I’m Shanika, one of your outgoing PGR Collective Convenors. I’ve been in the role two years but know that most of you are unaware of the existence of Collectives, or what we do as Convenors!

To raise awareness – and to encourage you to think about standing for the role of Collective Convenor yourself – please see the piece below.

What are the SU Collectives?

Historically, College's SU had limited understanding of postgraduate students. They created a PGR Collective and a PGT Collective, alongside six other Collectives for under-represented groups on campus (see this link for more details: https://www.su.rhul.ac.uk/voice/getinvolved/collectives/).

What does a Collective Convenor do?

The role of the PGR Collective Convenors is to represent PGR interests and rights at the highest levels of the SU and College. We do this by giving feedback and advocating for students on important issues that affect a significant number of PGRs, at meetings with/via petitions to College senior staff. We also sit on the PGR Forum, a recent initiative to bring about change for PGR students.

There is ideally one PGR Collective Convenor per School, e.g.: I am the PGR Collective Convenor for the School of Performing and Digital Arts. I sit on two School-wide committees: the PDA Student-Staff Committee (representing all PGRs for Music) and the Research Student Oversight Committee (representing all PGR students within the School). I also sit on the College-wide Research Degree Programmes Committee (RDPC) - one of only two PGR students to do so. The RDPC is led by the most senior members of the Doctoral School academic and administrative staff.

Why should YOU consider becoming a Collective Convenor?

As a Collective Convenor, you get insight into College procedures, and get to know senior academics. You also get useful experience for your CV! It’s not a huge time commitment and you would have a real and tangible impact on the PGR student experience – both for yourself and others.

What’s the best thing I’ve done as Collective Convenor?

My proudest moment was advocating for free covid-related thesis submission extensions for students impacted by the pandemic, in an online RDPC meeting in the academic year 2019-20.