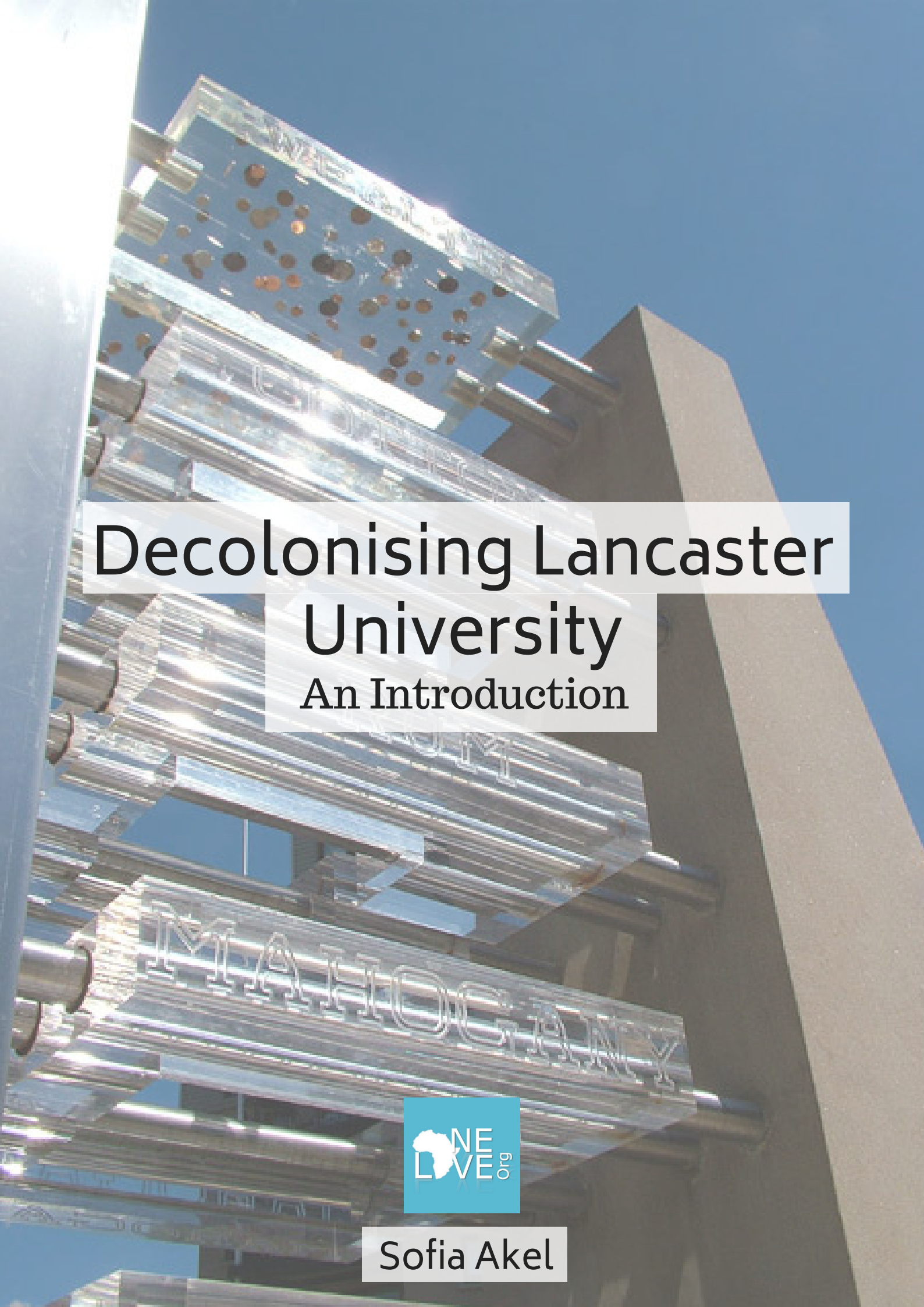

Decolonising Lancaster University

An Introduction

Sofia Akel

DECOLONISING LANCASTER PLEDGE

Decolonising higher education is about rethinking, reframing and reconstructing the curriculum, environment, research and forms of engagement that maintains the current hegemony. It is one that is often overwhelmingly Eurocentric in its design, whose foundations uphold and reproduce colonial structures, relationships and education.

Decolonising is not simply about the diversification of our curriculums, it is the meaningful and conscious pursuit of challenging the institutional hierarchy and monopoly on knowledge. Lack of diversity and perspectives does more than reduce the scope of knowledge for both students and staff, it can have a detrimental effect on learning outcomes, attainment and retention.

Power and education are inextricably linked, therefore it is our duty as higher education staff, producers and sharers of knowledge to understand both our individual and collective responsibility, in order to ensure that the existing state of higher education does not continue to marginalise and supress silenced voices. I hereby pledge to begin the process of decolonising my work at Lancaster University, taking into account both my individual and collective responsibility to produce inclusive, decolonised education.

Lancaster University staff and students who have signed the Decolonising Lancaster Pledge

Chloe Diafuku
Chloe Long
Craig Jones
Dawn Whitaker
Dr Alexandra Gormally
Dr Alona Armstrong
Dr Astrid Nordin
Dr Benjamin Neimark
Dr Christopher Donaldson
Dr Deborah Sutton
Dr Debra Ferreday
Dr Emily Heath
Dr Emma Palmer
Dr Emma Sayer
Dr Heather Moorhouse
Dr Jacob Phelps
Dr James Robinson
Dr Jenni Hyde
Dr Jennie Gilbert
Dr Joanna Kostka
Dr John Childs
Dr Julia Gillen
Dr Julie Hearn
Dr Karenza Moore
Dr Kathryn MacKay
Dr Luke Parry
Dr Marjorie Lundgren
Dr Mike Whitfield
Dr Nicola Spurling
Dr Nils Markusson
Dr Patricia Murrieta-Flores
Dr Paul Young
Dr Rebecca Whittle
Dr Richard Johnson
Dr Robert Gutsche Jr
Dr Sarah Barber
Dr Shuruq Naguib
Felix McNulty
Jane Pye
Jeneen Hadj-Hammou
Laura Clancy
Malika Mezeli
Professor Anne-Marie Fortier
Professor Christina Hicks
Professor Claire Waterton
Professor Gordon Walker
Professor Imogen Tyler
Professor Nigel Clark
Professor Simon Batterbury
Racheal Alake
Sofia Akel
Sunil Banga
Tasneem Sharkawi

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FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear Reader,

This piece of work could be said to have been years in the making. Institutional and structural change movements, such as decolonising higher education, are often met with great resistance and apprehension. In 2016 as a final year History student at Lancaster University, I brought the campaign Why is my Curriculum White? to our North-West England campus. This was a result of my continual disillusionment with higher education. As a black female, I could not see myself represented in my curriculum, nor could I hear the voices of marginalised peoples speak as there was no room for 'us' in western epistemology. However, I was not alone in my feelings of disconnect and isolation, discovering that many other black and minority ethnicity students also feel the same across the UK.

The following year I was elected Vice-President Welfare and Community at Lancaster University Students' Union, with the same drive to level the playing field for students of all backgrounds and working to put racial equality on the institution's agenda. The work demands a lot both emotionally and physically, it commands self-reflection, self-motivation, and the ability to overcome institutional barriers that uphold covert discrimination. But just as those who came before me, I hope to pave a way for those who arrive after.

Throughout working on race equality, I have been fortunate to meet, work with and get to know many students and academics from across the world who are also using their voices in the pursuit of equality. May we all know them and have the opportunity to work with them!

Therefore, I'd like to dedicate this booklet to the student and staff activists who have supported me throughout my work, and to those who signed the pledge. I'd also like to thank students, friends and family who have been my rock and encouraged me to continue this work. Thank you, because without your support I would not be here fulfilling my passion and making a difference.

Lastly, I'd like to thank all of our donors and graphic designer who have made the creation of this booklet possible, thank you for understanding the vision and believing in its importance.

Signed

(Sofia Akel)

Around the world, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people face a plethora of institutional barriers that have been perfected by centuries of colonial dominance and its resultant hangover. These barriers are a complex web of predominately covert forms of oppression, which often come disguised as well-meaning opportunities such as meritocracy.

