



Learning  
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2020-21

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# BAME ATTAINMENT GAP AT UON

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*Exploring the Experiences of African Descent Students  
and the Factors that Impact on their Low Grades.*

**Learning and Teaching conference 2021**

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FACULTY: *FBL*  
SUBJECT AREA:  
BUSINESS SYSTEMS &  
OPERATIONS



FACULTY: *FAST*  
SUBJECT AREA:  
*JOURNALISM, MEDIA  
& PERFORMANCE*

FACULTY: *FAST*

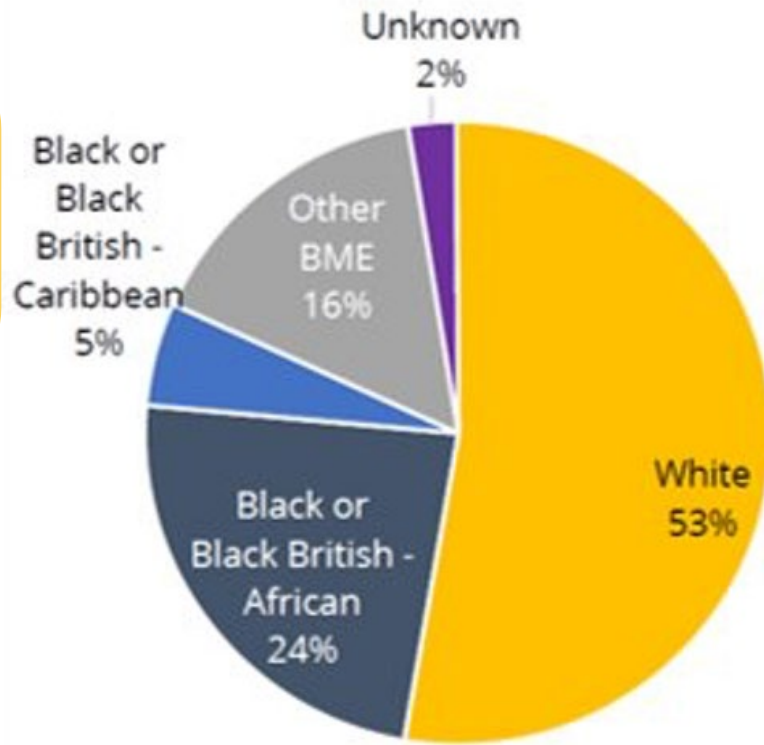
SUBJECT AREA:  
*COMPUTING*



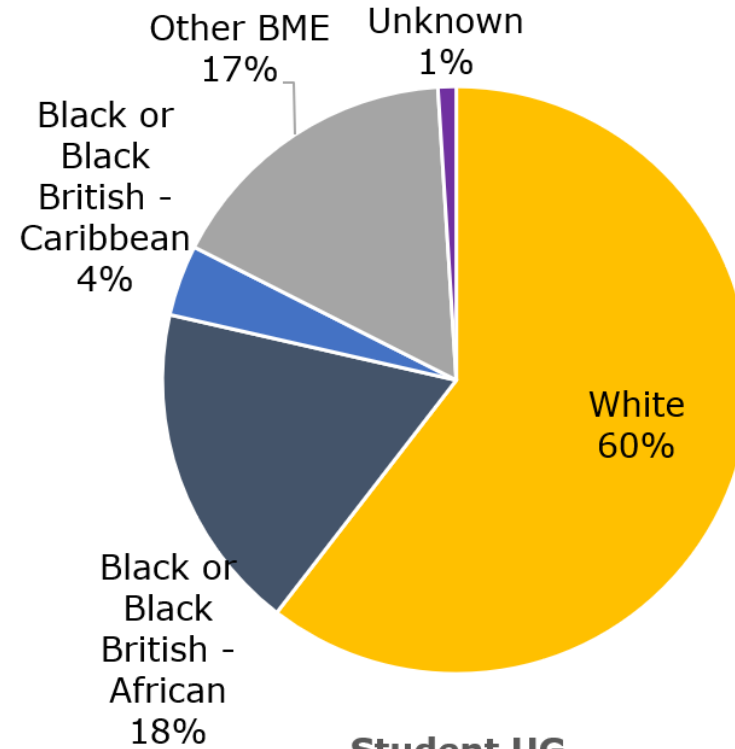
# Overview of the Project

- Phase 1 of a longitudinal study on GEM Award Gap at the University of Northampton
- Key objectives
- Research Methodology
  - Interviews with 9 Academics
  - 2 Focus groups with Academics
  - 2 Focus groups with Undergraduate students

