
NUS' Race Equity Plan to Tackle Institutional Racism 2017-2022

■ The purpose of this plan is to begin to tackle institutional racism and create lasting organisational change."

Creating race equity at NUS

In February 2016, following a complaint by our then Black Students' Officer, NUS commissioned an independent review to investigate the allegation that the union is institutionally racist.

The Runnymede Trust carried out this review and in December 2016 shared its findings in a report, which concluded: *"there remains no doubt in our minds that NUS as an employer has seriously failed to support Black¹ staff, officers and volunteers and has considerable work to do to address the poor understanding and engagement of race and racism amongst white staff and associates."* In addition to its findings, the review made a series of recommendations. NUS welcomes both the findings and recommendations without reservation.

Our vision is to be a racially just organisation – one which is determined to attract and retain diverse talent so we can continue, as we have throughout our history, to be at the vanguard of societal change.

This five-year Race Equity Plan outlines the proactive approach and steps we will take to address the findings of the review, alongside additional information we have on racial disparities and racism in the organisation. At the centre of this plan are the experiences of Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, officers and volunteers. We acknowledge the bravery and emotional labour it has taken for them to share their experiences in the hope of making NUS and our spaces racially just and inclusive.

The purpose of this plan is to begin to tackle institutional racism² and create lasting organisational change. Its approach is grounded in the view that

racism is deeply embedded in all facets of society, including all institutions, such as schools, universities and workplaces. It has also been produced at a time when racism and race hate incidents continue to rise in the UK. The approach does not adopt a deficit model, which locates the problem with Black, Muslim or Jewish people, but instead acknowledges the need to tackle racism on an institutional level.

We do not underestimate the task at hand. We know we will not dismantle institutional racism in five years, but this plan is our commitment to begin creating race equity in NUS. This plan is about disrupting the status quo of society and challenging all aspects of NUS practice that reproduce racial disparities and racism in the organisation.

Addressing institutional racism and creating race equity is not only pertinent for NUS. This was evident in the Race Matters report, which highlighted that there is a great deal of work to be done to address the lack of Black staff representation and progression in the student movement. As there is an interrelationship between NUS' race equity work and the Race Matters programme of work, NUS will ensure that all initiatives and projects to improve the experiences of NUS Black staff and officers will also be implemented as a part of our Race Matters work. This means that whatever NUS produces i.e. race equity toolkits, guidance and training, this will also be shared with student' unions. Relevant actions from this plan will also be incorporated into the Quality Mark to encourage race equity within students' unions.

¹ NUS uses 'Black' as an inclusive term to refer to people of African, Arab, Asian, Caribbean, South and Latin American heritage. It is a political statement, borne out of the UK anti-racism movement that encompasses individuals who live in the UK and have a shared history of systemic exclusion, inequality and discrimination experienced because of their race. Black is used as an inclusive term and we recognise that individuals may choose to describe themselves in different ways. In addition to focusing on racism towards those who define as Black, the plan will also focus on racism towards those who define as Muslim and Jewish. This is because Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are specific forms of racism, which can also intersect with religious discrimination.

² This plan uses the definitions of Institutional Racism set out by the Institute of Race Relations and the Lawrence Inquiry report: *Institutional racism is that which, covertly or overtly, resides in the policies, procedures, operations and culture of public or private institutions – reinforcing individual prejudices and being reinforced by them in turn* (Institute of Race Relations, undated). This can result in the: *collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin* Macpherson (1999).

This is a critical and defining moment for NUS and will require everyone in the organisation to take collective responsibility for creating the necessary change. We also welcome those who work with NUS to not only support us, but work with us to make change happen. Ultimately, this work will not only benefit NUS, but will also strengthen race equity work in the student movement and provide a benchmark for the third sector to learn from.

It is with this perspective that we will also share our learning, successes and failures as we would like our approach to educate and inspire others to rethink traditional approaches to equality, diversity and inclusion, with the hope of working together to tackle and dismantle institutional racism. If organisations do use any element of this plan, please reference NUS in your work.

Lastly we want to acknowledge the Black Students' Officer who called for the investigation. This plan is an outcome of their bravery to raise a systemic issue in NUS. We hope that this plan has a lasting legacy to improve the experiences of Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, officers and volunteers, so that NUS is a space where they can thrive and have a sense of belonging.

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NUS' Race Equity Plan 2017-2022

Three principles have underpinned the creation of this plan: impact, quality and rebuilding trust. This meant we intentionally took time to create this plan, enabling us to carry out research and consult with relevant stakeholders (see Appendix 1). This plan was developed by the race equity project delivery team and sponsored at various levels within the organisation. The NUS UK board-level sponsor is the Chair of the NUS HR Sub-Committee, the NUS President is the sponsor for elected officers and the executive-level sponsor is NUS' CEO.

In addition to combatting overt forms of racism, this plan focuses particular attention on addressing more covert and subtle forms of racism, such as racial microaggressions and micro practices, which contribute to reproducing racial inequality and white privilege. This is why the plan focuses on equity and not equality. Race equity is about addressing the barriers to equality created by racism in all its forms.

This plan acknowledges that Black, Muslim and Jewish people are not homogenous groups. They come from a variety of backgrounds and therefore have a diversity of experiences and opinions. The manifestation of different forms of racism also differs. For example, the experiences of visible minorities will differ to those who are non-visible minorities. Furthermore, because NUS uses 'Black' as a political and inclusive term, it is important to consider that racism experienced by African, Arab, Asian, Caribbean, South and Latin American people will not always be the same, as there are distinct racial stereotypes and narratives for each racial group. This is why the plan does not adopt a one-size-fits-all approach.

In recognising the diversity among Black, Muslim and Jewish people, the plan will also consider intersectionality at every stage of implementation. Although the primary focus of this plan is race and ethnicity it will be important to consider how racism intersects with other modes of oppressions for Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, officers and volunteers.

