



DE MONTFORT
UNIVERSITY
LEICESTER

DECOLONISING DMU



Decolonising DMU: Towards the Anti-Racist Classroom

Kaushika Patel
Chris Hall
Richard Hall

decolonisingdmu@dmu.ac.uk | www.dmu.ac.uk/decolonising | [@DecolonisingDMU](https://twitter.com/DecolonisingDMU)



Kaushika Patel, PVC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, DDMU Project Director

Chris Hall, Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, leads DDMU's Institutional workstream



[Richard Hall](#) (no relation), Professor of Education, directs DDMU's research and evaluation



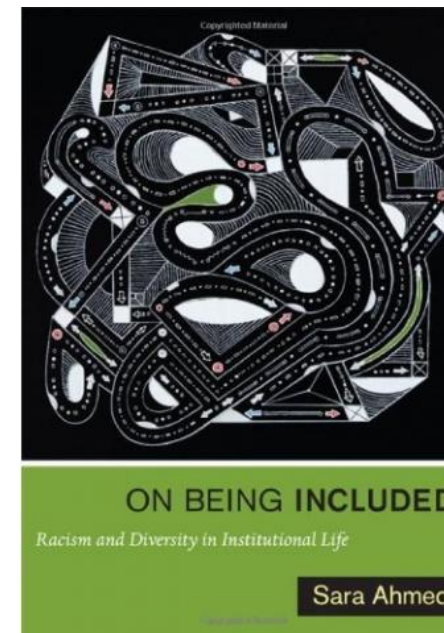
Session aims

- To discuss why institutions must move beyond projects for closing the BAME attainment gap and the core tenets of the Race Equality Charter to focus upon decolonising the classroom.
- To analyse DMU's strategic approach, in order to consider practices that may be transferable, including through interdisciplinary dialogues and for student support.
- To explore the subject-specific, curriculum design and delivery challenges and opportunities of implementing a developmental, institutional strategy for decolonising the classroom.



#RADICALDMU19
RADICAL PEDAGOGIES:
MACPHERSON 20 YEARS ON
DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY
19 SEPTEMBER 2019
MACPHERSON
EDUCATION
JUSTICE
TINYURL.COM/RADICALDMU

