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# Scoping Strategies for the Race Attainment Gap in Philosophy

RIS21

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of the  
Arts

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**This report has been formatted in compliance with the British Dyslexia Association's accessibility Style Guide.**

# 1. Executive Summary

## 1.1 Introduction

This report was commissioned by the School of the Arts (SoTA) at the University of Liverpool (UOL). This is a scoping study to assess what, if any, interventions are being undertaken by Philosophy departments across the globe to address the ethnicity degree awarding gap (EDAG) by higher education institutions (HEIs). These results are intended to form the basis of an evidence-based strategy to combat the awarding gap with the Department of Philosophy within the University. Through this research, we hope that further interventions taken to tackle this gap will be sustainable and effective, enacting positive change in our academic community.

The structure of this report is based on the TASO June 2023 report “Approaches to addressing the ethnicity degree awarding gap” (TASO, 2023). TASO (Transforming Access and Student Outcomes) is a charity set up in 2019 and funded by the Office For Students. It aims to eliminate all equality gaps in higher education, and improve student experience through evidence-based strategies.

## 1.2 Context

There have been several waves of research in this area, from the first reports identifying the attainment gap’s existence (Connor et al., 2004), to increased interest from the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement from 2020 onwards. Each has increased awareness and investigation in this area, and have prompted the wider Higher Education (HE) sector to commit to end the EDAG - often referred to as a “wicked” problem (Ugiagbe-Green and Ernsting, 2022). This gap represents the significant deviation between the degree outcomes of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, and their white counterparts. Although there is a plethora of research both demonstrating that there is a very real difference in student

outcomes based on race, and evaluating the potential reasons behind this, there is a significant lack of research investigating interventions that work to combat it. In particular, it seems that universities commonly make declarations of anti-racism and support for movements like BLM, but fail to show transparency on how they are truly tackling institutional racism (Stevenson et al., 2019).

This work was undertaken to combat the EDAG within Philosophy at UOL, but I hope it has wider implications for the way institutional racism is talked about in our institution, and the transparency we show when implementing interventions.

### **1.3 Findings**

Findings from our evaluation of UK HEI Philosophy providers indicate that:

- Policies pertaining to racial equality are largely created at Faculty or institution level. Philosophy specific interventions are few, and those related to the attainment gap are non-existent.
- Of UK HEI Philosophy providers evaluated, none have published findings on the impact of interventions that have been implemented in their departments regarding any aspect of race equality.
- Schemes and groups that are shown on HEI websites to demonstrate racial awareness and good EDI function are almost entirely inactive - meaning that the online resources have not been maintained. For example, only one Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) Chapter out of 4 had activity in the last 6 months.
- There was a more obvious focus on gender equality. It appeared that every department had a website section on Athena Swan, or the BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme, but lacked more than a passing statement on race equality.
- Overall, HE Philosophy departments seem to be working towards mitigating the EDAG, but very few have seen clear results from their interventions.

Findings from our evaluation of UK HEI Humanities Faculties indicates that:

- Policies are still largely created at institutional level. Just over half of the 50 Humanities faculties evaluated had no mention of racial equality policy on their websites, and of those that did, 17 directly relied on their institutions' APP or EDI strategy plan.
- Of the faculties evaluated, none have published findings or full reports on the impact of the interventions they have implemented. This may indicate a lack of monitoring and evaluation of interventions.
- Additionally, research concerning the EDAG appears to be in its initial stages, despite having been of interest since 2001. Research by Humanities faculties appears to be focused on identifying casual factors of the EDAG or creating resources to begin interventions.
- Overall, interventions into the EDAG appear to be used as an advertisement tool rather than a legitimate effort to increase equality in the HE sector.

## 1.4 Methodology

A list of UK universities that offer undergraduate Philosophy (N=43) was formed based on the Complete University Guide ranking table. The institutions Bangor University, Liverpool Hope University, London School of Economics and Political Science, Nottingham Trent University, SOAS, University of Gloucestershire, and University of Roehampton were omitted due to not offering Philosophy as a sole discipline. The institutions Swansea University, University of Wales Trinity St David and University of the Highlands and the Islands were included as despite not fitting the Complete' University Guide's ranking criteria, they do offer Philosophy as a sole discipline.

This list was coded according to if the Philosophy department had published any policy specifically pertaining to the EDAG on their website or research platform, and whether the department had a specific Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) committee. A policy was defined as any statement acknowledging the EDAG, racism within the discipline, or any reference to interventions taken to combat the EDAG or racism. The universities that had policy published were then coded on whether these interventions were targeted at Philosophy, at the faculty level or at

the institutional level. The interventions were then also coded on frequency of use, and how developed they were. The most informed interventions were expanded on to the full extent possible.

The parent faculties or schools of the Philosophy departments, such as schools of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Arts, were then evaluated using the same method. The process was repeated, coding the parent faculties on the presence of policies or research concerning the EDAG, and whether they had a specific EDI committee or group. This data was then coded on whether it was specific to the faculty or relied on the institutions policies. The interventions found were coded on frequency of use and development level.

Additionally, a number of exceptional case studies external to the discipline scope of this research have been included due to their potential utility. These were found either in conjunction to the Philosophy/faculty interventions, or through academic databases. Publications pertaining to this subject were found through searching academic databases. The databases used were Google Scholar, PhilPapers, and several journals of education. The search terms/keywords used were as follows:

- BAME/BME
- EDI/Equality/Equity
- Higher education
- Philosophy
- Race/racial/ethnicity awarding/attainment gap
- University/HEI

