

#CLOSINGTHEGAP

**BLACK, ASIAN
AND MINORITY
ETHNIC STUDENT
ATTAINMENT AT
UK UNIVERSITIES:
CASE STUDIES**



Universities UK

nus
national union of **students**

MAY 2019

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INTRODUCTION

Universities can work together to address the inequalities in attainment between White and Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students by sharing evidence of what works and what doesn't in attainment gap interventions. As a first step, UUK has created this collection of case studies for university practitioners as a guide of what some universities are already doing to remove attainment differentials and improve BAME students' university experiences.

It is important that BAME students have a key role in co-creating and informing the implementation of attainment-gap interventions, facilitated by students' unions, and that they are compensated for their time in doing so. Many of the interventions detailed in this collection are still underway and therefore not yet fully evaluated. UUK and NUS will evaluate how far the sector has come in early 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS

UUK and NUS' report, *Black, Asian and minority ethnic student attainment at UK universities: #Closingthegap* identified five steps to success.

- **Providing strong leadership**
- **Having conversations about race and culture**
- **Develop racially diverse, inclusive environments**
- **Getting the evidence and analysing the data**
- **Understanding what works**

Each case study has been labelled as to which recommendations it relates to in the left-hand corner.

BME ATTAINMENT GAP PROJECT

UCL

Dr Julie Evans, Faculty Tutor Brain Sciences UCL,
Co-lead BME Attainment Gap project

TIME PERIOD AND COST

- 2017–2019
- HEFCE Catalyst Fund £500,000 and six institutions contributed match funding
- Overall project is worth £1.1 million

PARTNERS

Consortium project led by Kingston University London, De Montfort University, University of Greenwich, University of Hertfordshire and University of Wolverhampton and further education college, NESCOL

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

The project aims to reduce the BME attainment gap by building on successful interventions developed by Kingston University and adapting them to suit the size and shape of UCL. Although work to address the gap has been taking place on a local level across the institution, the HEFCE funded project presented an opportunity to address the gap at an institutional level. The project encompasses the entire undergraduate population of 18,330 students. UK BME students represent 42% of all UK students at UCL, which is higher than the sector average of 22%.

The aims of the project are:

- eliminate the BME attainment gap at UCL and improve BME student satisfaction, measured by data and the national student survey
- raise awareness of the BME attainment gap and develop unconscious bias training

- create a forum to discuss attainment gap issues
- create a curriculum that is consistently inclusive and which benefits all students
- create resources for staff so that they are confident in creating inclusive learning environments
- create a culture where students feel confident that racist behaviour will not be tolerated at UCL

HOW DID THE PROJECT WORK?

This is an ongoing project, so far we have:

- formed a working group with stakeholders including the BME Sabbatical Officer
- raised awareness of the project through a dedicated website, news stories and a conference in April 2018 opened by the Provost
- been changing organisational culture and attitudes through a data driven approach
- appointed and trained BME faculty leads for each 11 faculties at UCL (these individuals form part of the faculty educational leadership and will advise and implement the institutional aims at a faculty level; they are the vehicle for sharing good practice across UCL)
- been developing tailored resources to support staff in developing a more inclusive curriculum
- developed an Inclusive Curriculum Health Check to assess the current situation – this is now a mandated action as part of our annual quality assurance processes and departments will need to create plans going forward for developing a more inclusive curriculum and learning environment, which will evolve over the coming years

WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

Changing the culture in a large organisation such as UCL is a challenge; we are large and geographically distributed. However, UCL is a research-intensive university and taking a data driven approach to informing staff about our attainment gap is proving successful. Providing tools to help programmes develop a more inclusive curriculum is key and the BME Attainment Faculty Leads are a great support for staff.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

- We will monitor the effectiveness of the Inclusive Curriculum Health Check in the next year.
- We hope to have online and face-to-face unconscious bias training developed in the next year.
- We will look at the effectiveness of working with students as partners to create a more inclusive curriculum, and we are in the process of appointing student curriculum partners.
- We are working on an effective way for students to report incidents of racial discrimination, including developing a system for anonymous reporting of racist behaviour.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

ENHANCING DIVERSITY IN THE DRAMA CURRICULUM

QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY LONDON

Dr. Elyssa Livergant, Project Lead, TRaP Fellow Drama

Elena di Mascio, Head of Engagement, Retention and Success

Dushant Patel and Catherine Palmer, Graduate Co-leads

Daniel Hartley, Project Consultant

Dr. Catherine Silverstone is coordinating work resulting from the project

TIME PERIOD AND COST

- October 2017 – May 2018
- £4925
- Funded by the Engagement, Retention and Success fund and the School of English and Drama at Queen Mary
- Staffed by the Department of Drama

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

The project aimed to assess the Department of Drama's strengths and areas for development in relation to disability and BAME visibility and experience. It engaged students and staff in meaningful reflection on the invisible norms (white/able bodied) shaping the curriculum; norms that mark certain bodies and experiences as out of place. The project sought to identify the politics of knowledge at the base of the curriculum and the wider institution, and further an analysis of power relations within the department's teaching and learning experiences to begin the complex process of furthering a more inclusive practice.

This work is part of varied efforts across the School of English and Drama, and Queen Mary University London (QMUL) more widely, to promote dialogue, critical reflection and action on what it means for a curriculum and an institution to be diverse and inclusive.

HOW DID THE PROJECT WORK?

The research included:

- a series of focus group discussions with staff and students
- an audit of the Department of Drama's first year module documentation
- targeted visits to modules to discuss BAME and disability visibility in the curriculum
- a review of research on attainment and belonging from the university's Engagement, Retention and Success team
- a small literature review was also undertaken but there is a marked lack of material in this area

The project engaged in an ongoing reflective evaluation of its aim and processes.

As well as the project team itself, over 70 members of the department, including staff and students, participated in the project.

WHAT WAS CHALLENGING?

The scope of the project presented methodological challenges: the two categories of disability and race are themselves internally complex and require their own space to develop; and meaningfully addressing inequalities based in race and disability creates discomfort, especially for those who benefit from privilege. While it is beyond the scope of this project, both challenges were sensitively reflected on with participants.

The challenging nature and relatively small scope of the project threw into relief the need for further resources to support this work. Formally integrated and properly resourced opportunities to reflect critically and creatively on race and disability in the curriculum, and in the sector, are desperately needed, including dedicated funding, staff time, and central support and networks.

HOW WELL DID IT WORK?