**Our debt to those who
struggled before us**



Building the Anti-Racist Classroom

- Making the revolution irresistible -



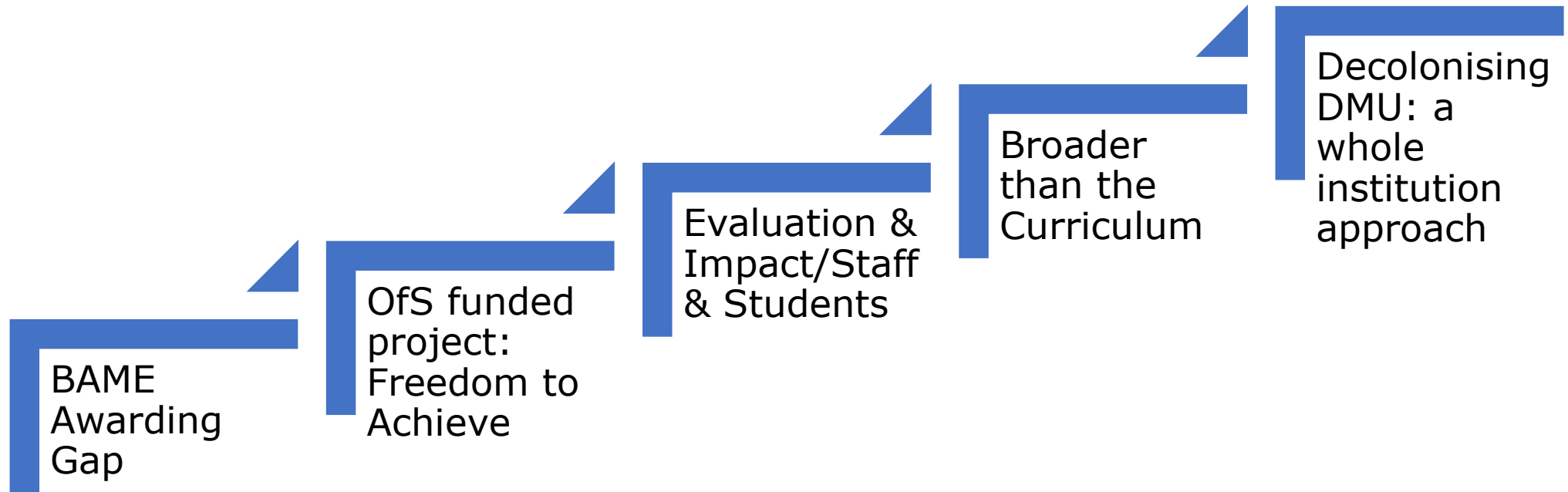
BARC IS TRANSFORMING • ABOUT BARC • EVENTS • BLOG • RESOURCES • CONTACT

BARC BANK FUNDED PROJECTS

BARC is Transforming

BARC is an international collective of women of colour scholar activists. We aim to build anti-racist pedagogic communities of students and university workers through sustained collective organizing, collaboration and radical thinking. Our practice is led by our commitments to critical theory, intersectional feminisms and decolonizing frameworks.

Decolonising DMU: Towards the Anti-Racist University





Strategic rationale: Freedom to Achieve

Office for Students funded Project, led by Kingston University to examine positive ways of addressing the attainment gap.

DMU recruited 6 Fair Outcome champions from existing staff: One per faculty and one in Library and Learning services and one Corporate champion.

Faculty FOC - Each staff member was tasked 10 undergraduate programmes to look after.

