

BRIDGING THE GAP TO LEADERSHIP:

A source document for practice placement educators

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of some key resources relevant to the University of Brighton and Christ Church Canterbury University's Bridging the Gap initiative.

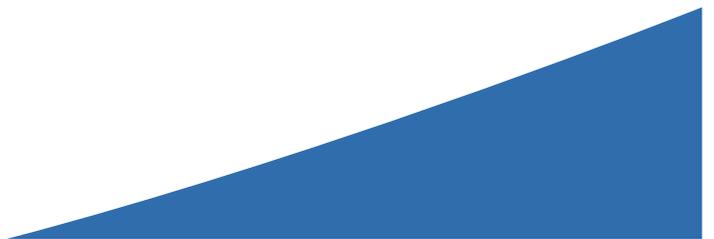
This document contains summaries of key resources you may find relevant and interesting for your work as a practice placement educator as well as links to further reading to provide a starting point for your own reflections on this area. This includes:

- Policy documents
- Insights from recent research
- A guide to terminology and language
- Suggested further reading/resources

The Degree Awarding Gap

1. Research has shown that students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are less likely to be awarded higher degree classifications than white students (Advance HE, 2018)
2. Minority ethnic students have the additional burden of structural inequality in higher education (Advance HE, 2021) and on their practice placements (Council of Deans of Health, 2022)
3. Negative placement experiences are a reason for students to leave their programmes (HEE, 2018)

**DID
YOU
KNOW?**





Recommendations

- Providing strong leadership (responsibility sits with senior leadership however examples show collaboration with student leaders and union representatives)
- Having conversations about race and culture
- Developing racially diverse, inclusive environments
- Getting the evidence and analyse the data
- Understanding what works



Three years on from this report, Universities UK reported that progress has been made on reducing awarding gaps in all minority ethnic groups. However, minority ethnic students remain less likely to be awarded higher grades for their degree (Universities UK, 2022).

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities, (UUK and NUS 2019) Click [here](#) for the full document

Key points

- Inequalities in HE mirror those in wider society
- Race and ethnicity can significantly negatively affect degree outcome
- Sustained work across the HE sector is required to address the degree awarding gap



Read more here:

Smith, SV (2017) Exploring the BME student attainment gap: What Did It Tell Us? Actions to Address Home Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Undergraduate Students' Degree Attainment. *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 5 (1), pp. 48-57. ISSN 2051-9788 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14297/jpaap.v5i1.239>

Advance HE. (2018) Students Statistical Report. London: Advance HE Available at: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/student-recruitment-retention-and-attainment/degree-attainment-gaps>

Health Education England (2018) RePAIR: Reducing Pre-registration Attrition and Improving Retention Report. NHS. <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/reducing-pre-registration-attrition-improving-retention>

Advance HE. (2021) Understanding Structural Racism in UK Higher Education: An Introduction Available at: [https://warwick.ac.uk/services/sg/si/diversity/advance he - understanding racism report.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/sg/si/diversity/advance%20he%20-%20understanding%20racism%20report.pdf)



The practice placement experience – insights from recent research

Recent research has explored stakeholder perspectives on the factors influencing differential outcomes for ethnic minority students on health and social care placements. One study ([Nightingale et al., 2022](#)) explored the factors affecting ethnic minority students on practice placements through focus groups with four sets of stakeholders (ethnic minority students; academic staff; placement educators; student union advisors). Key insights arising from the research were grouped into three themes “Recognition”, “The Lived Experience” and “Surviving not Thriving”.

- Recognition (acknowledging concerns; cultural norms: challenging environments)

This theme was drawn largely from the focus groups of staff participants in the study. Academic staff recognised a differential in **ethnic minority student placement attainment** and professional “Fitness for Practice” referrals was highlighted by students, academics and student union advisors.

Staff participants also discussed **cultural norms** such as a high expectation of success, internalising problems rather than sharing issues, over-respect for authority. Inherent cultural norms that have developed within professions has meant that students were expected to conform to a traditional professional framework or “way of being” which for some ethnic minority students meant conforming to “white” culture.

Placement geography was seen to present challenges for some students when the communities in which they were working were “overwhelmingly white”. Student participants tended to focus on the role of supervisors, mentors and placement staff and the support they give.



- The lived experience (problematizing language and stereotyping; being treated differently)

This theme grouped the thoughts of student participants. Students in the study felt that **stereotyping** began before placement when supervisors were introduced to names with challenging pronunciations. **Accents were problematised** and some ethnic minority students were laughed at because of their “strange” pronunciation.



