BIRMINGHAM CITY University

Birmingham City University

Black Lives Matter **Antiracist Commitment Plan** 2020–2025

Introduction

The University's Antiracist Commitment Plan has been developed in response to the global Black Lives Matter movement. This follows the commitment statement made by BCU in response to the killing of George Floyd in 2020 and the anti-Black racism that exists in society.

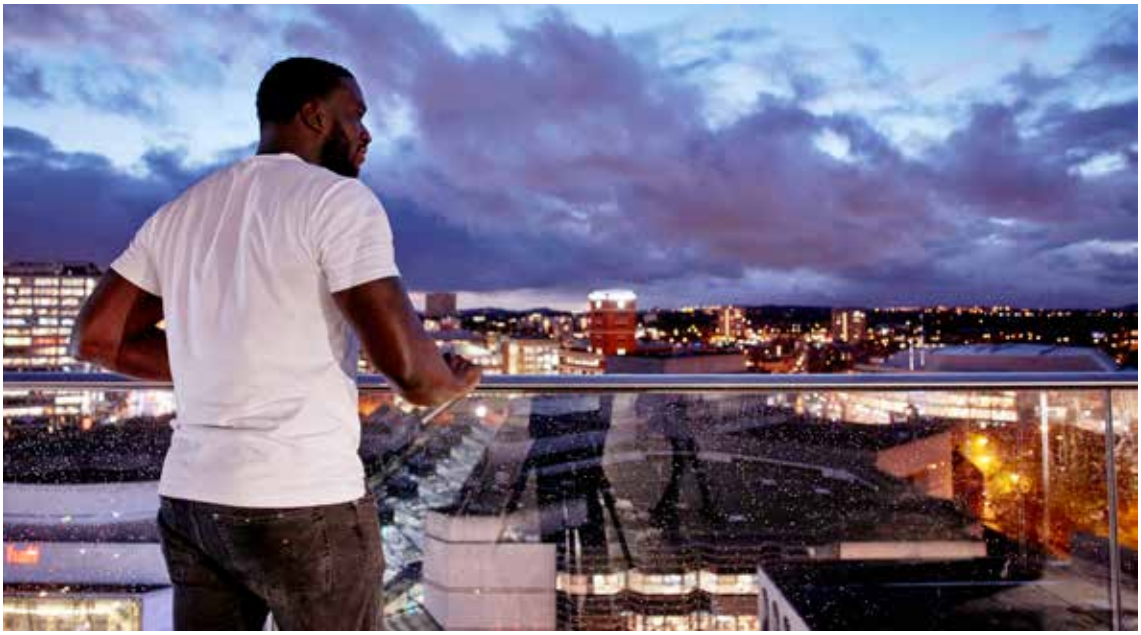
"We stand with our Black students and our staff. We want to be part of the solution."

Excerpt from a joint statement from Birmingham City University and our Chancellor Sir Lenny Henry, June 2020

This plan is a symbol of BCU's ongoing commitment to support Black students and staff in acknowledgement of the well-documented disparities they face in the HE sector and within BCU; for example the awarding gap, the significantly low numbers of Black Professors and senior leaders, and the lack of Black representation on senior boards and committees in the University. It has been developed in recognition of the work that our University must do to remove the barriers that hinder equality of opportunity in our organisation.

How will we achieve change?

This plan sets out the actions we will take over the next five years to achieve real change across our University. Some actions are already underway, others will take place this year and next, and some are longer-term goals which will continue to be explored and developed in the coming years. All actions will be implemented in line with the University Strategy, Access and Participation Plan, and wider EDI Strategy.



Our plan covers the following four areas:

Learning, teaching and assessment

By creating a fair, safe and supportive learning environment for our students, we will ensure that everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

Research and knowledge exchange

With enhanced support to achieve race equity and equality for researchers and professors, we will spark a renewed commitment to improving diversity in our research community and celebrate the achievements of Black BCU scholars.

People, values and partnerships

By reviewing and enhancing our recruitment practices, we will achieve a more diverse staff community at all levels, promoting our values through a vibrant programme of activity that delivers real outcomes for equality diversity and inclusion.

Leadership

Our new University strategy will place a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion at its heart, with the leadership of our organisation taking individual and collective responsibility to drive change.