Productive developments include:

- changes on a module level, including the creation of a new first year module to equip students with the tools to discuss race and disability in relation to the drama curriculum (launching in 2019–20)

- committee changes, including Equality and Diversity committee representation on the Teaching and Learning committee
- a programme of targeted interventions to support students at risk of missing good honours
- study days and other formal opportunities for staff and students to develop knowledge in relation to race and disability
- the need to increase diversity of racial and disability visibility in staffing was highlighted – while hiring permanent staff is not an immediate option an initial measure is to focus on guest lecturer, teaching assistant and assistant lecturer level

We found that conversations about the visibility of race and disability are an uneasy and essential practice that can transform the dominant culture of values in the institution if they are given formal support to develop. While quantitative approaches to activities are useful, foregrounding challenges we face in transforming power structures that play out in our day-to-day practices with each other through discussion is key to change.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Support for this work must be organisational rather than project focused; a longer-term commitment to inclusivity, backed by ongoing investment, is necessary to address structural inequities in the institution that shape staff and students' everyday participation in teaching, learning and research.

USING PROGRAMME LEVEL DATA TO STIMULATE CHANGE

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

Dr Helen Barefoot, Chair of the BAME student success working group

TIME PERIOD AND COST

- March 2017 – July 2019
- £60,000 funded from OfS collaborative project
- £8,000 funded by Advance HA (previously the Leadership Foundation)

PARTNERS

Consortium project led by Kingston University London, De Montfort University, University of Greenwich, University of Hertfordshire and University of Wolverhampton and further education college, NESCOL

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

We wanted to support academic leadership at a programme level to enable inclusive curriculum enhancements and improve outcomes for students from BAME backgrounds. The aim was to stimulate localised change within programmes using a value added (VA) metric, a nuanced metric which considers attainment in relation to expected performance according to entry qualifications.

Institutional and school level data had enabled us to start considering and making some progress on the attainment gap, but we needed programme level data to identify areas of good practice and areas that need focus. We recognised that change at a programme level was essential to gain widespread improvements.

HOW DID THE PROJECT WORK?

With guidance from Kingston University, our Student Information and Planning Team developed the VA dashboard. The dashboard contains data from the past five years which enables consideration of student attainment, taking into account entry qualification and subject studied.

Through inclusive practice workshops we presented national, institutional and programme level data (VA scores) to programme teams; we also discussed inclusive curriculum enhancements, implicit bias and compassion focused pedagogies. Following attendance at a workshop, we followed-up with programme leaders to identify relevant actions to reduce attainment gaps.

Case studies of good practice were developed and included examples such as:

- arranging whole team meetings focused on discussions of BAME attainment
- challenging module leaders to review their reading lists to include more BAME authors
- clear expectations that all members of the programme team should do unconscious bias training and attend inclusive practice workshops
- developing the confidence of programme team members to talk explicitly about race within the context of their disciplines

WHAT WAS CHALLENGING?

Many colleagues don't really understand the wider considerations of race, racism and white privilege. On occasion, we encountered challenge and resistance at the workshops and there were some difficult comments and assumptions that we had to address. When discussing race attainment gaps some people also deflect the conversation into a discussion of other issues, eg gender. We are encouraging staff to read books such as 'Why I'm no longer taking about race to white people' by Reni Eddo-Lodge. We were fortunate to work in multi-racial teams so facilitators could share how their own racial identities inform their approaches and opinions.

Despite our clear messaging that we were not taking a deficit approach, some people still suggested actions targeted at students and some staff asked for more data: our argument is that we have enough data, we now need actions.

We have learnt that change takes time and that you need evidence to

challenge assumptions, including quantitative data at the programme level, qualitative data, and first-person narratives.

HOW WELL DID IT WORK?

The production of a VA dashboard has enabled a much more nuanced understanding of attainment gaps at programme level and has enabled programme leaders to discuss appropriate actions with their programme teams. To date, over 37 programme teams have attended workshops and through various events we have spoken to over 400 staff members.

As attainment data has a lag period in terms of effect following actions, we haven't yet fully assessed the outcomes. However, we have collated 11 case studies of good practice from programme leaders who have made inclusive practice changes. We have also made changes to our annual monitoring and reporting mechanisms at programme level. All undergraduate programmes now comment on attainment gaps (as measured by VA scores) within their annual monitoring reports and programme action plans must identify activities to reduce any gaps.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

We initially enabled programme teams to book onto sessions, which meant that not all programmes engaged. We are now taking a more targeted approach and working with teams with the biggest gaps. We also intend to work with the deans of each school to ensure localised targets and visible leadership on race equality.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

DEVELOPING A BME STUDENT ADVOCATE PROGRAMME

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

Sara de Sousa, Student Success Lead for the Business School
and Careers Advisor at University of Hertfordshire

TIME PERIOD AND COST

- October 2017 – June 2018
- £7000
- Funded by the University Learning and Teaching Innovation award

PARTNERS

Hertfordshire Students' Union

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

In 2017–18 the University of Hertfordshire designed and implemented a BME Student Advocate programme to support an institutional objective to reduce the attainment gap. The 'student voice' was recognised to be missing in much of our initial activity and this project was created to gather first hand experiences and student input into the curriculum. 10 BME student advocates carried out different activities depending on the needs of the academic school with which they worked.

HOW DID THE PROJECT WORK?

The project was established across all 10 schools, through the BME Student Success Working Group; the group's objective was to further understand the experiences of students from different ethnic backgrounds. The idea for the

BME student advocate project was suggested by a student member of the group who wanted to get more students involved in promoting race equality, reducing the attainment gap and supporting BME student leadership.

The aims of the project are:

- to create safe spaces so that BME students can voice any concerns, seek guidance and support and share their experiences
- to support the careful dissemination of data associated with the BME attainment gap to students
- to facilitate dialogue with staff members to address issues which may be faced by BME students in the schools
- to represent BME students and raise issues of concern, or ideas for change at school meetings, workshops etc
- to promote race equality and be role models for other BME students
- to work with staff to improve the inclusivity of their curricula

The 10 BME student advocates carried out activities including:

- holding focus groups with BME students
- representing BME students at school meeting
- challenging the assumptions of staff members
- critiquing curricula and promoting race equality

Benefits for staff members included:

- having an advocate to discuss inclusive practice ideas with
- receiving feedback about BME student experiences
- being challenged on assumptions
- forming student-staff partnerships

WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

The BME student advocates' self-evaluations recognised common challenges of encouraging students to attend focus groups, logistical difficulties in arranging times to meet with staff and a lack of wider awareness of the role. In future, we will work closely with staff members to identify key times and places where our advocates can speak with students

and we will promote the focus groups more effectively. Another challenge that the advocates faced included staff not acknowledging the attainment gap within their programmes and being reluctant to discuss race equality.

It has been really useful to have a race equality project officer who has acted as the line manager for our advocates. He managed the time sheets and also helped them set up focus groups. The advocates work for up to four hours a week during term time and have some self-direction in how they manage that time.

