Black and minority ethnic student success: addressing the attainment gap

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Equality Challenge Unit

Advancing equality and diversity in further and higher education
About Equality Challenge Unit

= UK higher education sector organisation
= Funded by the 4 UK higher education funding Councils, Universities UK and GuildHE

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Terminology

= Black and minority ethnic (BME)
= UK domicile
= Degree classification
UK-domiciled BME students by academic year

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UK domiciled students by academic year and ethnicity

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First year UK-domiciled BME students by mission group

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Degree classification

UK-domiciled first degree undergraduate qualifiers obtaining a first or upper second class honours degree by academic year and ethnicity

Source: ECU publication ‘Equality in higher education: Statistical report 2010.’

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Systemic barrier

- Controlled for other factors - Broecke and Nicholls (2007)
- Ethnicity, Gender and Degree Attainment Project (EGDA) by ECU and the Higher Education Academy
- No simple answer but unlikely to be reducible to single knowable factor
- Sector response variable
- Important to not apply a deficit model

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What does one do in the face of such data?

= Monitoring quantitative information not enough
= Qualitative research
= Action learning to change culture
= Worked with HEA and 15 HEIs to explore
### Thematic actions

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<td>Data collection and action</td>
<td>Build knowledge</td>
<td>Collect/interrogate data and disseminate findings</td>
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<td>Research</td>
<td>Build understanding and evidence base; also research capability</td>
<td>Undertake institutional, pedagogical, experiential research</td>
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<td>Learning, teaching, assessment and student support</td>
<td>Change practice</td>
<td>Pilot, implement and/or evaluate interventions</td>
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<td>Perceptions and understandings</td>
<td>Change institutional culture and individual behaviours</td>
<td>Engage and develop staff, managers and students</td>
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<td>Institutional infrastructure and governance</td>
<td>Embed degree attainment in reporting/delivery structures to monitor and sustain progress</td>
<td>Change reporting/delivery structures</td>
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<td>Institutional policy</td>
<td>Embed degree attainment in policy to change institutional culture</td>
<td>Change policy(ies)</td>
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Source: ECU and HEA publication ‘Improving the degree attainment of black and minority ethnic students.’ Approaching equality and diversity in further and higher education
Data collection and action

- Enhanced understanding of data
- More detailed breakdown
- Data sharing
- Distributed action

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Qualitative data and action

- Understanding what made some students attain
- Understanding motivation
- Student satisfaction – resulting in changes to teaching and learning practice
- Working with staff to understand/challenge perceptions
- Student feedback – ie. mono-cultural curriculum; changing study space
Resources

= http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/equality-in-he-stats-10


= http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/improving-attainment-of-BME-students

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