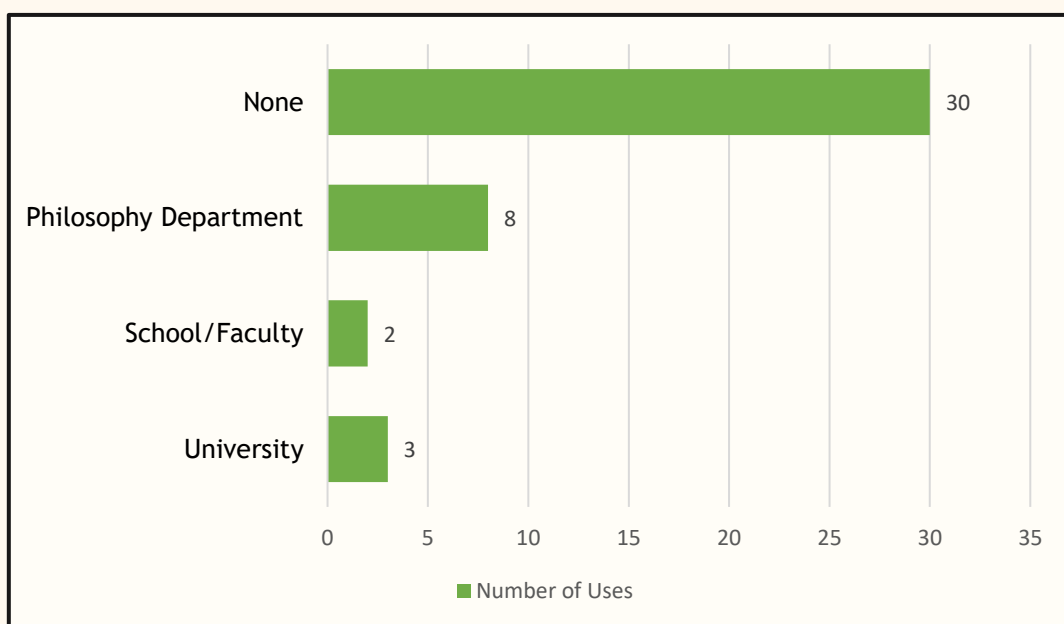
International research was focused on the USA and South Africa, to gain a full scope of interventions in varying racial cultures. The research was found by creating a list of universities in these countries that offer Philosophy, selecting the top 10 based on attainment and reviewing their Philosophy and Humanities faculties' EDI policies.

## 2. UK HEI Findings

### 2.1 Approaches in Philosophy

Universities offering undergraduate Philosophy: N=43

Philosophy departments with policies or publications about racial equality: N=13



*Figure 1.* Frequency of racial equality policy in UK HEI Philosophy providers according to target level

Fig.1 shows that of 43 Philosophy departments, 30 do not have any reference to race within their academic policies. This leaves us with 13 departments to evaluate.

This is a list of all the interventions taken in Philosophy, regardless of whether they are targeted, faculty level, or universal:

1. BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme\*
2. Decolonisation of curriculum

3. Diversifying guest Philosophy speakers
4. Diversifying reading lists
5. Improving student access to support through clear EDI links
6. MAP Chapter (including relevant activities and events)
7. Open EDI Committee meetings
8. Staff Education/Training
9. Use of the HEI's EDI policy/APP
10. Use of the parent Faculty's EDI policy

\*The BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme is designed to improve access to women in Philosophy, but multiple universities noted its application to race equality.

