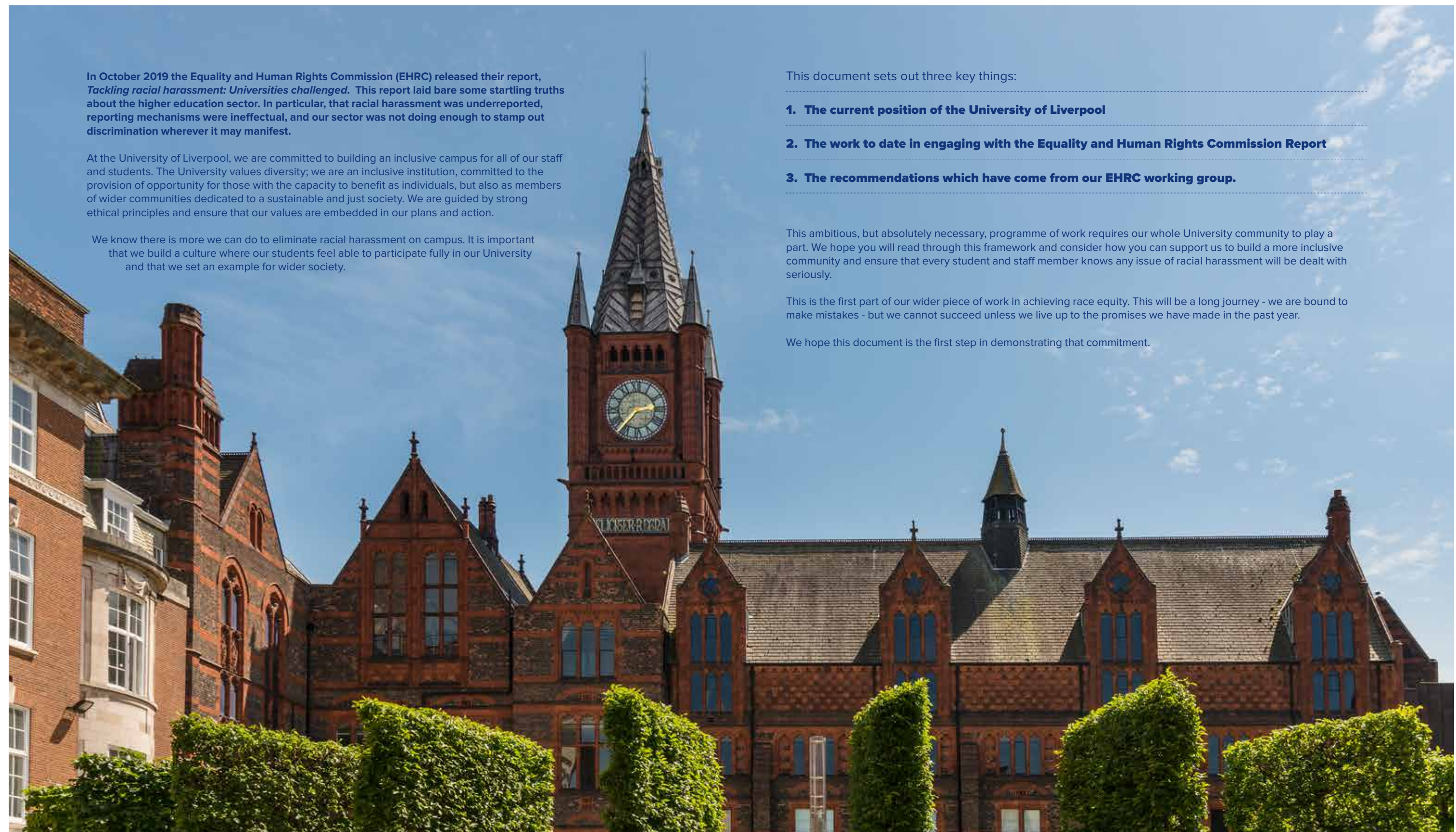




UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

Tackling Racial Harassment: Universities Challenged

A University of Liverpool Response



In October 2019 the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) released their report, *Tackling racial harassment: Universities challenged*. This report laid bare some startling truths about the higher education sector. In particular, that racial harassment was underreported, reporting mechanisms were ineffectual, and our sector was not doing enough to stamp out discrimination wherever it may manifest.

