



## University of Plymouth Statement on Equality and Human Rights Commission Report 'Tackling racial harassment: Universities challenged'

We welcome the [report](#) on tackling racial inequalities in Universities from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in October 2019. This report has highlighted the issues of racial inequalities across the HE sector and has provided us with a framework to thoroughly investigate and address the issues raised. As a University, we place enormous value on the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion and it is these values which make the University of Plymouth such an enriching place for study and for employment. This EHRC will feed into our renewed Equality Scheme in 2021 to help further strengthen our commitment to zero-tolerance of all forms of harassment and discrimination.

Since the publication of this report, we have spent considerable time completing a self-assessment of our policies, procedures and practice as a University to ensure we address the underlying issues behind racial harassment in Higher Education. We are committed to enacting whole-culture change at our institution. To gain a fuller understanding of harassment, discrimination and micro-aggressions against BAME staff and students, we are building on the success of our [Athena Swan submissions](#) on tackling gender equality by signing up to the [Race Equality Charter](#) by 2022.

Over the past twelve months we have seen the launch of multiple new [staff networks](#) to support all staff in being themselves at the University. Many of these networks work in partnership with our [student societies](#) to ensure all voices of minority and minoritised groups are heard and consulted in policy and procedure changes.

We have also launched an online reporting tool, '[Speak Up](#)', for reporting abuse, harm and hate. This tool allows all staff, students and contractors to either report anonymously any incidents as they happen or request assistance within 48 hours of an incident occurring. The University also hosted its largest ever range of events for Black History Month and for Refugee Week, culminating in an international fashion show with over 300 visitors on campus celebrating the unique cultures within our diverse city. Whilst these events may appear small on the surface, they are an important reminder to all who work and study with us that we celebrate our difference and take equality, diversity and inclusion seriously.

Over the coming twelve months, we look forward to expanding on addressing the issues identified via our [Race Equality Charter Team](#) in addition to welcoming new initiatives in addressing the issues raised in the EHRC report. We thank the EHRC for this opportunity to grow as an institution and welcome the focus this has brought to racial inequalities across the HE sector.

**Professor Judith Petts CBE**  
Vice-Chancellor, University of Plymouth

20<sup>th</sup> January 2020