This plan outlines nine main areas of focus:

1. dealing with incidents of racism
2. wellbeing
3. leadership and decision making
4. race equity knowledge
5. tackling Islamophobia and anti-Semitism
6. diversifying NUS
7. developing and career progression of Black staff
8. creating healthy NUS spaces
9. enabling the success of this plan

Dealing with incidents of racism and wellbeing are organisational priorities in this plan, however we recognise that other aspects of the plan, such as developing race equity knowledge, will affect our success in addressing these areas. This is why all nine areas are interrelated and should not be viewed in isolation.

This plan is a working document, allowing us to change focus when needed, based on our progress and lessons learned. This is why we have only outlined a timeline for the first year. Actions marked with an asterisk* indicate the translated recommendations from the *Runnymede Review*.

Only 7 per cent of Black respondents have confidence in NUS' procedures aimed at addressing unconscious racism compared to around half of white respondents.

Runnymede Review, 2016

1. Dealing with incidents of racism

Overt and covert forms of racism can be experienced in a range of ways through organisational policies, procedures, culture and behaviours. Unless such incidents are challenged and addressed racism in all its forms will continue to be a persistent feature within organisations and racial disparities and structural disadvantage will continue.

We know that staff, officers and volunteers face racism within NUS and while we have policies to deal with such incidents, there has been a disparity between the objectives of those policies and what happens in reality. This has resulted in complaints of all forms of racism being mishandled.

First line responders' confidence, and their knowledge of all forms of racism, have been barriers in identifying and knowing how to deal with racist incidents, especially when it comes to the more covert forms of racism, such as racial microaggressions. These factors have led to a lack of trust and confidence in our policies and procedures to handle racist incidents. We urgently need to address this to ensure that staff, officers and volunteers feel safe and protected within our workplaces and spaces.

What does success look like?

- a clear understanding of behavioural expectations around race equity for all NUS staff, officers and volunteers
- proactive identification of, and action to deal with racism by anyone in the organisation, not just those directly affected
- having clear channels to flag and report racism
- having robust, consistent policies and procedures to deal with racism
- knowledgeable and confident people providing a consistent and supportive first line response to racism
- knowledgeable and confident policy/process owners, investigators and decision makers
- a culture of a consistent zero tolerance approach to racism
- a high level of confidence and trust in NUS' approach to deal with racism.

Key success measures

- 80 per cent of NUS Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, officers and volunteers understand and trust our policies and procedures to deal with overt and covert forms of racism
- 80 per cent of all NUS staff, officers and volunteers understand what overt and covert racism looks like
- 80 per cent of all NUS staff, officers and volunteers feel confident, and understand how, to flag and report racism
- 80 per cent of NUS first line responders to racism feel knowledgeable and confident in dealing with incidents of racism.

Activities will include:

- Introducing an anonymous and confidential whistleblowing channel to reduce the number of racist incidents that go unreported (year 1).
- Working with first line responders to racist incidents, e.g. line managers, the People Team, Trade Union, Black Staff Group, Liberation Team, NUS officers, Democratic Procedures Committee, Elections Committee, Supervising Trustee and Events Team, to map and review all current reporting and complaints channels. This will enable us to make improvements, identify key steps and roles to ensure consistency across all policies and processes (year 1), such as:

- understand previous examples of racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism
- produce a clear and transparent guide for all NUS staff and officers on how to report racism and how incidents will be handled
- produce a clear and transparent guide for all NUS volunteers on how to report racism, which includes how incidents will be handled and a named point of contact for concerns around race equity
- produce a clear and transparent guide for event delegates on how to report racism.
- Training for all line managers, the People Team, Trade Union, Black Staff Group, Liberation Team, NUS officers, Democratic Procedures Committee, Elections Committee, Supervising Trustee and Events Team around how to deal with racist incidents including (year 1):
 - understanding all forms of racism
 - spotting the signs of racial microaggressions and other covert forms of racism
 - immediate actions to support people who have experienced racism
 - initial steps to tackle racist incidents
 - roles and responsibilities
 - our policies and processes
 - how to have courageous conversations around difficult issues such as racism or organisational shortcomings.
- Issuing an invitation to all staff, officers and volunteers to 'mystery shop' our whistleblowing reporting channels and share their experience with staff to help build trust and confidence in the service (year 1).
- Establishing a group of stakeholders across NUS and the student movement, including the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS) and the Union of Jewish Students (UJS), to discuss and agree what zero tolerance of racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism looks like in practice, to help produce guidance for the movement on appropriate actions and sanctions to take in response to racism (year 1).
- Reviewing relevant HR policies (e.g. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Dignity at Work, Whistleblowing, Grievance and Disciplinary) to set out expectations around race and dealing with racist incidents (year 1).

This review should include:

- scope
- examples of policy breaches to include covert forms of racism, such as racial microaggressions and the cumulative impact of racism over time
- selection criteria for investigators of allegations of racism
- a decision panel for disciplinary hearings and appeals
- wellbeing support and counselling for those raising concerns
- key communication points in the process of investigating and tackling allegations of racism.
- Reviewing how historical code of conduct cases that relate to race were handled to inform the review of the NUS Code of Conduct Policy.
- Reviewing the NUS Code of Conduct policy that governs the behaviour of officers, volunteers and event delegates, to include clear expectations around race equity, improve trust in the policy and eliminate any potential bias (year 1). This will include reviewing:
 - scope
 - list of example policy breaches
 - the consistency of zero tolerance of racism and sanctions for those breaching this
 - the consequences of people not taking actions that are linked to sanctions
 - a sole person as supervising trustee making overall decisions
 - the selection criteria for suitable investigators and decision making around hearing and appeal panels
 - the misuse of the policy for political gain
 - how the policy interacts with NUS' democratic policy and political accountability reporting of officers at National Executive Council (NEC)
 - how the policy interacts with Democratic Procedures Committee and Elections Committee rules at NUS events
 - key communication points within the process
 - training of all roles within the policy on race equity
 - access to investigation data and outcomes.
- Update our NUS Values-Based Behavioural Framework for all staff to include examples of good and bad behaviours in relation to race equity.

