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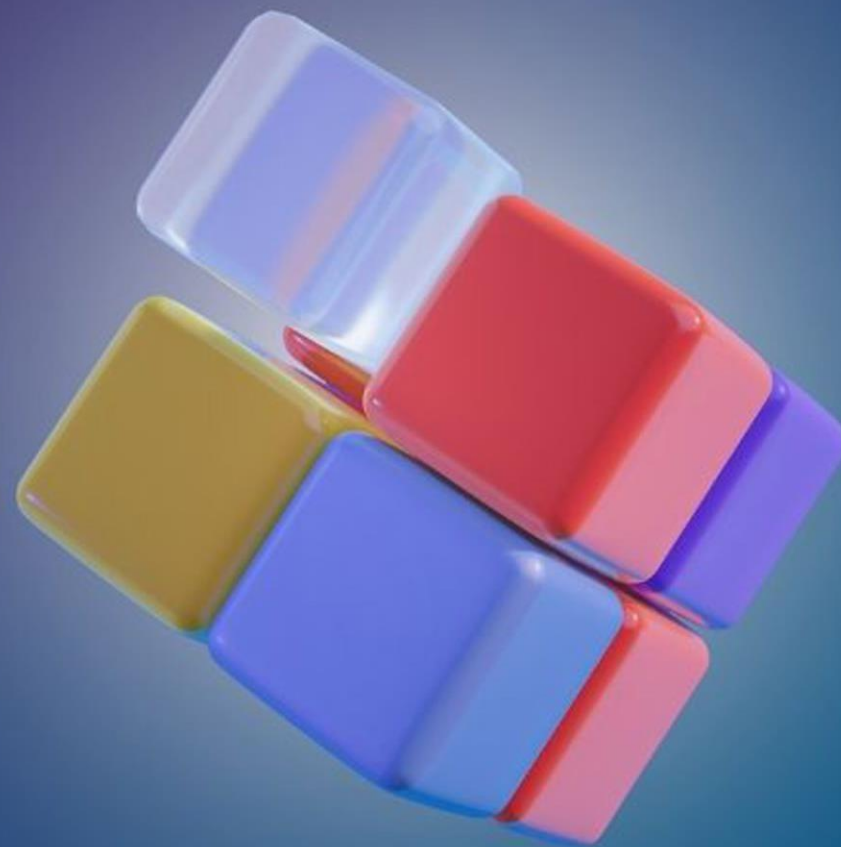
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Beyond Words: Driving Real Change with an Anti-Racism Strategy

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Overview

- **The context** - Key challenges for students and staff.

- **The approach** - Evidence-informed co-production.

- **The focus** - Clear priorities for institutional and structural change.

- **The goal** - Embedding anti-racist principles and practices throughout the organisation.