This, as we will explore in this guidebook, becomes mythologised by an enduring attainment gap that sees many BME students receiving lower grades in UK universities compared to their white counterparts. This in turn hinders further opportunities and progression for minority peoples. We are taught
from a young age that meritocracy will enable us to reach our full potential as skills and hard work are rewarded. However, when we look closer this is not the reality for many minority students in this country. Many ethnic minorities are told from a young age that you must:

"WORK TWICE AS HARD, TO GET JUST AS FAR"

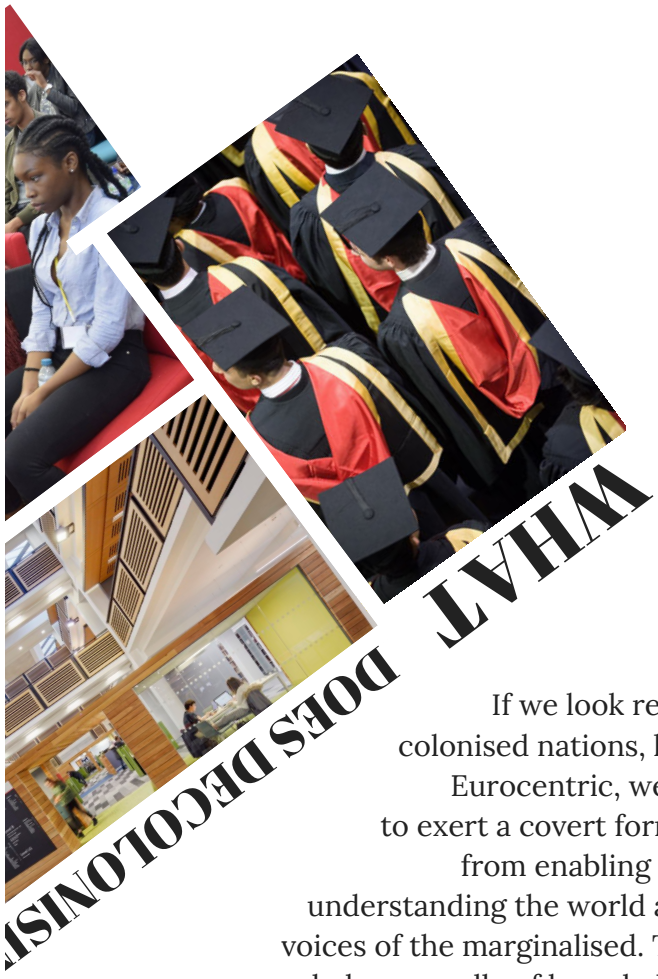
One might argue that universities are an elite institution built on an 'ivory tower' that does more to maintain than challenge the status quo, which within this context we may call the colonial epistemology.

This introductory guidebook will explore the recent movement to decolonise higher education, which is increasingly becoming a discussion point amongst many academics worldwide. Situated in the context of Lancaster University, this introduction will look at the many ways that students are let down by a system that they believed would enable them to succeed in the future. Lastly, this guidebook will attempt to answer and provide perspective on commonly asked questions such as 'what does decolonising mean?' and 'how do you decolonise teaching and research?'

This guidebook has been created to encourage meaningful conversation and action, whilst providing a resource point for academics and staff across the institution who are interested in finding out more about decolonising and steps that they can take to get started.

Disclaimer: This introductory guide does not claim to be the ultimate voice on decolonising higher education. Lastly, please note that this was created after two weeks, from start to finish. Therefore due to time constraints some of the data and analysis may only provide an introductory look at a very complex issue.

To say we have a colonial higher education system is to identify and understand the institution's history and intrinsic link to empire and colonisation. For many centuries, educational establishments served as colonial outposts, advancing technology and science in the quest of maximising their colonial goals of invasion, slavery and empire. For example, Rohan Deb Roy writes on how modern science was built on a system of exploitation that impacted millions of people, justifying this exploitation through research that gave hierarchical perspectives on race such as eugenics.



"...MODERN SCIENCE WAS BUILT ON A SYSTEM OF EXPLOITATION THAT IMPACTED MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, WHILST SERVING TO JUSTIFY THIS EXPLOITATION THROUGH RESEARCH THAT GAVE HIERARCHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON RACE SUCH AS EUGENICS. "

If we look reflectively at the UK and beyond, in particular at former colonised nations, higher education there still consists of a predominately Eurocentric, western epistemology. Therefore, these universities tend to exert a covert form of intellectual superiority which acts as a gatekeeper from enabling the 'legitimisation' of other epistemologies and ways of understanding the world around us, thus, further subordinating and suppressing voices of the marginalised. This is particularly significant when higher education is regarded as a cradle of knowledge, which in turn has wider global implications such as imposing western intellectual hegemony on the world.

Therefore to decolonise higher education is to identify the tools that have perfected the colonisation of knowledge systems for centuries, these can be seemingly small things such as Eurocentric reading lists, which in fact have a huge influence on maintaining its legitimacy. These could also be more deep-rooted, such as not looking at what is included in our curricula, but rather what is omitted. Once we have identified these tools, we must rethink, restructure and reshape our universities, ensuring space for inclusivity that goes beyond diversification. Through sustained movement and unity, we can begin dismantling the colonised university which monopolised knowledge systems and begin building one that offers a multitude of epistemologies - from this we can begin to understand the politics and colonisation of education.

Every effort has been taken in my research and this guide to include the voices of western, Black Minority Ethnicity (BME) and indigenous voices.

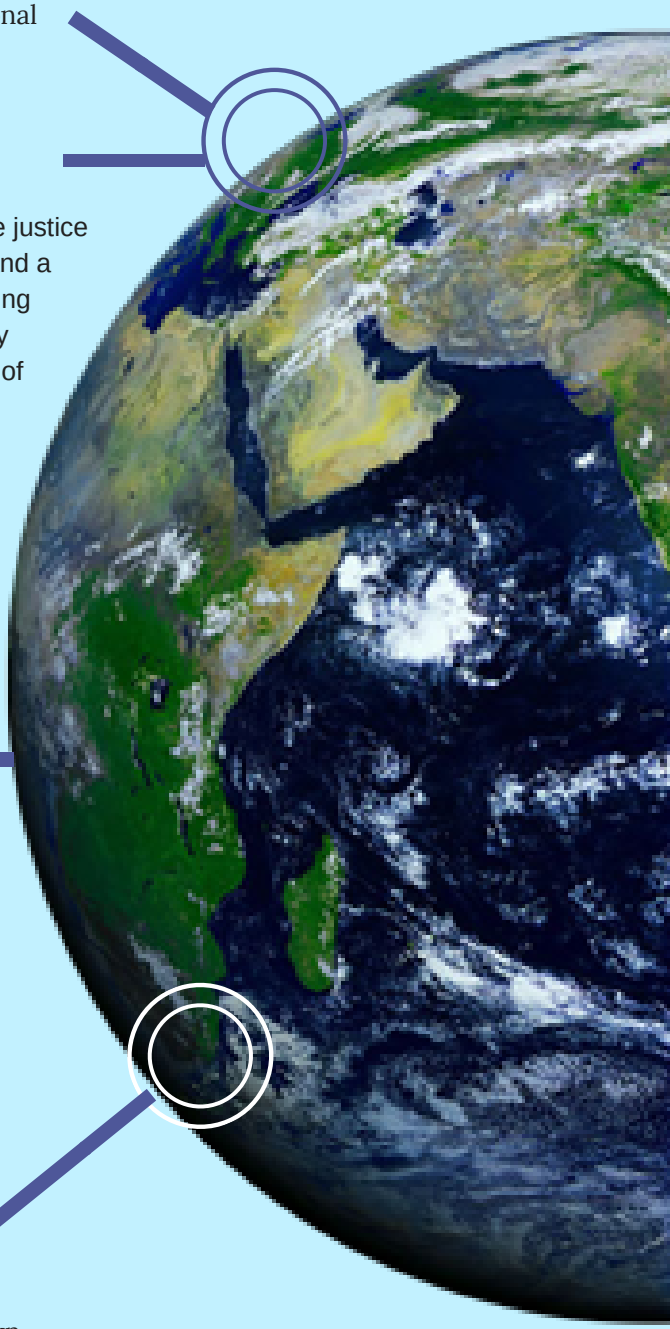
UK Grassroots

Across the United Kingdom, universities are having discussions about what it means to decolonise and diversify their knowledge and teaching output. The grassroots campaign Why is my Curriculum White? was one of the pioneering campaigns that brought this movement to student and staff consciousness. It was started at University College London in 2015, and later spread to many universities around the UK such as Bristol, Manchester, Leeds and Lancaster. The National Union of Students have also been fundamental in challenging the curriculum and other forms of educational inequality such as the BME attainment gap. Sister campaign Rhodes Must Fall: Oxford, in England, which initially focused on the removal of colonialist Cecil Rhodes' statue from their university, whilst also fighting for a decolonised curriculum, was instrumental in bringing this conversation to a national consciousness, causing fierce debate on this nation's colonial past.