At the University of Liverpool, we are committed to building an inclusive campus for all of our staff and students. The University values diversity; we are an inclusive institution, committed to the provision of opportunity for those with the capacity to benefit as individuals, but also as members of wider communities dedicated to a sustainable and just society. We are guided by strong ethical principles and ensure that our values are embedded in our plans and action.

We know there is more we can do to eliminate racial harassment on campus. It is important that we build a culture where our students feel able to participate fully in our University and that we set an example for wider society.

This document sets out three key things:

- 1. The current position of the University of Liverpool**
- 2. The work to date in engaging with the Equality and Human Rights Commission Report**
- 3. The recommendations which have come from our EHRC working group.**

This ambitious, but absolutely necessary, programme of work requires our whole University community to play a part. We hope you will read through this framework and consider how you can support us to build a more inclusive community and ensure that every student and staff member knows any issue of racial harassment will be dealt with seriously.

This is the first part of our wider piece of work in achieving race equity. This will be a long journey - we are bound to make mistakes - but we cannot succeed unless we live up to the promises we have made in the past year.

We hope this document is the first step in demonstrating that commitment.

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL POSITION

The University of Liverpool receives very few complaints of racial harassment. Unlike some universities, we collect data specifically on complaints of racial harassment, but in any given year there are few complaints of racist conduct either from students or staff.

To receive so few likely underplays the scale of racial harassment on campus. We know from local resolution, informal reporting, and feedback from the Liverpool Guild of Students, that the experiences of some of our students and staff are not represented in these statistics.

Through the EHRC report and our own work, we believe that underreporting is driven primarily by three factors. The first is the availability and knowledge of the reporting mechanisms for racial harassment. The second is the extent to which conduct can be readily identified, or attributed, to being racially motivated. Third, is the confidence of victims in the reporting and resolution of complaints of racial harassment. This will be explored further through our appreciative inquiry outlined below.

Therefore, our efforts to build a more equitable and inclusive University community will not succeed until we are able to continuously demonstrate to staff, students, and our wider community, that we are tackling racial harassment effectively.

We know this is no easy task. For example, at the University of Liverpool, and in higher education more broadly, we still have significant award gaps between white and BAME students, BAME staff are significantly underrepresented in senior positions, and although we are making progress, there is more work to do in ensuring all staff throughout the institution feel empowered to take local action to tackle this issue.





OUR PROCESS

The publication of the EHRC report was a call to action for the entire higher education sector. The report laid bare that racial harassment was much more prevalent than reported and reporting was not effective for those affected by it.

This issue sits amongst wider racial disparities on our campuses. At the University of Liverpool, we acknowledge that being free from harassment should be a minimum and not the whole of our aspirations when it comes to building a more equitable campus for all of our staff and students. In particular, we know that some, but not all of the disparities, include:

- **Gaps in degree awards remain stubbornly and unacceptably high**
- **There is an underrepresentation of BAME staff in senior positions at the University**
- **The publicly shared experiences of staff and students on racial harassment and racism do not yet match up with our official reporting.**

This is the background to the formation of the EHRC Working Group which set out to understand the nature of racial harassment on campus and how we may combat it as an institution.

Explicitly, the EHRC Working Group's work started from the premise that being free from racial harassment is a foundational and crucial step toward building a more equitable campus for all of our members.

