

# RACE EQUALITY STATEMENT FROM PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR, LIZ MARR



The Open University's mission is to be open to people, places, methods and ideas and this means that a commitment to equality must be embedded in all that we do.

We stand in solidarity with the Black community and everyone who fights against racism and all forms of unjust discrimination. We celebrate diversity and the strengths that it brings, we challenge under-representation and differences in outcomes.

We have a responsibility to listen, to learn from the lived experiences of colleagues and our students, and to ensure that we can respond to the fear and anger caused by the killing of George Floyd, and the injustice of racial discrimination and inequality.

As the UK's largest university, we have a responsibility to deliver with actions and not just words. We are holding up a mirror and examining our own behaviours. We recognise that there is much more we can do and that we need to do that work more quickly.

Specifically, we will be working to address why we are a more popular choice for White people than Black and Asian people and why our Black students do worse in their study and employment outcomes than our White students. We are working on a number of teaching, curriculum and research projects to address this. We are committed to making changes inside our own organisation and ensuring that there are more BAME people appointed at all levels. Most importantly, we will be listening to our BAME colleagues and students, not just to understand their perspectives, but to help us achieve real change.

The OU must be for everyone, where differences in identity and prior academic attainment do not matter as 'admission criteria', and where different people study alongside each other sharing the ambition to learn. A truly inclusive model of higher education.

We must not, and will not, become complacent in our vision to create an inclusive university community where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, inequalities are challenged, and everyone can achieve their potential.

## **USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES**

### **Open University Students Association**

The OU Students Association has a [Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic \(BAME\) student group](#) where students can connect with each other, meet online, and discuss and share their experiences. The aim of the group is to create a supportive and helpful environment to champion best practice but also to raise awareness of issues and challenge the University through the Students Association. If you would like to contact a student representative to discuss your experiences as a BAME student at the OU, please contact Patrice Belton (your student Vice President Equality, Diversity and Inclusion elect) or Verity Robinson (Head of Student Support at the Association) on [oustudents-support@open.ac.uk](mailto:oustudents-support@open.ac.uk). You can read the [Students Association statement on the Black Lives Matter Movement](#) on their website.

### **OU Student Support**

The OU takes all allegations of harassment or bullying very seriously and it's important that if you feel something has affected you, you tell us as soon as possible. There are a number of options for support:

- Contact your [student support team](#)
- Speak to your [tutor](#)
- If you're at a residential school, contact the School Director

Our [Dignity and Respect Policy](#) outlines the procedure for taking informal and formal action. [The Open University Student Charter](#) sets out our joint responsibilities and what we can expect of each other. We also have a number of resources to support [Mental health and wellbeing](#).

### **OU academic research and articles on race equality and diversity**

Please find below a summary of some of the OU's research studies and articles that explore questions relating to race equality and diversity.

## **Grenfell Tower, COVID-19, structural racism and resistance**

Professor Steve Tombs marks the third anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire with an [Article for the Harm and Evidence Research Collective](#), making the point that the effects of class and ethnic inequality which framed Grenfell are even more visible and more harshly experienced three years on.

## **Understanding refugee experiences**

[A collection of OpenLearn resources](#) that celebrate refugee contributions to the UK and promote a better understanding of refugee experiences and creativity.

## **Open Research Online articles**

Open Research Online (ORO) is a free to access website that shares the OU's high-quality and peer reviewed publications. Here is a selection of research outputs relating to race equality:

Nguyen, Quan; Rienties, Bart and Richardson, John T. E. (2020). [Learning analytics to uncover inequality in behavioural engagement and academic attainment in a distance learning setting](#). *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 45(4) pp. 594–606.

Phillips, Coretta; Earle, Rod; Parmar, Alpa and Smith, Daniel (2019). [Dear British criminology: Where has all the race and racism gone?](#) *Theoretical Criminology*

Gangoli, Geetanjali; Bates, Lis and Hester, Marianne (2019). [What does justice mean to black and minority ethnic \(BME\) victims/survivors of gender-based violence?](#) *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (Early Access).

Douglas, Jenny (2018). [The Politics of Black Women's Health in the UK: Intersections of "Race," Class, and Gender in Policy, Practice, and Research](#). In: Jordan-Zachery, Julia S. and Alexander-Floyd, Nikol G. eds. *Black Women in Politics: Demanding Citizenship, Challenging Power, and Seeking Justice*. SUNY series in African American Studies/SUNY series in New Political Science. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, pp. 49–68.

Irwin-Rogers, Keir (2018). [Racism and racial discrimination in the criminal justice system: Exploring the experiences and views of men serving sentences of imprisonment](#). *Justice, Power and Resistance*, 2(2) pp. 243–266

Garcia, Rebecca; Ali, Nasreen; Papadopoulos, Chris and Randhawa, Gurch (2015). [Specific antenatal interventions for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic \(BAME\) pregnant women at high risk of poor birth outcomes in the United Kingdom: a scoping review](#). *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*, 15(1), article no. 226.

Kaposi, Dávid and Richardson, John E. (2017). [Race, racism, discourse](#). In: Wodak, Ruth and Forchtner, Bernhard eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Politics*. Routledge Handbooks. Routledge, pp. 630–645.

Dixon, John and Taylor, Stephanie (2016). [Fact and evaluation in racist discourse revisited](#). In: Tileagă, Cristian and Stokoe, Elizabeth eds. *Discursive Psychology: Classic and contemporary issues*. Explorations in Social Psychology. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 271–288.

Sanders, John and Rose-Adams, John (2014). [Black and minority ethnic student attainment: a survey of research and exploration of the importance of teacher and student expectations](#). *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 16(2) pp. 5–27.