In our learning, teaching and assessment we will:

Commitment	Actions	Academic year 2020/21	Academic year 2021/22	2023 to 2025
1. Ensure an inclusive, safe learning environment with clear mechanisms and procedures for students to report unwanted behaviour, harassment and racist incidents with reportable records of appropriate action taken.	Report racial injustice via the new Report and Support platform and take appropriate action, including providing regular summary reports to the University EDI Committee	✓		
	All Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committees across the University should have diverse membership.	✓		
	Conduct research into the lived experiences of Black students and staff at BCU		✓	
	Develop an antiracist electronic booklet for students and staff, which should be distributed to all first year students during induction and made available to staff.			✓
2. Provide EDI training and support for students and staff.	Student induction - EDI cultural competencies development programme for all students. Develop additional support/extended induction for international students e.g. support with accommodation, cultural awareness within first few weeks of joining BCU.		✓	
	Introduce mandatory EDI training for all BCU staff.		✓	
	Develop graduate attribute development programmes.			✓
3. Decolonise and diversify our curriculum in partnership with our students	Student Curriculum Consultants working in partnership with staff (formal paid role placing student lens on what curricula looks like, undertaking research in partnership with staff).		✓	
	Review reading and learning resources.	✓		
	Develop inclusive pedagogy tool kit.	✓		
	Share best practice at our BCU conference in 2021: 'Intersections of Injustice: combating injustice through EDI best practice'.	✓		
	Draw on external expertise where diversity doesn't exist in teams, helping to broaden expertise and global perspectives when shaping curricula.		✓	
	Ensure curriculum mapping EDI learning experiences in every course.			✓
4. Promote equal opportunities to succeed and eliminate awarding gaps to achieve racial equity	Run tailored intervention projects identified in response to Faculty APP targets and action plans.	✓	✓	✓
	Annually evaluated progress against APP Action plans.	✓	✓	✓

Commitment	Actions	Academic year 2020/21	Academic year 2021/22	2023 to 2025
5. Ensure that all student facing services demonstrate EDI and cultural competencies.	Develop EDI and cultural competency staff development training.		✓	
6. Tackle unfair Grading	Introduce anonymous marking wherever possible to remove potential for bias.		✓	
7. Communication and marketing activity linked to Black Lives Matter	Create a version of the BCU Tiger logo in pan African colours, to be shared during Black History Month.	✓		
	Develop BCU BLM merchandise like lapel pins, pens, lanyards, with the inscription "BCU Black Lives Matter" to create awareness in a strategic and sustainable way.			✓

In our research and knowledge exchange, we will:

Commitment	Actions	Academic year 2020/21	Academic year 2021/22	2023 to 2025
1. Invest in a support programme and targeted scholarship programmes to improve the pipeline of BCU scholars from UG through to PHD to drive racial equity for communities that are underrepresented	Develop financial support/scholarship schemes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students (in line with positive action legislation).		✓	
	Faculties to use QR funds to strategically enhance race equality.		✓	
	Undertake a review of our Open Days, including Post Graduate Research, and ensure they are inclusive experiences.		✓	
	Track completion of PhDs by ethnicity.	✓	✓	✓
2. Expand our reporting by ethnicity to inform strategic plans to improve diversity in our research community and to further improve our future REF submissions. Ensure that systems and policies for capturing equality and diversity data feed into strategic plans	Undertake an annual review of EDI progress in Research, supported by data to include WAM research allowance, internal funding awards, research leadership roles, research promotions, reporting outcomes by ethnicity.		✓	

Commitment	Actions	Academic year 2020/21	Academic year 2021/22	2023 to 2025
3. Ensure that routes to Professorial Promotion are available, fair and transparent for all.	Increase the diversity of people on promotion panels.	✓		
	Support Black academic staff with the application process for academic conferment and provide mentoring support.		✓	
4. Raise the profile and visibility of BCU Black scholars	Celebrate the success of Black scholars.	✓		
	Champion the work of the Diversity and Inclusion Research Community and create opportunities for positive role models which are visible to our academic communities.		✓	

In our people, values and partnerships we will:

Commitment	Actions	Academic year 2020/21	Academic year 2021/22	2023 to 2025
1. Increase the diversity of our staff through transparent and accountable selection and recruitment processes across all areas of professional services and academic staff with a particular goal to improve representation in our teaching community	Strengthen workforce planning to increase the number of Black colleagues at all levels in the workforce, including via apprenticeships and internships.		✓	
	Ensure head hunters evidence a commitment to equality diversity and inclusion (senior recruitment and Board of Governors).		✓	
	Proactively identify Black colleagues who display high potential. Promote their capability and successes through interaction with the wider business and leadership team.		✓	
	Ask partners (e.g. BCUSU) to sign up to the Black Lives Matter Antiracist Commitment Plan.	✓		
	Promote reverse mentoring to raise awareness of barriers faced by Black staff.		✓	✓
	Foster a culture that appreciates and celebrates diversity, resulting in harvesting of the benefits of all experiences, skills and ideas. The workforce should reflect the diversity of BCU students.		✓	✓