- Conducting mandatory training for all NUS staff on racism outlining examples, expectations of behaviours, how to report racism and the process to deal with incidents, including at NUS events (year 1).
- Providing mandatory training for NUS officers and committee members on the NUS Code of Conduct policy outlining clear expectations of behaviours and consequences of breaching the policy (year 1).
- Providing guidance for all event delegates on the NUS Code of Conduct policy outlining clear expectations of behaviours and consequences of breaching the policy.
- Outlining clear roles and responsibilities for the NUS People Team, Elections Committee, Democratic Procedures Committee and a delegate's students' union when dealing with any racism at NUS events.
- Conducting an NUS led social media campaign highlighting when the media states someone's race or ethnicity for no reason or uses racist, Islamophobic and/or anti-Semitic language or microaggressions.
- Considering the practicalities of NUS becoming a hate crime reporting centre for staff, officers and volunteers.

31 per cent of Black staff agree that the organisation demonstrates by its actions that it cares about its employees compared to 61 per cent of white staff.

NUS Staff Engagement Survey, 2016

2. Wellbeing

Experiences of racism have been shown to affect people's physical and emotional health and wellbeing in a variety of ways. However, this aspect of oppression is often neglected or underestimated. This is especially true in regards to the nature of racial microaggressions, which have a profound cumulative, and at times devastating, effect on wellbeing. The impact of racist incidents is often compounded when racism is ignored and incidents are trivialised, overlooked and/or dealt with inappropriately.

The *Runnymede Review* clearly showed that staff, officers and volunteers have been affected not only by overt and covert forms of racism in NUS, but also by the emotional labour it takes to tackle or educate colleagues on the existence of racism, resulting in increased emotional vulnerability, stress and fatigue. In addition to a lack of understanding about the impact of racism, there is a lack of formalised wellbeing support for those experiencing racism in NUS. More work needs to be done to: safeguard the wellbeing of Black, Muslim and Jewish colleagues in the organisation; increase awareness of the impact of racism; and provide appropriate support for people to deal with, and recover from, experiences of racism.

What does success look like?

- awareness among all staff, officers and volunteers of the impact of racist incidents and racial microaggressions on health, wellbeing and employment
- reduced isolation experienced by Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, officers and volunteers
- reduced levels of racism-related stress experienced by Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, officers and volunteers
- a protective and proactive culture of dealing with racist incidents, which prioritises the victim.

Key success measures

- 80 per cent of NUS staff, including Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, agree that "People here are treated equally, irrespective of ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or religion" in our colleague survey
- 80 per cent of NUS staff, including Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, agree that the organisation demonstrates by its actions that it cares about its employees
- 80 per cent of all NUS line managers and senior leaders feel confident and able to provide guidance and support to those affected by racism.

Activities will include:

- *Implementing a clear, formal and well-promoted programme on wellbeing, mental health care and support and healing for Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, officers and volunteers who have experienced racism (year 1).
- Ensuring that staff who are actively contributing to NUS' race equity work receive appropriate support.
- Reviewing the support and training available for Black Students' Campaign Committee members.
- Reviewing the NUS new starter induction programme, including the buddy system, to consider how to help Black, Muslim and Jewish staff feel less isolated in the organisation (year 1).
- Continuing to promote the benefits of being part of the Black Staff Group to new Black staff who join NUS (year 1).
- Ensuring support for other self-organising groups based on ethnicity or faith for staff, officers and volunteers.
- Ensuring support for Black, Muslim and Jewish staff to access support networks outside NUS.
- Developing a mentoring scheme for all full-time

officers and Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, with access to a diverse range of mentors.

- Extending the existing HSF Assist counselling service for NUS staff and officers to all volunteers so they can access an online virtual doctor and up to six free counselling sessions to support their well-being (year 1).
- Providing specialist counselling services around race and racism to all Black, Jewish and Muslim staff and officers who have been affected by racism (year 1).
- Recruiting a full-time pastoral care support worker for full-time officers.
- Providing guidance for staff, especially senior leaders, working with officers on how to support their wellbeing.
- *Assigning the National President a mutually agreed coach/mentor throughout their presidency (year 1).
- Reviewing staff support for all NUS full-time officers.
- Devising, and regularly reviewing, an agreed personal safety and well-being plan for all NUS full-time officers, due to the public nature of their role (year 1). The plan will include actions they and the organisation must take to reduce the risks and negative impact of things like:
 - the cumulative effect of overt and covert forms of racism
 - * the cumulative impact of negative press articles or social media posts
 - comments in the media or social media that are racist or based on personal identity
 - online harassment, trolling or stalking
 - threats to safety or death threats from another person
 - incidents such as verbal abuse or violence from another person
 - lone working
 - physical and/or mental health issues that may be exacerbated by any of the above.
- Training NUS full-time officers as part of their induction (year 1) on:
 - self-care
 - how to deal with conflict
 - resilience.

44 per cent of Black staff trust and respect the senior leadership team compared to 66 per cent of white staff.

NUS Staff Engagement Survey, 2016

3. Leadership and decision making

Addressing systemic racial disparities and creating race equity in an organisation requires leadership. Leadership that not only understands and promotes the importance of race equity, but is also able to model racially just behaviours and practices. For race equity to be truly embedded in an organisation it also has to be at the heart of all decision making.

At NUS, our leaders and decision makers are predominantly white and often lack confidence and understanding around the issues of racism and race equity. A lack of visible leadership in tackling racism has resulted in racial disparities being reproduced, as concerns about racism made by staff, officers and volunteers have not resulted in change. There have also been instances when decisions have been made without considering race equity, all of which has led to a deficit of trust in the organisation's handling of race issues.