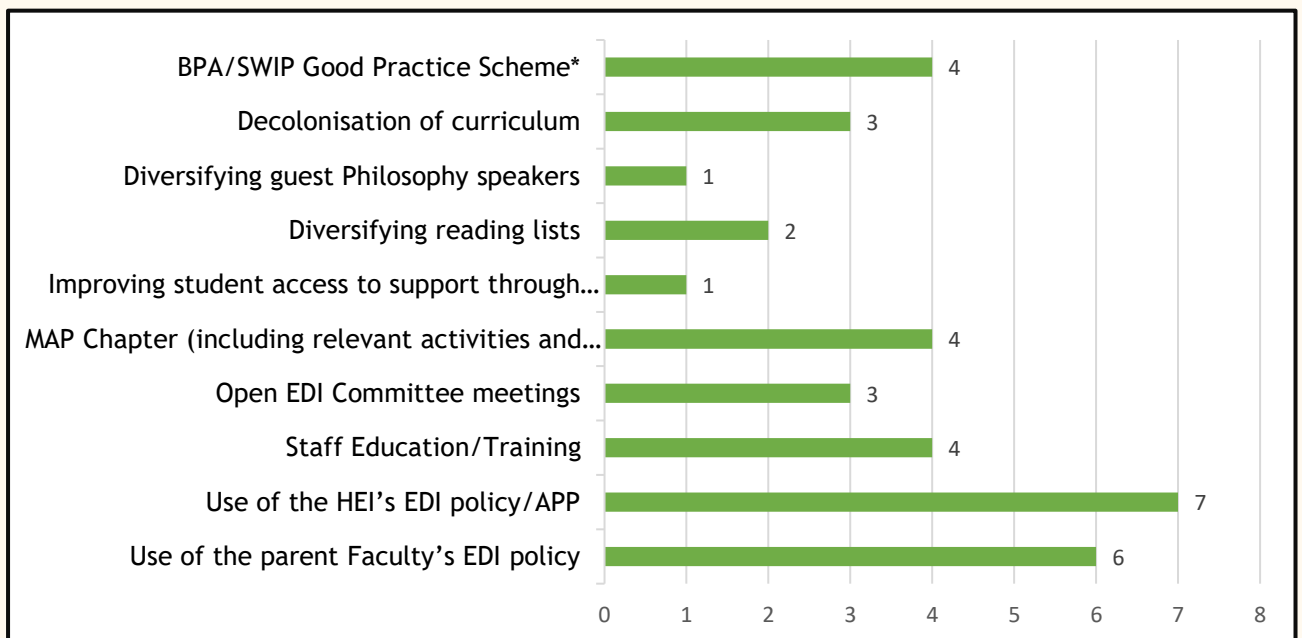


Figure 2. Frequency of intervention use by intervention type

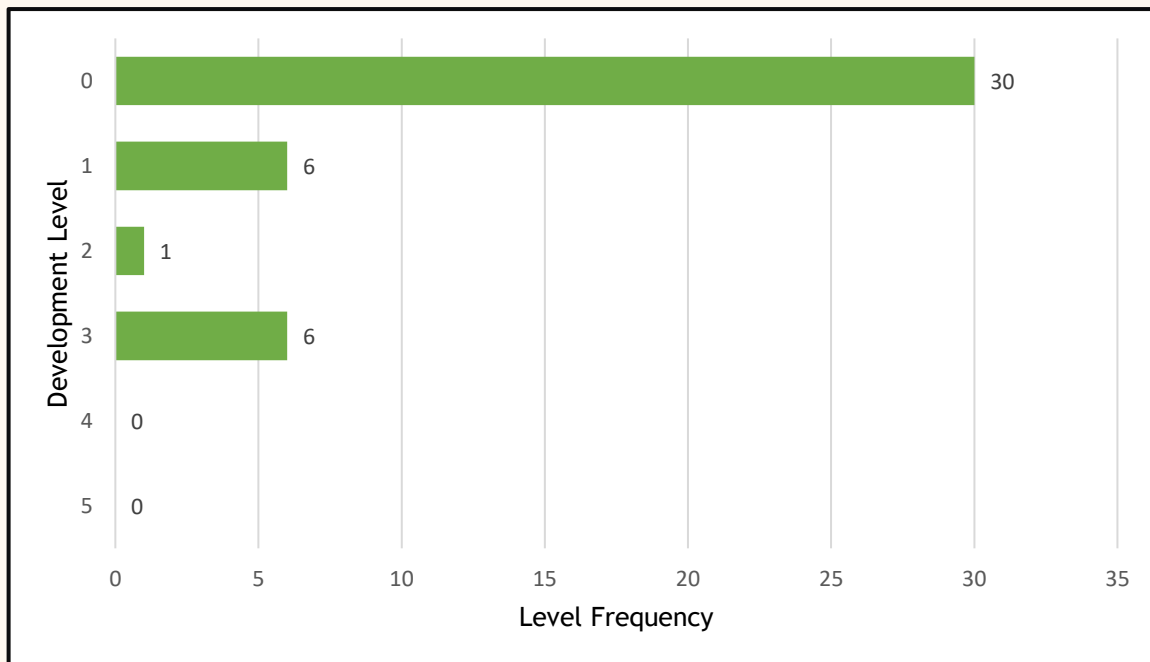
It is obvious that even if a Philosophy department itself does reference racial equality, 10 out of the 13 directly reference its faculty or institution's policies. The word intervention is used loosely, as even references to a general aim towards a strategy has been included. The development level of these interventions varies massively, and to evaluate their utility for this report, they have been organised on a development scale. This scale is based on the TASO (2023) scale for APP development.



- 0 - No locatable reference to race, the EDAG, EDI or any policy
- 1 - A distinct statement on racial equality, including reference to the HEI or faculty's EDI policy or APP.
- 2 - (1) AND discussion of specific relevance to Philosophy
- 3 - (2) AND evidence of how interventions have subsequently been utilised.
- 4 - (3) AND clearly reported results on the interventions progress and activities
- 5 - (4) AND full evaluation of the intervention with clear impact on the EDAG.

| HEI/Intervention               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Total Dep. Interventions |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|--------------------------|
| Durham University              | n | y | n | n | n | n | n | y | n | y  | 3                        |
| Lancaster University           | n | n | n | n | n | n | y | n | n | n  | 1                        |
| University of Aberdeen         | y | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | y  | 2                        |
| University of Bristol          | y | n | n | n | n | y | n | y | y | n  | 4                        |
| University of Cambridge        | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | y | n  | 1                        |
| University of Edinburgh        | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | y | y  | 2                        |
| University of Glasgow          | y | n | y | y | y | y | n | y | y | n  | 7                        |
| University of Hertfordshire    | y | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | y | n  | 2                        |
| University of Oxford           | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | y | y  | 2                        |
| University of Sheffield        | n | y | n | n | n | y | y | n | n | n  | 3                        |
| University of St Andrews       | n | n | n | n | n | y | n | n | y | y  | 3                        |
| University of Warwick          | n | y | n | y | n | n | y | y | n | n  | 4                        |
| University of York             | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | y  | 1                        |
| <b>Total Intervention Uses</b> | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 6  |                          |

Table 1. Intervention type frequency by UK HEI Philosophy department. Interventions are referenced via their number label from the list above



*Figure 3. Frequency of the development level of Philosophy department interventions*

As shown in Fig.3, we were unable to locate any fully evidenced interventions into any aspect of racial equality in Philosophy. There was consistent failure from Philosophy departments to follow through on statements, as well as failure to maintain initiatives once begun.

The following case studies are interventions that are development level 3. As stated, although these interventions do not have clear results, it is important to gain the true breadth of the investment of philosophy in this area. It is possible that through further research or interview, more information about these interventions could be gained.

## 2.1.1 UK Philosophy HE Case Studies - Level 3-5 Development

### Durham University (n.d.) - 3

#### Interventions Used:

- Decolonising the Curriculum
- Staff Training
- Use of Faculty EDI Policy

#### Evaluation:

- Durham University have employed a “Decolonisation” Intern, who prior to appointment created a zine about decolonising the Philosophy curriculum.
- They also had a workshop on decolonising the curriculum as training for staff in November 2022
- There is no further information about the content of the staff training, the activities of the intern, or any potential results.

### University of Bristol (n.d.) - 3

#### Interventions Used:

- BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme
- MAP Chapter
- Staff Training
- Use of HEIs EDI Policy

#### Evaluation:

- University of Bristol’s MAP Chapter appears to have been last active in May 2019, advertising a MAP Bristol Conference (MAP Bristol, 2019). There’s no further information available on the University’s website or on the main MAP website.
- The university also claims to have Active Bystander, implicit bias, and microaggression training available for undergraduates, postgraduates, and staff members. There is no further information available.

### University of Glasgow (n.d.) - 3

#### Interventions Used:

- BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme
- Diversifying guest Philosophy speakers
- Diversifying reading lists
- Improving student access to support through clear EDI links
- MAP Chapter
- Staff Education/Training
- Use of the HEI's EDI policy/APP

#### Evaluation:

- University of Glasgow's MAP Chapter section of their website lists several past projects, the most recent being May 2022. It also lists multiple useful resources for education about discrimination in Philosophy.
- The BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme section details the aims of their usage of the Scheme, including diversifying speakers, improving student access to support, staff training. and diversifying reading lists. The aims of these interventions are expanded to race, where the Scheme is targeted at gender equality. There are no further details about how this is being implemented.

