**BSA Postgraduate Forum Activity Report 2023/4**

**PG Forum** **Convenors**:

James Green (UCL)

Karen Tatham (University of Leeds)

**Supported by:**

Jackie Murphy (BSA Membership Development)

Alison Danforth (BSA Publishing)

The BSA PG Forum was reconvened with a full team in Sept 2022 following the group lapsing before the pandemic. 2023 provides the first full year of engagement.

**Aims and objectives**:

Our focus has been to reconnect with the BSA PG community, and to use the resources and the networks of the BSA to support the PG experience. We also aim to organise and hold events each year on topics that are relevant to current PGR’s (e.g., publishing workshops).

Membership of the PG Forum JISC list is 472: 122 members have been added after a gap in recruitment since 2019.

**Social Media:** The PGF forum uses Twitter/X to promote our own events and others that are relevant to PG’s. The account is primarily managed by James and is checked on a regular basis. Our Twitter page has over 2,800 followers.

**Activity to date:**

We have focused on three areas:

1. **Building better communication** with PGRs including refreshing the website, building email and X/Twitter; supporting and publicising the BSA PGR Regional Events; promoting wider BSA opportunities including Mentoring Month, Study Groups and PG events at the BSA Annual Conference. The decision was made to move the traditional PGR Pre-conference day into the main conference because of the cost of living pressures PGRs were experiencing. A joint PGR-ECR evening walk and drink were held during the conference to support belonging and community.
2. **Demystifying Publication**. As PGRs we get many mixed messages whilst studying about publication, against an academic jobs landscape that asks for publications. We have worked with Alison Danforth to deliver two publications events in 2023 , with this programme continuing into 2024:

At the BSA Conference April 2023, a PGR workshop ‘From PhD to Published’, with contributions from editors from Routledge, WES and SRO. The session was full, with people having to stand.

In November 2023, ‘Demystifying Publication’ with the editors of Sociology. The November event was online and free to all PGRs, not just BSA members. We had 186 sign up and 90+ attend.

Alison Danforth has supported these events, and is separately including publishing information sessions suitable for PGRs-ECRs in conferences e.g., WES Sept 2023.

In June 2024, From Thesis to Monograph”: A guide to getting your first book!’ with the editors of Sociological Futures.

The event had over 200 national and international PGR’s sign up with over 100 attending the event.

1. **Engaging with the BSA Advisory Forum** to ensure PGs are represented and considered in BSA strategy. Jackie Murphy supported the comparison of PGR fees with other learned societies, resulting in 2024 fees being reduced from £72 to £40.

**Future Endeavours:**

We have plans to further our work with the BSA before we resign from our posts at the next BSA annual conference, these include:

1. Karen and James will write an 800-word article to be published on the BSA website. This will be based on the theme of ‘navigating the hidden curriculum as a PGR’ (e.g., publishing, seeking funding, looking for jobs)
2. Organise another event on publishing with the editors of Sociological Research Online
3. Organise an event for PGR’s thinking of moving into industry/outside of academia. Collaborating with industry experts and the Applied Sociology Forum.
4. Supporting Masters students to PhDs-from feedback from academics the process is opaque and requires high levels of capital to navigate – a possible Autumn 2024 event -currently Masters students in the BSA are underrepresented. But this may require additional resource or different approaches beyond James and Karen.
5. Transferring from PhD to academia – Spring 2025 -a possible conference activity?- precarity, poor job prospects and intense competition-how can the BSA networks and expertise begin to level the field for new ECRs. Our focus as ever is making sure opportunities, hidden processes and supports are made more visible to all PGRs.

**Acknowledgements**

James and Karen want to formally record the support, advice and encouragement provided by Jackie Murphy and Alison Danforth in restarting the PG Forum and supporting with events 2023-2024. We have been able to put on quality events that are attracting a wide range of PGRs, many of whom are not part of the BSA. Alison and Jackie exemplify what is best about the BSA and its role in supporting Sociology in the UK. We also thank the Advisory Board for their support for the PGR community.