

Call for funding

Strategic development grants: Enhancing the attainment of black and minority ethnic students

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Strategic development grants: Enhancing the attainment of black and minority ethnic students

Background information

The Higher Education Academy *black and minority ethnic student retention and success learning and teaching summit* has collected and reviewed evidence about the contribution of the curriculum¹ to black and minority ethnic (BME)² student retention and success in higher education, with a particular focus on degree attainment³. The synthesised outcomes will be presented to a summit attended by senior institutional managers and national policy makers where future actions and priorities will be agreed. A final report of the evidence and recommendations will be prepared for use by the sector and the HEA.

To support the sector to implement interventions to improve the attainment of BME students, and to contribute to our knowledge about effective approaches to improving the retention and success of BME students the HEA is offering Strategic Development Grants. This document provides further details of the funding available, and how to apply.

Guidance for potential applicants

1. A total of £70 000 is available. Projects will be funded up to a maximum of £10 000 towards the direct cost of implementation. The hosting institution will be expected to contribute in kind funding towards the cost of implementing and/or evaluating the project. All projects should demonstrate excellent value for money.
2. Projects should commence in September 2012. The initial implementation should be completed within 12 months, but we expect impact to increase over time, and this will be

¹ The term curriculum is used in the broadest sense, incorporating curriculum organisation, design, contents, pedagogy and assessment. See Crosling et al 2008 for a fuller discussion.

² We recognise that students from ethnic minority backgrounds are highly diverse and not a homogeneous group, but we have adopted this term for simplicity in this paper. We are undertaking analysis of HESA data that breaks this category into sub-groups.

³ Building on previous work undertaken by the HEA, including ECU/HEA (2008), Berry and Loke (2011) and Singh (2011).

reflected in the evaluation which will continue for an additional three years to enable impact on degree attainment to be examined. At the beginning of the funding period a description of the work being implemented should be submitted to the HEA to be made available on the website. This should be updated at the end of the first 12 months.

3. All proposals should directly aim to improve BME student retention and attainment. They must incorporate the guiding principles as detailed in the report (see appendix 1). Projects are encouraged to be evidence-informed, but we welcome innovation and risk taking where it is reasonable to assume that an intervention is likely to have a positive impact.
4. Each funded project will be evaluated for impact over a four year period by an external evaluator. The evaluation indicators will be agreed in discussion between the external evaluation team and the hosting institution. Funded projects will be expected to contribute time and data to the external evaluation process during the implementation year and a subsequent three years.
5. It is not assumed that all projects will be equally successful, and the evaluation will be focused on learning and development rather than punitive.
6. All funded projects will be expected to attend a startup workshop in York on 24 September 2012. The workshop will explore implementation and the measurement of impact.
7. All funded projects will contribute to at least one dissemination event organised by the HEA in the UK. Travel and subsistence costs should be covered by the host institution, any delegate fee or similar additional cost will be covered by the HEA.

Selection criteria

The proposals will be assessed against the following principles:

8. Directly addresses BME student retention and success.
9. Proposed project is evidence-informed and likely to improve BME degree attainment.
10. Proposed project addresses Guiding Principles.
11. Active involvement of students in project design and/or implementation.
12. Appropriate outcome indicators

13. Suitable project management arrangements.
14. Explicit commitment to supporting the external evaluation.
15. A sufficiently detailed budget that demonstrates excellent value for money.
16. Able to attend the start-up workshop and a dissemination event.
17. Intervention and evaluation results are likely to have applicability to other institutions in the UK.

How to apply

18. Bids are invited from anyone responsible for the student learning experience who is working in higher education institutions in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland or England that subscribes to the HEA (see the website for details of subscribing institutions <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/subscribing-institution>). The projects can be led by anyone within an institution but must have support from a pro-vice chancellor or equivalent. An email from the pro-vice chancellor or equivalent, indicating this support must be submitted along with the application form. Institutions may submit more than one application.
19. To apply, please complete an application form which asks for the following information:
 - a. Description of your proposed intervention, including rationale for why you think it will improve BME student retention and success. This may make reference to institutional or national research evidence.
 - b. Details of how your intervention is in-line with or informed by the Guiding Principles.
 - c. Timetable of key activities, dates and person with lead responsibility and others involved.
 - d. Project management details including the name of the project leader (that the HEA will liaise with), wider team involved, relationship with institutional priorities and structures, e.g. student experience policy, widening participation or equality strategy, learning and teaching committee, etc.
 - e. Information about how the project will directly engage with students as active participants in the execution of the project; for example this could be as researchers, steering group members or as evaluators.

