**Motion Title: Attainment Gap**

**The Student Union Notes:**

1. The black attainment gap is a long-established issue with a trend as far back as national data was gathered[[1]](#footnote-1).
2. The attainment gap exists along with other inequalities, including disparities in access, continuation and employment outcomes[[2]](#footnote-2).
3. Over a decade ago the attainment gap was established to predominantly lie with the institutions, and exists after other factors such as socioeconomic background, discipline and institution choices, and entry grades, were accounted for[[3]](#footnote-3).
4. Academic staff employed within higher education do not reflect the undergraduate or national population regarding race[[4]](#footnote-4), and in particular are missing at senior leadership levels[[5]](#footnote-5).
5. There is not parity within the sector on the courses and institutions attended by students of colour, or for black academics[[6]](#footnote-6)
6. Black students are significantly more likely to become unemployed on graduation and less likely to experience the benefits of their degree[[7]](#footnote-7).

**The Student Union Believes:**

1. Systemic inequality undermines the real value of our degrees, as well as the whole higher education sector. Race inequity cannot coexist with the internationally leading system we want.
2. The causes of the attainment gap are multiple and systemic within our institutions, and require broad approaches from both government and each individual institution.
3. Educational race inequality is further compounded by employer bias, leading to poorer employment outcomes nationally.
4. Current regulation of universities via the Teaching Excellence Framework does not require improving the attainment gap; while the issues are sector wide, approaches significantly vary by and within each university and other providers.
5. The Teaching Excellence Framework has not been adequately analysed to understand whether it systematically suppresses race inequalities outcomes.
6. Student-led initiatives to make improvements on the attainment gap and race inequity need to be sustainable over several years and adaptable for all member unions.
7. Specific challenges on attainment persist in specific disciplines and types of institution.
8. The Equality Challenge Unit provides a Race Equality Charter which equips committed institutions with a framework to make change around race inequality, including improving the attainment gap. The Equality Challenge Unit is currently undergoing significant changes to its governance and merging with other sector bodies.
9. Attainment in Higher Education in Scotland is a much more diversified topic with students of disabled and SIMD20-40 backgrounds having overall attainment.

**The Student Union Resolves:**

1. Raise awareness of the Attainment Gap
2. Campaign for the institution to take responsibility and a lead on addressing the attainment gap
3. Mandate the Academic Congress to collect information on Attainment and work with the university on action plans to target this

**Proposer: Rahul Singh, President**

**Seconder: Aoife Clark, Executive Committee**

1. www.hesa.ac.uk [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. www.ecu.ac.uk – Statistical Reports [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. DFES. Research Report RW92, S Broeke, T Nicholls, 2007 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. www.hesa.ac.uk [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Aiming Higher: Race, Inequality and Diversity in the Academy, 2015, Runnymede Trust [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. www.ecu.ac.uk – Statistical Reports [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. www.ecu.ac.uk – Statistical Reports [↑](#footnote-ref-7)