

Anti-Racism Strategy

2025/26 – 2027/28

Foreword

My journey of learning about race and racism has been ongoing, but reading the **Staff Journey Report (staff only)** was a pivotal moment. It forced me to stop and reflect deeply on my own behaviours, assumptions and leadership. I have no hesitation in recognising that UWE Bristol is institutionally racist, and I acknowledge the impact that has had on the wellbeing, success and belonging of Global Majority students and staff over many years.

This isn't about shame – it's about accountability. Since then, I've been intentional about listening, learning and taking action. I've worked with colleagues to build anti-racist commitments into my own practice, and into how we lead as an Executive team. That's why every member of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE) has anti-racism objectives built into their PDRs.

We're focusing on anti-racism, specifically, because the evidence shows us that racial inequity remains deeply embedded in our systems. To drive meaningful change, we have to name the problem and commit to dismantling it. I'm holding myself to account, and I expect my fellow leaders to do the same.

Professor Sir Steve West, Vice-Chancellor, UWE Bristol



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Introduction

UWE Bristol is a world-class university committed to shaping the future workforce, driving local economic prosperity, fostering sustainable communities, and developing innovative solutions to global challenges.

To achieve these ambitions, UWE Bristol recognises the importance of being both ambitious and innovative. However, it also acknowledges the need to move beyond inclusion and take tangible, measurable actions to address systemic inequities. This commitment aligns with UWE Bristol's long-term goal (UWE Bristol Strategy 2030), legal obligations (Equality Act 2010), regulatory requirements (Office for Students and Department for Education), and business sustainability imperatives (McGregor-Smith, 2018).

Over the past two years, extensive research and data analysis on student and staff experiences have revealed persistent discrimination and barriers faced by individuals with protected characteristics. Findings indicate that Global Majority individuals – those from Black, Asian, Brown, Mixed Heritage, and Indigenous to the Global South backgrounds – are disproportionately and systemically disadvantaged at the University. In response, UWE Bristol has launched the Anti-Racism Strategy, with a foundational commitment to striving to become an Anti-Racist institution



One either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an antiracist. There is no in-between safe space of 'not racist'.

— Kendi

Defining an Anti-Racist Institution

An anti-racist institution actively dismantles racism at every level – policy, practice, culture, and leadership – rather than merely being non-racist or passively inclusive. UWE Bristol is committed to identifying, challenging, and eradicating racial inequities to ensure that all racialised groups, particularly those from the Global Majority, have equal access to opportunities, resources, and decision-making power.

By embedding anti-racist principles, UWE Bristol aims to cultivate a supportive, inclusive, and inspiring learning and working environment. This transformation will create equitable access to opportunities, strengthen trust and collaboration within local and global communities, and ultimately position UWE Bristol as a leader in equity and inclusion, fully aligned to its 2030 Strategy.



If you design a system that supports those who are most marginalised, you design a system that works better for everyone.”

— Powell, 2012

Who are the Global Majority?

The term Global Majority refers to people who are Black, Asian, Brown, Mixed Heritage, Indigenous to the Global South, or those not racialised as White. Collectively, they represent 17% of UWE Bristol's workforce, 24% of its student body, and approximately 85% of the world's population.

Through this strategy, UWE Bristol is taking decisive action to close the equity gap between Global Majority staff and their White counterparts, ensuring that by 2030, it stands as a sector leader in anti-racism and systemic change.

University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE, Bristol) (2020) '2030 Strategy'. Available at: uwe.ac.uk/about/values-vision-strategy/strategy-2030 (Accessed: 11 January 2025).

McGregor-Smith, D. (2018) Race in the workplace: The McGregor-Smith review. Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. Available at: gov.uk/government/publications/race-in-the-workplace-mcgregor-smith-review (Accessed: 09 February 2025).

Powell, J. A. (2012) Leading Towards Equity – Targeted Universalism: John A. Powell. Available at: belonging.berkeley.edu/video-leading-towards-equity-targeted-universalism-john-powell (Accessed: 11 January 2025).

