

Statement on measures to address Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the student and staff experience – July 2020

Inclusive Education

UEA is fully committed to addressing inequalities through all aspects of its work. In teaching and learning, we have an Inclusive Education Policy, developed during 2018/19 that sets out how we will address barriers to student success and positive outcomes throughout the student experience. The operation of this policy encompasses a number of activities and initiatives aimed at addressing inequalities for students from ethnic minority backgrounds:

Curriculum

A requirement for all Schools of study to discuss with their students the content of the curriculum. When thinking about the curriculum content Schools must consider:

- Do the sources used in the module draw from a wide range of perspectives? (e.g. do they take in relevant contributions from a perspective which is wider than White, able-bodied, Western/European, heteronormative?)
- Do examples used refer to a diverse range of people?
- Do examples help raise awareness of equality, challenge established stereotypes and promote respect of individual difference?
- The University encourages Schools to take the following steps to promote discussion of the nature of the curriculum within the academic community:
- At least once a year, the Staff Student Liaison Committee in each School should discuss the matter
- At least once a year, the Teaching Committee (or sub-group of teaching committee convened with the appropriate expertise) in each School should discuss and review the matter
- All staff and students are aware of action to take (see below) if they have concerns about the breadth of representativeness of the curriculum.

Consideration of the membership of groups and committees should take place prior to discussion and if there is a lack of diversity within the group (e.g. no disabled person, no person from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background, no person from a WP background), then representation should be invited in for that specific discussion.

Example of Curriculum: 'Law's Biases' LLB Programme (LAW, SSF)

- From 2021, students enrolled on the LLM programme will complete a new compulsory module in their first year called *Critical Perspectives in Law*, and it will include a series of lectures and related seminar on "Law's Biases".
- It is our intention for this to address a range of issues, including gender perspectives, race and decolonising the curriculum. As it will be taught right at the beginning of the degree programme, it should help students reflect on these issues throughout their studies with us and beyond.

An action plan to address the degree awarding gap

The action plan to address the degree awarding gap 'acknowledges both the issues within the University and the broader societal inequalities which contribute to them. The Plan is reviewed regularly by UEA's Inclusive Education Committee and takes account of the following:

- Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) students entering Higher Education have, on average, lower GCSE attainment, are less likely to have studied for A Levels and higher. They are also more likely to describe advice and guidance regarding HE decision making as poor.
- In line with sector findings, UEA internal data highlights a gap in prior attainment as measurable in UCAS tariff points and a higher likelihood of entering UEA with a BTEC qualification.
- UEA needs to play its part in addressing what it can change with activity spanning from outreach work and across the student lifecycle.
- On average across the HE sector BAME students are more likely to drop out, less likely to report being satisfied with their overall course experience, and are less likely to be awarded a 2.1 or 1st.
- Whilst UEA outperforms the sector average for BAME good honours rate, size and rate of closing the gap, there is much more for UEA to do to address the issue through systemic change and we are not at all complacent about the gap.
- Addressing the gap requires the University to look inside itself and challenge ingrained ways of thinking, and necessitates work across systemic, structural and cultural issues.

Working to increase understanding of the black student lived experience – UEA was a founding partner in a national research project with other universities and an expert research agency into the lived experience of black students. The findings have been widely shared across UEA and instrumental in driving action to address issues raised. We continue to work alongside UEASU to develop methods for actively listening to the voices of black students at UEA.

Systemic and cultural change - We have a dedicated widening participation team which works with Schools and Divisions across UEA and UEASU to address any barriers BAME students may face throughout their studies, to maximise their opportunities and success academically, personally, and socially. Examples include working with UEASU to understand and address BAME representation in clubs and societies.

Targeted Outreach Work - We are working specifically with students at further education colleges, which typically have more Black students than school sixth forms, to support their application and transition process from further education to higher education. We are also partnering with charities working with young Black people in urban areas, to raise their aspirations and encourage them to consider studying at UEA.

Mentoring - We are currently piloting a mentoring programme in London for Black students where they receive personal mentoring from a current UEA student from a BAME background. The aim is to help young Black people to realise their potential, boost their confidence and help with practical aspects such as their UCAS application and getting the most from open days. If the programme proves successful then we hope it can be rolled out to other geographical areas.

BAME student advocates network - Working in collaboration with UEASU, we have throughout 2019/20 piloted a BAME ambassador scheme in four Schools, one in each Faculty. This student-led approach has seen the creation of a number of different schemes including specific one to one mentoring and input into the diversification of curriculum. We plan to continue and expand this approach in academic year 2020/21.

