



LONDON
METROPOLITAN
UNIVERSITY

Race Equity Strategic Plan

2020/21 – 2024/25

Centre for Equity
and Inclusion

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Our approach

Our holistic approach will be framed by six strategic commitments:

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Foreword

Mark Anderson

Chair of the Board
of Governors



I joined London Met in 2016 specifically because I wanted to make a difference to an institution that mirrored my values and shared a commitment to social mobility, equality and inclusion and was prepared to take action to realise those ambitions.

The creation of the Centre for Equity and Inclusion and the publication of this strategy are important manifestations of our commitment, but it does not end there.

There is much work to do to achieve our ambitions and to create a more equitable university for our students and staff. Our entire community has a role to play, and it is not always an easy journey. There is a special emphasis on the work the White members of our community can do – we must make a commitment to listen, learn and engage with these issues and most importantly take action.

The journey ahead will be a long one, but with this comprehensive strategy as our guide, and with the commitment of our entire community, I am confident we will realise our vision.

London Met’s Board of Governors view the University’s commitment to promoting equality as being not only a strategic imperative, but a concept fundamental to the DNA of our institution.

Foreword

Professor Lynn Dobbs

Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive



Events in the last year have brought the discrimination and disadvantage that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities face in the UK into sharp focus. Some progress has been made. Black Lives Matter has become mainstream and obvious relics to Britain's colonial past have been removed. However, the pandemic has demonstrated that the collective weight of discrimination and inequality, particularly health inequality, has devastating consequences.

At London Met we have always been committed to using the power of education to transform lives. Our new strategic plan places our commitment to social justice and social change at its heart.

We have some work to do to achieve our goals. Our degree awarding gap is too stark and whilst our proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff is growing, there is a lack of representation in senior academic roles and non-academic leadership roles in the University.

But we are changing. We have established the Centre for Equity and Inclusion, and we have launched a significant, wide-ranging curriculum review. Our Education for Social Justice Framework will bring a curriculum that combines the principles of inclusive pedagogy with a progressive values-based vision reflecting the mission of the University.

We will not lose our commitment to this agenda. This strategy is very important to us. It puts into print the hard targets that we need to achieve so we can better support the communities that we are so proud to work with.

Our plan to deliver race equity at London Met

Dr Zainab Khan

Pro Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning
Director of the Centre for Equity and Inclusion



There remains a litany of challenges hampering the advancement of race equity in higher education. Ethnic minority and in particular Black students are more likely to drop out, less likely to complete their studies on time, more likely to be subject to misconduct investigations, less likely to be awarded good honours or progress to graduate-level employment. In relation to staff, Black and minoritised individuals remain less likely to be appointed, progress or occupy senior roles. There are also race pay gaps and increased likelihood of flight from the sector. These are all symptoms of institutional racism and we must take responsibility for rooting out practices which uphold racist systems.

The status quo is unacceptable to us – at London Met we are accelerating our race equity work because we know that change is long overdue.

We are building a university that aspires to be anti-racist in our practice. As a minority-serving institution where the majority of our students are from Black or minoritised backgrounds there is an added ethical imperative to deliver change.

Our strategic plan will tackle systemic barriers, both seen and unseen, and replace them with structural and culture change. Our ambition is to engage everyone in the practice of anti-racism and for us to respond to the nuanced challenges facing different racialised communities. The real test will be if Black and minoritised members of our community see and feel the change.

Investment

Effective, tangible change requires resource.

- Across the sector, Black and minoritised staff bear the burden of carrying their institution's race equity mantle. This work has historically been unrecognised and undervalued. Staff who hold management positions will be expected to lead their teams in anti-racism, racial literacy and the implementation of this strategy.
- We will ensure that staff leading anti-racist project work linked to this strategy will be resourced and receive workload recognition for their labour. This work is seen as vital to the health of our ecosystem and as such will be acknowledged and celebrated in promotion criteria.

We are committing £15 million of investment over the next five years to the strategic targets outlined below, to run concurrently with [the University's corporate plan](#). This is in addition to the establishment of the new Centre for Equity and Inclusion, which is already driving transformational change across the University.

- The funding will be targeted towards fixing the academic pipeline, changing institutional culture through an ambitious staff development programme and funding projects that will support the achievement of this plan.

Research and expertise

Continual learning and the pursuit of a What Works philosophy.

- In November 2020 we formally launched the Centre for Equity and Inclusion to drive institutional transformation, embedding inclusive practice into our DNA. We will build a team of race equity experts who will collaborate with departments across the University to support the delivery of this plan.
- In addition we will invest in research studies into race and racialisation within the University and higher education so that we can enhance our understanding and respond to the challenges that exist. We will evaluate our change programmes to follow what works. We will routinely share good practice to support change across the sector.

Good governance

Developing unity and purpose in progress. Creating accountability for action.

Policies and processes

- We constantly review our policies to ensure they reflect our inclusive values.
- We will go further to ensure that all of our practices, such as our hiring processes and misconduct investigations, support the removal of systemic discrimination.
- Our minoritised staff and students will have confidence in a reporting system that is robust and accounts for the nuanced manifestations and evolving nature of racism. They will be confident in reporting racism without fear, including any backlash directed towards them as a result of our ambitions set out in this plan.
- Our approach to procurement will ensure that we partner with suppliers who are equally committed to improving race equity within their organisations.