The potential for misunderstanding or miscommunication also led

students to adopting “outsider” positions and “hanging back”. The majority of ethnic minority student participants described their lived experience as **“being treated differently”** from white students including one student observing that another student was “made a laughing stock” and another saying “[I was] spoken to like a **child”**. Several students described a subtle “undertone” rather than overt racism or discrimination. Students in the study recounted examples of “active avoidance” of ethnic minority students by some staff and that some staff did not engage in “small talk” in the way they did with white students. They described an **“undertone” of covert racism** which resulted in them being “treated differently”



- Surviving not thriving (withdrawing mentally, feeling like an alien)

Due to experiencing challenging placements and **“feeling like an alien”**, students described putting in place students self-protection strategies such as **“withdrawing emotionally”** and “keeping a low profile”. Consistently across the focus groups, students used phrases such as “don’t rock the boat”; **“keep your head down”**; **“take it on the chin”** to sum up their coping strategies in these situations.



Many of these themes are in line with other studies of students’ practice placement experiences. In one study ([Hammond et al, 2019](#)) the key themes of student responses were “*You do feel like an outsider*”; “*Everyone wanted to shy away and tiptoe around it*” – difference is either dismissed, avoided or illuminated through microaggressions and “*We don’t have much power and influence*”.



Points for reflection:

- » What are the kinds of power imbalances highlighted during practice placement experiences and how might these be exacerbated by racial and cultural differences?
- » In what ways have your students been affected by these and what are the actions you could take to support students?
- » How do the findings of these studies relate to your own experiences of practice placements and your work place?



Studies which explore the practice placement experience:

Naylor, S., Norris, M. and Williams, A., (2014). Does ethnicity, gender or age of physiotherapy students affect performance in the final clinical placements? An exploratory study. *Physiotherapy*, [online] 100(1), pp.9-13. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0031940613000564>

Hammond, JA, Williams, A, Walker, S & Norris, M 2019, Working hard to belong: a qualitative study exploring students from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds experiences of pre-registration physiotherapy education, *BMC Medical Education*, vol. 19, no. 1, 372. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-019-1821-6>

Norris M, Hammond JA, Williams A, Grant R, Naylor S, Rozari C. (2018) Individual student characteristics and attainment in pre registration physiotherapy: a retrospective multi site cohort study. *Physiotherapy*. 104(4), pp.446-52 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physio.2017.10.006>

Nightingale, J., Parkin, J., Nelson, P., Masterson-Ng, S., Brewster, J., Labinjo, T., Amoakoh, D., Lomas, D., Salih, I., & Harrop, D. (2022). Multiple stakeholder perspectives of factors influencing differential outcomes for ethnic minority students on health and social care placements: a qualitative exploration. *BMC medical education*, 22(1), 17. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-021-03070-3>



Addressing the issues

Anti-racism in AHP Education: Building an Inclusive Environment, Council of Deans of Health 2023



Healthcare students manage demands of both university and practice-based learning. Minority ethnic students have to deal with the additional burden of structural inequality in HEI and practice placements as well as incidents of racism.

Purpose of the document:

- Spotlight minority ethnic AHP students' experiences and showcase initiatives and approaches that have been developed to support them by universities

Relevance:

- Report makes the distinction between university and practice-based environments and includes case studies that you can use to reflect on with your team

[Read more here](#)

Workshops as part of the project identified some key issues with practice-based learning including:

• Lack of support

- Students and staff felt that **support networks whilst on practice placement were lacking** compared to support received within the university. Staff also felt this affected attainment levels.
- As an example of lack of support one AHP student said ‘*My friend felt she couldn’t speak to her lecturers when she experienced racial discrimination on placement*’
- As a further example of this lack of support another AHP student said, “*We were taught about expectations on placement, but **no one mentioned what to do if you encounter racism***”



• Communication differences

- Issues often arose around expectations and communication styles on placement. Some students were marked negatively for lack of engagement in certain **perceived communication norms**, such as ‘using initiative’, and some found conceptual language challenging.



• Expectations of professionalism

- Expectations are often **culturally constructed**, and staff found that students may be **marked negatively** for a lack of alignment with perceived professional behaviours. Some **expectations are assumed** where they may need to be explicit.