HOW WELL DID IT WORK?

The work of the advocates was highly valued by staff within the university and recognising the impact of their work, the university has fully funded the programme for the next academic year.

The full impact of the work is difficult to measure, but our hopes that the project would increase conversations about race and enable a better understanding of BME students' experiences have certainly come to fruition. We hope that the advocates will empower other BME students and that this may become evident through confidence in contributions in the classroom, increased numbers of BME students standing as programme representatives and perhaps more BME students being elected as Hertfordshire Students' Union (HSU) officers. We will work with HSU to measure programme representation and election submissions.

It has been very important for us to work closely with our students' union in the development of our scheme. The vice-president (education) worked with us to develop the role descriptor and was on the interview panel for all our advocates

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

The University of Hertfordshire is fully-funding the project again for the academic year 2018–19. We have also received inquiries from a number of other UK universities requesting details on the programme and at least two of these are implementing a similar scheme.

BME ATTAINMENT GAP INITIATIVE

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

Co-chairs: Sarah Speight, Associate PVC for Teaching and Learning
Alison Reeves, Head of Education Excellence

TIME PERIOD AND COST

- February 2017–July 2020
- Embedded into core roles and processes but we are ‘piggy-backing’ on funded collaborative projects in partnership with the University of Birmingham.

PARTNERS

- University of Birmingham

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

From research carried out in 2015 and 2016, we knew that our BME students were not getting the same opportunities as other students. We decided a formal initiative would enable us to explore the impact of a range of projects that could help to shift our culture. We did not believe that any single activity could solve the challenge. Our objective is simple: to make the student experience at the University of Nottingham as good as it can be for everyone.

HOW DID THE PROJECT WORK?

The initiative brings together projects and processes that have been developed by a cross-faculty group of staff and students. The purpose of the project is to test and implement initiatives to help address Nottingham-specific challenges.

For example:

- the attainment gap widens between academic years (smallest in first year, largest in fourth)
- the gap is largest amongst those with lower entry grade tariffs
- student societies are vital in bringing together people of the same race and/or religion
- student experiences vary between campuses
- micro-aggressions are varied in scale
- many social science students desire a more inclusive curriculum

So far we have:

- established a Steering Group, which meets termly to provide guidance and monitoring and to generate updates for the university's Education and Student Experience Committee, and Race Equality Charter Mark group
- developed training for unconscious bias and inclusive teaching practice
- improved harassment reporting
- developed specific campaigns to stress the inclusive values of the University of Nottingham
- scoped a comprehensive reverse-mentoring scheme
- conducted interviews with BME alumni
- investigated the impact of assessment practice upon BME students
- established the 'decolonising the curriculum' project
- researched initiatives to reduce the attainment gap in STEM subjects
- run a faculty-wide survey to collect student views on inclusion
- incorporated consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) data into periodic reviews of academic schools
- improved EDI training for senior tutors
- shared our internal action plan widely and we are using data and monitoring activity

WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

- **Having the conversations:** many white staff are defensive and deeply uncomfortable about discussions of privilege and race.
- **Getting beyond the data and into action:** staff can fixate upon the numbers rather than upon positive activities that benefit everyone.
- **Getting staff to understand** that BME staff are not responsible for addressing the challenges.

A partnership approach is essential: staff, students, alumni, employers and all key stakeholders have an important voice. Uncomfortable truths have to be listened to; strong views need to be heard. We need to draw upon experts and upon the real experiences of our BME colleagues, but recognise that we all have to show leadership. We must recognise the learning that is required, and we have to accept that we will get things wrong as we do this work.

Having a range of activities underway helps in overcoming these challenges as we can maintain momentum and have progress to report. We are also appointing a student data analyst who will regularly supply schools with robust data.

HOW WELL HAS IT WORKED?

While the current end date of the project is July 2020, we recognise that it is likely to require a longer period of time to fully embed inclusive practice. These initiatives are ‘works in progress’. They are being monitored, with progress reported to the BME Attainment Gap Steering Group, but evaluation of their impact is a longer-term process. We recognise that it will be difficult to isolate the benefits of some individual projects but we are taking a ‘universal design’ approach; each initiative should be of benefit to the whole community while of specific benefit to those currently disadvantaged.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

The project is ongoing. It will continue to report regularly to its Steering Group and other governance bodies. We will be developing evaluation mechanisms as the project proceeds.

AN INSTITUTION-WIDE APPROACH TO ADDRESSING THE ATTAINMENT GAP

SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY

Professor Jacqueline Stevenson, Strategic Lead
for work to address the attainment gap

TIME PERIOD AND COST

- Started in November 2017
- Strategic investment money was and continues to be used to support this work

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Departments were supported to develop interventions based on their own needs and perspectives. The majority of work covered mentoring, placements, academic writing and decolonising the curriculum and these have been expanded into four university wide interventions, which are being developed and rolled out this year.

HOW DID THE PROJECT WORK?

Action research interventions, based on logic model approaches to evaluation, were used to frame activity. The initial focus was on targeted departmental based interventions to test various hypotheses at specific points in the student life cycle: recruitment, retention, attainment and graduate destination. Departmental projects tested a hypothesis by making changes (eg to the curriculum) and then evaluating the impact of the changes. In the academic year 2017–18, 31 departmental-based projects were delivered across the university.

All departments engaged with the project, although at variable levels, and a number of departmental or faculty structures were put in place to support activity. Students have been engaged throughout, although also at various levels of involvement. To achieve the goal of reducing and then eradicating the attainment gap we are now involved in substantially scaling up awareness, commitment and activities, and providing a more robust infrastructure to support this activity.

WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

The short lead-in time of the projects has meant it has taken time to implement interventions and the overall time-frame of the project has, as yet, been too short to enable meaningful change to happen and/or for outcomes to be observed.

Some staff remain less enthusiastic about engaging in this work than others. Heads of departments having ultimate responsibility to engage and report back on progress would have ensured consistent staff engagement.

We have had to take a robust approach to ensure that data on the attainment gap is shared, understood and is used to form the basis of interventions. Leading with the data but using numbers rather than statistics has ensured that staff can understand that we are talking about individuals and makes it 'real'.

HOW WELL HAS IT WORKED?

