Tackling racial harassment in higher education

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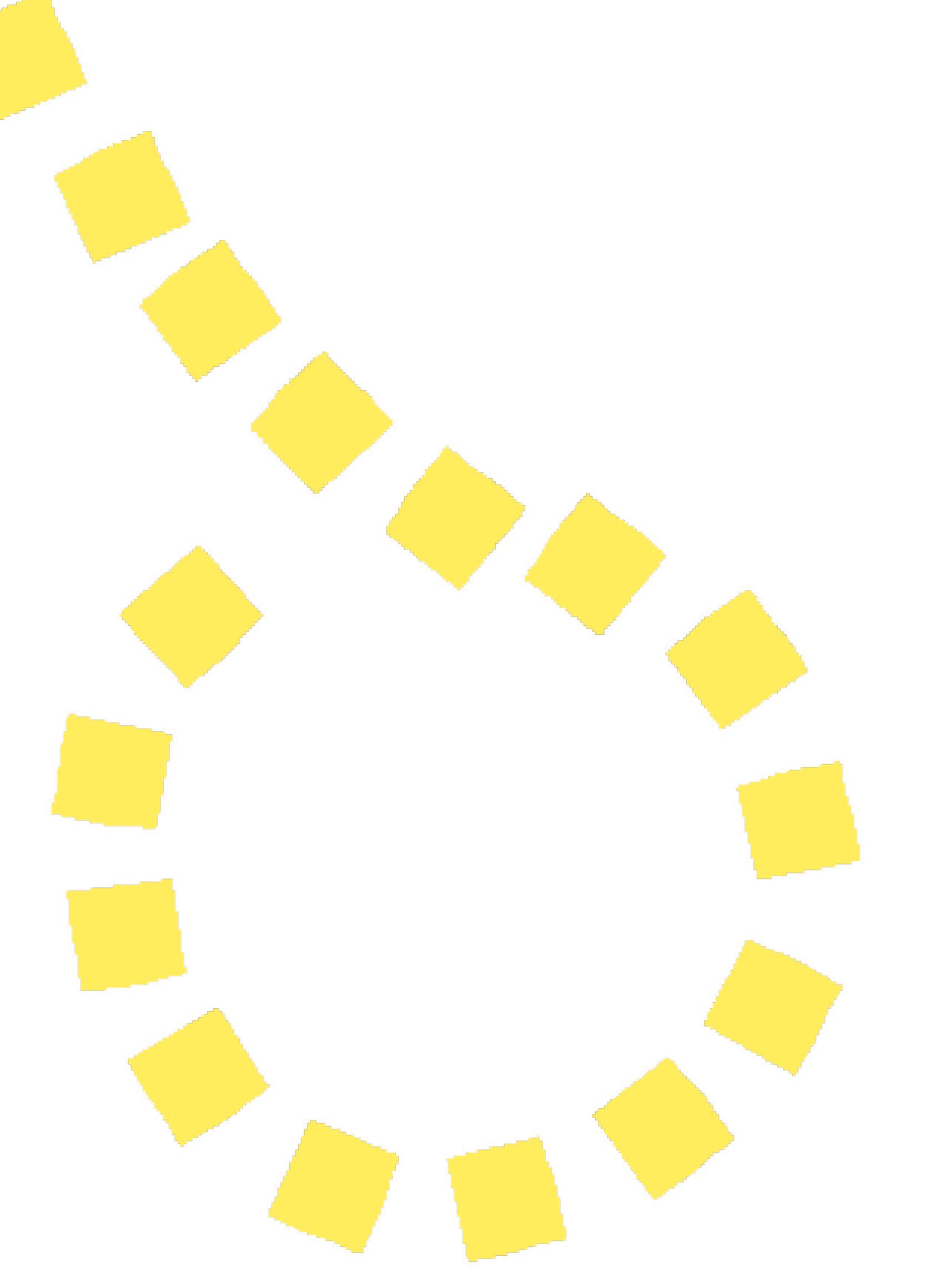
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University of Aberdeen

Internal and external partnership working

The University of Aberdeen is developing and implementing a bold framework for creating an anti-racist university with a focus on partnership.



Anti-racism strategy

The university developed its Anti-racism strategy 2022–25 through meaningful discussion with partners to hear views and galvanise commitment and momentum across the university. A key tenet of the strategy is that collective effort is required to combat racism and that voices of racialised groups should be at the core of this work.

The strategy sets out priority areas for action, developed in discussion with the university's race equality strategy group (RESG) and key bodies in the university such as the senate, court and the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) committee, as well as with external partners such as Advance HE and NHS Grampian. These discussions were supported by Aberdeen University Students Association and the university's internal equality networks.

RSEG provides strategic direction on racerelated issues and comprises staff and students across the university. The university also has a thriving race equality network for staff and students from racialised groups.

Internal partnerships

The robust internal partnerships fostered at the university have been instrumental in delivering change. Examples of this activity include:

 enhancement of the university's online report and support tool

- expanded EDI events and engagement activities, such as development of a Black History Month programme
- delivery of an ongoing race literacy training programme tailored to staff cohorts
- development of a systematic and collective approach to decolonising the curriculum
- appointment of race equality champions across schools and directors of professional services
- commitment to providing monetary recognition for the contribution of students to this work

The university's immediate and planned priorities internally include:

- capacity building opportunities for frontline staff on responding to racist incidents
- addressing the underrepresentation of racialised groups at senior levels through a new recruitment policy
- harnessing the power of data to understand challenges and progress, eg on the ethnicity awarding gap

External partnerships

Development of external partnerships has also been critical to this work. The university's strategy includes a commitment to mutual sharing of learning and collective action with external partners.

So far, activities have included:

- engagement with Advance HE as a strategic sounding board
- sponsoring Black Impact and providing opportunities for them to showcase their mission
- establishing an anti-racism roundtable, led by the university.

The anti-racism roundtable is made up of a consortium of local partners dedicated to advancing and embedding anti-racism in their organisations and in the northeast of Scotland. It has connected organisations, providing an opportunity for honest reflection and a platform to showcase progress. Attendees have identified common challenges and opportunities for collaboration, including on decolonisation efforts, diversity festivals and networking events.

The roundtable is now progressing into its second year with a review of progress and an externally facilitated strategic direction-setting process, including setting ambitious outcomes to which all participating organisations can contribute.

