

# Race Equality Charter Survey Executive Summary

October 2022

## Introduction & High-Level Summary

As part of St Mary's commitment to advancing racial equality across our institution for all staff and students, the university is using the [Race Equality Charter](#) (REC) as a framework to recognise and address racial inequalities within our community. A significant part of our work on the REC has been to provide opportunities for staff and students of all backgrounds to anonymously share their experiences, understanding and/or perception of racial inequalities at St Mary's University.

In March 2021, our REC Self-Assessment Team (SAT) launched staff- and student-wide REC surveys to help the university better understand barriers to achieving racial equality for staff and students. The purpose of this document is to provide a high-level overview of the survey findings and outline a series of outcomes and actions that this survey data will inform within the REC project and throughout the wider university.

Much of the information presented focuses on statistically significant differences between answers to quantitative survey questions from different ethnic groups, which therefore demonstrates differences in experience we as a university need to understand and address. We have also included qualitative information analysed from open text boxes in the survey which presents staff and student perceptions about different aspects of university life. These perceptions are equally as important as the quantitative differences observed, and will be addressed with equal weight as the REC project progresses.

## Survey Respondent Information

We were thrilled to receive a significant response rate from both staff and students as compared to other surveys led at St Mary's in recent years. Our number of responses compared to our total staff and student population was 9%, which is quite high compared to the response rate for other universities' REC surveys:

REC Bronze Award Holding University	REC Survey Response Rate (as compared to total staff and student population)
Albertay University	5%
Leeds Trinity University	16%
Keele University	5%
Royal Holloway University	5%
<b>St Mary's University</b>	<b>9%</b>
University of East London	11%
University of Hertfordshire	4%
Wolverhampton University	4%

Due to small numbers of respondents from individual ethnic groups, responses have been aggregated in alignment with the [UK government's classification of major ethnic groups](#) (as used in the UK Census) and then further aggregated to Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME):

## Staff Respondents

Ethnicity	% Staff Respondents	% St Mary's Staff Population AY 20/21
Asian or Asian British	9.1%	8.8%
Black or Black British	3.2%	4.2%
Mixed	2.4%	3.1%
Other Ethnic Background	2.0%	1.9%
Prefer not to say	13.0%	6.3%
White	70.5%	75.6%
Total	100.0%	100%
<hr/>		
BAME	16.5%	18.0%
White	70.5%	75.6%
Prefer not to say	13.0%	6.3%
Total	100.0%	99.9%

A total of 279 staff responded to the survey, including 98 Academic and 129 Professional Service staff. 254 respondents provided information on the ethnic group they most identify with.

## Student Respondents

Ethnicity	% Student Respondents	% St Mary's Undergraduate Student Population AY 20/21
Asian or Asian British	13.2%	15.1%
Black or Black British	13.8%	10.2%
Mixed	9.8%	7.5%
Other Ethnic Background	6.3%	3.4%
Prefer not to say	5.8%	3.7%
White	51.1%	60.2%
Total	100.0%	100%
<hr/>		
BAME	43.1%	36.1%
White	51.1%	60.2%
Prefer not to say	5.8%	3.7%
Total	100.0%	99.9%

A total of 255 students responded to the survey, of whom 174 provided information on the ethnic group they most identify with.

## Headlines

Responses to survey questions relating to the following topics showed **statistically significant differences** between BAME and White staff and students (survey responses with significant differences are outlined in the 'Detailed Analysis' section):

- ✓ Diversity at St Mary's, Representation and Belonging
- ✓ Diversity in the Local Area
- ✓ Reporting Racial Discrimination
- ✓ Course Content & Course Format (for students)

Each survey section offered an opportunity for open text comments, or qualitative responses, from which the following **themes** arose:

