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Abstract Template for:

Closing the gap: research and practice on Black and Minority Ethnic student attainment in Higher Education

Preferred Presentation Type	x☐Oral Presentation ☐ Poster ☐No preference
Is the presenting author a student?	☐Yes x☐ No
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Title (maximum 25 words)

The Leeds Beckett University (LBU) Deep Dive project: actions to address home BME undergraduate (UG) students' degree attainment.

Theme	☐ Theory and pedagogy ☐ Research on race and ethnicity in higher education ☐ Policy reviews and proposals x☐ Practices, interventions and initiatives ☐ Other

Authors Name, biography and affiliations (100 words per presenter)

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Dr Susan Smith is Head of Curriculum Development and Review in the Centre for Learning and Teaching at Leeds Beckett University. Her research interests are in student metacognition and the development of innovative curricula and she has published widely.

Abstract (maximum 300 words)

This presentation will outline the process, initial findings and actions from the current Deep Dive project which

is exploring home BME undergraduate students' attainment and how the University can support them more effectively to get more 2:1 and 1st class degrees.

Despite numbers of BME students being relatively small at LBU (12%), there is a clear attainment gap.

BME students across the sector are more likely than their white peers to get a Third or 2:2. (Broeche and Nicholls, 2007; Richardson, 2008). At LBU, 49.8% BME students get good degrees compared to 64.5% of white students. Nationally 73% of white students get 1st and 2:1s but 58.5% of BME students nationally get 1sts and 2:1s. Our University *is below* average for attainment for white *and* BME students both in our own University and compared to the sector and the gap in white and BME attainment remains significant.

A broadly interpretive approach was adopted for this project. Detailed analysis of quantitative data relating to 5 large UG courses, analysis of course documentation and of qualitative data from staff and student focus groups was undertaken.

Six actions (listed below) were identified from the emergent findings and will be discussed. These are part of a more inclusive approach to practice catalysed by our Race Equality Charter Mark Action Plan and a parallel Deep Dive project about supporting disabled students.

a) the identification of two Inclusivity Champions per School and Service

b) establishing a pan-University group to address inclusive assessment practice;

c) establishing a work group exploring BME student uptake of placement opportunities;

d) "unconscious bias" training for all staff

e) establishing a project to review "white curricula" which would mirror the existing NUS campaign "Why is my curriculum white?

f) working with the SU to encourage more BME students to stand as student course representatives.

Word count (excluding references) 300

References

Broecke, S., & Nicholls, T. (2007). Ethnicity and degree attainment. Research report RW92 Department for Education and Skills (DFES) Available on line at: www.dfes.gov.uk/research/

Abstract Template for:

Closing the gap: research and practice on Black and Minority Ethnic student attainment in Higher Education

Richardson, J. T. E. (2008). The attainment of ethnic minority students in UK higher education.

Studies in Higher Education, 33(1), 33-48.

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