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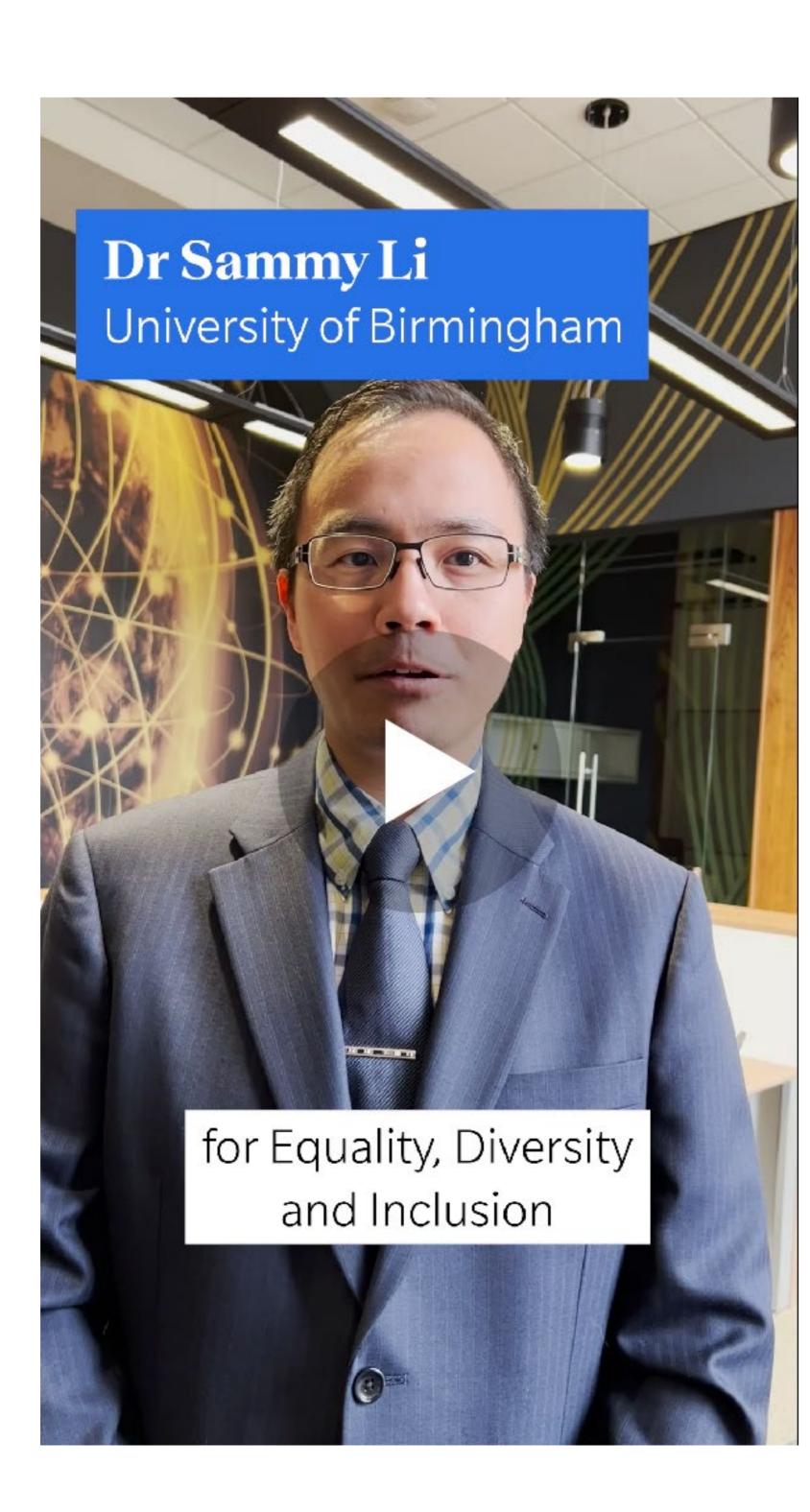
University of Birmingham

Partnership with the University of Amsterdam

The partnership between University of Birmingham and University of Amsterdam was forged in 2019 with the aim of sharing expertise and collaborating to enhance equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the two institutions.

Watch on YouTube:

Dr Sammy Li and Dr Guido de Wilde on the partnership



About the partnership

Each organisation has a highly diverse, international and multicultural population, so ensuring community cohesion is a key priority for both. The partnership's area of focus has been around enhancing the intercultural competency of their student and staff populations.

Intercultural competency is a fundamental part of a suite of approaches, aimed at ensuring students and staff have the understanding and skills required to build cohesion, communicate effectively, and foster shared understanding on such diverse campuses.

Resources for students

The universities have developed an online EDI learning course for students that teaches intercultural skills and strategies, such as 'intercultural teamworking', active bystandership and sharing multicultural accommodation.

Resources like these are designed to connect with the day-to-day lives of students at various touchpoints through the student lifecycle.

Over 4,000 students have self-subscribed to this course, and it has achieved over 250,000 unique page views.

The theme for the universities' collaboration this year is 'urban changemakers', including a range of activities designed to empower students to make positive changes for intercultural cohesion.

Summer school

As well as the annual student-led EDI festival, the universities have also designed a fully funded four-week summer school in Amsterdam for University of Birmingham widening participation students to grow the skills and confidence to be changemakers in their own lives.

Working with some of University of
Amsterdam's top minds in intercultural
competency, these students will return to
Birmingham to share their learning with their
peers as part of a knowledge sharing campus
tour to empower more and more of the student
population to be the changemakers we need
in society in order to effectively tackle not
only racial harassment, but also intersecting
oppressions.

The universities' hope is that through this collaboration, and working closely with our students to empower them, and therefore harnessing the scale of people-power necessary, students can continue to deploy the skills and understanding needed to address these challenges, and create the kind of mass cultural change needed on campuses, but also in wider society.