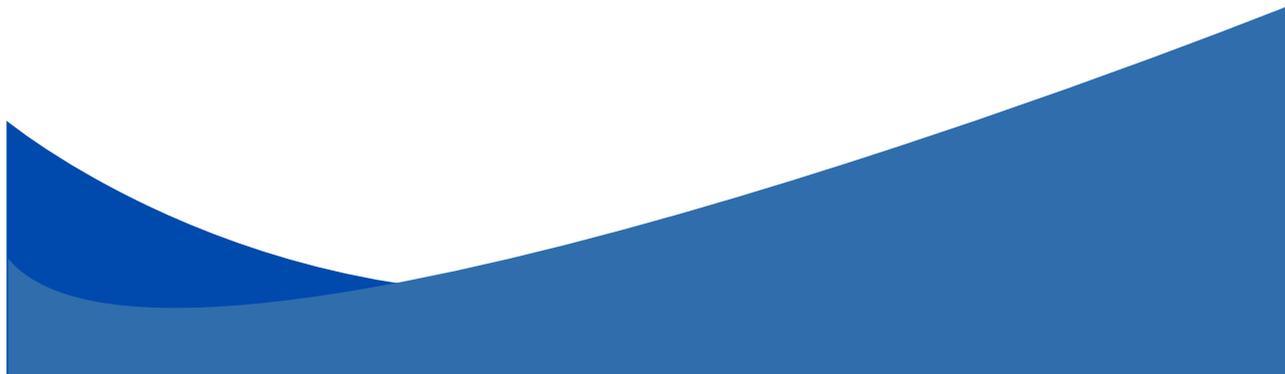


The report also includes case studies which include schemes to support minority ethnic students such as forming a group to provide a safe space to discuss incidents which may occur on placement; training for staff and practice educators as well as the Bridging the Gap to leadership placement run by University of Brighton and Canterbury Christ University and resources to address the awarding gap and discrimination in practice.

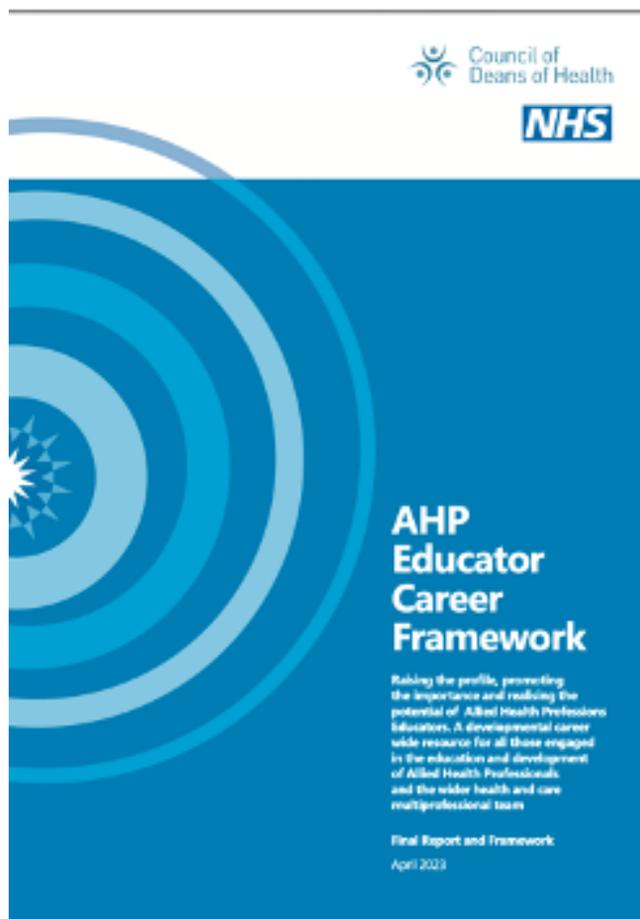


Points for reflection:

- » What are the ways that you are/your organisation are creating an inclusive environment which meets the needs of all students to support their learning and progression?
- » The report sets out a number of recommendations. To what extent do you feel your organisation is:
 - Encouraging student leadership development and building confidence to challenge discrimination?
 - Providing adequate and mandatory practice staff training on equality, diversity and inclusion issues?
 - Enabling safe spaces for students within the practice environment to raise concerns and that staff respect and are able to escalate these concerns?
 - Ensuring that there is a designated AHP EDI lead within each placement provider?
 - Engaging with regional AHP leads to ensure strategic planning to support minority ethnic students on placement?
- » If you have identified any gaps, what action could you take to address this?
- » What support do you need to improve the situation?



AHP Educators Career Framework, Council of Deans of Health 2023



The AHP Educators Career framework seeks to support a sustainable and high quality educator workforce in both practice and academic settings.

