**The University of Leeds**

**Race Equality Action Plan**

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# Background

At its meeting on 10 February 2020, the E&I Board (E&IB) approved the Race Equality Framework. Through this it commissioned the E&I Delivery Group to develop a corresponding Race Equality action plan to cover a three-year period. The E&IDG has considered this at its meetings in February and May. Consultation has also been held with the Leeds11 staff equality network which represent BAME staff at the University.

The E&IB approved the proposed approach to the Race Equality action plan set out below at its meeting on 24th June 2020.

# Introduction to the Race Equality action plan

Our University values of inclusiveness, integrity, community, professionalism and academic excellence are at the heart of everything we do. Our Equality & Inclusion Framework demonstrates our commitment to creating a community where every individual is treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their protected characteristics, and is part of a working and learning environment free from barriers.

We are progressing with our efforts to advance equality and inclusion for staff and students from a variety of backgrounds, with different and often multiple identities, to ensure that they are attracted to our University, feel part of our community and have every opportunity to achieve their ambitions. Our mission is to foster a culture of inclusion, respect and equality of opportunity for all.

**Confronting racism and progressing race equality**

We know that racism and racial inequality are significant issues within Higher Education and we acknowledge that the University of Leeds has considerable issues to address and progress to make in this area. Our University cannot reach its full potential unless it can benefit from the talents of the whole population, and until individuals from all ethnic backgrounds can benefit equally from the opportunities it affords.

We also understand that racism is an everyday facet of UK society and that it manifests itself not only in overt discrimination, but also in subtle differences in actions, decisions and behaviours. We understand racism is a societal system of inequality which affects BAME staff and students - both on campus and in their everyday lives – and that in developing solutions to racial inequalities it is important these are aimed at long-term institutional culture change. For this reason, we want to better understand the representation and experiences of our BAME staff and students in order to effectively address these inequalities and to build a strong sense of trust in our BAME community.

We recognise that whilst we are using the term “BAME”, experiences will be different between individuals, many of whom who will have multiple and interconnected identities. We also understand and appreciate that different groups within the BAME community will face different challenges that cannot be addressed through a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach.

We also know that despite the mechanisms and policies already in place to report and address racial harassment and discrimination, there is work to be done to achieve our goal of creating a culture where all BAME staff and students feel safe, valued, and that they belong in every aspect of University life.

The University has now signed up to the Race at Work Charter and has adopted the five principles of the Race Equality Charter operated by AdvanceHE.

# The Race Equality Action Plan

The action plan is split into five main areas, although we recognise there are important interactions between these, and that some actions will impact on all of these:

1. Changing culture and behaviours – actions aimed at creating long-lasting cultural change, understanding and addressing the needs of our BAME community, and embedding racial inclusion into everything we do.
2. Developing staff and the working environment – actions aimed at diversifying our workforce, and ensuring the University is attractive to, and supports the personal and professional development of colleagues from all backgrounds.
3. Supporting students and student education – actions aimed at diversifying our student body, and addressing inequalities faced by students during access, induction, teaching and curriculum, progression and awarding.
4. Developing an inclusive research culture – actions to implement an inclusive research environment
5. Providing an accessible infrastructure – actions to enhance the physical and digital accessibility of our campus

The plan has been developed alongside and in alignment with the Student Success and the Access and Participation plans led from the Taught Student Education Board and its Inclusion and Engagement Strategy Group.

The action plan aims to:

* Build and re-build trust within our BAME staff and student communities to provide reassurance that our University is progressing race equality, and so they are encouraged to engage with our University and its leadership
* Improve the representation, experience, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students at the University of Leeds, and continue to attract and retain talented staff and students from different backgrounds
* Clearly evidence our University’s commitment to progressing race equality and inclusion and achieving long-term institutional culture change
* Detail the actions necessary to progress our University’s aspirations and commitments outlined in the new Race Equality Framework, and our public agreement as a signatory of the Race at Work Charter
* Provide a single mechanism through which we can measure all our institutional efforts to progress race equality, by joining up with other related university strategies, for example, Athena SWAN, E&I framework, Student Access and Participation Plan.

# Priority areas

Subsequent discussion has identified the following priority set of actions under the following headings and corresponding theme areas:

* Building trust amongst the University BAME community (culture theme)
* Increasing the proportion of BAME staff in the University (staff theme)
* Increasing the representation of BAME staff in senior and leadership roles (staff theme)
* Supporting career development for BAME staff (staff theme)
* Increasing disclosure rates from all staff (culture theme)
* Providing effective reporting mechanisms and feedback on actions taken following reports of racial harassment or complaints (culture theme)
* Increasing student access from BAME groups (student theme)
* Removing the awarding gaps for BAME students (student theme)
* Increasing the BAME progression into postgraduate study and postdoctoral research (student/staff/research themes)
* Progressing curriculum change (student theme)

Within each group there will be individual actions that will be ‘SMART’ including measurable outcomes, identified ownership and delivery time scales.

# Deliverable targets

The Delivery Group and the Equality Policy Unit will also bring forward a set of proposed high-level measures against which the E&I Board and our University community can monitor progress over the timescale of the plan. Initial suggestions for these include:

* A target of reaching the regional benchmark for the proportion of BAME staff in the professional, managerial and support staff group (an increase to 17% from the current 10%[[1]](#footnote-1)).
* A target of reaching the sector benchmark for BAME professors (an increase to 10% from the current 6%[[2]](#footnote-2))
* A specific target (to be set) for the increase in the proportion of postdoctoral researchers again set against a sector benchmark
* Specific progression measures for existing BAME staff and an increase in such staff in key decision making roles or groups
* A specific reduction in the ethnicity pay gap
* Specific student success measures (proportion of BAME students overall and in specific cohorts such as PGT and PGR, reduction in awarding gap from 12.7% to 5.5% by 2024/25)
* All programmes to have refreshed their curriculum
* Move towards 100% staff declaration of diversity and other characteristics (currently 78%).

# Next steps and communications

Following endorsement from E&IB, the E&IDG will now progress the definition and delivery of these actions, reporting on progress at the next E&IB. Taking this plan forward also provides an opportunity for the University to communicate positively to our staff and student communities on our commitment to addressing racism and racial inequality and the differential experiences and outcomes. EPU will work with the University Communications team to implement a campaign of communications around this activity and the commitment to the Race at Work Charter.

June 2020

1. This is the percentage of PMS staff that has made a declaration of BAME ethnicity – at present an additional 7% of PMS staff have chosen not to disclose their ethnicity and the ethnicity for a further 8% is not known. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This is the percentage of professors that has made a declaration of BAME ethnicity – at present an additional 7% of professorial staff have chosen not to disclose their ethnicity and the ethnicity for a further 12% is not known. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)