Where we started

Students
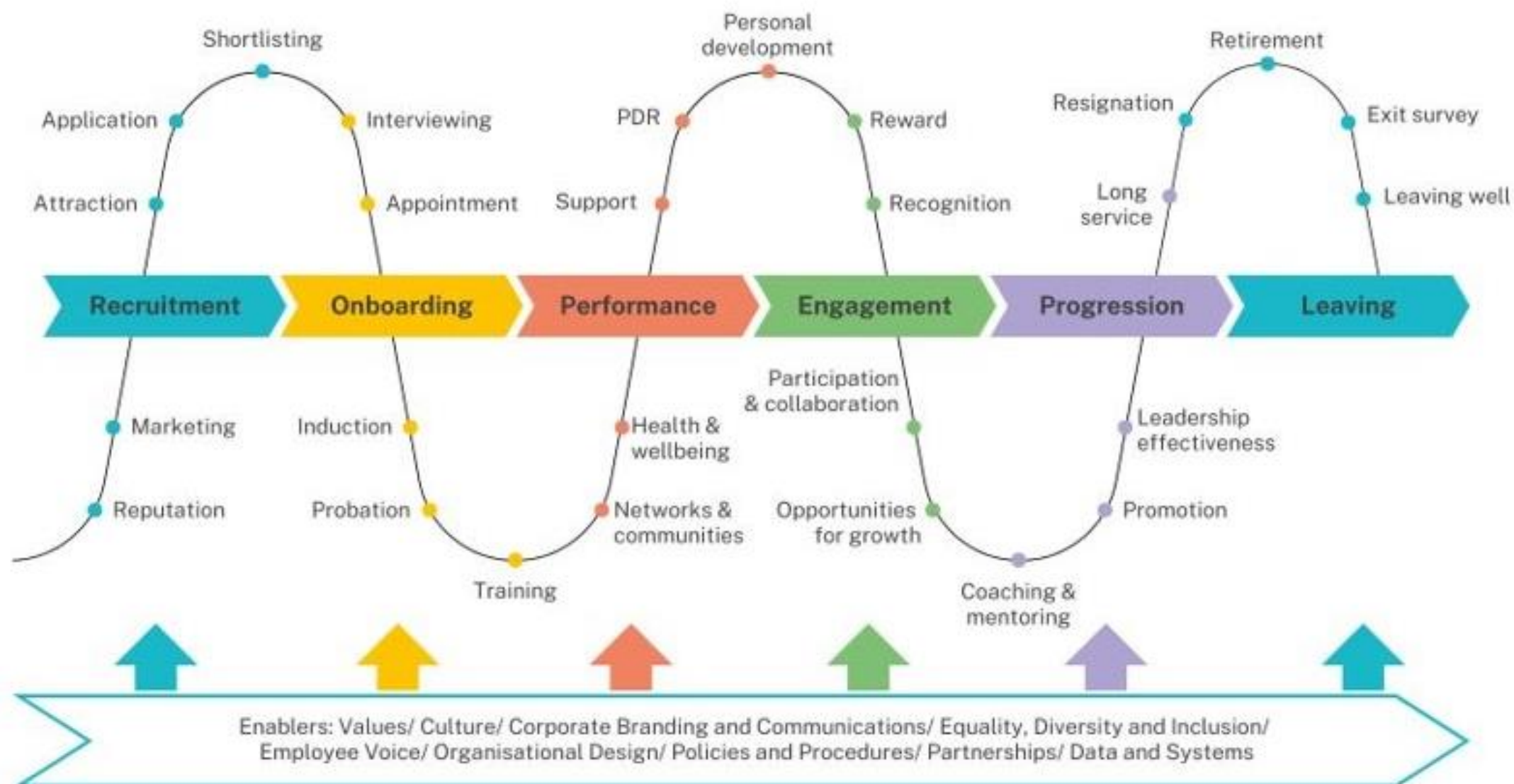
- One of the largest ethnicity awarding gaps compared to English universities

- Low sense of belonging for Global Majority students

Staff

- Overrepresentation of Global Majority staff in the lowest paid grades

- Almost no representation in senior leadership roles

- High attrition, low sense of belonging, low trust, low progression and significant pay gaps for Global Majority staff

UWE Bristol Staff Journey 'Moments that Matter'

Recruitment
- Shortlisting
- Application
- Interviewing
- Attraction
- Appointment
- Marketing
- Reputation

Onboarding
- Induction
- Probation
- Training

Performance
- Personal development
- PDR
- Support
- Health & wellbeing
- Networks & communities

Engagement
- Reward
- Recognition
- Participation & collaboration
- Opportunities for growth

Progression
- Leadership effectiveness
- Promotion
- Coaching & mentoring

Leaving
- Retirement
- Resignation
- Exit survey
- Long service
- Leaving well

Enablers: Values/ Culture/ Corporate Branding and Communications/ Equality, Diversity and Inclusion/ Employee Voice/ Organisational Design/ Policies and Procedures/ Partnerships/ Data and Systems

Questions we asked....

1. How can UWE become anti-racist and what are the top priorities?

   a) What would it look and feel like if it was effectively anti-racist?

   a) What behaviours and/or practices are needed to make this happen?

2. What are the key steps to reduce racial disparity at UWE?

3. What is not working that should be stopped?

4. What changes would make the biggest impact for you?

5. What successful solutions exist and how can UWE adopt them?

What we heard....

Evidence informed

The discovery phase of developing an anti-racism strategy at UWE Bristol

1 Desk research on anti-racist strategies and approaches

2 7 listening events involving 60+ students and staff

3 Meetings with staff networks and individuals

4 Reviewing student and staff data

5 Reviewing insights from student and staff surveys

Evidence informed

Priority areas for students

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes
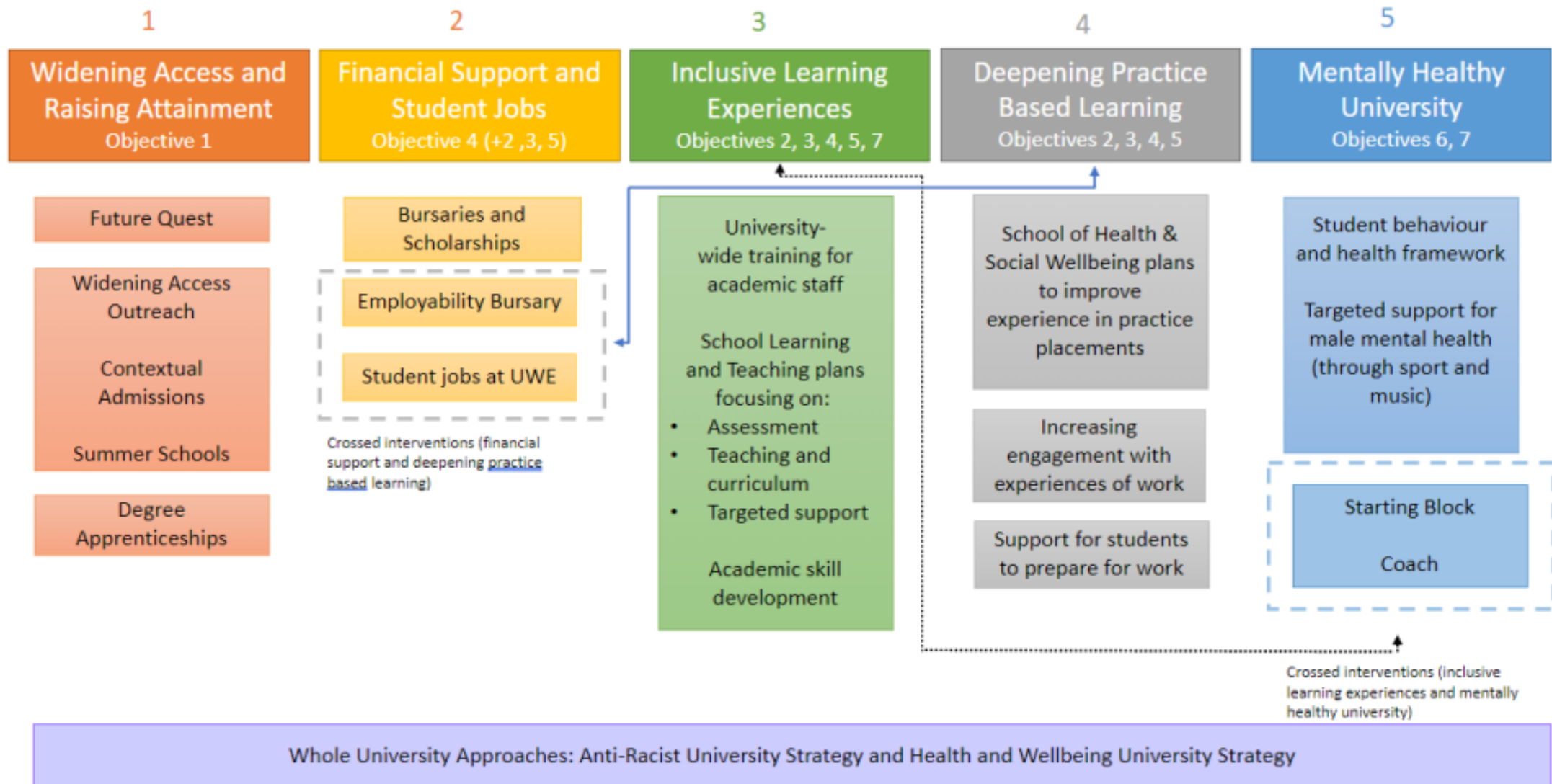
Priority areas for staff

1. **Education, training and racial literacy** – with a focus on improving the confidence, capabilities and capacity of managers, whilst providing pastoral support for Global Majority staff and those leading this agenda

2. **Progression** – improving progression and awareness of opportunities and processes to accelerate progression

3. **Processes, procedures and policies** – with a focus on grievances, disciplinaries, recruitment and other HR processes, ensuring we improve the staff experience and recruitment processes

4. **Culture and engagement** - Improving the experience of current Global Majority staff, addressing their lived experiences, focusing on staff networks and building belonging.

5. **Leadership** – Increasing representation of our leadership and ensuring strong accountability for embedding anti-racist approaches

Data and communications as underpinning priorities - fundamental for understanding our processes, staff experience, measuring progress and impact, ensuring everyone understands their responsibilities and who is accountable

Strategy Development Roadmap

Educate, inform, inspire – bringing the data insight to life

Building a proposed **anti-racist strategy and plan**

Engaging and involving people in **co-production and change**

4 levels of racism

Personal

Private beliefs, prejudices, & ideas that individuals have

Interpersonal

The expression of racism between individuals

Institutional

Discriminatory treatment, policies & practices, within organisations & institutions

Structural

System in which public policies, institutional practices, and other norms perpetuate racial group inequality

Focus

Co-production guide

EXPLANATION

EXAMPLES

CO-PRODUCING — Doing WITH

You work with service users and other organisations from design to delivery. You share all, or almost all, decisions.

A sports club partners with a youth-led charity to identify ways for high school students to get active. They fund youth leaders to run these activities.

CO-DESIGNING — Doing WITH

You involve service users and other organisations in designing your products/services. They influence decisions but aren't involved in 'seeing it through'.

A group of local charities co-host a series of events at a local marae to design some new health and wellbeing services to suit local Māori.

ENGAGING — Doing FOR

You give service users and other organisations regular opportunities to express their views in a variety of ways. They can influence some decisions.

A group of government agencies start hosting regular events with young people to understand and better cater to their needs when leaving school.

CONSULTING — Doing FOR

You invite service users and other organisations to fill in surveys or attend meetings to say which proposal they prefer or what they think about an issue.

A local council comes up with three options for improving car parking in the central city, and asks residents to vote on their preferred choice.

INFORMING — Doing FOR

You inform people about your services and explain how they work. Sometimes you tell people what decisions you've made and why.

A charity sends a monthly e-newsletter to former service users to let them know about new programmes in their area.

EDUCATING — Doing TO

You educate people on the benefits and rationale of your services. You may try to convince them to act differently.

The head office of a nationwide charity records a podcast to share success stories and new approaches with staff in the regoins.

COERCING — Doing TO

You require people to use your service or do something without understanding their true wants and needs.

A government department requires people to look for work or attend study to receive a financial benefit.

business **lab**

Credit to Sherry Arnstein, the New Economics Foundation, NESTA and Think Local Act Personal.

Four Anti-Racism guiding principles

Prioritise Anti-racism

Investigate racial inequity

Anti-racism Guiding Principles

Policies, practices, systems that promote racial equity

Make measurable progress

Anti-Racism in action through guiding principles

Prioritise Anti-Racism

- How do my actions/ decisions contribute to dismantling systemic racism within my sphere of influence?
- Am I addressing racial inequities proactively, or only when issues arise?
- What concrete steps can I take to embed anti-racist principles into my programme?
- How much time have I given to learning about anti-racism?

Investigate racial inequity

- Whose voices/ perspectives are missing from my work, and how can I actively include and amplify them?
- What data have I collected to understand racial inequalities in my area?
- Am I aware of how Global Majority groups are affected by the service I provide?

Systemic action

- How are policies and practices reviewed through an anti-racist lens?
- How could I implement positive action in the delivery of our service?
- How do my curriculum, teaching methods, and assessment practices reinforce or challenge systemic inequalities?

Measuring progress

- Do I regularly review/measure our progress?
- What measurable goals aligned to anti-racism have I set for myself?
- In the end of year self-assessment have we reflected on how well diversity of voice has been captured or informed business?

Anti-Racism Strategy

Based on a social justice framework for self-evaluation and strategic planning
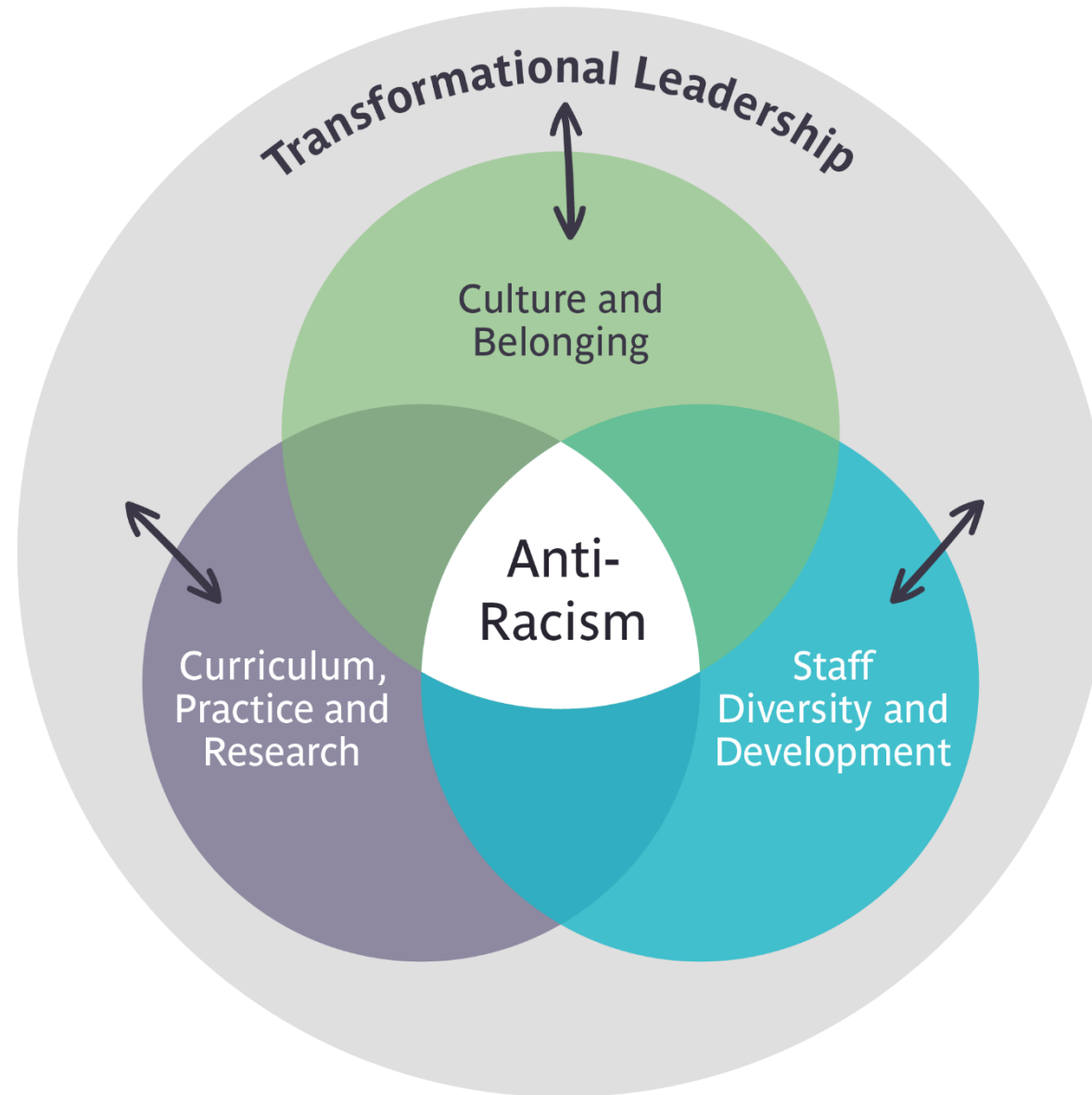
Adapted from Vafadari, 2024

Curriculum, practice and research

Our promise: We pledge to embed anti-racism principles within our curriculum, practice, and research, fostering an inspiring environment where diversity is celebrated, discrimination is actively challenged, and equity is prioritised.

Our targets:

- Reduce the White to Black (African and Caribbean) students degree awarding gaps to less than 10% by 2030
- Reduce the White to Asian degree awarding gap to 0 by 2030
- Increase the % of Global Majority colleagues that have Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) as measured within the annual HESA return to 20%

Key impact areas:

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

Culture and belonging

Our promise: We commit to cultivating a culture of belonging where everyone feels valued, respected, supported and dedicated to continually improving the experience for Global Majority students and staff. Additionally ensuring individuals feel safe and empowered to report instances of racism and discrimination knowing concerns will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.

Our targets:

- Increase the workplace recommendation score to 70% by 2026/27
- Increase % of students who feel that there is a clear system for raising issues or complaints related to race. With a comparable level of satisfaction for staff.
- Reduce disparities between Global Majority staff compared to White staff in feeling they are treated fairly regardless of their race or ethnic origin.
- Reduce the disparities between Global Majority students and staff compared to White students and staff in feeling a sense of belonging at the university.

Key impact areas:

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

Staff diversity and development

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

Our targets:

- Staff diversity at all levels to reflect Bristol's Global Majority population of at least 20% by 2030.
- All staff to have undertaken the Anti-racism Terminology training
  (module 1) by 31st July 2025 and new staff within three months of joining.

Key impact areas:

- Comprehensive training and resources to enhance staff racial literacy and awareness.

- Targeted projects addressing disparities identified in the Anti-Racism Staff Data Analysis Report, led by People Services.

- Strategic investment in the Black female leadership pipeline, supporting the career progression of Black women into senior roles.

Leadership

Our promise: We are dedicated to fostering anti-racist leadership, promoting diversity at all levels of governance, and ensuring that our leadership structures actively reflect and champion the values of equity, inclusion, and social justice.

Our targets:

- New or externally recruited S and J grade roles to better reflect Bristol's diverse Global Majority population of 20% by 2030.
- Board of Governors diversity to continue to reflect Bristol's Global Majority population of at least 20%.
- All VCE members to deliver the race equity KPI targets within their areas of responsibility

Key impact areas:

- Proactive engagement with VCE, the Board of Governors, and senior leaders to develop anti-racist skills and racial literacy.
- Establishing clear expectations for leadership to embed anti-racist principles, ensuring accountability and alignment across all strands of work.
- Engaging senior leaders at the next level down to support the strategy, involve their teams, and align their priorities with the strategy.

Measuring progress

Anti-Racism Strategy Theory of Change

Aim: the overall aim of the Anti-Racism Strategy is to **significantly reduce racial disparities** for Global Majority staff and students with the **ambition of eliminating these disparities over time**, ensuring that the experiences and opportunities to succeed for all staff and students are not limited by their race or ethnicity.

Inputs   Staff time   financial investment   Senior leader buy-in   External partnerships   The Students' Union staff, Presidents' and officers' time