The *Runnymede Review* was clear that central to our race equity plan must be work to address our organisational culture, particularly around improving the levels of trust among our staff, officers and volunteers in the Senior Leadership Team and improving how organisational change is led.

What does success look like?

- high levels of trust in the NUS Senior Leadership Team among Black, Muslim and Jewish staff
- Black, Muslim and Jewish staff increasingly engaged with NUS and more likely to recommend NUS as a good place to work
- visible leadership from the board, full-time officer team and Senior Leadership Team on race equity, based on confidence and comfort in dealing with race equity issues including racism
- decisions and organisational change within NUS are communicated clearly and demonstrate consideration of race equity
- clear, two-way communication channels in place to ensure that the experiences of those affected by issues of race equity and racism within NUS are reported to senior leaders and decision makers.

Key success measures

- 80 per cent of NUS staff, including Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, trust and respect the Senior Leadership Team
- 80 per cent of NUS staff, including Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, agree that there is visible leadership on race equity at NUS
- 80 per cent of NUS staff, including Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, agree that the leadership team leads by example in relation to race equity
- 80 per cent of all NUS staff, including Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, would wholeheartedly recommend NUS as a good place to work to others in our colleague survey (our employee engagement indicator)
- attrition rates are the same for white and Black staff.

Activities will include:

- *Recruiting an Organisational Change Director with race equality expertise to oversee organisational culture change. The recruitment process should involve the Race Equity and Inclusion Manager and Black Staff Group Chairs (year 1). The post-holder should ensure that the Race Equity Plan actions are sustainable. They should lead on:
 - identifying barriers to trust and deliver activities to drive an NUS-wide cultural shift towards higher levels of trust
 - *creating and reinforcing a shared vision for NUS to which all – irrespective of political difference – can subscribe
 - creating a race equity vision for NUS.
- Updating our management competencies to include examples of leadership on race equity.
- Reviewing internal communications channels, the communication of organisational change and decision making, to ensure race equity is considered.
- *Identifying ways to slow down the pace of change and work within NUS culture including consideration of two-year full-time officer terms.
- *Training on racial justice, which explores race equity, covert racism, white privilege and power for key NUS leaders and decision makers (year 1), for all:
 - *NUS full-time officers
 - NUS leadership team members
 - existing NUS board members
 - NUS advisory groups
 - NUS Development and Oversight Board
 - HR Sub Committee members
 - National Executive Council members.
- Implementing a reverse mentoring scheme for all members of the NUS Executive Team, who will be paired with a Black, Muslim or Jewish staff member or volunteer to better understand experiences of those affected by racism, barriers to progression and race equity within the organisation.
- *Drawing up guidance around how the Black Staff Group and Trade Union provide feedback on the experiences of Black staff to the Senior Leadership Team.
- *Holding regular meetings between the Senior Leadership Team, the Black Staff Group, the Race Equity and Inclusion Manager and the Trade Union to discuss race equity in the organisation.
- Including a shared responsibility around race equity in all NUS senior leader role profiles (year 1).
- Ensuring that all members of the NUS Senior Leadership Team have an objective around race equity and inclusion as part of their performance plan (year 1).
- Having a leadership development programme for all senior leaders that facilitates in-depth understanding and confidence around visibly leading on race equity and liberation.
- Ensuring that NUS leaders write blogs or deliver talks on their learning journey around race equity and related topics.
- Building Race Equity Plan success measures and activities into the strategic planning cycle and financial decision-making processes.
- Applying an equality impact assessment to all NUS projects and campaigns, undertaken by project leads.
- Including a race equity and inclusion checklist in project initiation documents to ensure that we conduct inclusive consultation and decision making.
- Reviewing our ethical supply chain screening criteria to include tougher criteria on suppliers' race equity commitments.

65 per cent of Black respondents report feeling demoralised or unhappy at NUS because of others' lack of understanding and insensitivity about race and racism.

Runnymede Review, 2016

4. Race equity knowledge

In order to challenge racism and create race equity in NUS, understanding individual, cultural and institutional forms of racism and concepts such as racial microaggressions, white privilege, white fragility and allyship are vital. Without this, all forms of racism may go unchallenged, be reproduced and/or be dealt with inappropriately, and Black, Muslim and Jewish people will continue to be marginalised.

The *Runnymede Review* clearly indicated that NUS has a lack of knowledge about the dynamics of racism and that the good intentions of white colleagues does not equate to racially just practice. Understanding of racism, notably in its more subtle or covert forms, has been particularly misunderstood and overlooked within the organisation. This has resulted in inappropriate and, at times, dismissive responses from colleagues when concerns and reports of racism have been raised by staff, officers and volunteers. Addressing this lack of understanding will be crucial in ensuring that the experience of Black, Muslim and Jewish people are not only improved, but that all forms of racism are challenged within the organisation

What does success look like?

- improved awareness and confidence of NUS staff, officers and volunteers in understanding racism and race equity
- improved awareness of what allyship looks like in practice
- line managers feel better supported to deal with, and talk about, issues relating to race and racism.

Key success measures

- 100 per cent of NUS staff and officers have received creating equity at work training
- 100 per cent of NUS colleagues, officers and volunteers have received racial justice training
- 80 per cent of line managers in NUS feel confident talking about issues relating to race and racism
- 80 per cent of NUS staff, officers and volunteers have reported an improvement in their awareness and confidence around race equity following training.