Equality, diversity, and inclusivity are central principles to the framework. As well as providing a focus on addressing education inequalities which may exist between learners it is intended to help individuals, line managers and organisations to consciously support educator wellbeing and champions equal opportunities for educator continuing professional development including protected learning time for educators themselves.

The framework covers six domains.

Domain 2 - Diverse and Inclusive leadership – to overcome barriers and provide solutions for the provision of inclusive education

Inclusive education leadership that **respects the diversity of learners** is at the core of educator practice.

A commitment to developing **equitable learning environments** and addressing inequalities is fundamental to facilitate and deliver inclusive education at all levels.

Allyship, participation and anti-discriminatory practice are central to leadership practice.





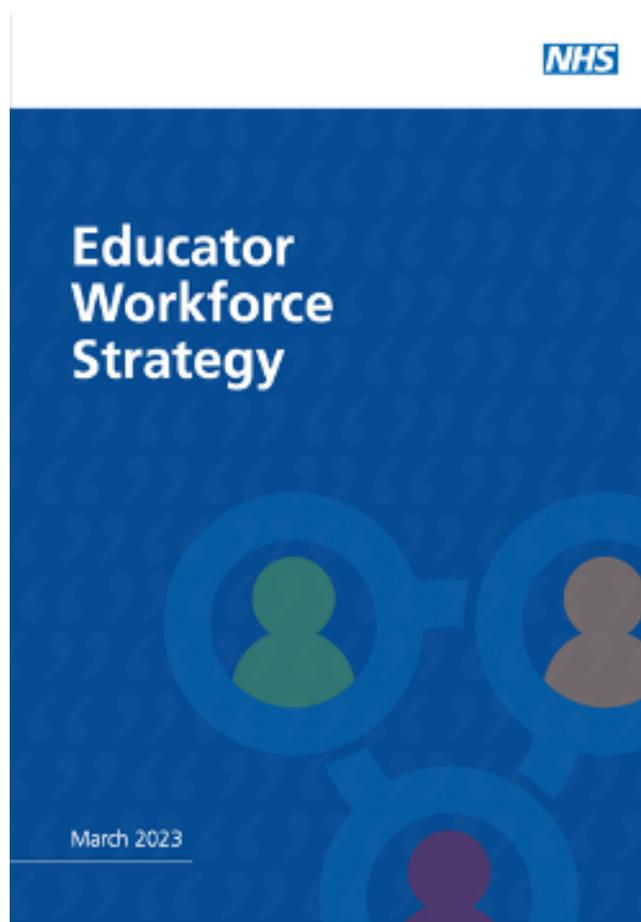
Read more [here](#).



Points for reflection:

- » Consider whether, and to what extent, your working practices meet the requirements set out in the framework. How do you:
- Contribute to creating an inclusive learning environment using an evidence-based approach, and is welcoming to innovation.
 - Demonstrate a shared responsibility for creating an inclusive learning environment with a specific focus on learner and educator wellbeing.
 - Lead a team approach to creating an inclusive learning environment.
 - Develop and promote a diverse and inclusive learning environment, that values and supports staff and students, across the wider organisation and professions.
 - Assess learners' individual needs and preferences.
 - Demonstrate the characteristics (creativity, humility, and a commitment to diversity) of inclusive leadership that are emphasised

Health Education England Educator Workforce Strategy, NHS 2023



The purpose of the HEE Educator workforce strategy is to ensure that the NHS has a **sustainable supply of educators** to support the development of the healthcare workforce.

The *strategy* sets out seven priorities that aim to deliver sufficient capacity and quality of educators which will enable the **expansion of**

the healthcare workforce that is required to deliver care, now and in the future.

The strategy aims to tackle concerns from the healthcare education sector and service providers in terms of the **capacity of educators** to



Priority 6:

Promoting the NHS aspirations to improve equality, diversity and inclusion. “Educators will be supported to **better understand and support issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)** and

initiatives will be implemented to **eliminate disparity** in and through education and training.“ **Read more [here](#)**



Points for reflection:

- » What does cultural competence mean to you?
- » What are the equality, diversity and inclusivity strategies and requirements of your own professional body and how does fulfilment of these impact on your work as a practice placement educator?
- » What kind of support do you feel could help you to focus on equality, diversity and inclusivity?