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Where are we now?

Over the past two years, UWE Bristol has undertaken comprehensive groundwork to fully understand the scope of the challenges related to racial inequities.

UWE Bristol has been open and transparent about the scale of these challenges. The data evidence from the **Anti-Racism Data Analysis: Staff Journey Report (staff only)** and the **University Access and Participation Plan** confirmed that UWE Bristol is institutionally racist. It highlighted systemic inequities in staff representation, career progression, and workplace experiences. We acknowledge that both external societal events and internal institutional practices have compounded harm for Global Majority staff. These intersecting factors have contributed to experiences of exclusion, inequity, and racial trauma, underscoring the urgent need for sustained, systemic anti-racist action.

Additionally, extensive engagement has shed light on the consequential impact on Global Majority students, including:



Degree awarding gaps between Black and White students.



Feelings of exclusion and lack of belonging.



Overt and covert racism, including microaggressions.



The psychological toll of racial trauma on mental health and well-being.



The need for safe spaces for Global Majority students.



Lower continuation rates and limited progression into postgraduate study.



Disparities in academic support, assessment design, and marking bias.



An excessive emphasis on Eurocentric curricula.

What have we done to date?

A mixture of training and development, knowledge transfer and advisory support activities to improve knowledge, confidence and capabilities around anti-racism.

We have developed anti-racism training for Vice Chancellor's Executive (VCE), People Services (formerly HR including recruitment), EDI team, Internal Comms and Engagement, started engagement with Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Planning training for EDI champions all to prepare for the strategy.

The data evidence collected have shaped the development of UWE Bristol's Anti-Racism Strategy, which is centered around the following fundamental question:

How can UWE Bristol effectively dismantle the identified barriers – across policy, practice, culture, and leadership – so that Global Majority staff have equitable access to opportunities and experiences on par with their White counterparts, enabling them to reach their full potential and positively impact Global Majority students?

This strategy is primarily focused on fostering inclusion and anti-racism among university staff, rather than students. By driving meaningful change at the staff level, UWE Bristol aims to create a lasting and transformative impact on student experiences and outcomes.

Guiding principles

Over the last two years, UWE Bristol also developed **Anti-Racism Guiding Principles (staff only)** – a consistent, structured approach to anti-racist practice. These principles provide a whole-institution approach and framework for empowering staff and students to actively challenge racism. It is a clear framework for university-wide implementation, ensuring accountability and alignment with UWE Bristol's core value of inclusivity. The Guiding Principles acknowledge that engagement with Global Majority communities and stakeholders is ongoing, and that UWE Bristol will need to evolve along to meet emerging needs and challenges.



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The vision for the strategy

UWE Bristol is driven by a powerful mission: to transform futures by developing the workforce of tomorrow, advancing community sustainability, supporting local economic prosperity, and working collaboratively to address global challenges. **To achieve this mission, we must ensure fair treatment, full participation, and equitable outcomes for all our staff and students.**

We acknowledge that UWE Bristol has not always met this commitment. Institutional data confirms that systemic racism exists within our structures and practices. **We recognise the harm caused** to Black, Asian, Brown, Mixed Heritage, and indigenous to the Global South staff and students (collectively, those from Global Majority backgrounds), **and we accept responsibility for the past.** While we cannot change what has already occurred, **we are determined that our future be shaped by care, honesty, and accountability.**

Confronting racism requires more than words. We need to question unfair advantage, break down discriminatory systems, and actively reshape our university so that everyone has a fair chance to thrive. This is the purpose of the **UWE Bristol Anti-Racism Strategy – a long-term, institution-wide commitment to becoming actively anti-racist and transforming our university from within.**

By delivering this strategy our clear intent is that ***UWE Bristol will become a sector leader for racial equity, setting a new standard for higher education and embedding a lasting culture of inclusion.*** Our commitment is structured around our three key pillars, in line with UWE Bristol's Strategy 2030:

- **Purpose** – We will transform futures by conducting research that challenges injustice, developing inclusive and empowering innovations, and shifting our ways of working to ensure equal access to opportunities. Racial equity will be embedded across all areas of university life – from teaching and research to recruitment, leadership, governance, and community engagement. **We will eliminate all identified inequity gaps between Global Majority staff and their White counterparts.**
- **People** – The visible commitment, behaviours, and decisions of UWE Bristol's Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE) will set the tone for all staff, shaping the culture and expectations of the entire university. Global Majority staff will have equal access to opportunities, and feel valued, safe, and fairly treated. All colleagues will be confident, accountable, and equipped to respond swiftly and effectively to racism. **We will show that a diverse and empowered workforce drives justice, innovation, and impact for all.**
- **Place** – Our campuses will reflect and celebrate our diverse community – fostering collaboration, pride, and a culture where discrimination will not be tolerated. As an anchor institution, UWE Bristol will communicate its anti-racism commitments clearly to all external partners, including suppliers, community organisations, and employers. **We will become known for our ability to create equitable, inclusive, and place-based learning environments – and a highly recommended institution for Global Majority talent to work, study, and thrive.**

Tackling racism in all its forms is not only the right thing to do – it's the smart thing to do. By becoming a sector leader in racial equity, UWE Bristol will strengthen its ability to attract and retain talented, committed staff; reduce attrition; improve student experience and outcomes; and enhance our reputation locally and globally.

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Commitments to achieve these aims

To realise these goals, UWE Bristol will:

- **Embed a culture of accountability and transparency** in its anti-racism work.
- **Communicate openly**, consistently, and effectively to raise awareness, set clear expectations, and encourage engagement with anti-racist practices.
- **Proactively** address power and privilege.
- **Use data-driven decision-making** to enhance trust and confidence among staff and students in sharing demographic information that supports anti-racist change.
- **Recognise and celebrate individual, collective, and organisational efforts** to advance anti-racism.
- **Swiftly address behaviours that fall short of expectations**, ensuring prompt and effective action.



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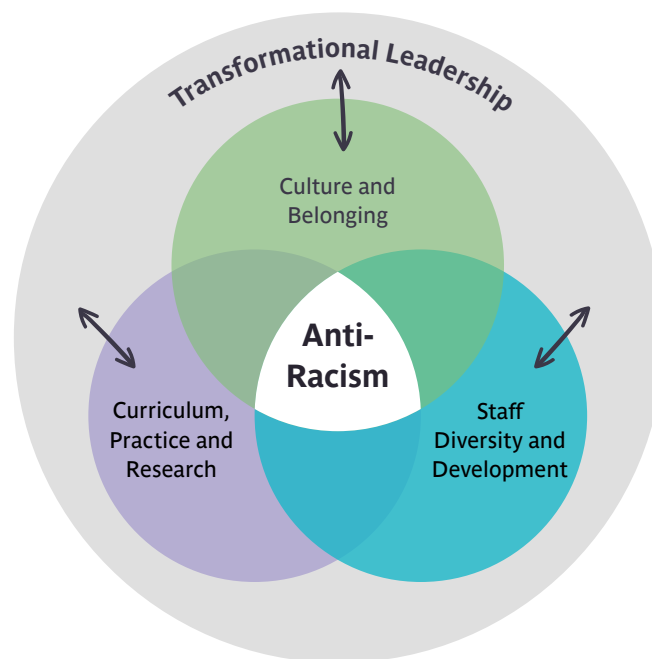
Our strands of work

UWE Bristol's Anti-Racism Strategy encompasses a range of routine business activities that support each strand of work. However, the actions in the action plan go beyond standard practices, with an aim to accelerate progress and drive substantial improvements aligned with our established Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Recognising the complexity and interconnected nature of this strategy, it is essential to acknowledge that actions within each strand overlap and reinforce one another. For example, fostering a strong sense of belonging for Global Majority individuals contributes to reducing racial disparities, while enhancing racial literacy among staff and students strengthens an institution-wide culture of anti-racism. These synergies create positive ripple effects, amplifying the overall impact of the strategy.

