

*Fifth*

# BME

## EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER CONFERENCE

**»» Moving on up**

Conference programme  
**9 July 2021**

*Be positive, practical and pragmatic  
Feel empowered to stay in academia*

# Welcome



A very warm welcome to the fifth Black and Minority Ethnic Early Career Researcher Conference. I am delighted that The Open University (OU) is co-hosting this year's prestigious event with the University of West London (UWL). I would like to thank the conference's founder, Dr Bernadine Idowu-Onibokun from UWL, Professor Marcia Wilson, Dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion here at the OU and today's esteemed panel of speakers for convening and coming together for this very relevant discussion.

This year's conference sold out in three weeks and as I write this, we have a waiting list of over 160 guests, reminding us of the urgent need for a space like this. There is one key objective for this conference and that is to ensure that by the end of today, you feel empowered and inspired to stay in academia. Our society needs the expertise, talents, skills and knowledge of Black and Minority Ethnic Early Career Researchers. It is vital for this and future generations that we significantly amplify racially minoritised voices and that universities work hard to remove the obstacles and inequities that stand in the way for so many.

At The Open University, we recognise that we have work to do in order to secure the urgent cultural shift we need. I also recognise my role as a white, male leader of the largest university in the UK and how imperative it is that I work with the senior team to engage in the uncomfortable, but absolutely critical, conversations needed for change; that we encourage staff to openly discuss race and racism; that we proactively call-out micro-aggressions, disparities, inequities and openly discuss all forms of discrimination faced, not only within the OU, but throughout the Higher Education Sector. This event is one of the many steps the OU is taking in its commitment to become an anti-racist university.

We hope that you find today inspiring, engaging and uplifting, but most of all, we hope you feel heard within a sector that you should not have to fight to be part of or valued by.

Best wishes

**Professor Tim Blackman**  
Vice-Chancellor, The Open University

# Programme

## 5th BME Early Career Researcher Conference

hosted by The Open University and the University of West London

### Conference programme

9 July 2021

Host: Professor Marcia Wilson, Open University

- 09:30 – 09:45 **Welcome**  
Dr. Bernadine Idowu-Onibokun (University West London)
- 09:45 – 10:00 **Opening Address**  
Professor Tim Blackman  
(Vice-Chancellor, Open University)
- 10:00 – 10:45 **Keynote Speaker Professor Gus John** (Coventry University)
- 10:45 – 11:00 Q&A
- 11:00 – 11:15 Tea Break
- 11:15 – 12:30 **Panel: Overcoming Challenges and Barriers**
- » Facilitator: Lorraine Jones (University of East London)
  - » Dr. Winston Morgan (University of East London)
  - » Dr. Amarachukwu Anyogu (University of Westminster)
  - » Dr. Deanne Bell (Nottingham Trent University)
  - » Dr Anthony Gunter (Open University)
  - » Professor Layton Reid (University West London)
- 12:30 – 13:15 Lunch
- 13:15 – 14:00 **Keynote Speaker Professor Funmi Olonisakin**  
(Vice Principal/President International King's College London)
- 14:00 – 14:15 Q&A
- 14:15 – 14:30 Tea Break
- 14:30 – 15:00 **Workshop 1: Well being**  
Dr Jenny Douglas (Open University)
- 15:00 – 15:30 **Workshop 2: Mentoring/Sponsorship**  
Annette Hay (Coventry University)
- 15:30 – 16:00 **Workshop 3: Developing applications and resilience**  
Dr. Ayodele Afonja (University West London)
- 16:00 – 16:30 **Workshop 4: Leading in spaces that aren't designed with you in mind**  
Jannett Morgan (JM Learning & Skills)
- 16:30 – 16:45 Closing remarks Professor Marcia Wilson
- 16:45 – 18:00 Virtual wines and nibbles reception

Follow up after the conference: Fistral training – Zoom [www.fistraltraining.com](http://www.fistraltraining.com)  
please see below for registration

# Speakers, facilitators & mentors



## Dr Ayodele Afonja

Dr Ayo Afonja is an Aerospace Engineer who conducted her PhD research on zeolite modified metal oxide gas sensors for environmental monitoring at UCL.

She also designed and built a multi-channel gas sensing test rig to evaluate sensitivity of zeolite modified sensor devices that she developed to trace gases such as nitrogen dioxide and ozone. The test rig is still being used. She is passionate about learning and enjoys sharing knowledge, helping academics develop proposals for research funding and providing guidance for capacity development.