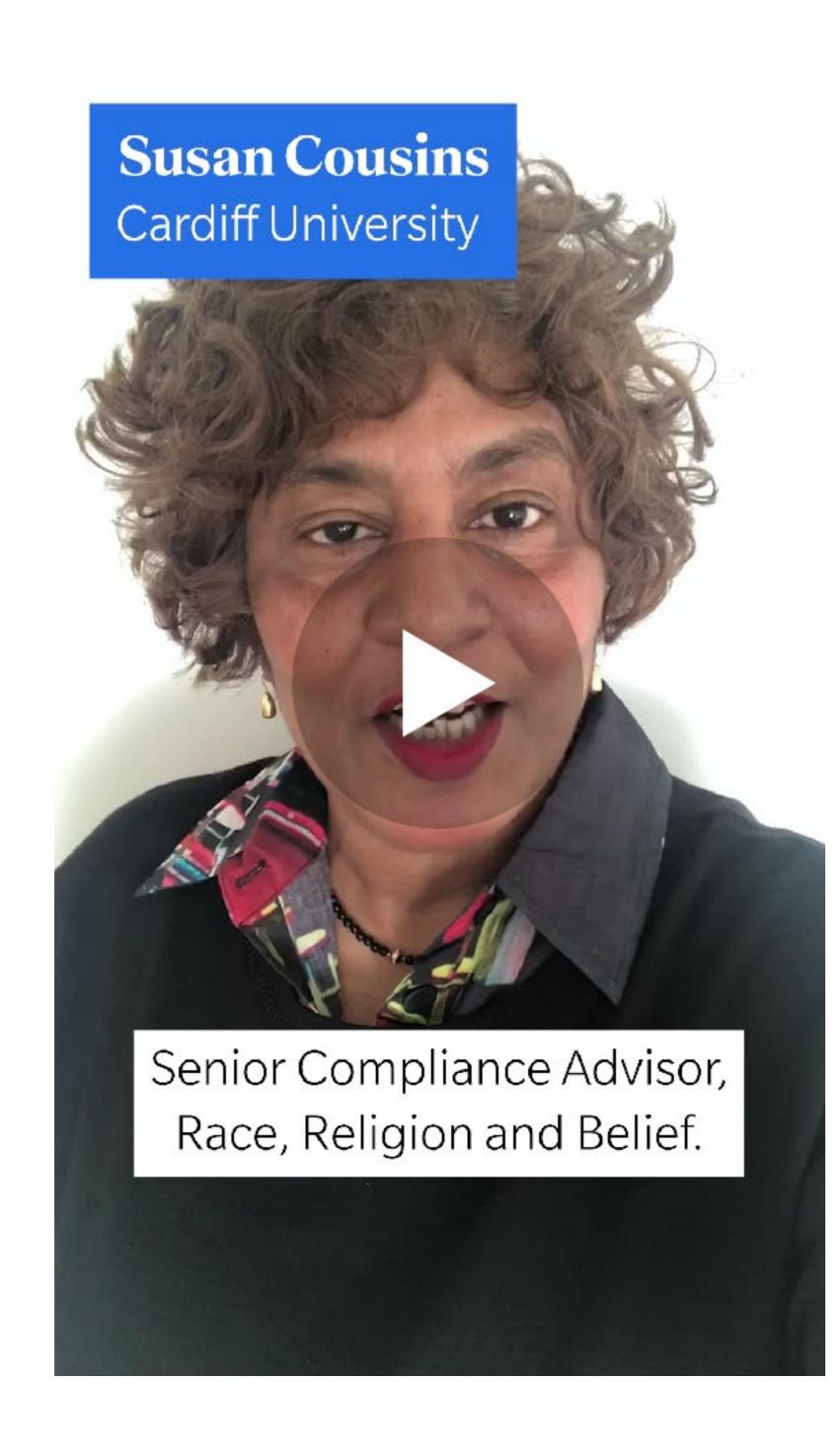
Cardiff University

A whole-institution approach to anti-racism

Cardiff University is taking a whole-institution approach to achieving its aim of becoming an actively anti-racist university.

Watch on YouTube:

Susan Cousins on Cardiff's work on anti-racism



The university has undertaken two external reviews of its progress towards race equality in recent years, in 2017 and 2021, and has accepted the recommendations from both these reviews in full.

EDIHub

The university has invested in a new team, the EDI Hub, which aims to strategically coordinate and embed equality, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism (EDIAR) activity across the institution.

The team is located in the vice-chancellor's office and reports directly to the deputy vice-chancellor, who has overall responsibility for this area of work. This positioning puts EDIAR at the heart of decision-making in the university and, alongside public statements from senior leaders, demonstrates the leadership's commitment to becoming a proactively antiracist institution.

The EDI Hub is developing a clear vision for EDIAR, revising operational structures and refreshing the university's EDI governance structures. Part of this work will involve strengthening mechanisms for voices of staff and students to inform senior-level decision making.

New groups will be introduced from September 2023 with responsibility for interrogating data, identifying and raising issues, overseeing projects, providing recommendations to the

university's EDI committee, and ensuring that the institution's EDIAR work is effective and impactful.

These groups will be co-chaired by two members of the university's executive board to strengthen senior-level oversight and accountability and demonstrate senior level commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism. One of the groups will focus on race, religion and belief, and will have oversight of the institution's engagement with the Race Equality Charter.

The key aim for these groups is to ensure that the lived experience of staff and students is heard, valued, and informs the institution's decision making. Working with all co-chairs, the deputy vice-chancellor will ensure that issues of intersectionality will not get lost.

Senior Compliance Advisor

As well as this, the university has a dedicated senior compliance advisor for race, religion and belief who provides guidance across the institution and supports the university to effectively manage complex race-related issues and complaints, with the support of the institution's Race Equality Supervisory Panel. This multi-team approach to achieving race equality supports the university to tackle immediate issues and challenges while also working towards achieving wholescale institutional change.

Strategic Equality Plan

The university is in the process of developing its next Strategic Equality Plan (2024–28), which will set a new direction of travel and a vision for what EDIAR means for Cardiff University. This new approach will bring together existing strategies and action plans, including the university's Race Equality Action Plan, into a cohesive approach. The strategy will be aligned with the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan, the development of which was informed by Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna of Cardiff University's Business School.

Cardiff University recognises that to achieve radical outcomes, radical action is needed, and this has been a driver in the university's investment. The university will regularly monitor and evaluate these changes to ensure that it is successful in reaching its ambitions.

Contact

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University of East London

Staff anti-racism training

The University of East London's Student-Ready University Staff Development Programme aims to support staff in implementing an anti-racist approach to teaching and learning.

Training for staff

The programme has been designed by academic staff and is informed by principles of inclusivity, collaboration and community.

The aims of the project are to:

- embed inclusive decision-making processes in recruitment, quality assurance and performance development reviews
- increase student resilience
- enhance career readiness

The programme began in March 2023 and includes learning activities, resources and examples of best practice, such as how to 'decolonise' a Moodle site. Staff are required to engage with the training, which is also informed by staff and student feedback. Evaluation is built into the project through a logic model approach.

Training for students

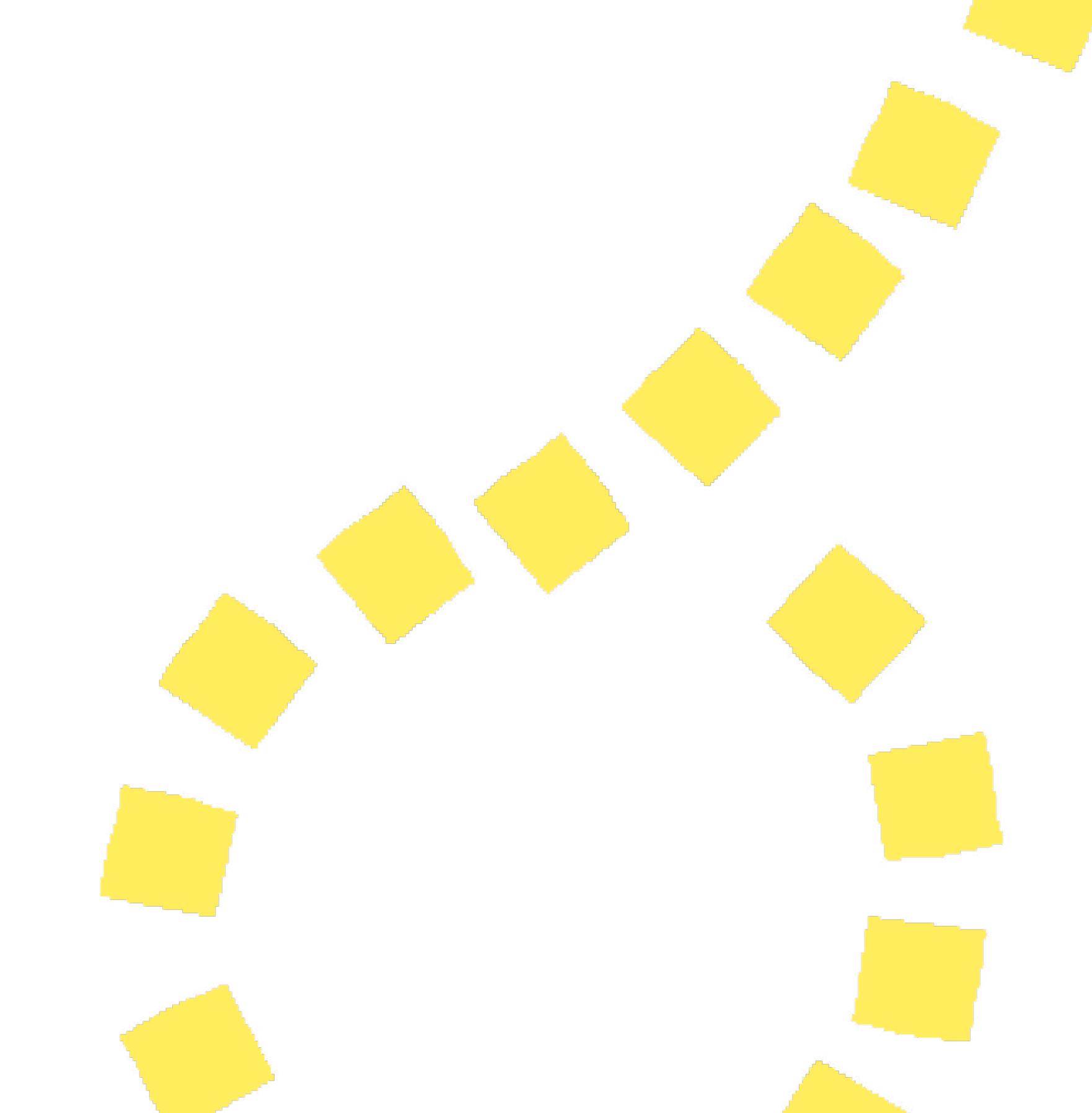
The university has also partnered with Good Course to deliver EDI training for students. Students receive active bystander training alongside training on sexual consent and microaggressions.

