDC engagement team via email for help with this.

5. Code of conduct and managing inappropriate behaviour

Our code of conduct for all BDC supported clubs and groups can be found [here](#).

What to do if you encounter inappropriate behaviour at an event

It is not up to you to deal with behaviour that falls outside of the code of conduct directly. Please report any inappropriate behaviour to the Bristol Doctoral College and we can assist with dealing with the situation.

Signposting for wellbeing or pastoral issues

Signposting: Disclosure of a wellbeing, pastoral or safeguarding issue

You should not feel that you need to deal with this directly. Please encourage the student to seek relevant support from the Doctoral College, Student Services, Wellbeing or their supervisor or PGR Director.

6. Additional support for network leads

We appreciate that leading a network based on a personal or protected characteristic carries both an emotional load, and can lead to complex situations or issues being raised. As a result the Doctoral College will offer some additional support to network leads.

Networking and community building opportunities

The doctoral college will arrange 3 events per year that bring together network and club leads to share experiences and consider intersectional approaches to networking. We will contact all leads at the beginning of the academic year to inform you of dates, or you can contact the Doctoral College for further information. There will also be an opportunity to raise any issues or questions with senior leadership for PGR. (although you can also do this at any time via email).

Support with navigating running a network

- Additional useful information can be found in the SU documentation:

[Bristol SU | Leading Your Group](#)

- Also, please read our *Top Tips for Running an Inclusive Event* document which can be found on the [PGR Clubs and Networks Resources webpage](#).