Glasgow/East London: Institutional

On an institutional level, Glasgow University has launched a "reparative justice programme," which involves creating a centre for the study of slavery and a memorial in the name of the enslaved. This came after a ground-breaking report published by Glasgow University found that the institution directly benefited from the slave trade in the 18th and 19th century, to the sum of almost £200 million in today's money.

Additionally, the University of East London has been gathering data on whether or not UK universities received money from the slave trade between the 16th and 19th century. Geoff Thompson, chair of governors for the University of East London says it will be "ethical and right" for universities who benefited from slavery to contribute to a £100m fund to support ethnic minority students.



Latin America: Institutional

If we turn our gaze to Latin America, 'The Meeting of Knowledges' project has been underway at the National Institute of Science and Technology of Inclusion in Higher Education and Research, at the University of Brasilia. This project aims to decolonise Latin American universities by making room for other epistemologies such as Indigenous and Afro-Brazilian community knowledge. For example shamans, artisans, traditional architects, etc are invited, despite high levels of illiteracy, to teach as professors of their field.

South Africa: Grassroots

In South Africa, campaign Rhodes Must Fall: University of Cape Town (RMF), which began in 2015 has been instrumental in bringing the conversation to an international stage. This movement also initially focused on the removal of Cecil Rhodes' statue, with success. This lead to further movements across South Africa, prompting students and academics across the world to demand a decolonised university.

Case Study: Keele University

Keele University launched a manifesto for decolonising their curriculum as part of their work on the Race Equality Charter, which they were awarded the bronze award for in 2017. Below is an extract of 5 of the 11 points on what decolonising the curriculum means to them:

1. Decolonising the curriculum means, first of all, acknowledging that knowledge is not owned by anyone. It is a cumulative and shared resource that is available to all. Knowledge (and culture) is collectively produced and human beings of all races, ethnicities, classes, genders, sexual orientations, and disabilities have as much right as elite white men to understand what our roles and contributions have been in shaping intellectual achievements and shifting culture and progress.

2. Decolonising the curriculum is to recognise that knowledge is inevitably marked by power relations. Our universities exist in a global economy of knowledge, with a definite hegemonic centre, reflecting hierarchies of race, class and gender. At the top of this hierarchy sit the knowledge institutions of the global North, databanks and research centres supported by the wealth of European and North American powers. This hegemonic position is not just a matter of the wealth of the global North. Our world is still shaped by a long colonial history in which white upper class men are at the top of social hierarchy, most disciplines give disproportionate significance to the experiences, histories and achievements of this one group.

3. Decolonising is about rethinking, reframing and reconstructing the current curriculum in order to make it better, and more inclusive. It is about expanding our notions of good literature so it doesn't always elevate one voice, on experience and one way of being in the world. It is about considering how different frameworks, traditions and knowledge projects can inform each other, how multiple voices can be heard, and how new perspectives emerge from mutual learning.

4. Decolonising is not just about bringing in minority ethnic writers and texts, but also how we read 'traditional mainstream' texts. Decolonising is far more nuanced than just replacing authors, and it is more than just the topics covered in a course. It concerns not only what is taught and how it is critiqued, but how it is taught, which gives rise to an understanding of decolonisation that addresses how academic literacies are experienced.

5. Decolonising means identifying ways in which the university structurally reproduces colonial hierarchies; confronting, challenging and rejecting the status quo; and reimagining them and putting alternatives into practice for the benefit of our academic integrity and our social viability.

* please go to the references section for the link to the full list of points

History of Lancaster by Professor Alan Rice

It was no shame for eighteenth century Lancastrians to be involved in slavery either directly through investing in or captaining slave voyages, or less directly by dealing in West Indian and American slave-produced goods such as mahogany, sugar, rum and cotton. Men who made their fortune through slavery such as Thomas Hinde became mayors of the city and his memorial plaque can be seen in the Priory Church. The Gillows furniture company was famous for its mahogany furniture forested by enslaved Africans in the West Indies and members of the family were investors in slave voyages. Most exploited Africans never came to Lancaster, instead being transported in terrible conditions to the Americas where they were forced labour in horrific and violent plantation economies. However, some were brought to Lancaster as slaves and served in the seemingly elegant Georgian Houses spread through the city. They were not mere passive victims, however, as shown by the anonymous runaway "N**** Boy, of the Ebo Country" who escaped from his master the Reverend Thomas Clarkson in Heysham in 1764. In the advertisement placed in a London newspaper to try to apprehend his "property" he is described as having a "broad Lancashire Dialect". It is only now that the lives of these remarkable African survivors are being fully told.

Lancaster was the fourth largest slave port in Britain and was responsible for around 200 voyages and nearly 30,000 Africans transported from the first voyage in 1736 to the final one in 1806; yet with a tiny contemporary African Caribbean population, it is all too easy for this slavery infested history to be elided and marginalised. However, Lancaster is in many ways uniquely connected to all the major narratives of the story of slavery from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century; from the West Indian Trade, through the Transatlantic Slave Trade to the industrial revolution and its growth of cotton factories dependent on colonial slave labour, to the fall of King Cotton and its Empire in the calamitous and deadly "Lancashire Cotton Famine" of 1861-64.

Alan Rice is Professor in English and American Studies at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston. He has worked on the interdisciplinary study of the Black Atlantic for the past three decades including publishing Radical Narratives of the Black Atlantic (Continuum, 2003) & Creating Memorials, Building Identities: The Politics of Memory in the Black Atlantic (Liverpool UP, 2010). In May 2014 he launched as co-director, the Institute for Black Atlantic Research (IBAR) at UCLAN.

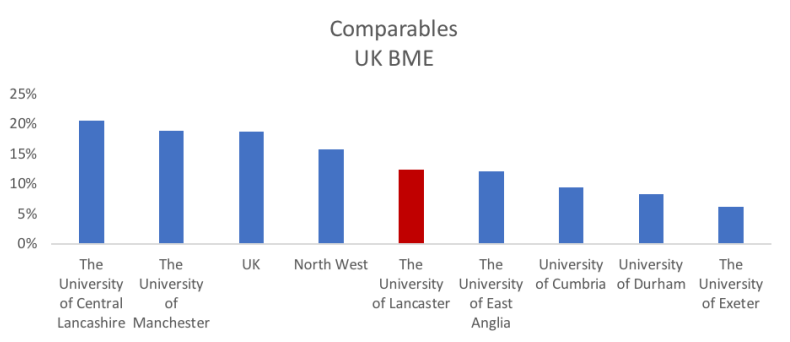
WHY DECOLONISE LANCASTER UNIVERSITY?

To bring the colonisation of higher education into a modern Lancaster context, one may look at the 'internationalisation' of UK institutions. Many parallels can be drawn between physical colonisation to that of the intellectual. For example, in the context of Lancaster University, the Ghana campus is marketed as 'giving yourself the Lancaster advantage.' There are many interpretations that can be drawn from this, however if you look into Ghana's history of colonisation, the first European trading post was established in 1482, by the Portuguese which over the centuries was captured by various opposing European empires before reaching the hands of British colonialists in 1867. It would be another ninety years before Ghana received its independence. Fifty-six years later Lancaster University established its Ghana campus, marketing itself as bringing superior Lancaster (read: Western) knowledge to the former colony, which of course generates the Lancaster campus both financial and intellectual resources extracted from Ghana. This teaches Ghanaian students that Eurocentric epistemology is the 'advantage' and therefore the superior body of knowledge in this context.