Actions	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
APP School Roadmaps UWE Programmes Equity 2.0 Leadership charter and anti-racist education Black Women Professors and progression to Professoriate	Progress on School roadmaps, improving curriculum, teaching and assessment approaches Engagement with Equity 2.0 Increase in Global Majority student satisfaction measures (e.g. NSS) Increase of Global Majority staff with Significant Responsibility for Research	Reduce gaps in awarding, continuation and graduate outcomes for Global Majority students Teaching staff apply anti-racist approaches to teaching, assessment, support, curriculum design and content Staff know where gaps are in student outcomes and experience, and what they can do to address gaps Research funding allocation is transparent and equitable	Anti-racist principles are **embedded in the curriculum, academic practices, and research initiatives** to eliminate racial disparities in continuation, graduate outcomes, awarding and access to research.
Resolution Hub including Report and Support Brave spaces for students and staff Awareness campaigns, events and training EDI data and insights	Engagement with Report and Support and Resolution Hub Attendance and feedback with brave spaces for students Engagement with campaigns, events and training Improved disclosure for demographic data	Support roles feel empowered to provide culturally appropriate advice and support Improved mechanisms for reporting racism and following up reports All staff feel confident to speak out about inequitable practices and policies, knowing their concerns will be listened to and addressed Managers have greater competency supporting Global Majority staff and embedding anti-racism change	Enhanced **sense of belonging** for Global Majority staff and students, where individuals feel more **valued, supported and safe** to speak up.
Anti-racist education and terminology guide WHEN's 100 Black Women Professors Now Career progression and pathways Reward Strategy	Engagement with anti-racist education and terminology guide Increase in staff diversity at senior levels Engagement with WHEN 100 Now Increased diversity in rewards decisions	Increased retention and progression of Global Majority staff Leadership and hiring managers provide transparency and accountability on recruitment and progression opportunities Leadership encourages and supports Global Majority staff to take on development and progression opportunities Global Majority staff are fairly rewarded and recognised for their work	Increase **diversity** of our staff body and **eliminate racial disparities** in career **progression, access to opportunities and retention** for Global Majority staff.
Leadership training Senior staff diversity Anti-racism guiding principles VCE Diversity Champions Diversity of voice	All SLT have at least one PDR objective aligned to the anti-racism strategy Increased diversity of senior staff Engagement with guiding principles Engagement with VCE Diversity Champions Staff Network engagement and awareness	Increased diversity at senior levels Staff have confidence in SLT's ability to transform the institution Increase accountability and ownership across the institution in developing an anti-racist culture Networks (formal and informal) are positively utilised and engaged effectively by leadership and business owners	**Anti-racist and diverse leadership** is embedded into the culture of the University, with leaders that **reflect and champion** a long-term commitment to changing attitudes, behaviours and practices at all levels of the organisation.

Anti-racism Strategy Launch Roadmap

Institutionalising inclusion

Evidence
Listening events and data collection
Analysis
Research and data analysis
Report
Finalise report
Present to VCE

Guides
Co-production / terminology guides
Principles
Setting expectations for anti-racist practice
VCE Training
1:1s and workshops for VCE with external trainer

Workstreams
Develop and scope workstreams
Workshops
Define priorities and theory of change
Refining
Actions prioritised on impact, scalability and sequence

Terminology
Announce terminology UWE will adopt
Training 1
Terminology learning module launch
Engagement
Strategy engagement sessions with SLT and key stakeholders

Governance
Established to oversee strategy and hold accountability
Targeted Engagement
HR, Comms, EDI, Champions Committees targeted for training and engagement activities

Training 2
Launch of terminology learning module 2
Comms
communication and engagement plan developed for the strategy

Strategy Published
Anti-Racism Strategy published
Listening events
Listening events to obtain feedback and learnings

Oct 23 | Feb 24 | Apr 24 | Oct 24 | Feb 25 | Apr 25 | Jun 25

Discovery Understand UWE's context from a race perspective

Enablers Enablers for the strategy are defined, pre-work is needed before establishing workstreams

Workstream scoping Each workstream scopes, defines and prioritises key actions for delivery

SLT Launch Strategy is signed off by Board of Governors. Launch with Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to contextualise the strategy for their area

Foundations Key services, groups and committees targeted to ensure they are prepared for wider strategy dissemination

Engagement A comms and engagement plan developed to ensure effective dissemination of the strategy

Strategy published The anti-racism strategy will be published and disseminated across the university with progress and impact measured throughout

Key take aways

Use evidence to inform your approach

Ensure you're engaging with diverse voices

Co-produce principles that will guide your anti-racism journey

Focus on system/structural change

Bring people on the journey – communications and engagement activities

Take action

1. How are inequities showing up in your institution or organisation?

2. Who are the voices you need to hear from to better understand lived experiences?

3. How are policies and practices advancing equity and not maintaining the status quo?

4. What one action could you take to embed anti-racism in your work?

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