Data

- In 2020 we overhauled and modernised the University's data practices to ensure we use robust data intelligence to understand and assess our performance.
- We will develop data sets and publish annual reports that draw on both qualitative and quantitative data to drive decisions, address disparities and promote a culture of transparency on our performance against all aspects of this strategic plan.

Accountability

- We have already committed to applying for Bronze award for the Race Equality Charter by 2023/24. We will develop a framework for department and school action plans to ensure every corner of the institution makes progress well in advance of our future submission for the Charter.

“Students and the Students’ Union have seen a great dramatic change in the University. Their focus on race and equity has been a huge part of the societal change and march of progress towards a more equitable learning. It has been an absolute pleasure to have worked and continue to work with the University collaboratively; to tackle every day struggles that are embedded within higher education. This strategy continues to empower our students to be free of the socially constructed norms that hinder student success and provides a better and higher quality of student experience. We believe that every student deserves equity within their education; this strategy will provide that.”

Chrystalle Margallo – President, London Met Students’ Union



Decision-making

- We will ensure that our governance activity is fully representative. Black and minoritised voices will be at the table at every level of the institution.
- We will work in partnership with the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff network, students and the Students' Union on all aspects of development and enhancement of this plan. Our equity programmes will be rooted in lived experience.

Targets

- Create an equity dashboard showing the full picture of race-based student and staff pipeline statistics.
- The annual publication of a race compendium.
- We will achieve Race Equality Charter status by 2024.
- 20 percentage point biannual increase in the confidence of Black and minoritised staff and students in the grievance process.
- To reflect the London adult population,¹ 55% of our Board and associated committees will be from a Black or minoritised background by 2025.

¹ England and Wales Census 2011

“On the long journey to becoming an anti-racist society, the land beyond positive intention and beautiful rhetoric has remained a mystery to many within higher education. The accountability reforms set out in this strategy represent a new bare minimum – at last the translation of those good intentions into transparent and tangible action.

“This is a cyclical process; adapting and responding to our evolving understanding of anti-racist practice at the University and within higher education.”

Alex Mormoris
Centre for Equity and Inclusion



Culture change

Race equity work is not the job of a few individuals, we all have responsibility.

In order to create systemic change, anti-racist practice must be embedded throughout the entire University. From individual interactions, our provision and processes through to strategic operations and infrastructure, we will develop qualitative evaluation methods to assess changes to the lived experience of our minoritised staff and students.

All of our staff will be racially literate professionals who understand their role and capacity as change agents for racial and social justice. Every member of staff will understand the responsibility to continually advance their knowledge of nuanced, contemporary racism and how it manifests within higher education. Staff will uphold these values in their interactions with students, colleagues and our partners.

We will achieve this through:

Inclusive Behaviours Programme

- The development and introduction of an Inclusive Behaviours staff development programme, which will include privilege and anti racism training. This will be complemented by a new Professional Behaviours Framework, which will articulate behaviours expected of staff in relation to inclusivity.
- All senior managers will be required to undertake on-going professional development and immersion activities in race awareness.

Talking about race

- We will ensure there are regular conversations about race and racism through specific campaigns and the celebration of Black History throughout the year.
- Race equity will be a standing item in our committee structures as well as key University events such the annual learning and teaching, and research conferences.
- We will ensure that there are regular educational opportunities available for staff and students to improve their understanding and awareness of how racism and racialisation operates. This will be underpinned by decolonial sociological and historical perspectives.

Targets

- Introduction of Professional Behaviours Framework featuring Inclusive Behaviours by June 2021.
- All academic staff to have undertaken Inclusive Behaviours training by September 2021 and new staff within six months of joining.
- All professional services departments to have undertaken the training by June 2022.
- Board and senior managers to undertake a rolling programme of race equality training.

Equity in education

Education that liberates individual potential and builds collective solidarity.

We are a university that has always had a strong social mission and through this strategic plan we are refreshing and recharging our ambition. We recognise the overwhelming evidence which links diversity in curricula with improved outcomes for Black and minoritised students. We want to unlock our students' capacity to be agents of societal change, and to be supported by lecturers who understand the impact of race and coloniality on the way academic conventions, knowledge and traditions are formed.

Education for Social Justice Framework

- This is our lynchpin learning and teaching strategy for the next five years. Designed in partnership with students, the Students' Union and staff to address the degree awarding gap we are going further to ensure the curriculum is delivered through a kaleidoscope of emancipatory pedagogic approaches so that Black and minoritised students see themselves reflected, the contributions of diasporic communities recognised and all subjects will engage with critical race theory.
- We will facilitate the co-design and enhancement of curricula with our students.
- Our students will develop their capacity for inclusive leadership with the opportunity to learn about the social issues facing London.

- We will ensure that our Student Services provide culturally appropriate provision, staffed by experts in inclusion and understanding into the impact of racialisation and racism on students.

