

# The Brad-ATTAIN Project & STRI Group



The collaboration between the STRI Group and the University of Bradford has already provided valuable opportunities for students, including work-based internships, mentoring, guest lectures, and work-based learning experiences.

The primary objective of the Brad-ATTAIN project was to enhance access and participation for BAME individuals in postgraduate research at the University of Bradford. This initiative was inspired by a comprehensive study conducted by the University and College Union, which revealed a notable lack of diversity in academic roles, particularly in relation to BAME representation.



STRI Group, in collaboration with the University of Bradford, embarked on the Brad-ATTAIN project to tackle the existing disparities and promote inclusivity within the realm of postgraduate research. Through this project, STRI Group offered its expertise and support to facilitate a more diverse and representative academic community.

## ACTION & APPROACH

STRI Group agreed to offer internships to undergraduate students to provide them with first-hand experience and insight into postgraduate research. The Brad-ATTAIN project management team and STRI staff with Ph.D. qualifications provided academic support.

STRI submitted a project proposal that was accepted by the Brad-ATTAIN project team. Internship opportunities were advertised through Handshake (the university's job portal) and distributed to supporting academics.

The Career and Employability Services Team actively promoted the internships, offering guidance and support to students throughout the application process.

## IMPACT

The collaboration between STRI Group and the University of Bradford yielded several outcomes for different stakeholders:

**Increased Interest:** The project attracted applications from BAME students who previously may not have considered a career in academia. This initiative ignited their interest in academic research and opened doors to postgraduate opportunities.

**Enhanced Employability:** While not all students secured research internships, STRI Group provided paid work experience opportunities to enhance their employability skills. This demonstrated a commitment to supporting BAME students in their career development.

**Improved Applications:** The process of applying for research internships improved students' understanding of how to pursue research-based roles. As a result, students showed an increased appetite for academia, leading to improved applications for various opportunities.

## CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNT

Moving forward, the Brad-ATTAIN project team plans to conduct feedback sessions with interns to gauge their perception of academic research and to gather insights for future improvements. Plans are in place to further support current research interns to explore potential research subjects.

To further support potential BAME academics, mentorship programmes with established BAME academics will be established to provide guidance and visualise potential career opportunities. Additionally, when promoting research internships, it is crucial to use inclusive and accessible language to attract a diverse range of candidates, considering language barriers for bilingual students.

Lessons learnt from this collaboration highlight the importance of proactive efforts to address underrepresentation in academia. By fostering partnerships between academic institutions and industry experts like STRI Group, opportunities can be created, and barriers can be overcome to promote diversity and inclusivity in postgraduate research.