

Welcome and introductions

Position paper 1: Lessons learnt from getting RECM bronze award - Karen Lipsedge

Karen was part of Kingston Self-Assessment Team for 2015 application for REC, and more recently chairing this for the 2019 renewal

REC is very metric driven, you need to evaluate interventions and ensure they're sustainable on a long-term basis

No institution yet has a silver award. Comparing the REC to Athena Swan, REC founded 2015, Athena 2005. 60 universities are now members of race equality charter. Only 12 have made successful applications or renewals of bronze RECM. Brighton submitted in July, outcome imminent

Athena Swan has 105 members, most have an award. AS has departmental awards as well as institutional, not true of REC, which requires you to look at both local and institutional

Changes to REC imminent in next couple of weeks – likely to include strategy for enhancing intersectionality as ECU are big on demonstrating intersectionality – and may introduce departmental awards

What is the REC?

The REC is a public statement that the university has demonstrated a commitment to improving racial equality for staff and students. It provides a roadmap whereby the university can 'turn the glass inwards' – self-reflect. Need to think about the cultural and institutional barriers which are in place stopping BAME staff and students progressing and reaching full potential

3 ways you need to demonstrate commitment:

- Performance and achievement rates amongst BAME students
- Diversity embedded at heart of curriculum – teaching and learning environments which are safe space and actively promote inclusivity
- Embedding equality of opportunity for all staff at all levels

Why did KU apply?

Over half of F-T home students identify as BAME, and come from one of five key WP groups

KU wanted to demonstrate that they celebrate this diversity and ensure they have strategies and policies in place to ensure plurality of voices and contributions within the university

KU made BAME attainment gap a KPI and used value added score as metric. They created highly inclusive curriculum covering teaching, learning and assessment.

KU also did work on myth busting – lots of myths about explanations for attainment gaps, e.g. cultural environment outside the university. But it's the university as an institution which needs to go through a cultural change, and that takes time.

KU have created Headstart summer programme for students with non-traditional qualifications

Students as co-curricular consultants on inclusive curriculum, and on buddy scheme

Stella HE leadership and management programme for BAME staff

Embedding unconscious bias training for everyone on interview panels, for senior leadership training and as part of onboarding

Kingston's lessons learned

Needs lots of renewal, reapplication every 3 years so it's not a one-off. Involved writing an action plan which is road map for this period. Need to demonstrate successful completion of this for renewal

Need senior leadership buy in

Really hard work, 18 months of extensive consultation but some unis take longer. Recommendation to take less time rather than more time.

BAME staff have burden of doing the main work, may not be funded

Timing a student survey is difficult – Brighton went for Oct/Nov last year. Focus groups needed ethics clearance

Submission process is tough

Kingston's advice:

Have an idea where you're going, action plan

Get your student survey in the calendar first

Use working groups dividing up areas (there are eight sections)

Involves realising what kind of institution you have, and that can be quite soul-destroying

Use your students – cf KU's student journey map, suggestion to do the same for staff (career cycle)

See if you can use the good practice with students for staff too – twinning

Challenging work, but work worth doing. If you stop at any stage you stall and go backward – 'keep on running'

Remember that you're not doing it alone – you're a group. Needs to not just be one person

Position paper 2: Measuring progress with Access and Participation Plans – Jo MacDonnell

About 20% Brighton students are from BAME backgrounds.

Brighton have two APP targets around ethnicity: black attainment compared to white and Asian attainment compared to white. Ambitious targets, started off with one for ethnicity and OfS pushed back on this.

APP covers data in percentage points, not real numbers of students

How will Brighton achieve these outcomes?

They have a dedicated committee 'Brighton Achieves' with deputy head for learning and teaching and heads of professional services. Meet monthly to look at data, initiatives and evaluation. Takes a student lifecycle approach from transition following offer acceptance to employability post-graduation. Good data tool available so don't have to go through university's data team. Group is very strategic, which is crucial to ensuring APP stays current.

Change of institutional narrative from 'attainment gap' to 'degree awarding gap'. It's the institution's problem, not students'. Change of terminology has been adopted by vice chancellor and pro-vice chancellor.

Brighton have signed the UUK/NUS pledge, work by Valerie Amos and Amatey Doku. Covers five steps, including:

1. Strong leadership, PVC takes strong and frequent interest.
2. Having conversations about race – speaker series starting in November, from HE sector and from broader BAME community
3. Evaluating initiatives, knowing 'what works'

Other things Brighton have been doing work on:

Brighton have developed Student Success Framework, which is used by staff, and which is about to be redeveloped. This will now have a strand about considering BAME experience.

Evaluating induction process, are we overloading students with too much information? Focus on belonging – activities to facilitate this. Personal tutors need to see students in week 6, 'wobble week'. Personal tutor policy has been redeveloped.

Brighton did focus groups with students as part of Race Equality Charter Mark application, and used these to inform APP too. Jo now going to academic schools with this data, and co-developing actions with schools. Reaction to this is mixed, some schools embrace it some don't.

Brighton have done diversifying the curriculum work using Kingston's model, which pays students as consultants. Students sit on validation panels as panel members.

Action plan for APP is the same as the RECM action plan, and the Brighton Achieves Committee's action plan.

Inclusivity awareness for students – do they know how to talk to each other when they come to university? (Wolverhampton have a good video on this). Induction week is a good time to set ground rules on this.

BAME match mentoring scheme, started two years ago in School of Education. Matched black teacher training students with black teachers in local community, then rolled out to health sciences too for nursing students and allied health professions, and now offered to all BAME students. Financial investment in mentor training.

When looking at data, crucial to separate out different ethnicities, rather than considering 'BAME' students overall. Also worth looking at early years and progression data, not focus only on degree awards.

Feedback from discussions

Good idea to work out what your drivers for applying for RECM are, and think about consequences of not applying, e.g. reputational damage, losing students. Need to be really clear about resources needed and show SMT that by putting in funding they're getting something out: a financial plan needs to sit alongside plan for applying for the RECM. Resources for data and planning also important. Plan needs to facilitate cultural change in university. RECM can be used to surface good practice which is already happening.

APP needs collaborating approach and holistic view of university's culture. Need to think about what you need to do as a university to be 'in it together'. Language is important, and students are not currently engaged enough in conversations about cultural awareness.

Access to data facilitates ownership of challenges. There was discussion of issues with OfS datasets and OfS's blinkered view about data, and how challenging the targets will be to meet. Also OfS's definition of 'success' being attaining a first or 2.1 and progressing to employment.

Topic and location for next working group meeting

Agreed to focus on racial harassment report released last week. Universities don't talk about the strategies in place to support staff or students who experience discrimination, and we need to get better at this. Proposed location of Winchester, hosted by Sarah. Alternative will be Kingston.

Date agreed as March 24th.

Please remember to bring students to meetings if possible.