Sheffield Hallam University

Race Equality Charter

A Summary Report of the Survey Findings

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Race Equality Charter

Sheffield Hallam is committed to addressing racial inequalities and creating an inclusive culture and environment where individuals are able to thrive, irrespective of their race or ethnicity. In January 2018, Sheffield Hallam signed up to the Race Equality Charter, which is a national charter mark that promotes the representation, progress and success of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff and students in the Higher Education sector.

This report summarises the key findings from staff and student responses to the Race Equality Charter surveys, which are mandatory aspects of the Race Equality Charter application. The survey objectives were to explore the lived experiences of staff and students in relation to race equality and to identify emerging themes that can help inform additional research and possible actions.
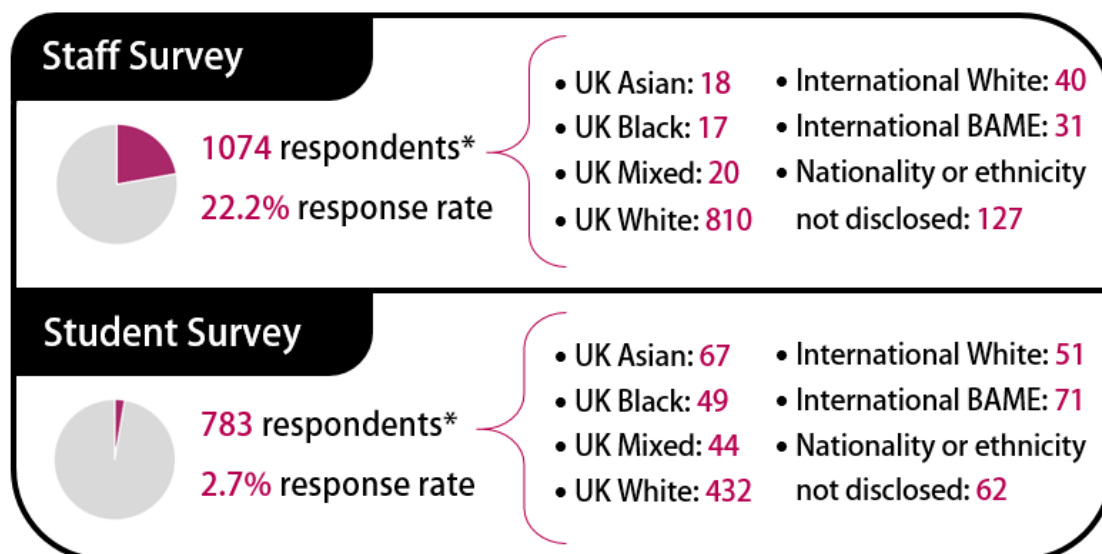
Survey Respondents

The target populations for the surveys were all students and staff who are studying at or employed directly by Sheffield Hallam. Both surveys were launched in October 2018 and closed the following month in November. The response rate for the staff survey was 22.2% and the response rate for the student survey was 2.7% (see Figure 1).

The data presented includes illustrative quotations which are taken from the written comments of staff and students. These quotations are reported anonymously and every effort has been made to ensure that no individual is personally identifiable.

Across both surveys, responses by UK respondents were analysed by specific ethnic group. However, International respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds were aggregated due to the small numbers who completed the surveys.

The findings from the surveys should be treated with a degree of caution, particularly due to the low response rate on the student survey. There is a need to gather more evidence to substantiate the findings of the surveys by undertaking further work, such as conducting focus groups and interviews, and by scrutinising data from other sources.

Figure 1: Response rates and number of survey respondents by ethnicity and nationality

Staff Survey

1074 respondents*
22.2% response rate

- UK Asian: 18
- UK Black: 17
- UK Mixed: 20
- UK White: 810
- International White: 40
- International BAME: 31
- Nationality or ethnicity not disclosed: 127

Student Survey

783 respondents*
2.7% response rate

- UK Asian: 67
- UK Black: 49
- UK Mixed: 44
- UK White: 432
- International White: 51
- International BAME: 71
- Nationality or ethnicity not disclosed: 62

*The number of respondents from UK Other backgrounds were too small to report

Figure 2: Illustrative quotes from survey respondents

Quotes provided by student respondents are shown on the left, while quotes by staff respondents are displayed on the right.