Commitments and Accountability

As a condition of registration with the Office for Students (OfS), UEA has an Access and Participation Plan (APP) covering the next five academic years which can be found [here](#): This

Plan includes firm commitments to increase access to UEA for specific Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students and a whole lifecycle approach to close the black attainment gap at UEA. The University publishes annually a transparency return to give details of our progress on equality, diversity and inclusion issues. The accountability is vital to the progress we are making. <https://www.uea.ac.uk/about/corporate-social-responsibility/widening-participation/transparency-return>

Report and Support on-line tool

We are committed to ensuring our campus is a welcoming and supportive place to be for all students and staff. We believe that everyone has the right to work, live and study in a safe, respectful and inclusive environment and have a zero tolerance to any form of discrimination, harassment, assault, abuse or bullying. To try and make it easier to report incidents on a named or anonymous basis and to move towards central reporting, in January 2020, working in partnership with UEASU and building on our Never OK campaign, we launched a new 'Report and Support' online reporting tool for staff and students. The aim is to help us better understand the prevalence of issues within our community; and to inform our proactive and preventative work on tackling issues and reducing the risk of future incident taking place.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

In 2019/20 we invested additional funds to support mental health and wellbeing for our university community enabling us to move forward with a range of initiatives.

Working in partnership with staff and trade unions in January 2020 we launched our first Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy with our CLIPS brand. The Strategy is centred on five pillars, known by the acronym CLIPS, which form the foundation of our strategy for improving mental health and wellbeing of our staff. We place wellbeing at the heart of our University and we aim to equip our staff and students with the understanding, skills and experiences to lead satisfying, worthwhile and fulfilling lives.

In November 2019, to coincide with Stress Awareness Week, we launched our free 24/7, 365 days a year Employee Assistance Programme for staff and their family members which is being well utilised and complements our in-house services of staff counselling and occupational health services. A similar programme was launched for students in February 2020.

We recruited a Wellbeing Training Manager in Student Services and since October 2019, 127 staff have completed the two-day Mental Health First Aider training. On 19 May 2020 we launched our Staff Network for Mental Health First Aiders to coincide with Mental Health Awareness Week.

Race at Work Charter

UEA is proud to have added its signature to the Business in the Community's Race at Work Charter. We recognise that the continued existence of racial inequalities in higher education limits both minority ethnic individuals and the sector as a whole in fulfilling its full potential.

The Race at Work Charter is composed of 5 principal calls to action for organisations across all sectors. The work the University is doing towards a submission to the Advance HE Race Equality Charter overlaps with the principals for the Race at Work Charter, which both look to cultural and systemic changes that will make a real difference to minority ethnic staff and students.

Actions which have come out of UEA signing Race Equality Charter

Data indicates that the number of Black staff across all UK HEIs, especially within Senior Leadership roles are at unacceptably low levels. UEA is no different, however, our VC has pledged his commitment to the Advance HE Race Equality Charter and is Chair of the UUK Tackling racial harassment in higher education taskforce. We are working towards a full submission for a Bronze Award in February 2022. An action plan will be produced as part of the submission where we can take positive action to reverse this trend within our institution.

Staff networks (BME)

The University has an active BAME Staff Network, and a representative attends the University EDI Committee who provides regular reports and engages in discussion on a range of EDI projects.

The Faculty of Science has established a cross School working group to examine issues facing our student and staff BAME community. The first meeting of academic staff is scheduled for summer 2020 and student representation is planned for the new academic year. The working group will examine current issues as well as course design and will report to the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee.

Working with SU and student networks

We work in partnership with our SU and its networks ensuring representation at all key University committees, particularly those which focus on our EDI work. Our Report and Support initiative is one way the University has worked jointly with our staff and student community in addressing equality issues.

New International Chair of Creative Writing

Funding has been secured to recruit to this new post within the School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing, which has a primary focus on Africa. Recruitment is currently being finalised and positive action will be taken to increase our applicant pool. Funding has also been secured to support the Global Voices Scholarships for up to 10 new Black writers to study Creative Writing at UEA.

Additional EDI Team Resource

Rob Drury was recruited joined the EDI Team in April 2020 to support the University's work towards the Race Equality Charter. Rob, who has had experience working on similar projects with the UEA SU, is also responsible for supporting both our Race Equality Charter Working Group and BAME Staff Network.

