

WSU Anti-racism statement

Worcester Students' Union (WSU) is committed to representing and championing diverse cultural heritage and our members from ethnic minorities, and to striving to be anti-racist in all we do. The death of George Floyd in May 2020 and the Black Lives Matter movement awakened society and organisations across the globe to the urgent need to address long-standing inequalities and to fight racism - including structural racism - wherever it exists. The Students' Union accepts that it should not have taken the death of George Floyd to awaken the world to structural racism and inequality, but it has, and the WSU Executive Committee and Senior Management feel it is of paramount importance that we need to change for our members - the students - and we continue to be passionate about this change. We released a statement in June 2020, a copy of which can be found [here](#), as well as one a year later about what we had done, which can be found [here](#).

We recognise that most of our staff are white and so, as a team, we have limited lived or personal experiences of racism. We want to be honest about this but, in mitigation, work with students and experts in the field of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) to ensure we understand and act accordingly. We recognise we have been part of a larger system of inequality that has prevailed for too long and, therefore, we have been critically reflecting on our organisation and the ways in which we engage students from ethnic minorities and with diverse cultural heritages. We are also alert to the fact that intersectionality means that students can be oppressed and affected by discrimination in a variety of ways, not just through racism.

Things we are doing on our journey to anti-racism, as part of our short and longer term operational and strategic plans, include:

- Using external expertise, reviewing, and changing how we recruit core staff and how we can widen access to our employment opportunities to create a more diverse and representative team that reflects our student body.
- We have created an internal EDI Working Group to scrutinise all aspects of our operations, within which anti-racism is high on the agenda. Our EDI Policy, which underpins the work of this group, can be found [here](#).
- Pressing the University to develop their own EDI strategy, based on a Race Equity paper the SU President and Chief Executive drew up in July 2020, with the University's then Pro Vice Chancellor (Students) and the Director of Access and Inclusion. The President of the SU has a seat on a (relatively) new EDI Committee of the University. Things we believe need to be addressed include (but are not limited to) the black awarding gap, diversity of staffing in academic and professional support roles, greater understanding, and

recognition (within policies and practices) of religious observance and decolonising the curriculum. At the time of writing this statement, we are beginning to see progress and positive intention from the University. We will, however, continue to push for change within the University to ensure intended actions come to fruition.

- Training our core staff on a rolling basis in race equity (which includes concepts such as privilege and unconscious bias). Members of our senior leadership team have, also, undertaken Leadership on Race Equity training. Our Chief Executive is part of a cohort of SU senior leaders who are championing race equity developments across the sector.

- Working with our student Networks and societies who represent and engage students of diverse cultural heritage to build relationships, support them to flourish and grow their membership, and to bring issues around their experience to our attention that need addressing. We aim to eradicate barriers to participation and involvement so the SU can say it is truly inclusive. Our Welfare and Inclusion Council, for example, exists to drive debate, consider student and societal issues, form policy, and create a space for collaboration on the Union's representative work on welfare, inclusion, equity, and sustainable development.

- Continuing to work with students to review the terminology we use, particularly with our REN (Race Equality Network).

- Monitoring student engagement statistics with our opportunities, including (but not limited to) societies, sports clubs, networks, elections and officer roles, representation, and advice and support, to ensure we create action plans where students are not getting involved and to understand why.

- Training our student groups in EDI, allyship, and inclusion as part of the #Teamworc ethos and further embedding TeamWorc UNITED accreditation - details of which can be found here and on our website here [#TeamWorc United \(worcsu.com\)](https://www.worcsu.com/#TeamWorcUnited)

- Eradicating and taking a zero-tolerance approach to any discriminatory or racist behaviour within our student sport and other student groups, invoking our disciplinary procedures when students breach our code of conduct.

- Promoting, hosting, and collaborating with students on events that are culturally significant for students of diverse heritage, all year round.

- Endeavour to be less euro-centric in the things we talk about and communicate and make proactive efforts to broaden our horizons in the things we debate and do.

- Review our events programme in the Hangar and take on feedback from our student groups to ensure we are welcoming to students of diverse heritage and that they feel at home in our venue and at our events.

- Our Chief Executive is a member of the BUCS (British Universities and Colleges Sport) Inclusion Board, with a specific focus on race equity, as well as student behaviour in sport. A great deal of learning and insight comes from this group that is brought back to WSU.

-We are working to support the Executive Committee of the national ACS (African-Caribbean Societies') Sports League to grow and embed their offer amongst ACS's nationally

We know change will take time and that we have a long way to go but we are passionate about achieving tangible results and ensuring a positive environment where diversity is celebrated.

We don't want those with lived experience to be responsible for making the changes needed and recognise that it can be emotionally very harmful for people when this is asked of them. We are determined to lead the change.

If you want to speak to us more about our aims, however, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact the President, Al, on a.linforth@worc.ac.uk and/or the Chief Executive, Sophie on s.williams@worc.ac.uk.
