

COMMITTEE NAME: EDIC

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PAPER TITLE: RACE EQUALITY CHARTER ANNUAL REPORT 2026

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Is this paper confidential? YES ☐ NO ☒

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NOTE ☒ DISCUSS ☒ DECISION ☐ RECOMMEND ☐

This paper presents the University's first annual review following the Race Equality Charter Bronze Award. It provides a concise overview of post-award implementation activity during 2025/26, highlights early evidence and learning, and identifies priorities for 2026/27.

The report shows that the University has made a purposeful start in moving from award recognition to implementation. Activity has been most visible in awareness-raising, community engagement, Black History Month, Race Equality Week, the relaunch of the Black Students' Network, REC drop-in sessions, updated ethnicity guidance, activity capture, reporting infrastructure and early governance conversations.

However, the evidence also shows that progress is uneven. Some colleagues still have different levels of awareness and understanding of REC, which indicates that implementation has not yet been consistently embedded across the University. Priority 1, focused on belonging and inclusion, has the strongest activity profile. Priorities 2 and 3 show work in progress, particularly around reporting confidence and student-facing programmes. Priority 4 requires closer attention because the recruitment data suggests limited movement and some downward movement in ethnic minority group (EMG) representation through the recruitment pipeline. Priority 5 requires a clearer baseline on representation in governance and decision-making, although work has begun in this area within the research environment.

EDIC is invited to note the progress made, discuss the areas for further development, and endorse the proposed priorities for 2026/27.

Consultation:

The annual report draws on evidence and feedback from REC USAT, MOSAIC, HR Culture and Inclusion colleagues, Student Support, faculty and departmental engagement, Heads of Department feedback, Black History Month and Race Equality Week reporting, REC activity submissions, training review materials and recruitment data.

The report will also be shared with relevant stakeholders through EDIC, REC USAT, and senior institutional committees as appropriate.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Impact:

This paper directly supports the University's commitment to advancing race equality through the REC action plan. It identifies activity, emerging learning and areas requiring further development across the five REC priorities: belonging and inclusion, bullying and harassment, student recruitment and outcomes, staff recruitment and progression, and representation in decision-making. The report is deliberately evidence-led and avoids overstating impact where outcome data is not yet available.

Wellbeing:

The report has implications for [staff and student wellbeing](#), particularly in relation to belonging, bullying and harassment, reporting confidence, student support, and the experience of ethnic minority staff and students.

Sustainability Compliance:

There are no direct sustainability compliance implications arising from this paper.

Regulatory Compliance:

The report supports the University's responsibilities under equality legislation and related institutional commitments. No new regulatory compliance risks are identified. Any future actions relating to recruitment, reporting, staff development or representation should continue to be developed in line with HR policy, employment law, data protection requirements and equality legislation.

REPORT

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This paper presents the Race Equality Charter Annual Report 2026 for consideration by EDIC.
- 1.2. The purpose is to provide a first-year post-award implementation review following the University's REC Bronze Award and to identify areas where further institutional focus is required in 2026/27.

- 1.3. EDIC is asked to note the progress made, discuss the areas for further development, and support the proposed priorities for the next phase of implementation.

2. Background

- 2.1. The University received the [Race Equality Charter Bronze Award in 2025](#). The award marked an important institutional milestone, but the main test now lies in implementation. The University's REC action plan is structured around five key priorities:

1. Removing barriers to racial inclusivity and strengthening belonging among staff and students.
2. Addressing bullying and harassment issues specific to ethnic minority groups.
3. Improving recruitment and awarding outcomes for students from under-represented ethnic minority groups.
4. Reviewing and addressing disparities in staff recruitment and career progression.
5. Increasing representation of Ethnic Minority Group colleagues on decision-making committees.

2.2. The 2025/26 academic year represents the first post-award implementation year. The focus has therefore been on awareness, engagement, activity capture, data development, training review, reporting infrastructure and early governance conversations (as shown in the appendices section and 3.7). This report distinguishes between activity, engagement, infrastructure and impact. This is important because some areas show visible activity, but do not yet provide sufficient evidence of measurable outcome change.

3. Summary of progress and emerging evidence

- 3.1. A [central call-out for REC-related activity](#) captured 38 submissions across the five REC priority areas. The strongest concentration of activity was linked to belonging, community and culture (see Appendix B).
- 3.2. [Black History Month 2025](#) and [Race Equality Week 2026](#) (see Appendix C) provided evidence of continued visibility and engagement. Black History Month recorded 213 active webpage users and reached 27,857 Instagram accounts. Race Equality Week recorded 267 active webpage users and reached 16,137 Instagram accounts. These activities demonstrate engagement and visibility, but they should not yet be treated as evidence of measured culture change. Future reporting should connect activity more directly to staff and student experience evidence.
- 3.3. Feedback from engagement sessions (see Appendices D and E) indicates that awareness and understanding of REC are not yet consistent across the University. This is an important implementation finding. It suggests that the next phase should continue to strengthen local ownership, practical communication and use of the five REC priorities in faculty, departmental and professional services settings.

