Race Equality Strategy and Action Plan

April 2021

Our Race Equality Strategy and Action Plan (RESAP) was formally launched in March 2019 as the culmination of an immensely valuable partnership between students and staff at the University. It contained 5 institutional aims and 5 overarching objectives articulated as 38 actions.

After launching the strategy, we set up a race equality steering group with membership from academic and professional staff as well as the Students' Union in order to oversee this work. Since then, we have progressed a number of actions, but some areas require more work. As a live document, the strategy and action plan is continually under review and has been updated to reflect what we have learned over the last two years. The actions are specific, measurable and achievable, and include targets and set timeframes. We have identified key departments and services responsible for leading action in particular areas. This work will be business as usual as it becomes embedded within standard University protocols and practices.

We've been holding some difficult but crucial conversations around the different areas of this action plan and we will continue to do so. We will continue to have a range of people and views represented at decision making groups and committees and will seek out constructive engagement from the members of our University.

"I am pleased and encouraged by the way in which the whole University community has engaged with the Race Equality Strategy and Action Plan over the past two years. As readers will see from the updated plan, we have learned a great deal about our institutional culture and our capacity to advance race equality. While we have a distance to travel in key domains, we have a well signposted road and a clear method for reaching those goals."

Professor Susan Fitzmaurice
Chair of the Race Equality Steering group

"It is heartening to see the actions within the strategy being more explicitly articulated with increased individual and departmental accountability and appointed time frames. The University has acknowledged major challenges ahead and amongst other actions is starting to work towards the collection of reliable and representative data, the embedding of an inclusive culture within our institution and a prompt and proportionate response to racist behaviour. I believe that in time, these collective efforts will ensure that racial diversity is fairly represented at all levels of seniority and responsibility within our University. There remains much to be done, but we have taken initial and important steps."

Professor Amaka C Offiah
Chair of the BAME Staff Network

"It is reassuring for the student body to see through the action plan that the University is becoming an actively anti-racist institution. It is vital that the University is holding individuals and departments accountable for a lack of prior action. Anti-racist work requires consistent efforts and must be part of the foundation and ethos of any institution. The Decolonising the Curriculum initiative is an important step towards promoting an inclusive learning environment. Race equality must not be an issue which is simply spoken about when it is deemed socially and politically relevant and it must be a present concern in every policy and measure that the University takes. We hope that the University continues to strive for equality."

Grace L Thambyrajah
Chair of the Student BME Society

For ongoing updates: sheffield.ac.uk/inclusion

University Vision

This document is one of the major routes by which we are fulfilling one of the four pillars that underpin the University vision - to be One University.

We will build a diverse community of staff and students from a broad range of backgrounds, demographics and cultures, and create an inclusive, supportive and collaborative environment in which they can succeed and flourish.

Our race equality work is one of many strands of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work that aims to enable our talent to prosper. We are an international and inclusive institution being culturally and ethnically diverse but we know that we can do more to be even more inclusive. This work will influence and contribute to other areas such as at the intersection of other protected characteristics.

Language Disclaimer

Throughout the document, we use the acronym BAME to stand for people from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic groups within the UK. We are aware of the profound limitations of this term as it groups together a wide range of people and their various lived experiences. As we monitor our progress on the actions, we will check to see if a particular ethnicity or ethnicities within our UK BAME community face distinct challenges that need to be recognised and addressed specifically compared to other ethnicities.

We cannot avoid the use of some classifications such as BAME and the racial classifications that make up BAME to analyse how ethnicity affects our processes, our experiences, and ultimately, our lives. We will take a path that enables a careful balance of progressing race equality whilst not racialising the world even more. It is important to find and progress issues that a group of people may face and removing those barriers is a prior requirement needed in order to ultimately get to a world where we treat people as individuals and judge them for their actions.

Objectives

The objectives articulated in this strategy document are informed by and respond to issues that have been highlighted by current and former students and staff both in the University of Sheffield and in the wider sector. This section sets out the context and background for these objectives.

Objective 1: Create an inclusive campus culture that facilitates belonging and promotes respect for students and staff and the wider community, measured by increased sense of belonging reported in staff and student surveys

Not only is our University a great higher education establishment but our Students' Union is also one of the best, if not the best in the country (Whatuni Student Choice Award for best Students' Union 2020, for the 4th year running). We know that participation in more areas of the University for students can lead to greater success later on as our students gain key soft skills from active involvement in extracurricular activities.

In order to enable our students (and staff) to engage with University life to the fullest extent as individuals, including participation in societies, sports teams, and academic projects, we must create an environment where our members feel a sense of belonging. Only then can they be intellectually challenged in a productive manner to be successful in their chosen disciplines and grow to become the best they can possibly be.

