

## University of Warwick

### Black Lives Matter

#### Joint Statement from Race Equality Taskforce and University Executive Board

Like many others around the world, we are shocked and distressed at the events that have unfolded in the United States. We absolutely condemn anti-Black racism and fully support the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as all our students and staff standing in solidarity.

We fully acknowledge that we are part of a sector and country where racism has proliferated and is embedded within society. We see this in the lack of Black professors, in the Black attainment gap, and, as our students have shared in the Warwick Speak Out report (by Warwick anti-Racism Society and the SU), in the experience of Black students every day, both on our campus and in the classroom. Our students tell us, and we recognise, that these everyday experiences and structural inequalities, in addition to the repeated racial violence they witness first hand or in the media, affects them and causes psychological, emotional and physical pain and trauma. We recognize that racism, in all its forms, impacts our students' ability to succeed and to feel like they belong to the university community, no matter what the University principles and values say.

We thank the students and staff, especially Black students and staff and those of colour, who have given their time and emotional labour to share their own stories (often repeatedly) to educate the many of us who need educating, and therefore act as catalysts for change, however slow and frustrating that can feel. We are committed to not just being 'non-racist', but to building a culture of anti-racism and inclusion.

We want to provide reassurance that our words are backed by action. Here are the actions currently underway as we work towards institutional change:

- Our University Strategy, launched in September 2018, firmly puts Social Inclusion at its heart and states that we will "ensure that, irrespective of background, disability, faith, gender, race or sexual orientation, all staff and students have access to equal opportunities to thrive and progress at Warwick".
- We are embedding training for students and staff focused on anti-oppression work, including understanding racism and how to combat it in our values and principles work: <https://warwick.ac.uk/about/values>
- Reporting racist incidents and feeling confident that reports will be fully investigated and suitable action taken that fits with our zero tolerance stance is a key priority: we are adapting our Report and Support tool so incidents of racial abuse can be reported and we have appointed a student liaison officer dedicated to work with students who report incidents of racism.
- We have set the target to close the Black Attainment Gap across the institution by 2025. We recognize that the Attainment Gap is not the result of a single issue, but the result of multiple institutional factors. As such we are taking a multi-layered and evidence-based approach that includes working with departments on their curriculums, ring-fencing funding for programmes to support students, educating our staff on the ways our behaviour and teaching practice negatively impact our students' ability to achieve, but also funding student

and staff-led initiatives, such as the “BAME student experiences and learning in professional development programmes”.

- We have funded the development of the “Tackling racial inequality at Warwick University” Staff Development Programme. This Programme, which is grounded in Critical Race Theory, was initiated by the WIHEA Anti-Racist Pedagogy and Process Learning Circle and is being led by two staff members with expertise in the histories and operation of ‘race’ and anti-racist pedagogies. It will be made available across the University for all teaching staff and supported by a Teaching Forum focused on embedding anti-racist pedagogy in the curriculum across the University.
- We have funded several student-led initiatives, including the SU’s Warwick Decolonise Project, which works with different departments across the university on their curriculums.
- We have initiated mandatory talks and workshops, specifically on race and equality, for senior management. We are also developing other projects such as reverse mentoring to ensure that real change happens at all levels within our institution.
- We have set up a Race Equality Taskforce, made up of academics, professional staff and SU representatives with expertise and involvement in different aspects of racial equality. The Race Equality Taskforce provides guidance on the various institutional initiatives related to racial equality and identifies key issues and effective responses. This group is working with all areas across the institution with the aim to address issues around racial inequality and actively inform how the University engages on matters related to race and racism.

These are some of the actions we are taking, but we acknowledge these actions alone do not reflect the enormity of the challenge the current situation has highlighted. As such, we are committed to continuing to develop and work towards our goal of an anti-racist and inclusive university.

As well as our inward reflection and scrutiny, learning from external practice and benchmarking ourselves against other institutions is an important part of our strategy. To help us to do this, we have made commitments to make a submission for the Race Equality Charter, the Business in the Community Race at Work Charter and the West Midlands Combined Authority’s Inclusive Leaders’ Pledge. These external services will provide a framework through which we can ensure that we are removing institutional barriers experienced by Black staff and students. We also encourage all of our staff and students, and the wider community, to continue to hold us to task.

We are listening, we are learning, and we are taking action in order to change.