

## PhD Studentship (3 years): From farm to fork: building resilience into our food systems

**Department:** College of Business and Social Sciences

**Contract Type:** Fixed Term

**Basis:** Full Time

**Closing Date:** Midnight Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Interviews of shortlisted candidates will be conducted during the week commencing Monday 23 May 2022.

The successful candidate will be notified by Monday 6 June 2022.

**Supervisor:** Professor Monder Ram

**Project Reference:** [to be added by PGR Admissions]

Applications are invited for a three-year postgraduate studentship, supported by the College of Business and Social Sciences and to be undertaken within the [Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship \(CREME\)](#) at Aston University. The studentship is offered in collaboration with the [Food, Farming and Countryside Commission \(FFCC\)](#).

**The position is available to start in October 2022.**

### Financial Support

This studentship includes a fee bursary to cover the UK/Home fees rate, plus a maintenance allowance of £16,062 in 2022/23 (subject to eligibility). Applicants must be eligible for UK/Home fee-paying status.

### Background to the Project

The sustainability and resilience of traditional food supply chains is under threat due to the impacts of BREXIT, the COVID-19 pandemic, and recent global events. There is a need to transition to new ways of working.

There is often very little communication from one end of a value chain to the other (i.e., from farm to fork). Our ambition for this research project is to foster greater connectivity between producers (farmers and growers), retailers/caterers, and those who buy their end products through knowledge sharing and learning, to develop more sustainable food supply chains that can improve business prospects without negatively impacting the socio-ecological contexts in which they operate.

We would also like the research to help reframe productivity in a way that recognises the impact of businesses on the environment, health, community, and culture, not only the financial aspects of our economy.

The learning arising from this project will be used to influence critical policy decisions on reshaping our food systems. Making sense of complex information and building new narratives is an important feature of this work.

We expect the successful candidate to engage in participatory research with relevant stakeholders in the food system so there will be a requirement to travel for visits and conduct online meetings.

### Person Specification

The successful applicant should have been awarded, or expect to achieve, a Masters degree in a relevant subject and/or a First or Upper Second Class Honours degree (or an equivalent qualification from an overseas institution).

### **Essential:**

- A qualification at undergraduate degree level or above preferably in a social science, business, or environmental subject.
- Interest in food supply chains, sustainability, and productivity.
- Clear enthusiasm for the subject and willingness to learn and apply qualitative research skills.
- Knowledge of different processes for developing creative solutions in tackling complex problems (e.g. action learning, participatory action research).
- Excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Demonstrated ability to engage with people of diverse backgrounds.
- Applicants must be eligible for UK/Home fee-paying status.

### **Supervision**

The successful candidate will be under the academic supervision of Professor Monder Ram, the Director of the Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME).

Project supervision will also be provided the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission (FFCC) who are partially funding the studentship.

### **Contact information**

For informal enquiries about this project, please contact Professor Monder Ram:  
[m.ram1@aston.ac.uk](mailto:m.ram1@aston.ac.uk)

### **Submitting an application**

As part of the application, you will need to include:

- A 'Personal Statement' detailing how your knowledge and experience meets the essential criteria and what you will gain from the PhD (maximum 1 side of A4)
- A copy of your current CV (maximum 2 sides of A4)
- A research proposal that clearly addresses the topics given above with a brief review of relevant research literature (maximum 4 sides of A4)
- Two academic references
- Copies of your academic qualifications for your Bachelor degree, and Masters degree; this should include both certificates and transcripts, and must be translated into English if obtained in another language.
- Proof of your English Language proficiency (if required)

Details of how to submit your application, and the necessary supporting documents can be found [here](#).

Please select 'Aston Business School Research Degree Programme (Oct 2022)' from the application form options.

**Please include the supervisor's name, project title and project reference in your Personal Statement.**

If you require further information about the application process, please contact the Postgraduate Admissions team at [pgr\\_admissions@aston.ac.uk](mailto:pgr_admissions@aston.ac.uk)