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Equality, diversity, inclusion and respect are core values at the University of Kent. Advancing these values has been a key area of development and our EDI work has become increasingly embedded and important to our community. However, this work has not always aligned with the lived experience for many racially minoritised staff and students. As an institution, and as individual members of the community at Kent, we have a significant role to play in ensuring that we challenge and deconstruct systemic racism and all forms of discrimination. Dedicated members of our community have given their time, over and above their work and study, to raise and address these issues.

Our vision is to be an antiracist institution; one that actively opposes racism, in recognition that simply promoting equal opportunities will not go far enough. This strategy, and our commitment to the Race Equality Charter (REC), places our leadership team firmly accountable for driving antiracism across our institution starting with immediate effect. The strategy has been developed in partnership with colleagues who have been championing antiracism work at Kent for many years and seeks to recognise, and build from, the significant work that has taken place and which continues. We are indebted to colleagues for their continued support and efforts.

We recognise that sustained and continuous action, backed up by the necessary resource, is required to become an antiracist institution. Our leadership team will be accountable for progress and effectiveness of the priorities and actions in this strategy and we will regularly review this work in an institutional and societal context that is constantly changing. Crucially, we will listen to and act on the lived experience of members of our community as we work together towards our vision for antiracism at Kent.

Professor Karen Cox
Vice-Chancellor and President
INTRODUCTION

Our context

The Covid-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement have brought racial disparities in higher education into sharper focus. Many of these are present at the University of Kent.

Institutional data and feedback from racially minoritised members of our community highlight a range of inequalities. For students, these include awarding and continuation gaps and experiences of racism. For staff, they include unequal recruitment and promotion outcomes, and underrepresentation in senior roles.

Many of these issues have been identified through the work undertaken by the Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) staff network, Kent Union, and the eight Black and minority ethnic (BME) student societies last year in their student demands. Their work highlights the need for action.

Why we must act

Racial inequalities and lived experiences illustrate the need for action to tackle racism. However, to date, as a university, we have not done this well. Despite much positive work, we have not sufficiently prioritised these issues; the resources for change at scale have not been dedicated; and accountability for real change has not been clear. We have heard that the leadership team could be bolder, that communication could be more effective, and that more can be done to make sure that the burden of this work is not placed on racially minoritised students and staff.

The University has begun to take important steps. We have signed up to the Race Equality Charter and launched the institution-wide Challenging Racism campaign. Our Executive Group has taken part in inclusive leadership training and the Student Success team delivers sector-leading approaches to tackling awarding, continuation and progression gaps for racially minoritised students. There are many examples of good practice across the University, with members of the community engaged in decolonisation efforts to address racial inequalities, and staff proactively supporting racially minoritised staff and students.

A long-term project

Our vision of becoming a truly antiracist institution that fights against racism, will take more than a few months or years. This is not about paying lip service: we need sustained action, and a willingness to learn. This strategy, developed in partnership with members of the Kent community, provides the framework to tackle racism across all our campuses and beyond. It sets out a clear vision and seven strategic objectives, highlighting the importance of leadership, accountability, and listening to the lived experiences of our racially minoritised staff and students. For each strategic objective, we have identified an accountable leader and committed to a set of actions which outline the steps that we will take as we strive to become an antiracist institution. We will work closely with the BAME staff network, Kent Union and other relevant groups across all our strategic objectives to ensure that this is a truly collaborative effort.

Importantly, the strategy recognises that we are, and will continue to be, engaged in a long-term project. In keeping with this spirit, the strategy will be continually reviewed, and the actions updated to reflect the ever-changing context and our developing understanding.

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1 University of Kent, Student demands: www.kent.ac.uk/challenging-racism/student-demands
The term racially minoritised is used throughout this strategy. It is a term increasingly used in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) work as an alternative to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) as it highlights the social construction of racial categorisation. However, the term racially minoritised also has limitations: it could be perceived as passive and limiting in terms of individual agency; it also risks homogenising the experience of individuals and communities who experience racism in different ways. The term is used here fully aware of these limitations but in acknowledgement that there is no consensus on the preferred terminology.2

OUR VISION FOR ANTIRACISM AT KENT

The University of Kent will actively dismantle structures which perpetuate racial inequality within our university and strive to become a force for antiracism within our local community and broader society.

Our priority is to work continually to create an environment where racially minoritised staff and students are valued and can achieve their goals. We will continually review and communicate our progress to tackle institutional racism in an ever-changing context.
## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Require **senior leaders** to drive, and be accountable for, antiracism across the University

2. Listen to, and act on, the **lived experience** of racially minoritised staff and students

3. **Dismantle barriers to racially minoritised students’** success and belonging

4. **Decolonise** University teaching, research and partnerships

5. **Dismantle barriers to racially minoritised staff members’** success and belonging

6. **Embed antiracist behaviours and practices** among the University community

7. Advocate for antiracism **locally, nationally and globally**
1 Require senior leaders to drive, and be accountable for, antiracism across the University

This strategy places Kent’s leadership team firmly accountable for antiracism progress. Effective progress towards antiracism hinges on the attitudes and actions of our senior leaders.

The remaining objectives throughout this strategy have been assigned to individual members of Kent’s Executive Group to ensure accountability. To support them to deliver effective and transparent leadership, the leadership team will undertake antiracism training and have systems in place to publicly report on progress.

Accountable leader: Vice-Chancellor
2 Listen to, and act on, the lived experience of racially minoritised staff and students

Listening to, and acting on, the lived experience of staff and students from racially minoritised backgrounds is fundamental to antiracism. People with lived experience of racism have essential insight and expertise which must be reflected in how we act.

Over the last academic year 2020-21, the University community started a conversation about race and racism. Kent’s BAME staff network conducted a staff survey to understand experiences and cultural barriers to race equality\(^3\). The University ran staff inclusion circles as part of its Challenging Racism Campaign which aimed to create a safe environment to share experiences and concerns. Kent Union created a list of student demands for antiracism in response to students’ lived experiences\(^4\). The Student Success Team has collected rich data on ‘belonging’ for racially minoritised students and is currently conducting longitudinal research for students in receipt of an academic excellence scholarship.

These actions are a first step in understanding the work that the University needs to do. But they have highlighted that there are very real barriers to staff and students feeling able to share their experiences relating to race. Furthermore, there is a lack of trust that affirmative words from the University translate into action.

This is a particular concern when it comes to reporting incidents of racial harassment and discrimination. Only 36% of racially minoritised staff respondents to the BAME staff network survey felt confident that action would be taken if they were to report a race-related incident.

It is important that we move as a community to provide safe avenues for reporting racism, and spaces where reflections on the lived experience are listened to, acted on, and communicated. Student and staff networks will be an important avenue to raise these issues, but the University will work in partnership to ensure that the burden for consultation does not fall too heavily on the networks, and that work required is appropriately resourced.

The following areas are a priority for Kent:

- Provide resources to relevant staff and student networks to support collaborative working with the University to understand and address issues.
- Make better use of the rich data collected about the student experience through existing surveys and through the work of the Student Success team to understand racially minoritised students’ experience at Kent.
- Promote, review and enhance reporting processes across Kent’s campuses to ensure that staff and students, including students on placement, feel comfortable raising concerns and confident they will be actioned and communicated clearly to those reporting the issue.

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3 University of Kent, BAME Staff Network All Staff Survey 2020: https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/staff-student-news/2020/10/26/bame-all-staff-survey-2020/
4 University of Kent, Student demands: https://www.kent.ac.uk/challenging-racism/student-demands

Accountable leader: Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance
3 Dismantle barriers to racially minoritised students’ success and belonging

Racial inequalities among students persist at our University. For example, in 2019-20 there was a 15% gap between White and Black students awarded a first or 2:1 degree.

In addressing these inequalities, rather than focusing on racially minoritised students themselves, this objective places the onus on the University to understand and actively dismantle barriers for students across the student lifecycle.

There is much more that the University needs to do to provide an equitable experience for racially minoritised students. The work of the Student Success team, representations from Kent Union and direct communication from student societies have highlighted several issues in recent years which need to be addressed. These include:

- Limited representation of racially minoritised staff.
- Lack of a sense of belonging within the University community and the local area due to experiences of racism.
- Insufficient mental health support for racially minoritised students

The following areas are a priority for Kent:

- Provide compulsory antiracism training for all staff, prioritising those in student-facing roles.
- Review the cultural competency and appropriateness of mental health support.
- Develop a mentoring scheme for racially minoritised students.

Accountable leader: Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Education & Student Experience
Decolonisation approaches are increasingly used as a vehicle for developing pedagogy which is inclusive of racially minoritised students. We recognise that both the term ‘decolonisation’ used as a metaphor in this way, and whether the University should be ‘decolonising’ as a process are contested. Nevertheless, it is something that Kent will pursue.

The concept of decolonisation is not new at Kent. Students, who were engaged in the ‘Decolonise the Curriculum’ project, conducted research with racially minoritised students to develop the Decolonise UKC Manifesto in 2019. The Manifesto highlighted where changes needed to be made, in the curriculum and across the wider University. As a result, there are some highly-developed approaches to decolonisation taking place across Kent. For example, the Diversity Mark programme brings together teams of staff and students to review and diversify reading lists and facilitate discussions about representation in university resources. However, beyond this there has not been leadership engagement to drive whole-institution change.

Led by work of students and staff, this strategy marks a commitment to explore what decolonisation means for Kent and to place it on a more strategic footing. This involves thinking about how biases in our research and teaching combined create exclusion for racially minoritised students and staff. It also means reviewing the way we work with international partners to create more equitable and reflexive partnerships which do not impose Kent’s ways of working. The first step is to define the problem and our approaches to solving them.

**The following areas are a priority for Kent:**

- Define and communicate what decolonisation means in the Kent context and how to translate this into effective action across teaching, research and partnerships, building on existing work and led by students and staff already engaged in this area.

- Establish a rolling University-wide programme to decolonise the curriculum in collaboration with Kent Union, including training for academics and the requirement for action plans from each division setting out how they will achieve this.

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6 University of Kent, Decolonise UKC Manifesto: [https://decoloniseukc.org/manifesto/](https://decoloniseukc.org/manifesto/)
5 Dismantle barriers to racially minoritised staff success and belonging

Staff from racially minoritised backgrounds at Kent do not have equitable opportunities to succeed. Structural and cultural issues limit a sense of belonging and create barriers to promotion and progression. This is evident from the low representation of racially minoritised staff – particularly in more senior positions – and persistent promotion and pay gaps at Kent. It is also evident in the disproportionate number of racially minoritised staff on fixed-term contracts, which limit opportunities and confidence.

Many of these barriers are subtle and not always easy to define, but they are pervasive. They stem from attitudes, assumptions and biases. These are often unconscious but sometimes they are more overt. Racially minoritised staff still experience micro-aggressions, discrimination and harassment in some instances.

Many racially minoritised staff at Kent are committed to improving the experience for their colleagues and racially minoritised students. These staff members give up their time to support antiracism work. They attend panels to ensure a diversity of perspectives for fairer recruitment and promotion. These efforts should be acknowledged.

The following areas are a priority for Kent:

- Ensure inclusive recruitment, selection, progression and promotion practices that do not exclude racially minoritised staff, including for temporary positions.
- Review staff contracts across the institution which are held disproportionately by racially minoritised staff.
- Report data on and reduce the ethnicity pay gap.
- Provide leadership development opportunities and mentoring for racially minoritised staff.
- Develop clear professional services pathways to create fairer opportunities for promotion for racially minoritised staff.

Accountable leader: Director of HR & Organisational Development
6 We will embed antiracist behaviours and practices among the University community

Along with leadership and accountability, the behaviours and practices of individual staff and students, including White staff and students, will underpin all that this strategy is trying to achieve.

Creating change at the individual level at the scale required will be a continuous process. Each year new staff and students enter the University, and they must enter a culture where racism in any form is widely understood to be wholly unacceptable. To do this, Kent needs to equip students and staff with the skills to enter conversations about race and racism, and to understand how their behaviours can perpetuate inequality and structural racism. They should be empowered to advance antiracism within and beyond the University’s campuses.

The following areas are a priority for Kent:

- Roll out regular compulsory antiracism training for students, to complement staff training outlined in objective 3.
- Build antiracism elements into the Leadership Behaviours Framework and in the implementation of Academic Career Map.
- Introduce a student-staff reverse mentoring scheme for staff to better understand experiences of racially minoritised students.
- Run a series of events on effective allyship to develop an ally network.

Accountable leader: Director of HR & Organisational Development and Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Education & Student Experience
7 We will advocate for antiracism locally, nationally and globally

Developing an institutional culture which is safe and inclusive for racially minoritised students and staff is a priority for the University. Looking ahead, our ambition is to advocate for antiracism locally, nationally and globally. These activities will be mutually enabling. As Kent develops greater capabilities in this area through focused research and partnerships, the University community will be better placed to deliver the other six objectives outlined above. Advocating for antiracism beyond the University’s campuses will provide further opportunities for staff and students who are dedicated to advancing this agenda.

There are several priorities which will support this longer-term objective:

• Develop a research community on intersectional research justice and use Kent’s Public Engagement Officers to increase the impact of this work with the local and wider community.

• Publish decolonising work by staff across the university.

• Use Kent’s Graduate Journal as a vehicle to share research of the Student Success team to advance antiracist higher education nationally and internationally.

• Enhance the role of our students and graduates as advocates for antiracism through volunteering, employment and enterprise opportunities and developing antiracist graduate attributes through a decolonised curriculum.

• Review the effectiveness of Postgraduate Support Scholarships to support progression among racially minoritised students.
To support accountability and assessment, we have adopted seven strategic indicators. The data available to support this is mixed; some are existing monitored indicators and others will require new data collection or analysis.

They are not the only basis on which success should be judged. We recognise that they do not correspond to each objective and that some objectives are best measured in other ways. However, alongside other means of evaluation and review, they will enable better accountability, and a sense of the extent to which the strategy is or is not working.

As part of implementation and reporting, the University will develop and publish targets against each of these measures.

- The awarding gap between White and Black; Asian and Other/Mixed ethnicity students
- The gap between the proportion of White and Black students progressing to postgraduate study
- Student satisfaction with teaching and learning and broader student experience, measured through analysis of existing student surveys by ethnicity
- Proportion of racially minoritised staff in academic and professional services roles, including at senior levels (considering intersectionality)
- The promotion gap between White and racially minoritised staff
- The pay gap between White and racially minoritised staff
- Gaps in White and racially minoritised staff experience and engagement monitored by staff pulse surveys (when mechanisms are in place)
DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

**Timing**
The strategy covers the period up to 2023-24 to align with the Race Equality Charter (REC). The actions in this strategy have been divided into those which we aim to deliver during the academic year 2021-22, and those to be delivered over the longer-term life of the strategy.

**Governance**
Each of the accountable leaders identified in this strategy will be accountable for their objectives. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy Group will manage the strategy delivery, reporting to the Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance Board.

**Resourcing**
Resources for this strategy will come from a range of sources; some existing, and others additional where required. Sources of funding include Kent’s rolling EDI budget, the DVC Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance’s strategic EDI fund, and budgets from relevant departments, for example, HR, student services, divisions, and information services. Resources from exercises such as Athena SWAN could complement the REC as well as reinforcing the importance of intersectionality. Ultimately, success should be judged on progress against measures and outcomes rather than inputs.

**Review**
Accountable leaders will report annually on the progress against each of the objectives and relevant measures. Actions will be chosen and implemented to meet objectives as required. They will be reviewed regularly and developed to reflect changing context and emerging lessons.

**Evaluation**
Continual evaluation and improvement will be a key feature of this strategy delivery and will be the responsibility of accountable leaders. Evaluation will take place through:

- Reporting against the measures outlined in this strategy.
- Commissioning and conducting evaluations of individual objectives and actions as appropriate.

Crucial to the success of this strategy will be improvements to the collection and use of data to support the ongoing understanding of what works in Kent’s context.
The following is a list of initial actions against each of the strategic objectives. The majority are concentrated in the next year, recognising that accountable leaders will continually identify new actions as they become pertinent to supporting antiracism at Kent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
<th>2021-22 academic year</th>
<th>By 2023-24</th>
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</table>
| **1 Require senior leaders to drive and be accountable for antiracism across the University** | • Review executive race equality training and develop a programme of antiracist executive training and engagement which equips our leaders with the confidence, understanding and practical steps to actively cultivate an antiracist culture.  
• Publish and communicate who is accountable for each of the objectives in this strategy.  
• Introduce relevant KPIs for race equality progress as part of performance objectives for managers and senior leaders.  
• Make minutes and actions from relevant committees public (where regulations allow) and recognise networks and committees for their input. | • Develop a public-facing antiracism webpage with clear action and progress, including KPI dashboard.  
• Report annually on spending on antiracism activities in this strategy. |
| **2 Listen to and act on the lived experience of racially minoritised staff and students** | • Create a workstream which assesses the various student survey responses by race (eg, NSS, PTES, PRES) to understand and monitor different experiences across the academic and wider student experience.  
• Expand communications relating to actions identified by staff and student networks with targeted, clear and transparent communication around antiracist initiatives and close the feedback loop on consultation activities.  
• Improve awareness of, and access to complaints mechanisms across both campuses, eg, promotion of Harassment contacts; the Inform Kent Harassment Tool (INK); staff reporting tool and process for registering complaints with teams that include implicated staff.  
• Improve complaints processes through transparent feedback processes, antiracism training for staff involved in complaints handling and disciplinaries and routine monitoring and analysis of reporting and resolution satisfaction by race. For students, this should include those on placement. | • Develop and promote a staff pulse survey designed to understand the experiences of staff, including feelings of inclusion, and create a safe space, such as inclusion circles, to reflect on findings and share lived experiences.  
• Increase the proportion of complaints procedures which have a racially minoritised member on the panel through a range of mechanisms, including buying-out staff time; training and recruiting a broader pool of staff to engage, and engaging with external suppliers. |
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<tr>
<th>2021-22 academic year</th>
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<td><strong>3 Dismantle barriers to racially minoritised students’ success and belonging</strong></td>
<td>• Develop a mentoring scheme for racially minoritised students across our campuses which pairs staff and postgraduate students with undergraduate students to support career planning and progression; explore opportunities to collaborate with partner universities in an intra-university programme.</td>
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<td>• Provide antiracism training for staff in student-facing roles, building on outcomes from inclusion circles to ensure staff are equipped with appropriate terminology and understand how inclusion underpins an excellent student experience.</td>
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<td>• Review cultural competency and appropriateness of mental health support for students from racially minoritised backgrounds following recruitment of racially minoritised mental health advisers.</td>
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<td>• Review the effectiveness of campus security charter in terms of the experience of students from different ethnic backgrounds.</td>
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<td><strong>4 Decolonise University teaching, research and partnerships</strong></td>
<td>• Establish a rolling University-wide programme to decolonise the curriculum in collaboration with Kent Union and require each division to produce an action plan setting out how they will achieve this.</td>
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<td>• Run a series of events on what it means to decolonise teaching, research and partnerships in the Kent context, building on the work of the Decolonise UKC Manifesto and the work of the Student Success team.</td>
<td>• Create opportunities for students to lead decolonisation projects through a dedicated fund.</td>
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<td>• In the short term, continue to roll out the Diversity Mark and develop the Kent Inclusive Practices (KIPs) to ensure that they are inclusivity-driven, not just accessibility driven.</td>
<td>• Introduce decolonising roles in each division to support a University-wide programme of decolonisation.</td>
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<td>• Review existing processes that present a barrier to decolonising the curriculum, such as programme and module approval.</td>
<td>• Train academic staff in inclusive teaching and learning (in virtual and face-to-face environments) and integrate inclusive pedagogic practice into staff probation and the Academic Career Map.</td>
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<td>• Develop an action plan to decolonise research and knowledge exchange at Kent, building on the outcome of events.</td>
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<td>• Pilot and review training for researchers in decolonial research practices.</td>
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<td>• Establish shared ways of working with HEI partners in both research and teaching based on the principles of good governance which establish a collaborative approach to assessing and managing risk, administration and communication.</td>
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### 2021-22 academic year

#### 5 Dismantle barriers to racially minoritised staff success and belonging
- Recognise the commitment made by staff in support of this work and enable them to engage by exploring opportunities to buy-out staff time to contribute to relevant networks and panels.
- Continue to develop more inclusive recruitment approaches through training and transparent feedback to applicants.
- Increase the proportion of recruitment panels which include racially minoritised staff through increased promotion of opportunities, training and exploring processes to buy-out staff time to engage.
- Establish recruitment targets for senior academic and professional services roles for racially minoritised staff.
- Review ‘direct hire’ processes to ensure they follow inclusive standards set for general recruitment.
- Review roles for staff on contracts which disproportionately affect racially minoritised staff.
- Roll out professional services competency framework as part of the Talent and Success strategy to identify clear pathways to promotion for administrative and professional service staff.
- Provide targeted leadership pathway training programmes for racially minoritised staff in both academic and professional service roles.
- Report the ethnicity pay and promotion gaps linked to the actions in this strategy which seek to address it report progress annually.

### By 2023-24
- Develop workload modelling to account for staff time dedicated to race equality work, including network and panel attendance.
- Provide senior leader shadowing opportunities for racially minoritised staff.

#### 6 Embed antiracist behaviours and practices among the University community
- Conduct regular, quality, compulsory antiracism training and cultural competency aligned to Reflect, Plan, Develop (RPD) with effective evaluation (including as part of induction); working with Inclusive Employers initially to tailor and trial ‘Awareness and understanding racism’ training.
- Facilitate conversations about race and racism between racially minoritised and white staff and students to equip people with the language and understanding for effective discussions and action.
- Trial antiracism training for students and evaluate its effectiveness.
- Run a series of events to define and explore effective allyship in Kent’s context with a view to developing an ally network at Kent.
- Tailor and roll out the Inclusive allyship programme, working with Inclusive Employers, which builds on an understanding of allyship at Kent from events with the University community.
- Build diversity and antiracism attributes into the Leadership Behaviours Framework and in the implementation of Academic Career Map, as well as job offers and promotion criteria, and clearly communicate this to all staff as part of RPD.
- Introduce student-staff reverse mentoring scheme for staff to better understand experiences of racially minoritised students.
- Launch the ‘Inclusive Line Manager’ programme to provide leaders with tools to develop a more inclusive leadership style.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of training and continually develop based on the evolving context.
- Review and report data on the proportion of staff engaging with antiracism activities.
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<td>7 Advocate for antiracism locally, nationally and globally</td>
<td>• Design antiracism into the curriculum as part of decolonisation efforts so our students and alumni are empowered to challenge structural racism in society.</td>
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<td>• Train committee members to ensure that PG scholarships (launched May 2021) are equitably awarded by different divisions. Review the success of this scheme with a view to rolling out to a greater number of students in the future.</td>
<td>• Develop a Signature Research Theme on intersectional racial justice which incorporates and showcases the work of the Student Success team (building on Centre for Sexuality, Race and Gender Justice).</td>
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<td>• Develop placement/volunteering opportunities for students with organisations who aim to tackle racism and racial inequality.</td>
<td>• Introduce a public engagement role in each division to support staff to engage publicly in debates on research relating to racial justice and translate the application of research to benefit local communities.</td>
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<td>• Incorporate racial justice as a theme in the Graduate journal and publish Student Success research and include people from diverse backgrounds on the editorial board.</td>
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<td>• Identify relevant organisations (including local government) and develop knowledge exchange partnerships to tackle racism locally.</td>
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<td>• Develop procurement processes to appraise suppliers on their approach to race equality and develop targets to increase procurement of goods and services from businesses owned by racially minoritised people.</td>
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