Through targeted training informed by principles of cultural competency and anticolonialism, the University of East London has been actively working towards and making progress in achieving positive institutional change.

The university has started to see positive changes among its student population. For example, the degree awarding gap has reduced by 6 percentage points since 2017–18.

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University of Exeter

Involving the community in tackling racial harassment

The University of Exeter is based in Devon and Cornwall, parts of the UK that have historically had limited ethnic diversity. With the university's growth in access and participation activity and international student numbers, it became imperative for the university to involve staff, students and the wider community in its response to racial harassment.

Leadership

Since 2018, the university's provost has provided leadership in engaging the whole university community in inclusion work, starting with the creation of the Provost Commission.

The commission brought colleagues and students together to lead change across student and staff induction, improving data, developing inclusive spaces and fostering an inclusive culture. From these themes emerged a need to look externally, and the university set up an equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) partnerships board with local partners including the police, city and county councils, and local NHS trusts among others.

Initatives to tackle racial harassment

From the commission and partnership board, initiatives to tackle racial harassment emerged, including:

• Joint data sharing protocols: The university worked with colleagues in the police and county council's hate crime units to set up data sharing protocols that enabled them to share incidents reported across the various organisations. This data can be used to identify hotspots for incidents in the city and deploy collaborative campaigns and interventions in these hotspots.

- Cornwall Anti-racism Forum: Based on the success of the EDI partnerships board in Devon, a discursive space was set up for the university's Cornwall campuses, bringing together colleagues, students and local partners to collectively learn about experiences of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people in Cornwall, discuss shared challenges and take forward collective action.
- Student-led anti-racism: The university launched a dedicated fund for students to run anti-racism projects supported by Exeter's Education Incubator teams. In its first year, the fund supported 20 unique projects, including on decolonisation, training and cultural community mentoring.

These initiatives are now being taken forward at the university with oversight from a university-wide wellbeing, inclusion and culture committee.

Assessing data

Assessment of data as part of the university's Race Equality Charter application process showed that outcomes of these initiatives included:

- increased trust in reporting, demonstrated through a high number of reports being made, including through informal routes
- improved inclusivity within teaching and curricula design, culminating in the development of the Transformative Education Framework
- enhanced confidence in the university community and senior leaders in conversations about race.

This has demonstrated that a whole-community approach with consistent support from leaders has improved safety, trust and allyship within the university.

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Leeds Trinity University

Strong leadership

Authentic and inclusive leadership that demonstrates visible support for tackling racial harassment is a priority at Leeds Trinity University.

Leadership

The race equity agenda is led by the executive team, but the importance of distributed leadership in this work is critical to ensuring it is embedded and sustainable across the university.

Leeds Trinity is aware that burnout is common for those leading anti-racist work alone, and that the distribution and ownership of the agenda are fundamental in ensuring that everyone sees this as a critical element of their work.

There are several facets to leaders' work to tackle racial harassment. At Leeds Trinity University, this begins with authenticity and honesty, highlighting that the issues that exist are attributable to a system which is still deeply influenced by the colonial legacy and institutional racism.

However, the university is also clear that this should not become an excuse for inertia, and the university's leadership teams recognise that whilst there are anachronisms in many of the structural elements of the university's work, change can be made with the will to do so.

At Leeds Trinity University there has been significant work to ensure that leadership teams own their commitments towards building an anti-racist university.

Office for Institutional Equity

The recently established Office for Institutional Equity plays a critical role in bringing the aims of anti-racist practice and intent together through a strategy for Equity, Social Justice and Belonging. The strategy requires active approaches from leaders in middle and higher-level leadership roles to eliminate discriminatory processes and mitigate practice which contributes to awarding gaps.

Anti-racist learning

Members of the executive and directorate have embraced leading by example by engaging with ongoing staff development and talking about race. A group of senior leaders are currently involved in the Nova Reid programme of anti-racist learning, and meet every month to discuss the progress they have made on the course.

Race equity is high on the agenda, with continued internal and external conference activity, workshops and engagement with the community. The visibility of leadership in these events has been critical to showing our colleagues that this is an ongoing journey that everyone at the university is on together.

Re:tension, a short film accompanied by a

discussion entitled the Aftermath debate, has been developed by Ricardo Barker and Syra Shakir, Associate Professors of Learning and Teaching. The toolkit has been used to stimulate discussion, embed race literacy and challenge common microaggressions experienced by colleagues and students of colour. The tool has been used internally and externally with other universities.

People and Culture Strategy

The university's new People and Culture
Strategy recognises the need to prioritise
racial equity within its values and behaviours
framework, meaning that promotion
opportunities and annual appraisals require
colleagues to demonstrate their continued
contribution to this work.

Living its values has been the key to demonstrating the university's commitment to tackling racial harassment.

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University of Leicester

Together Against Harassment initiative

The University of Leicester is implementing its Together Against Harassment initiative to tackle racial harassment.

The initative is co-produced by staff and students, and seeks to deliver a range of actions to foster transparency, trust, accountability, confidence, action and awareness to develop a culture of anti-racism.

As part of the initiative, the university has developed a dedicated webpage for staff and students with essential information including case studies, processes, disclosure portal, training, available support and key contact information.

Online disclosure tool

The university has extended its online student disclosure tool to staff, allowing anonymous disclosures, and is promoting the use of the term 'disclosure' in place of 'reporting'. This places an emphasis on support.

Disclosures are supported by an experienced student case management team and a dignity and respect contact service, to ensure support is sensitive and responsive to the experiences and needs of those disclosing. This service is being enhanced to deliver more tailored support, which will be delivered by external agencies and charities.

The university regularly monitors reporting of incidents of harassment to help them develop an understanding of racial harassment at the university, including highlighting outcomes and any specific concerns in areas of the university.

Training

The university has piloted and is rolling out training modules on anti-racism, and university schools have developed race inclusion action plans to advance anti-racism and address local issues.

Resources

The university has also developed a guide to race-related terminology which seeks to communicate a university-wide approach to talking about race. The guide promotes a shift from prescriptive approaches to talking about race to empowering and supporting staff and students to engage in a meaningful and informed way.

In recognising the limitations of our extensive online training materials in facilitating meaningful discussions, developing a shared understanding and learning, and challenging prejudice and unconscious biases, the university supplements its online training with a range of face-to-face dignity and respect workshops as well as tailored anti-racism workshops at individual school level for both staff and students.

As a result of a recent staff survey, the university is also facilitating a series of listening events with key members of the university community including the staff Multi-Ethnicity Forum.