We have yet to see the changes we aim to achieve but recognise that changing institutional cultures and practices is challenging. Staff recognition of the attainment gap has increased and there is a high level of commitment to departmental projects. However, the first year projects were, mostly, small-scale and there is little evidence yet of impact on the attainment gap because of scale or because initiatives have taken time to develop.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

We now have funding for a second year of engagement. Our work over this academic year (2018–19) is based on:

- more transparent and visible recognition of the attainment gap, and institutional commitment to effecting change across the university and departments

- commitment to long-term funding (two or three years) to ensure strategic management of institutional approaches to addressing the attainment gap
- a coherent institutional strategy being developed, in partnership with key stakeholders, which makes clear our institutional commitment and approach
- a number of institutional initiatives being delivered across the university
- training and advice being made available to staff (and students) across the institution, including training on how to deal with issues around race/racism/micro-aggressions, understanding and dealing with data, developing proposals which avoid deficit approaches etc
- the implementation of multiple departmental interventions, supported by appropriate resources (staff and financial)
- head of departments having responsibility for affecting change
- significantly more engagement with students, including with the students' union, adopting, where feasible, participatory action research approaches
- further research with students, academics and other stakeholders to enable more nuanced understandings of our students' experiences and how change can be affected at a local level
- closer engagement with the work of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team and especially its Race Equality Charter work, Sheffield Hallam's employability and placement advisors, and the students' union, among others

CREATION OF THE BME POST IN HEALTH AND APPLIED SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST
OF ENGLAND

Alisha Airey, BME Student Success Project Officer

COST

- £26,000
- funded through Widening participation funds within the Health and Applied sciences (HAS) Faculty

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

I was recruited as BME Project Officer to focus on the success of BME students and create and lead on all BME initiatives within the Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences. The role was created to directly target the attainment gap of BME students within the faculty. My core responsibilities include sharing and developing an inclusive practice within Health and Applied Sciences (HAS) faculty and within the wider services offered at the University of the West of England (UWE).

The key part of the role is to open up conversations about race, run a series of staff and student workshops in order to promote an inclusive environment and lastly create interventions which are suited to individual areas and students.

HOW DID THE PROJECT WORK?

I created the BME programme as a part of my role. I ran focus groups with students across all departments and all the feedback fed directly into the programme.

The programme included:

- role model workshops with BME alumni students, BME professionals in the field, academics, and key individuals from wider BME communities
- one-to-one support was offered to all BME students, promoting targeted and personalised interventions
- a series of projects, such as community film screenings, to open up conversations about race to all students, staff and community groups, bridging the divide between community and the university
- staff awareness workshops where wider data was shared and best practice models were showcased

WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

- Obtaining programme data: without data programme leaders do not own responsibility for the part they have to play.
- Buy-in from staff across a very large faculty: I have learnt this has to be a collaborative approach, with buy-in from all staff, to ensure a culture shift to a more inclusive environment which will lead to more inclusive practices.
- Keeping momentum for the programme and implementing culture change.
- Students and staff understanding my role and encouraging staff and students to get involved.

HOW WELL HAS IT WORKED?

The evaluation is on-going through collecting student, community and staff feedback after workshops.

A year into this post I have:

- arranged and delivered over 20 workshops to students, staff and community members
- conducted over 70 one-to-one meetings with students and put the appropriate support in place and while doing this reported on the pitfalls to ensure systems do not disadvantage BME students
- worked with over 100 BME students
- worked very closely with the wellbeing team to ensure BME students are offered and have access to BME therapists
- connected a number of students with local BME role models to develop stronger working relationships
- identified spaces for BME students to access support while out on placement

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

I will continue to refine the BME programme with a key emphasis on working closer with programme leads to devise targeted approaches. I will also continue to develop the work with the wider community and university, allowing open conversations to take place. This will include working more closely with families.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE IN STEM (SESTEM)

UNIVERSITY OF READING

Dr Billy Wong, Project Lead

TIME PERIOD AND COST

- October 2018 – September 2021
- £40,000
- Internally funded to cover cost of part-time research assistants and data collection costs

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

The Student Experiences in STEM (SESTEM) aims to better understand the experiences of undergraduate students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) degrees, and aims to tackle the inequality of outcomes of STEM students at the university, especially those from BAME backgrounds. It represents a much-needed update to the university's 2014 report and will contribute to the university's commitments in the Race Equality Charter, as well as the university's Curriculum Framework, especially the development of inclusive practices.

HOW WILL THE PROJECT WORK?

The long-term goal is to understand and eventually develop strategies and resources to reduce the BAME attainment gap at university. Over three years, the data will include up to 90 interviews, 180 reflection journals and three discussion workshops. We have chosen this approach due to the importance of a rich and qualitative understanding of student experiences.

The project will:

- track students over the course of the year/degree – year one and year two participants will be invited to take part again in subsequent years
- each year, participants will return two journal reflections, as well as taking part in an interview, followed by a workshop to discuss preliminary findings and recommendations for change in practice
- generate empirical and contextual evidence to inform future work

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

The project has just started, but we anticipate that recruitment and retention to be a challenge.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

WIDENING PARTICIPATION ACHIEVEMENT TEAM (WIPAT)

UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON

Joanna MacDonnell, Director of Education

TIME PERIOD AND COST

- January 2017 – ongoing
- In academic year 2018–19: 0.6 full-time equivalent lecturer and £75,000 funded from the Access Agreement funds.

PARTNERS

Consortium project led by Kingston University London, De Montfort University, University of Greenwich, University of Hertfordshire and University of Wolverhampton and further education college, NESCOL

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

WiPAT was established to lead on the institutional approach to student retention, success and progression. The team develops and leads on initiatives and interventions which directly respond to the annual the Differential Outcomes Report with particular reference to those subjects and student groups with identified areas of concern.

The purpose of the WiPAT is to:

- ensure that there is fairness across our processes
- an understanding of unconscious bias
- provide opportunities for BME students to have mentors who support their aspirations and ambitions

HOW DID THE PROJECT WORK?

Our work has involved:

- understanding the data by undertaking a close analysis at course level
- using data to start conversations in schools and raise awareness with personal academic tutors
- developing a greater understanding of who our students are, for example examining the intersectionality with commuting students (BME students are more likely to be commuters than white students and commuting students have poorer outcomes than non-commuters)
- establishing synergies between the Equality and Diversity Team, Race Equality Charter Group and WIPAT, such as hosting a joint event on Decolonising the Curriculum in December 2017
- developing the Student Success Framework
- actions for staff development around BME attainment (resulting in Advance HE unconscious bias workshops for lecturers and academic staff delivered in 2018/19)
- BME mentoring implemented in the School of Health Sciences
- and planned in the School of Environment and Technology
- actions to revise and refresh the definitions of *inclusivity* and *inclusive practice*
- refreshing and communicating the policy and guidelines on religious observance during assessment and examinations
- the creation of a BME Student Success Group, consisting of 50% BME students, 50% staff
- interventions including mentoring, 1:1 coaching and employability skills workshops
- an anonymous marking pilot

WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

We learnt that there is a need to focus on university staff; it was challenging to get some staff to engage with unconscious bias training, both face-to-face and online. The notion that ‘I don’t have biases’ is prevalent. Some staff will continue to blame the students despite the data indicating that this is not the case.