The group met a number of times and considered the report in three phases:

1. **Understanding the nature of our current reporting processes and considering their effectiveness in capturing reports of racial harassment**
2. **Developing areas of inquiry which will be central to addressing issues of racial harassment on campus**
3. **Developing specific recommendations with clear responsibilities for leaders across our institution.**

In turn, this has led to three areas of recommendation:

- **Our reporting structures for racial harassment**
- **Building a culture on campus which promotes racial equity**
- **Maintaining transparency on how we can all positively contribute to a more equitable University community.**



OUR WORK TO DATE

The EHRC working group has been working iteratively to implement change as work has gone on. The EHRC report formed the catalyst for a deep look into much of our work in building a more equitable campus.

However, as the group has met over the last year, the growth of the Black Lives Matter movement, renewed calls to action on campus, and mass engagement in this work, has led to coterminous work streams taking place:



- We have adopted a Race Equality and Anti-Racism Action Plan which identifies current, forthcoming and longer-term plans
- We have carried out a review of parts of our media presence with a view to making recommendations on how representative they are of our community
- We have agreed a new partnership with the Anthony Walker Foundation (a charity dedicated to tackling racism, hate crime and discrimination by providing educational opportunities, victim support services and by promoting equity and inclusion for all) to support our training and community engagement work
- A 'scorecard' is being developed to make departments aware of their own award gaps, including gaps based on race
- The emergent student success strategy has been tasked with making specific consideration of award gaps based on race
- We have committed to sign up to the Advance HE Race Equality Charter, which will complement the recommendations from the EHRC working group
- We are reviewing BAME representation in our programme of cultural activities eg the Great Read, the Liverpool Literary Festival, and our Culture at Home webpages
- We have agreed all Senior Leadership Team and Professional Services Directors Group members and Deans will have agreed a race equality/anti-racism objective in their PDR
- We are currently reviewing our materials for recruitment to Council, our governance of race equality, and the responsibilities of leaders across the University.

This is just some of the activity which has, and is, taking place across the University. There is a momentum across a wide range of activity. Our challenge is to now capture and channel it into making lasting change on campus.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Structural changes