Our staff deserve nothing less than what we aim for our students to expect. And so establishing better systems and processes with more transparency (such as our reporting mechanisms) will build more confidence in the University for all of our members.

We will progress this objective to create a supportive environment that encourages collaboration and increases the input of all members of our community into the University.

Objective 2: Widen access to students from BAME backgrounds through their transition to higher education and support these students to succeed once at the University

The University of Sheffield has historic civic roots. It was formed to deliver a higher education to benefit the children of the working class of Sheffield. In order to ensure that we keep this legacy alive, it is vital that we remove barriers that prospective students may face when accessing higher education.

Our Student Recruitment, Marketing and Admissions department is responsible for this work with the UK BAME communities. This specific area of their work for students from BAME backgrounds sits alongside the other groups that they work with, groups that evidence has shown face barriers. It is important to listen to these different groups of people and work with them separately. A one size fits all approach does not work as members of each group have a different set of issues and barriers that they may face.

Objective 3: Reduce the ethnicity awarding gap between BAME and white students to zero

The awarding gap concerns the fact that students who are racialised as BAME enter the University with the same entry grades as white students but are on average awarded lower degree classifications.

Our updated RESAP has a set of specific actions designed to hold departments accountable for removing the barriers present within our academic disciplines. Some issues are University wide whereas others are specific to a faculty or department.

We must analyse and address the causes for this gap. We will remove institutional barriers around immutable characteristics present so that our students can achieve the levels of excellence that truly reflect their efforts and ability. This does not equate to lowering the bar as we want to uphold the value of a degree from the University of Sheffield.

Objective 4: Improve graduate outcomes and sustain or improve progression to postgraduate education for BAME students

We want our graduates to have excellent options once they finish their undergraduate studies, whether that means entering the workforce, continuing to postgraduate studies or following other pathways. In order to achieve this, our Careers Service will ensure that students are presented with the best support and opportunities required for their development and preparation.

Objective 5: Increase the diversity of the staff body and support the career progression of BAME staff

We want to attract the brightest minds to work at the University of Sheffield and to see them thrive in their careers. To achieve excellence as an institution, we need diversity of thought and experience to come together and work collaboratively so that we might progress the pursuit of knowledge.

In the first iteration of this document, we said that **when people come together with different views, approaches and insights it can lead to richer, more creative and innovative teaching and research and the highest level of student experience.** In order to attract and facilitate the constructive use of these different views, we must first remove the barriers that prevent a wide range of people from applying, working and progressing at our University.

By improving our recruitment processes and systems, we aim to remove the barriers that prevent the best talent from applying to, being recruited to, and flourishing at the University of Sheffield. We will do this by appropriate and legal use of Positive Action and other measures such as working to mitigate against the effects of biases and prejudices within recruitment processes and systems by modernising them and reviewing the make-up of decision-making panels.

Race Equality Action Plan

Our objectives have not fundamentally changed but as we have made progress we have updated and clarified the actions to achieve each objective. Each action has a timeframe for an outcome and an assessment of that outcome. This remains a live document that is constantly under review and we, as always, welcome input from members of our community.

The institution as a whole is accountable for the progress of the strategy and implementation of the action plan. We have ensured that the work involved is business as usual for the whole University, from admissions to outreach, from staff recruitment and promotion to student learning and teaching. We will continue to welcome constructive and critical engagement and challenge in order to advance our strategy.

Objective 1: Create an inclusive campus culture that facilitates belonging and promotes respect for students and staff and the wider community, measured by increased sense of belonging reported in staff and student surveys

	Action	Outcome	Responsibile Stakeholder
1a	The University works with students and staff to run a number of events annually, including to mark national events such as Black History Month, Chinese New Year, etc.	The University celebrates diversity and raises black visibility and diverse ranges of cultural identity in a coordinated manner with partners in the city e.g SHU.	Director of HR BAME Staff Network Chair Director of Student Support Services
1b	Profile BAME staff and students on the WALL of BAME and also integrate people naturally into other areas of the University including departmental materials such as digital screens, portraits, building names etc.	Increased visibility of BAME staff and students across campus and online.	ED&I Manager, HR
1c	Deliver annual anti-racism training and development, starting with inductions for all new students, including training for sports clubs and student societies.	Training in place for all new students, as part of induction, to create dialogue and encourage active inclusion by students.	Director of Student Support Services
1d	Staff in student facing roles to have anti-racism training and development at induction, refreshed every two years with ongoing development.	Staff in student facing roles are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to support BAME students and to act as allies.	Director of Student Support Services
1e	Residence Life Mentors in University accommodation to embed anti-racism information into existing training.	Clear anti-racism messages embedded into training events taking place in the Residences. Students report confidence in understanding/able to talk about race.	Dan Barcroft (Director of SRMA)
1f	Continually engage and exchange knowledge with other universities to learn and share good practice and take part in sector training to understand the latest staff and student issues.	Connections established with universities who have good practice we can learn from, through existing and new networks.	ED&I Manager, HR Director of Student Support Services
1g	Ensure that staff, students, and the wider community know how to report incidents of racism; what support is available to them; and what the University's procedures are to process them.	Increased guidance on, awareness of and confidence in racism reporting. Trust is built in the University's reporting systems and processes.	Director of Student Support Services Director of HR
1h	Evaluate data from reporting systems to understand the trends highlighted in order to improve the procedures and address problematic areas.	Support is continually improved and action is taken appropriately to address issues.	Director of Student Support Services Director of HR