✉ [ayodele.afonja@uwl.ac.uk](mailto:ayodele.afonja@uwl.ac.uk)



## Dr Amarachukwu Anyogu

Amara is a Lecturer at the University of Westminster, where she leads the Foundation year in Life Sciences programme. Amara's teaching expertise centres on creating learning environments that empower learners from diverse backgrounds to achieve their goals of succeeding in Higher education. An active researcher, her interests focus on the interactions of microorganisms in food environments, as agents of disease and as food producers. Amara is the Co-Founder of [aspiringprofessionalshub.com](http://aspiringprofessionalshub.com), an employability resource for early-career professionals providing knowledge, and skills training. To bridge some resources gaps encountered by early-career researchers in Africa, Amara co-founded the Nigerian Applied Microbiologists network. The network serves as a platform for building impactful research collaborations, mentoring early-career scientists, and communicating scientific innovation with the general public.

✉ [a.anyogu@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:a.anyogu@westminster.ac.uk)

🐦 [@amaratweets](https://twitter.com/amaratweets)



## Dr. Deanne Bell

Deanne Bell is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Nottingham Trent University. She holds a PhD in Depth Psychology with a specialism in community psychology, liberation psychology and ecopsychology from Pacifica Graduate Institute.

Deanne's work focuses on social transformation given the reality of social suffering, structural violence and collective trauma the majority world experience. She uses a decolonial framework both within the university where she is involved with decolonising the university and more broadly where she continues to study how we bystand social suffering. She has recently launched two research projects titled *The Anatomy of Indifference and Care* and *Transforming Academic Inequalities at NTU*.

✉ [deanne.bell@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:deanne.bell@ntu.ac.uk)



## Professor Tim Blackman

Tim has held senior positions at several universities, including a prior appointment as Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Quality at The Open University, and social sciences Deanships at Teesside University and Oxford Brookes University. Before joining the OU in October 2019, Tim served as Vice-Chancellor at Middlesex University.

After graduating from Durham University, he spent time as a community worker in Belfast, before returning to hold positions including Director of the Wolfson Research Institute and the Dean of the University's campus in Stockton-on-Tees.

Tim co-founded charitable enterprises such as Community Technical Aid and the Oxford Dementia Centre.

As Vice-Chancellor, Tim is the chief academic and administrative officer of the University, responsible for providing strategic leadership through his senior executive team, championing the interests of the institution at the highest levels with government, policy makers and funders, and ensuring the long term financial and operational sustainability of the OU.

✉ [vice-chancellor@open.ac.uk](mailto:vice-chancellor@open.ac.uk)

🐦 [@TimJBlackman](https://twitter.com/TimJBlackman)



## Dr. Jenny Douglas

Dr Jenny Douglas is Senior Lecturer in Health Promotion in the Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies at The Open University. She has a PhD in Women's Studies and completed her doctoral thesis on cigarette smoking and identity among African-Caribbean young women in contemporary British society.

Dr Douglas is an honorary member of the Faculty of Public Health and is a director of the UK Public Health Register. She established and chairs the Black Women's Health and Wellbeing Research Network at The Open University. Dr Douglas is a member of the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (RCOG) Race Equality Taskforce. She is a contributing author to 'Inside the Ivory Tower', a collection of autoethnographies outlining Black women's experiences in British Higher Education. Her research is vast, spanning 30 years on issues of race, health, gender and ethnicity. The key theme unifying her research and activism is intersectionality – exploring how 'race', class and gender affect particular aspects of African - Caribbean women's health. Dr Douglas is a Plumer Visiting Research Fellow at St Anne's College, University of Oxford.

✉ [jenny.douglas@open.ac.uk](mailto:jenny.douglas@open.ac.uk)

🐦 [@jenny\\_douglas1](https://twitter.com/@jenny_douglas1)



## Dr. Anthony Gunter

Dr. Anthony Gunter is a Senior Lecturer & Programme Lead for Childhood and Youth Studies at The Open University in the School of Education, Childhood, Youth & Sport (ECYS). Previously, he worked as Principal Lecturer in Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of East London.

Before embarking on a career in academia he worked for over 14 years in South and East London, firstly as a detached community and youth worker before taking on Project and Area Manager roles. His research interests and expertise are in the areas of: Black young people; youth cultures and transitions; serious youth violence and gangs; race/ethnicity, crime and justice; and policing multi-ethnic urban neighbourhoods. During the past two decades he's carried out a number of ethnographic research studies examining and exploring contemporary urban youth subculture(s) and alternative youth transitions. More recently, his work has focused on serious youth violence with regard to: (i) current policy, policing and preventative practice aimed at tackling 'street gangs' and; (ii) youth led and community-based/ driven solutions and interventions.