- ✓ **'Sense of belonging'** was raised 61 times by staff respondents and 42 times by student respondents, namely related to exclusion/isolation/discrimination and noticeable homogeneity of St Mary's community
- ✓ Both staff and students expressed concerns about **potential negative consequences of reporting racial discrimination or harassment**, including not being taken seriously, or that the formal process would not result in appropriate action
- ✓ Comments relating to **course content** (namely lecturers needing to be better equipped to facilitate discussions about race in the classroom) and **course format** (namely levels of comfort of BAME students approaching lecturers for learning support)
- ✓ Both staff and students also noted a need for **inclusive, more [racially] diverse leadership** and a need for **more awareness raising and support for equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) work**

## Detailed Analysis

*\*Note: this section has been adapted from the REC SAT's full survey report for ease of reading and conciseness. Staff and students are welcomed and encouraged to read our SAT's full survey report, which can be accessed on request by emailing [equalitycharters@stmarys.ac.uk](mailto:equalitycharters@stmarys.ac.uk).*

## Methodology

Survey questions used a seven-point Likert scale from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'. Responses to these questions were converted to numerical equivalents:

Survey Response	Numerical Equivalent
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Somewhat Disagree	3
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4
Somewhat Agree	5
Agree	6
Strongly Agree	7

Respondents were grouped as 'White' or 'BAME' based on the ethnic group they identified as. These demographic attributes were also recoded to numerical values to facilitate analysis between groups. Independent Samples T-Tests were run to compare differences between two groups, and One-Way ANOVA's to identify differences between three or more groups.

The sample size did not allow for statistical analysis on the basis of the specific ethnicities asked about in the survey, as there were less than 10 people in each group, with the exception of 'White' and 'Prefer not to say'. As such to protect the identities of individuals and preserve statistical validity the report includes 'BAME' and 'White' as the main comparison groups.

A panel of analysts was formed to review staff and student qualitative (open text) survey data, which included representatives from the REC SAT. Initial codes were given to the qualitative comments, and conducted individually. The panel then convened to discuss the data as a group, and identify trends, themes and possible points of interest for further investigation or action. The comments

were then grouped according to the identified trends and refined into the themes described in this report.

## Survey Responses with Statistically Significant Differences between BAME & White Staff and/or Students

*\*Note: This section **only** includes survey questions **where statistically significant differences were observed between BAME & White Staff and/or Students**, which is highlighted in yellow and marked with \*. Analysis of all survey questions can be found our SAT's full survey report, which can be accessed on request by emailing [equalitycharters@stmarys.ac.uk](mailto:equalitycharters@stmarys.ac.uk).*

Survey Statements		BAME	White	Difference
I considered the ethnic/racial diversity of St. Mary's before applying to work/study here.	Student	3.80	3.18	0.62*
The ethnic/racial diversity of St Mary's impacts on my sense of belonging (i.e. my feelings of acceptance and connection at work/ i.e. my ability to be my true self in my studies/campus life).	Staff	5.14	4.30	0.84*
	Student	5.21	4.10	1.11*
The ethnic/racial diversity of St Mary's impacts on my desire to stay.	Student	4.79	4.24	0.55*
I believe I am treated equally by colleagues (including relationships with subordinates, managers, and senior managers), irrespective of my ethnicity or race./ I believe I am treated equally by St Mary's staff and lecturers, irrespective of my ethnicity or race.	Student	5.28	6.20	0.92*
Survey Statements		BAME	White	Difference
I believe I am treated equally by St Mary's students, irrespective of my ethnicity or race.	Student	4.75	5.94	1.19*
I feel I can be open about my identity/ies and be my true self when in a classroom setting at St Mary's.	Student	4.95	5.95	-1.00*
I feel I can be open about my identity/ies and be my true self when in a social setting at St Mary's.	Student	4.95	5.85	-0.90*
I feel represented in internal communications at St Mary's.	Staff	4.31	5.29	-0.98*
	Student	4.16	5.75	-1.59*
I feel represented in external communications (i.e. I see people like me in marketing materials, social media, external website content) at St Mary's.	Staff	4.49	5.12	-0.63*
	Student	4.34	5.54	-1.20*
I would recommend my institution to a prospective staff member/student.	Student	5.19	6.06	-0.87*
My experience at University has been a rewarding one.	Student	5.05	5.91	0.86*
I feel represented in a meaningful way that I feel comfortable with in communications at St Mary's.	Student	4.25	5.60	-1.35*
I feel student activities at St Mary's reflect diverse cultural backgrounds/experiences.	Student	4.36	5.44	-1.08*
I feel safe when at St Mary's campus.	Student	5.25	6.10	-0.85*
I feel safe when interacting with St Mary's security staff.	Student	5.24	5.95	-0.71*

