



UCL

# UCL Advancing Race Equality Toolkit

This toolkit is a compendium of ideas for advancing race equality at departmental and faculty level. It includes guidance, briefings and case studies and its aim is to inspire and inform action. It has been co-developed with members of UCL's Race Equality Steering Group, with particular thanks to Professor Ijeoma Uchegbu, Ms Marcia Jacks, Dr Kamna Patel and Ms Paulette Williams for their valued input.

Each section is deliberately brief, however advice and support on the implementation of any of these suggestions, is available from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team. Please email: [equalities@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:equalities@ucl.ac.uk) for further information.

**UCL Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Team**

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# **1. An introduction to the Inclusive Curriculum Framework and Value - Added Metric**

# Inclusive Curriculum Framework

A consortium of six higher education institutions including UCL and one college of further education secured the maximum amount of funding available from HEFCE's £7.5m Catalyst Fund, launched by the Government as part of a programme addressing barriers to student success. Kingston University's BME attainment gap has narrowed from 29 per cent in 2012/13 to 15 per cent in 2015/16.

It leads to a curriculum that is accessible, reflects students' backgrounds and prepares them to contribute positively to a global and diverse workplace.

Learning and teaching are function of:

- Culture of a student
- Culture of Lecturer
- Culture of department, faculty, institution

An inclusive approach therefore "Necessitates...equity considerations being embedded within all functions of the institution and treated as an ongoing process of quality enhancement.

Making a shift of such magnitude requires cultural and systemic change at both the policy and practice levels." (Wray, 2013: 4)

What is an inclusive curriculum?

"Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education refers to the ways in which pedagogy, curricula and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all" (Hocking, 2010)

Value Added Data (VA)

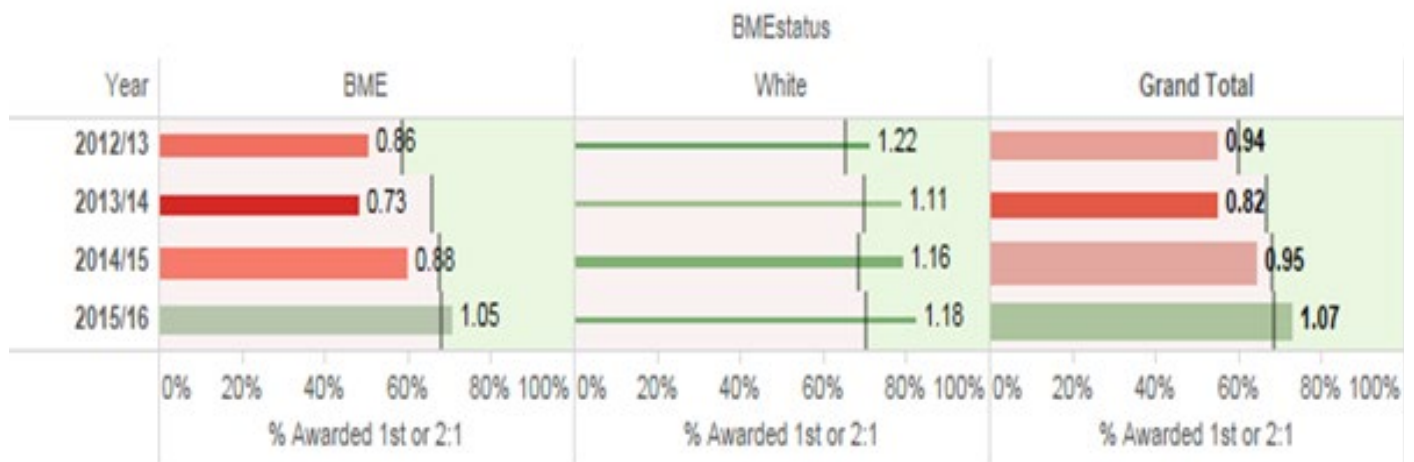
Summary:

- The VA metric highlights differences in attainment which cannot be explained by student entry qualifications, or subject of study.
- Uses the actual degree outcomes of all students graduating across HE in the last five years to calculate a statistically expected percentage of 1st/2:1 degrees for any cohort of students.
- This can then be compared with the actual attainment of that cohort .
- Where the attainment exceeds the 'expected', the VA score is proportionately above 1 and conversely where the outcome is below expectation the VA score is below 1.



## Example:

Value Added Scores for Selected Department - by Year & BME status



## Summary: UCL VA Data

- As expected, all UCL students perform well above the sector benchmark.
- 88% of students graduating in 16/17 were expected to achieve a good degree.
- At UCL, 96% of white students and 93% of BME students achieved a good degree.

Our students all tend to perform well above expectations, whether white or BME, but there does remain small attainment gap that has persisted for the past few years.

88% of students graduating in 16/17 were expected to achieve a good degree. In reality, 96% of white students and 93% of BME students achieved a good degree. So at the overall level there is a gap of 3%. Given the relative population sizes this is probably statistically significant.

There was a gap of 4% in 2015/16 and 4% in 2014/15 and 0% the year before. In terms of faculties, the only one with a persistent attainment gap seems to be the Bartlett (there was a gap of 20% in 2016/17).



## **2. How can you thrive if you don't feel you belong?**

# What departments can do to include Black and minority ethnic students in all aspects of learning and teaching

Maximising students' sense of belonging at UCL is imperative to support their learning, university experience and ultimately their achievement. Yet Black and minority ethnic (BME) students have a lower sense of belonging compared to white students. We need to address this so BME students are not disadvantaged.

You can use the practical examples below to support inclusive teaching and create change. They are based on input from students themselves about their experiences and solutions they believe will work.

Use the content to stimulate discussion: please share any thoughts or good practice to support this initiative as it evolves.

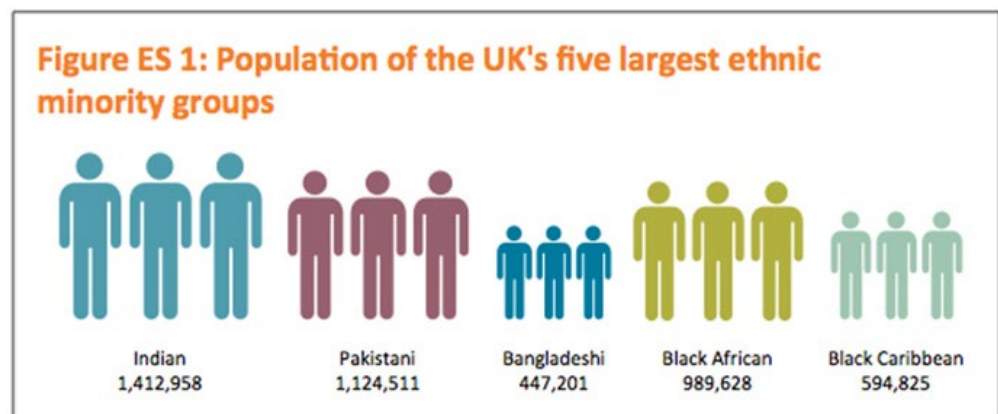


Image: African Voices 2016, UCL Grand Challenges / Jacques



## Be aware of your personal responsibilities as a teacher

- Be aware of your own influence as a role model.
- Be aware of and refrain from perpetuating racial stereotypes.
- Consider how 'race' relates to your subject matter and be open to discussing this.
- Be open about not knowing everything about 'race'; encourage challenge and debate.
- When instigating a debate or posing questions relating to 'race', encourage all students to engage. Do not look on BME students as a default for comment.
- If you are White British consider how this impacts on your views: read about 'White Privilege'.
- Ensure anonymity in marking and moderation as set out in Section 7 of the Academic Manual are adhered to.
- Share good practice within your department and Faculty and beyond through the Liberating the Curriculum Forum.



## Use inclusive teaching to support students being active in their own learning

- Ask students to remind you of their names and how to pronounce them if necessary. Encourage students to use their given name rather than anglicising names.
- Suggest your department provides teaching staff with student's names and photos, if this would be helpful (Department of Greek and Latin use a phonetic guide).
- Provide a variety of access routes to personal tutors e.g. published office hours, email, online bookable appointments.
- Provide a basic etiquette guide in induction material with examples of how to address staff in person and via email, to avoid anxiety resulting in a barrier to interaction.

- Provide openings for your students to tell you about themselves; e.g. if you are giving feedback or answering a question one-to-one, tag on an informal 'how are you?' or stop for a quick chat if passing in the corridor. This will help you get to know your students as individuals beyond their perceived identity.
- Make a particular effort to call on a variety of students during discussions and when inviting opinion. Consider whom you usually call upon, allow to speak, and listen to.
- Appreciate BME students may have different experiences and needs. Treating everyone the same can mean needs are not met. Some students may need extra encouragement to seek your advice, or for you to allocate team roles in group work to help them fully participate.
- Use interactive teaching methods to learn about students and help them learn about each other. Pair/small group work with feedback avoids isolating individuals or putting them on the spot. Mixing up pairs/groups - rather than grouping together those already sitting next to each other - encourages students from different ethnic backgrounds to interact.

## Create inclusive events

- Ensure events cater for a wide range of interests. Vary what is on offer so everyone gets an opportunity to participate.
- If an event will provide a specific opportunity such as information about how to apply for a scholarship, ensure it is inclusive e.g. held during the day and without alcohol.



## **Provide BME role models**

- Ensure some teaching is delivered by BME teaching staff – use visiting lecturers at least once a term if there are no in-house staff.
- Seek to include BME academics when profiling those who have contributed to your field of work or those with successful careers in your field.
- Direct students to Liberating The Curriculum resources such as videos of BME Alumni.
- Look for opportunities to display diverse imagery so spaces are inclusive and reflect UCL's global image, for both physical and online spaces.

## **Ensure an inclusive and diverse curriculum**

- Ensure reading lists reflect diverse authors and subjects.
- Within the context of your subject, extend content beyond European culture or history to include a wider view of the world; avoid presenting European culture as the default best.
- When using UK, European or Western material, look to reflect the diverse identities and influences that constitute these areas.
- Be aware of the underlying values and assumptions in your field when selecting material. Pay attention when students bring material from other perspectives.
- Ensure images used in lectures reflect contemporary UK society and support UCL's position as a global university. Avoid only using images of white people, or only using images of BME people when talking about 'race'.
- After an initial review of your reading list consult students to gain their input. Consult them about and encourage them to consider the cultural and historical context in which content was developed e.g. when racial inequality was an accepted norm or colonialism was dominant.

## **2. Background**

UCL holds a Bronze Race Equality Charter for Higher Education. In achieving this UCL committed to implement a Race Equality Charter Action Plan during 2015 to 2018.

The action plan was informed in part by a study conducted in 2014 on BME student attainment. Wider research shows that British BME degree students do less well even when a range of factors, including their socio-economic background, are taken into account.

One factor contributing to this, is a lack of feeling of belonging for BME students. Differential student attainment and sense of belonging could be seen as examples of Critical Race Theory<sup>1</sup> in practice.

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1 Rollock, N. and Gillborn, D. (2011) Critical Race Theory (CRT), British Educational Research Association online resource. Available online at [<https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/critical-race-theory-crt>] Last accessed [May 2017].

Making progress on student belonging and attainment is not about students fitting in and making do – it is about delivering undergraduate education in an inclusive way so that all students benefit from what UCL has to offer.

Practicing inclusion is a legal requirement of Higher Education Institutions under Section 91 of the Equality Act<sup>2</sup>.

The practical tips contained in this paper were informed by a focus group of UCL BME students, facilitated by Challenge Consultancy. Quotes below are from this focus group.



### 3. Belonging interventions

#### a. Personal responsibilities

We all have a responsibility to deliver inclusion. However, we have heard from BME students that they often feel obligated to bring challenge to curriculum content or mode of delivery. This makes them feel like a lone voice, and if in the minority in the student group this will increase feelings of isolation and disconnectedness.

Students reported experiencing negative ‘micro messages’ from staff, which may not have been intended as such but nevertheless have a negative impact. This was in relation to use of language; stating stereotypes as fact; attitudes and reaction toward BME students during discussions and debate e.g. indicating that their input is of less value or factually incorrect if it differs from the lecturer/tutor; reluctance to engage in conversations about race.

**“At the beginning of the year, the whole course were told that BME students always do worse in the practical exam. This was announced as a fact to everyone!”**

#### b. Positive affirmations

BME students may feel isolated and disconnected from peers, lecturers and the curriculum. They will not benefit from the positive affirmations that white students experience as a matter of course.

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<sup>2</sup> Equality Act 2010 Technical Guidance on Further and Higher Education

Students have reported that sometimes lecturers avoid using their names. They acknowledge that this may happen when teaching staff are unfamiliar with certain names or struggle to pronounce them and are anxious not to cause offence. However, this reduces interaction, decreases the likelihood that those students will be called upon to contribute and leads to exclusion.

Where a student is from a visible minority, and the onus is on them to make their voice heard - it is likely to discourage their participation.

A colour-blind approach to students is seen by some as equality in practice. However, this does not acknowledge the lived experiences of BME students. Those students who feel isolated and excluded (from the curriculum and/or in other ways) stated that they would feel supported if teaching staff checked that they were okay, showed consideration and vocalised an interest in their wellbeing. They called for an acknowledgement that BME students experiences where different to their white counterparts.

It would be positive for BME students to see people who share their identity or background in reading lists and reference material. If students perceive reading lists as flawed because they represent a monoculture this will risk demotivating and disengaging them.

**“I’ve received comments from professors about how my English is ‘very good’ apart from some things a ‘native speaker’ would not say....I am a native speaker! There are variations of English outside of British English. Comments like these reinforce my sense of being perceived as an inferior ‘Other’.”**

### **c. Inclusive spaces**

BME students reported not seeing themselves represented in the style/look of the spaces they occupy on campus. They feel it is not visibly evident that UCL is a global university. This creates a mismatch between students’ expectations before arrival and their lived experience after arrival. This discourages a sense of belonging and increases a sense of not being entitled to be within the particular space.

A key issue under this theme was the emphasis on alcohol for all events, including those run for students by teaching staff. Students reported that this sometimes was used as an incentive for attendance e.g. free wine. The link to alcohol also impacts upon access to tutors, with students reporting tutors stating they “can be found in the pub” when not in their office.



A review by another London university discovered international students were reticent in approaching teaching staff as they were unsure of the etiquette in addressing them.

Students reported other factors relating to inclusive spaces including: not valuing BME student perspectives and making jokes at the expense of international students.

**“Teaching staff poke fun at international students – knowing they will not get the joke...”**

#### **d. Role models**

Being able to see one's own identity represented within teaching staff has a very positive impact on students. BME students do not benefit from the positive affirmations that white students experience as a matter of course, such as seeing people like them delivering lectures or progressing within the career path that they are aspiring to. This may have a negative impact on BME students' sense of belonging and aspirations.

Lack of staff diversity can impact on other areas of concern such as general attitudes of current staff and what is felt by some students as being a fear of discussing 'race'.

Where BME teaching staff are present, students reported feeling that they favour white students (possibly responding to stereotype threat and not wishing to be seen to favour BME students).

**“All of the lecturers are white”**

**“I don't feel represented at all in this university, in terms of the systems and the people that go to this university.”**

#### **d. Curriculum**

Representation in the curriculum seems to be an overwhelming concern for students. This underlines the work already underway by Liberating the Curriculum to ensure that knowledge from marginalised knowledge producers is fairly represented in UCL curricula and acknowledged as mainstream, rather than 'other' and different from that produced by the dominant social category.

The following were highlighted by students:

- References/suggested reading
- Lack of willingness to have a conversation about 'race'
- Lack of diversity in those assessing/marking practical assessments – impacting work content and judgement when marking.

Students reported material used in lectures only containing images of white people. This does not reflect contemporary UK society nor our position as a global university. Doing so diminishes a BME students' sense of belonging and increases their sense of 'otherness'. This could result in detachment from the taught material purely on the basis of the imagery that is used to present it. One student reported never seeing a person of colour (over a two year period) used in teaching material except in one topic that particularly related to a specific 'racial' group – which was far from evidence of inclusion.

**“All we do is talk about dead white men.”**

**“Every image I saw used, all year, were of white people.”**

**“A political view can be marked as wrong, this is then reflected in the grading, when it was simply a critique of the thinking of the tutors preferred author.”**

## 4. Resources and further reading

A discussion of race, equality and education in the UK: British academia's colour-blind problem: an interview with Dr Nicola Rollock

Research into fitting in and belonging presented as a lunch hour lecture: Game of clones: why it matters if our friends are the same as us by Dr Katherine Woolf - Senior Lecturer in Medical Education at UCL

Exploration of ethnicity and achievement among medical students: a study conducted by The University of Manchester by Suzanne Vaughan

A blog penned by a Black person responding to a question on what 'white privilege' is from an old school friend who is white Got privilege?

Article by Stanford University academics testing their hypothesis on why capable Black college students fail to perform as well as their white counterparts. Steele.C.M. (1991 August) Thin ice: Stereotype threat and Black college students. Atlantic Monthly, 284(2), 44-47, 50-54

Exploration of 'stereotype threat' and its impact: Steele,C.M. (1997). A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance. American Psychologist, 52, 613-629

Discussion of racial colour blindness, its emergence, what it looks like and its impact on tackling racism.

An exploration of variances in students' strategies for academic success including seeking support from lecturers, by ethnicity Stevenson, J. (2012) An exploration of the link between minority ethnic and white students' degree attainment and views of their future 'Possible Selves', Higher Education Studies, 2 (4), pp. 103-113.

A discussion of Critical Race Theory in education: Yosso, T.J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? Race, Ethnicity and Education, 8(1), pp. 69–91

Resources from Liberating the curriculum working group at UCL

For more information contact: [equalities@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:equalities@ucl.ac.uk)



## 3. Quick guide to guided marking

# Guided marking

## What is it?

Students read a range of peers' assignments (anonymised and from a previous year with authors' permission) at the beginning of the module, rank the assignments, comment on them and agree a grade. The assignment is similar to the module assignment and helps students understand what they need to do to be successful.

## Why do it?

Students need to know the standard of work the teacher expects them to produce; they need to develop assessment literacy. This is especially important for some international students starting a programme at UCL, and for students from diverse backgrounds. Students develop a sense of good quality work from reading, ranking and giving feedback on a range of assignments. This helps them benchmark their own work (self-assess). Sharing thoughts with peers and the teacher helps clarify teacher expectations.

## How to organise guided marking

Guided marking can be done online (via Moodle) or in a lecture or seminar/tutorial.

To organise guided marking:

1. Select at least 3 assignments (lab reports, posters, essays, recordings of oral presentations, videos) from a previous year that show a range (satisfactory, good and excellent). Download into a document, e.g. a pdf, anonymise and give each assignment a number. If you have markers' comments, download these into a separate document.
2. Contact the authors and obtain permission.
3. Explain the purpose of guided marking to your group (either online or face-to-face). For more information, see the Quick Guide on Helping Students Understand Assessment.
4. Explain the assignment, distribute and explain assessment criteria. Ask students to read and rank the assignments and justify their rankings. (They can also write feedback comments.) This can be done online or as preparation for a seminar.
5. Students share their rankings and justify (either online or face-to-face in group discussions).
6. The teacher shares his/her rankings, answers questions and provides guidance.



This gives the teacher an opportunity to clarify assessment criteria. If available, markers' comments can also be shared.

After guided marking, students could be asked to work on their assignment, submit a draft and peer review. They can then use peer reviewer comments to improve the assignment before submitting. They can also self-assess, providing a grade and comments for their own assessments.

**Teresa McConlogue, October 2015**

**For more help or to discuss: [arena@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:arena@ucl.ac.uk)**



## **4. UCL case study: The effectiveness of targeted recruitment**

This case study serves as an excellent example of how a concerted and collegiate effort at departmental-level can lead to a positive outcome on the hiring of under-represented academic staff.

In 2014, the Department of Philosophy were in the fortunate position of creating three new lectureship roles. There was widespread agreement amongst members of the department that this would be a good opportunity to attempt to address the significant under-representation of female academics. Of the previous six academic hires, only one was a female and the appointment had been made five years previously. There were also only four permanent female members of staff in the department (out of seventeen permanent staff members).

Academic and research staff in the department collectively agreed to proactively contact good prospective female applicants, and encourage them to apply (while making it clear that the selection process would remain both competitive and open). Members of the department knew some good potential candidates already, but they also agreed to contact academics they knew well internationally, and ask which female candidates they would recommend.

Of course, everyone all knew some good male candidates too, and heard about others once the positions were advertised. But the department was determined to put some effort into getting lists together of good prospective female applicants. Each of these applicants was sent an email encouraging them to apply by the Head of Department, and by anyone else appropriate in the department - so e.g. for those candidates specialising in ancient philosophy on the list, the relevant academic wrote to them too to encourage them to apply whether they knew them already or not.

Since it was widely agreed amongst colleagues that women were underrepresented in the department, the fact of a candidate's being female could be used as a tie-breaker, in deciding on who to long- or short-list (i.e. if there was nothing academically / professionally separating candidates) - as is consistent with the Equality Act 2010. Overall, the proportion of female candidates applying rose, which resulted in a much higher proportion of women being short-listed than for previous roles. Ultimately, the use of the tie-break provisions were not necessary following the interview stage as three exceptional women, who objectively scored the highest points, were selected.



## **5. Positive action in recruitment - supporting UCL's Race Equality Charter action plan**

## Context

The positive action provisions within the Equality Act 2010 are distinct from positive discrimination. Positive discrimination is recruiting or promoting a person solely because they have a relevant protected characteristic. Setting quotas to recruit or promote a particular number or proportion of people with protected characteristics is also positive discrimination. Positive discrimination is unlawful in Great Britain.

Positive action (Section 159 of the Equality Act 2010) allows the selection of a candidate from an underrepresented group when they are of 'equal merit' as the other best candidate(s), sometimes described as a 'tie-breaker'.

'Equal merit' does not just mean qualifications.

## UCL's position

UCL Council has approved use of the 'equal merit' positive action provision for:

- Black and minority ethnic (BME) candidates
- Women in Grades 9 and 10 roles

## What does 'equal merit' mean?

Recruiting managers should ensure the criteria set out in the Person Specification is an accurate reflection of the job requirements. They then need to determine how this criteria will be assessed in an objective way. This can take into account a candidate's overall ability, competence and professional experience together with any relevant formal or academic qualifications, as well as any other qualities required to carry out the particular job. It is important to be able to demonstrate individual assessment of merit for both candidates in a 'tie-breaker' situation.

Guard against any criteria that could indirectly discriminate against BME candidates – for example, use of a psychometric test that has not been checked for bias (some such tests have an inherent bias toward people with a particular background) or, disregarding non UK qualifications.

## Examples of 'tie-break' provision

- The panel consists of 4 members, 2 prefer candidate A, the other 2 prefer candidate B – both are considered equally appointable. They may choose the BME candidate
- 2 candidates have scored equally in their interviews – the panel can select the candidate from the under-represented group



- 2 candidates are both very strong but have different skills that makes them of 'equally merit' but in different ways

## **Under representation?**

Recruiting managers should know the ethnic profile of the staff in their department or in the type of role being recruited to. Data is available from InfoView and/or from the Human Resources Division. Knowing this information ahead of the recruitment process will put managers in the best position to apply the positive action provisions.

## **Framework of provisions**

The positive action provisions do not allow the appointment of a less suitable candidate just because that candidate has a protected characteristic that is under-represented.

Implementing the 'equal merit' provision must be proportionate in the context of each case. This means balancing of all the relevant factors e.g. the extent to which BME people are under-represented against the impact that the proposed action may have on other people.

The positive action provisions make it clear that employers must not adopt policies or practices designed to routinely favour candidates with a certain protected characteristic, even where there is evidence of under-representation or disadvantage. All suitably qualified candidates must be considered on their individual merits for the post in question.

Where one candidate is clearly superior or better qualified for the job than the others, then an employer should offer the position to that candidate.

UCL's having agreed a routine policy of being prepared to use positive action where it is appropriate for it to do so is perfectly acceptable under the law. An employer may go into an appointment exercise prepared to use the 'tie-breaker' provisions, only to identify a clearly superior candidate – any notion of using the 'tie-breaker' would then become irrelevant.

Avoid setting artificially low thresholds when implementing the positive action provision. For example, if the pass mark in an assessment is set at 70% and one candidate scores 71% and another score 91%, it would generally be wrong to consider that just because both passed the minimum success threshold the two candidates are of equal merit.



# 6. UCL's Fair Recruitment Specialist initiative

# Overview

The Fair Recruitment Specialist are made up of black and minority ethnic staff who have agreed to take on this role to support race equality progress at UCL. All have received high level training to undertake this role. The lack of ethnic diversity within UCL's current staff profile prevents us from having a policy of visibly diverse panels – without an initiative like this.

Diverse recruitment panels are regarded as a positive contributor in fair and effective recruitment by:

- Adding a variety of perspectives to decision-making;
- Helping mitigate against 'cloning' and the perpetuation of current profiles;
- Reducing the possibility of stereotyping;
- Enabling candidates to perform at their best by reducing 'stereotype threat';
- Being a visible demonstration of UCL's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Even where our intention is to select the best candidates based solely on merit, considerable research shows that aspects of a candidate's identity, such as their gender or ethnicity, may differentially, but subtly, shape the expectations and behaviours of a recruitment panel and consequently the selection outcome.

The initiative is being piloted in Population and Health Sciences; and Arts and Humanities.

## Top tips for avoiding bias in recruitment

1. When shortlisting operate on the principle of inclusion rather than exclusion – look for strengths rather than short-comings
2. Only use originally agreed criteria from the person specification to draw up your shortlist
3. When shortlisting and again when interviewing: compare and score all responses to criteria/question 1 then 2, and so forth rather than by completing an assessment of one person at a time. This avoids 'overspill' where you may be unduly influenced to a very good or poor answer from one person.
4. Always pilot a test with an existing group of staff – to avoid unintended difficulties with it.
5. It is crucial to have model answers ready to compare candidate responses to. Just ranking candidates will not necessarily correlate to their ability to do the job.
6. Each interviewer should always score each answer immediately after it is

provided. Waiting until the end to score each question risks forgetting an early or less-vivid but high- quality answer

7. Do not discuss your impressions of the candidates until you have added up the final scores

8. Undertake a pre-mortem to consider all the things that could go wrong so you are less likely to do things that could lead to these outcomes

**Contact the EDI Team for more information on [Equalities@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:Equalities@ucl.ac.uk)**



# **7. Summary of UCL's Inclusive Advocates initiative**



# **Inclusive Advocacy: Proposed Outline**

“UCL believes that diversity is a vital contributor to an institution that aims to change the world through disruptive thinking and creative endeavour. We are striving to be a place where people can be authentic and their unique cultural background, perspective, experiences and skills are valued as an asset to research and teaching excellence. It is on this basis that I fully endorse the new Inclusive Advocacy programme and strongly encourage my senior staff to participate in it.”

## **Professor Michael Arthur – UCL President and Provost**

Inclusive Advocacy is a pilot sponsorship programme designed to ensure that high-performing Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff reach their full potential at UCL. The pilot is being developed in response to the strikingly low representation of senior BME staff and data that show staff from some ethnic groups are less satisfied with career support and progression and can take longer to be promoted.

The two-year programme connects senior leaders (‘Advocates’) to high-performing Grade 7 and 8 staff. The senior leader’s role is to proactively ensure that the employee receives growth opportunities, in addition to access to useful networks.

The objectives of Inclusive Advocacy are to:

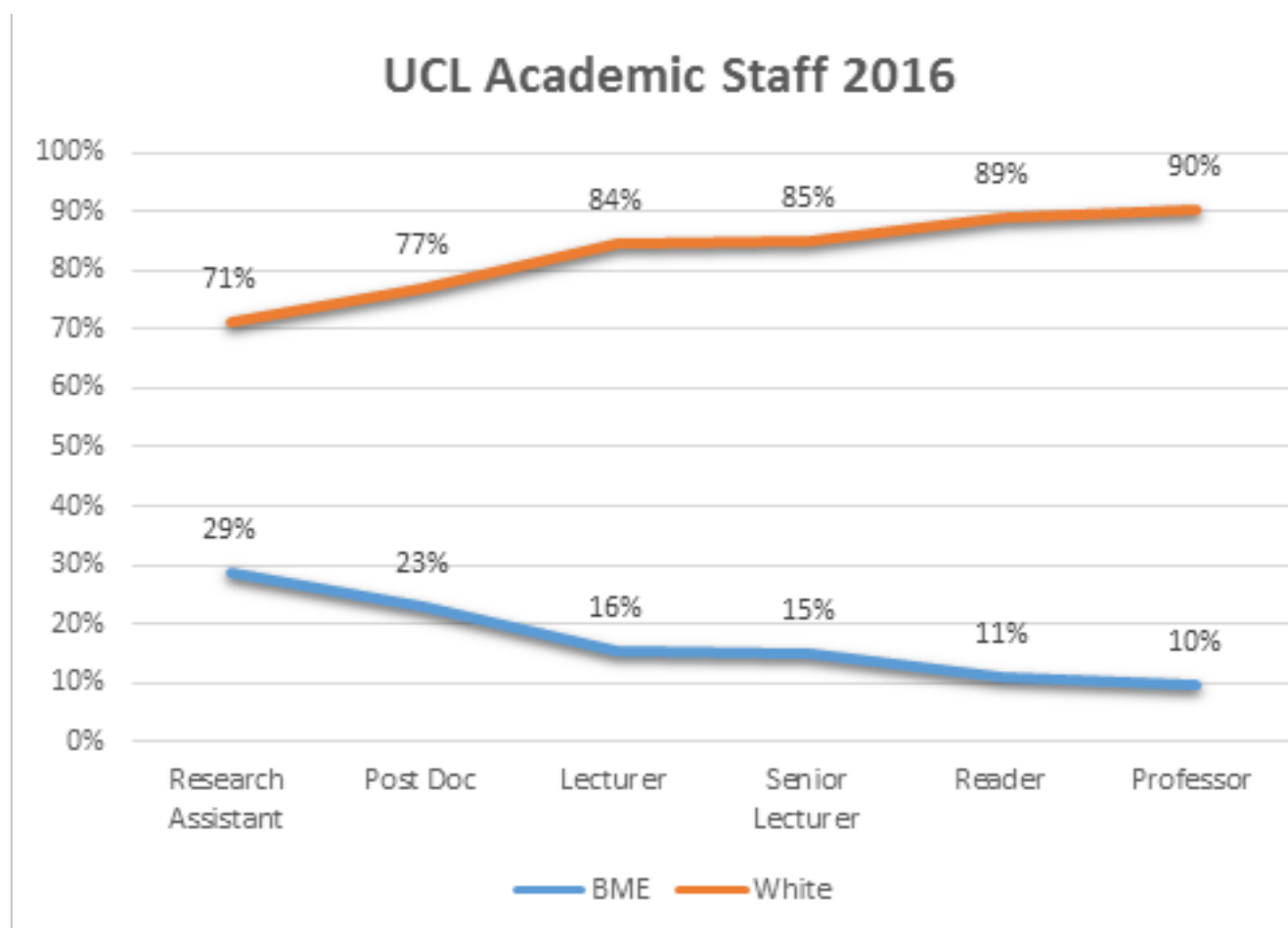
- Retain and promote diverse talent at UCL
- Remove unnecessary barriers in people’s career journeys
- Develop both the employee and advocate by creating personalised, mutual learning
- Enhance the student experience and improve attainment by having more visible role models from minority backgrounds
- Open access to senior networks and reduce nepotism
- Accelerate organisational change and help meet UCL’s aspirations on equality, diversity and inclusion

## **Why is the Inclusive Advocates programme focussed on BME staff progression?**

In 2015, UCL received a Bronze Race Equality Charter award. Participation in this required substantive statistical analysis of all key areas of University activity. The data demonstrated that:

- BME staff are more likely than white colleagues to be on time-limited research contracts
- There is a higher turnover rate of BME staff
- White staff are promoted at a higher rate than BME staff
- BME staff are less satisfied with career support at UCL than white staff
- White staff, on average, get promoted quicker than BME staff

It is important to state that these figures are based on overall group trends and not individuals.



Studies have found that BME staff often feel isolated, marginalised, undermined and lacking in support in higher education<sup>1</sup>. The sense of BME staff feeling as if they are ‘outsiders’ is repeated throughout much of the literature on this topic<sup>2</sup> and in focus groups and surveys conducted with UCL’s own staff:

“With regards to getting a promotion there is a strong culture of who you know, not what you know. A lot of white colleagues go out drinking together and are able to

1 <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/experience-of-bme-staff-in-he-final-report/>

2 <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/Aiming%20Higher.pdf>

form friendship circles that I feel excluded from”<sup>3</sup>

At a formal level, UCL has clear institutional policies for the equitable treatment of all staff. As in any large, complex organisation, however, there remain opaque practices and instances of informal decision-making that can undermine formal procedures and equality. These are compounded by implicit biases and the psychological processes that mean people are inclined to have an affinity to others who are more like themselves<sup>4</sup>. Whilst overt forms of discrimination may have become more unacceptable, these subtle forms of interpersonal behaviour can accumulate to achieve the same ends.

It is beyond dispute that daily experiences of working relationships and managerial support and encouragement matter a great deal for career advancement. For example, the personal discretion of managers in delegating high status or risky projects can influence who is more ready for promotion.

Staff from under-represented groups can generally have less power in an organisation than the dominant group – both actual and ‘soft’ power – and this can limit their advancement, yet the organisation may tend to blame their lack of progress on them, or society at large, rather than itself.<sup>5</sup>

## **Is sponsoring BME staff unfair – or even wanted?**

Most senior staff are likely to be able to name an individual who has been influential in advancing their career. A person who has ‘taken them under their wing’ and gone that ‘extra mile’ to proactively support them. This means that many senior staff have de facto been beneficiaries of sponsorship themselves and so instinctively may understand what is meant by the term.

Ideally, all staff should benefit from being sponsored by a senior member of staff. Yet UCL has compelling statistical and qualitative evidence that shows structural barriers are still more prominent for BME staff.

There is already an underlying culture of sponsorship and patronage in academia and a reliance on informal networks but that it is not being conferred on all groups equally<sup>6</sup>. This programme is a conscious attempt at readdressing this largely unconscious behaviour. Over time, as BME staff progress more equitably through the organisation, there should not be the requirement for it.

An important aspect of this programme is that it also offers the opportunity for

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3 [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/equalities/race/RECM\\_application\\_FINALJan16.pdf](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/equalities/race/RECM_application_FINALJan16.pdf)

4 Kandola, B. (2013) The value of difference : eliminating bias in organisations

5 Ibid

6 Bhopal, K. (2014). The experience of BME academics in higher education: aspirations in the face of inequality,

personal, mutual learning, by raising awareness of the experience and perceptions of BME staff amongst senior managers, so that the day-to-day privilege that white people benefit from becomes salient and informs how the organisation is led.

## **What is the difference between sponsorship and mentoring?**

“A sponsor is a senior person who believes in your potential and is willing to take a bet on you, in so doing advocates for your next promotion; whereas a mentor is an experienced person willing to build your confidence and provide a sounding board”<sup>7</sup>

A variety of mentoring schemes already exist across UCL, which vary in reach and effectiveness. The main distinction between mentoring and sponsorship is that whereas a mentor may help an employee envision and plan their next position, a sponsor will leverage their social and career capital with the ‘protégés’ to create stretching, developmental opportunities for them. For example, a mentor may advise their mentee to attend an important meeting, whereas a sponsor will ensure they actually take the employee along with them to significant, career advancing events.

The role of the sponsor is to open doors, introduce opportunities for exposure, demonstrate to a higher-level audience what the employee can bring to the institution, connect the employee to career opportunities and advocate for their abilities. The hallmark of sponsorship is that it invokes the sponsor’s professional reputation and the sponsor makes their support visible.

## **What does being an Inclusive Advocate entail?**

In the academic context, sponsors could undertake activities such as initiating an interdisciplinary collaboration, nominating the employee to speak at an important conference and reading and commenting on draft papers for publication. Sponsors can help demystify the ‘rules of the game’ – clearly instructing on what is worth doing and when to attain promotion, whilst respecting the employees ‘authentic self’ and values and vision of their own career.

Therefore in addition, the sponsor’s role is also to learn from the employee, to be welcoming of diverse perspectives, to be receptive of the fact that ‘success’ comes in many guises and to better reflect on how white privilege can operate in the university context.

UCL’s approach to sponsorship will be to encourage senior staff to pledge to be advocates first, and then to help match them with suitable employees. This is because staff may be reluctant to ask for advocacy beyond their line manager. Despite the data showing that BME staff face additional barriers in progression, there is also still a strongly-held perception of there being a ‘meritocracy’ at UCL which may mean that under-represented groups require encouragement to join the programme, for fear of being viewed as lacking in some way. Moreover, staff from

7 Hewlett, A, S. (2013) Forget a mentor, find a sponsor

some cultural backgrounds, and particularly women, can potentially be more averse to self-promotion<sup>8</sup>.

## **How the scheme works**

Sponsors (or 'Inclusive Advocates') must be Grade 9 or 10 staff who manage a department or research group. They must be able to commit to sponsoring an employee employees for 2 years and, at a minimum, meeting with the employee one-to-one every two months.

Advocates will be asked to attend a briefing session, in which there will be a discussion on the best way of matching them with 'protégés', and what the sponsors preferred way of approaching this will be. The briefing session will also explore how to navigate sensitive issues such as how the sponsorship relationship will be explained to others in the department. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team will also help support the process of connecting advocates and employees. The employees, once selected, will then also be asked to attend a briefing session. Both sessions will make sure that each party understands what is expected of them and how they can build a successful sponsorship relationship. The employee's manager will also be informed of the arrangement and asked to support it and any resultant opportunities that emerge for the employee.

Inclusive Advocates is largely a one-to-one relationship. The EDI Team, however, will check in on a six monthly basis to ensure the sponsorship relationship is working well. This will include phone calls with both parties followed by a more formal evaluation at the end of the (two-year) period.

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8 Mirza, H, S. (2009) Race, gender and educational desire: why Black women succeed and fail



# **8. Guidance on making committees more diverse**

An audit of UCL's Committees undertaken in 2015 found that women and BME staff are significantly under-represented in key decision-making forums.

Membership of many University-level, faculty and departmental committees are entirely or largely ex officio. Increasing representation of BME members on these committees without amending their terms of reference will be dependent on increasing the representation of BME staff amongst the constituent staff populations from where the ex officio members of the committees are drawn. In the interim, however the following suggestions are proposed to help make committees more representative of the diversity of UCL; committee shadowing, deputising and role rotation.

### **What are the benefits to UCL and individuals?**

- more diverse and representative decision-making
- BME staff gain greater insight into the roles of the senior staff and ways of working
- cost effective career and professional development
- excellent networking tool
- breaks down barriers and develops relationships

### **Committee shadowing**

The purpose of shadowing is to give staff the opportunity to experience the responsibilities of committees. The Chair of the participating committee should invite a small number (between 1-4) of under-represented staff in relevant roles to shadow the committee for an academic year. The shadowers attend the meeting, observe the discussion between the attendees, and as permitted, ask relevant questions after the conclusion of the meeting.

### **Formal Deputising**

Another suggestion is for key people on the Committee to formally select a deputy. The deputy must be regularly briefed on the workings of the committee, be sent all papers and have the dates of meetings in their diary in readiness to step and cover for the committee member if necessary and represent them at the meetings they are unable to attend.

### **Role Rotation**

Some departments have decided to ensure that key roles in the department are regularly rotated between men and women. For example, a male will hold the post for a year followed by a female the following year. Heads of Department are encouraged to think about how this principle could also apply to BME staff.





## **9. Guidance on utilising secondments to promote career progression**

- Review the number of staff you have on secondment and determine if this an ethnically representative cohort of staff. Include all secondments – within the faculty; into the faculty and outside of the faculty.
- Consider providing a presentation open to all staff promoting the benefits of secondments. Perhaps ask a member of staff who has had a good secondment experience to speak.
- Look for opportunities to create secondments as development experiences for staff.
- During appraisals encourage staff to consider secondment opportunities to help them achieve their career goals.
- Include a positive action statement when circulating details of secondment opportunities, particularly encouraging BME staff to apply.
- Ask your BME staff to register centrally within the faculty to indicate their interest in any secondment opportunities. Any opportunities within the faculty or UCL as a whole could be forwarded on to them.
- When selecting staff to undertake secondment opportunities commit to apply the 'of equal merit' or 'tie-breaker' positive action provision from the Equality Act (see separate guide)
- If a secondment is extended and becomes open ended rather than fixed term it will need to be advertised externally – commit to apply the 'of equal merit' or 'tie-breaker' provisions where possible.
- Where fixed term posts are filled by an internal secondee consider extending the offer of this development opportunity to include: access to a mentor; coaching and networking opportunities. This will maximise the benefit of the secondment.