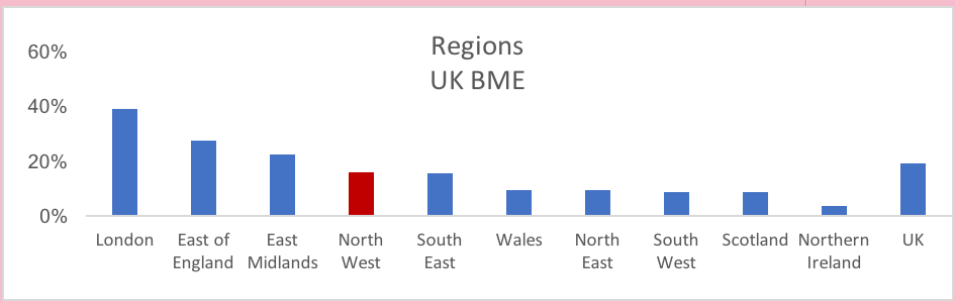
"We will become a university that is globally significant. Driven by research, and stimulating learning, the globally significant university informs and changes practice and thinking worldwide." – Lancaster University 2020 Strategy.

By Region

Below we can see from the 2016/17 data taken from HESA that the northwest hosts 16% of BME students, compared to London which hosts 39%. However by comparison the North West is better (albeit slightly) than the South East (15%), Wales (9%), North East (9%), South West (9%), Scotland (8%) and Northern Ireland (3%). Overall in the United Kingdom 19% of students on average are BME.



*Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Who's studying in HE?: Personal characteristics Data (2016/2017)



UK domiciled students by subject area and BME/white identity

		White			BME			All students	
		No.	↓%	→%	No.	↓%	→%	No.	↓%
SET									
AGRI	Agriculture, related subjects	15260	1.1	94.1	950	0.2	5.9	16210	0.9
ARCH	Architecture, building, planning	29365	2.1	77.6	8490	2.0	22.4	37860	2.1
BIOS	Biological sciences	157825	11.1	79.4	40835	9.7	20.6	198660	10.8
COMP	Computer science	57865	4.1	72.4	22095	5.3	27.6	79960	4.3
ENGI	Engineering, technology	81740	5.7	73.7	29190	7.0	26.3	110925	6.0
MATH	Mathematical sciences	25780	1.8	76.4	7980	1.9	23.6	33760	1.8
MEDI	Medicine, dentistry	34665	2.4	64.5	19100	4.6	35.5	53765	2.9
PHYS	Physical sciences	67570	4.7	85.8	11215	2.7	14.2	78785	4.3
SUBJ	Subjects allied to medicine	195615	13.7	74.1	68365	16.3	25.9	263980	14.3
VETS	Veterinary science	5545	0.4	95.1	285	0.1	4.9	5830	0.3
SET	SET total	671225	47.1	76.3	208515	49.8	23.7	879740	47.7
Non-SET									
BUSI	Business, administrative studies	140010	9.8	67.3	67995	16.2	32.7	208005	11.3
COMB	Combined	31200	2.2	89.9	3485	0.8	10.1	34690	1.9
ARTS	Creative arts, design	122255	8.6	85.2	21220	5.1	14.8	143480	7.8
EDUC	Education	115010	8.1	83.9	22055	5.3	16.1	137065	7.4
HIST	Historical, philosophical studies	66055	4.6	89.0	8145	1.9	11.0	74200	4.0
LANG	Languages	73965	5.2	85.7	12315	2.9	14.3	86280	4.7
LAW	Law	43240	3.0	65.9	22405	5.3	34.1	65645	3.6
COMM	Mass comms, documentation	31080	2.2	80.9	7345	1.8	19.1	38425	2.1
SOCI	Social studies	131630	9.2	74.3	45615	10.9	25.7	177240	9.6
NSET	Non-SET total	754440	52.9	78.2	210590	50.2	21.8	965030	52.3
All subject areas									
All	All subject areas	1425665	100.0	77.3	419105	100.0	22.7	1844770	100.0

*Table from Equality Challenge Unit Equality in Higher Education: Students Statistical Report 2018

By Subject Area

Below is an Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) report from 2018, showing the numbers of UK domiciled BME and white students in the UK by areas of study 2016/2017. This provides a clear picture of which subject areas tend to represent higher numbers of BME students. Here we can see that 23.7% of SET (science, engineering and technology) students were UK domiciled BME compared to 21.8% of non-SET UK domiciled BME students.

Due to data restrictions I am unable to publicly present the full data on student and faculty diversity. However, this section will include some information regarding the diversity of the region, university and applicants taken from approved sources.

HOW DIVERSE IS LANCASTER UNIVERSITY?

By Staff

Lancaster University has very low rates of BME staff members, especially those within professorial roles. If we were to have more staff diversity at the university, this would have the potential to create a knock-on effect that helps to remedy other issues within the institution such as curriculum and board make-up. Many of the issues explored in this paper cannot be solved in isolation and it will take numerous approaches to begin levelling the playing field. Staff diversity can have numerous positives such as curriculum diversity, greater representation, and sources of inspiration for minority students who rarely see themselves reflected in higher education.

At the time of writing this guidebook, I was unable publicly present staff diversity data. However, one could simply look around this campus to see how low the staff diversity numbers are at Lancaster University.

According to the Equality Challenge Unit, among UK academics there are notable differences within BME groups: for example, 15.8% of UK Chinese academics were professors compared with just 4.6% of UK black academics. During 2003/4 and 2016/7 the proportion of all staff who were UK BME increased from 4.8% to 7.6%, and the proportion of non-UK BME staff from 3.8% to 5.5%. The increase in staff who were UK BME was most pronounced among professional and support staff, from 4.8% in 2003/04 to 8.4% in 2016/17. In the same time period, the proportion of academic staff who were UK BME increased from 4.8% to 6.7%. The reverse was the case for non-UK BME staff: between 2003/04 and 2016/17, the increase in proportions of non-UK BME professional and support staff was smaller (from 2.4% to 2.9%; 0.5 percentage points) compared with academic staff (from 5.6% to 8.3%; 2.7 percentage points).

If we look at Lancaster University's secretariat website we can see that:

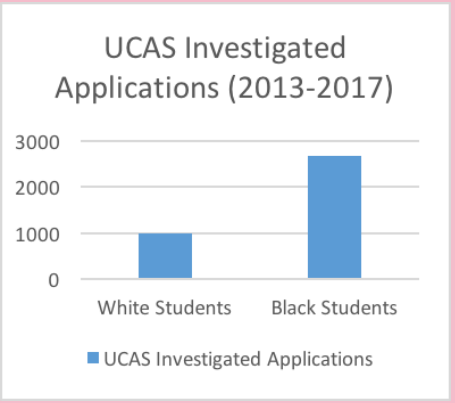
- **The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee** (EDIC), has no appointed BME staff members or student representatives.
- **The Widening Participation Advisory Group** (WPAG), has no appointed BME staff members or student representatives.

According to the terms of references for EDIC, the purpose of the committee is to promote all university equality and diversity matters, including policy and strategy, action plans and approaches to achieving aims and objectives. Whereas the terms of reference for WPAG state the group exists to support and advise senior officers in overseeing all widening participation student recruitment and retention, and the production of the annual Access and Participation Plans for the Office for Students (among others).

This raises awareness to the fact that activities regarding the equality and diversity of this student body fall upon senior university staff members who do not reflect the ethnic diversity of the University, the UK and even the world. This is highly problematic as there are no BME voices and representation at the highest levels of decision making within the institution. Therefore issues such as racial discrimination, ethnic diversity, decolonising the curriculum and the nuanced experiences of BME students may fall through the cracks, which some students may argue has already been the case. There is also a tendency for these issues to not be picked up with as much rigor as non-racial issues. According to the university website, Lancaster has been committed to membership of the **Race Equality Charter since 2017**, however as you can see on the universities secretariat site, no such working group exists. To many students, this would have been the first instance that they would see racial equality taken seriously at Lancaster University.

It is often a common joke among the student body that BME students are used as 'tokenistic' marketing and PR tools to showcase how diverse the campus is, especially in regards to prospectuses. However, when it comes to creating a safe and inclusive campus, many feel let down, neglected and disillusioned. There are examples of students who have reported micro-aggressions and racial discrimination from staff and fellow students. With those who lodge a formal complaint, only to be let down by less than satisfactory outcomes that do little to discourage discrimination but more to discourage others from coming forward.