✉ [anthony.gunter@open.ac.uk](mailto:anthony.gunter@open.ac.uk)



## Annette Hay

Annette works in Research Services at Coventry University and throughout her working career, Annette has maintained her lifelong commitment for social justice, with a particular interest in Race Equality. Annette has over 30 years of 'proactive' engagement and leadership, in championing equality in local, national and international arenas.

Since joining Coventry University, Annette has worked with staff and students towards embedding more inclusive work practices and values. She is recognised for her strategic influence and input into the university's policy, practice and external engagement. In addition, her passionate leadership and networking capabilities, have led to her representing Coventry University on a number of Boards and Committees, including US based NADOHE (National Association of Diversity Officers in HE), ARMA (Association of Research Managers and Administrators) EDI Advisory Group, Coventry City's Belgrade Theatre, Coventry University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Council, Race Equality Council (Chair), Black and Minority Ethnic Staff Network (Lead).

✉ [aa3784@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:aa3784@coventry.ac.uk)

🐦 [@annettehaycu1](https://twitter.com/@annettehaycu1)





## Dr. Bernadine Idowu-Onibokun

I am a Senior Lecturer and Course Leader with the new school of Biomedical Sciences, University of West London. I am also a Visiting Lecturer on the Intercalated BSc Regenerative Medical Course, within the Centre for Oral Clinical & Translational Sciences, King's College London. I am an award-winning scientist, having been a recipient of the Roger Cotton Prize.

I am a Diversity & Inclusion Champion supporting BME students & staff at various Universities around the UK, providing bespoke workshops or events. I sit on the panel for various events at the Houses of Parliament. I am the Founder & Director of YACnCAY charity, which celebrates a decade Sept 2020, also the founder of the BME Early Career Researcher Conference, which is now in its 5th year. I freelance for the Guardian newspaper. In 2020, I became a Principal Fellow of HEA and was elected to be a member of the Royal Society of Biology.

✉ [bernadine.idowu@uwl.ac.uk](mailto:bernadine.idowu@uwl.ac.uk)

🐦 [@toyinyacncay](https://twitter.com/toyinyacncay)



## Professor Gus John

Professor Augustine "Gus" John was born in Grenada and came to the UK in 1964 to study Theology. Since arriving in Britain, he has been active in issues of education and schooling. In 1971, he co-authored *Because They're Black* with Derek Humphry, then a staff reporter on the Sunday Times. Prof John has also worked in a number of universities including as Visiting Faculty Professor of Education at the University of Strathclyde (1997 -2007) and since 2007 as an associate professor of education and honorary fellow of the London Centre for Leadership in Learning at the UCL Institute of Education.

Since 2016 he has been a Visiting Professor at Coventry University. In 1997, he was appointed adviser to former Home Secretary, Jack Straw, on race and social inclusion and advised on the Race Relations Act 2000. He has delivered keynote speeches for the annual conference of the Archives and Records Association, Warwick University and the inaugural annual lecture of the British Educational Leadership Management and Administration Society at the UCL Institute of Education.

✉ [Ac4617@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:Ac4617@coventry.ac.uk)

🐦 [@troovus](https://twitter.com/@troovus)



## Lorraine Jones

I am a Senior Lecturer in Psychosocial Studies and Head of Department of Education & Communities at the University of East London (UEL). I am also the founder of the Black Academy at UEL which is a collective of Black academics and managers who represent and enact Black leadership and aspiration with a passion for racial equity, anti-racism and Black representation. I am a Londoner of mixed Caribbean and Irish heritage and, as a mother, having successfully gained an Access to Higher Education college course, became a mature student of Social Sciences at UEL some 20 years ago. I make these points about my identities as my personal experiences are central to my academic research interests and educator commitment to making things better for Black students, especially in HE. I gained an MA in Racial Equality Studies at Middlesex and enjoy exploring my interests of Black Britishness, 'Race', Black feminisms and my PhD research in the Policing of Black bodies and communities. I am a Fellow of the Higher Academy and was most recently a finalist the Leadership category in the prestigious Precious Awards.