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Manchester Metropolitan University

BAME ambassadors

In partnership with the students' union and as part of its Inclusive Learning Communities (ILC) project, Manchester Metropolitan University recruits a team of BAME ambassadors each year.

The ambassadors provide consultation and feedback on key areas identified for development by communicating their opinions and experiences to staff across the university.

Watch online:

BAME ambassador Tomilola Adedewe reflects on her experiences

The Big Change Project

In September 2022, the BAME ambassadors scheme expanded through The Big Change Project. The Big Change Project involved a series of interviews between ambassadors and university staff. Through this project, senior leaders at the university committed to making positive changes, and these actions are recorded and reviewed through follow up.

Case studies

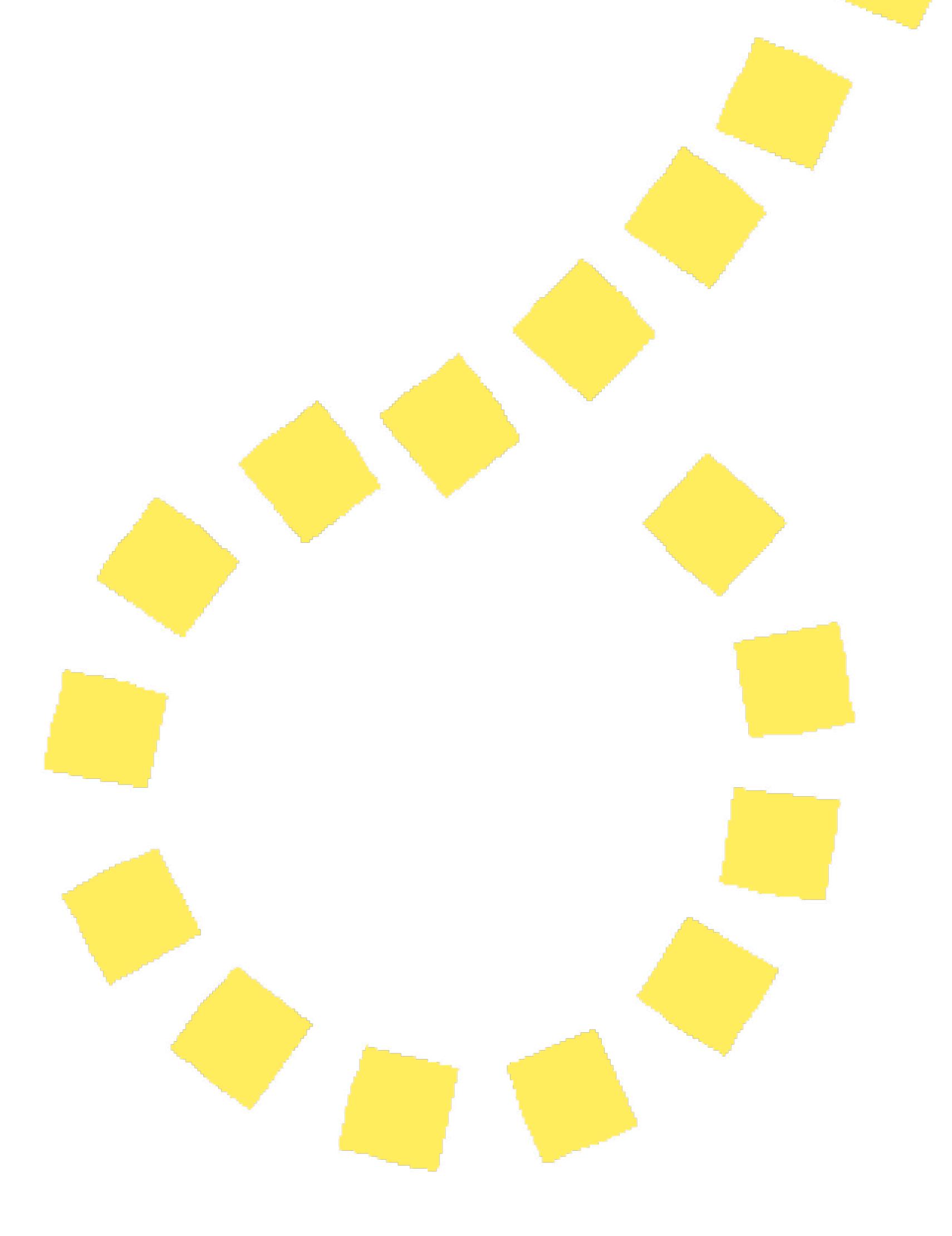
The BAME ambassadors have also been involved in producing a series of case studies which have informed the resources the university has produced to train staff, including training on microaggressions and the impact it has on students.

Activities and events

The ILC project also includes delivery of a range of activities and events throughout the year to foster a sense of community and celebrate cultural diversity. This has been achieved through campaigns such as the As I am campaign, which aimed to increase the visibility of BAME staff and students. The university also holds fortnightly Global Café events which are an opportunity for UK and international students to engage in intercultural exchange through themed discussions and activities.

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Newcastle University

Accommodation services

Newcastle University was awarded the Race Equality Charter (REC) Bronze award in November 2022. The university has set up a REC implementation action group to take forward its REC action plan commitments.



The key objectives of the action plan are to:

- Increase representation from ethnically minoritised groups in colleague and student cohorts and position Newcastle University as an employer and academic institution of choice.
- Create 'safe' and 'brave' spaces for belonging, both physical and conceptual, as well as to enhance colleague and student experiences through effective engagement, communication and partnerships.
- Introduce effective reporting tools and training mechanisms to empower and enable colleagues and students to stand up to and report racial hate crime.
- Articulate the multiplicity of perspectives through effective communication and consultation, and use these authentic voices and lived experiences as a key driver for change.
- Address barriers and sustain change
 by embedding the principles of race
 equality in existing structures, processes
 and committees, therefore mitigating
 disproportionate impacts for those belonging
 to ethnically minoritised groups.

The action plan also includes a student-focused workstream which was co-created with students and whose implementation will continue to be co-led by them.

The university also has a campus and estates workstream which aims to:

- Work towards the university's campus and estate being safe spaces free from racially motivated hate crime and aggressions.
- Work towards the university's campus and estate promoting and celebrating the diversity of the institution.
- Continue to improve facilities and spaces on the university's campus and estate to make them more welcoming to students, colleagues and visitors from all cultures and faiths.

Accommodation

One aspect of this is the university's commitment to ensuring a safe space for students to live through its accommodation. ResLife supports all students within university-owned and -managed partnership accommodation to ensure they have the highest quality residential experience.

