

Working towards the Race Equality Charter

October 2020 Action Plan and Workstreams

What is the Race Equality Charter?

In his recent Insights Lecture Dr Keith Magee spoke about 'creating brave spaces' to challenge systemic issues of racism and deliver 'thoughtful educational leadership'. The Race Equality Charter is first and foremost a vehicle and a foundation on which we can start to work towards being a more equitable institution: an institution where colleagues are given the opportunity and the confidence to challenge systems, processes and practices which perpetuate systemic racism and racial inequality.

Advance HE's Race Equality Charter (REC) provides a framework through which institutions work to identify and self-reflect on institutional and cultural barriers standing in the way of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues and students. Member institutions develop initiatives and solutions for action, and can apply for a Bronze or Silver REC award, depending on their level of progress.¹

Newcastle University became a member of the REC in March 2019 and is aiming to make a submission for a REC Bronze Award by July 2022.

The REC is underpinned by five fundamental guiding principles.

- Racial inequalities are a significant issue within higher education. Racial inequalities are not necessarily overt, isolated incidents. Racism is an everyday facet of UK society and racial inequalities manifest themselves in everyday situations, processes and behaviours.
- UK higher education 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.
- In developing solutions to racial inequalities, it is important that they are aimed at achieving long-term institutional culture change, avoiding a deficit model where solutions are aimed at changing the individual.
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and students are not a homogenous group. People from different ethnic backgrounds have different experiences of and outcomes from/within higher education, and that complexity needs to be considered in analysing data and developing actions.
- All individuals have multiple identities, and the intersection of those different identities should be considered wherever possible.²

What do we need to do?

The REC Awards handbook states that, amongst other things, 'bronze institutions are characterised by: a comprehensive, evidence-based action plan, underpinning the institution's race equality priorities and aims'.

¹ <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/equality-charters/race-equality-charter>

² <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/equality-charters/race-equality-charter>

The requirements include the need to:

- Interrogate qualitative and quantitative data on the experiences and outcomes for minority ethnic staff and students.
- Consult with minority ethnic staff and students on existing issues and the development of actions and initiatives.
- Create a comprehensive, evidence-based action plan, with SMART actions. Actions should be owned by people who have adequate influence and seniority to complete them. Accountability should be built into existing institutional reporting mechanisms.³

In order to ensure the delivery of a cohesive action plan the Self-Assessment Team (SAT) has established a set of workstreams. Each workstream will develop a detailed action plan with clear milestones which will feed into the overall REC SAT Action Plan.

Timeline and Objectives

The timeline for the workstreams is as follows:

- Workstreams Established and Leaders Identified: July 2020 **COMPLETED**
- Initial Draft High Level Objectives: September 2020 **COMPLETED**
- Approval of Objectives by Executive Board: October 2020 **COMPLETED**
- Detailed Action Plans and Milestones: Between November 2020 and March 2021
- Progress Monitoring begins: April 2021

Theme	Objectives	Lead
Colleagues	Increase the representation of BAME colleagues in the University Increase the representation of BAME colleagues in Senior and Leadership roles Support progression and career development for BAME colleagues	<u>Chris Stanley</u>
Students	Identify, support and complement existing work to decolonising the Curriculum (to include content, learning & teaching and assessment, notably feedback) Propose a strategic approach to the provision of financial Support Advise on ways in which support for students can further help reduce barriers to success	<u>Alison Shaw</u> Dorothy Chirwa Nadia Ahmed
Partnership Work	Review the representation of diversity across partnerships to inform future objectives Develop a high-level partnership strategy	<u>Andrea Henderson</u>

³ ECU's Race Equality Charter Awards Handbook January 2016

	Establish an external Advisory Board	
Communications and Visibility	<p>Develop a high-level communications strategy for the institution which feeds in to the EDI Communications Strategy</p> <p>Review the representation of racial diversity across our communications and publications, and make informed recommendations on the basis of this review.</p> <p>Work with the Colleague and Student workstream to move forward opportunities for open and honest conversations and feedback</p>	<u>Naomi Oosman-Watts</u> Nadia Ahmed
Campus and the Estate	<p>Work towards campus and our estate representing and reflecting our vision to continue increasing the diversity of our institution</p> <p>Continue to work towards our campus and our estate being safe spaces free from racially motivated hate crime and aggressions</p> <p>Continue to improve facilities and spaces on our campus and estate to make them more welcoming to students, colleagues and visitors from all cultures and faiths.</p>	<u>Iain Garfield</u>

