

Research funded by



BAME ATTAINMENT AT UON

An investigation into BAME attainment, exploring the factors that impact on low grades of BAME students at The University of Northampton.



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FACULTY: *FAST*

SUBJECT AREA:
*JOURNALISM, MEDIA &
PERFORMANCE*



FACULTY: *FAST*

DEPARTMENT:
ACADEMIC LIBRARIAN

FACULTY: *FBL*

SUBJECT AREA:
*BUSINESS SYSTEMS &
OPERATIONS*



Teaching Boot and Shoe students
Northampton College of Technology c.1950's



Technical drawing
Northampton School of Art 1959



Senior Typing Class, 1960
Northampton College of Technology



Students relaxing by the Brampton
Building, School of Health 1992



CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

*Once upon a time the University
would have served the county
of Northamptonshire's needs....*

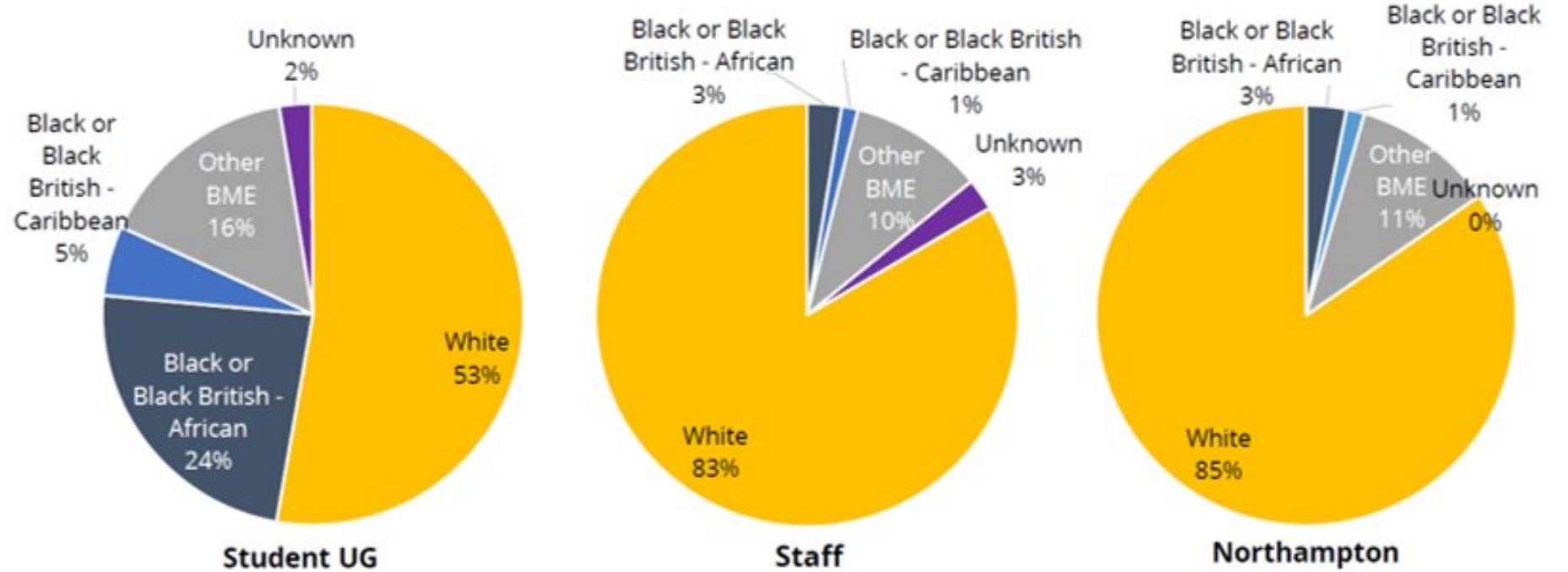
Within the last ten years, we've seen...

- Increasing competition
- A growing number of students from Black And Minority Ethnic backgrounds (BAME), particularly Black British/African students coming from London



Comparison of ethnicity – intake, staff, town –

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- “The numbers do not lie”,
- meaningful and structured uncomfortable conversation.
- better understand the challenges faced by our BAME student communities and negative impact on attainment.
- honest responses from all our participants, who also highlighted the importance of such open conversations and dialogue, and the manner in which it was conducted.



While there is an attainment gap for all ethnic groups, it is consistently worst for Black (Black African/Black Caribbean/Other Black Background) students across the HE sector.