Freedom to Achieve Overview



Freedom to Achieve Overview



Relationships

**Lack of student
integration
Lack of role
models
Personal tutoring**

Development

**Placements
Employability
Library**

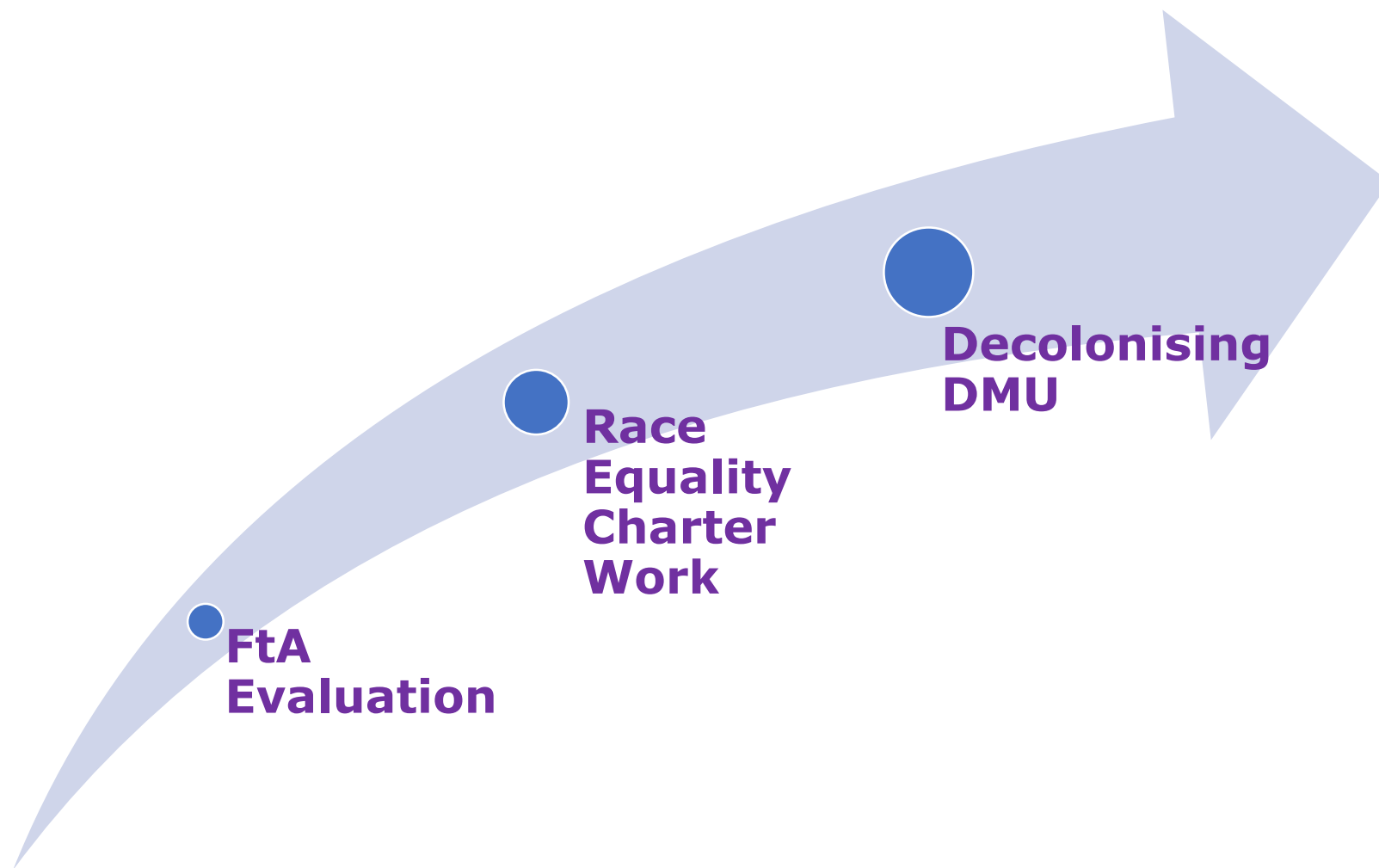
Teaching and learning

**Feedback
Assessment
Cultural
inclusivity**

Community

**Campus space
Societies**

Freedom to Achieve to Decolonising DMU (DDMU)





Decolonising DMU recognises that racial inequality in Britain originates from colonialism. In seeking to decolonise, we are creating an anti-racist university which allows all to succeed, and which celebrates the rich diversity and heritage of DMU. It shifts the burden and conversation away from one of deficit, blame and shame, to recognise that racial inequality has been built over centuries on the dominant western and northern hemispheres and patriarchal interpretation of values and merit. This in turn has created systems, hierarchies and behaviours that create disadvantage and fail to recognise the rich history and world contributions of the global majority.

Different to the strategies of many Higher Education Institutions, Decolonising DMU stretches far beyond the curriculum. It acknowledges that the scale of the challenge runs deep into examining the everyday norms of university life and will require all DMU staff and students to acknowledge, identify, discuss and seek to understand the issues. It is critical that we work collectively, with respect and dignity, in order to work for institutional solutions that are underpinned by the reality that our staff, students and communities will benefit from an anti-racist university.

Strategic rationale: Decolonising DMU



BLACK LIVES MATTER

DMU Statement

To stand against racism means we stand for anti-racism and DMU cannot condemn any individual or organisation without looking in the mirror and critiquing and challenging ourselves.

To stand against racism and for anti-racism we have to be strong enough to challenge institutional racism and continue to look at our own actions and behaviours.



Strategic activity:

consider the opportunities and challenges for institutional structures, cultures and practices emerging from the ethos of decolonising and the realities of white privilege/whiteness.



Strategic risks impact the classroom

Culture

- Surfacing latent racism, including race-related incidents
- Lack of institutional understanding: e.g. white privilege/fragility
- Student and staff fears of being accused
- Lack of institutional emotional resilience
- Burden of responsibility falling to students and staff of colour

Business case

- Concerns that student and staff applications will drop
- Just a 'phase' a new 'buzz' word/initiative
- Concerns re partners perspectives, local/national/international
- Reputational challenges? Loss of business?



Strategic hopes impact the classroom

Culture

- Morally bold in language and action, as a societal challenge
- Acknowledge the existence of institutional racism and hate crime
- Centring the University's obligation to open debate
- Enabling a broader range of voices to be heard

Relationships

- Building communities of allies across DMU and wider
- Recognise and reflect the diversity of the university population

Accountability

- Hold senior teams accountable
- Active change to build an anti-racist university

DDMU: Institutional Workstream



DDMU: Staff Workstream



DDMU: Student Workstream



Raising awareness: DSU, student channels, societies, MarComms



Creating spaces that drive conversation



Student led activities/ events



Engagement with society champions



Supportive and safe environments



DDMU: Library Workstream



Decolonising our collection

Demonstrate cultural awareness and reflect our University community.



Culturally aware spaces

Better understanding of BAME student usage of LLS spaces, inform service development and new build.



Promoting "Workforce Diversity"

Work with Library profession to develop more representative staff profile

Staff development initiatives, pipeline for new and existing staff



Raise staff awareness:

provide forum for practice sharing and discussion with workshops, team talks and a read to debate series



Provide
Supportive and safe
environments,
study, community
and discussion





Issues in Decolonising

Institutional: cultures; management structures; governance; internal regulation and performance management; policies; and procedures.

Staff-related: workloads; curriculum design, delivery and assessment; management and delivery of research and public engagement; approaches to professional development; the regulation of relationships; and, the role of professional services' staff in the design and delivery of services?