By Student Body



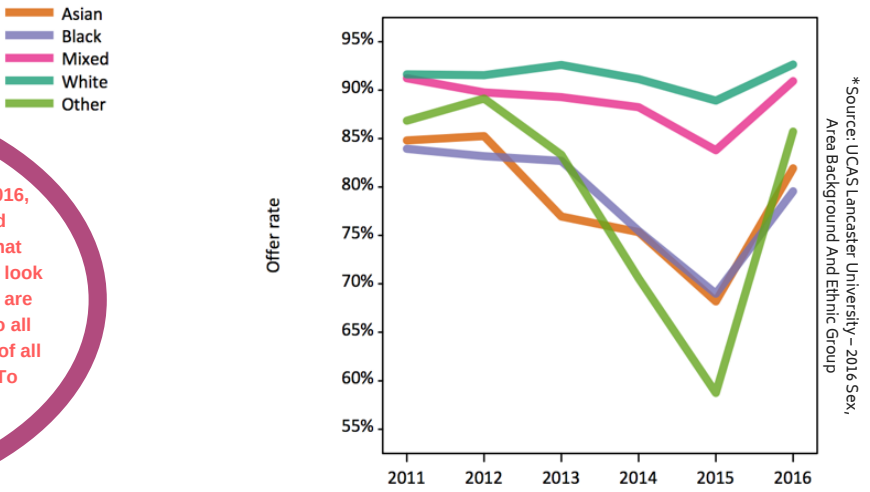
*Source: The Guardian

Applying to university is both a time of great excitement and apprehension for prospective students. Many have universal concerns such as not getting the grades or not writing a good enough personal statement. However, BME students may face additional concerns such as 'will my race be a hindrance?' 'Will I lose out on a place due to my ethnicity?' And even 'will I be given a place just to fill a quota?' These questions are not rare in the minds of many prospective BME students. However, for black students in particular, a question of 'will my UCAS application be investigated?' may also add pressure at a time of great stress for many students.

UCAS data has revealed that black students are 22 times more likely to have their university applications investigated compared to their white counterparts. Black applicants make up around 9% of all university applications, but 52% of all those flagged by UCAS' verification service between 2013-2017 were from black students. Of the 260,550 black applicants, 1-in-97 applications were investigated, in comparison to the 2,127,965 white applicants where 1-in-2139 were.

This report comes at a time where higher education institutions are beginning to be questioned for their complicity in maintaining racial divides and systematic barriers. Recently, Oxford University was reported as having admitted three or less black applicants to a third of its colleges over three years. MP David Lammy responded by calling the University "a bastion of white middle-class privilege," which Oxford University is not an anomaly. He also said, "It is simply not good enough for UCAS to say that they do not know why black applicants are so much more likely to be flagged up by UCAS admissions systems." For many BME students, this is just the beginning of a series of hurdles that they must overcome to reach success in the higher education landscape. The following sections will look at the ways that Lancaster University fails its BME students.

Below we can see Lancaster University's undergraduate application trends from the period of 2011 to 2016, which was collected by UCAS. This is a good indication of the levels of diverse applicants that Lancaster University receives. For example if we look at the offer rate, we can see that white students are offered a place at the highest rates compared to all other ethnic groups from 2011-2016, with 88.1% of all white students being offered a place in 2016. To compare, only 64.5% of black students were offered a place at Lancaster University in 2016.



*Source: UCAS Lancaster University – 2016 Sex, Area Background And Ethnic Group

P.22 Applications (all ages) by ethnic group

Statistic	Ethnic group	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
June deadline applications	Asian	800	975	1,040	1,145	1,635	1,345
	Black	375	365	430	475	585	505
	Mixed	370	405	370	380	480	445
	White	11,515	10,970	9,590	9,115	10,585	10,030
	Other	60	80	90	95	145	135
Offers	Asian	635	770	685	735	955	1,005
	Black	265	250	295	290	335	325
	Mixed	305	330	300	300	350	375
	White	9,885	9,560	8,355	7,765	8,825	8,835
	Other	50	65	60	60	85	105
Offer rate	Asian	79.0%	79.1%	66.1%	63.9%	58.5%	74.8%
	Black	69.8%	68.5%	69.4%	61.4%	57.6%	64.5%
	Mixed	83.4%	81.5%	80.9%	78.9%	72.7%	84.7%
	White	85.9%	87.1%	87.1%	85.2%	83.3%	88.1%
	Other	82.0%	81.5%	65.2%	63.5%	59.7%	76.3%

*Source: UCAS Lancaster University – 2016 Sex, Area Background And Ethnic Group

According to the Equality Challenge Unit**, the biggest differences in degree attainment for the upper two-degree classifications (1st and 2:1) are by ethnic background in the UK**. In 2016/2017, 79.6% of white students received a 1st or 2:1 compared to 66.0% of BME students, which is an attainment gap of 13.6%. Since 2015/2016 white and BME students receiving a 1st or 2:1 has increased by 1.2% and 2.6% respectively. However, this gap differs widely by ethnic group, with the biggest gap existing for black African (24.9%), black Caribbean (20.8%) and other black backgrounds (25.5%).

	2015/16		2016/17	
White	188600	*78.4*	198340	*79.6*
BME	41430	*63.4*	45660	*66.0*
Asian	18710	*66.0*	20660	*68.7*
Black	10415	*53.1*	11375	*55.5*
Chinese	1855	*72.2*	2135	*75.1*
Mixed	7980	*72.6*	8735	*74.5*
Other	2470	*64.7*	2760	*67.3*
All ethnic groups	230030	*75.2*	244005	*76.6*

*source: Equality Challenge Unit

Implications of a BME Attainment Gap (Equality Challenge Unit)

Below are some of the implication that the Equality Challenge Unit believes the BME attainment gap has one minority students, followed by a look into the causes and ways to remedy this.

Implications of the BME attainment Gap:

• Many graduate-level jobs and post-graduate courses (and related bursaries) have 2:1 degree or above as a minimum entry requirement. This means that minority ethnic graduates are less likely to be able to benefit from these opportunities, which impacts on the job market and the academic pipeline.

• Minority ethnic students comprise nearly 20% of the student population, and that figure is likely to increase with changing population demographics. With fees to consider, those students are going to expect institutions to demonstrate that they are addressing the attainment gap and have taken race equality seriously.

• If students have not had a positive experience of higher education or feel that they have not been allowed or encouraged to fulfil their potential, they are less likely to want to become academics. This is at a time when UK higher education needs to increase the pool of minority ethnic UK academics.

Causes and Remedies of the BME attainment Gap:

There is a lot of interest and research in this area and various different views on how to tackle the attainment gap. Issues and solutions will vary depending on the culture of each institution, but generally:

As of 2018 Lancaster University is yet to produce its own attainment gap data. Following many conversations with university management, I have been told that this is down to concerns over small data groups e.g. the numbers of BME students are small by comparison to white students. However, even without this data, this alone should serve as a severe indication that as an institution Lancaster University fails to recruit UK students from a diverse ethnic background.

Lancaster University Students' Union also conducted some research into the attainment gap using the institutions Tableau (Data Analytics) charts, which involves working out the statistics as these do no currently exist. Unfortunately, due to their results being univariate the institution did not accept this data. It is extremely important that the university no longer hides behind the small data sets, and produces data on the attainment gap for this institution. Prospective students have a right to make the most informed decision about which institution they decide to obtain their degrees from. Producing the data may also spur on key players in university management to begin tackling this issue with rigor and importance.

• The degree attainment gap has persisted for at least the last decade, and it will require a variety of different initiatives and approaches to address entrenched racial inequalities
• Any initiatives or actions are likely to take time to have any significant impact. In implanting actions, institutions will need to be patient and commit to long-term resourcing
• Students must be at the centre of any actions that are taken. Students should be partners in addressing the gap and involved in the discussions from the beginning.

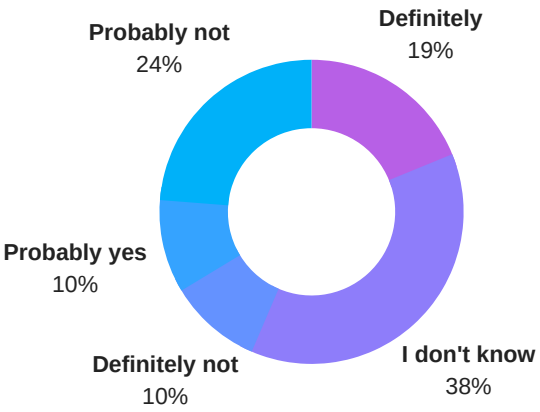
Action needs to focus on institutional barriers and inequalities, rather than 'improving' or 'fixing' the student. Traditionally the language of the attainment gap has focused on students' underachievement or lack of attainment, whereas it should focus on the institutional culture, curriculum and pedagogy.