On the following pages, we outline the four core strands of work, each integral to achieving our long-term goals. A detailed breakdown of supporting actions can be found in the Anti-Racism Strategy Action Plan.

We will achieve these aims and goals, using the Vafadari's (2024) Social Justice Model, a self-evaluation and strategic planning framework designed for transformational change within the educational context. The four key strands under this model include:



We have chosen to centre Vafadari's anti-racism scholarship in our strategy because it offers a practical, institutionally focused framework that critically engages with key theories and concepts. These include and are not limited to intersectionality, power and privilege, psychological safety, White fragility and implicit bias.

Vafadari's approach emphasises structural change, intersectionality, and accountability, aligning with our commitment to:

- Tackle systemic racism, not just individual bias.
- Centre the lived experiences of Global Majority staff and students.
- Embed measurable, sustainable change across the institution.
- This foundation ensures our strategy is both action-oriented and rooted in justice.

Vafadari, J. (2024). Anti-Racist Leadership in Education. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of the West of England.

5.1 Curriculum, Practice and Research

Our Promise

We pledge to empower and develop staff to embed anti-racism principles within our curriculum, practice, and research, fostering an inspiring environment where diversity is celebrated, discrimination is actively challenged, and equity is prioritised. Additionally, we will ensure that Global Majority research staff have opportunities to equitably progress in research and practice.

Key Impact Areas

- School-level ownership and implementation of actions aligned with the Access and Participation Plan (APP).
- Strategic racial literacy initiatives for all staff.
- Targeted interventions to enhance outcomes for Global Majority students and staff.

Our Targets

- Eliminate the degree awarding gap between White and Black (African and Caribbean heritage) students by 2030 in line with agreed targets from APP.
- Eliminate the degree awarding gap between White and Asian students by 2030 in line with agreed targets from APP.
- Increase the proportion of Global Majority colleagues with Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) to 20% by 2030 (as measured in the annual HESA return).



OUR ACCOUNTABILITY:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost

5.2

Culture and Belonging

Our Promise

We commit to cultivating a culture of belonging where all individuals feel valued, respected, and supported, actively combating racism and dedicated to continually improving the experience for Global Majority students and staff. Additionally, we will ensure that individuals feel safe and empowered to report instances of racism and discrimination knowing that their concerns will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.

Key Impact Areas

- Strategically aligned messaging, projects, and programmes delivered by People Services and Marketing teams to reinforce a culture of inclusivity and anti-racism.
- Strong partnerships with the Students' Union at UWE, including proactive engagement with the elected President's team to create safe spaces for Global Majority students.
- External engagement and accreditation with networks such as Universities of Sanctuary to embed best practices and enhance accountability.

Our Targets

- Increase the workplace recommendation score to 70% by 2026/27, while maintaining our current position of no disparity based on ethnicity.
- Improve student confidence in reporting racialised bullying, discrimination, or harassment, increasing the percentage of students (currently at 49%) who believe there is a clear and effective system in place. Similarly, ensure comparable levels of satisfaction for staff.
- Enhanced sense of belonging for Global Majority staff, closing the gap between their experiences and those of their White counterparts. Currently 21pp difference in feeling accepted, and 11pp difference in being oneself amongst Global Majority staff and White counterparts.



OUR ACCOUNTABILITY:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Registrar/Chief People Officer

5.3

Staff Diversity and Development

Our Promise

We will prioritise staff diversity and development, implementing inclusive recruitment and promotion practices, providing ongoing anti-racism training, and fostering a supportive environment where all staff regardless of race, feel valued, respected, and empowered to thrive.

Key Impact Areas

- Comprehensive training and resources to enhance staff racial literacy and awareness.
- Targeted projects led by People Services addressing disparities identified in the Staff Data Analysis Report.
- Strategic investment in the Black female leadership pipeline, supporting the career progression of Black women into senior roles.