IN MY ALMOST 3 YEARS NEVER HAVE I HAD A TUTOR FROM A BME BACKGROUND. **WHAT DOES THAT SAY ABOUT OUR UNIVERSITY?**

I ALREADY QUESTION MYSELF - LIKE DO I REALLY BELONG IN THIS ENVIRONMENT. **I DON'T SEE MYSELF ANYWHERE.**

SHU IS AN ETHNICALLY DIVERSE PLACE TO STUDY, HOWEVER THERE ISN'T MUCH INTEGRATION BETWEEN GROUPS.

THERE'S A GREAT MIX OF CULTURES. I FEEL COMFORTABLE IN MY OWN SKIN.

I **ALREADY FEEL QUITE OSTRACISED.**

I DON'T WANT TO BE LABELLED FURTHER AS THE ONLY PERSON OF COLOUR WHO CONTINUES TO BRING UP RACIAL ISSUES OR DISCRIMINATION.

IT CAN BE SUBTLE AND APPEAR HARMLESS, YET REALLY IT LEAVES A PERSON FEELING AN **OUTCAST AND ALONE.**

IN MY COURSE WE DISCUSSED DIVERSITY AND HOW TO CHALLENGE OPPRESSION AND DISCRIMINATION. THIS WAS VERY **EMPOWERING.**

THERE IS A **LACK OF DIVERSITY** ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY AT ALL LEVELS.

IT DOES AFFECT MY SENSE OF BELONGING WHILST EMPLOYED HERE.

I LOOK AROUND MY DEPARTMENT AND SEE ESSENTIALLY **A SEA OF WHITE FACES.**

WHAT I'M EXPERIENCING IS NOT EXPLICIT YET I FEEL THAT THERE IS A RACIAL UNDERCURRENT.

I HAVE WORKED HERE FOR TWO YEARS AND HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE PROCEDURE IS TO REPORT RACIAL OR OTHER DISCRIMINATION.

INAPPROPRIATE COMMENTS ARE MADE DAILY DUE TO IGNORANCE AND THEY ARE NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY WHEN YOU EXPLAIN WHY COMMENTS ARE OFFENSIVE.

I WAS APPROACHED BY STUDENTS WHO SAID THEY FELT **REALLY UPSET** BY THE UNIVERSITY'S RESPONSE.

YOU FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN AN INTERVIEW TO MAKE UP A 'QUOTA'. BUT YOU KNOW **THEY WILL NEVER GIVE YOU THE JOB.**

Perceptions and Impact of Equality and Diversity

- A prominent theme in comments provided by staff across various ethnic backgrounds and nationalities was a perceived lack of diversity in the profile of staff at all levels of the institution, including across senior management and leadership positions.

- There were more varied perceptions across both surveys about the diversity of the student population.
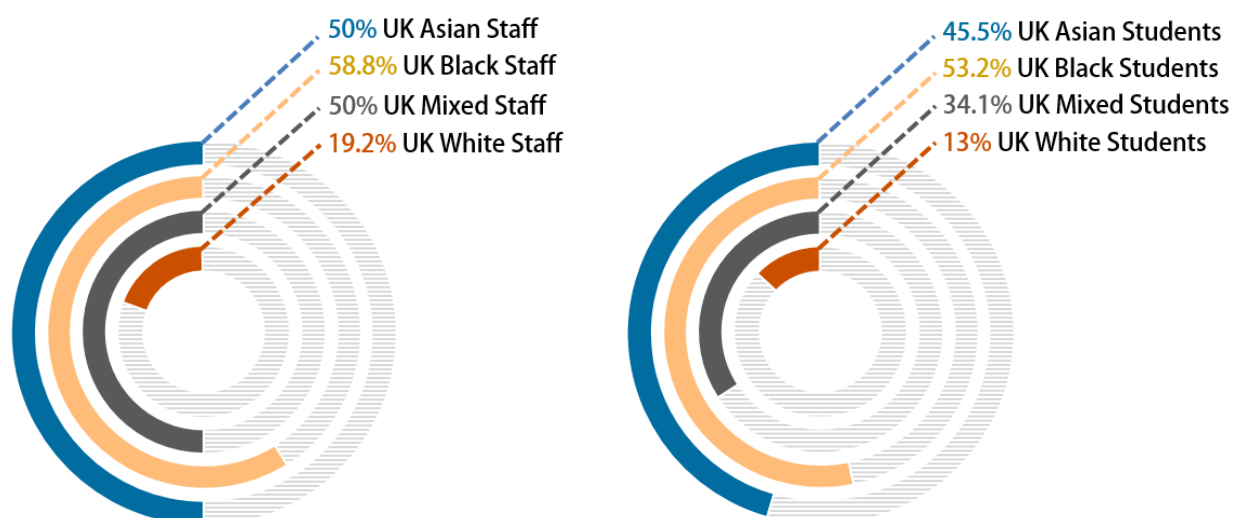
> "I believe our diversity profile across all characteristics is poor but it is particularly poor in terms of ethnicity. Our University is predominantly white across most grades and types of staff" (Staff, UK, White).