Activities will include:

- *Recruiting an independent race equality trainer to roll out racial justice training (year 1).
- Conducting mandatory training for all NUS colleagues around equity at work to ensure they all have a foundational level of understanding around liberation, equality, diversity and inclusion and how this links to the workplace (year 1).
- *Conducting mandatory racial justice training for all NUS colleagues, which includes an intersectional focus (year 1).
- *Reviewing existing mandatory induction programme content on equality, diversity and liberation and including additional modules on creating equity and racial justice at work. This should include information on liberation campaigns, successes and current work.
- *Creating a mandatory online induction for National Executive Council members and other NUS volunteers that includes a session on racial justice.
- *Staging an exhibition to showcase the historical impact of Black students, exploring the experiences and contributions of the Black Students' Campaign. Once completed, this should be submitted to the Black Cultural Archives.

- Conducting further research into examples of how racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism can manifest themselves in NUS and our political spaces to underpin awareness and understanding in future training.
- *Introducing a series of management development modules for all people managers and Trade Union representatives on topics linked to race equity, liberation, faith and belief, that include how to handle real-life scenarios.
- Developing a mentoring scheme for all managers to help build their confidence around race equity, in order to improve the experiences of Black, Muslim and Jewish staff.
- *Conducting masterclasses for all NUS colleagues on race equity topics (including Islamophobia and anti-Semitism) to increase understanding of, and promote discussion around, issues and barriers to race equity and inclusion for staff, officers, volunteers and members. This should include information on our liberation policies and campaigns to help break down barriers between NUS and the autonomous liberation campaigns.
- Running an empathy-based internal communications campaign to help NUS colleagues understand people's experiences of racism, including racial microaggressions.
- Conducting social media training for all staff, linked to the Staff Protocol policy.
- Introducing a year-round communications and events calendar to promote factsheets, resources and/or activities linked to national awareness days and cultural or religious festivals – these should include guidance for staff on topics such as supporting time off, fasting, etc.
- Providing opportunities for colleagues to visit different religious places of worship.
- Developing a white allies training programme.
- Conducting dedicated training for all staff working in press and communications to ensure they fully understand the way racism functions in the media and their roles and responsibilities in addressing it.
- Ensuring that language and terms used to discuss race and racism are consistently reviewed, and amended where appropriate.

5. Tackling Islamophobia and anti-Semitism

Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are distinct forms of racism that intersect with religious identity and with their own racist discourse and history. The aim of this section is not to conflate Islamophobia and anti-Semitism in NUS, but to address the fact that the *Runnymede Review* did not carry out a comprehensive or in-depth review of either Islamophobia or anti-Semitism. This has resulted in a lack of comprehensive data and information on both issues. Although the publication of *The Experience of Jewish Students in 2016-17* has provided some valuable information on anti-Semitism in the student movement and NUS' political spaces, there remains a lack of understanding of the experiences of Muslim and Jewish staff, officers, volunteers and event delegates' within NUS and our events.

The limited data we do have highlights the need for direct action to address both Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. Our political spaces and debates at NUS events around issues such as Israel and Palestine and our Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) policy bring many concerns around Islamophobia and anti-Semitism to the fore, in terms of how the issues are debated and the language that is used. This can lead to Muslim and Jewish staff, officers and volunteers feeling oppressed and unsafe. This must be addressed, especially as the *Runnymede Review* highlighted that many people within NUS have a lack of awareness and understanding around these two forms of racism and a lack of confidence in the ability of NUS to deal with them.

What does success look like?

- staff, officers and volunteers understand what Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are and how these forms of racism can manifest in the workplace and our online and face-to-face spaces
- NUS has a zero tolerance approach to all forms of racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism
- Our Muslim and Jewish staff, officers, volunteers and event delegates feel safe in our workplaces and spaces.

Key success measures

- 80 per cent of our Muslim staff, officers and volunteers feel that NUS understands and takes action on Islamophobia
- 80 per cent of our Jewish staff, officers and volunteers feel that NUS understands and takes action on anti-Semitism
- 80 per cent of NUS first line responders understand these issues and feel confident in identifying and dealing with incidents of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.

Activities will include:

- Recruiting a dedicated Faith and Belief Project Officer at NUS to support interfaith work (year 1).
- Building robust relationships with FOSIS and UJS to help inform our work on race equity (year 1).
- Working with Muslim staff, officers, volunteers, and Muslim organisations such as FOSIS, to agree a definition of Islamophobia (year 1).
- Sharing the agreed definition of anti-Semitism (year 1)
- Conducting research and focus groups across NUS and the wider movement on the experiences of Muslim and Jewish staff, officers, volunteers and event delegates.
- Training NUS staff, officers and volunteers in, and providing guidance on, Islamophobia, including a focus on gendered Islamophobia.
- Ensuring that NUS staff, officers and volunteers receive training and guidance on anti-Semitism, which has an intersectional focus.
- Providing support and guidance on topics such as fasting, prayer spaces and catering for Muslim and Jewish delegates and volunteers who are observing religious festivals or days at NUS events and meetings (year 1).

- Avoiding holding NUS events or meetings that clash with major religious events and festivals, including Muslim or Jewish festivals or days of remembrance (year 1).
- Collaborating with organisations such as UJS, FOSIS, the Pears Institute and Muslim, and Jewish staff, officers and volunteers to provide guidance for NUS, students' unions and others to better understand the impact of language in debating topics such as Israel, Palestine, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. This should include models of dialogue and other good practice guidance, for NUS and the student movement. This guidance should be accompanied by a series of facilitated forums for discussions.
- Reviewing how we deal with racist incidents, should include how we deal with Islamophobic and anti-Semitic incidents.
- Including examples of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism in our policies that link to race and racism, e.g. Equality and Diversity, Dignity at Work and Code of Conduct.
- Coordinating events for Holocaust Memorial Day.
- Coordinating events for Islamophobia Awareness Month.
- Developing stakeholder relationships with organisations that challenge anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.
- Amending all diversity monitoring processes to ensure that 'Jewish' is a category for both ethnicity and religion.