Allyship Training

The University's Centre for Staff Development Training (CSED) are piloting an Allyship Training programme. The Executive Team will complete the training in August 2020.

Bystander Intervention Training (MED)

[Norwich Medical School](#) students and staff have co-created bystander intervention training, to enable individuals to recognise and call out intentional and unintentional racist behaviour and micro-aggressions that they witness on campus, during placements, or in any other setting. The training encourages bystander peers and tutors to implement a united front and shared accountability to deal with racism. The school has also developed an academic mentoring scheme for BAME medical students to build confidence and inspire junior students to take control of their own personal development, with support from a senior student mentor.

Tackling Discrimination and Harassment across Higher Education Conference

The University has supported two colleagues from our BAME staff community to attend the Tackling Discrimination and Harassment across Higher Education Conference. This event took place in July 2020 and included a number of keynote speakers including David Isaac CBE, Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Amy Norton, Head of EDI at the Office for Students, and our Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Richardson in his capacity as the Chair of the UUK Tackling Racial Harassment Taskforce. Expressions of interest were sought from both our Race Equality Charter Working Group and our BAME Staff Network, with two expressions being received. Both were supported with the conference fee and time allocated as part of their normal working day. We were particularly pleased to support an academic colleague from the School of Biological Sciences and a colleague from our professional services in the Student Support Service to attend. Both attendees will share the resources as part of future networking meetings.

Scholarships

The University offers scholarships, generously funded by donors, for BAME students to help with tuition and living costs, including:

- The Birch Family Scholarship for the MA in Creative Writing (Poetry)
- The UEA Crowdfunded BAME Writers' Scholarship for MA in Creative Writing (Prose Fiction) for students who identify as BAME.
- The Miles Morland Foundation African Writers' Scholarship for MA in Creative Writing (Prose Fiction and Biography & Creative Non-Fiction). This is offered to anyone born in Africa, if both parents are African, or if the student has African nationality.

Awareness-raising events and communications

- A PGR-led event in the Faculty of Humanities, on decolonising curriculum was held on 2 July 2020. A follow-up report is to be included in the HUM Faculty and HUM School's curriculum strategy
- The School of American Studies (AMS) held a guest speaker event on 2 July 2020. Speakers included; Kimberly Jones 9Activist, filmmaker, and NAACP Image Award Nominated co-Author of YA Novel "I'm Not Dying With You Tonight"), Clive Lewis MP (MP for Norwich South), Dr Becky Avila (Alumni of American Studies at UEA, now Grants manager for Los Angeles based Not for Profit Organization, "Safe Place for Youth."), Piers Harrison Reid (Black British Poet). Discussion was based around the recent BLM protests, the comparisons between the UK and US movements, and where we go from here. Dr Rebecca Fraser discusses the highlights here: <http://ow.ly/hr6Y50AsCr2>
- UEA-funded Cultural partners, eg National Centre for Writing (including UEA alumni), leading on significant cultural events such as the [Desmond Elliott Prize](#).
- Student-led HUM event planned for September 2020
- The School of Biological Sciences' Equality and Diversity blog: <https://ueabioathenaswan.wordpress.com>
- The VC was recently interviewed by the Guardian chair of UUK Advisory group on racial harassment. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/jul/07/its-not-banter-its-racism-uk-students-accuse-universities-of-brushing-complaints-aside>

Aurora – UEA part of successful bid to European Commission for social inclusion work

The Aurora Alliance has been selected as one of the now 41 European University initiatives supported through the Erasmus+ programme to lead the way to a European Higher Education and Research sector that contributes to a Europe of prosperity and well-being.

The Aurora Alliance stems from the Aurora Universities Network. Originally formed in 2016, Aurora is a network of research-intensive universities deeply committed to the social impact of our activities, and with a history of engagement with our communities. The Aurora Alliance consists out of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, University of East Anglia, University of Iceland, University Duisburg-Essen, University Rovira I Virgili, University of Naples, University of Innsbruck, Copenhagen Business School, and Palacky University in Olomouc. The Alliance has a number of associate partners, four of those are universities in Central and Eastern Europe. We are looking forward to implementing and executing our strategy in the coming months to kick-off the Aurora Alliance Programme, with a focus on social inclusion.

This document is a work in progress. We are committed to progress in all areas and will continue to monitor all areas of work and to ensure that best practice becomes embedded.