- Across both surveys, UK respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds were more likely than White respondents to agree that the ethnic or racial diversity of the institution has an impact on their sense of belonging (see Figure 3).

- Survey comments show that, in areas of the institution where the level of diversity was considered to be relatively high, a number of student respondents reported that they had been able to relate and affiliate with others. In areas where there was a perceived lack of diversity, some student and staff ethnic minority respondents alluded to the pressures of trying to fit in and feeling isolated.
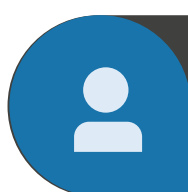
> "It's hard for people that aren't from your ethnic or cultural background to understand you so you in turn feel like a minority and feel pressured to change to fit in with your surrounding people and not be an outcast. But who enjoys themselves when they aren't themselves?" (Student, UK, Asian)

Figure 3: Percentages of UK staff and student respondents that strongly agreed or agreed with the statement 'The ethnic/racial diversity of Sheffield Hallam impacts on my sense of belonging'

- 50% UK Asian Staff
- 58.8% UK Black Staff
- 50% UK Mixed Staff
- 19.2% UK White Staff

- 45.5% UK Asian Students
- 53.2% UK Black Students
- 34.1% UK Mixed Students
- 13% UK White Students

Perceived Treatment and Reporting Incidents of Discrimination on Campus

- In the surveys, 8.9% of staff respondents and 5% of student respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they have witnessed racial discrimination on campus. The figure of 35.3% for UK staff respondents from Asian or Black backgrounds was notably higher.

- More than one-third of UK Black staff respondents and one-quarter of UK Asian staff respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they have been the victim of racial discrimination on campus (see Figure 4).

- A number of UK and International staff and student respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds highlighted the ways in which prejudice was expressed through subtle forms, ignorant remarks and preconceived assumptions.

> "While I don't believe that I'm mistreated by colleagues, I do believe that I'm treated differently. I encounter micro-aggressions. There is no deliberate intent here, but these are examples of my otherness being highlighted on an almost daily basis." (Staff, UK, Other)

- A key recommendation proposed by many staff was the need to increase the visibility of procedures to report incidents of discrimination, with survey comments indicating that there was variation across respondents in their awareness of existing mechanisms.

- UK staff and student respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds were less confident than their White counterparts that appropriate action would be taken if they reported a race-related incident to the institution (see Figure 4). As an example of this point, it was perceived that:

> "The response to the allegations was passive and inadequate. There was a clear message sent out to all staff and students of colour that racial harassment was not an important consideration." (Staff, UK, Mixed)

Figure 4: Percentages of UK staff and student respondents that strongly agreed or agreed with statements relating to incidents of racial discrimination and action being taken