6. Diversifying NUS

Diversity benefits everyone in an organisation. Research has shown that in addition to improving creativity, performance and decision making, workforce diversity improves employee and membership satisfaction. To represent the diversity of students fully and create race equity across NUS, we need Black staff, officers and volunteers working at every level of our organisation. In the case of staff, this is especially true of management and leadership roles.

Despite some progress on Black representation among staff and officers, NUS continues to be a predominantly white organisation, which will only change by addressing the underlying barriers to the recruitment and retention of Black people. As the *Runnymede Review* states, increasing racial diversity, will require deliberate and decisive action, especially in breaking the cycle of an all-white Executive Team. Furthermore, in order to counter the current lack of confidence and trust in our recruitment process and appointments, NUS needs to ensure that our recruitment practices are equitable, inclusive and transparent. It will also be important to disaggregate data for Black staff, officers and volunteers so we can understand representation in relation to people with African, Arab, Asian, Caribbean, South and Latin American heritage.

What does success look like?

- NUS becomes a racially diverse organisation with Black people represented at every level of leadership, including our main governance decision-making bodies.

Key success measures

- 80 per cent of NUS staff, including Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, agree that our recruitment and selection process is fair
- 25 per cent of all NUS staff members are Black
- 25 per cent of all NUS people managers are Black
- 25 per cent of the appointed NUS Senior Leadership Team members are Black
- 25 per cent of members of all NUS boards, sub-committees, advisory groups and development and oversight boards are Black

- 25 per cent of all NUS election candidates for full-time officer positions are Black.

Activities will include:

- *Making our approach to recruitment more equitable and transparent by (year 1):
 - reviewing all recruitment and selection policies and processes
 - continuing to remove personal and diversity data from applications before the shortlisting stage
 - starting to remove the education provider and qualifications sections of applications before the shortlisting stage
 - introducing application scoring templates for managers, for consistency of assessment
 - ensuring that values-based recruitment is built into the interview process
 - introducing interview and assessment scoring templates for consistency
 - providing mandatory racial justice training for all recruitment panels
 - providing mandatory recruitment and selection training for all recruitment panels, including a focus on creating equitable recruitment processes and mitigating unconscious bias
 - ensuring racially diverse interview panels for all leadership and management vacancies as a minimum
 - recruiting senior leaders to include consideration of their competency and commitment to race equity in the workplace
 - *reviewing the role titles of managers with no direct reports.
- Providing recruitment and selection training to Black Staff Group members to support their career progression, as well as enabling them to participate in volunteer opportunities to join recruitment interview panels (year 1).
- Extending the reporting of recruitment diversity data on applicants, shortlisted candidates and successful candidates to include additional data by department, team and recruiting manager in order to identify issues and hold people to account.
- Regularly reviewing organisational recruitment data and targets.

- Implementing an online recruitment system to make recruitment diversity data reporting live, quicker to produce and easier to analyse for trends and issues (year 1).
- Creating an employer brand for NUS that helps to attract more Black applicants (year 1).
- Piloting a range of new advertising channels to target Black applicants and monitor the impact of using these channels.
- Implementing a new recruitment preferred supplier scheme that involves:
 - creating an 'equitable recruitment' charter that all NUS recruitment agencies must sign up to, including an evidenced commitment to race and inclusion
 - agreeing to a defined positive action approach that increases the number of Black candidates put forward for, and placed into, roles
 - *including recruitment agencies that specialise in placing high-calibre Black candidates in organisations in the new NUS preferred suppliers list
 - rejecting non-diverse shortlists
 - conducting mandatory inductions for NUS preferred suppliers on our culture, departments, roles and our targets to diversify.
- Providing work experience programmes for Black students.
- Developing positive action initiatives and guidance to increase the number of Black candidates standing in NUS elections.
- Regularly monitoring Black representation, including a focus on intersectionality and data on different ethnic groups to identify any areas of bias or patterns of under-representation.
- Providing professional development programmes for Black volunteers and officers.
- Extending our existing diversity data reporting to include the diversity of officers, volunteers on our boards and committees, and election candidates.
- Considering options for agreed quotas on our boards (year 1).

13 per cent of Black staff agree that the organisation provides people with good prospects for promotion or advancement compared to 38 per cent of white staff.

NUS Staff Engagement Survey, 2016

7. Development and career progression of Black staff

Research has consistently shown that Black employees are less likely to have access to development opportunities and progress within their careers, compared to their white peers. Barriers to Black employees' development and progression have often been identified as information and opportunities not being shared with Black staff, a lack of support from managers and bias. Career progression can also be negatively affected by experiences of racism as these experiences can lead to higher attrition rates.

NUS data and the *Runnymede Review* clearly shows that there is work to do to improve the development and progression of Black staff in NUS. This is evident in the lack of Black managers and senior leaders in the organisation, which results in a lack of role models for Black staff. The *Runnymede Review* highlighted that Black staff are less likely to report being confident that their line manager will support their career progression and development or engage seriously with their concerns on this topic. These factors have led to low morale and a sense of being undervalued among Black staff at NUS. To counter this, direct and deliberate action is needed to improve the opportunities for Black staff.

What does success look like?

- Black staff feel encouraged and supported to develop and progress their career
- Black staff are aware of the options available to them to develop and progress
- there is visible career progression for Black staff.

Key success measures

- 80 per cent of all Black NUS staff agree that the organisation provides people with good prospects for promotion or career advancement
- 80 per cent of all Black NUS staff feel that they are encouraged and supported to develop and progress their career
- 25 per cent of all NUS internal promotions are of Black staff.