### University of Sheffield (2022) - 3

#### Interventions Used:

- MAP Chapter
- Decolonising the Curriculum
- Open EDI Committee Meetings

#### Evaluation:

- University of Sheffield have an "active" MAP chapter which "promotes the work of minorities in philosophy". There is no further details and the linked page is to the general UK MAP website.
- They also claim to be working towards decolonising their Philosophy curriculum but fail to expand.
- The university's EDI Committee meets once a semester and welcomes anyone to participate and raise issues. There are no further details on projects carried out by the committee

### University of St Andrews (n.d.) - 3

#### Interventions Used:

- MAP Chapter
- Use of the HEI's EDI policy/APP
- Use of the parent Faculty's EDI policy

#### Evaluation:

- University of St Andrews invites students to join their EDI committee, but do not specify the committee's work.
- The university's MAP Chapter has its own website and has a clear record of past events, including seminars, reading groups and socials. The site is current and has a contact address to be added to a future events mailing list. The MAP Chapter also has a section on a mentoring scheme that pairs undergraduate with PhD students. However, this has not been updated since 2021.

### University of Warwick (n.d.) - 3

#### Interventions Used:

- Decolonising the curriculum
- Diversifying reading lists
- Open EDI Committee meetings
- Staff Education/Training

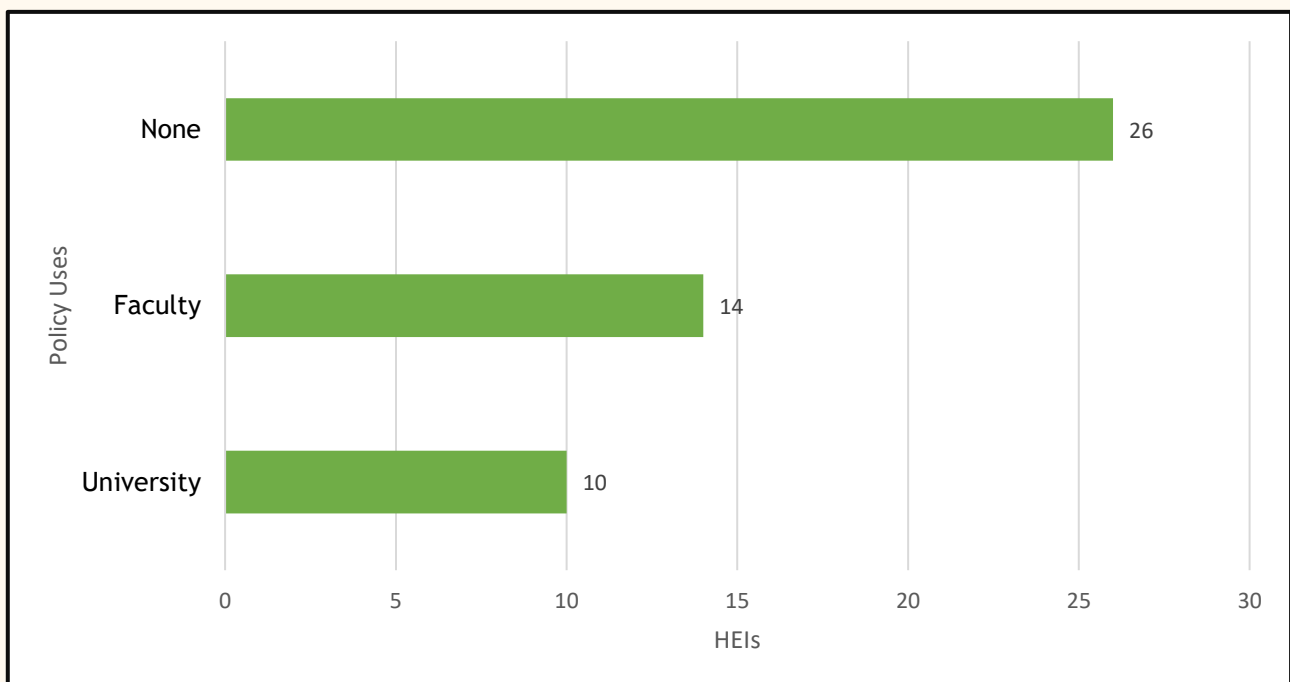
#### Evaluation:

- The most recent review of new module proposals includes considers diversity in reading lists.
- University of Warwick's Philosophy Department's EDI committee meets on a termly basis "to discuss current issues, monitor progress on ongoing projects, share information, and develop ideas and plans". There is a record of news and events from the committee, including those from their "active" MAP Chapter, however, this has not been updated since October 2022. The university's MAP Chapter has not been active since 2021, and does not have a record of initiatives.
- All staff in recruitment are required to complete an EDI in the workplace training module.

## 2.2 Approaches in Humanities

This section analyses the interventions taken by both the Humanities and Social Science faculties. Although creating interventions at this level harms the specificity needed to tackle the EDAG in each subject effectively, it is still broadly relevant to Philosophy, and can be more strategic than an HEI's general APP. As with the related subjects, the faculties evaluated here are in universities that offer undergraduate Philosophy. The number of HEIs with an EDI group or committee specifically for the Humanities or Social Science faculty has been noted as not overloading staff is important - relying on institution level staff removes direct contact and increases workload, something that is important to avoid.

The following chart shows whether the publications and policies displayed (whether in an EDI subpage or not) are specific to the department or universal:



*Figure 4.* Frequency of racial equality policy in UK HEI Humanities Faculty providers according to target level

Both the subject sections above had a lack of targeted interventions. It appeared that the specificity of interventions is generally left to faculty level, to then

decide what to do. The lack of EDI committees in specific subjects could suggest that EDI staff struggle to find interventions that can be applied faculty wide.

This is a list of all the interventions taken at a faculty level:

1. Anonymous Recruitment
2. BAME Student Initiatives
3. BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme
4. Course Survey
5. Decolonising curriculum
6. Diversifying Reading
7. EDI Staff Committee
8. EDI Student Committee
9. Faculty Plan
10. HEI's APP
11. Research
12. Staff Training