HOW WELL HAS IT WORKED?

Over three years, we have seen a reduction of 6% in the BME attainment gap, and 8% in the black attainment gap. However this is ongoing and we don't yet have an outcome other than these metrics.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

We are just starting the round of funding allocations for academic school based interventions.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF BME STUDENTS: A PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS PERSPECTIVE

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

Dr Louise Bunce, Principle Investigator

TIME PERIOD AND COST

- 2016–17
- £3,000
- Funded by an Oxford Brookes University, Health and Life Sciences Faculty, Learning and Teaching Grant

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

We explored the lived experiences of BME students using a psychological needs perspective provided by Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to understand the issues they face while studying at university.

SDT proposes that everyone has three fundamental needs; autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The extent to which we experience fulfilment of these needs predicts our motivation for learning and well-being. We chose a focus group approach because we wanted an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of BME students, with a view to changing our practice.

HOW DID THE PROJECT WORK?

We ran three focus groups with a total of 18 BME undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences. Through the focus groups we explored the extent to which the students felt their psychological needs were being met to establish what support they may find helpful to improve their university experience. The focus groups were each conducted by a BME member of staff, and the member of staff did not teach students in the faculty.

The principle investigator (PI) oversaw the project, and was involved in data analysis, dissemination and the development of subsequent interventions.

A paid external research assistant helped to organise the focus groups so that students were anonymous to the PI. The research assistant also transcribed the focus groups and assisted the PI with data analysis.

After the data had been analysed, the PI held two feedback groups for any BME students interested in the project findings. In this session, the PI fed back some of the general themes that emerged from the focus groups to demonstrate that we had listened and heard their experiences. The PI discussed with students possible types of support that we could put in place and changes to practice we could make.

WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

It was difficult recruiting students and finding a suitable time that they could all meet. As a result, we had fewer students than we would have liked taking part. It was also challenging finding an appropriate BME staff member to conduct the focus groups who did not also teach the participating students.

Students had to trust us to treat what they said confidentially, and to listen to and take what they were saying seriously. Students were brave to come forward and talk about very challenging and sometimes upsetting issues to them.

HOW WELL HAS IT WORKED?

We found that BME students reported persistent and significant difficulties, both within their education and outside in their everyday life, which undermined their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Several students who took part commented on how cathartic they felt the focus groups to be, and how important it was for them to feel that they were being listened to and cared about. The sessions

seemed to strengthen the connections between students, and between the students and university staff involved in the project.

There were several unintended and beneficial outcomes beyond those expected, for example, one program leader reported more instances of BME students raising inclusion/discrimination issues/complaints that we could then support them with.

Discussing the project at team meetings and departmental away days also raised awareness and understanding among staff of our BME students' experiences. Staff now promote resources among the team, eg diversifying the curriculum resources, educational videos, and books about diversity. More staff are interested in attending events about diversity and becoming more knowledgeable.

We learned that BME students want to have their experiences heard so that they can be understood and supported to enable them to achieve their full potential. We learned that staff and institutional structures need to change to facilitate inclusive practices.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

We will continue to disseminate the project and its findings more widely to other faculties, at department away days, the senior management conference, and the annual learning and teaching conference.

We are running a diversity group for students in the faculty to discuss equality, diversity and inclusion issues and get advice or support if necessary. The group will meet twice a semester with a teaching fellow who also identifies as BME and who will administer the group. The students have a WhatsApp group, and will help to buddy-up new students who identify as BME with existing BME students.

THE UAL ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT MODEL (AEM)

UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON

Professor Susan Orr, Dean of Learning and Teaching Enhancement,
Teaching and Learning Exchange, Strategic Lead for addressing attainment
differentials at UAL

TIME PERIOD AND COST

- Four full-time equivalent AEM leads and three attainment educational developers
- Secured funding for an additional 0.6 post by Catalyst Changing Mindset in 2017,
- [Dr Gurnam Singh](#), Visiting Fellow in Race and Education, offers ten days of consultancy to UAL each year

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

The Academic Enhancement Model (AEM) is UAL's strategic approach to reducing attainment differentials and improving student retention and experience. AEM firmly locates the work of addressing our differentials within our structures and approaches, avoiding a deficit approach that problematises the student.

AEM deploys co-design approaches to support courses that fall below set thresholds in relation to attainment differentials, retention and student satisfaction. It focuses on key sites of academic activity that include formative assessment, feedback, curriculum, identity, cultural difference, stereotype threat, implicit bias, micro affirmation and work-based learning.

The UAL Court of Governors set a KPI that by 2022 UAL will have eliminated its attainment differentials. Our key objective is to ensure that this is mainstream activity at the core of our academic strategy and that this work is relentless and unavoidable.

HOW DID THE PROJECT WORK?

There are four AEM College based academic leads who work with the university's [Teaching and Learning Exchange](#). Building on work already in place at college-level, the AEM Leads provide focused, ongoing support to courses that fall below thresholds.

Sabri's (2017) research identified 'promising sites of intervention'. AEM leads coordinate these interventions ensuring that resources are appropriately targeted. For example, Sabri points to the positive impact of micro affirmation in teaching at UAL: we offer workshops for staff to develop expertise in this area. The AEM team has co-designed an AEM Tool Box that offers tried and tested and evidence-based interventions and resources.

As part of our Catalyst funded work we offer [Growth Mindsets workshops](#) (adapted to '[Creative Mindsets](#)' to align with our arts focus) for students and staff whose courses are in AEM. These workshops focus on implicit bias, stereotype threat and growth mindsets.

While we see the work of addressing our attainment differentials as staff activity, we do not ignore the role of the student. There are two partnerships with students and the students' union: '[Decolonising the Arts Curriculum One College at a Time](#)' and working with staff and students on implicit bias and stereotype threat.

We have also established an Attainment Differential Action Group chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor that supports the attainment differential work.

WHAT WAS CHALLENGING?

Our staff development offer is attracting very positive engagement but we do not have systems in place to track this engagement at the level of course team.

We have had to manage the student communications and partnership in a nuanced way to avoid stereotype threat. For example, we do not tell students about the attainment gap in their first induction lecture! Instead we work with students in areas where the students' union and student body are keen to collaborate, primarily decolonising the curriculum.

Our workshops on implicit bias and stereotype threat are delivered by trained students, but the complexity of their lives mean it is hard for them to commit to sessions weeks in advance. This sometimes leads to last minute changes which are hard to manage.

HOW WELL HAS IT WORKED?