✉ [l.f.jones@uel.ac.uk](mailto:l.f.jones@uel.ac.uk)

🐦 [@cockneyrebel](https://twitter.com/@cockneyrebel)



## Jannett Morgan

Jannett Morgan is a teacher, trainer, consultant and coach with over twenty years' experience working in further and higher education, and more recently in the commercial sector. Jannett is Associate Programme Director for Diversifying Leadership, the Advance HE programme for Global Majority early career academic and professional services employees, which to date has served participants and their career sponsors from over fifty institutions. She has also delivered inclusive leadership development programmes and keynotes for staff and students at several universities and sector agencies.

Since 1998, Jannett has also supported students and employees with 'hidden' disabilities, mainly the cognitive learning differences of dyslexia and dyspraxia. Jannett has tutored at several London universities, is an accredited neurodiversity specialist workplace coach and works strategically with employers and sector bodies including the Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education and the British Dyslexia Association.

✉ [jannett@jmllearningskills.co.uk](mailto:jannett@jmllearningskills.co.uk)

🐦 [@jannettmorgan](https://twitter.com/@jannettmorgan)



## Dr. Winston Morgan

I am a Reader in Toxicology and Clinical Biochemistry in the school of Health Sport and Bioscience and Director of Impact and Innovation at The University of East London. As an active researcher I have published widely in peer reviewed journals and supervised numerous PhD students in many areas of bioscience. My bioscience research interests have included target organ toxicity, the toxicity of amphetamine related compounds, the effectiveness of probiotics and prebiotics in gut health, the wound healing and anticancer properties of phytochemicals extracted from medicinal plant materials, the antipyretic and anti-inflammatory actions acetaminophen and several NSAID's, lipid metabolism and the toxicity of highly active anti-retroviral drugs (HAART). Current students are working on the inflammatory impact of e-cigarettes, antimicrobial properties of medicinal plants and the analysis of insulin for forensic reasons. In addition to my bioscience research I am also involved in research into factors (particularly race) which results in disparities in medical and educational outcomes based on race.

✉ [w.a.morgan@uel.ac.uk](mailto:w.a.morgan@uel.ac.uk)

🐦 [@drwinstonmorgan](https://twitter.com/drwinstonmorgan)



## Professor 'Funmi Olonisakin

Professor 'Funmi Olonisakin is Vice-President and Vice-Principal International and Professor of Security, Leadership & development at King's College London. She founded the African Leadership centre (ALC), which aims to build the next generation of African scholars and analysts generating cutting edge knowledge for peace, security and development in Africa. She was Director of the Conflict, Security and Development Group (CSDG) at King's College London from 2003 to 2013. Prior to this, she worked in the Office of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict. In 2018, she was appointed to the Council of the United Nations University.

✉ [funmi.olonisakin@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:funmi.olonisakin@kcl.ac.uk)

🐦 [@funmiolonisakin](https://twitter.com/@funmiolonisakin)



## Professor Layton Reid

Is an architect, designer and academic, currently visiting Professor of Research and External profile at the University of West London and visiting Professor and Researcher at ESNE, Madrid, he is developing a game changing suite of degree courses in IDEA, Architecture, at UWL previously Associate Dean at Ravensbourne University London where he championed diversity and inclusion. Professor Reid is the founder Director of Desiterture, a research based practice that considers Polycultural environments and sustainable cities. Internationally exhibited and published, projects include, Vertical City, Osteon Cumulus, Linearpolis, Polycity, and Sanatheon. Presented at Hong Kong Vertical Cities and Singapore high density development conferences, World Architecture Festival, Asia Design Platform and 2019 Venice Biennale European Culture Foundation.

His latest publication is a chapter on the 'Inside as Outsider II', in the University of Westminster Press, Dialogues and Dreams, 2020. He is a trustee of IKENGA, a charitable organisation working to transform creative education.

✉ [layton.reid@uwl.ac.uk](mailto:layton.reid@uwl.ac.uk)

🐦 [@f\\_layton](https://twitter.com/@f_layton)



## Professor Marcia Wilson

Professor Marcia Wilson works at The Open University (OU) as the Dean of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Prior to the OU, Marcia worked at the University of East London for 12 years where she established the UK's first Office for Institutional Equity (OIE) and held the position of Dean. Her work includes equality projects with Universities UK and London Higher to tackle racism in higher education institutes. Fewer than 0.5% of the senior managers in universities are Black women. This makes Marcia, who is a multiple award winner for her work in higher education, one of the few Black women leaders in higher education in the UK. She uses her platform to raise awareness about inequalities and generate institutional change.

Marcia has a PhD in Sport Psychology from the University of Iowa. She has held various roles throughout her career including Head of the School of Health, Sport and Bioscience and Head of the Sport Science department at UEL. She spent 10 years studying and working in the USA. She has also worked for eight years in sport psychology at the Football Association with the women's national team (U15s, U17s and seniors).