Commitment	Actions	Academic year 2020/21	Academic year 2021/22	2023 to 2025
2. Continue to conduct equal pay audits across all levels of our organisation to our organisation to advance racial equity, with monitored action plans to close pay gaps	Conduct an Ethnicity Pay Gap review, set up regular reporting and produce an action plan to address issues identified.		✓	
3. Expand our reporting by ethnicity to understand the diverse experience	Continue to use data to inform strategic plans whilst acknowledging that staff from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds are not a homogenous group and that complexity of experience and outcomes needs to be considered in analysing data and developing actions.	✓	✓	✓
4. Effective resourcing of EDI	Ensure financial support for BCU's Equality Diversity and Inclusion work.	✓	✓	✓
	Secure resources for Colleague Support networks including formalising the work of the BAME network and providing training, development and support.	✓	✓	✓
	Develop an antiracist allies programme for staff.	✓		
	Develop opportunities for celebration and thought leadership, for example Black History Month marked across all campuses and Faculties, and a conference series.	✓	✓	✓
	Develop a Black Excellence Day to celebrate the achievements of Black People.		✓	
	Black Academic Mentorship Programme (BAMP): BCU Human Resources will setup a targeted recruitment programme to employ more Black staff members in all faculties to close the gap in poor staff diversity. Faculties to establish 3-5 year targets and action plans.	✓	✓	✓
5. Achieve the Advance HE Race Equality Charter standards.	Recruit staff resource to lead on the Race Equality Charter.	✓		
	BCU will sign the Race Equality Charter by December 2020.	✓		
6. Increase representation on decision making boards and committees	All senior boards and committees to have Black membership by 2021/22.		✓	✓

In our leadership we will:

Commitment	Actions	Academic year 2020/21	Academic year 2021/22	2023 to 2025
1. Ensure that EDI is a strategic priority for BCU and that the University EDI Committee continues to advise and inform University Executive Group (UEG) decision making	UEG will receive regular reports and recommendation from the University EDI Committee.	✓	✓	✓
	Review BCU strategy to strengthen EDI as a key priority.	✓		
	Ensure regular communication in Tiger Today and across other platforms about BCU's Antiracism commitment.	✓	✓	✓
2. Ensure that all leaders are able to demonstrate strong EDI awareness and cultural competencies through inclusive practices and behaviours	Provide race equality/antiracism training to the University Executive Group (UEG), Board of Governors (BOG) and all leadership roles.	✓	✓	✓
	UEG and senior leaders to undertake mentoring and reverse mentoring. Black staff members will mentor senior leaders, enabling an exchange of skills, knowledge and understanding to foster an environment of growth and learning on both parts.		✓	
	Members of UEG to take individual responsibility for driving key EDI strands and enabling long-term change.	✓	✓	✓
3. Continue to improve BCU as a learning and reflective organisation which strives to remove institutional barriers and injustices to achieve racial justice for all students and staff, creating long-term	Include EDI responsibilities and values in promotion criteria for staff.	✓		

Creating meaningful change

The development of this plan has been achieved by a working group consisting of BCU staff, students and recent alumni. This group has brought together people in key roles across the University – both from professional services and within our academic faculties.

Moving forwards, members of the University's Executive Group will act as executive sponsors of the plan, ensuring that key strands of activity are progressed and real change implemented. These roles are:

- **Diversity of Boards and Committees** – Karen Stephenson, University Secretary
- **Research scholarships, funding and PhD pipeline** – Professor Julian Beer, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
- **Student Equality Diversity and Inclusion Development Programmes and Support** – Professor Clare Mackie, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Professor Peter Francis, incoming Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
- **Race Equality Charter** – Professor Alison Honour, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Arts, Design and Media
- **Reporting Harassment and Discrimination** – Professor Keith Horton, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Business, Law and Social Sciences.
- **Decolonising Curricula and Inclusive Practice** – Professor Julie McLeod, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Learning and Teaching
- **Equality Diversity and Inclusion Training and Workforce development** – Mark O'Dwyer, Director of Human Resources
- **Reverse Mentoring and Antiracist Allyship** – Professor Hanifa Shah, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment
- **Research into the lived experiences of students and staff** – Professor Ian Blair, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Health, Education and Life Sciences.

Progress on this plan will be measured and driven by the University's EDI Committee, with oversight from the HR Committee of the University's Board of Governors. The University will share updates on the implementation of the plan through the EDI Annual Report, as well as ongoing communication with staff and students.

Other EDI work

This plan does not take away the importance of the need to address wider inequalities that affect all of the communities that are protected in our Equality Diversity and Inclusion policy, such as people of different gender identities, sexual orientations and socio-economic backgrounds; disabled people; communities with religious beliefs and those with none; and all those from the multiple rich and diverse cultures who are part of our BCU community.

Tackling inequality and injustice is a priority for BCU and we will continue the excellent work being done through charter standards such as Athena Swan, Stonewall, the Disability Confident Charter and the Race Equality Charter. Using this vehicle, the University will have the tools to drive equality for all disadvantaged communities, and those from all backgrounds and cultures within the BCU community. This Antiracist Commitment Plan is part of our ongoing journey to identify and eliminate the barriers in our systems, policies, processes and practices that perpetuate systemic racism.

For more information about BCU's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work, please visit: **www.bcu.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity**