University of
**Kent**

## On this page

# 1. Strategy

**Your demand:**

Short and long-term strategy to be implemented that enhances political discourse and political education on both the Canterbury and Medway campuses.

**Our response:**

Colleagues from across the University have come together to advance our thinking and approach to antiracism at Kent. This work has been facilitated by Nous, an external consultancy, which has provided a team of experts and a critical external eye. The project was guided by a steering group, chaired by Professor Georgina Randsley de Moura, with representation from Student Services, HR and Communications. The strategy development has been led by a wider reference group that included Kent Union, and academic, professional services (divisions and PSD), and commercial services colleagues. The perspectives and voices of the reference group in shaping the strategy have been crucial.

A draft of the Antiracism Strategy (http://blogs.kent.ac.uk/executive-group/files /2021/08/BT_130984_Antiracism-Strategy_July_2021.pdf)  is now being shared for

engagement and input. The strategy will enable us to prioritise the actions needed, to focus on the continual change needed, and to challenge accepted thinking and ways of working in all areas of our work. This is essential work to create a more inclusive community.

The Antiracism Strategy (http://blogs.kent.ac.uk/executive-group/files/2021/08 /BT_130984_Antiracism-Strategy_July_2021.pdf) will be seen by JSNCC for consultation (September) and discussed at the October EDI Steering Group meeting, for recommendation to October ASPP Board for approval and on to Senate and Council. We very much welcome your comments and feedback – this can either be through these meetings and boards and/or directly to Professor Randsley de Moura at dvcacademic@kent.ac.uk (mailto:dvcacademic@kent.ac.uk) .

## 2. Training

**Your demand:**

Campus wide initiative be undertaken to develop anti-oppression initiatives, training, and facilitations.

**Our response:**

We acknowledge that there is still much work to do to ensure racial equity is standard across the University. Numerous initiatives are currently underway to facilitate systemic change. To date, we have relaunched the Expect Respect Module (https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/staff-student-news/2021/02/09/take-the-expect-respect-module/) as compulsory for all students; affirmed our commitment to social justice by signing the Racial Equality Charter (https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/staff-student-news/2021 /01/28/our-commitment-to-the-race-equality-charter/) ; and updated our Campus Security Charter (https://www.kent.ac.uk/estates/services/security /charter_code_conduct.html) recommitting to ensure everyone's safety. Currently, critical assessments are taking place across University sectors to highlight where there are EDI shortfalls, so that we can work to address them.

The University of Kent remains committed to and engaged in combatting of systemic oppressions as well as open to considering additional projects that lends to our goal.

## 3. Statement

**Your demand:**

A statement of solidarity that makes explicit the acknowledgement of whiteness, white supremacy, systemic racism, and racial violence on campus [and] should publicly

condemn acts of systemic racial violence and over-policing.

**Our response:**

We formally recommitted to actively tackle racism on our campuses and in our wider community on June 4, 2020 by signing onto the Race Equality Charter (https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/staff-student-news/2020/09/29/kent-signs-up-for-race-equality-charter/) . Now, the University of Kent reaffirms that racism has no place within our campus community. We remain steadfast in our belief that it is our collective responsibility to stand up for justice, freedom, and human dignity. The University also recognises that we must do better and that we need not just talk, but action. We wish to highlight just some of the ongoing actions we have taken to combat racism:

- We have committed to realising the Race Equality Charter. (https://blogs.kent.ac.uk /staff-student-news/2020/09/29/kent-signs-up-for-race-equality-charter/)
- We have ratified a new EDI governance structure installing the EDI Strategy Group, EDI Operations Task Force and EDI Forum.
- We are actively recruiting for an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, tasked with skillfully ushering the University's multiple EDI initiatives.
- We are working to launch a Racial Harassment Steering Group to actively monitor reported incidents of racism in our community.
- We are hosting the Student Success project (https://www.kent.ac.uk /studentsuccess/) to uncover, monitor and recommend best practices for eliminating barriers to degree attainment for Black students.
- We have launched various pilots across Student Services dedicated to offering support to minoritised collectives within our University community
- We are working with multiple external EDI expert consultants to develop proactive strategies for successfully combatting racism within our community.

Our commitment to action is not just limited to these ongoing projects, and we will continue to highlight other initiatives as development continues.

# 4. Resources for BME societies

**Your demand:**

Funding allocated in the form of a specific student levy dedicated to BME collectives and societies. This levy will be used to resource projects, programming, and supports that are alternative to institutional support and necessary to their members.

**Our response:**

The University of Kent recognises that adequate resources are necessary to meaningfully combat systemic racism. To this end, currently funds exist in a range of

places specifically for student access. We aim to increase transparency and promote access to these funds, so we are developing additional mechanisms for this purpose. This is being actioned by Student Services and finalisation is currently underway. In the meantime, students are welcomed to contact Dr Auzimuth Jackson, Student EDI Officer for information or advice at **studentedi@kent.ac.uk (mailto:studentedi@kent.ac.uk)**

On a specific levy, Professor Richard Reece, Deputy Vice-Chancellor - Education & Student Experience, is working with Kent Union and student societies to understand the needs and opportunities not being met by existing funds and how they can be addressed. This will be actioned via the Education and Student Experience Board of Senate.

## 5. Campus Security

**Your demand:**

The extent Campus Security's executive authority is clarified and made transparent to the student body.

**Our response:**

Work to complete this action is being undertaken by Campus Security, including development of a Charter to provide the clarity demanded. The Charter (https://www.kent.ac.uk/estates/services/security/charter_code_conduct.html) was agreed by Estates senior management team in September 2020, with versions shared with several interested parties including the Head of Colleges and Community Life, BAME Network, Kent Union, African and Caribbean Society. Feedback has been incorporated into the current version (https://www.kent.ac.uk/estates/services/security /charter_code_conduct.html) (version 6), which you can see on the Estates webpages (https://www.kent.ac.uk/estates/services/security/charter_code_conduct.html) .

Professor Richard Reece, Deputy Vice-Chancellor - Education & Student Experience, is working with Kent Union, Student Services and Campus Security - via the Education & Student Experience Board - to progress this work.

## 6. Use of student cards for identification

**Your demand:**

The accommodation agreement that students sign discontinues the use of student cards for identification that disproportionately targets BME students.

**Our response:**

Having an open campus is a wonderful student, staff, and visitor experience, but it does come with risks of potential exploitation of both people and property. The University leadership's current view is that withdrawal of the right to request identification risks leaves students, staff, and visitors to the University under-protected.

We agree, however, that BAME students must not be targeted. To ensure this policy is applied equally for protection of all members of our community, a revised Code of Conduct (https://www.kent.ac.uk/estates/services/security/charter_code_conduct.html) (V3) has been approved by Estates senior management team. Details can be found on the Estates website (https://www.kent.ac.uk/estates/services/security /charter_code_conduct.html) .

The newly established University EDI Steering Committee will be progressing work to understand how we can effectively monitor the revised Charter and Code of Conduct (https://www.kent.ac.uk/estates/services/security/charter_code_conduct.html) .

## 7. EDI Forum

**Your demand:**

EDI Forum is reimagined to serve the purpose of facilitating the reporting of discrimination on campus.

**Our response:**

The revised University EDI governance structure was discussed at the Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance Board on October 21, 2020, with a recommendation that Senate, the governing group responsible for the academic work of the University, approved the revised structure. Following its approval, Senate then met in early November 2020 and issued final approval for the new structure, giving rise to the EDI Strategy Group.

The EDI Strategy Group held its first meeting in February 2021, approving the mandate for creating the EDI Forum open for all to raise issues. Teams are currently being created for the EDI Forum, and membership will be open for everyone across the University- please feel free to join!

## 8. Executive Group training

**Your demand:**

Those in positions of institutional power do the work to understand the history of Blackness, Black movements and black student organising that can inform any additional structural changes.

**Our response:**

At our Executive Group meeting in November 2020, Talent & Organisational Development (the HR team responsible for staff training and development) proposed a new programme, to run alongside work already expected of individual leaders, to understand the cultural backgrounds of communities across Kent. The approach is incremental, with a programme of blended learning delivered over time, as one-off initiatives have proved ineffective to instil long-term changes in individual behaviour and organisational culture.

The programme commenced December 2020 and aims to:

- Raise awareness and understanding among all University staff of issues concerning race and ethnicity.
- Open channels for discussion and debate at organisational and team level to allow sharing of experiences.
- Build and expand on existing learning and development programmes related to EDI and the harassment contact/bystander programme to strengthen support available across the University.
- Create a framework that supports the University in tackling racism.

We recognise that this work is critical, and regular updates on progress will be reported via the EDI Steering Committee and, from there, actively communicated across the University community.

## 9. Space

**Your demand:**

A physical BME student space for use by BME societies and collectives as a student community service hub.

**Our response:**

The aim of the University's policy for provision of space is to create inclusive environments where all students feel comfortable in areas provided. The additional requirements to create Covid-secure spaces mean that this is a difficult demand to address in the immediate term. However, we are pursuing some possible ideas for this academic year when we have a clearer sense of how teaching will work post-Covid. In particular, we are working with the College and Community Life team to look at how

we use the available spaces for students to display work reflecting them and their experiences.

More broadly, how student spaces can be created and used, and the idea of the hub will be reviewed by Professor Richard Reece, Deputy Vice-Chancellor - Education and Student Experience, via Education & Student Experience Board, and will be revisited once the social distancing requirement on space has been lifted.

## 10. Student support

**Your demand:**

The immediate hire of BME counsellors within Student Support and Wellbeing to facilitate weekly drop-in sessions for BME students.

**Our response:**

We have two BME counsellors, one-third of our current counsellor provision. Student Support and Wellbeing also took positive action in a recent recruitment exercise and successfully appointed two BME Mental Health Advisers.

Ongoing monitoring of the diversity of the Student Support and Wellbeing team is undertaken by the Education and Student Experience Board. You can find out more on the Student Support and Wellbeing webpages (https://www.kent.ac.uk/student-support) .

Last updated 3 August 2021

**Contact us**