Student-related: co-production of the curriculum; engagement with student support services; volunteering and public engagement; the role of students' unions and societies; and relationships developed on-campus.

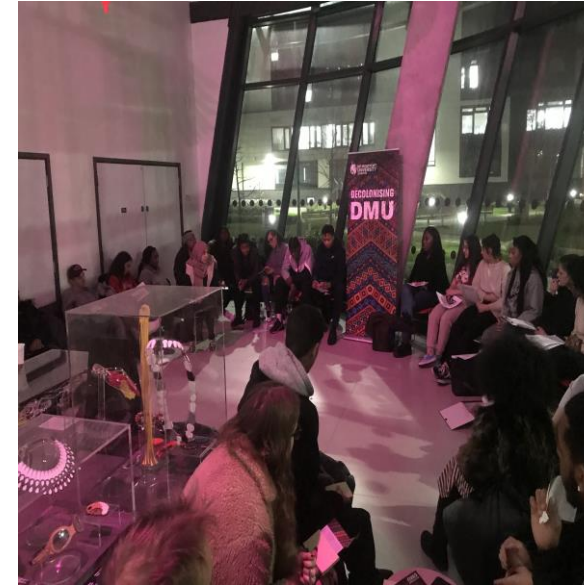
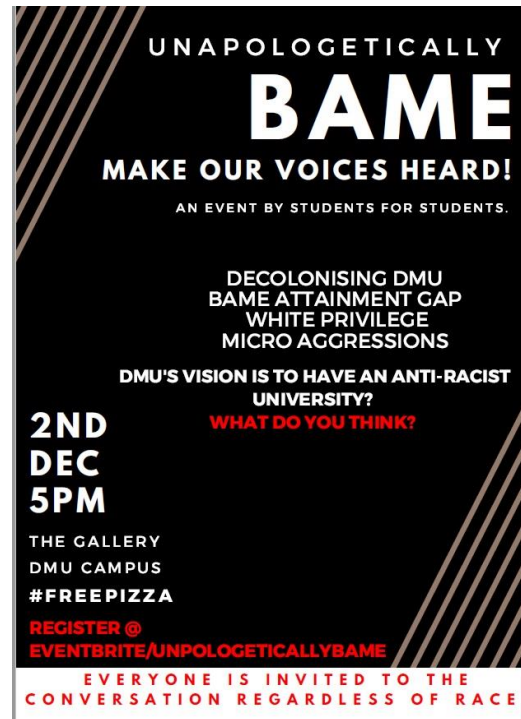


Institutional research question (to consider)

What is the relationship between decoloniality and the idea of the University?

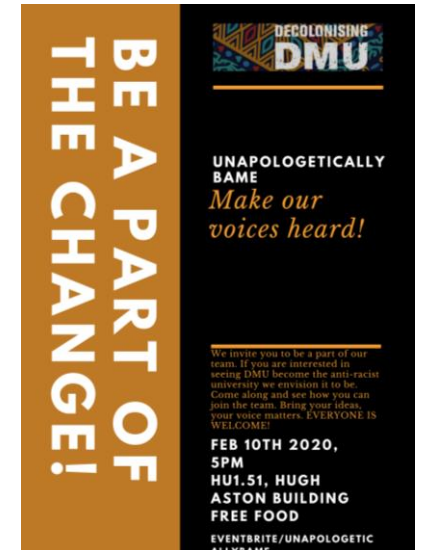
Issues

- Impacts of austerity and pandemic
- Ideas of the scholarly community and public university
- Metrics and performance management
- Student-as-consumer or producer
- Impacts of governance, regulation and funding
- Intersectionality
- E&D



"One aspect of the conversation that went really well was when we went round the room and asked everyone to share either in a few words how race has affected them or to share an experience. This was a really powerful exercise and everyone participated."

- 
- Support for those already-activist
 - Conversations about race and racism should not be optional but a compulsory part of each student's university experience
 - Universal support for expression and against silencing, including safe spaces
 - Making the vision of decolonizing tangible, in order to connect the classroom to the institution
 - Building trust in institutional messaging and culture
 - Building spaces and times for staff to listen to students





"XXXX tutors/teacher need to familiarise themselves with black students and learn to understand us instead of giving us a 1 year 'trial' period- where they challenge us to see whether or not we match up to the stereotypes or not. It makes us feel like we have to work harder to be recognised as a regular student."