I would recommend my institution to a prospective student from an ethnic minority background.	Student	4.80	5.94	-1.14*
My University experience is meeting my expectations.	Student	4.51	5.56	-1.05*
The ethnic/racial diversity of the local community impacts on my day-to-day life.	Student	4.60	3.41	1.19*
I am aware of ethnic/racial tensions within the local community.	Staff	3.75	3.19	0.56*
	Student	4.60	3.69	0.91*
I have witnessed or been the victim of racial discrimination on campus.	Staff	3.27	2.30	0.97*
	Student	2.99	1.78	1.21*
I have witnessed or been the victim of racial discrimination in the local area.	Staff	2.63	2.13	0.50*
	Student	3.18	1.68	1.50*
If I witnessed or experienced racial discrimination or harassment at St Mary's, I would report it to the university.	Student	5.15	6.14	-0.99*
If I reported a race-related incident to my institution, appropriate action would be taken.	Student	4.33	5.20	-0.87*
If I reported a race-related incident to my institution, I am confident I would be notified of the outcome.	Student	4.39	4.96	-0.57*
I have been treated unfairly by students at St Mary's.	Staff	2.59	2.03	0.56*
I have been ignored or not paid attention to because of my dress, speech, or other characteristics related to my ethnicity.	Staff	2.61	1.98	0.63*
<b>Survey Statements</b>		<b>BAME</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Difference</b>
I feel confident calling out instances/incidents of racial (and other forms of) discrimination when I witness or am the victim of them.	Student	4.70	5.36	-0.66*
If I reported a race related incident to my institution I am confident I would be supported in the process.	Student	4.63	5.33	-0.70*
I am progressing well in my course.	Student	5.34	5.81	-0.47*
Anticipated Attainment <sup>1</sup>	Student	2.98	3.25	-0.27*
St Mary's has helped me develop the skills I need to apply for graduate-level jobs.	Student	4.59	5.09	-0.50*
The content of my course matches my expectations and includes what I thought it would include.	Student	4.91	5.41	-0.50*
The content of my course reflects the opinions of a wide variety of people.	Student	4.80	5.44	-0.64*
When relevant, issues of ethnicity and race are included in academic discussions.	Student	4.78	5.39	-0.61*
When relevant, my course tutors and lecturers are confident and competent in facilitating discussions around ethnicity and race.	Student	4.84	5.44	-0.60*

<sup>1</sup> The numerical coding for this question was a 1-4 scale, with 1=Graduate with a 3<sup>rd</sup>/pass, 2=Graduate with a 2:2, 3=Graduate with a 2:1, 4=Graduate with a 1<sup>st</sup> Class.

I feel confident asking my lecturers for additional perspectives/academic resources that reflect my lived experience.	Student	4.90	5.51	-0.61*
I enjoy the way my course is taught.	Student	5.00	5.49	-0.49*
I am comfortable contributing to group discussions.	Student	5.16	5.84	-0.68*
I am comfortable approaching course tutors with any questions or queries.	Student	5.54	6.04	-0.50*
I am happy with the way my course is assessed.	Student	5.01	5.56	-0.55*
In my experience students from all racial and ethnic backgrounds are included equally at all students' union events and societies.	Student	4.26	5.09	-0.83*
Racially offensive or inappropriate behaviours are not tolerated at events and activities organised by the students' union.	Student	4.83	5.34	-0.51*

## Summary of Qualitative (Open Text) Responses

\*Note: quotes listed below reflect raw data from the survey's open text responses

### Sense of Belonging

#### Staff comment summary:

(26) references to exclusion/isolation/discrimination; (16) references to the noticeable homogeneity of the St Mary's community; and (18) positive comments about feeling included. BAME staff were more likely than White staff to make comments in relation to a lack of sense of belonging, including feeling excluded, isolated, or hiding aspects of identity at work. This is consistent with the significant difference observable between White and BAME staff in relation to the question "The ethnic/racial diversity of St Mary's impacts on my sense of belonging". When White staff mentioned this, it was often in reference to another minoritized identity, notably LGBTQ+ or Religion. References to homogeneity and positive references about feeling included came from both BAME and White staff.