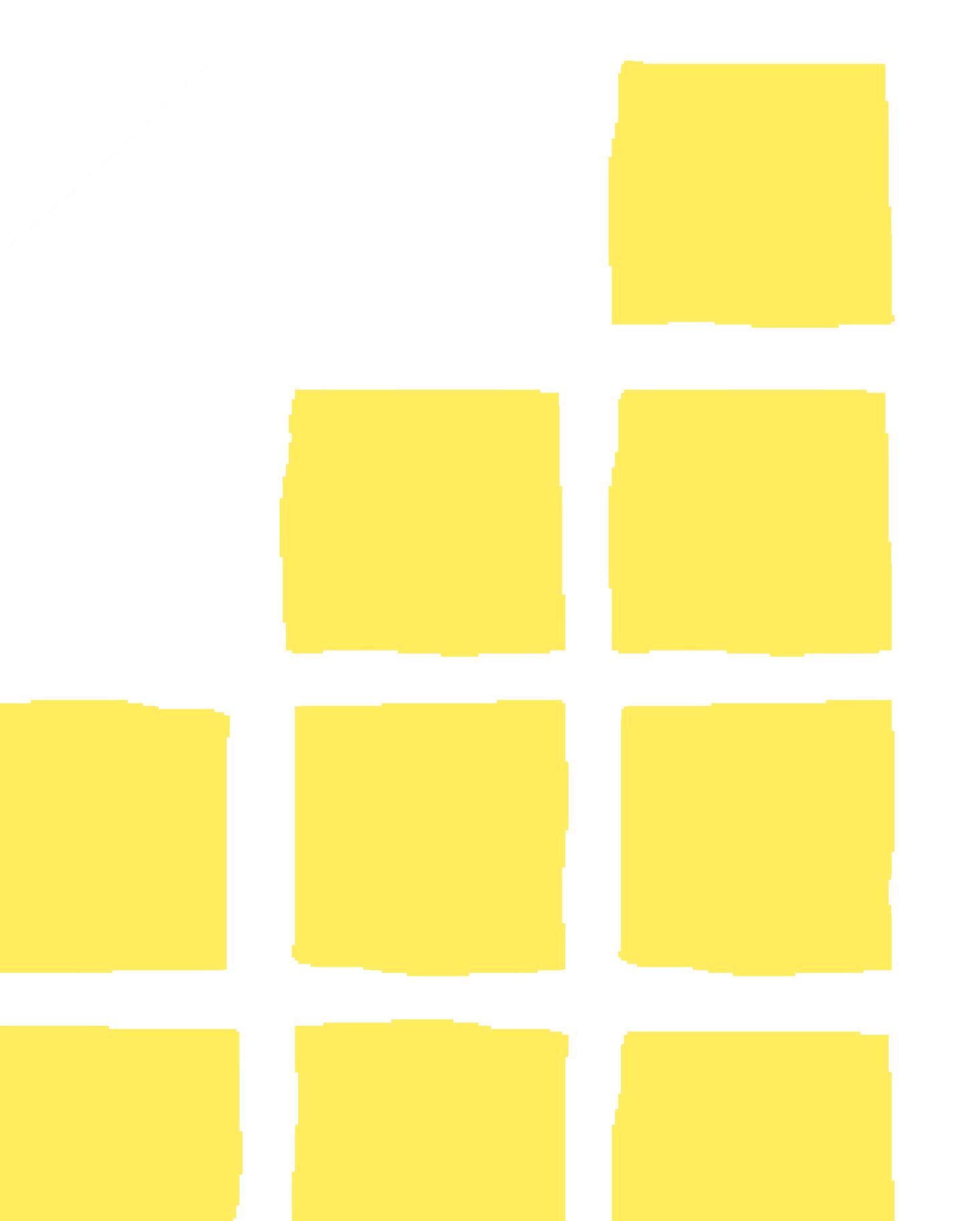
This is achieved through:

• Practical skills sessions on a topics including handling difficult dialogues and situations, safety and security, and 'all about you' sessions. Students are signposted to information about how to report racial harassment. The team collaborates with key university services on content creation, themes and curriculum planning.

- Peer-to-peer support from ResLife student assistants (RSAs), experienced students who have lived in the student accommodation and can draw upon their own experiences to offer peer-to-peer support.
- RSAs come from a diverse range of social and ethnic backgrounds, including approximately one in three being international students.
- Drop ins and one-to-one sessions are available for students to discuss issues and find out about wider support services, including anonymous reporting.
- As well as this, ResLife staff and RSAs are trained in effective signposting to university services if a concern cannot be resolved at an accommodation level, working with teams such as the student health and wellbeing service.
- Activities and events to familiarise students with the local community and develop a sense of belonging. This organised events programme is developed in consultation with students.

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The Open University

Equity, diversity and inclusion plan

In 2022, the Open University developed a new five-year institutional strategy: Learn and Live. One of the pillars of the strategy is equity.

The equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) plan was launched in November 2022, committing to the importance of embedding equitable and inclusive practices in everything the university does, and holding the university accountable to that commitment.

The plan sits alongside the university's Equality Scheme which sets out the actions that the university is committed to. The plan is underpinned by three key principles: commitment to an evidence-led process (including success measures and targets), communication with staff and students, and accountability for actions.

The plan was created in collaboration with the EDI team and a convened EDI plan steering group. The eight priority areas identified through this process are:

- 1. leadership and governance
- 2. culture change
- 3. staff networks
- 4. EDI data and reporting
- 5. learning and teaching
- 6. the staff experience
- 7. the student experience
- 8. research, scholarship and knowledge exchange

Objectives

Short-, medium- and long-term objectives were created. These include objectives relevant to tackling racism and racial harassment, such as closing the degree awarding gap between Black students and their white peers and improving recruitment, progression and retention of Black students and staff.

Actions

Actions the Open University has taken towards meeting these objectives include developing a free, sector-wide anti-racism course written by Black academics in partnership with Santander Universities. The course is called Union Black: Britain's Black Cultures and Steps to Anti-Racism and is available online.

The university has also committed to the pilot of 100 Black Women Professors NOW, a pioneering cross-institutional and interdisciplinary programme aiming to make a step-change in the number of Black women attaining professorial and senior leadership roles in their institutions, and increasing the diversity of the academic pipeline. This has led to promotion and seats on governing bodies for several participants, and the second cohort of participants has recently commenced.

In addition, the university launched two new financial support student programmes in September 2022: the Black Students Support Fund and Sanctuary scholarships.

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University of St Andrews

Communicating support

The University of St Andrews launched an online Report and Support tool in 2020.

The tool enables and encourages staff and students to report negative behaviour including racism, microaggressions, bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct, and to report concerns about the safety and wellbeing of others.

Information on racism and reporting

In 2022, a new specific section on racism was created as part of Report and Support, in response to feedback from the university's Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) staff and student network. The webpages include information on legal definitions of racial discrimination, harassment, hate crime and victimisation.

The section also provides information about racism, what support is available, how to report racism and how to support someone who is experiencing racism, including a listening guide. The development of this information was informed by the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Equality Act statutory guidance and Tackling racial harassment: universities challenged publications, and was coordinated by the head of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and the Report and Support team.

To demonstrate visible senior-level support for this provision, a video was created with an opening message by the principal and vice-chancellor.