UON

ATTAINMENT GAP

Result for BAME students: Points below that for White students 2018-19

1. FAST

- Architecture, Photography & Design (27)
- Computing (14.3)
- Fashion & Textiles (40)
- Humanities (15.4)
- Journalism, Media & Performance (25.6)

2. FBL

- Criminology & criminal Justice (12.5)
- Events, Tourism & Hospitality (52.5)
- International Strategy & Business (30.8)
- Law (13.3)
- Marketing & Entrepreneurship (20.5)

3. FHES

- Early years (15.4)
- Education, Children & Young people (24.6)
- Occupational Therapy (20.5)
- Psychology (22.3)
- Social work & sociology (24.3)



RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To understand BAME students' experiences at UoN
- To examine the factors influencing their performances
- To explore issues relating to low BAME attainment at UoN
- To explore the barriers impacting on their grades
- To explore ways to improve communication highlighting support service available to students



METHODOLOGY

- Qualitative research
- Opinion-based and subjective in nature
- Video and audio recording
- Semi-structure interviews with
Academic, support staffs & Alumni
- Focus groups with current
undergraduate students at UoN



Implications of the study

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- *Enhanced BAME students experience*
- *Inclusive curriculum design and delivery*
- *Targeted academic support services strategies*
- *Informed University policy and strategy in widening participation, diversity and attainment*
- *Recognising extent of inequalities that BAME students may face Move towards a narrowing of the attainment gap*
- *Having uncomfortable discussions through open and honest conversations/dialogue*
- *A deeper understanding of cultural differences impacting on practice*

[BAME Participants Call Video](#) (click on title to view)

Sample of interviews



BAME Research Snippet mp3 (click on title to view)

- BAME students are not a homogenous group and it was clear that the BAME students all faced different challenges and barriers depending on the cultural group they represent.
- Major differences in attitudes to learning between various Ethnic Minority groups
- Language is a major barrier for some minority groups
- Links between family responsibilities, socio-economic background and effects of commuting on attainment
- Students feel that University is inclusive but Northampton is not
- Lack of BAME staff representation in most departments



Key Observations

- BAME students find it difficult to relate to the majority of course content and references used, and passively engage with some and in some cases most course content
- Students sighted examples of what they considered as intentional and unintentional 'microaggressions' prior to coming to UoN and during their time at UoN.
- Prior learning experience negative impact on learning
- Academic support services not diverse in staff, however, very helpful to those who see them
- Attainment gap is different amongst various cultural and social groups



In addition

- All staff who participated, highlighted the fact that the interview made them think and will help them reflect on their practice.
- Through interviews and conversations with staff, the realisation of the value of 'white privilege' was mentioned on a few occasions



A NEED FOR POSITIVE ACTION

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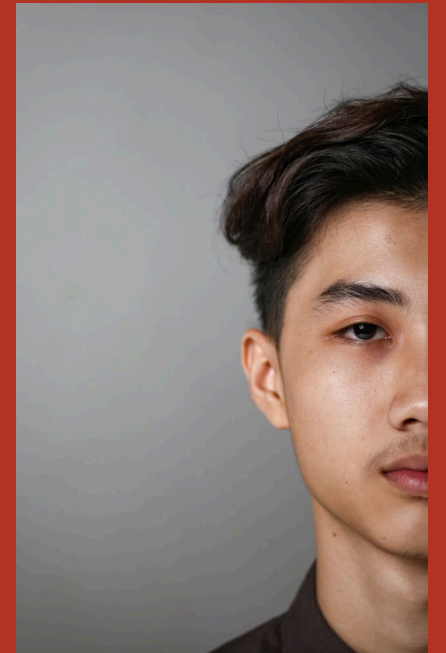
- Strong leadership
- Deeper exploration of belonging, diversity, inclusion and exclusion
- Investigation of more specific groups within the 'BAME' and their experiences to better define gaps within specific demographic groups
- Decolonisation or colonisation of the curriculum
- Internationalisation of the curriculum, where applicable
- Inform University policies and procedures.
- Inform a more effective inclusion and widening participation strategy
- Feed into a move towards the development of a Centre for Diversity and Race Studies
- Staff training and self-reflection
- Audit of module content by curriculum teams where necessary



In Conclusion

In order for us to move forward as an institution, it begins with acknowledgement from all changemakers that there is a problem, then embracing the strategies for the implementation of effective solutions.

We are an educational institution after all, let us begin by educating ourselves. By better understanding our past, we can better shape our present and future.



THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON POLICY & PROGRESS

The 1963 Lord Robbins report

- Expansion of universities
- College of advanced technology to be given status of university
- University places to be available to all who were qualified and had the abilities
- Research for the truth
- Educated and cultivated men and women

The 1997 Lord Dearing Report

- 93 Recommendations
- The provision of higher education should be expanded to allow for widening participation, particularly among women, ethnic minorities, and students with disabilities
- There should be diversity of provision of higher education

*University fees triple 3 times
in the past 20 years*



<http://mypad.northampton.ac.uk/uonattainmentgap>



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