Objective 2: Widen access to students from BAME backgrounds through their transition to higher education and support these students to succeed once at TUoS

	Action	Outcome	Responsibile Stakeholder
2a	Analyse the transition and early success of BAME students in the first year of the students' journey by linking together their pre-application data to their first year experience and feed this information with recommendations to other areas such as the awarding gap and mentoring schemes by the end of the 2020/21 academic year.	Identify issues that form in the handover from prospective student to current student, and inform actions on this basis.	Director of SRMA
2b	By the end of the 2020/21 academic year, Student Recruitment, Marketing & Admissions to undertake a review of the BAME prospective student journey, including the available data for the past three years.	SRMA can make informed decisions to support BAME prospective students.	Director of SRMA
2c	By 2022, specific actions to be carried out to address any issues identified across applications, offers, admissions and transition, taking into account data gathered to meet targets set out in the Access and Participation Plan.	Gaps in all areas of the prospective student journey to be reduced by implementing changes in the following admissions cycle.	Director of SRMA
2d	Student support services to review the provision of services in relation to BAME students and identify areas for improvement within DDSS, CWAG, SAS, UCS/SAMHS, Wellbeing, UHS, SSiD, ISS, the Chaplaincy and Financial Assistance. The first tranche of reviews to be carried out by 2021 by UCS, SAMHS, Wellbeing and the Chaplaincy.	Service areas are improved to ensure that BAME students at the University are appropriately supported throughout their time at the University.	Director of Student Support Services
2e	Review all marketing materials, including open days and supporting materials, and develop processes to ensure professional and authentic representation of diversity in a coordinated manner with faculties.	More BAME students consider Sheffield as their university of choice.	Director of SRMA
2f	Using positive action, recruit more BAME student ambassadors and train all ambassadors to support the BAME applicant journey from school to registration.	Prospective BAME students feel fully included.	Director of SRMA
2g	Develop and continue outreach activity to target students from BAME backgrounds including students from the local area.	Increase applications / offer making and recruitment of BAME students.	Director of SRMA

Objective 3: Reduce the ethnicity awarding gap between BAME and white students to zero

	Action	Outcome	Responsibile Stakeholder
3a	By 2023, ensure that data systems at the University allow students' grades to be tracked throughout their academic studies, taking into account different ethnicities and separating home and international students when analysing the awarding gap.	Departments review award gaps to inform target-setting and interventions in the annual planning round. The actions and outcomes are assessed at Faculty and University levels annually.	VPE, LTSG
3b	Conduct an analysis of the awarding gap, aligned to delivery of targets within the Access and Participation Plan.	Design, implementation and evaluation of evidence led interventions support BAME students to achieve academic success.	VPE, LTSG
3c	Elevate to produce new guidance, training and resources for pedagogical practice on race equality and the curriculum in the 2020/21 academic year.	Academic staff can easily access the development materials to improve their curricula and teaching from the perspective of race equality.	VPE, LTSG
3d	Curriculum subgroup to be set up to develop an institutional approach to race equality in the curriculum, as part of the Programme Level Approach in line with the University's Learning and Teaching strategy.	Clear guidance for the delivery of an inclusive curriculum for staff, continually assessed by staff and students and revised accordingly. Regular assessment at department level as part of the annual reflection exercise.	VPE, LTSG
3e	Ensure that the personal tutoring review in 2020/2021 addresses and evaluates the quality and impact of personal tutoring on the support of students.	Dedicated resources and training created for personal tutors so that they can support BAME students.	VPE, LTSG

Objective 4: Improve graduate outcomes and sustain or improve progression to postgraduate education for BAME students

