

# Case Study

## Institution

University College Birmingham

## Project title

Introduction to Race Equality

## Background/Context

University College Birmingham (UCB) specialises in vocational courses in both the higher education and further education sectors.

It offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses, as well as some higher-level apprenticeships, with many courses accredited by the University of Warwick. UCB is popular with international students, who join from more than 60 countries.

UCB embarked on a project around inclusivity, examining its own policies and initiatives, and as part of this established that there was an awarding gap between Black and White students.

It set up a governance structure and plan to address the issue, including the appointment of new personnel to take it forward.

## Solution

UCB wanted to look at the broader context of race equality, rather than using a course which focused on unconscious bias.

UCB opted to use Advance HE's e-Learning Introduction to Race Equality course to give all staff an insight into race equality and the institutions role in achieving it. Based on a programme designed for the University of Surrey, this tailorable course is aimed at all staff within an institution and complements other support in the area of tackling racism and race inequalities.

The course, designed to be challenging and provocative, sets out race equality in the higher education context and uses student case studies to underpin its messages.

## Outcomes

UCB is using the course for its 600 staff, across both its further and higher education offers and including support staff, as part of its bigger internal project. Most staff have now participated and UCB has embedded the course into staff induction to ensure it reaches all.

Staff take part in the first online module, followed by a facilitated face-to-face reflective session in a mixed group, repeating this methodology for the second module. Delegates use the facilitated sessions to examine what they have learned from the course and how they might put it into practice, with positive feedback on the insights gained.

The project around inclusivity featured the introduction of a suite of initiatives, including the course, and has resulted in the Black, Asian and minority ethnic awarding gap more than halving during the period.

**Alice Wilby, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Access, Participation and Student Experience), University College Birmingham, said:**

**“I have always had a commitment to attracting less traditional students to higher education and making sure that all students can get the most out of their studies, and this is a focus of my role.**

**“Therefore I felt it was important that we should engage as many people as possible in this project, from across the University. I had previously worked with Advance HE so was confident they would deliver.**

**“The course was relevant to our needs and having the student case studies was extremely important.”**