#### Relevant staff quotes:

*"There are definitely changes being brought forward but when I first joined St Mary's, I did feel isolated despite having a really supportive team. I felt I was the only South Asian representative, the voice for wanting changes across the wider St Mary's community, although my ideas were listened to they were not actioned."* (BAME, Female)

*"St. Mary's appears to have a 'clique' type culture which can make anyone that fits outside of that culture - feel excluded and unable to be their true selves."* (BAME, Female)

*"I am a white female, and I feel that those at the top are not very diverse (including racially). This stood out to me immediately at my induction, which made me feel less warm towards the institution."* (White, Female)

#### Student comment summary:

(16) references to St Mary's lacking/needing more diversity (from almost all BAME or Non-British White students); (14) references to the importance of a sense of belonging, including isolation and exclusion (BAME students more likely than White students to reference isolation/exclusion); (10) references to ethnic and racial diversity improving or enhancing a sense of belonging; and (7)

references to feeling included/not having problems with belonging (raised by more White than BAME students).

#### Relevant student quotes:

*“When I was applying to different universities I never even considered diversity being a problem. When I joined St Marys in September 2019, I very quickly felt out of place and considered transferring by the end of my first year. However, after moving away from campus...it doesn't impact me as much, but it is still a problem”* (BAME, Female)

*“There are also times when I feel excluded by my cohort because I am only international student in the class. In pair or group activity, sometimes classmates they seems didn't want me to be in their group. Or some classmates didn't want to sit together with me. This greatly affect my mental health and I felt scared coming to university to have class.”* (BAME, Gender: Prefer not to say)

*“I did not consider ethnicity when choosing the course however it was very warming to see a lot of diversity in the course, which goes beyond race. I haven't yet felt any reason to question being treated in any specific way due to my race.”* (BAME, Female)

### Negative Consequences of Reporting Racial Discrimination or Harassment

#### Staff comment summary:

(8) references to experiences of microaggressions and unconscious bias leading to feelings of inferiority or lack of belonging (BAME staff more likely than White staff to reference this); (16) references to fears of negative consequences when reporting racial discrimination or harassment, including (11) references to fear of reprisals (such as being dismissed) with staff identifying as BAME more likely to discuss informal consequences, such as a negative impact on relationships with colleagues (raised 3 times); (18) references to a lack of confidence in issues being properly dealt with via the formal complaints process (from both BAME and White staff); and (13) comments citing examples of incidents they reported but did not feel were handled well.

#### Relevant staff quotes:

*“Numerous painful examples of microaggressions that I have encountered as an educator PoC [person of colour] – I have been inappropriately (publicly) challenged on discussing the issue of race by a student in the past – when I tried to speak about this with his tutor I was told that ‘he wasn't racist’ and to take no notice; when convening an event for external delegates and colleagues to share good practice, upon welcoming the delegates I was presumed to be the catering staff and they proceeded to leave their refreshment orders with me...”* (BAME Female)

*“I felt that the treatment I experienced by an external visitor on campus wouldn't have been followed up if I had reported it. Colleagues were not able to support me as they had never had to deal with such an issue before and didn't know what to do and I felt they minimized the pain I felt.”* (BAME, Female)

*“There is always the fear of being ostracized or being fired as a new employee. But I am sure this opinion will change”* (BAME, Male)

*“If I personally experienced racial discrimination, I would only report it if it was easy to evidence, as otherwise I would worry about not being believed or it having a detrimental impact on my career. I would prefer instead to leave my post at the University.”* (BAME, Female)

