

ROYAL CENTRAL

SCHOOL OF SPEECH & DRAMA • UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Anti-Racism Action Plan Year-End Report

July 2021

Introduction

This year-end report responds to Central's pledge to monitor its work on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and especially its Anti-Racism Action Plan on a regular basis. It is intended to reflect on our achievements, as well as be transparent about our shortcomings.

Key staff taking forward the Anti-Racism Action Plan:

- George Caird, Interim Principal (GC)
- Debbie Scully, Deputy Principal, Clerk to the Governors (DS)
- Julia Roberts, Director Engagement & Enterprise (JR)
- Hugo Burchell, Academic Registrar, Director of Academic Services (HB)
- Heather Akif, Director of Operations (HA) (left post 30.03.21)
- Dr Josh Abrams, Interim Dean of School (JA)
- Dr Broderick Chow, Interim Deputy Dean (BC)
- Dr Javeria Shah, Academic & Inclusion Specialist (JS)
- Ola Adeyemi, Head of Finance (OA)
- Danielle Chavrimootoo, EDI Adviser (DC)

Work continues to map out a framework for embedding EDI into Central's Strategic Plan which will be implemented by the new Principal during 2021.

Complaints

1. **Action: Central will investigate every complaint of racism received**

Responsibility: GC

Deadline: Ongoing

- In the summer of 2020 when 34 complaints, many in relation to historic allegations of sexual harassment and other professional misconduct issues, were registered as a result of the Black Lives Matter movement, it became clear that Central's policies and procedures on complaints required updating and interconnecting. These policies comprised the Student Code of Conduct, the Staff Professional Code of Conduct, the Student Complaint Procedure, the Investigation Policy, the Grievance Policy, the Disciplinary Procedures, Appeal Processes and other policies relating to students and staff.
- The need for an overarching Complaints Framework was identified and this was written and introduced in June 2020. In addition to connecting the existing policies as far as was initially possible, the Complaints Framework confirmed Central's commitment to addressing historical complaints within this framework.
- In addition to the existing policies, it was decided that an additional *Dignity at Work and Study* should be created in order to set out a clear directive on standards of conduct and behaviour expected of anyone working or studying at Central. This was commissioned from Central's adviser, Danielle Chavrimootoo, who has created a draft policy that

is now being aligned with Central's Complaints Framework and existing policies. Subsequent to this, the OfS has issued guidance to providers which set-out a statement of expectations for preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct affecting students in higher education.

- A top-level external review of our existing policies is now being carried out in order that the wording of all policies can be clearly cross-referred, be accessible and easy to follow and align with employment legislation and OfS expectations.

Training for staff and students

2. **Action: Central will continue to deliver regular compulsory anti-racist training**

Responsibility: JS

Deadline: Ongoing

- At the end of January 2021, all permanent and fixed-term staff in post by the end of November 2020 had undertaken mandatory inclusion training. The training included online workshops with a leading national voice and training authority on anti-racism, Dr Muna Abdi, on the themes of 'What is a Microaggression?' and 'How to be an Ally'.
- Following the compulsory anti-racist staff training sessions and to help embed a culture that is fully inclusive, as part of the 2020/21 annual appraisal process staff are required to reflect on the training and provide examples of how

they will change/modify their behaviour and/or change systems and processes.

- 2020 student entrants have now received training. The aim is for a community-wide roll out in the 2021/22 academic year via the Equity and Inclusion Brightspace (Virtual Learning Environment) that Dr Javeria Shah is currently finalising.

3. **Action: Central will commit to delivering unconscious bias and sensitivity training for all staff, visiting lecturers and Board members on a regular basis**

Responsibility: GC/DS/BC

Deadline: Ongoing

- Training will continue in September 2021 including any new starters who have not yet received training.

4. **Action: Central will deliver unconscious bias and sensitivity training for all students as part of their induction**

Responsibility: HB

Deadline: Ongoing

- Training will continue for new student entrants in September 2021.

Curriculum

5. Action: To implement the 'Repairing the Curriculum: Anti-Racism and Pedagogical Change' project. This sets out a timescale and process for building concrete institutional change and embedding anti-racism into all Learning and Teaching at Central

Responsibility: BC

Deadline: Ongoing

See here for further information www.cssd.ac.uk/repairing-curriculum.

- The Repairing the Curriculum: Anti-Racism and Pedagogical Change project has completed its work for the academic year. It will continue to be an embedded part of Central's Learning and Teaching processes in the future.
- *Listening*: in June 2020, as a response to Central's statement on the Black Lives Matter movement and the murder of George Floyd, former students, especially from Black and Global Majority backgrounds, came forward to hold the School accountable to its statements.
- The Deputy Dean completed a report analysing all testimonies received via email and social media, as well as meetings and focus groups with Black and Global Majority alumni and current students. This analysis was shared in informal, open, and honest meetings with all academic staff during the autumn term 2020. Dialogue during these meetings focused on embedding anti-racism, inclusion and equity in each course, unit, reading list and production process.