AEM has enabled the university to identify best practice, thus providing consistency and accelerating enhancement work across the university. This year we have seen a 4% reduction in the differential between undergraduate students of colour and white students achieving a first- or upper-second-class degree. Differential reductions on some courses in AEM have been significant.

We have secured very high levels of engagement in this work: over 600 staff have attended attainment related staff development. Putting attainment differentials at the heart of AEM has been key to communicating to staff and students that this work is unavoidable. It is important to build relationships with course team staff that promote collaboration and co-design, and to make the attainment differentials a shared problem for all staff to address, without shame and blame. We have learnt how important it is to support colleagues to be able to have uncomfortable conversations that directly challenge student deficit narratives and address issues of race and whiteness.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

We are working with course teams to share the AEM Tool Box resources and are working with colleagues across UAL to co-design additional resources to support staff. We are also progressing the AEM Student Resource Pack, where students are co-designing learning materials that respond to areas that students have expressed concern about, eg tutoring and community building.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

The AEM team wants to acknowledge its debt to the pioneering work of Aisha Richards who founded Shades of Noir.

PERSONAL TUTORING AT PORTSMOUTH

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

Dr Mary McKeever, Academic Developer, Principal Lecturer in Higher Education and Principal Fellow of the HEA, University of Portsmouth
Project Lead on the OfS-funded Raising Awareness Raising Aspiration (RARA) Project on Personal Tutoring

TIME PERIOD AND COST

- March 2017- March 2019
- OfS funding
- £90,000 from the catalyst fund; £57,000 of which invested in a PhD student bursary to research the experiences of successful BME students at Portsmouth
- Dedicated staff time including: project lead; staff from Information Systems and Technology-enhanced Learning and the Academic Skills Unit and 25 senior tutors

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Personal Tutoring at Portsmouth aims to enhance personal tutoring for all students at the university, with a focus on building an understanding of how the attainment gap is manifested in different departments. The project is investigating to what extent an enhanced personal tutoring system can reduce the attainment gap, based on research evidence that the personal tutor can play a particularly important role in the academic integration of BME students and students from lower socio-economic groups.

Building on the experience of the University of Sheffield and King's College London, we developed our own personal tutoring platform. The platform supports personal tutors as they guide students through all stages of the student cycle, bringing together multiple data streams, links to student services, and training resources for personal tutors into one place.

HOW DID THE PROJECT WORK?

A cross-institutional team was formed to build the platform; this included staff from Information Systems, Academic Development, Technology-enhanced Learning, and staff and personal tutors from the schools of Architecture and Creative Technologies.

The personal tutors made a 'wish list' of the information they need to be effective, and voted on the priority of the information. Their overarching request was that all the information should be in one place. Central to this was wanting immediate access to student support services so that they can refer students to academic, personal and career development support.

The Information Systems team adopted new technology and ways of working to provide the information that tutors need, ensuring ease of use, security, privacy and maintainability of the platform. The technology used allows for the addition of new functionality to the live platform so that further requirements can be added easily.

Following a successful pilot, the platform was rolled out across the university under the supervision of a senior tutor in each department. The platform allows tutors to track the engagement and academic progress of students and to act swiftly to refer students to additional opportunities.

WHAT WAS CHALLENGING?

The platform draws on numerous, real-time, data streams, which span specialist departments that each have some autonomy. There have been some anomalies and time lags in the data; it has been challenging to identify the sources of anomalies and to provide guidance to personal tutors about who to contact should one occur. Departments have had to work together to map out processes and responsibilities for particular issues.

There are challenges around the suitability of some staff to the role of personal tutor, and expertise in personal tutoring, including working with BME students and students from lower socio-economic groups, exists in pockets. The senior tutor network is providing a way in which this expertise can be shared across the institution.

There are also challenges in the time and effort being a personal tutor can involve. Recent research is indicating that group work can solve some of the logistical problems, help students form peer support networks.

We had to submit the platform to a review to ensure that it complied with GDPR. The requirement that students give permission to share their data has required working with the disability service to find a method of obtaining student consent to share reasonable adjustments with personal tutors.

HOW WELL HAS IT WORKED?

When the platform was piloted, 95.8% of tutors in Creative Technologies and 84.2% in Architecture said that it was an improvement on what they had before. A test site was sent to associate deans and heads of schools and 80% of respondents thought that staff in their faculty/school would benefit from the platform.

The platform was rolled out across the institution in September 2018 and currently connects all personal tutors with over 20,000 students. It is too early to see any impact on the BME attainment gap, but senior tutors have been given access to the high-level BIS database to investigate the attainment gap in their schools.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

We will be prioritising our student-facing work by piloting an interactive student guide to personal tutoring. We hope to work with the students' union to involve students in a critical analysis of the BME attainment gap. We want to encourage the students' union to conduct research with students so that our work is informed by the BME student experience and that student perspectives are included in resources for personal tutors.

We are conducting research into the experiences of different ethnic groups at the university, focusing on the strategies employed by students and their personal tutors that have resulted in academic success.

We will explore the role that personal tutors might play in helping to reduce the attainment gap. The departmental-based work led by senior tutors will investigate attainment gaps and initiate discussions about the retention, progression and academic achievement of all students, with a particular focus on the BME attainment gap.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

RACE, RIGHTS AND SOVEREIGNTY

GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

Caroline Grape and Ray Bushell, Co-programmers

TIME PERIOD AND COST

- 2016 – ongoing
- Budget for each academic year is £4000
- Funded by the GSA Public Lecture Series (£2000) and GSA Students' Association (£2000)

PARTNERS

Partnership between the GSA Public Lecture Series and the GSA Students' Association. Some events are delivered with external partners including: LUX Scotland, University of Stirling, University of St Andrews, Glasgow Autonomous Space, Kinning Park Complex, Glue Factory & Centre for Contemporary Arts.

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

The Race, Rights and Sovereignty series seeks to celebrate, challenge, inform and inspire the next generation of artists, designers and architects about race and empower them to have a creative voice. The series is now in its third academic year and over this period has expanded to include a wide range of events including lectures, screenings and workshops. Events are practitioner-led, meaning we provide support for the practitioner to deliver an event that is beneficial to their practice. This resists 'tokenism' and creates space for tackling issues surrounding equality and diversity in a genuine way.

Initiated in response to student and staff demands for increased information and opportunities to discuss and unpack ideas and issues in this field, the series provides safe forums for discussion and knowledge exchange. All events are free and open to everyone. Our audience predominantly consists of GSA staff and students, the general public and local communities, particularly where activities take place externally.

HOW DID THE PROJECT WORK?

Since 2016, we have delivered 13 events with local, national and international-based practitioners. These events tackle varying issues and form the core programme. By allowing the event structure to be informed by the invited practitioner we create a supportive environment for both practitioner and audience to explore a complex subject area.