#### Student comment summary:

(22) references to racial discrimination not being taken seriously, or that nothing would happen as a result of reporting (majority from BAME students, just 3 from White students); (12) references to fear of reporting or concerns about retribution (majority from BAME students); (4) comments relating to examples of racial discrimination and (3) noting training as a helpful response to racism; (8) noting they would be comfortable reporting and appropriate action would be taken (3 BAME responses and 4 White responses; however the ethnicities of those BAME students were 1 Chinese, 1 Mixed – White and Black Caribbean, 1 Mixed – White and Asian, which means colourism cannot be ruled out as a possible factor in student's experiences); and (8) references to uncertainty about how to report or what could be reported (from both BAME and White students).

#### Relevant student quotes:

*"I feel like the staff would undermine the severity of the incident and try to invalidate it or not take it as seriously because they would not be able to understand it due to their race."* (BAME, Male)

*"I'm scared it would have a negative effect on me or any other person involved. It is hard to prove micro-discriminations because most witnesses don't even notice."* (BAME, Female)

*"I have zero idea how to go about reporting incidents and doubt the process will be simple."* (Ethnicity and Gender: Prefer not to say)

*"I think St Mary's are definitely at the forefront of creating a more respectful, genuinely nicer environment for students here"* (Prefer not to say, Female)

#### Need for More Inclusive Practice in the Classroom

##### Student comment summary:

(11) references to lecturers' ability to talk about race from both BAME and White students (4 positive experiences, 4 noting discomfort or lack of awareness by lecturers, 3 noting poor handling of race discussions in the classroom); (4) references to course content being centred narrowly on a Western or European point of view and lacking diverse perspectives/teaching methods (comments were from 3 BAME and 1 White student); (9) references to approachability of staff (5 positive and 4 noting a lack of support or responsiveness from staff) both negative and positive comments were mostly from BAME students or students not specifying their ethnicity.

##### Relevant student quotes:

*"Racial discussions are very bare minimum "racism bad" conversations. During a discussion in which a handful of ethnic students were being berated by a student being wilfully ignorant, none of the white students or lecturers (there were TWO white male lecturers there) knew how to handle the situation and did absolutely nothing to mediate it."* (Gender and Ethnicity not specified)

*"lecturers aren't aware enough of ethnic backgrounds and what other ethnic people go through."* (BAME, Male)

*"Many lecturers have a Western/North view which is then narrowed by the view of their home culture, rather than a global culture which includes the diversity of the world. I have been in lectures where the majority of the students are from India and a lecturer has essentially told them that Western culture is superior. A stronger theme on my course is that teaching will only be from a US-UK-Australia perspective rather than a truly International one."* (BAME, Female)



*"I do not feel confident to approach my lectures. They do not have the same time for me as some of my other peers"* (BAME, Female)

### **Need for Inclusive, More Diverse Leadership & Representation**

#### **Staff comment summary:**

(12) references to wanting to see more diversity at senior management levels, including SLT and Board of Governors; (5) references to wanting visible efforts by leaders to speak to and understand the experience of minoritized groups; (5) references to wanting EDI to be made a strategic priority; all comments from both BAME and White staff.

#### **Relevant staff quotes:**

*"Take steps to ensure racial diversity in the University's leadership. If over half of our students do not identify as white British, it feels out of place to have a virtually exclusively white SLT and Board of Governors"* (White, Female)

*"It would be encouraging to see some racial equality within the senior management team because at the moment it seems like senior management is not diverse. However, the current team is doing a fantastic job."* (BAME, Male)

*"I do not know if the leadership listens to everyone. There have been times I have felt like I have not been listened to, and that the leadership cares more about their agendas than listening to their colleagues. At times, it feels misogynistic and like "the old guard"."* (White, Male)

#### **Student comment summary:**

(7) references to a need for more diverse staff or representation of BAME people, including 4 references to teaching staff specifically (comments from both BAME and White students); and (2) comments (both from BAME students) referencing the University needing to commit to meaningful change.