Racial justice programmes

- Many British Black and minoritised students will reach university without having had any formal education covering their own racial and cultural history. Similarly, White students are also likely to have experienced a Euro-centric myopic presentation of history and culture during the formative stages of their education. We will develop and introduce a spine of Black and racial studies modules for all students to learn about the history of race in London, Britain and global migration.

Decolonising academic practices

Decolonisation typically refers to the withdrawal of political, military and governmental rule of a colonised land by its invaders. Decolonising academia, however, is understood as the process in which we rethink, reframe and reconstruct the curricula and research that uphold a Europe-centred, colonial lens. It should not be mistaken for 'diversification', as diversity can still exist within this western bias. Decolonisation goes further and deeper in challenging the institutional hierarchy and monopoly on knowledge.

We are actively seeking to decolonise the University through:

- Our learning and teaching strategy, the Education for Social Justice Framework, which will be monitored through academic quality processes and also under the auspices of the Access and Participation Plan.
- Our recruitment and promotion practices will build a staffing base where decolonial thought is evidenced in their academic practice, which in turn will encourage and support our students to undertake decolonial research.
- Our University culture, whereby staff and students will be supported and as a result become well-acquainted with what is meant by decolonisation.

Targets

- Implementation of the Education for Social Justice Framework by September 2022 for all degree programmes.
- We will reduce the degree awarding gap to 10% by 2025. Any gap is unacceptable so we are setting an additional stretch target of 5%.
- We will eliminate disparities in non continuation between White students and Black and minoritised students by 2025.
- We will develop a mixed methods evaluation process which will enable us to assess student satisfaction towards staff competency in discussions on race and racism.

“Structural racism as we know it today was solidified and perfected through the colonial project. To say we are post-colonial, would be to ignore the multitude of ways people of colour are still oppressed by colonialism. Decolonisation then, is not only necessary but essential to eradicating structural racism.

“Mainstreaming an educational experience of Black and critical race studies which uncover omitted voices and histories of Black people in the UK, creating a more honest and truthful narrative of Britain’s history and present, forms a vital educational basis. This is crucial in supporting the next generation of leaders, academics and more to unsubscribe to the historical amnesia and revisionism that is taught to us through compulsory education.”

Sofia Akel – Centre for Equity and Inclusion



Fixing the pipeline

Delivering a staffing base that reflects our students and our communities.

Despite the growth in student diversity in higher education, Black and minoritised academics remain missing in action. They struggle getting in and getting on, and studies have pointed to their ‘flight’ from the academy, driven out by a discriminatory and psychologically hostile culture. There are de minimis numbers in professorial and senior leadership roles across the UK.

Every institution is faced with this challenge and they must decide the appropriate course of action. At London Met we want to build an academic pipeline for future leadership of the institution, ensuring that the staffing base and decision-makers reflect the diversity of our students and the local communities we serve.

A generation missing in action

Entry into academia is often prohibitively expensive due to the requirement for postgraduate qualifications and research experience. Our 2020 data suggests there are no young (those aged under 35) Black or minoritised early career academics at London Met.

We will be launching a campaign to diversify our academic pipeline and will focus on early career academics including post-doctoral fellowships, developing an apprentice lectureship scheme, lecturer and senior lectureships as well as seeking to attract outstanding professors and senior managers.

Fair recruitment, selection and progression

- We are working to implement the recommendations of the MacGregor-Smith Race in the Workplace Review (2017) including ensuring diverse interview panels and rejecting non-diverse shortlists.

In addition we will:

- Ensure all hiring managers and recruitment panel members have undertaken Inclusive Behaviours in addition to recruitment and selection panel training by June 2022 so that we end inequitable practices such as hiring in one’s image.
- Take positive action in order to deliver a representative workforce.
- Revise all future job descriptions to reflect our values and ensure that the criteria for all appointments speak to our ambition on race and desire to attract candidates with shared values and expertise on race.
- Use data to assess performance in departments and schools where disparities persist between application, shortlisting and appointment.
- Also use data to identify and respond to trends that suggest that workloads and development opportunities are not being allocated equitably.

- Develop a series of standard interview questions and scenarios that will assess candidates' capability to work in a multicultural organisation.
- Provide career-enhancing development opportunities for Black and minoritised staff that redress institutional imbalances and inequities.

Targets

- Reflecting the London population benchmark, at least 55% of all early career academic staff and senior academic staff respectively, to come from Black and minoritised backgrounds by January 2025.
- 55% of Senior Managers to come from Black and minoritised backgrounds by January 2025.



“Education on all matters pertaining to race is a continuous process. Staff and students should have a sense of belonging and trust that their views and voices will be heard and valued. They must be convinced that decisions made are fair and equitable and not tokenistic. Equality of opportunity should be experienced by all. Conversations about race, discrimination and microaggressions need to be voiced. Staff and students should not be marginalised because of accents, heritage languages and preconceived notions of ethnicity and class. It is time that the narrative of racism be changed and words become action.”

Janet Douglas Gardner

Associate Professor and Chair of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Voices Staff Network

This plan has been developed in consultation with Black and minoritised staff and students, and will be subject to monitoring and evaluation.