Watch on YouTube:

Professor Dame Sally Mapstone on identifying and challenging racism

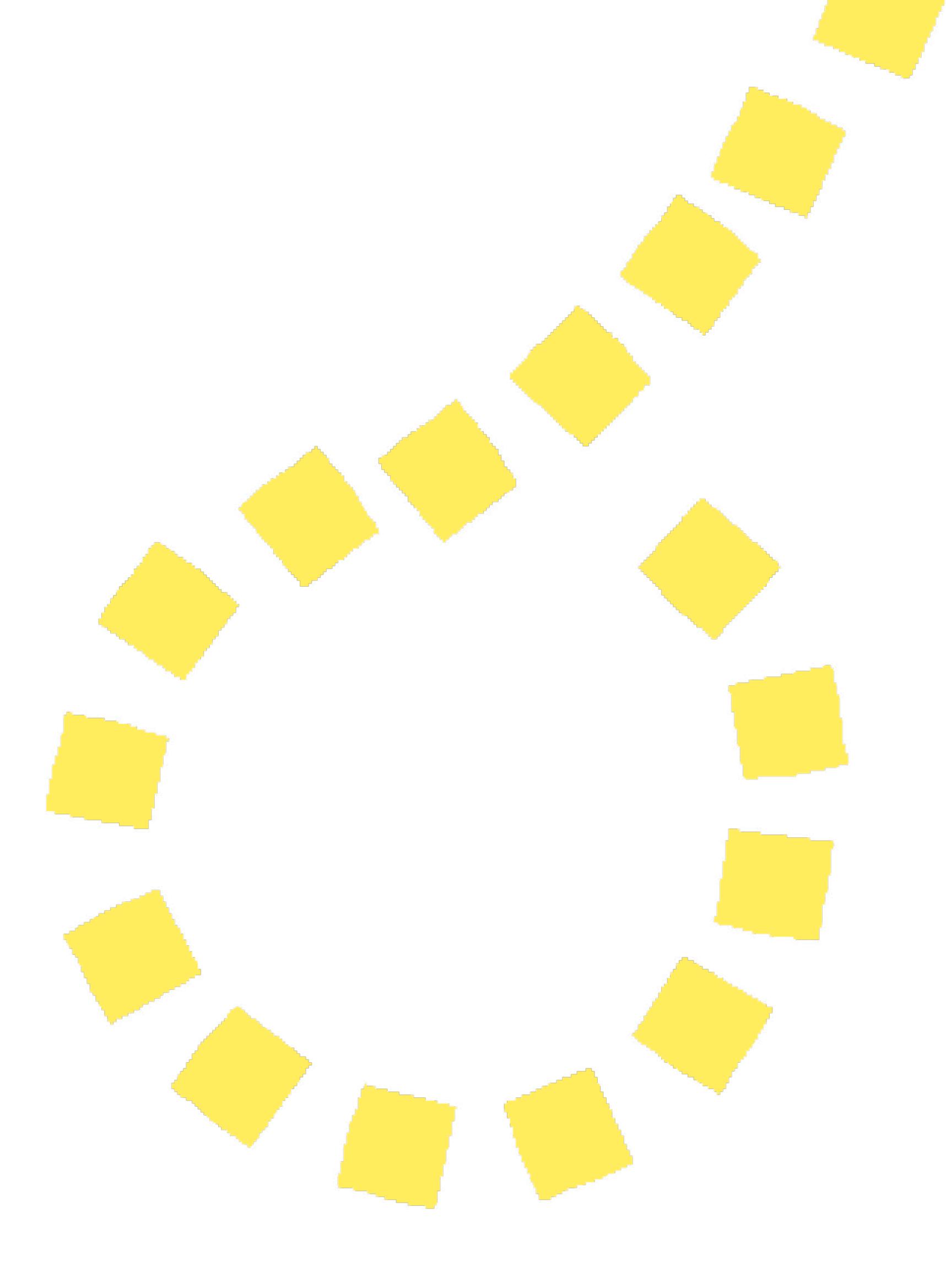
A range of definitions and examples were then explained by members of the student BAME network, rector's office, Race Equality Charter chair and the students' association.

Evaluation

To evaluate the university's progress in relation to race, a Race Equality Charter staff and student survey was run from November 2022 to January 2023. The survey launch was supported by a similar video in which the principal and vice-principal (people and diversity) encouraged staff and students to participate in the survey. The video also featured BAME staff and students commenting on their experiences at the university.

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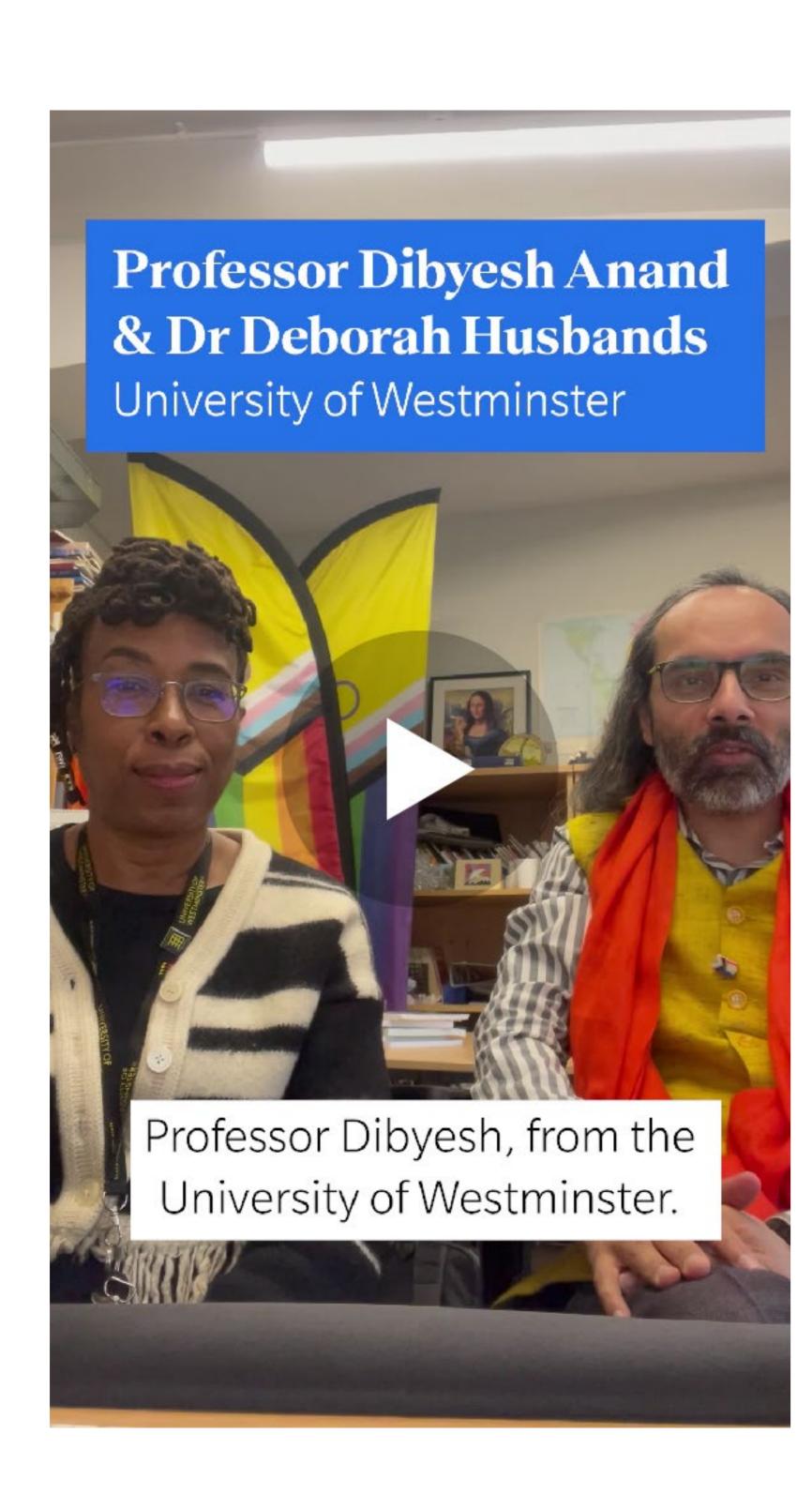
University of Westminster

Westminster Conversations series and Black History Year Programme

The University of Westminster is taking a multi-faceted and consistent approach to tackling racism. Anti-racism is enshrined in the university's values and strategies.