#### **Relevant student quotes:**

*"The teachers at this school are not very diverse Ed especially in the acting department where there is only on lecturer who is a person of colour"* (BAME, Female)

*"the senior leadership team need to actively be involved e.g. attending big and small events"* (BAME, Female)

### **Need for More Awareness Raising and Support for EDI Work**

#### **Staff comment summary:**

(26) references to development and support for EDI (from both BAME and White staff): (16) supporting the work of EDI through time, resources, and training (including need for more EDI training), (4) citing more resource needed to support EDI, and (3) noting the burden of EDI work falls disproportionately on minoritized staff; (7) negative perceptions of EDI work, including concerns that EDI initiatives will have negative consequences (comments almost entirely from White staff).

#### **Relevant staff quotes:**

*"I applaud St. Mary's for engaging in the REC but much more needs to be done from Senior leadership and throughout all departments to tackle and challenge racial discrimination in a committed and practical way."* (BAME, Female)

*"I would like to see the continuation of the 'Let's Talk About Race' webinars and other forums where staff discuss these issues. Because the burden of running these events always seems to fall on the same volunteers, I would very much like to see a team created to run them as part of their paid responsibilities, preferably under the leadership of a PVC for EDI." (White, Female)*

*"Clearly by doing this survey, St Mary's feels that they are not doing enough for race equality. This worries me because I have a feeling that in order to increase the race equality, St Mary's will be hiring staff who meet a tick box in terms of race and diversity, rather than hiring the best for the job. E.g. if a white person and a person of other race applied, the non-white person would be hired to increase the equality." (White, Female)*

#### Student comment summary:

(8) references to the need to raise awareness about race issues (including comments from both BAME and White students); and (5) references to wanting to see more events to promote diversity or serve international students (comments from both BAME and White students).

#### Relevant student quotes:

*"the equality and diversity training should be mandatory to all students to complete at the start of their studies. It's a really informative and important training module and I have found it to be extremely beneficial." (White, Female)*

*"Do more events that enhance diversity and inclusion." (White, Female)*

## Next Steps

In response to the survey data, the REC SAT plans to focus on the following in their forthcoming action plan:

- ✓ Interventions to better support lecturers in discussing/addressing race in the classroom and creating course content that speaks to the diversity of students in their classrooms
- ✓ Review of existing staff and student reporting procedures for instances of racial discrimination and harassment
- ✓ Interventions to better support and develop pipeline of BAME staff into future leadership roles
- ✓ Culture change initiatives driven by senior leadership to enhance inclusive practice institution-wide leading to trust in the 'system' for BAME staff
- ✓ Targeted recruitment of incoming Board members seeking to broaden the group's ethnic diversity
- ✓ Development activities for senior leadership to broaden their understanding of equality, diversity, and inclusion and build their confidence in leading diverse, inclusive teams

Several actions in our Athena SWAN Action Plan (to be submitted to Advance HE and launched in November 2022) also seek to address issues raised in the data, including:

- ✓ Create leadership training workshops which demystify academic leadership roles, with specific focus on encouraging participation from those in groups underrepresented in leadership

- ✓ Identify female and BAME members of academic staff who might be eligible for Academic Promotion and reach out to those individuals encouraging them to apply and inviting them to prospective applicant workshops
- ✓ All members of UEC asked to increase their involvement in & attendance of staff & student EDI activities throughout the year as one of their objectives in their annual appraisal
- ✓ Include our “Leadership Compact” outlining agreed leadership behaviours (in line with St Mary’s values) as an appraisal objective for all those with leadership responsibility, taking a cascade approach from the top of the organisation
- ✓ Review our Anonymous Reporting pilot alongside REC data collected to determine what other interventions are necessary to ensure better consistency in the application of HR policies for equality, dignity at work, bullying, harassment, grievance, and disciplinary processes
- ✓ Endeavor for all longlists and shortlists for UEC & SLT-level posts to reflect the gender and ethnic diversity of our total staff population