Research	<p>Collate information on existing initiatives/activities from across the University in relation to increasing the representation of BAME PGR students/ staff researchers and on pastoral support and career development/progression opportunities</p> <p>Work with existing and future Centres for postgraduate and doctoral training programmes to increase representation</p> <p>Scope external funding opportunities to support recruitment and retain doctoral trainee and staff researchers and share these opportunities with relevant groups</p> <p>Liaise and work with external funders and other partners to develop and deliver sector-wide initiatives that remove structural barriers to the career progression of BAME researchers .</p>	<u>Judith Rankin</u>
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Work to date

In addition to planning for future work, colleagues engaged in the REC SAT have also undertaken work towards the charter in the last year, some examples of which are as follows:

- Work is already in progress in People Services on diversifying recruitment and measures are already being implemented
- Through the Changing the Culture group a range of initiatives have been implemented including: training for staff and students, creation of the Hate crime Champion role descriptors and framework, creation of the Hate Crime Liaison officer role
- The work of the group has also led to the Report and Support System being extended to cover all hate crime. In addition, new web pages have been created relating specifically to race related hate crime and micro-aggressions
- A Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic focused Leadership Development programme is being designed in partnership with Common Purpose and is almost ready to launch
- Staff and student surveys have been conducted to provide baseline data; quantitative data have been analysed and reported to EB, analysis of the qualitative data is ongoing.
- Extensive work is taking place around decolonising the curriculum
- Listening sessions have taken place on a range of topics with students and colleagues including COVID Specific return to work sessions.
- Initial scoping is underway to provide a strategic approach to routes to financial support specifically for black and minority ethnic students.
- The BAME Network has supported initiatives such as last year's round table event and more recently engaging with BAME networks from across the region to organise a joint Black History Month event on 'Action, Allyship and Antiracism'

This existing work, which for the most part is already embedded in teams across the institution, will feed in to the workstreams and become part of the wider REC SAT institutional action plan.

Next steps

In order to ensure consistency across the workstreams, a set of tasks has been agreed by the REC SAT as a plan of work for these groups:

Actions	Timeframe
Develop a set of initial, draft objectives	To be approved in October 2020
Establish membership from across the institution bringing in colleagues and students who may not currently be involved with the REC SAT.	November/December 2020
Establish the baseline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ current situation ○ available data ○ position in October 2019 as compared to October 2020 	November 2020 – March 2021
The progress so far <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ what have we done in the last twelve months? ○ what have we measured and what does the data tell us? ○ where have we missed opportunities to demonstrate and evidence work we have done? 	November 2020 – March 2021
Our ambitions and proposed roadmap for the next 2 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ what do we want to achieve in the identified focus areas and why? ○ what do we expect the changes we make to look like and how will we know? ○ what do we need to measure; what are our clear deliverables and milestones? ○ how will we demonstrate these have been achieved/delivered? 	November 2020 – March 2021
Set SMART Targets for the action plan.	By end of March 2021; for approval by University Executive Board April 2021.
Establish how targets will deliver lasting and meaningful change beyond the lifecycle of the Charter for example – considering what success might look like in 5 years.	By April 2021

The next stage will involve setting clear and measurable milestone, and merging those into the REC institutional plan. These milestones will help define what success looks like for the institution and allow us to measure progress. We commit to regular and transparent communication of progress against the action plan to colleagues and students. Updates and information on the work of the REC SAT will be hosted on our webpages throughout this process and we invite engagement with the work at every level and stage from across the institution.

From the co-chairs, on behalf of the REC SAT
Professor Julie Sanders, Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Naomi Oosman-Watts, Head of Student Strategic Projects

28 October 2020



BAME Roundtable Event, November 2019