

BAME Forum Sector Policy Update 1: November 2019

Reports and Guidance

UK Engagement survey (UKES) (October 2019)

Advance HE

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/ukes-2019>

“What stands out from this data are the high levels of engagement from Black students, and that fact that BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) students overall report comparatively higher or similar engagement compared to White students. Clearly, students from BME backgrounds are engaging with their course, and indeed are setting a positive example in many cases.

The results among Black students in particular are consistent with what we have found in previous years in UKES, building a consistent picture of strong engagement. As a counterpoint to this data, however, we can point towards the Student Academic Experience Survey (SAES) by Advance HE and HEPI (Higher Education Policy Institute), which consistently reports that students from BME backgrounds have a less positive experience than White students in terms of value for money and meeting expectations. There is also the widely reported BME attainment gap within the UK higher education sector, with Black students in particular facing wide gaps in terms of the proportions that achieve higher-classification degrees compared to White students.”

Tackling Racial Harassment: Universities Challenged (October 2019)

Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/tackling-racial-harassment-universities-challenged>

“[The EHRC launched an] inquiry into racial harassment in publicly funded universities in Britain to examine staff and students’ experiences of racial harassment and the effect they might have on their education, career and wellbeing. [The EHRC] also wanted to look at the extent to which universities have in place available, accessible and effective routes to redress for their staff and students if they experience racial harassment.

Racial harassment is a common experience for a wide range of students and staff at universities across England, Scotland and Wales. Around a quarter of students from an ethnic minority background (24%), and 9% of White students, said they had experienced racial harassment since starting their course. This equates to 13% of all students.

20% of students had been physically attacked. 56% of students who had been racially harassed had experienced racist name-calling, insults and jokes. Other common experiences included:

- Subtle and nuanced acts, often known as microaggressions;
- Being ignored or excluded from conversations or group activities;
- Being exposed to racist material or displays.”

Media Coverage:

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-50123697>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/23/universities-failing-to-address-thousands-of-racist-incidents>
- <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/university-racism-harassment-hate-crime-students-campus-abuse-a9147591.html>

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities: #ClosingTheGap (May 2019)

Universities UK (UUK) and National Union of Students (NUS)

<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/bame-student-attainment-uk-universities-closing-the-gap.aspx>

“A students’ race and ethnicity can significantly affect their degree outcomes. Of the disparities that exist within higher education, the gap between the likelihood of White students and students from Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds getting a first- or upper-second-class degree is the most stark – 13% amongst 2017-18 graduates. The sector must partner meaningfully with students and robustly demonstrate its commitment to addressing the BAME attainment gap.

Many universities have made a considerable effort to address this gap over several years with collaborative work between university leaders, staff and students’ unions, but there is still a long way to go. Eliminating these attainment differentials and transforming the university experience for BAME students will require sustained work from across the higher education sector.

Universities UK (UUK) and the National Union of Students (NUS) have consulted with students, staff and vice-chancellors to identify the fundamental barriers to racial equality. This report and its recommendations aim to break down these barriers and accelerate sector-wide progress toward eliminating BAME attainment gaps.”

Media Coverage:

- <https://www.fenews.co.uk/fevoices/28748-closingthegap-in-5-steps-addressing-bame-attainment-at-uk-universities>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-48121840>
- <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/10/18/british-universities-product-colonialism-national-union-students/>

Homeward Bound: Defining, understanding and aiding ‘commuter students’ (December 2018)

David Maguire and David Morris, Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI)

https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/HEPI-Homeward-Bound-Defining-understanding-and-aiding-%E2%80%98commuter-students%E2%80%99-Report-11429_11_18Web.pdf

“According to the Sutton Trust, a quarter of today’s students live at home and commute to study at university. In some parts of the country, especially major cities, the proportion is higher.

Relocating to university is a distinctive feature of UK higher education and it confers many advantages for our students and universities. However, it is comparatively expensive for individuals and the state, and benefits most those with the financial wherewithal, social flexibility and confidence to make such a big life change.

There is evidence to suggest that, compared to residential students, commuter students obtain poorer outcomes from their higher education, and will be less engaged and satisfied with their academic experiences... The best available evidence suggests that commuter students are also more likely to be the first generation in their families to enter higher education, have a lower income, be mature and be from an ethnic minority background. In England, they are more likely to live and study in and around London and other large cities.”