Watch on YouTube:

Professor Dibyesh Anand and Dr Deborah Husbands on their initatives



Two of the University of Westminster's initiatives are Westminster Conversations and the Black History Year programme.

Black History Year Programme

The Black History Year programme, in its third year, is led by Dr Deborah Husbands and run by a diverse group of colleagues from across the university. Its premise is recognising the challenges of tackling racism while celebrating the successes of the university community.

Westminster Conversations

The Westminster Conversations series, led by Professor Dibyesh Anand, is driven by a theme of challenging prejudices and celebrating diversities. It covers issues including sexism, ableism, queerphobia and all forms of racism. The series includes one-off seminars, series, talks, film discussions and day-long conferences to bring together students, colleagues, activists and the public to discuss challenges and opportunities of working intersectionally, without erasing specificity.

For example, this year's annual Challenging racisms in higher education and beyond conference included sessions on experiences of Black women in academia, Islamophobia, antisemitism, casteism and the importance of community.

Staff networks

The university also has active staff networks including BME, Q+, Women of Westminster, Colleague Disability, and Faith, Spirituality and Belief. These groups work intersectionally. Open forums where staff can hear from experts in anti-racism are a key feature of this work, reflecting the importance of awareness raising, honest conversations, serious questioning and interventions in policy making. This kind of shared listening supports making anti-racism a 'felt experience' at the University of Westminster.

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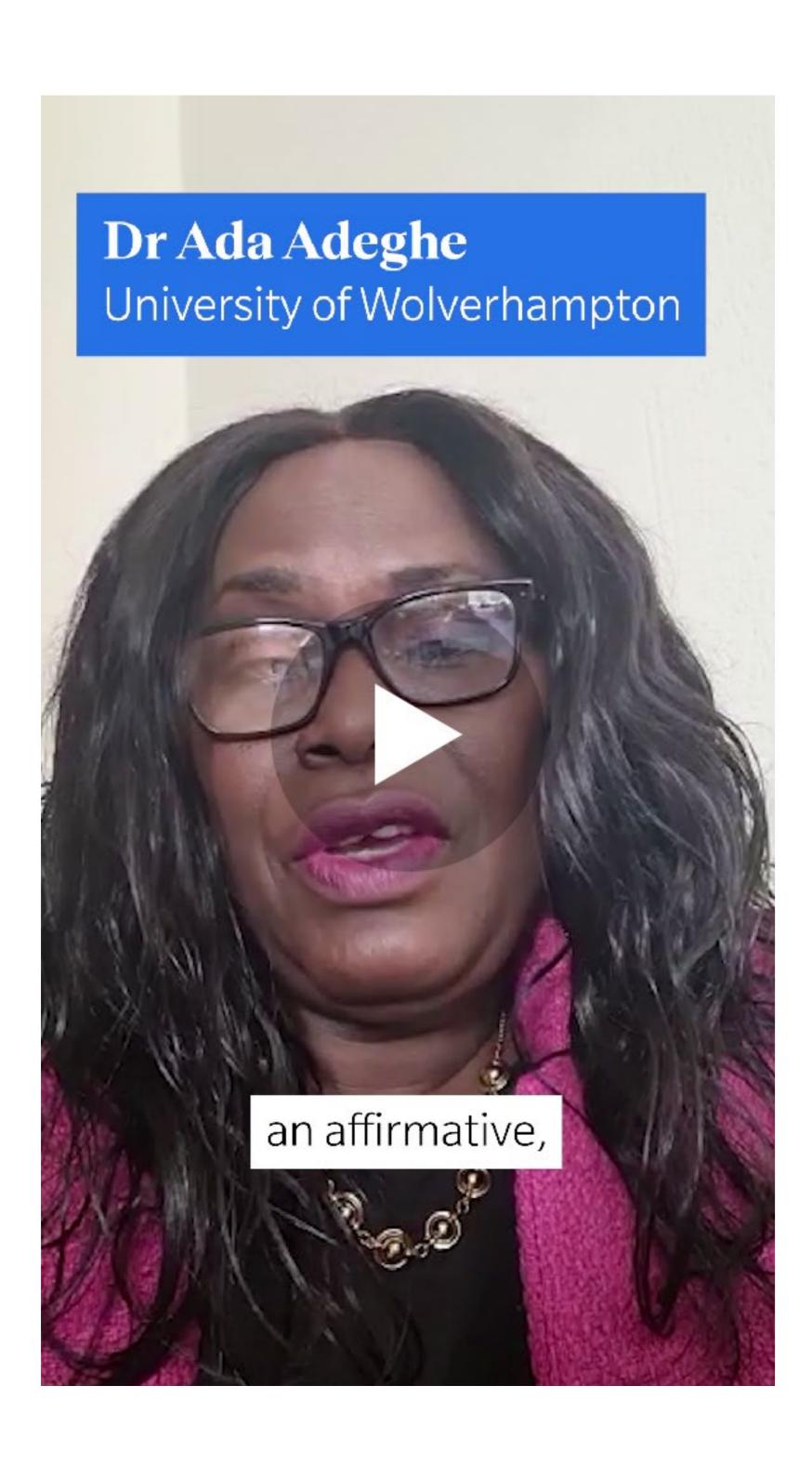
University of Wolverhampton

Inclusive framework for curriculum design and delivery

The University of Wolverhampton has a diverse student body – 55% of its students are from ethnic minorities.

Watch on YouTube:

Dr Ada Adeghe on the University of Wolverhampton's inclusive framework



The university's inclusive framework is central to adopting an affirmative approach to racial diversity and eradicating awarding and noncontinuation gaps between white and Black, Asian and minority ethnic students. It is also a key part of the university's student engagement strategy.

The framework embraces equity, whereby race, personal circumstances and historical disadvantages are recognised and considered in curriculum design and delivery.

Principles

Four overarching principles underpin the framework:

Principle A: Where am I in the curriculum?

This principle is about designing and delivering courses informed by students' lived/living experiences and interests, thereby nurturing their sense of belonging, affirming and celebrating difference.

By building on the rich cultural capital of the university's diverse student body, they are able to see themselves reflected in the curriculum. Staff facilitate positive cross-cultural exchanges in classroom discussions thereby reducing bias, prejudice and the othering of fellow students.

Principle B: Are we removing obstacles to student success and progression?

This principle recognises the profound impact racial harassment can have on students' mental health, educational outcomes and progression. Under the sub-principle of 'Brave and Safe Spaces,' students are supported by staff to become allies, challenge microaggressions and use the university's incident reporting tool if necessary. This creates a safe environment where all students, regardless of their ethnicity are able to flourish and grow.

Principle C: Are our students our co-creators?

Having co-creation as central to the philosophy of design and delivery on the university's programme means that the curriculum is invested in by the university's students, irrespective of their race or ethnicity. Only by valuing the voices of the university's racially diverse group of students can we begin to celebrate their uniqueness.

Principle D: How are we developing our inclusive lens?

The framework invites tutors to intentionally facilitate discussions about racism, privilege and what constitutes racial harassment.
Students are also supported to challenge largely traditional, Eurocentric curricula.

Decolonising the curriculum through critical reflection on the forms of knowledge we value and why, including fair representation of racially diverse scholarly work, are fundamental to the University's anti-racist approach to teaching and learning.

Overall, the University of Wolverhampton's inclusive framework recognises that the curriculum plays a critical role in tackling and preventing discrimination, ensuring that the learning environment is an inclusive one, free of racial inequality or racism.

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