During Michaelmas Term of the academic year 18/19, I asked students at Lancaster University about the decolonising movement and areas of diversity here. I used a small sample of 21 respondents, varying in age and level of study. After obtaining some insightful feedback, I recommend that this study be rolled out at a larger scale to make the findings representative of the student body. Here are some of the key findings of the survey:

What does diversity mean to you?

Diversity means not feeling aware of my skin colour because the room is full of people of different backgrounds and encouraging discussions to enlighten me of varying opinions."

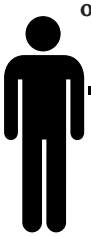
Do you believe that Lancaster cares about equality and diversity?



"Please tell us how you feel about the diversity of your modules, staff and peers."

"I planned on completing my final year dissertation on the restitution of stolen artefacts in Benin during colonialism. However, my proposal was rejected. One of the reasons given as to why it was rejected was that the law department did not have any staff that might be able to supervise that topic. I embarked on my own research of the subjects the law staff specialised in and found several potential supervisors. When I pointed this out, I was again dismissed by the law department. It is clear that there is a certain bias against particular topics that focuses solely on ethnic minorities."

How would you describe the diversity of Lancaster University's staff body?

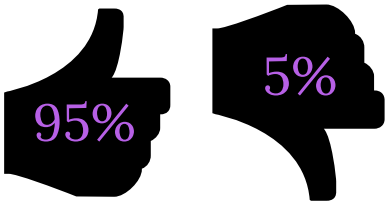


80% NOT DIVERSE

19% A LITTLE DIVERSE

5% VERY

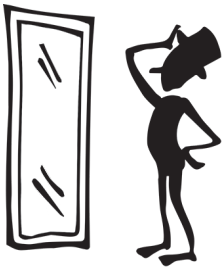
Do you think the university should do more to increase the diversity of its staff body?



"Have you ever discussed curriculum diversity with your department?"

"I have never discussed curriculum diversity within the department. Although it's something that I definitely feel is an issue, it is an uncomfortable one to discuss especially in a predominantly white department."

Do you see yourself reflected in your higher education?



Definitely not - **43%**
Not really - **29%**
A little - **14%**
Definitely - **14%**

"What do you think decolonising your degree means?"

"It means to begin with being aware and accepting that our society has been built colonial, imperialist actions, values and learning. Taking this into account when planning experiments and field work and interacting with researchers and people when travelling to other countries. It also means increasing the number of BAME researchers and students and ensuring they receive the same treatment and recognition as the other researchers."

Do you think the university should do more to increase the diversity of its student body?

AGREE 95%

DISAGREE 5%

Do you believe that your curriculum predominantly contains work from caucasian academics?

- 76% Definitely
- 14% I don't know
- 5% A little
- 5% Definitely not

How would you describe the diversity of Lancaster University's student body?

38% NOT DIVERSE

62% A BIT

WHAT DO STUDENTS THINK ABOUT LANCASTER'S DIVERSITY & CURRICULA?

Introduction

When we talk about decolonising education, one of the most common questions that arise are “how do you decolonise a science?” Before continuing through this section, consider the implications of science, which part of the world has remained the gatekeepers of scientific research, who can access this research, who benefits from it and which communities historically bear the brunt? Now re-ask yourself if it is possible to decolonise a science? In the context of decolonising education, it is no longer acceptable for one to renounce responsibility due to their research being “objective numbers” as often regarded in the traditional sciences like physics and chemistry. For example, one cannot research water sanitation through a purely objective lens without considering the socio-political context surrounding this body of work, such as the Flint water crises in Michigan, USA. Additionally, one cannot conduct research into effective mining strategies in indigenous lands for an oil company without consequently having an impact on the community that resides there. This section will consider a range of approaches to decolonising research and science.

Decolonising Research & Science Through the ‘Pluriverse’

Juanita Sundberg, University of British Columbia, Canada, addresses decolonising posthumanist geographies in her article for Cultural Geographies. Her analysis of decolonising geography can be applied more broadly to the sciences and thus research. She highlights the concept of a ‘universe’ which Blaser describes as equating ontology with culture, supporting the idea that different perspectives on the world can be understood or reduced through Eurocentric categories. Following this understanding Sundberg suggests that through this explanation one can see how the assumption of a ‘universe’ is inherently colonial. Supporting her claim through Blaser’s words they conclude that ‘it sustains itself through performances that tend to suppress and or contain the enactment of other possible worlds.’

We may link this back to the introduction of this guidebook where we explore the definition of decolonising and the need for a range of epistemologies to find legitimised space within educational institutions. Sundberg explains this idea through the concept of a ‘pluriverse,’ which in essence requires us to consider more than just the Eurocentric lens from which we see the world, to one in which a multitude of ‘worlds’ exist in the same space, allowing us to draw on western, indigenous and minority epistemologies equally. She states that by enacting universalising claims, we reproduce colonial knowledge and further subordinate other ontologies.

Decolonising Science Commentary

In 2015 Dr Chanda Prescod-Weinstein (Essence Magazine top 15 Black Women Paving the Way in STEM and Breaking Barriers) wrote a commentary on her perception on decolonising science. She states that there are two different angles at play when it comes to discussing this topic. The first being, what constitutes scientific epistemology and what its origins are. As a physicist she was taught that physics began with Greeks which was later inherited by Europeans, whose ideas expanded the subject. The conversation has now turned to ‘introducing’ the African diaspora to science, under the caveat of “bringing science to underrepresented minority and people of colour communities.” She debunks this example stating that these ‘Greeks’ were actually Egyptians and Mesopotamians under Greek rule, which despite having European influence hereafter, the roots of its methodology are not European in origin.

The second angle at play, is the European engagement with “internalist” science over the last 500-years in service of colonialism and white supremacy. Prescod-Weinstein explains how Huygens and Cassini facilitated astronomical observation missions to help the French better determine the exact location of St. Domingue, which includes Haiti and the Dominican Republic – two former French colonies.

Does Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Have a Race Issue?

Currently there are initiatives within Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics to recruit underrepresented diverse students. Chandler Puritty et al, discuss how without inclusion, diversity initiatives may not be enough in higher education. Stating that whilst diversity among scientists can benefit the field, retaining and engaging that diversity seems to be an issue within science.

Puritty posits that underrepresented minority (URM) students feel unwelcome in academic departments and scientific fields in particular. She claims that there is a disconnect between diversity initiatives in institutions and the experience of URM students and this could be a reason for the failure to diversely recruitment and maintain retention. Puritty states that there is an increasing amount of literature that highlights the discrimination and microaggressions that URM students face within STEM departments. Simply recruiting minority students does not go far enough if these students feel marginalised and isolated in their departments. For example in the context of Lancaster University’s Faculty of Science and Technology (FST), an anonymous BME student expressed to me that “as a research student, in my first two years I felt isolated.” Unfortunately, they are not alone in their feelings of isolation. Puritty et al concludes her paper by revealing that these feelings of isolation, silencing, undervaluing and invisibility experienced by students from underrepresented backgrounds is a consequence of structure and systematic bias in society and science. As a result, this influences the areas of research that URM students pursue. For an institution to be inclusive, it must value ‘an individual’s identity and encourage a relationship between cultural identity and work.’ As a point of further study I would recommend that the ethnic diversity of FST is explored, taking into account the student experience.

Collective vs. Individual Responsibility

In this section we will look at two cases that examine collective and individual responsibility when it comes to decolonial practices. The first is an extract from National Geographic's The Race Issue which explores its history of biased, racist reporting and accepting its collective responsibility as a global publication to present accurate and authentic depictions. The second part is a contribution by Dr Jacob Phelps (Lancaster University Environment Centre) on ways that he decolonises his teaching and presentation of research. These two cases demonstrate the need for both collective and individual action in order to bring about change to the existing state of higher education.