Our Targets

- Achieve staff diversity reflective of Bristol's Global Majority population (at least 20%) by 2030.
- Reduce disparities between Global Majority and White staff in perceptions of fair treatment, ensuring equitable experiences across progression and development opportunities, and perceptions of differences being valued in the workplace, currently 12 and 17 percentage point (pp) difference respectively, amongst Global Majority staff and White counterpart.
- Ensure 100%* of UWE Bristol staff complete Anti-Racism Terminology Training (Module 1) by the end of 2025, with new staff completing it within three months of joining.
- A trended improvement in the average length of service for Global Majority staff on permanent contracts, currently 4.7 years.**

* This target excludes those exempt due to long-term leave or exceptional circumstances.

** This provisional figure reflects the average length of service for Global Majority staff on permanent contracts using 2023/24 data. It may be subject to change as we improve data quality and finalise a consistent, reliable methodology.



OUR ACCOUNTABILITY:
Chief People Officer

5.4 Leadership

Our Promise

We pledge to foster anti-racist leadership, promoting diversity at all levels of governance, and ensuring that our leadership structures actively reflect and champion the values of equity, inclusion, and social justice. Our goal is to rebuild staff trust and confidence in leadership, in relation to racial discrimination and equitable access to opportunities.

Key Impact Areas

- Proactive engagement from Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE), the Board of Governors, and senior leaders to develop anti-racist skills and racial literacy.
- Establishing clear expectations for leadership to embed anti-racist principles, ensuring accountability and alignment across all strands of work.

Our Targets

- Increase senior staff diversity, ensuring that intakes into new or externally recruited S and J grade roles reflect Bristol's Global Majority population of at least 20% by 2030.
- Maintain Board of Governors diversity, ensuring it continues to reflect Bristol's Global Majority population of at least 20%.
- Hold each member of the VCE accountable within their performance objectives, for delivering race equity KPI targets within their respective areas of responsibility.
- Further embed and review the effectiveness of measures introduced to strengthen diversity of voice in the University's decision-making groups.



OUR ACCOUNTABILITY:

Vice-Chancellor, President, and CEO

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Measuring progress

Our promise

We pledge to track progress effectively and take informed data-driven decisions. Our goal is to be accountable in our pursuit to achieve rapid and meaningful transformation in the experiences of staff and students.

Whilst we cannot evaluate every action: we will prioritise our resources on the actions most likely to create meaningful impact. By combining regular monitoring with focused evaluation, we will assess the effectiveness of the strategy and identify opportunities for improvement.

Evaluation approach

- Introduce diligent monitoring and evaluation.
- Conduct regular monitoring at annual, biannual, or quarterly intervals, depending on the nature of the initiative.
- Utilise a comprehensive range of qualitative and quantitative data sources, including:
 - HR metrics including recruitment, retention, absence
 - Formal reporting of racism, bullying and harassment
 - Performance objectives
 - Race equity and experience surveys
 - Listening activities and stakeholder feedback
 - Engagement with staff and student networks
 - Training participation and uptake metrics

Findings from the evaluations will be shared openly to foster accountability, transparency, and ongoing learning.

Our targets

- Published Theory of Change framework
- Published evaluation framework—aligned with Office for Students’ standards of evidence to measure both short- and medium-term outcomes of our priority actions, alongside a process evaluation to measure the effectiveness of the launch and socialisation of the strategy.
- Key outcomes we intend to measure:
 - Reporting of racism, identifying trends, putting in place corrective action and adjusting learning and development activity based on insight.
 - Improved staff and student perceptions of belonging.
 - Increased availability of safe physical spaces, groups and networks for Global Majority students and staff.