Activities will include:

- Creating an NUS career pathway map outlining the knowledge and skills required across all families of roles and at all levels to support career progression conversations.
- Encouraging Black leaders within and outside NUS to share their career progression journey so people can see what a successful career pathway looks like.
- Providing an overview to all line managers and Black staff on accessing learning and development opportunities within NUS, including case studies.
- *Working with the line managers of Black staff to ensure that personal development plans are in place and scrutinising talent ratings and relevant career progression plans.
- Making optional career coaching available to all full-time officers and Black staff members.
- Continuing to provide funding to the Black Staff Group for training and development (year 1).
- Investing in the training and development of Black staff identified in the NUS talent pool to support a career pathway, including coaching and mentoring.
- Encouraging diversity data disclosure from all staff, officers, election candidates and volunteers and including this in our diversity monitoring data (year 1).

- Extending existing diversity data reporting to include monitoring the uptake of learning and development opportunities as well as the progression of all staff, including Black staff (year 1).
- Extending existing plans for NUS gender pay gap reporting to add race pay gap reporting and including analysis of the intersectionality of gender and race on pay (year 1).
- Devising a webinar on supporting staff with their professional development and aspirations, which acknowledges the barriers that Black staff face to progressing and developing their talent.
- Reviewing the process to allocate development opportunities to ensure fairness and equity.

■■ The 'cultural norm' within NUS' political spaces needs to change to ensure that people feel safe and that all forms of racism are challenged."

8. Creating healthy NUS spaces

NUS is a political and campaigning organisation that provides a democratic framework and space for student politics. The nature of politics in society is oppositional, and inevitably in any form of debate tensions and disagreements occur between those who hold differing political views. This is also true within NUS spaces and in many cases, debates and political disagreement can involve personal slurs, attacks and often covert and overt racism from people within or outside the student movement. This not only affects the wellbeing of those directly affected, but also undermines the values of the student movement and creates an unsafe environment for political debate.

The *Runnymede Review* expressed deep concern about the nature of political debate, within NUS and its spaces, especially when tensions and disagreements between those who hold differing political views are compounded by differences in experiences and understanding of racial oppression. There was an added concern of the continuation to debate and comment on political views using social media or in social spaces outside of formal work hours or political and democratic spaces, where respectful exchange of ideas does not always appear to be the main objective. To address this, the 'cultural norm' within NUS' political spaces needs to change to ensure that people feel safe and that all forms of racism are challenged. The work indicated in this plan, to create healthy NUS spaces, will inform the work already being done as part of the *wellbeing and welfare are central to the student experience* programme within NUS100 – NUS' six-year strategic framework.

What does success look like?

- healthier forms of debate at political events and in the workplace
- healthier social media exchanges
- a zero tolerance approach to racism and hate crime, both online and offline
- event delegates recommend getting involved in student politics to other students.

Key success measures

- 80 per cent of Black, Muslim and Jewish NUS event delegates feel confident that NUS is actively tackling racism at our events and in related online spaces
- 80 per cent of NUS event delegates, including Black, Muslim and Jewish delegates at democratic events, feel that their event provided a healthy environment for respectful debate
- 80 per cent of NUS event delegates, including Black, Muslim and Jewish delegates, would recommend getting involved in student politics to other students.

Activities will include:

- Developing guidance on creating inclusive events and spaces.
- *Designing and implementing a social media policy for officers, volunteers and event delegates, outlining the acceptable and unacceptable use of social media and applying the NUS Code of Conduct Policy to any potential breaches (year 1).
- Reviewing the existing social media policy for staff, to ensure it is consistent with requirements for officers, volunteers and event delegates.
- Making online social media training available to officers, volunteers and members, including how to challenge and report inappropriate content, racism, hate crimes and defamation of character.
- Promoting our social media policy, guidance and tips at NUS events (year 1).

- Exploring different forms of dialogue and debate, and a recommended best practice approach for the movement, which includes how identity politics are used in political debate.
- *Delivering online training and guidance for conference/event delegates and members on our preferred best practice model of healthy and respectful debate and disagreement.
- *Producing online training and templates for the producing and writing of debate motions to minimise the risk of misinterpretation.
- *Ensuring that a National Conversation Series on a range of topics such as Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) offers safe spaces for learning and reflection where political gain is not the main objective.
- Working with relevant stakeholders to create a discussion framework for dialogue and debate around Israel/Palestine.
- Including the following topics in NUS full-time-officer induction training:
 - healthy political organising
 - healthy debate and disagreement
 - press protocol, including the criticism of other officers and their work
 - conflict resolution.
- Reviewing our staff protocol to include specific guidance for staff on supporting factional student politics and officers.
- *Providing clarity on how the NUS President champions the work of the Black Students' Campaign and Black Students' Officer and supports their autonomy, even when there are disagreements.

9. Enabling the success of this plan

The success of this plan relies heavily on having the right resources in place to deliver the work, as well as ensuring that related activities are embedded across NUS to ensure ownership and accountability by everyone at every level. Delivering long-term, sustainable and positive impacts for race equity will also require significant cultural change at NUS and this challenge should not be underestimated. Changing the culture of an organisation takes time. In a complex political environment, where the NUS full-time officer team changes every year, this will need to be an ongoing approach within NUS.

Measuring and demonstrating impact throughout the delivery of this plan is crucial and reporting progress, learning, successes and failures along the way will be one way to demonstrate commitment to our race equity work and help build trust in it across the organisation. Sharing our learning, successes and failures with our member students' unions and other organisations is equally important. This plan is both bold and courageous and we would like our approach to educate and inspire others to break away from traditional approaches to equality, diversity and inclusion, with the hope of working together to tackle and dismantle institutional racism.

What does success look like?

- an NUS-wide vision for race equity
- a sense of ownership of this vision and a clear race equity action plan for NUS staff and officers
- clear accountability at the top of NUS for achieving our race equity vision and plan
- a clear operational plan to achieve race equity, with action owners and accountability for delivery
- dedicated resources and budget to deliver our race equity vision and plan
- a defined method to measure the impact of our Race Equity Plan

- regularly reporting and communicating on progress against our Race Equity Plan
- other organisations want to learn from our successes and failures.