AIM	ACTIONS	SUCCESS
<p>The University of Liverpool will ensure students and staff are empowered to report harassment and ensure our complaints procedures are fit for purpose and offer effective redress.</p>	To roll out Report and Support as the primary tool for reporting harassment.	<p>Report and Support will be made available from the beginning of the new term and included as part of welcome communications.</p> <p>Appendix I presented to University committees in first cycle of 2020, and a wider review of policies relating to racial harassment with recommendations presented in spring 2021.</p> <p>To deliver citizenship module for Foundation Week, October 2020.</p> <p>A year-on-year increase in the proportion of staff, and students, who report that they feel confident of how and where they can report incidents of racial harassment.</p>
	To review the range of policies, codes of conducts, and safeguarding measures relating to reporting and addressing racial harassment with particular attention to how it relates to Report and Support.	
	To develop a citizenship module which sets expectations of our students to engage in active anti-racism.	
	Amend Appendix I of the Policy on Students Conduct and Discipline to clearly outline examples of racial harassment under each category of offence and give examples of consequences to ensure that disciplinary panel members treat racial harassment and racism disciplinary cases appropriately and consistently.	
	To develop staff specific communications on the tools they can access, and the steps they should take, to ensure racism and racial harassment is reported appropriately.	
<p>The University of Liverpool will ensure effective data collection procedures are in place to enable us to develop a baseline in order to evaluate and improve our prevention and response strategies.</p>	The University will use Report and Support as a basis for data collection on racial harassment, and in turn report this through the governance cycle.	<p>Report and Support will be rolled out in October with accompanying communication plan.</p> <p>An annual thematic report on issues raised through report and support will be delivered to Senate and Council, and shared with local stakeholders.</p> <p>The newly formed shadow assessment team for the Advance HE Race Equality Charter will evaluate the use and effectiveness of data as their immediate priority.</p>
	Report and Support will be used to provide an annual thematic report of issues of racial harassment that were raised but did not amount to formal complaints. This will be used to make institution-wide interventions.	
	The University will develop mechanisms of sharing intelligence and best practice with key stakeholders. This will include developing a better understanding of where racial harassment is taking place outside of campus.	
	As part of the work to obtain Advance HE accreditation (below) the availability, granularity, and usability of data will be prioritised as a baseline to understand staff and student experiences.	
<p>The University will ensure that initiatives to support mental health in higher education reflect the impact of racial harassment and micro-aggressions on people's mental health and wellbeing, and the needs of people with different protected characteristics, to best support a diverse student and staff population.</p>	To convene a small working group to explore staff and student mental health reporting as relates to racial harassment while integrating intersectional lens.	<p>Training for student-facing staff developed and delivered with partners on the impacts of racial harassment on student mental health this academic year.</p> <p>The Advance HE Race Equality Charter Shadow Assessment Team will have agreed data reporting as an early priority in their work.</p> <p>A working group on the interaction between racial harassment and mental health will be convened by winter 2020.</p>
	To work with partners and staff to assess and deliver any training needs arising out of these initiatives, with particular attention to staff with frequent contact with students.	
	Reassess data reporting to delineate between what is a regulatory requirement and what is most useful for internal decision making.	
<p>University of Liverpool's Senior Leadership Team, Council, and wider Leadership Team, will demonstrate leadership and accountability for embedding an inclusive culture across the institution.</p>	To develop new governance measures which draw attention to equality and diversity implications of policy being developed in the committee structure.	<p>New measures on supporting effective adherence to equality and diversity objectives, like the EHRC framework, will be fully integrated into the University committee cycle by 2021.</p> <p>An effective communication plan will follow the launch of the EHRC Framework in October 2020.</p> <p>An annual update to Council and Senate will be delivered with accompanying material on statutory EDI responsibilities.</p> <p>Liverpool Guild of Students will have embedded the wider considerations of EHRC in their training taking place with students on bystander intervention.</p> <p>A programme of work will begin in 2021 which looks at how we recognise staff who contribute toward building better cultures, particularly around race equity, on campus, alongside teaching and research merits.</p>
	Liverpool Guild of Students will embed and promote inclusivity as part of their training of student leaders.	
	An annual report will be presented to Council and Senate on the progress of EHRC and other race equality initiatives.	
	An annual statement will be made available to staff and students on how oversight of race equity work is being maintained.	
	University of Liverpool's Senior Leadership team will engage with expert practitioners on issues of race equity and the wider leadership team will support mentoring initiatives.	
	Specific criteria will be developed which recognise and reward measures to embed greater cultural shift toward race equity through institutional recognition and reward.	
A network, support, and coaching for members of the Leadership Team on race equality will be developed. Specific consideration will be given to the engagement of external expertise to improve race equality and develop anti-racist policies, actions and practices.		