(A full list of data sources is available on the [strategy intranet page](#))

Enablers

The successful implementation of our strategy relies on the following key enablers:

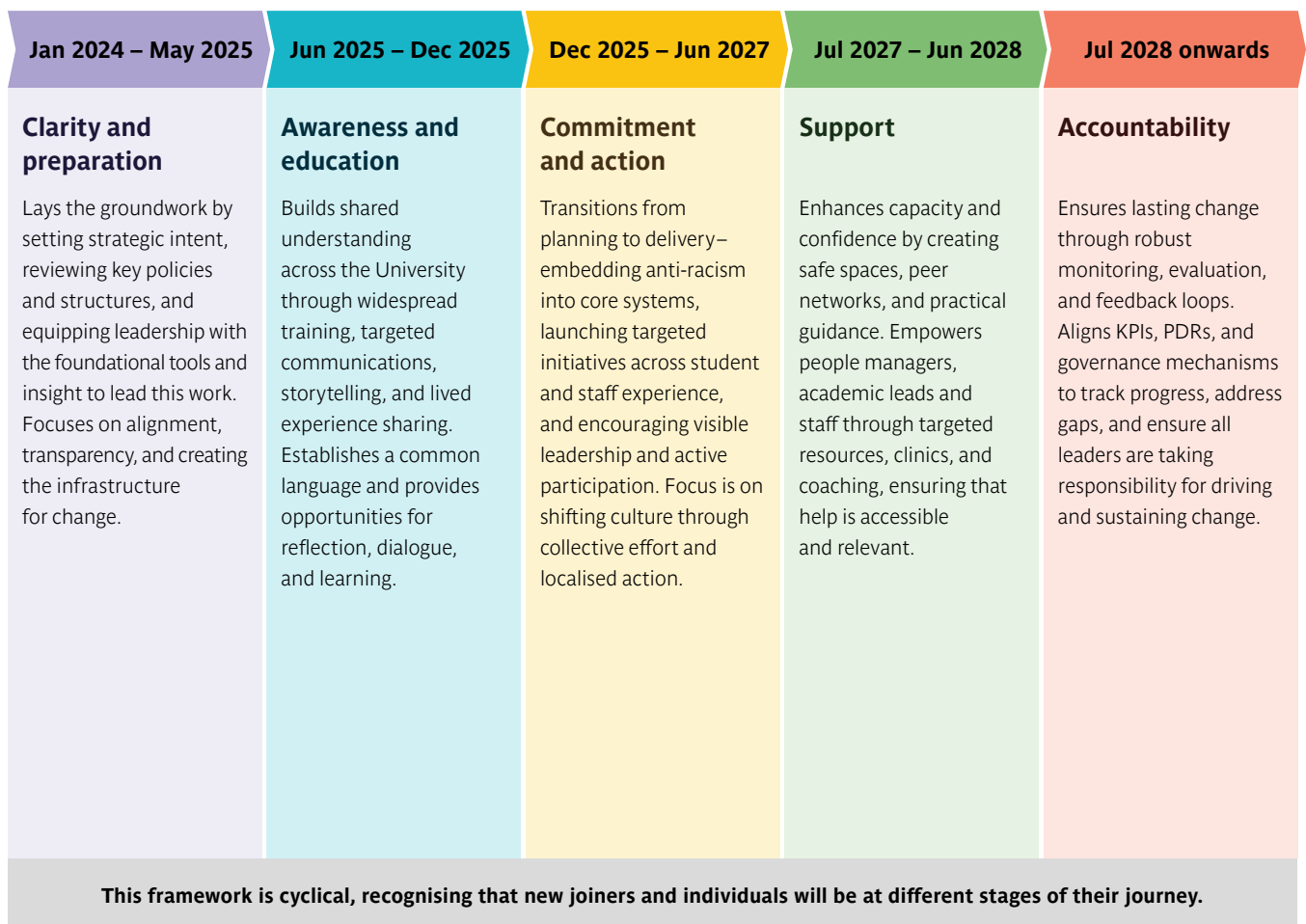
- **Data** – Providing actionable insights while fostering trust and confidence among staff and students in sharing demographic information. Strengthening data accuracy will allow us to develop a clearer and more representative understanding of our university community.
- **Communications** – Ensuring transparent, consistent, and effective communication to enhance awareness of anti-racism efforts. This will drive engagement with anti-racist practices, align initiatives across the University, and create a shared sense of responsibility and ownership.

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Appendix 1

UWE Bristol Anti-racism Change Pathway

This pathway outlines the intended journey from awareness to accountability, providing a shared direction for the majority of the University to follow within the suggested timescales. However, this is not a rigid or linear process, it's cyclical – people may need to revisit earlier phases, and new staff or students may start at different points. The model offers a flexible framework to support ongoing reflection, adaptation, and progress across the university.



Appendix 2

Strategy Development

The roadmap below sets out the path we have followed to develop our Anti-racism Strategy.



Appendix 3

Governance, Resourcing and Review

Governance

- Each of the accountable leaders identified in this strategy will be accountable for their objectives.
- The strategy covers the period up to 2027/28 to align with the APP, with the learning and teaching elements reporting into the APP governance groups.
- The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team will manage the strategy and action plan delivery, reporting to the People and EDI Executive Committee.
- The EDI Advisory group will offer constructive examination of the University's strategy and the consideration of external perspectives.
- Accountable leaders will report twice annually through VCE to the Board of Governors via the relevant committee on the progress against each objective and relevant measures.

Resourcing

- Resources for this strategy will come from a range of sources; some existing, and others additional where required.
- Sources of funding include the EDI budget, College/School budget and budgets from relevant departments, for example, People Services, Student Academic Services, Research and External Engagement etc.
- Resources from programmes such as Athena Swan could complement the Anti-Racism Strategy action plan as well as reinforcing the importance of intersectionality.
- Ultimately, success should be judged on progress against measures and outcomes rather than inputs.
- Necessary funding will be allocated to fully deliver the actions outlined in the plans – actions in the plan will need to be fully costed and signed off through business planning rounds.

Review

- The Anti-Racism Strategy action plan details actions to be delivered within the first academic year as well as actions over the longer-term life of the strategy. The action plan will be reviewed quarterly by the EDI team.
- Accountable leaders will decide and implement actions to meet objectives as required. They will be reviewed regularly and developed to reflect changing context and emerging lessons.
- Continual evaluation and improvement will be a key feature delivering this strategy and will be the responsibility of accountable leaders.
- Essential for the success of this strategy will be enhancements to the gathering and utilisation of data to aid in the continuous comprehension of what strategies are effective within UWE Bristol's context.

Appendix 4

Sources to Evidence Progress

Sources to evidence progress will include:

- Senior leader accountabilities and performance objectives.
- Student and staff race equity surveys.
- Staff experience and EDI focused pulse surveys.
- Feedback provided during listening activities.
- Student and staff demographic (ethnicity) profile data.
- Feedback from student and staff networks.
- Training uptake and feedback both online and face-to-face.
- Staff recruitment, promotion and reward data.
- Staff pay gap data.
- Student awarding gaps data.
- Student progression, completion, non-continuation data.
- HR metrics including recruitment, retention, absence.
- Formal reporting of racism, bullying and harassment.

Appendix 5

Anti-Racism Strategy Acknowledgements

Staff Data Analysis

Anti-racism report

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- Kimberley Scott

Anti-racism

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- Fiona Cottrell
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Anti-racist Education Group

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- Ann de Graft-Johnson
- Rima Khatun
- Malcom Richards
- Vicky Swinerd

Anti-racism Strategy

Reference Group

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- Xavier Baker
- Lizzie Johnson
- Rima Khatun
- Vicky Swinerd

Groups that have contributed to the development of the strategy

- Anti-racism listening events (students and staff)
- SU presidents
- Staff networks
- 100 Black Women Professors Now programme cohort
- Elevate leadership development programme cohort
- Black Professors Group
- Student Consultation Panel
- EDI Advisory Group (external partners)
- LCI Positive Action Community of Practice

This is not a complete list of contributors, as some individuals have chosen not to be named, but their valuable input is deeply appreciated.