Key success measures:

- 80 per cent of NUS staff, officers and volunteers feel that our Race Equity Plan is taking us in the right direction to achieve race equity at NUS
- 80 per cent of NUS staff, officers and volunteers believe that delivery of the Race Equity Plan is having a positive impact on race equity at NUS
- 80 per cent of NUS staff, officers and volunteers understand their role and responsibility in delivering the Race Equity Plan.

Activities will include:

- Agreeing a board- and executive-level sponsor for race equity who can be held to account on achieving our Race Equity Plan (year 1).
- Having a clearly defined organisational vision for race equity that is shared and owned by everyone in NUS (year 1). This should include:
 - a clear set of measurable statements on how Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, officers and volunteers feel about NUS, race equity progress at NUS and their personal experiences
 - a clear set of measurable statements about how white, non-Muslim and non-Jewish staff, officers and volunteers feel about NUS, race equity progress and their levels of understanding, awareness and confidence in discussing and taking action on race equity as allies
 - a process to cascade the race equity vision throughout NUS to enable the creation of departmental action plans to embed ownership of race equity.
- Developing a defined race equity data dashboard to report progress against targets (year 1).
- *Establishing a Race Equity Working Group to take forward the Race Equity Plan (year 1).

- Establishing a Race Equity and Inclusion Team that includes a:
 - Race Equity and Inclusion Manager
 - Race Equity and Inclusion Project Officer
 - Faith and Belief Project Officer.
- *Recruiting an organisational change expert to support the cultural change required to ensure sustainable impact around race equity (year 1).
- Ensuring that each Executive Team member acts as a visible champion for a theme in the Race Equity Plan (year 1).
- Allocating Race Equity Plan actions to key teams (year 1).
- *Communicating progress on delivery against the Race Equity Plan quarterly directly from the CEO to staff, including the Black Staff Group, officers, volunteers and members (year 1).
- *Progressing delivery of the Race Equity Plan and its success measures to be reported to every HR Sub Committee and NUS UK Board meeting during the course of the five-year plan (year 1). This should include data on the number of racist incidents reported and dealt with.
- Including an agenda item on every HR Sub Committee and NUS UK Board meeting on the progress of Race Equity Plan (year 1).
- Establishing a process for the Race Equity Manager to independently report issues and barriers to NUS' race equity work to the NUS UK Board
- Including an agenda item on every Executive Team meeting on the progress of Race Equity Plan (year 1).
- Publishing an annual *Race Equity Impact* report that includes:
 - success measures
 - full diversity data, including a focus on intersectionality and a breakdown of all NUS staff, officer and volunteer groups who define as Black, Muslim and Jewish.
 - comments from Black, Muslim and Jewish staff, officers and volunteers on how they feel about the progress of the actions in the Race Equity Plan.

 We would like our approach to educate and inspire others to break away from traditional approaches to equality, diversity and inclusion, with the hope of working together to tackle and dismantle institutional racism."

- Ensuring that our Race Matters recommendations for member students' unions incorporate our learning from the *Runnymede Review* and any relevant actions from this plan.
- Sharing our race equity learning, successes and failures with member students' unions through events, workshops and webinars.
- Incorporating relevant actions from this plan into the Quality Mark to encourage race equity within students' unions.
- Conducting dialogue and sharing best practice information with organisations that are focusing on creating race equity in the workplace, including trade unions.
- Conducting dialogue with leading diversity bodies in the UK to share our race equity learning, successes and failures and influence their work and benchmarking processes with other organisations.
- Implementing a formal review of racism and race equity in NUS by the end of 2022.

Appendix 1

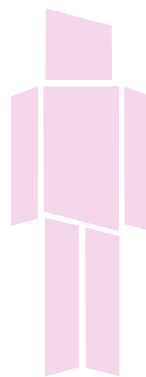
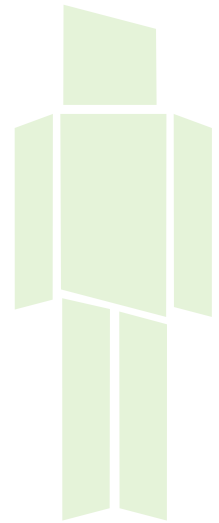
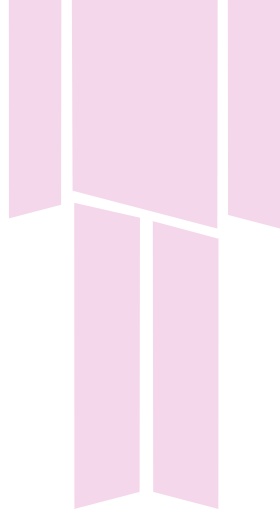
This appendix outlines the range of consultations and research papers that have informed this plan. Consultations were undertaken with a range of individuals, through individual, group and survey consultations.

Research papers:

- *Ethnic inequalities in health: the impact of racism* (2007), Race Equality Foundation
- *Independent Review into the allegation of institutional racism in NUS* (2017), The Runnymede Trust
- *Race at Work* (2015), Business in the Community
- *Race in the Workplace: The McGregor-Smith Review* (2017), Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- *Race Matters* (2015), NUS
- *Tackling Racial Harassment and Bullying – A toolkit for employers* (2016), Business in the Community
- *The Experience of Jewish Students in 2016–17* (2017), NUS
- *The NUS 2016 Colleague Engagement Survey*

All NUS colleagues were invited to take part in consultations on this plan. Specific consultations were undertaken with the following individuals and groups:

- Black colleagues, officers and volunteers
- Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS)
- Muslim colleagues, officers and volunteers
- NUS Black Staff Group
- NUS Black Students' Campaign Committee and Steering Committee
- NUS National Executive Council
- NUS HR Sub Committee
- NUS Senior Leadership Team
- NUS UK Board
- Jewish colleagues, officers and volunteers
- The Runnymede Trust
- The Union of Jewish Students (UJS)



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