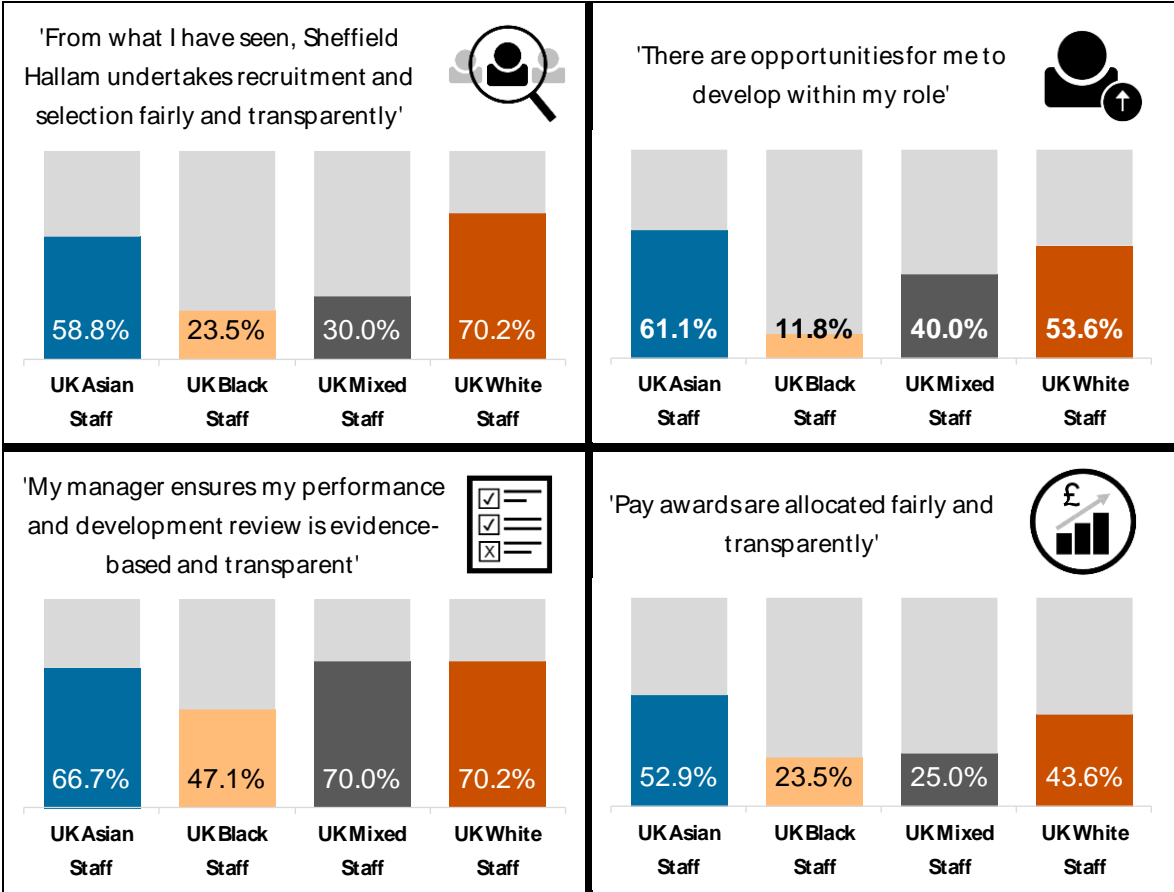|	Staff				Student			
	UK Asian	UK Black	UK Mixed	UK White	UK Asian	UK Black	UK Mixed	UK White
'I have been the victim of racial discrimination on campus'	25.0%	35.3%	0.0%	0.9%	9.1%	2.1%	2.3%	0.2%
'If I reported a race-related incident to my institution, appropriate action would be taken'	37.5%	17.6%	31.6%	61.3%	31.7%	31.9%	27.9%	49.3%

Internal Policies, Procedures and Structures

- UK staff respondents from Black or Mixed backgrounds responded less favourably than other groups about their employment experiences, opportunities for development and the fairness and transparency of internal procedures (see Figure 5). International BAME staff responded more positively than International White staff in this theme.

- Analysis of the comments suggest that several UK and International staff respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds consider their prospects for promotion, career development and support to be low. Decision-making processes about progression and pay were also considered to lack transparency and consistency by many staff. As an example of this point, it was perceived that:

> "Promotion to senior roles is not seen as even an option for ethnic minority staff. Internal recruitment for senior roles depends on who you know and whether you are liked, and is not based on talent, skill, knowledge or experience." (Staff, UK, Mixed)

- Staff from all backgrounds provided a range of suggestions to rectify the potential bias in recruitment and selection procedures, for example, anonymising the application process. Other recommendations focused on the need to ensure equality and diversity training is more active and mandatory to challenge staff and to promote reflection and reflexivity.