- f. Identification of between four and eight outcome indicators that could be used to measure the impact of the project on BME student retention and success (particularly degree attainment).
 - g. Commitment to contribute time and data to the external evaluation.
 - h. Name, role and contact details of person who will attend the start-up workshop on 24 September 2012 in York.
 - i. Willingness to contribute to a UK dissemination event organised by the HEA.
 - j. Additional dissemination that you will undertake.
20. Completed application forms should be submitted electronically to RetentionAndSuccess@heacademy.ac.uk by 5pm on 6 July 2012. Late applications may not be considered.

Budget

- 21. You will need to show a breakdown of costs e.g. staff £5000 does not give enough detail. Please provide detail of the level of staff and the number of days they will work on the project.
- 22. Identify within the budget what is requested from the HEA and what is included in matched funding. Matched funding can include in-kind support, full economic costs and support from identified partners.

Timeline

Date	Activity	Comments
30 May 2012	Call opens	Available from http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/funding
13 June 2012	Summit meeting	Senior staff in each HEI have been invited.
6 July 2012	Final date for submission of proposals	Submission by 5pm.
20 July 2012	Outcome of proposals	Teams will be informed by email
31 July 2012	Contracts must be returned to the HEA	We cannot guarantee to pay you if signed contracts are not returned by this date.
1 September 2012	Projects commence	
24 September 2012	Start-up workshop	HEA, York 11am – 3.45pm
12 October 2012	Summary of work to be submitted to the HEA	This will be put on the HEA website
30 September 2013	Revised summary of work to be submitted to the HEA	This will replace previous description on the website.
August- September 2013	Contribution to year 1 evaluation	Supplying data/explanation of successes and challenges.
August – September 2014	Contribution to year 2 evaluation	Supplying data/explanation of successes and challenges.
August – September 2014	Contribution to year 3 evaluation	Supplying data/explanation of successes and challenges.
August – September 2014	Contribution to year 4 evaluation	Supplying data/explanation of successes and challenges.

Further information

Queries and requests for further information should be sent to retentioandsuccess@heacademy.ac.uk no later than 29 June 2012.

References and resources

Berry, J. and Loke, G. (2011) *Improving the degree attainment of Black and minority ethnic students*. York: HEA available from <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/inclusion/ethnicity/ImprovingDegreeAttainment.pdf>

Crosling G, Thomas L & Heagney M (eds) 2008, *Improving student retention in higher education*, New York: Routledge Falmer.

ECU and HEA (2008) *Ethnicity, Gender and Degree Attainment Project. Final Report*. York: HEA available from http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/resources/publications/exchange/Ethnicity_Gender_Degree_Attainment_report_Jan08.pdf

Singh, G. (2011) *Black and minority ethnic (BME) students' participation in higher education: improving retention and success*. York: HEA available from http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/inclusion/Ethnicity/BME_synthesis

Further resources are available from <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/inclusion/ethnicity-resources>

Appendix I: Ten guiding principles

1. The need for change must be recognised and supported at institutional strategic level, ideally championed by the PVC for LTA; reducing the attainment gap should also be enshrined as an institutional key performance indicator, underpinned by robust data.
2. A holistic, longitudinal approach should be taken to reduce the attainment gap, from pre-entry 'aspiration raising' activities through to progression to post-graduation study and/or employment.
3. Interventions should be 'post-racial'. Where targeted interventions are deemed to be desirable, a clear rationale for such activity should be communicated to both staff and students.
4. Initiatives designed to reduce the attainment gap should, in principle, be based on clear evidence and have timely and measurable outcomes. However, implementing faster and more substantial change may require a degree of risk-taking.
5. All students should be viewed as partners in the educational journey and systematically involved in the design and implementation of inclusive learning, teaching and assessment activities.
6. Institutions should put strategies in place to ensure staff feel able, and empowered, to develop effective relationships with *all* students; these relationships should be built on a sharing of power and responsibility.
7. Regular and effective monitoring and evaluation strategies should be initiated alongside the implementation of both mainstream and targeted strategies. Results should be disseminated appropriately, including where no change has been effected; where change has occurred strategies need to be put in place to ensure such change is sustained.
8. Academic development and support should be largely mainstreamed and students should be encouraged and empowered to draw on these existing mechanisms; however, institutions also need to implement alternative strategies to support those students unable or unwilling to access mainstream provision.
9. Institutional strategies should be implemented to enable staff to develop sufficient confidence to deal with issues of race and racism; both staff and students should be afforded 'safe spaces' within which to discuss race and racism.

10. All teaching staff should set local targets for reducing the gap; good practice in teaching and learning, leading to enhanced student success, should be recognised and valued institutionally.