

## Application for a Social Policy Association Opportunity Grant

### Organising Committee:

with input from civil society agencies working in policy areas.

- Aims:**
- a) To engage with BAME and Gypsy, Traveller and Roma (GTR) doctoral and post-doctoral students from 'non-traditional' academic backgrounds who are actively engaged in political and policy focused research (and/or activism on behalf of their communities) on their perceptions of relevant academic training received (or required) which impacts their effectiveness as scholars and trainee policy practitioners.
  - b) To identify both best practice (and any lacuna in curricula or training) which engages with the particularity of the BAME/GRT student experience in policy related fields.
  - c) To explore innovative training processes, opportunities and skills sets as well as the presence or absence of networks of influence or community role models which may have benefited or inhibited the career development of BAME and GRT students/Early Career Researchers (ECRs) and policy practitioners
  - d) To interrogate the concept of whether reducing the BAME attainment gap in education and other targeted initiatives such as 'decolonising' the social policy/political science curricula, the presence of BAME/GRT role models, mentors and lecturers, or utilising case-studies in teaching which are particularly pertinent to BAME/GRT students (e.g the racialised impacts of education or social welfare policies) may encourage enrolment on social policy focused programmes and/or engagement in policy careers.
  - e) To provide the opportunity for pertinent policy and HE strategic sector leads/NGO representatives to engage in meaningful discussion with BAME/GRT students and staff on the themes emerging from the above debates.

**Rationale/Background:** This proposal engages with both the pressing need to reduce the BAME student attainment gap; most prominent in relation to exceptionally low levels of GTR students entering into HE; concerns and challenges over the future of Social Policy teaching; and the increasing unequitable impact of social policy enactments and implementation on BAME and GRT communities in recent years. We consider that the time is ripe to explore the ways in which concerns over unequitable outcomes and life opportunities articulated by many BAME and GRT students (particularly from non-traditional student backgrounds), civil society organisations supporting BAME/GRT communities, and strategic education bodies, can coalesce to support opportunities for BAME/GRT students to access social policy programmes and undertake career progression into policy roles which may impact their communities. This workshop has close synergies with Bucks New University's focus on co-produced action research on supporting BAME and GRT students to support academic achievement and career development. Team members are currently working closely with the APPG Gypsy Traveller Roma affairs and a consortia of civil society organisations on developing activities which blend political/policy activities and training with opportunities and support for HE progression for GRT and wider BAME students. Accordingly, this workshop (which if funded will be advertised widely to ensure equality of opportunity for participation albeit with priority for SPA BAME/GRT members) will enable a larger number of students/ECRs to enter into the conversation around how availability and selection of programmes of study, attainment in HE, policy careers and activism are impacted by curricula, the presence or absence of role models and career paths within HE and professional policy fields.

**Planned Activities:** A co-designed one day seminar (organising team and civil society networks) for a maximum of 30 delegates – split between BAME/GRT students (SPA members prioritised) and civil society/policy organisations/HE to ensure a balance of views, opportunities for discussion and networking opportunities. Participation from ECRs/students and participants from across the UK will be sought through wide advertising of the event via SPA and policy/practice networks and BNU's website. BAME/GRT academics such as Kalwant Bhopal and David Smith have indicated their interest in supporting such an event. NGOs/civil society who are represented in working with APPGs and advocacy organisations supporting BAME/GRT communities who are active in policy/political engagement arenas, e.g ACERT; ROTA; Runnymede Trust; Traveller Movement etc. as well HE policy/strategy leads e.g AdvanceHE; OfS will also be invited to participate. Favourable responses have been received to preliminary outreach to partners.

The seminar will consist of three panels of short presentations linked to the aims/objectives of the day (particularly the linkage between curricula/attainment/role models and policy careers; and how lived experience as a BAME/GRT individual engages and articulates with aspirations for policy/activism careers) Speakers for the panels will be drawn from the main groups outlined above (BAME/GRT academics; NUS/Academic Strategy organisations; Civil Society and ensuring input from BAME/GRT doctoral students/ECRs) followed by Q&A. Tables of delegates (each table consisting of a 'mixture' of categories of invitee) will after every panel/Q&A session be invited to frame key points for discussion/feedback which will be presented and democratically voted upon to decide the final subject for debate in the last hour-long session of the day. Core themes will thus organically emerge from the 'starting point' of the panel discussions. We will invite participants to continue the discussions and networking opportunities through membership of a discussion group/email list. Further we will explore with delegates their views on more in-depth research into areas of debate which they would like to see going forward. Interactive tweeting/submission of questions will be encouraged to support wider 'live' participation in the event from BAME/GRT students/ECRs and staff unable to attend.

**Anticipated Outcomes and Outputs:** **a)** Raising Awareness of the core areas and synergies between GRT/BAME student attainment and the pipeline from social policy (and related) programmes of study to career progression and confidence building in engaging in policy practice and activism impacting minority communities. **b)** Policy and practice related networking opportunities across sectors and geographical locations **c)** Encouraging wider public debate on the themes outlined above (aims and objectives) as well as ongoing discussion amongst delegates and others via follow-up online mediums; **d)** Opportunities for co-production of research themes into the above areas (involving SPA and non-SPA members) **e)** Production of a short report on the event detailing recommendations from practitioners/academia – including relevant and accessible content within Social Policy (and related) modules and **f)** Advertising the benefits of SPA membership and raising the profile of the SPA to a range of agencies who may not be familiar with the organisation

**Dissemination:** Report and other activities disseminated via the SPA website; BNU and associated agencies/HEIs and organisations who have participated. Publicity via ongoing web-discussions; production of blogs, BAME/GRT media, input of findings into APPG special events, etc. Abstract submitted for SPA 2020 of findings.

**Budget: In addition to a request for £1800 from the SPA** we are seeking to identify opportunities for additional funding via invited NGOs, or Advance HE etc which may reduce the need to draw down the entire SPA budget allocation if awarded. The budget includes room hire; travel bursaries (priority for SPA student/ECR members and unfunded civil society agencies) and catering. We will further explore the possibility of 'low cost'/free use of central London premises or if this is not possible accommodation and conference support can be provided at £350 per day including IT support in High Wycombe by Bucks New University. Any outstanding sums will be made available to support (evidenced) claims for necessary **alternative care provision** (for dependents) or to enable delegates with disabilities to attend who would not otherwise be able to do so and require support (e.g. signing; mobility assistant).

Accessible Room Hire (including IT support/flip charts etc)	Indicative cost of £350 for a full day (out of London); £550 per day in London	Indicative average cost: £450
Travel support costs for Student/ECR and unfunded civil society/HE delegates	up to an average of £40 per head. As we are anticipating that delegates will travel from various locations in the UK to ensure wide participation, we are averaging this cost and assuming that it will be required for approximately 22 attendees	Indicative Cost £880
Catering for 35 delegates (including organising team);	Cold lunch with drinks (dietary options); water/cold drinks available throughout day; tea and coffee on arrival and mid-morning and mid-afternoon + fruit bowls on table	Indicative cost (averaging University catering and 'in-house' catering charges at venues for above sample menu £600
<b>Full costing – underwriting to a maximum of £200 from internal university funding sources</b>		Indicative Budget TOTAL: £1930