Language and terminology

The Law Society Guide to Race and Ethnicity Terminology and Language [here](#) states that:

Race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably

- Race is a categorisation based mainly on physical attributes or traits
- Ethnicity is broader than race and refers to shared culture, religion, traditions, ancestry, language, dialect or national origins.
- In the **Equality Act (2010)**, the **protected characteristic of “race”** is defined as including colour, ethnic or national origin, or nationality
- “BAME” and “BME” are used to refer to people of non-white ethnicities in the UK including those who identify as having mixed ethnicity

- Use of **“BAME” has been criticised** due to the grouping together diverse ethnicities and the implication of an homogenous ethnic identity, however it may be appropriate to use in some contexts such



Recommendations include:

- Ensuring you are using terms which **accurately reflect** the racial or ethnic groups you are talking about
- Avoiding umbrella terms unnecessarily and remembering that these do not refer to a singular homogenous ethnic group
- Explaining acronyms in full in any writing, particularly at first use, and avoiding pronouncing or writing as words
- Seeking more detailed data and insights wherever possible so you can **better recognise, understand and reflect the experiences** of different minority ethnic groups
- Accepting and acknowledging that **ethnicity is an integral part of a person’s identity** and treating it as such; avoiding describing a person’s identity as ‘BAME’
- **Respecting individual preferences** and allowing options for individuals to self-describe for example when asking survey questions
- Questioning why you need to know how people describe their identity and avoiding making individuals feel like outsiders by asking questions like “where are you from?”
- Continuing to **educate yourself, listen and learn** as our language continually evolves and owning and learning from your mistakes, apologising if you get terminology wrong and cause offence





Points for reflection:

- » What is the impact of the language you use around race and ethnicity?
- » What are the steps you can take to become more informed on this topic?



Read more about language and terminology:

BRAP Race Fluency <https://www.brap.org.uk/post/race-fluency>.

Dacosta, Chrissie & Dixon-Smith, Steven & Singh, Gurnam. (2021). Beyond BAME: Rethinking the politics, construction, application, and efficacy of ethnic categorization. Stimulus Paper.





Want to understand more? Suggestions for further reading and exploration

University of Brighton and Canterbury Christ Church University resources for practice educators available [here](#) and [here](#). Resources are available on the following topics:

- o Unconscious bias
- o Microaggressions
- o Allyship and white privilege
- o Inclusivity and language

Key items created by students can be found on the Bridging the Gap to Leadership Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@bridgingthegaptoleadership/videos>

Dare to Care

The University of Essex's extensive multi-media resource of materials on equality, diversity and inclusion can be found [here](#). Resources are split by profession and include:

- o Policies and statements
- o Research and reports
- o Support and advocacy groups
- o News and blogs

Caring with confidence

NMC Code in Action includes an animation on inclusivity and challenging discrimination [here](#).

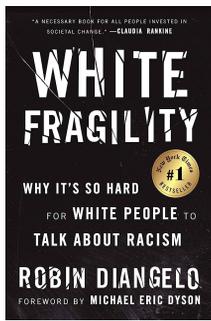
Books and accompanying author discussions



Reni Eddo-Lodge Why I am no longer talking to white people about race.

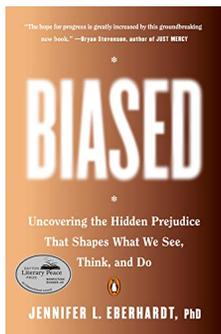
<https://www.theguardian.com/news/audio/2017/may/31/why-im-no-longer-talking-to-white-people->

about-race-podcast. Themes: Structural racism



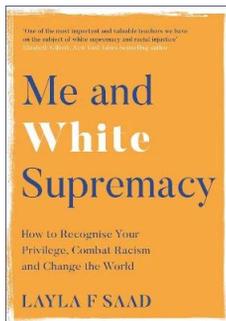
Robin DiAngelo White fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/audio/2019/mar/26/why-is-it-so-hard-for-white-people-to-talk-about-racism-books-podcast>. Themes: Racial justice; white privilege; unconscious bias; structural racism



Jennifer Eberhardt Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudices That Shape Our Lives

https://www.ted.com/talks/jennifer_l_eberhardt_how_racial_bias_works_and_how_to_disrupt_it?language=en. Themes: unconscious bias; racial bias at all levels of society and tools to address this



Layla F Saad: Me and White Supremacy: How to Recognise Your Privilege, Combat Racism and Change the World <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2ExgdBQfpY>. Themes: white privilege; systemic racism

Points for reflection:

- » What have you discovered in investigating this topic and how will this new information inform your future practice?
- » What one action do you think you can take to improve how you support students on practice placements?
- » What are the steps you will take to continue to develop your knowledge in this area?
- » How could you share this knowledge with your colleagues?

Bridging the Gap



To Leadership