RECOMMENDATIONS

Community and Visibility

AIM	ACTIONS	SUCCESS
To roll out measures to close and quantify BAME award gaps with Departments, Schools and Faculties.	Produce a 'score card' to measure and develop action plans to close BAME award gaps at a departmental level.	Score cards on BAME award gaps will be made available to Departments, Schools, and Faculties, in winter 2020. Reduce the BAME award gap (1st or 2:1s) to 3% by 24/25. Where practicable the University will disaggregate the "BAME" student category to gain a better understanding of the multitude of experiences which currently sit within this umbrella term. Eliminate the gap in degree outcomes (1st or 2:1s) between white and black students to 0% by 24/25. To see a year-on-year increase in the proportion of BAME students undertaking PhDs starting in 2021. Report on bursaries to be delivered to Student Intake Strategy Group in winter 2020.
	To use the Student Success Boards as the central place for reporting, scrutinising, and collaboration on activity to close BAME award gaps.	
	To make available expertise, resource, and advice for Departments, Schools and Faculties to access in their work to close local BAME award gaps.	
	To engage with the Prosper programme and PhD studentships and initiatives where there is need for specific actions on race equity.	
	To provide sponsorship opportunities between senior staff and BAME students hoping to undertake PhDs.	
	To use the Success Boards, and financial support, to focus on progression between UG and PGT.	
	To make recommendations on configuration of student bursaries with a view to assessing their appropriateness in achieving Access and Participation Plan targets.	
To work with local communities, expert organisations, and the Universities Studying Slavery consortium, to explore how the historic actions of the University have shaped perceptions of it today, and in doing so improve those perceptions.	To engage with expert organisations on the University of Liverpool's race equality commitments, with specific emphasis on engaging local communities with the work of the University.	In 2020 a review of the diversity of University communications will be launched which looks specifically at how we profile partners, the representation of our public materials, and our events. New partners will be sought and secured in 2020 with specific criteria on their ability to support community engagement and training.
	To use the development of this EHRC framework as the starting point for ongoing and meaningful engagement with staff and students on issues of race equity.	
To successfully gain accreditation of the Advance HE Race Equality Charter Mark.	To begin the process of benchmarking current progress against Advance HE Race Equality Charter.	To establish Shadow Self-Assessment Team in winter 2020 to begin preparation. To sign up to the Advanced HE Charter Mark by spring 2021. To successfully gain Advance HE accreditation within the 18 months-3 year timeline.
	To carry out an initial data project to assess current gaps in reporting.	
	To form a Self-Assessment Team to gain accreditation.	
To engage existing student networks with opportunity for peer support.	To use University resources to support the growth of existing peer support programmes.	To use Guild Liaison Sub Committee to develop proposal over the 20/21 academic year for supporting peer support programmes and liberation networks.
	To work with the Guild to support their liberation networks.	
To centre our community work around how the University can be a more visible, active, and effective anti-racist organisation, and in doing so support organisations with ambitions like ours.	To use Black History Month and Foundation Week to launch a series of events, education sessions, and commitments from the University to demonstrate our commitment to anti-racist practice.	To develop and launch a series of activities for Black History Month and adopt as an institutional priority in the future.
	To provide opportunities for staff and students to meet with external experts on anti-racist practice.	

RECOMMENDATIONS

Culture

AIM	ACTIONS	SUCCESS
To better understand the experience of BAME staff and students at the University.	Using an appreciative inquiry approach, to engage in iterative dialogue with staff and students to identify ways in which the EHRC action plan is eliminating racial harassment through building a positive and inclusive culture and how this can be sustained and embedded throughout University practice.	To report on staff and student experiences in order to inform continued activity towards building a more inclusive culture and eliminating racial harassment. To begin reporting in spring 2021.
To regularly set out the expectations of our students of their conduct on campus around racial harassment.	To use the Citizenship Module as an educative tool. To use thematic reporting to committees, and Council, as a means of making larger scale interventions.	To have at least 1,000 students engage in 'A Conversation about Race' in the Citizenship Module.
Align quality assurance and programme development processes to better embed considerations of diversity and decolonisation.	To review the effectiveness of quality assurance processes to encourage a more diverse curriculum. To provide central research, information and resource to tackle local challenges on decolonising the curriculum..	To provide central resource and support for a coordinated Faculties group interested in decolonising the curriculum, by winter 2020.
Map and facilitate engagement with students, staff, and local community groups.	To adopt Black History Month as part of the institutional calendar of events. To form new partnerships with new racial justice organisations in the city. To provide further opportunities for staff and students to volunteer with local community groups and charities who are working in racial justice.	To set out public information on our partners who are supporting our work through targeted communication across the 2020/21 year.
To provide appropriate training for staff which covers both reporting racial harassment, and developing leadership capacity in anti-racist practice.	Roll out appropriate training for Report and Support with particular emphasis on staff with significant student conduct. To work with partners on securing appropriate resource for training in cultural competency around racial harassment.	To develop materials to support the adoption of Report and Support as the platform is rolled out in autumn 2020. To develop proposals for staff training appropriate to their interaction with students and staff by winter 2020.



THE INCLUSIVE
RED BRICK