National Geographic – Acknowledging Research Reporting's Racist Past

In April 2018, National Geographic dedicated an entire issue of their magazine to race, called The Race Issue. This edition looked reflectively upon National Geographic's own racist history of reporting research and explores how race defines, separates and unites, looking towards the future by decolonising their research. Below are extracts from editor Susan Goldberg's letter to the readers.

Race is not a biological construct, as writer Elizabeth Kolbert explains in this issue, but a social one that can have devastating effects. "So many of the horrors of the past few centuries can be traced to the idea that one race is inferior to another," she writes. "Racial distinctions continue to shape our politics, our neighbourhoods, and our sense of self." How we present race matters. I hear from readers that National Geographic provided their first look at the world. Our explorers, scientists, photographers, and writers have taken people to places they'd never even imagined; it's a tradition that still drives our coverage and of which we're rightly proud. And it means we have a duty, in every story, to present accurate and authentic depictions—a duty heightened when we cover fraught issues such as race. We asked John Edwin Mason to help with this examination. He dived into our archives. What Mason found in short was that until the 1970s National Geographic all but ignored people of colour who lived in the United States, rarely acknowledging them beyond labourers or domestic workers. Meanwhile it pictured "natives" elsewhere as exotics, famously and frequently unclothed, happy hunters, noble savages—every type of cliché. Unlike magazines such as Life, Mason said, National Geographic did little to push its readers beyond the stereotypes ingrained in white American culture.

***"It's hard for an individual—or a country—to evolve past discomfort if the source of the anxiety is only discussed in hushed tones."* - Michele Norris**

According to Robert M. Poole, who wrote Explorers House: National Geographic and the World It Made, "African Americans were excluded from membership—at least in Washington— through the 1940s." I'm the tenth editor of National Geographic since its founding in 1888. It hurts to share the appalling stories from the magazine's past. But when we decided to devote our April magazine to the topic of race, we thought we should examine our own history before turning our reportorial gaze to others. "Americans got ideas about the world from Tarzan movies and crude racist caricatures," he said. "Segregation was the way it was. National Geographic wasn't teaching as much as reinforcing messages they already received and doing so in a magazine that had tremendous authority. National Geographic comes into existence at the height of colonialism, and the world was divided into the colonisers and the colonised. That was a colour line, and National Geographic was reflecting that view of the world." Some of what you find in our archives leaves you speechless, like a 1916 story about Australia. Underneath photos of two Aboriginal people, the caption reads: "South Australian Blackfellows: These savages rank lowest in intelligence of all human beings." Questions arise not just from what's in the magazine, but what isn't. Mason compared two stories we did about South Africa, one in 1962, the other in 1977. The 1962 story was printed two and a half years after the massacre of 69 black South Africans by police in Sharpeville, many shot in the back as they fled. The brutality of the killings shocked the world. "National Geographic's story barely mentions any problems," Mason said. "There are no voices of black South Africans. That absence is as important as what is in there. The only black people are doing exotic dances…servants or workers. It's bizarre, actually, to consider what the editors, writers, and photographers had to consciously not see."

Photographs by C.P. SCOTT (MAN); H.E. GREGORY (WOMAN);
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CREATIVE (BOTH)

"If I were talking to my students about the period until after the 1960s, I would say, 'Be cautious about what you think you are learning here,'" he said. "At the same time, you acknowledge the strengths National Geographic had even in this period, to take people out into the world to see things we've never seen before. It's possible to say that a magazine can open people's eyes at the same time it closes them."

Presenting Research in the Classroom – Tips from Dr Jacob Phelps (Lecturer in Tropical Environmental Change and Policy)

Dr Jacob Phelps, Lecturer in Tropical Environmental Change and Policy in the Lancaster Environment Centre, argues that some of the challenges of decolonising higher education can be tackled by individual academics within their every practice. He also notes the importance of department, faculty, and university level action, bringing together both the individual and collective responsibility. Below he shares with us some actions that he incorporates into his teaching to decolonise.

1. Highlighting People Behind the Research – When presenting an example or paper in class, I often include a "vignette" into my lecture slide that highlights the author behind the work. I include their name, institution and, importantly, a photograph. In this, I am actively highlighting people of colour and women in my field.

2. Diversifying Authors – I am working to increase the diversity of authors on which I draw for teaching, specifically non-US/EU/Australian authors. This is often difficult because the seminal texts I want to teach are white and from industrialised countries, so this going to have to be an active choice. Highlighting the identities of these authors is important.

3. Challenging Neo-Colonial Epistemology – Many empirical case studies that I draw on in teaching are from tropical and developing countries. There is a risk of treating these sites as "laboratories, "other" or exotic", or sites for extracting information. There is also a risk of imposing our views and desires onto other people. This is particularly salient in the UK, given its colonial history and ongoing tendencies towards neo-colonial conservation. I actively highlight these issues and risks in my teaching, including asking students to reflect on cases in their own work/thinking where this might be happening.

4. Engaging Others' Experiences – I am introducing a "deep" case study into my new module, asking students to actively explore views and priorities of different stakeholders, including those which are radically different from their own. This will go beyond research to include role-playing, in which students will work to represent the interests and perspectives of different stakeholders as part of a classroom negotiation.

Introduction

Decolonising Research and Science is very much linked to this area of Decolonising Teaching. As academics and staff members in higher education, most would be familiar with conducting research in various capacities throughout their careers. Therefore, I consider teaching to be the next chronological step in decolonising higher education as this comes as a direct result of research, understanding and specific knowledge on a topic or subject.

However, this is just as important as decolonising research and science, because as creators and distributors of knowledge, each academic has a responsibility to equip their students with the best understanding of a subject area that does justice to the topic. Many of the students that go through higher education, do not go on to become full-time academics and researchers in higher education, many go down different career paths. Therefore, this may in affect be their last instance of formal education, which will inform the ways in which they conduct their work, practice their knowledge and influence those around them. For example, we expect that many Members of Parliament have had a formal university education, these MP's then work on behalf of the nation's citizens. However, if they are taught through a colonial epistemology, centred on Eurocentrism, it is likely that they will take this education and allow it to inform how they conduct their roles in regards to policies, political persuasions and even the understanding of the UK's history – If they are not taught through a critical lens. Therefore, it is extremely vital, that all students are taught from a variety of perspectives, empowering them to be critical thinkers who form educated understandings of the world around them.

What Can We Learn From Latin America?

In 1999, historical reparation and affirmative action was proposed by the University of Brasilia in order for them to enable Black and Indigenous Brazilian populations access to higher education. This caused enduring public debate for a decade, however more than one hundred universities have begun affirmative action for historically marginalised ethnic groups. José Jorge De Carvalho and Juliana Flórez-Flórez write on the Meeting of Knowledges project that has enabled universities around Latin America to begin decolonising their institutions. This project was created by the National Institute of Science and Technology of Inclusion in Higher Education And Research, in the University of Brasilia. This was a project that aimed to decolonise Latin American universities by 'making room' for the legitimisation of indigenous and Afro-Brazilian epistemologies, that were to be regarded with the same respect and validity as western forms of knowledge.

First they discuss the issue of affirmative action, within the context of decolonising. Raising the question of "why would young indigenous and black students be educated in an entirely Eurocentric academic system dominated by whites and with no respect for Afro-Brazilian and indigenous traditional systems of knowledge?" This question perfectly summarises the issues within higher education, not that of affirmative action (which will not be discussed here), but that of the colonised education system. Most would agree that education is important and should be accessible to all, not just a privilege to some. Therefore, affirmative action has opened higher education to minority students in Latin America, but a range of epistemologies is vital to the inclusion and legitimacy of other systems of knowledge. Therefore, this creates not just diversity, but inclusion which greatly impacts the student experience.

Here they outline the steps and aims of the Meeting of Knowledges project, which was started to rise to the challenge of political and epistemic change in higher education.

1. Epistemic renovation was the first major step, here the institution welcomed all traditional knowledges with equal legitimacy and equality, essentially validating alternative epistemologies in a colonial education system. This was not the replacement or exclusion of modern knowledge, but the broadening and diversifying of knowledge systems taught at this institution.
2. Masters of all the traditional knowledges, many of them illiterate, are invited to the university to teach as professors. This included shamans, artisans, traditional architects, specialists in the healing power of plants, specialists in Indigenous methods of reforestation, among others. They were able to teach a regular course in university as visiting professors from various areas of knowledge, which was taught in joint equal form with university professors, acting as partners not as a hierarchy.
3. Prior to the beginning of a term, an internship was developed where traditional masters (referring to indigenous masters) were invited to listen to regular classes to familiarise themselves with the dynamics of academic pedagogy.
4. Lastly, they aimed to reintroduce traditional forms of science, technology, arts and humanistic and spiritual practices to universities across Latin America. This can be considered a form of pedagogical revolution.

