



Awards 2025

Outstanding Contribution to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Institution Name	University of Liverpool and upReach
Submission title or project name	University of Liverpool and upReach – Liverpool Rise Programme
Nominee / key personnel	The University of Liverpool and upReach
URL	
Submission	The Liverpool Rise programme, a collaboration between the University of Liverpool and social mobility charity upReach, addresses persistent barriers facing disadvantaged undergraduates in securing top graduate roles. Complementing the university's in-house EQ+ widening participation programme, Liverpool Rise provides additional, targeted careers support to 60 students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Programme participants receive one-to-one career coaching throughout their university journey, while also benefiting from skills workshops, application support and exclusive work experience opportunities with prestigious employers. Combined, these powerful interventions help undergraduates to explore different career pathways and to develop the vital skills, networks and experiences needed to succeed in their chosen career and beyond. The results are transformative: students show significant improvements across all employability skills, with application and interview abilities improving by 111 per cent and work experience increasing by 31 per cent. Of 2024 graduates, 100 per cent have gone into graduate employment or further study after graduation – demonstrating the programme's effectiveness.



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Institution Name	Liverpool John Moores University
Submission title or project name	Empowering change: LJMU's Diversity and Inclusion Funded projects
Nominee / key personnel	Liverpool John Moores University
URL	https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/edi/edi-related-projects/the-university-funded-diversity-and-inclusion-scheme
Submission	In 2023, Liverpool John Moores University launched the Diversity and Inclusion Fund to support staff- and student-led projects tackling inequality and to promote representation. Nineteen projects received up to £10,000 each, co-created with students, staff and community partners. The projects tackle complex, often overlooked areas such as life-limiting illness, SEND inclusion in the workplace, menstrual equity, and Gypsies, Travellers, Roma, Showmen and Boaters (GTRSB) representation, delivering sector-leading solutions that address structural barriers with compassion and innovation. The university's approach moves beyond consultation to co-creation, empowering those affected by inequality to lead change. Every funded project is not just supported; it is strategically designed, implemented and evaluated with those it seeks to impact. By empowering those most affected by inequality to co-lead/produce projects, lived experience is embedded into the institutional structures, which ensures that the initiatives are not only relevant but deeply impactful.



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Institution Name	Royal College of Art
Submission title or project name	RCA BLK – a transformative platform for Black students, alumni and staff at the Royal College of Art
Nominee / key personnel	RCA BLK
URL	https://www.rcablk.com/
Submission	RCA BLK, founded as a grass-roots group in 2020, has become an essential and transformative platform for Black students, alumni and staff at the Royal College of Art. Funded and staffed by the RCA since 2022, they are uniquely positioned to drive change from within, advocating for a more inclusive environment and providing tailored support to Black creatives. Their approach focuses on three areas: encouraging Black students to join the RCA, enhancing their experience while studying at the college, and supporting post-graduation success. The autonomy, resources and focus provided by the RCA have supported the leadership of RCA BLK in building a community that fosters long-term success, making it a pioneering model for diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education and the arts.



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Institution Name	Buckinghamshire New University
Submission title or project name	Reimagining recruitment at Buckinghamshire New University
Nominee / key personnel	
URL	
Submission	Universities claim to be bold and distinctive while using the same “inclusive, friendly and welcoming” buzzwords. Something’s not working, though, when you consider higher education’s workforce demographics in 2022-23: 44 per cent of full-time academics were female; only 22 per cent of colleagues were global majority; and almost half of professors were aged over 56. We practise what we preach with inclusive recruitment. All candidates receive interview questions 72 hours in advance. Hearing this, critics say people need “to think on their feet” and will cheat. At Buckinghamshire New University, we aren’t looking for people who shoot from the hip. We prefer taking the time to consider and reflect. And it’s working: the numbers of global majority and disabled colleagues are up by 5 per cent and 3 per cent, respectively. Our disability pay gap is at 0 per cent. We’re calling on others to learn from our approach. We believe organisations purporting to be inclusive, friendly and welcoming must match what they say and do.



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Institution Name	University of Glasgow
Submission title or project name	Rainbow Office Hours
Nominee / key personnel	Emily Nordmann; Rafael Henry-Venson; Chiara Horlin; Lauren McDougall; Kirsty Hacking
URL	https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/equalitydiversity/students/lgbt/#rainbowofficehours
Submission	Rainbow Office Hours is a low-cost, scalable initiative that creates safe, informal spaces for LGBTQ+ students and staff to connect. Launched in 2019 within one school, the initiative expanded university-wide during 2023-24. It now includes more than 30 staff across all colleges and professional services. The sessions coincide with LGBTQ+ awareness days and offer affirming support, distinct from counselling or academic advising. Rainbow Office Hours challenge the assumption that personal and professional identities must remain separate. They provide a visible message to LGBTQ+ students that they belong. For many, these are the first encounters with visibly queer adults in leadership roles, helping them to imagine a future for themselves in academia and beyond. Built on existing resources, the initiative is highly sustainable, cost-effective and transferable to other institutions committed to enhancing diversity, equality and inclusion. Our work not only supports marginalised voices but also fosters a transformative campus culture that empowers everyone.



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Institution Name	University of Leicester
Submission title or project name	MedRACE: creating a learning environment that is safe, inclusive and empowering for all
Nominee / key personnel	
URL	https://le.ac.uk/cls/cls-equality/medrace
Submission	In response to the British Medical Association's 2020 Racial Harassment Charter, the University of Leicester Medical School launched MedRACE – a pioneering initiative redefining racial equity in medical education. Rooted in student experiences and staff collaboration, MedRACE fosters a safe, inclusive learning environment through robust reporting, anti-racism curriculum and policy advocacy. MedRACE has directly impacted more than 1,400 students annually, embedding inclusion in teaching, clinical placements and institutional policies. It has influenced NHS trust policies on inclusive attire and contributed to national toolkits on decolonising curricula. Through a flattened hierarchy model, students drive change, ensuring sustainable structural reform. A dynamic force beyond the university, MedRACE collaborates with NHS trusts and national bodies, shaping a generation of doctors who lead with equity and empathy. It is more than an initiative – it is a movement transforming medical education at local and national levels.