To evaluate the success of individual events, we request feedback from practitioners, participants and partners, which we use for reporting purposes. Through this, we can accumulate suggestions for speakers and titles for the reading lists, a continuously growing resource that underpins the series. Previously, we have incorporated suggestions from students and staff for speakers and practitioners.

This year we have also launched [a new website](#) which includes an open-source [resource centre](#), with recommended reading lists and support networks suggested by invited practitioners, GSA staff/students and the general public.

WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

As the equality and diversity discussion is complex, it's key to programme strategically in order to appeal to a wide audience, first and foremost led by the invited speaker or practitioner's practice, and also by incorporating external partners.

As the series is ongoing, it can be challenging to operate an outcome-based approach. We are investigating how to measure impact in a holistic, sensitive way, which may include a combination of reporting, photographing, sound or video recordings and/or feedback forms.

HOW WELL HAS IT WORKED?

Key development areas are:

- increased event attendance
- launch of dedicated website (incorporating a resource centre)
- and inter-disciplinary partnerships, one of which resulted in a mentorship opportunity

The programme has evolved organically but maintains its commitment to challenging, informing and inspiring people about race through diverse

programming strategies, in which we work with a variety of practitioners, student societies and partners.

It is important for programming of this nature to retain the ability to respond to urgent areas of discussion. A responsive, responsible and critical approach results in programming that resists becoming a 'tick-box exercise' to meet with equality and diversity aims. Relinquishing singular authorship means that equality and diversity aims become embedded in working approaches. This openness and flexibility builds a sense of collective ownership and ensures the longevity and impact of the programme.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

The programme will continue to deliver practitioner-led events for GSA students, staff and the public. We are focusing on the key theme of 'sovereignty' for the forthcoming academic year in response to the current precarious environment in the UK and beyond. We will deepen existing partnerships and form new ones, allowing us to deliver a wider scope of events and a larger programme which maintains its responsiveness and flexibility. The commitment to care, support and reciprocal relationships are embedded into the programming and sharing this ethos will be an important part of our next steps.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

BLACK CANTABS 'HISTORY MAKERS' EXHIBITION

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

Amy Trevethan, Public Affairs Manager (UK/Westminster)

TIME PERIOD AND COST

- October 2018–ongoing: likely end date of exhibition is 31 October 2019.
- Cambridge Assessment, £4,000
- Cambridge University Press £1,000
- King's College, Cambridge £1,200
- Newnham College, Cambridge £400
- Department of Social Anthropology £800
- Trinity College, Cambridge £500
- University Library £800
- Vice-Chancellor's Office £1,500

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

The 'History Makers' touring exhibition presents portraits of Cambridge's black graduates, from 1720 to the present. The exhibition is designed to encourage discussions around race and racial bias: in the words of its introduction, 'As you walk this corridor, do these images match your idea of what you think Cambridge is? If not, why?' The exhibition provokes visitors to challenge their own construction of belonging and perceptions of inclusivity by asking 'who really belongs here?'

HOW DID THE PROJECT WORK?

The exhibition is a collaboration between the university and colleges, and student society, the Black Cantabs Research Society. First hosted by the university library, the exhibition focuses on the indelible mark black alumni have left on Cambridge, and the world.

It features 15 portraits, including the novelist Zadie Smith, Britain's first black female MP the Rt Hon Diane Abbott, and the actress Thandie Newton. The portraits are styled as counterpoints to the traditional portraits lining the walls of the university and colleges in a challenge to create a new tradition of representation and inclusion for ethnic minorities. A number of our Black 'history makers' also spoke to camera [for short films](#) remembering their time at Cambridge.

Putting a spotlight on the 'hidden histories' of early black students at the university has been a means to stimulate conversations around the representation of ethnic minorities at Cambridge, and to influence moves towards a more inclusive culture.

All Cambridge undergraduates starting in 2018 viewed the exhibition as part of their induction to the university library, and more than a hundred people attended an [opening show at Trinity College](#). The portraits will also go on permanent display at their respective colleges.

WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

We have been aware of the need to approach this topic carefully. In student-institution collaborations, the institution needs to support its students appropriately to empower them to lead on the work and tell their own stories. This ensures student and alumni have ownership of their narratives.

We have been sensitive to concerns that the representation could be seen as reductionist, for example, packaging this wealth of history into 18 portraits. It is important to acknowledge that individual initiatives are each contributing to a wider cultural shift, which can take time.

We also encountered logistical challenges in sourcing images and other historical documentary evidence.

HOW WELL HAS IT WORKED?

We have noticed a gradual changing of perceptions across the university,

encouraged by the positive reception of the exhibition. Qualitative evidence has been gathered via feedback cards and by speaking directly to students, alumni, their families, and exhibition attendees. This evidence has been shared with senior leaders at the university and is informing the development of other projects.

There has been an increasing prominence of ethnic minority students as ‘spokespeople’ on behalf of their peers; for example, Toni Fola-Alade, President of the African Caribbean Society, spoke on Radio 4’s Today programme shortly after the exhibition commenced.

The exhibition has shown the university’s commitment to increasing the visibility of ethnic minority students’ contributions to Cambridge, and has demonstrated that the university is engaging in potentially challenging and critical dialogues around race. This has stimulated further engagement between the university and its black alumni, including discussions around the formation of a Black Alumni Network, which would potentially offer additional support and mentoring to current students.

Students and alumni have positive stories to tell about their time at Cambridge, as well as constructive reflections on how the university might cultivate a more inclusive environment. The exhibition has prompted us to consider the right mechanisms that could enable students to tell these stories more frequently.

The projects have been enhanced by senior leader buy-in from an early stage, such as the vice-chancellor’s address ‘Let’s Talk About Race’ in October 2018.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

The exhibition will continue to tour the university. We are hoping to build upon this work in future university and college events, particularly during Black History Month 2019.

The student-institution collaboration model will help to inform our ongoing work with our student ‘vloggers’, and our upcoming social media campaigns designed to increase the visibility of ethnic minority students at Cambridge and to encourage more applications from prospective students who are British Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi, all of which are under-represented groups at Cambridge.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

PUBLISHING BAME ATTAINMENT STATISTICS

GOLDSMITHS,
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Professor Elisabeth Hill, Deputy Warden

Melanie Rimmer, Director of Strategic Planning and Projects

TIME PERIOD AND COST

- Spring of each year
- Staff time

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

The annual publication of comparative data showing the ethnic breakdown of Goldsmiths' student body, in terms of:

- student enrolments
- average entry tariff
- non-continuation and progression rates
- degree classification

The institution-level data is published openly on Goldsmiths' website and goes beyond the information contained in statutory returns to HESA. The data also drills down beyond 'BAME' to identify differences between the outcomes of Black, Asian and 'Other' ethnicities. Internally, department-level information is available to departmental management teams.