	Action	Outcome	Responsibile Stakeholder
4a	Careers services to ensure that BAME students are supported through the Employability Delivery Plan, student skills and development portfolio (mySkills) using data from sources such as the career confidence survey to indicate relative needs.	By 2023/24, the career confidence of BAME students as indicated by routine inspection of available data to ensure specific needs are met.	Head of Careers
4b	Collect data regarding BAME student progression to postgraduate education at Sheffield.	To inform targets for BAME student progression.	Head of Careers
4c	As part of a Programme Level Approach, departments and faculties to engage with students early in their academic studies about the option of postgraduate study.	All BAME students are aware of their options, including postgraduate study, and can make informed decisions.	Deputy Vice-President for Education
4d	By autumn 2021, develop a mentoring programme that takes into account race related issues with support for BAME students.	The student/alumni mentoring programme provides more BAME mentors and supports more BAME mentees.	Head of Careers
4e	Within the Widening participation framework, identify work experience opportunities for eligible students and how we can promote those schemes to BAME students.	Work experience bursaries/ internships and scholarships effectively promoted to BAME students, resulting in an increase in BAME student participation.	Head of Careers

Objective 5: Increase the diversity of the staff body and support the career progression of BAME staff

	Action	Outcome	Responsibile Stakeholder
5a	Ensure that detailed staff ethnicity data is readily available (including ethnicity pay gap data) at a University, Faculty/Professional Services and Departmental level to support the identification of actions that increase the diversity of the staff body and support the career progression of BAME staff.	University, Faculty/Professional Services and Departmental Leadership teams are able to direct actions on the basis of improved data to improve representation of BAME academic staff.	Director of HR
5b	Review and publish our ethnicity pay gap data annually, ahead of the legislative requirement.	Demonstrate our commitment to taking action to increase career progression for BAME staff.	Head of Careers
5c	Ensure that our recruitment process (from advertisement to selection) encourages and supports BAME candidates to apply for and secure roles at the University through the use of positive actions, by debiasing the recruitment process and system and by sharing good practice.	Applicants do not experience barriers to recruitment, resulting in an increase in applications and appointments of a more diverse pool.	Head of Careers
5d	Develop support for the career progression of BAME staff with a particular focus on Early Career Researchers (ECR) and Professional Service staff.	BAME staff have the support needed to further their careers from appointment onwards.	Director of HR Head of Research Services
5e	Provide ongoing support for the BAME Staff Network, including: Providing a time allocation for the Chair and Vice-Chair; supporting the network's web presence as required; supporting the development of publicity materials when required.	The BAME Staff Network has the support that they need from the University to progress their aims and have input into the implementation of the strategy.	Director of HR
5f	Run a yearly disclosure campaign to improve equality data, to support ED&I agenda.	Sustained or improved disclosure rates across all Protected Characteristics.	ED&I Manager, HR

Institutional level action points

	Action	Outcome	Responsibile Stakeholder
1	Seek out constructive engagement and oversee the implementation of this strategy via members of our University through the Race Equality Steering Group that has representation from the SU, student BME committee and BAME staff network.	Strategic level steering group, leading on implementation of this action plan. Seen as a priority by staff and students.	Chair of the RESG
2	As part of the new 5 year University Strategy, embed key race equality work through the agreement of departmental specific improvement targets, and the development of bespoke action plans to achieve these.	Ensure that race equality actions are considered as part of the everyday business of the department rather than sitting in a separate strategy within separate governance arrangements and that all departments have a role in addressing issues surrounding race equality.	UEB & Planning & Insight
3	Progress the University's submission to the Race Equality Charter, beginning with forming the Self Assessment Team and creating the 3-year forward looking SMART action plan.	Race equality work is progressed and recognised. Bronze level achieved three years after joining.	Chair RESG
4	Develop and implement an ED&I development framework for staff that supports ambition in each of the following areas: Mandatory ED&I Race Equality Implicit Bias	All staff have the same baseline awareness of ED&I including our legal obligations. Staff in specific roles have further knowledge. Impact will be measured by regular feedback.	ED&I Manager Director of HR
5	Create a staff code of conduct by 2022 that is linked to the University's Vision that details expected professional conduct and creates an inclusive culture.	The University has clear guidance on what is acceptable behaviour and what the procedures are to deal with incidents of racism.	UEB
6	Use Positive Actions introduced in 2019-20 and planned for 2020-21 onwards, embedded within University processes to address the diversity of membership of Council, Senate and their Sub-Committees, both of lay members and University staff members.	Increase the diversity of the expressions of interest and nominations from staff and external candidates to improve the representation on committees and boards by 2022, with a view to more accurately reflecting the makeup of the University (staff members of committees) and the local area (lay membership) in the longer term (i.e. by 2025).	Head of Governance

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