

What we mean by Anti-Racist Curriculum

This resource was developed by and for Scottish tertiary institutions as a sector-led and co-produced resource

It was written by working group members of the Anti-Racist Curriculum (ARC) project

You just look like you've got a tan.
Do you have hair under your hijab?
Do people eat insects in your country?
I just don't see colour.
I don't think of you as black.

Call it racism.

#CallItRacism



The Anti-Racist Curriculum Project presents an exciting opportunity to further capitalise on the current sector wide commitment to tackle racism in the Scottish HE and FE sector.

In the **Anti-Racist Curriculum (ARC)** spirit of encouraging and embracing a plurality of voices and narratives and a broadening of our curricula horizons many words, terms, and lived experiences will naturally emerge. We offer the following to help navigate the terms of our project leaving the rest open for interpretation to ignite dialogue and in respect of the myriad of perspectives within your own learning communities.

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Power, privilege and elitism frame the curriculum...by identifying and investigating this, we will have a better collective understanding of how race is constructed...”

Why Anti-Racist Curriculum?

The reason we have chosen the term ‘Anti-Racist Curriculum’, as opposed to decolonising or inclusive for example, is for a number of reasons:



- 1. The ARC project** stems from the overarching work of the [‘Tackling Racism on Campus’](#) project borne from a landmark commitment made by Scotland’s universities and colleges in August 2020 to support a declaration against racism. Recognising that structural racism exists in our institutions and a collective will to challenge and address that, this anti-racist lens is now being applied to our curricula which is a key structural enabler.
- 2. Power, privilege and elitism** frame the curriculum through a White Eurocentric/Western perspective lens in our academic institutions, which has predicated and reinforced racism in its structures through the exclusion of other world views and narratives. By identifying and investigating this, we will have a better collective understanding of how race is constructed, and be better equipped to recognise and challenge racism more effectively within our curricula and beyond.
- 3. The need to develop** a more critical lens in order to disrupt, challenge and make visible the invisible racism in existing scholarship, learning and teaching, and pedagogic practices within the sector which prioritises whiteness, and does not fully prepare colleagues to consider anti-racist practices or the impact of teaching on our diverse students.
- 4. Acknowledging** that while Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and social justice frameworks already inform curricular discussions it is evident, however, that race remains less visible, least addressed, and sometimes entirely left out of these discussions.
- 5. To ensure** that institutions fulfil their obligations to ALL students in producing graduates able to succeed and navigate the modern world: an anti-racist approach is essential to equipping students and realising this.



What do we mean by Anti-Racist Curriculum?

- **An approach and a spirit of curricular reform:** a continual process rather than a final destination.
- **Cultivating an understanding** and self-awareness about our own positionality in the world and academia, and by extension how this impacts upon what we teach and how we teach it.
- **Reframing the way that we think** about curricula with a very strong anti-racist consciousness applied to those discussions. Transforming the ways in which every single person interacts, learns, experiences, and then takes those lessons forward into the world, benefitting everyone.
- **Acknowledging and teaching** explicitly about racism and anti-racism, both past and present within our curricula and within our institutions.
- **Debunking the myth of objectivity**, in scholarship, pedagogical and academic work, to interrogate the pathways and privileges that lead to certain knowledge and narratives to be amplified or silenced. Whose stories get told? Who gets to tell the stories? What about counter storytelling?

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Where diverse voices are valued and heard”

- **Taking an intersectional approach** with race at the helm. Meaningful anti-racist curricula take into account how race intersects with other protected characteristics – such as gender identity, sexuality and disability – as existing at one of these intersections has a profound impact on lived experience. As Audre Lorde argues, ‘there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives’ (p138, ‘Learning from the 60s’ in *Sister Outsider: Essays & Speeches*).
- **Where diverse voices are valued and heard** – that’s not only true within the content of our curricula, and even the pedagogy of our curriculum, it’s true in the makeup of our institutions, and the experiences of the people in them. Ensuring our Black, Asian and minority ethnic students and staff see themselves reflected in the curriculum, not as an exception but a central and valued part of it. Developing a curriculum that truly reflects the world in which our graduates will live in and work in.
- **Cultivating spaces for people** to feel safe to discuss race.

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AdvanceHE



Offensive questions, stereotypes and 'jokes' have a lasting impact on individuals, affecting their mental health, career progression and overall welfare at college or university.

It's time to stop sweeping these microaggressions under the rug.
Call racism out for what it is and challenge unacceptable behaviour.

It's time to take a stand.

#CallItRacism

Call it racism | Challenge racist behaviour | Change racist structures