The data serves two key purposes: holding the institution to account publicly for its progress in reducing inequalities in outcomes for different groups of

students, and driving increased awareness of the issues amongst leaders and managers across the college to inform how they work to address these challenges.

HOW DOES THE PROJECT WORK?

The data was first provided in response to a student campaign and it was agreed to publish the figures openly and use this as part of an evidence base for work to address the attainment gap at Goldsmiths.

Data is analysed by Goldsmiths' Strategic Projects and Planning team, and accompanied by a brief narrative cover note from the Senior Management Team. The report is published annually in the spring, using the latest available datasets.

The report is publicised through various communications channels, seeking to demonstrate the transparency agenda which sits behind the publication. The report is also shared with a number of internal governance committees, including the Academic Board.

WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

A number of challenges exist within the available data. For example, we have been unable to analyse applications received because of the large proportion of 'unknowns' in the dataset received from UCAS. We have greatly improved our own recording of ethnicity on enrolment in recent years, creating a more reliable dataset once students join us. Variable collection and coding of reasons for withdrawal also limit the insights available in the data; efforts to address this are now an area of focus of work for those working in student administration across the college.

We are in the process of developing our capacity and capability for data analysis and this will enable more sophisticated approaches in the future. For example, this year we will produce analysis of progression that includes students on four-year integrated degree programmes as well as the standard three-year undergraduate degree programmes. The dashboards will also enable multi-variant analysis of the data – showing where a number of factors may be coming into play to impact progression and attainment, such as type of entry qualifications. We hope this will better inform the targeting of any interventions, when considered alongside other forms of evidence such as qualitative feedback from students.

It is also worth acknowledging that the open publication of such detailed data presents potential risks in terms of the perception of a lack of rapid enough

progress in reducing inequalities between different groups of students. Goldsmiths has taken the view that tackling inequalities and challenging injustices can be challenging work, but this is best achieved openly and robustly, always acknowledging that there is more to be done.

HOW WELL HAS IT WORKED?

This is only the second year of publishing the data, but the exercise has helped focus minds across the college on the challenges and provided a solid foundation for a wider range of activity, working alongside Goldsmiths Students' Union. It has driven the early work of a new BAME Working Group, which has in turn led to the appointment of an academic lead in this area.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Continued publication each year, with increasing analytical sophistication and provision of greater insight. In future, we envisage producing accessible complementary material to more readily engage a student audience, with the use of infographics to illustrate the key data insights.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

LIBERATE OUR LIBRARY

GOLDSMITHS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Liberate our Library Working Group: Marilyn Clarke, Sara Ewing,
Jessa Mockridge, Laura Elliott, Alice Harvey, Cathy Leung, Leo Appleton

TIME PERIOD AND COST

- 2018 – ongoing

Budget for each academic year for book/resources suggestions is £2,500, additional funding will go into creating a Liberation Zines collection (£500)

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Goldsmiths' Library, as a conduit for access to learning and teaching resources, has committed to helping to deliver the Goldsmiths Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy's commitment to 'liberate our degrees' alongside the liberation call of Goldsmiths Students' Union. The Library has a dedicated '[Liberate our Library](#)' webpage (live as of December 2018) outlining the commitment to liberation work. We make two broad statements:

- we will work to diversify our collections, to de-centre Whiteness, to challenge non-inclusive structures in knowledge management and their impact on library collections, users, and services
- we will take an intersectional approach to our liberation work to encompass the many parts of a person's identity

We are engaging with the critical pedagogy movement with the establishment of a Liberate our Library Working Group, including a cross section of Library Services staff. This group also regularly meets with students' union sabbatical officers for Education, and Welfare and Diversity.

HOW DID THE PROJECT WORK?

We have assigned an annual sum of £2,500 to buy resources under the 'liberate our degrees' project. We have set up a dedicated resource suggestion form, through which students can make suggestions for purchases in line with this remit to 'ensure access, inclusion, and robust learning support for all our students'. All such purchases are searchable as a collection in LibrarySearch, the library discovery catalogue. We have already made over 100 acquisitions through the scheme.

We also work alongside academics to provide decolonised reading lists using our Reading List tool, Talisplayer, to create interactive, collaborative lists that focus on marginalised, underrepresented voices to better represent the identities and experiences of our student body, and by doing so, 'self-decolonise'.

We also deliver academic skills workshops to further equip students' approaches to the decolonisation agenda, such as: [Decolonising research methods](#) (Sara Ewing), and, [Decolonising the Modern World](#) (Vik Loveday, Sociology).

WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

We are keen to forge links with academic departments across the college to coordinate all our efforts towards liberation work, leading to less duplication of effort and more collaboration to make a better student offer. Achieving this requires focused time from academic colleagues and library personnel, and securing this time can be challenging during the bulk of the academic year.

We have been pleased to be invited to visit other libraries and higher education institutions and talk about our progress so far in this area of work. We remain committed to such activity, but it is important for leaders and managers to be realistic about the resource required to perform this sharing of practice.

HOW WELL DID IT WORK?

We acknowledge that decolonising curricula infused with centuries of bias is a huge task involving many stakeholders, that we have only just begun. However, early achievements so far include:

- over 100 liberate our degrees resources (books, DVDs) already purchased through student suggestions

- students engaging with decolonised reading lists and making further suggestions through these, while also discussing their content interactively
- students attending academic skills and critical librarianship workshops
- setting up a Critical Librarianship Reading group, dismantling and identifying inherent biases in library knowledge organisation and knowledge management methodologies

Goldsmiths Student’s Union are very keen to work with the Liberate our Library Working Group and we see this relationship as key to driving the success of the various liberation initiatives.

Our one academic collaboration has worked well, allowing us to experiment with a new tool, Talisplayer, as well as engage in critical pedagogy work.

We have a dedicated webpage where we inform our users of liberation work we are undertaking. This has been well received by both students and staff.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

- We will continue to dedicate funds towards liberate our degrees suggestions, and promote these purchases via Goldsmiths Library’s Twitter account.
- We will make book displays of these purchases for Black History Month, LGBTQIA month, and International Women’s Day.
- We will build a Goldsmiths zines collection to reflect diverse, underrepresented and marginalised voices within the student community.
- We will build on our decolonised reading lists by building key relationships with academic departments.
- We will extend our decolonial academic skills offering.
- We will work critically with library collection and management tools whilst being mindful of the historical legacies and focus of White, Western, heteronormative structures. We will seek to disrupt these in a pedagogical way. This work will be done in collaboration with students and academic staff.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

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