# Comparison of ethnicity – Student intake – Data



2018/19



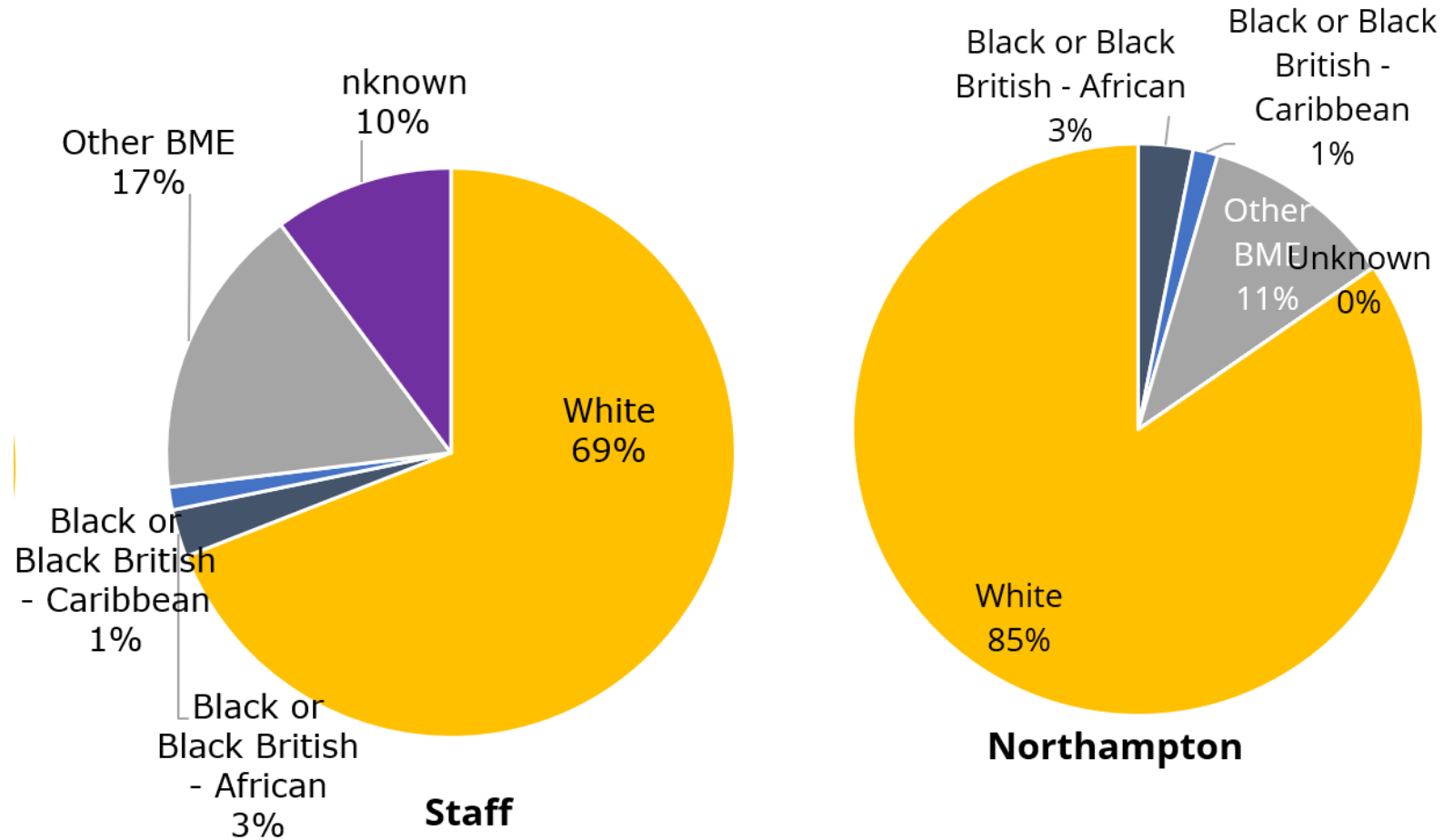
Student UG

2019/20

# Comparison of ethnicity 2019/20

## – intake, staff, town – Data

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# Key Observations and findings

- Black students are not a homogenous group and Attainment gap is different amongst various Black subgroups
- Black students find it difficult to relate to the large proportion of course content and references used on some programmes.
- Prior learning experience negative impact on learning, leading to lack of confidence
- A lack of Black staff representation making it difficult to comfortably talk with staff who can relate
- Links between working to survive, family responsibilities, socio-economic background and effects of commuting on attainment.
- Lack of personal and social support structures, both international and home
- Academic support services very helpful to those who see them, however, some find it difficult to engage
- 'Too cool for school' attitude, sit in 'clicks' and challenging to engage in a lot of cases



# POSITIVE ACTION



- Difficult conversations
- We should avoid the traditional ‘deficit’ approach, which views Black students’ lower attainment as a consequence of their failure to adjust or adapt, or a lack of ability
- Personal development/training on equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Impact on curriculum development and design



## Breakout Group Activity (10 mins)

- *What are the challenges you face as a tutor with Black students (in terms of engagement, achievement, retention, interaction, classroom participation, intellectual capabilities, attendance, attitude, receptiveness to your teaching, background)?*
- *How has this impacted on your practice and curriculum design?*
- *In your opinion, what kind of policies or strategies could be implemented by the university to improve Black students' attainment?*

# POSITIVE ACTION



- KPI
- Set achievable targets
- Universities gaining the Race Equality Charter Mark
- Collect data/statistics on Attainment/Award gap
- Develop mentoring programmes



## Padlet activity and Action Planning (10 mins)

*Now is your opportunity to propose practical solutions and action plan for your specific subject groups.*

- *Is there an awarding gap on my programme?*
- *Do I know my students' need and learning styles?*
- *Where do I start and what do I need to do now?*
- *What skills do I need to develop to start and move this forward? How will I develop those skills?*
- *What other support do I need from the institution, if any?*
- *What are the success factors and how do I measure them?*

[https://uon1.padlet.org/patrice\\_seuwou1/2j63l1t26eb7rvpq](https://uon1.padlet.org/patrice_seuwou1/2j63l1t26eb7rvpq)



WHEREVER YOUR  
**ATTENTION GOES,**  
**ENERGY FLOWS**  
— AND —  
**RESULTS SHOW.**

- Tony Robbins

# Open discussion & Conclusion

- The University of Northampton has the potential to offer all students life-changing and transformative experiences, but for this to become the norm for Black students, universities will have to undergo a significant transformation.
- In order for us to move forward as an institution, it begins with acknowledgement from all changemakers that there is a problem, then embracing the strategies for the implementation of effective solutions.
- We are an educational institution after all, let us continue educating ourselves & each other, understanding our past, thus continuing to shape our present and future.







<https://mypad.northampton.ac.uk/blackattainment/>

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