Media Coverage:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/dec/13/students-who-commute-to-university-are-getting-a-raw-deal>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/jan/30/commuter-students-debt-universities-live-home>

News and Articles

Minister tells universities to ‘up their game’ on access

University World News, 27 September 2019

<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190927131647385>

“Education Secretary Gavin Williamson has called on universities in the United Kingdom to improve access and participation for disadvantaged students and put an end to the high rates of students dropping out of courses.

‘My message is clear – up your game and get on with it,’ he said...

Speaking on a visit to King’s College London on Thursday, Williamson said: ‘It is not good enough that white working-class boys are far less likely to go to university and black students are far less likely to complete their courses than others. We cannot let this wasted potential go unchecked any longer.’”

Students accuse Goldsmiths University of watering down racism report

The Guardian, 11 October 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/oct/11/students-accuse-goldsmiths-university-of-watering-down-racism-report>

“Goldsmiths, University of London has been accused of watering down a damning report that illuminates how black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students feel victimised on campus by removing a foreword written by an anti-racism student activist organisation that was central to its publication.

Mona Mounir, welfare and liberation officer at Goldsmiths students’ union, says the foreword she was asked to write for the report was pulled at the last minute on the grounds it was ‘too political’. She was also writing in her capacity as a representative of student group Goldsmiths Anti-Racism Action, which occupied Deptford town hall between March and July to protest against racism on campus.”

Cambridge University seeks marked increase in black students thanks to ‘Stormzy Effect’

The London Economic, 11 October 2019

<https://www.thelondoneconomic.com/news/cambridge-university-sees-marked-increase-in-black-students-thanks-to-stormzy-effect/11/10/>

“Cambridge University has attributed a marked increase in black students to the ‘Stormzy Effect’ after a record number took undergraduate positions this year.

Ninety-one black students were admitted to the university at the start of this term, up about 50 per cent from the 61 who started courses in autumn 2018, raising the record number.

This follows Grime artist Stormzy’s announcement that he will fund the tuition fees and living costs of two students each year.”

Medicine, Dentistry and Law sees highest proportion of BAME students

The Boar (Warwick University), 18 October 2019

<https://theboar.org/2019/10/medicine-dentistry-and-law-sees-highest-proportion-of-bame-students/>

“Medicine, Dentistry and Law courses see the highest proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students at over a third, a study has found.

RS Components reported that Veterinary Science and Agriculture see the lowest participation of BAME students in contrast, alongside a 4% increase in the number of these students opting for apprenticeships in over a decade.

Based on data published by the government, the trading company analysed that Medicine, Dentistry and Law had the highest uptake of BAME students; with Medicine and Dentistry at 36% - 19,100 of 53,765 students in total. This was followed by Law at 34%, Business and Administrative Studies at 33%, Computer Science at 28% and Engineering and Technology at 26%.”

Upcoming Events

Priorities for tackling racial harassment and improving the BAME experience in higher education

Westminster Higher Education Forum, Wednesday 27th November 2019, Central London

<https://www.westminsterforumprojects.co.uk/conference/harassment-and-inequalities-in-HE-19>

This seminar will examine priorities for tackling racial harassment and improving the BAME experience in higher education.

The conference will be an opportunity to discuss the findings of the Equality and Human Rights Commission **inquiry into racial harassment in higher education**, looking at the current state of equality in UK HE, the nature of harassment experienced by students and how universities manage complaints.

Delegates will discuss key areas of concern identified by the inquiry and issues around implementation of recommendations, including in:

- Developing an understanding of the nature and range of racial harassment in HEIs;
- Availability and accessibility of mechanisms for reporting and redress, priorities for their improvement, and what effective action means in practice; and
- The adequacy of the statutory and legal framework affecting the responsibilities of universities in tackling the issues.

Closing the Attainment Gap for BAME Students Across Higher Education

Inside Government, Thursday 28th November 2019, Central London

<https://www.insidegovernment.co.uk/bame-he/>

This Forum will provide attendees with the opportunity to discuss effective methods for closing the attainment gap for BAME students across the higher education sector.

Participants will hear about the latest guidance on ensuring that universities are improving the experience for BAME students. In addition to this, best practice case studies will share innovative methods of closing the attainment gap for BAME students through the creation of inclusive learning environments and tailored support programmes.