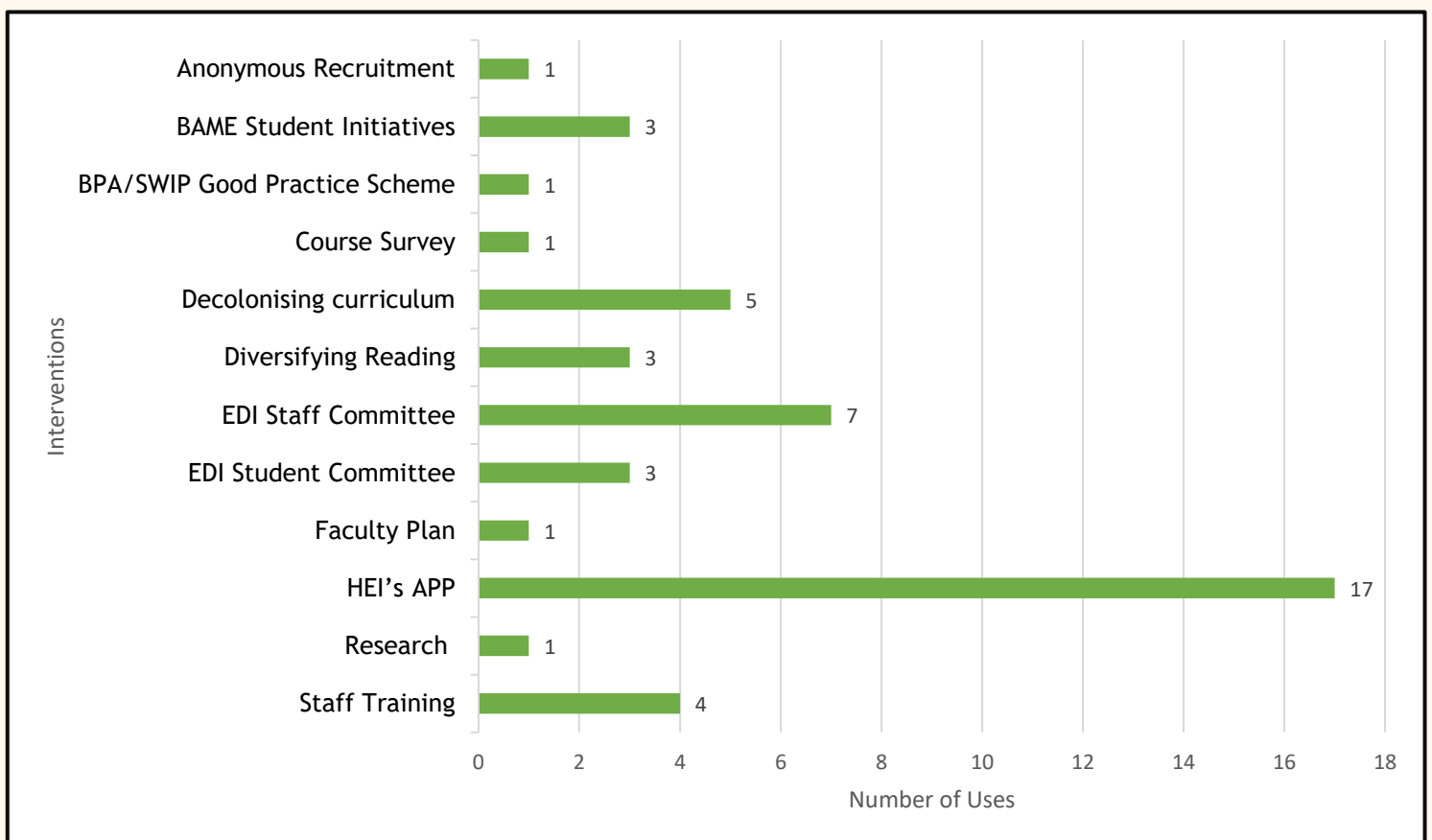


Figure 5. Frequency of intervention use by intervention type

Of the 24 HEIs implementing policies, here are the number of uses:

| HEI/Intervention               | 1        | 2        | 3        | 4        | 5        | 6        | 7        | 8        | 9        | 10        | 11       | 12       | Total Faculty Interventions |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------------------------|
| Cardiff University             | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | y         | n        | n        | 1                           |
| Keele University               | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | y        | n        | n        | n         | n        | n        | 1                           |
| King's College London          | n        | y        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n         | n        | n        | 1                           |
| London School of Economics     | y        | y        | y        | y        | n        | y        | y        | n        | n        | n         | n        | y        | 7                           |
| Newcastle University           | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | y        | n        | n        | y         | n        | n        | 2                           |
| Queen's University Belfast     | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n         | n        | n        | 0                           |
| Royal Holloway University      | n        | n        | n        | n        | y        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n         | n        | n        | 1                           |
| The University of Edinburgh    | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | y         | n        | n        | 1                           |
| University College London      | n        | y        | n        | n        | n        | y        | n        | n        | n        | y         | y        | n        | 4                           |
| University of Aberdeen         | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | y         | n        | n        | 1                           |
| University of Bristol          | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | y         | n        | n        | 1                           |
| University of East Anglia      | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | y         | n        | n        | 1                           |
| University of Essex            | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | y         | n        | n        | 1                           |
| University of Exeter           | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | y         | n        | n        | 1                           |
| University of Glasgow          | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | y         | n        | n        | 1                           |
| University of Leeds            | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | y        | n        | y         | n        | y        | 3                           |
| University of Lincoln          | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | y        | n        | y         | n        | n        | 2                           |
| University of Liverpool        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | y        | n        | n        | y         | n        | n        | 2                           |
| University of Nottingham       | n        | n        | n        | n        | y        | n        | y        | y        | n        | y         | n        | n        | 4                           |
| University of Oxford           | n        | y        | n        | n        | y        | y        | n        | n        | y        | y         | n        | y        | 6                           |
| University of Southampton      | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | y         | n        | n        | 1                           |
| University of St Andrews       | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | n        | y         | n        | n        | 1                           |
| University of Stirling         | n        | n        | n        | n        | y        | n        | y        | n        | n        | n         | n        | y        | 3                           |
| University of Warwick          | n        | n        | n        | n        | y        | n        | y        | n        | n        | n         | n        | n        | 2                           |
| <b>Total Intervention Uses</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>4</b> |                             |

Table 2. Intervention type frequency by UK HEI Humanities Faculty. Interventions are referenced via their number label from the list above



This is an evaluation of the development level of faculties policies and scale of EDAG intervention:

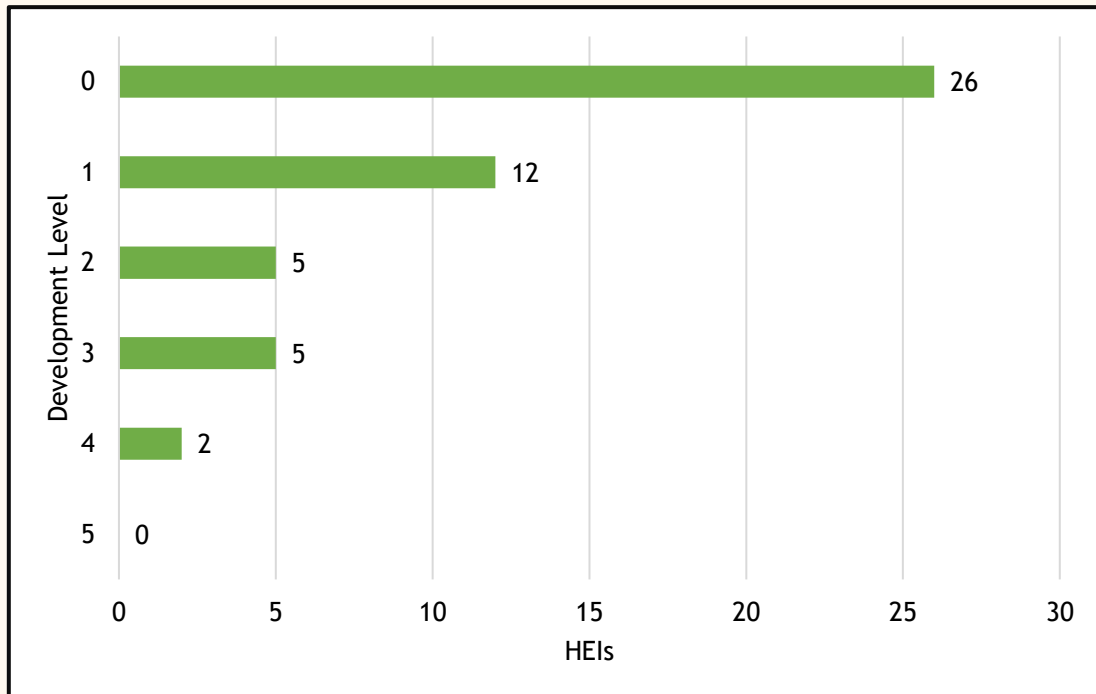


Figure 6. Frequency of the development level of Humanities Faculty interventions

There are significantly more examples of developed interventions at the Faculty level.

## 2.2.1 UK Humanities Faculty Case Studies - Level 3-5 Development

London School of Economics and Political Science - Department of Philosophy,  
Logic and Scientific Mind - 3

Interventions Used:

- Anonymous Recruitment
- BAME Student Initiatives
- BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme
- Course Survey
- Diversifying Reading
- EDI Staff Committee
- HEI's APP

Evaluation:

- Through the BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme, the department has implemented anonymous recruitment, diversified reading lists and improved student feedback methods. These interventions have been aimed at all marginalised groups, and not just to improve gender equality (Roberts, 2015).
- The department is also taking part in the 'Attaining Comprehensive Equality in Postgraduate Research Initiative' (ACE PGR), which aims at creating an inclusive and well-funded support network for BAME students looking to start post-graduate research (LSE, 2022). This programme is in its pilot phase, but is worth monitoring for its progress, as it is being implemented in Philosophy specifically.

Interventions Used:

- Decolonising curriculum

Evaluation:

Lecturer in Philosophy, Suki Finn, found that the awarding gap in Royal Holloway's Politics, International Relations and Philosophy department was around 12% with a ethnic minority student population of around 40%. Around 85% of the department's syllabi features material produced by white men.

Supporting literature suggests that diversifying curricula and reading lists potentially mitigates the EDAG, and Finn implemented the following interventions in Philosophy, to be then subsequently implemented in the other disciplines:

- Distributing useful guidance to other disciplines when gathering resources
- Provided varying types of student resource (for example, podcasts) for undergraduate 'reading' lists.
- Introduced more accessible and varied assessments with opportunities to prepare practice answers and essay plans
- Organising and hosting a women in Philosophy group
- Promoting use of the BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme guidelines
- Organising independent talks and training
- Designed 'Race, Gender, and Queer Philosophy' module for launch in Autumn 2021

Although there is no data on the mitigation of the attainment gap, Finn was awarded the "You're Valued" award by the university's Student's Union. She received overwhelmingly positive feedback from students, many of whom expressed gratitude for creating welcoming spaces where previously there were none.

Interventions Used:

- BAME Student Initiatives
- Diversifying Reading
- HEI's APP
- Research

Evaluation:

UCL's Humanities department references a BAME Student network, but unfortunately does not link to any further information. They also declare that they are moving towards diversifying course materials but do not discuss how this is being implemented.

The Sarah Parker Remond Centre for the Study of Racism and Racialisation is part of the Humanities research network, and has produced a report summarising the initiatives being taken in the faculty (Hannah, 2023). This report uses a mixed methods methodology with semi formal staff interviews to summarise the general attitude towards interventions in the department.

The faculty has introduced several "diverse" modules in subjects such as English, Philosophy, and Geography, but staff feel that the weight of organising these initiatives unfairly falls on those who are BAME themselves. Other white staff members feel uncomfortable trying to insert themselves into the work, through fear of causing offense. There is a sense of 'fragmentation' even with diversification initiatives and staff would advocate for more coordinated interventions.

This paper is a useful discussion of the reality of implementing racial equality strategies. Although it has reference to several research projects that would be useful to this report, I was unable to locate the full reports for them on the UCL research database, limiting its utility.

### University of Leeds - School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science - 3

#### Interventions Used:

- EDI Student Committee
- HEI's APP
- Staff Training

#### Evaluation:

The faculty has both a student advisory board and an EDI committee that incorporate student voices into EDI initiatives (University of Leeds, n.d.).

Unfortunately, the activities and events organised by these groups are institutional access blocked.

The university provides EDI training to their staff members, including Active Bystander training.

Additionally, the faculty run a student project award to fund student projects related to EDI. The prize for this is £250 and can be for any project enhancing EDI (University of Leeds, n.d.). There is no further information on the outcomes of these projects.

### University of Nottingham - Faculty of Arts - 4

#### Interventions Used:

- Decolonising curriculum
- EDI Staff Committee
- EDI Student Committee
- HEI's APP

#### Evaluation:

The faculty has a student led initiative called the 'Curriculum Task Force' which examines three to four modules per academic year.

They gather independent student feedback, evaluate course content, available resources, and assessment methods.

The findings from these reviews are not available online but have been presented at seminars and are under review for academic publication (University of Nottingham, n.d.). Feedback from students who have participated in this initiative is positive and implies that their sense of belonging is increased by being involved in curriculum development.

The English department is actively decolonising the curriculum based on the framework developed by Keele University (Keele University, 2023). They have implemented several changes, including accessible assessment design and variation in teaching methods (University of Nottingham, n.d.). There is no further information about the impact of these interventions.

The faculty also has an active EDI committee that invites student voices, including students as 'Inclusivity Ambassadors' (University of Nottingham, n.d.).

#### University of Oxford - Humanities Division - 4

##### Interventions Used:

- BAME Student Initiatives
- Decolonising curriculum
- Diversifying Reading
- Faculty Plan
- HEI's APP
- Staff Training

##### Evaluation:

The Humanities faculty has a very detailed Race Action Plan, however, this is outdated by a year. The interventions are detailed very well (University of Oxford, n.d.)

The faculty is decolonising the curriculum through reviewing literature, teaching content, improving lecturer-student communication and improving student engagement in their first term.

Although not mandatory, the Dean of the faculty has encouraged all staff to take part in race bias training at work.

The faculty has also increased funding into post-graduate scholarships for BAME students to encourage further HE participation.

The long and short term detailing of the Race Action Plan is the most detailed of any faculties, despite the lack of tangible results.

### **University of Warwick - Faculty of Social Sciences - 3**

Interventions Used:

- Decolonising curriculum
- EDI Staff Committee

Evaluation:

The University of Warwick's Social Sciences Faculty has produced a report summarising initiatives in race equality in the university (Paredes Fuentes, n.d.). Unfortunately, links to further information about the projects do not work.

Additionally, the "Decolonising Social Sciences" staff group produced a guide to decolonising the faculty, which is an intervention linked to mitigated awarding gaps (Paredes Fuentes et al., 2022).

## 2.3 Miscellaneous UK Case Studies

Although external to the scope of this research, I identified several case studies in UK universities with clear results and evaluation that I felt could be considered for adaption for a Philosophy context. As many interventions can only be effective when used in conjunction with each other, it is important to consider holistic strategies such as the following. I have only included interventions with clear outcomes and evidence of a direct impact on the EDAG.

### Developing the Inclusive Course Design Tool - Leeds Beckett University

This article explores the evidence base for the guidance Leeds Beckett University has created to improve student accessibility. It specifically evaluates its utility and relevance to the EDAG and provides a good basis for this type of intervention.

### What Works - Kings College London

King's College London have published a report on their "What Works" department, who are dedicated to evaluating the efficacy of programmes such as the one above (Todman, Gongadze and Hume, 2021). Their report contains useful insights into the role of students and the strategy variation needed to accommodate for different disciplines and institutions.

### OfS Catalyst Project on the BME Attainment Gap

A consortium of five universities have collaborated to implement King's College London's initiatives into the EDAG (Office for Students, 2019). The project's website contains clear details of the process of this, and the application methods used. Although the website lacks a clear report of the results of this project, the materials within it could still be useful



## **Narrowing the BAME Award Gap within the School of Business and Management - Royal Holloway University**

This project implemented several interventions, each aimed at combatting individual factors in BAME attainment, such as commuting, economic status and social isolation (Wainwright et al., 2021). It did this through initiatives like Personal Tutors, a BAME student development programme, and establishing communication links for commuter students.

The project is too recent to have results correlated to end of degree attainment, but received overwhelmingly positive student feedback.

## **Breaking barriers: using mentoring to transform representation, identity and marginalisation in black higher education students - SOAS University of London**

SOAS launched the “Breaking Barriers” mentoring scheme in 2017, as a student-staff scheme aimed at improving BAME student engagement (Heywood and Darko, 2021). At the time of the report, it was in its fourth year, and had seen significant results in student retention, attainment and engagement.

## **Developing a BME Student Advocate Programme - University of Hertfordshire**

In 2017-18, University of Hertfordshire piloted a BME Student Advocate Programme designed to improve communication between students and the institution (Barefoot and Boons, 2019). 10 students were appointed to work with each of the academic schools, carrying out duties such as running BME focus groups, critiquing curricula and representing BME students at staff meetings. The advocates found that generally, their role allowed them to make improvements in the university and help BME students to be more engaged with their courses.

## Disparities in Student Attainment (DiSA) - University of Wolverhampton and University of Coventry

This report evaluates the interventions taken to mitigate EDAG in the two universities in extensive detail, and identifies several success points (Cousin and Cuerton, 2012). It also contains recommendations for implementations in other institutions, and despite being older research, has valuable insights into student engagement. The University of Wolverhampton saw improvements in student attainment almost immediately during the project, and overall saw very promising progress.

### 2.4 Evaluation: UK HEI Interventions

There was no Philosophy specific case studies. This could be due to a number of reasons - lack of faculty interest, lack of funding, reliance on Department/School/Faculty policy, control of policy by the HEI, loss of where to start.

Regarding case studies in any of the categories, there was complete inconsistency in data reporting. Although every university has to publish an APP, there is no legal requirement for EDI policies at a department or subject level, which leads universities to implement their strategies in varying ways. I found that most Philosophy departments made a general anti-racist statement but failed to then identify and combat institutional racism within the subject. Additionally, I came across several promising case studies that were unusable for this report for a number of reasons:

- Institutional access blocks: Despite a thorough description of the planned interventions, data reports and evaluations were often only available in staff or institutional intranets
- Failure of completion: EDAG interventions appeared to have been started with clear outlines and reporting timelines, only to abruptly stop and remain incomplete. The results of these case studies was unclear, as was the reasons for their abandonment.

- Paywalls: Abstracts or case study summaries were available, but the full reports required payment to access, or a membership to organisations such as AdvanceHE.
- Publication Inconsistency: There was a lack of consistency in the location of EDAG intervention reporting. For example, the proposal of an intervention could be in a department's EDI page, but would either not have a link to the progress reports, or would have outdated links. I was able to search through HEI's websites and find some additional information, but these case studies were largely fragmented, and often ended in the final report being blocked by institutional access.
- Failure to publish data: I note this as a separate reason as multiple HEI's gave regular, accessible updates to their projects, but completely failed to publish their findings, and their specific impacts on the EDAG.