"Faculties need to decolonise the reading list".

"Firstly, we need to, as students, speak to members of staff at DMU bring them into the conversation so we can discuss."

"People not sitting together at university in lecture is not a university problem it is a society issue."

DR BEN WHITHAM

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND POLITICS



In 2018 I asked two third-year students who had written essays on postcolonial theory for my second-year international relations module whether they would be interested in leading a staff-student reading group on Akala's book *Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire*. They agreed, and found a couple more volunteers, so we had [four student leaders to facilitate the group](#). Lecturers participated, but the majority of the group were students – mostly BAME students, though white students joined too – and academic roles were effectively reversed. I acted as the student leaders' administrator, organising room bookings and refreshments, running the mailing list and adding new members. The students provided the intellectual leadership and decision-making. They opened, led and facilitated each discussion. 15-20 regular attendees met fortnightly on a Thursday evening for two hours (though we often ran over!) to discuss a chapter from the book. In this relaxed space, controlled by students, they led us through sophisticated discussions of race and racism, as well as class, gender, sexuality and much more. In 2019 we are reading Afua Hirsch's *Brit(ish)* with a new team of third-year student leaders, who attended the Akala reading group in their second year.

A vertical decorative border on the left side of the page featuring a complex, colorful geometric pattern in shades of blue, orange, red, and teal, resembling traditional Islamic art.

DR OLIVIER DE CONDAPPA

PSYCHOLOGY

As part of their second year research methods module, Level 5 psychology students complete an assessed qualitative research report using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). IPA is a new approach to our students, so two workshops are dedicated to practicing IPA on an existing dataset. These workshops presented an opportunity to incorporate further inclusivity within the Psychology programme by focusing on a topic that takes into account our learners' identities, experience and history: the Hajj Pilgrimage. Hajj is an annual pilgrimage that should be undertaken by all able Muslims at least once in their lifetime. Diaries written by pilgrims are analysed and discussed by students in the workshops, with a range of socially, culturally and globally relevant mixed media resources provided on Blackboard, and a tutor available to support students' learning. In terms of best practice, this approach highlights the suitability and adaptability of research methods training for embedding inclusivity into programme curricula. Topics can be chosen to reflect the demographics of the cohort, and changed easily from one year to the next by using readily available data (e.g. online diaries, blogs, public datasets etc.). Therefore, research methods training is an excellent opportunity for educators to enable more students to see themselves reflected in their learning.



SUMEYA LOONAT

BAL INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT

International students studying on Business programmes are given the opportunity to co-create study skills resources to develop their learning by attending my drop-in sessions and workshops on English language and academic writing skills. Through student feedback from these sessions I produced a referencing guide for international students which took their learning perspectives into account by using contextualised examples and keeping the design, content and language simplified and accessible. Resources created are intended to be used as supplements alongside central university materials and have been very well received by module tutors and students within the Business and Law faculty. Academic skills workshops are also embedded into some Business programmes with a large international student cohort so that students can access contextualised academic support and while these sessions are not compulsory, attendance is always at its maximum!



Curriculum activity

Thinking about relationships, personal development, community, and teaching and learning, what might decolonisation look like in your own practice?

What things might you/your teams want to think about to decolonise their working practices?

What things are you/your teams already doing to try and decolonise working practices?



Dignity of difference

Diversify the syllabus, canon, curriculum, infrastructure and staff

Decentre knowledge and knowledge production away from the global North

Devalue hierarchies and revalue relationality

Disinvest from power structures that reinforce metrics, citations and rankings

Diminish some voices and opinions that have predominated, and magnify those that have been unheard



DECOLONISING DMU

A Working Position

Our work on Decolonising DMU is grounded in a developmental conceptual analysis, through which it serves as a basis for our activities in each strand. As a result, it also supports discussion about why the work is important. Therefore, the team have produced a working position paper, which is [available here](#).

The paper is part of the team's commitment to dialogue about this work, including its historical, cultural and material basis. It sets out how the project emerges from previous struggles over the idea of the University and of the production and purposes of knowledge. It relates this to the idea of dignity and the dignity of difference, and uses this to set out a series of questions for those working and studying in higher education. Finally, an extensive reading list is provided.



Decolonising DMU

Contact

decolonisingdmu@dmu.ac.uk

www.dmu.ac.uk/decolonising

[@DecolonisingDMU](https://twitter.com/DecolonisingDMU)

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