- *Reflection*: in autumn 2020 the Repairing the Curriculum Working Group met for a reflective workshop aimed at identifying Central's values for Inclusive practice. These were shared at an all-faculty workshop in January 2021, where course teams discussed their ideas for enhancing their inclusive teaching.
- This was followed by two further forums on 'Decentring, Decolonising, and Repairing' and Neurodiversity in Learning, Teaching, and Assessment, facilitated by colleagues in Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS). Consultation with industry and sector expertise has taken place via the Independent Equity Committee, sector bodies and workshops with external organisations.
- *Dialogue and action*: review of courses has taken place through dialogue with course teams, the Deputy Dean, and the Inclusion Specialist. Course teams have completed Inclusive Practice Plans, identifying objectives for course enhancement in the short, medium, and long term. Action plans for all subject areas can be found in the full [Repairing the Curriculum Annual Report 2020-21](#).
- In 2020-21, Central funded eight course-level projects to support Repairing the Curriculum objectives at undergraduate, postgraduate, and short courses level.
- *Evaluation and further transformation*: in 2021-22 and beyond, Repairing the Curriculum will be an embedded part of Central's Learning and Teaching processes. Actions identified during this period of Repairing the Curriculum will be implemented formally starting in the 2021-22 academic year and reviewed annually. Academic staff personal Inclusive Practice Plans will be reviewed as part of appraisal.

6. Independent Equity Committee (IEC)

Responsibility: GC/BC

Deadline: Ongoing

Committee members appointed on 1 October 2020. The IEC provided important input for Central's Strategic Plan 2021-2023.

See here for further information www.cssd.ac.uk/independent-equity-committee.

The Committee will provide expertise and oversight of Central's anti-racist commitments as set out in its Anti-Racism Action Plan, will be independent and accountable, will meet 3 times per year and will report to the School's Governing Body.

Representation

7. **Action:** Central will develop a workforce of more diverse academic staff

Responsibility: GC

Deadline: Ongoing

- The Workforce Diversity Working Group was set up in March 2021 and met five times in the spring/summer of 2021. A further meeting to confirm the key measure(s) will take place during the Autumn term. Central will aim to fill at least 36% of vacant posts by Global Majority staff during the period 2021 – 2023 as a baseline for future growth (36% represents the BAME population of the London Borough of Camden plus 2%). All appointment processes will ensure that they follow Equity and Inclusion guidelines including positive action where appropriate.

8. **Action:** Central will make sure students and staff have access to counsellors who have a lived experience of the Black identity

Responsibility: HB

Deadline: Ongoing

- Students at Central have access to a diverse team of counsellors, including counsellors with lived experience of the Black identity.

9. **Action:** Central will set up a network where students of colour can seek advice and support from alumni of colour

Responsibility: JS

Deadline: Ongoing

Support for our students:

- Following a call out to our alumni, we received 145 offers of help from alumni interested in sharing their industry expertise with our current students, leading workshops, speaking at networking events and acting as mentors.
- An online Networking Event for Black and Global Majority students, staff and alumni was organised on Thursday 25 February at 6.00pm and included alumni key speakers. 76 registered to attend, a mixture of current students, staff, recent graduates and more established alumni attended and had the chance to network in small break out rooms. Feedback included that it was a very useful event, which should be repeated.
- Another event is planned for 2021/22 and the potential for an alumni-led network will be further investigated.

10. Action: Central will publish regular information on equity and inclusion progress to all stakeholders

Responsibility: All

Deadline: Ongoing

- The Anti-Racism page on the website includes a graphic timeline and regular updates on progress against the key areas of the action plan www.cssd.ac.uk/anti-racism-at-central.
- Regular bulletins are being circulated to all staff and all students.
- The Anti-Racism Action Plan was fully reviewed in Term 3, and the Governing Body has now approved the [Equity and Inclusion Action](#) Plan, which sets concrete and measurable objectives for creating an inclusive institution.
- In autumn, further developments are planned for an Equity and Inclusion webpage, led by Dr Javeria Shah.
- Central will continue to make prominent the profile of its Board members www.cssd.ac.uk/About-Central/Governance/governing-body.

11. Action: Central will continue to include more people of colour on the Board

Responsibility: Nominations Committee

Deadline: Ongoing

- Central continues to address all aspects of diversity of its [Governing Body](#) membership across the range of protected characteristics, using various external platforms and mechanisms to widen the search for members from diverse communities and underrepresented groups.
- As at January 2021, 31% of Central's Governing Body had declared an ethnicity other than 'white', up from 10% of the membership in 2018.
- As at January 2021, the balance of gender identity was comprised of 50% male, 44% female and 6% non-binary.
- The [Governor Appointments](#) page of the website provides information on providing expressions of interest from anyone wishing to consider a Governing Body role.
- The Nominations Committee continues to regularly review the balance of skills, gender and background on the Board. This year, Board appointments attracted several candidates from diverse backgrounds. The recent appointments of Josette Bushell-Mingo and Professor Rajinder Dudrah will further increase the diversity and range on the Board.

Intersectionality

- We acknowledge the intersectionality of our community and continue to work towards equity, diversity and inclusion in all its forms.

Funding to support inclusion initiatives

- In July, the Board of Governors confirmed and approved Central's budget for 2021/22 which includes funding for EDI initiatives.
- Further funds to support inclusion initiatives have been made available through fundraising. An anonymous donor has pledged £30,000 for one Undergraduate Scholarship of £5,000 and for one Postgraduate Black and Global Majority Scholarship of £5,000 over a period of three years.