These issues made it extremely difficult to effectively find interventions taken in UK Philosophy departments, leading to the lack of evidence-based recommendations in this report. In addition to recommending interventions to combat the EDAG, I would also like to recommend online location consistency, true project commitment, transparency, and an easily navigable institutional website as companions to help future researchers in this pursuit.

As the most significant issue faced when writing this report was a failure to publish results from projects in this area, it could be beneficial to conduct further research. This could involve potentially interviewing researchers to learn more about the outcomes of their projects, which would strengthen any actions decided to be taken by the University of Liverpool.

## 3. Global HEI Findings

### 3.1 South African HEI Approaches

The websites of all South African Universities were reviewed for whether they offered Philosophy, and if so, if they had any statement or policy on race equality.

There were 2 cases:

University of Pretoria

- Philosophy: Statement declaring commitment to incorporating more indigenous scholars into course literature (Ruttkamp-Bloem, n.d.)

North West University (North-West University, 2023)

- Faculty of Humanities: General statement of respect to racial sensitivity and history

The intuitions Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and University of Zululand were unable to be reviewed as their websites were inaccessible.

### 3.2 North American HEI Philosophy Approaches

This list was created using [QS University Rankings](#), filtered by North America region and Philosophy discipline. North American HEIs use a variety of terms to refer to EDI as there is no national standard, so all equivalents will be listed as EDI.

**New York University**

Interventions:

- MAP Chapter (MAP NYU, n.d.)
- EDI Staff Committee (New York University, n.d.)
- Student Initiatives (North-West University, 2023)

Evaluation:

NYU has an 'active' MAP Chapter with links to past events. Unfortunately, it hasn't been active since October 2019.

The department of Philosophy has an EDI Committee that ensures commitment to various policies, including fairness in admission. The policies are only available on the staff intranet.

The university has also had two relevant student initiatives, 'Countering Racism in Philosophy' (contact: [crp@nyu.gmail.com](mailto:crp@nyu.gmail.com)) and 'Inclusive syllabus project' (contact: Sophie Cote; [sophie.cote@nyu.edu](mailto:sophie.cote@nyu.edu)). There is no further information available, aside from contact addresses.

### Rutgers University - New Brunswick

Interventions:

- MAP Chapter (Kujan, n.d.)
- EDI Committee (Kujan, n.d.)

Evaluation:

Rutgers University MAP Chapter is being 'revived'. There is no information for current events and no information for its development.

The institutions EDI committee for Philosophy last updated its activities in autumn 2018.

### Harvard University

Interventions:

- Map Chapter (Harvard, n.d.)
- EDI Committee (Harvard, n.d.)

Evaluation:

Harvard have a MAP Chapter that organises annual speakers from minorities in Philosophy. There is no further information about their recent activities

The institutions “Climate Working Group” includes students in their activities, and reviews curriculum, surveys exiting students, and meets to discuss relevant issues

### University of Toronto

- No relevant policy

### University of Notre Dame

Interventions:

- MAP Chapter (Dame, n.d.)
- EDI Committee (Dame, n.d.)

Evaluation:

The department does not have any information on the current activities of their MAP Chapter. The “Climate Committee” works towards racial equality but doesn’t expand on how.

### Princeton University

Interventions:

- MAP Chapter (Princeton MAP, n.d.)
- EDI Committee (Princeton University, n.d.)

Princeton’s EDI committee meets once a semester and is open for students to contribute.

Their MAP Chapter organises seminars and speakers. There are no upcoming events to comment on.

## Yale University

### Interventions:

- MAP Chapter (Yale University, n.d.)
- EDI Committee

### Evaluation:

Yale Philosophy claims to have both a MAP Chapter and EDI Committee, but does not provide further details.

## Stanford University

### Interventions:

- MAP Chapter (Stanford University, n.d.)

### Evaluation:

Stanford's MAP Chapter are active, and have organised several events recently, including a seminar on "Inclusive Pedagogy".

## University of California, Berkley

- No relevant policies

## 3.3 North American HEI Faculty Approaches

### New York University - College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)

### Interventions:

- Mentorship Programmes (College of Arts and Science, n.d.)
- EDI Student Programme (College of Arts and Sciences, n.d.)

### Evaluation:

NYU offers multiple mentorship programmes aimed at improving access and attainment of BIPOC students. The Academic Achievement Programme (AAP) Big

Brother/Big Sister Programme in particular aims to “enhance the academic and leadership potential of incoming first year Black, Latino and Native American students”. This programme works through pairing the student with a peer in higher years to support them and guide them within the university system, which is associated with higher retention rates.

NYU CAS also has a student led, but faculty involved, EDI group that aims to increase diversity in the curriculum and sustain mentorship schemes such as the one above. As it was established in 2020, there is not much information available on their activities.

### **University of Pittsburgh - Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences**

Interventions:

- Mentorship Programme (BRIDGES, n.d.)
- Staff Training (Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, n.d.)

Evaluation:

University of Pittsburgh runs the BRIDGES programme for underrepresented and scholarship students to support their attainment and engagement. The programme is associated with higher student GPA, and target students are automatically invited to participate on entry to the university.

The School also requires staff to attend EDI training aimed at mitigating implicit bias.

### **University of Notre Dame - College of Arts and Letters**

- EDI Committee (Dame, 2023)

The Notre Dame Initiative on Race and Resilience runs several initiatives within the college including peer mentoring and focus groups. It also has several policy documents providing the evidence structure to the initiative.



## 4. Additional Resources

### **TASO June 2023 Report (TASO 2023)**

A report by TASO evaluating the efficacy of strategies to mitigate the EDAG in conjunction with an earlier report evaluating curriculum decolonising strategies.

### **Leeds Beckett: Addressing BAME Gap Initiatives (Smith, 2016)**

Mixed methods review of actions taken at Leeds Beckett University, followed with a discussion of the evidence based strategies developed as a result.

### **EDI Resource Bank (University of Nottingham, 2021)**

A large archive of training resources and information packs regarding all aspects of EDI, including extensive resources about race in HE.

### **Exploring Retention and Attainment of BME Students - Literature Review (Senior, 2012)**

Extensive review of literature regarding the EDAG, including evaluation of strategies.

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