Al Jazeera Commentary on the Erasure of Black British History

In the UK Black British history is something that is not taught with truth and accuracy, instead it is taught through the colonial lens, which sees Black British history as beginning with slavery with some additional highlights such as the 'arrival of the Windrush generation in 1948.' In-depth historical education is strictly reserved for Eurocentric curricula, for example the Second World War, where the erasure of BME soldiers is prevalent, many of whom came from the colonies.

Paula Akpan, speaks on her experience learning of Black British history, stating how the common theme throughout her studies was the capacity for the curriculum to critique at length, the mistakes of foreign governments without looking inwardly. Further stating how:

"**We use the failures of other countries as our teaching aids while still never truly exploring this country's dark history of imperialism and colonisation**"

Linking back to the importance of not only what is included, but what is omitted from education, Akpan says that this goes beyond the classroom and trickles through to the rest of societal workings. As a result, you become limited in what you can engage with in terms of curriculum content, concluding that the omittance of Black histories and epistemologies within an institution leaves black citizens believing that they are yet to earn their place in the UK.

At Lancaster University the first full Black History Month did not take place until 2017, when there was greater ethnic diversity within the elected sabbatical officer team at Lancaster University Students' Union. This highlights the importance of diverse representation at higher levels both within the union and university. Lancaster University's involvement with the month was predominately that of a financial contribution and marketing, besides that there was not much meaningful engagement in terms of event organisation and support from senior staff members outside of the students' union. This exemplifies that the university must begin to engage more meaningfully with the ethnic diversity of its student body, In this context students of African and Caribbean heritage.

National Geographic – Discussing Race in the Classroom

This is an extract from National Geographic's Race Discussion Guide, although it may be referring to U.S. education, there are many parallels that can be drawn with UK education.

Discussing race in our learning environments is critical. Race is one social construct that impacts the everyday lives of all students in this country. We have been warned not to discuss race, politics, or religion, but those very constructs are at the heart of human identity, human conflict, and human healing. Why are these topics still considered taboo in our learning institutions? The reality is that it is impossible to discuss race openly if we do not discuss racism—and racism in this country is too ugly, too shameful, too true. As educators, we have the unique power to change the ways in which these conversations happen and to move young people toward a better future. It is imperative that we model behaviour and provide learning spaces that are safe, open, and fuel constructive dialogue and growth. We must also understand that one story, one lens, and one source does not tell all. The new norm must include using multiple sources, listening to varying perspectives, and analysing facts. We must provide opportunities for students to reflect on information they have received to allow for deep thought and understanding. The U.S. Department of Education estimates that more than eighty percent of all public school teachers in the United States are white.1 How do these teachers talk about race if race has never negatively impacted them? Why should they talk about it? What do they gain by fostering such discussions? What is the cost to them? We must equip teachers with the tools to enrich the lives of their students and examine how race and racism are being talked about in classrooms.

Below is a short list of strategies to help educators facilitate positive outcomes while having these conversations. Establish clear ground rules for class discussion. Having students help to establish these ground rules will encourage them to follow them. Here are some suggestions:

• Be mindful of nonverbal responses and body language. Safe dialogue begins with the cultivation of trust.
• Listen for understanding instead of agreement. Maintain respectful language for each speaker across differences in perspective.
• Centre "I" statements when sharing your experience and avoid generalizations such as "they," "we," and "you".
• Ask respectful questions and avoid personal attacks. Focus on ideas, shared community needs and interests.
• Be direct when establishing objectives for the dialogue.
• Be an active and fully present facilitator in the room; show your students that you care for them and for what happens in your classroom.
• Do not make assumptions about your students' understanding, experience, or background.

We hope this discussion guide can be a resource to foster authentic classroom dialogues, cultivate safe learning environments, and provide students with the opportunity for cross-cultural understanding in our collective work toward a future of racial healing.

Decolonising Teaching in the Classroom – Tips From Dr Julie Hearn (Lecturer in Africa and Global Politics)

Dr Julie Hearn is a lecturer in Africa and global politics at Lancaster University. after inheriting a course on Africa and global politics in 2005, she made some changes toward decolonising the curriculum. below she shares some tips on decolonising teaching and best practice!

1. Content - I introduce the subject with sessions on the significance of the economic and ideological legacy of the European Slave Trade and colonialism to the continent's role in global politics, noting how Lancaster was the fourth largest UK slave trading port in the mid-1700s and encouraging students to visit the Slavery Museum in Liverpool.

2. Sources - In my reading list and in my lectures, I introduce students to African and Caribbean intellectuals and history-makers like Frantz Fanon, Walter Rodney, Eric Williams, C.L.R. James, Kwame Nkrumah and Wangari Maathai. However, women authors are missing as they were not on my reading lists as a student. For example, it is only this year that I have discovered that bell hooks has written on Slavery and African women and am able to add her to sources. I also include contemporary documentaries by historians such as David Olusoga.

3. Approach - I show students how to uncover hidden histories and narratives and to make the link between international and national actors, encouraging their critical thinking.

4. Pedagogic Relationship - I make sure that all students feel safe to discuss difficult topics and that the contribution of every student, but especially those with African heritage, is understood and valued.

5. Feedback from a Final year Law student, 2017-18

'I thoroughly enjoyed the course and I must say that it exceeded my expectations. You delivered from an objective point of view the forgotten history of an entire continent. The lectures and the seminars were not merely about the political aspects but they included a layer of history, psychology and sociology. The reading list was extensive as a way to make us understand and acknowledge different perspectives and, thus, it was key to one's personal development. I am speaking for myself, but I am sure that all the students of African descent taking the course will agree that you have given agency and a voice to the African people. You have put the history of the continent in context …'

1 Researching Decolonising – The first step is to understand what decolonising means in the context of higher education and how this may affect your teaching and research. For example, reading this introductory guide on decolonising is a great way to initially wrap your head around what this means in practice and in theory. There are increasing amounts of literature available now which will allow you to read deeper into your subject area.

2 Self-Reflection – The second step in decolonising your institution is to take some time for self-reflection in order to digest your research. This will enable you to consider what you know about decolonising, understanding where you fit in this complex web of higher education and how/if the work that you produce benefits or hinders the colonial epistemology. What this means in effect is, having a look at your research, curricula, and reading lists, understanding if your work reproduces Eurocentric, colonial schools of thought whilst marginalising other voices. Once you have done this, you may also choose to look at the language that you use and the ways in which you present information. For example, looking back to the National Geographic case study in the Decolonising Research & Science section, they explore the language used when presenting indigenous peoples, understanding their role in producing a derogatory narrative on Aboriginal people.

3 Diversify Your Reading Lists – The third step is to look at your reading lists and reflect on the diversity of voices and epistemologies that you include in your work. In our pilot survey 95% of Lancaster students agree that it is important to be taught a diverse curriculum. This can a relatively easy 'quick-win' on the journey to decolonising your institution, which involves both collective and individual action.

4 Discuss Decolonising with your Students – The fourth step is to begin to have conversations with your students on the importance of reading and learning from a diverse range of perspectives and epistemologies. Encourage them to be critical thinkers who can view education both inside and outside of a Eurocentric epistemology. Some institutions have begun working with students on course design, and co-creation. This way students can have a closer link to the materials that they are studying.

5 Discuss Decolonising with your Colleagues – The fifth step is to speak to your colleagues about decolonising within the context of your institution, faculty and even department. This is a great way to gauge your colleagues' understanding of decolonising, whilst identifying allies and those who you can share best practice and resources with.

6 Discuss Decolonising with your Department Management Team – The final step is to begin having conversations with your department management team, and those whose remit covers equality and diversity, module creation, teaching practices, etc within your department. The first 5 steps would have prepared you to begin having this conversation, so that structural change may start to take place. This will require a sustained approach, as your fellow staff members may also need to embark on this journey of understanding. However, despite how long this may take, the work here is vital in creating an inclusive learning space for all.

Conclusion: Easy Steps To Begin Decolonising Your Institution

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