Partnerships in Learning & Teaching (PLanT) Projects Application Form 2024-2025

Reference Number (CQSD use only): 012/2024-2025

Lead student contact details

Name: (student details removed) – ***Ambassador for: Girls Under Construction and Pathways to Property Organisations***
School: School of the Built Environment
Degree programme: BSc Quantity Surveying
Year group: Part 2
Email: (student details removed)

Lead staff member contact details

Name: Tabarak Ballal
Job title: Professor of Construction Engineering and Management
School: School of Built Environment (SBE)
Email: t.ballal@reading.ac.uk

How did you hear about the PLanT scheme? (tick all that apply)

I have applied previously		Email from CQSD	x
Staff portal	x	Word of mouth (staff)	x
Student Rep training session		Word of mouth (student)	
PLanT webpage	x	Other (please specify):	

Project title

Building & Beyond: A female BAME Construction and Surveying Guide

Project team

Project team name: **InHERit to Build**
Other members of the team (including students and staff) Include name, year group and degree programme of student partners
(student details removed), Part 1, BSc Quantity Surveying (student details removed) Part 2, BSc Quantity Surveying (student details removed), Part 2, BSc Quantity Surveying (student details removed), Part 2, BEng Architectural Engineering (student details removed), Part 2, BSc Quantity Surveying Additionally, we are in contact with 10 female BAME alumnae (construction and surveying professionals working in the built environment industry)

Project description (maximum 700 words in total)

Please refer to the PLanT scheme criteria and PLanT Projects Funding Scheme: Guidance for Applicants when completing your application.

Describe the proposed project including the following:

Project outline and rationale

What do you plan to do and why?

We plan to organise a series of workshops connecting female BAME students with successful and well-established UoR BAME alumnae professionals working in the construction industry. The overall aims are to enhance students' learning experiences by gaining insights into alumnae's educational journeys at UoR; and to inspire them to successfully transition into the industry.

Buildings are essential to our daily lives, as we spend **80-90%** of our time indoors (McMullan, 2018). However, the significance of these spaces goes beyond learning and understanding how they are designed, procured, constructed, managed and costed; it is crucial that gaining academic knowledge is augmented by shaping personal development, building confidence and understanding how this knowledge is applied in practice. The project's aim is to facilitate mentorship, connectivity, and opportunities to develop skills that enhance BAME students to thrive whilst undertaking their degree and successfully transition into industry upon graduation.

Why female BAME students? According to the ONS (2023), **20%** of the **3.1** million construction workforce are women. The BAME representation in the industry is just **6%** (CIOB, 2024). Construction is a white male-dominated industry. This poses challenges for attracting and retaining female BAME students and graduates due to a lack of visible relatable role models and mentors (Strachan et al., 2020) .

Within our construction and surveying programmes, female representation aligns with industry trends. Across four undergraduate programmes and three cohorts, **22%** of students are female. Interestingly, **75.9%** of all construction and surveying female students at Reading are from BAME backgrounds. Given the severe underrepresentation of BAME professionals in the industry, it is imperative to draw on the experiences of BAME alumnae to encourage and equip our female BAME students with skills-focused learning experiences preparing them for a smooth transition into graduate roles.

Furthermore, construction is a dynamic industry where high demand for buildings creates challenges and opportunities ranging from health and safety, environmental sustainability, and social responsibility. Tragic events like Grenfell Tower and Lakanal House are rarely discussed within the context of undergraduate curricula. There is therefore an urgent need to educate the next generation about such challenges.

Alignment with SBE's T&L Priorities:

A key T&L priority in SBE's 2023-2024 STEAP is 'Engagement' which seeks *to investigate factors impacting student engagement and performance within modules and across programmes*. The project focuses on female BAME students and addresses a gap in the provision of learning support mechanisms to enhance their learning experiences.

Alignment with UoR's Strategic Priorities (Excellence, Community, Sustainability):

The project aligns with UoR's priorities by:

- inspiring female BAME students to take ownership of their learning and develop their career readiness by linking academic learning to practice enriching their perspectives and skills (**Excellence**).