Figure 5: Percentages of UK staff respondents that strongly agreed or agreed with statements relating to recruitment, development and pay

'From what I have seen, Sheffield Hallam undertakes recruitment and selection fairly and transparently'

UK Asian Staff	UK Black Staff	UK Mixed Staff	UK White Staff
58.8%	23.5%	30.0%	70.2%

'There are opportunities for me to develop within my role'

UK Asian Staff	UK Black Staff	UK Mixed Staff	UK White Staff
61.1%	11.8%	40.0%	53.6%

'My manager ensures my performance and development review is evidence-based and transparent'

UK Asian Staff	UK Black Staff	UK Mixed Staff	UK White Staff
66.7%	47.1%	70.0%	70.2%

'Pay awards are allocated fairly and transparently'

UK Asian Staff	UK Black Staff	UK Mixed Staff	UK White Staff
52.9%	23.5%	25.0%	43.6%

Inclusive Learning, Teaching and Assessment Practices

- UK Asian student respondents were less likely than other UK groups of student respondents to strongly agree or agree with a series of statements relating to course content and the inclusion of ethnicity and race in academic discussions. In contrast, higher percentages of International BAME student respondents agreed with these statements than International White students.

- Several student respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds expressed the view that their course content had not incorporated multi-cultural perspectives, whereas a number of White student respondents questioned the relevance of race and equality within their subject area.

> "The course is predominantly taught by white middle class tutors who bring their own experiences, interests and knowledge of the world. This often excludes any referencing to the black or ethnic minority experience."
> (Student, UK, Black)

- UK student respondents from Black backgrounds were more likely than other UK groups to respond in agreement with many statements relating to learning, teaching and assessment, such as their understanding of employment opportunities, skills development and academic support.

Local Population and Community

- In the surveys, 23.5% of staff respondents and 15.1% of student respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they have witnessed racial discrimination in the local area. The figure of 66.7% for UK staff respondents from Asian backgrounds was notably higher.

- One-third of UK Asian staff respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they have been the victim of racial discrimination in the local area (see Figure 6).

- Many staff and student respondents expressed an awareness of ethnic or racial tensions within the local community.

Figure 6: Percentages of UK staff and student respondents that strongly agreed or agreed with statements relating to the local area and the local community

	Staff				Student			
	UK Asian	UK Black	UK Mixed	UK White	UK Asian	UK Black	UK Mixed	UK White
'I have been the victim of racial discrimination in the local area'	33.3%	17.6%	20.0%	0.7%	13.6%	14.9%	15.9%	1.4%
'I am aware of ethnic/racial tensions within the local community'	55.6%	52.9%	26.3%	25.6%	38.8%	48.9%	40.9%	21.1%

Summary of Findings

The responses to the REC surveys indicate that there were some differences in the perceptions and experiences reported by staff and students across ethnic groups. More than one-third of UK staff respondents from Asian or Black backgrounds agreed that they have witnessed racial discrimination on campus. Analysis of the comments implied that many respondents, in particular staff, held some reservations about the institution's ability to respond appropriately to race-related incidents of discrimination.

In the staff survey, there were disparities between ethnic groups in relation to UK staff members' perceptions about their employment experiences, opportunities for development and the fairness and transparency of internal procedures. According to the student survey, UK Asian students in particular were less positive about their experiences of learning, teaching and assessment practices. Nevertheless, there is a need to treat the findings of the student survey with a degree of caution as a result of the low response rate.

What's Next?

The following priorities are proposed by the Race Equality Steering Group to address the findings of the staff and student surveys:

- Conduct follow-up research and activities to enhance the institution's understanding of the experiences of ethnic minority staff and students across all areas and to substantiate the findings that were reported in the surveys;

- Develop a policy statement and principles in relation to equality and diversity and ensure that these are embedded in all university decisions and processes;

- Develop and apply a proactive action plan relating to HR recruitment and progression and ensure that policies, procedures and structures are fully inclusive;

- Review existing staff training on equality and diversity and raise awareness of what constitutes racial discrimination;

- Raise staff and students' confidence in the University's ability to adopt a zero tolerance stance against racial discrimination;

- Raise awareness of the Report and Support service as a tool for reporting all incidents of racial discrimination under the 'Stand Together' campaign;

- Clearly communicate and report the outcomes of race-related incidents of discrimination.

Interpretation, analysis and reporting by Student Engagement, Evaluation and Research.

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