✉ [marcia.wilson@open.ac.uk](mailto:marcia.wilson@open.ac.uk)

🐦 [@marciaw1404](https://twitter.com/@marciaw1404)

# *Fistral training programme*

We are pleased to invite you to a follow-up conference later in July, led by Fistral training



## **Maximising Your Potential**

9.30am - 11.30am



**REGISTER HERE**

Please note spaces are limited



## **Building Your Resilience**

1.00pm - 3.00pm



**REGISTER HERE**

Please note spaces are limited



## **Maximising Your Potential**

9.30am - 11.30am



**REGISTER HERE**

Please note spaces are limited



## **Collaborating Effectively with Others**

1.00pm - 3.00pm



**REGISTER HERE**

Please note spaces are limited



# Maximising Your Potential

Professional success relies on substantive knowledge and expertise but also on an understanding of more general personal strengths, such as communication and collaboration skills, self-presentation and decision-making, and the ability to capitalise on these strengths to get the best out of yourself in the short and long term. In the context of Higher Education and Research, career pathways demand individual commitment to professional development and self-awareness of development priorities.

In this webinar, participants will learn the DISC behavioural profiling framework, and use this to gain insights into their key personal and professional strengths and motivations, as well as their potential limitations and stress triggers. This awareness will equip participants to make informed choices about the best approaches to their day to day work demands, improve their working practices in order to increase productivity and confidence, and identify their key professional development needs.

During this 2hr webinar participants will:

- » Learn the DISC behavioural profiling framework
- » Use the DISC framework to create a self-assessed DISC profile, highlighting work preferences, strengths and potential limitations
- » Identify strategies to capitalise on personal strengths and address professional development priorities

Prerequisites: None

# Building Your Resilience

Working life inevitably brings with it setbacks and difficulties to overcome. In addition, academic life brings with it a set of particular challenges: a highly competitive professional field; the inevitable rejections from journal editors, funding bodies and conference organisers; the sometimes conflicting demands of teaching and research; and the need to drive your own career advancement. Resilience is the quality that will help an individual survive and thrive in the face of professional demands, or even global pandemics.

In this webinar, participants will learn how they can prepare for and better navigate the ups and downs of their career. They will learn how to put in place the psychological foundations of resilience. They will understand how to develop a mindset for success that will increase their resilience in the face of setbacks. They will also learn some simple, daily techniques to boost and maintain their resilience levels over time.

During this 2hr webinar participants will:

- » Understand the characteristics of demanding work environments
- » Learn the psychological building blocks of resilience
- » Learn techniques to foster resilience that will build over time

Prerequisites: None

# Collaborating Effectively with Others

Effective collaboration is one of the single most important skills of the successful professional. This is of particular importance in the context of Higher Education, in which individuals may be involved simultaneously in a range of different teaching and research groups, and required to collaborate with many different people, sometimes in different disciplines, locations and institutions.

Despite understanding that different individuals have different preferences and needs, it is hard to take account of that when interacting with them, especially when under pressure. This course provides participants with the understanding to take account of individual differences in such a way that they are better able to conduct constructive interactions.

This online course draws on the widely used teamworking tool, the DISC behavioural framework. Participants will learn the framework in order to gain insight into the different working preferences, decision-making approaches, motivations and communication styles of the different DISC styles. They will identify their own style and its implication for their collaboration preferences and blind spots. By learning how to recognise the style of others, they will be equipped with the knowledge to be able to tailor their behaviour and communication in order to collaborate more effectively.

By the end of this 2hr webinar participants will have:

- » Learned the DISC Behavioural Framework, the range of working preferences associated with each of the behavioural styles, and how to recognise their own style and the style of others
- » Recognised how the different working preferences of the DISC styles will affect how individuals like to work with others and consider how to facilitate these differences when collaborating
- » Understood how to communicate more effectively with colleagues by tailoring communication according to their DISC style, thereby reducing misunderstandings and avoiding potential unnecessary conflict

Prerequisites: None

*Thank you  
to our  
supporter*



Centre for Research Staff Development,  
King's College London

Please let us know what you thought of  
the conference by filling in our online  
feedback form.



**FEEDBACK FORM**

## **Conference committee**

Dr. Bernadine Idowu-Onibokun (Chair)

Professor Marcia Wilson (Host)

Heidi McCafferty

Steve Hasler

Sheryne Shillingford-Reed

Dr Craig Walker