- providing structured opportunities for BAME students to connect, network, and develop professional relations with BAME alumnae with the aim of accessing real-world reflections and insights into the built environment (**Community)**.

- raising students' awareness of key challenges faced by the construction industry including environmental sustainability and social responsibility **(Sustainability)**

Partnership (Criterion 2)

How will students work in partnership with staff at different stages of the project?

The project consists of four phases:

- **Phase 0** – Lead student has collaborated significantly in the writing of this proposal with the academic
- **Phase 1 –** Students will organize events with staff guidance, using a project tracker to ensure progress. Staff will offer insights during the planning stage
- **Phase 2 –** Staff, alumnae, & students will participate in panel discussions and other planned activities.
- **Phase 3 –** Students and staff will co-author a guide to disseminate the project's findings and will be included in the induction of new female BAME students

Impact and evaluation (Criterion 3)

What is the anticipated impact of your project on teaching and learning and/or the student learning experience and how will you measure this?

The main impact on students' learning experience is achieved through accessing informal mentorship with BAME alumnae in order to:

- boost female BAME students' learning experiences through gaining insights into alumnae's reflections of their learning journeys; and
- support female BAME students in defining their career objectives through engagement with professional role models.

The project's outcomes will be captured in a jointly written report (students, alumnae, staff):

'**Building & Beyond: BAME Women in Construction Guide**' featuring students' reflections on enhancing learning experiences, strategies for engaging with latest developments in industry, and alumnae insights into career journeys in construction.

How will you measure this?

- **Mentorship Tracking**: engagement between mentees/mentors is tracked. Six months post project, a survey will be conducted to verify the impact of the mentorship programme.
- **Feedback:** Post-project survey to gauge students' opinions on impact on their learning experience.

The planned activities include:

- Dissemination: Guide for female BAME students

Word count: 699 (excluding original questions and references)

Project start date: 17/02/2025
Project end date: 18/07/2025

Budget details

Brief outline of project activities	Activity start date and end date	Approximate costs associated with the activity. (**Note**: All claims and/or expenses need to be arranged before 30th June 2025)
Lead student Time Contribution	05/11/2024 - 18/07/2025	20 hours @ £11.48 per hr (campus jobs) = £229.60 (research proposal, organising workshops & project guide)
Workshop refreshments • Workshop 1: Alumnae inspirational reflections on their educational journeys (Networking bingo ice breaker) • Workshop 2: Surviving as a female BAME professional in construction (BBC Style Question Time: Panel discussions/Q&A) • Workshop 3: Impact of construction on environmental sustainability (case study analysis) • Workshop 4: Industry response to Grenfell Tower report (alumnae perspectives) • Workshop 5: Presentations by students (to alumnae and industry professionals - firms approached: TandT alinea, Savills, RLB, Hollis, Colliers, and Girls Under Construction	17/02/2025 - 19/05/2025 (Semester 2: Weeks 2 – 12)	£200.00 (light refreshments for workshops + lunch for the final presentation)
Project dissemination (report)	16/06/2025 - 18/07/2025	£50.00 (designing project guide)

Total funding applied for £479.60

Signature of lead student	Signature of lead staff member
(student details removed)	
Date: 10/11/2024	**Date: 10/11/2014**

References:

CIOB (Chartered Institute of Building), 2024, EDI report.

McMullan, R. (2018). Air Control in Buildings. Environmental Science in Building.

ONS (Office for National Statistics), 2023 EMP14: Employees and self-employed by industry. UK

Strachan, R., Dele-Ajayi, O., Stonehouse, J., Logan, S., Poolan, T., Blakelock, L. and Bell, R., 2020. Lets diversify by changing culture and challenging stereotypes: a case study from professional construction higher education programmes. *Higher Education Pedagogies*, *5*(1), pp.327-339.

Applicants must convert the completed application into one pdf file and submit this electronically to Martin Wise (**m.wise@reading.ac.uk**) by 17:00 on the day of the submission deadline.