- 3.4. [Support & Report](#), #NeverOK and Dignity & Respect processes (see Appendix F) provide an existing reporting and resolution infrastructure. However, available evidence does not show high levels of race-related reporting from ethnic minority staff and students. This requires careful interpretation and further work on trust, awareness, possible under-reporting and confidence in formal routes.
- 3.5. Student-facing activity includes [Bath Ambitions](#), decolonising learning initiatives, [Black Students' Network](#) activity and related engagement. However, Bath Ambitions remains in delivery and should not yet be presented as impact evidence. Evaluation is expected in the next reporting cycle.
- 3.6. Recruitment data by ethnicity (see Appendix G) is particularly important. It does not support a claim that the REC Bronze Award has yet had a significant positive impact on recruitment outcomes. EMG applicants represented 54.2% of applications but 21.3% of appointments in 2025/2026 (post-award). This compares with 54.8% of applications and 26.2% of appointments in the previous period (2024/25). The data shows that EMG representation reduces substantially between application and appointment stages, and the post-award data shows a lower proportion of EMG appointments than the previous reporting period. This does not establish cause, but it identifies a clear area for further review.
- 3.7. Pursuant to the Research Culture Action Plan, the Research Culture Team, in collaboration with colleagues from Governance, EDI and HR Data Analysis, are undertaking a review to determine the extent to which the membership of research-related governance structures at Bath are representative of the communities they serve (see priorities 5.1, 5.3 and 5.4). Following data collection and a gap analysis, it was agreed that the scope of the review should focus on institutional level research committees and subgroups in the first instance. A draft institutional level dashboard is near completion and will be circulated to governance and EDI leads before the end of June, for feedback. The review will act as a pilot for an approach to comparing representation on committees with the communities they serve, that is scalable and potentially applicable to other institutional level committees.
- 3.8. Alongside the work highlighted in 3.7, it has been recognised that, in order to achieve our aims within REC, wider more accessible demographic data is needed for departments. HR is now working on the development of a dashboard which will ensure all areas of the business have easy access to diversity data that can inform decision making and improvement plans. The dashboard is currently being reviewed and tested by key stakeholders.

4. Analysis

- 4.1. The first post-award year has created a useful foundation for REC implementation and engagement with REC USAT (Please see Appendix H). REC is becoming more visible through events, engagement, activity capture, network activity, reporting infrastructure and practical tools.
- 4.2. The evidence also shows that implementation is uneven. Priority 1 has the clearest activity profile, but this is primarily activity and engagement evidence, not outcome evidence.

Priorities 2 and 3 require stronger evidence on reporting confidence, student experience and programme outcomes. Priority 4 requires more detailed recruitment and progression analysis. Priority 5 requires a clearer baseline on representation in governance and decision-making.

- 4.3. The qualitative evidence also suggests that awareness of REC remains uneven. Some colleagues are engaging constructively with the agenda, while others are still developing their understanding of the work, the priorities and how they apply in local contexts. This suggests that further engagement should be practical, locally relevant and linked to existing decision-making processes.
- 4.4. Training is an area of development rather than completed impact (see Appendix I). Current work is shaping provision around allyship, bystander intervention, cultural awareness, racial literacy, racism, microaggressions, anti-racist allyship and power dynamics. Future reporting should assess delivery, uptake and evidence of learning or changed practice.
- 4.5. The REC practical guide/toolkit (see Appendix J) provide a useful mechanism for supporting leaders to translate REC priorities into routine, local and reviewable actions. Future reporting should assess the extent to which these tools are used in departments, committees, recruitment processes and planning cycles.
- 4.6. Financial considerations: There are no immediate financial implications arising directly from this paper. Any future activities requiring funding, including training delivery, data development, evaluation activity or network support, should be considered through the relevant planning and budget-setting processes.
- 4.7. Resourcing: Continued implementation will require coordinated input from the REC Lead, Culture and Inclusion team, HR, Student Support, faculties, departments, professional services, REC USAT and relevant staff and student networks. A key consideration for the next phase is ensuring that implementation does not rely disproportionately on a small number of committed individuals or on ethnic minority colleagues but a collective effort across senior leaders.
- 4.8. Risk:
 - The main risk is that REC remains visible but not sufficiently embedded in routine decision-making across the University.
 - A further risk is that post-award activity is mistaken for impact. The current evidence shows activity, engagement and early implementation, but it does not yet demonstrate significant outcome change across all priorities.
 - The recruitment data requires particular attention. The post-award data does not show significant positive movement in EMG progression through the recruitment pipeline. EMG representation remains high at application stage but considerably lower at appointment stage. This should be treated as an area for deeper analysis rather than as evidence of progress.

These areas do not diminish the value of the post-award work undertaken to date. They provide a clearer and more credible basis for the next phase of implementation.

4.9. Priorities for 2026/27:

We propose the following priorities:

1. Embed REC ownership (champions) across faculties, departments and professional services.
2. Through the creation of an accessible and transparent PowerBI diversity dashboard, we can strengthen data, evidence and accountability.
3. Continue to develop race-specific capability and support student-facing work, e.g., central and student-related events and activities.
4. Continue to create REC awareness (practical guide to nudging inclusive practice) and training to shape the delivery of our sense of belonging and inclusivity across the University.

5. Recommendation and Next Steps

In summary, our Bronze Award was a significant milestone. The task now is to build a stronger evidence base, embed ownership across the institution, and ensure that REC shapes routine decisions about belonging, safety, recruitment, progression, representation and student experience.

EDIC is invited to:

1. Note the progress made in the first post-award year of REC implementation.
2. Discuss the areas for further development identified in the annual report.
3. Endorse the proposed priorities for 2026/27.
4. Support continued reporting through REC USAT and relevant University governance structures.

Progress against these priorities should be reviewed through REC USAT during 2026/27, with a further update brought to EDIC as part of the next annual reporting cycle.