Recognising cultural diversity, incorporating international perspectives and actively decolonising the curriculum are all activities which bring new, multicultural, critical perspectives into the curriculum. It involves ensuring that people of different backgrounds are respected and valued, whether they are students, staff, members of disciplinary communities, or individuals or communities represented in the curriculum. Cultural diversity is a strength in a community, and should be actively drawn upon to create a richer learning environment that is also more inclusive. Incorporating international perspectives supports this through emphasising global connections and promotes opportunities for learning in a world-wide context. These activities create a baseline that can lead to a more profound reflection on the discipline and its role in the wider world, and a reworking of the whole approach to teaching and learning known as decolonising the curriculum. This involves being culturally self-aware, exploring assumptions about how the world is, and reflecting on the legacies of Western colonialism and empire on knowledge, education and professions, especially around race. Different disciplines have different histories and therefore will approach this in different ways and to different extents. It is a profoundly reflective process that is never ending, but creates an important dynamic for continually reflecting on the curriculum and embedding critical perspectives within learning activities.

The University of Brighton’s approach to diversity and decolonising the curriculum is centred around staff and students in each learning community (for example, a course), exploring their subject content and learning and teaching practices to uncover, challenge and review preconceptions, stereotypes, and traditions. The act of staff and students working in partnership, with where possible, students taking lead roles is crucial, as it is important to bring new perspectives and open up hierarchies within the curriculum to allow more profound changes to take place.
The Diversity and Decolonisation Ideas Grid

The following list of suggested activities and outcomes can be used by staff and students to plan, reflect on and record the changes made to their curriculum. These activities form the basis of this guidance document, and a full version of the list in grid form that can be used to check progress can be found at the end of this document.

• Staff & student session on **intercultural dialogue** incorporated into curriculum
• Have **guest lecturers** from abroad either physically or virtually
• Have **ethnically diverse lecturers** present either physically or virtually
• **Students and staff collaborate with students/staff abroad** on research and learning activities
• Have opportunities for staff and students to contribute their **international experiences** in the curriculum
• Opportunities to **study or work abroad**
• Opportunities for **placements in intercultural environments**
• Reading lists have had global, social justice, alternative, and **decolonised perspectives** incorporated
• Reading lists include **diverse authors** with respect to gender and ethnicity
• Content within sessions includes **global and social justice** case studies or **decolonised perspectives** or comparable examples
• Course **visual media** (PowerPoints, VLE) sensitively and appropriately represents global diversity
• Learning activities use global and social justice case studies and explore alternative and/or **decolonised perspectives**
• **Timing** of content and activities considered
• Develop a **course-level approach to decolonisation**
The first steps to changing practices are self-reflection, and questioning your own assumptions about the world and your relationship to it. When people come together in a community they bring their own experiences, as well as their assumptions about the community and the people in it. Exploring these is a key way to create a respectful environment where everyone feels included and confident enough to share, on their own terms, their interests, backgrounds and previous experiences. This helps everyone feel part of the community, and strengthens it through drawing on the diversity of people’s experiences. In these activities, there should be no expectations or preconceptions about participants’ experiences or interests, but they should offer an opportunity for individuals to share whatever they would like, to the extent they would like. In many ways, these activities are similar to traditional ‘icebreaker’ activities (and could work well alongside them), but their intercultural and global elements allow participants to share these aspects of their life stories in a fun and informal way.
Activity 1: SSS - Share something special

This activity encourages staff and students to take an interest in the lives and approaches of people from different backgrounds, and increases self-awareness of their own cultures and assumptions. It helps promote social engagement within the classroom and breaks down cliques.

Invite students or colleagues to bring in a particular image of something that is important to them (not a family member); or provide a large selection of 20-30 for them to choose from. They should signify something to them about their culture or background, and that they feel comfortable to talk about with the group. For example, this could be because they:

• Remind them of their childhood.
• Depict a familiar place.
• Relate to a value or belief that is important to them.
• Are related to something they enjoy doing.

Ask participants to spend a moment thinking about why they chose the image or object. In pairs, ask them to each explain why they have chosen their images, and what they mean to them. Then they can share their reactions to each other’s images or objects, and consider:

• What does your partner’s image/object signify to you?
• Does the meaning that they describe have any resonance with your own experience?
Spend 5-10 minutes in these pairs before circulating to find new partners.

"Modified from the HEA’s Internationalising the Curriculum Toolkit"
### Activity 2 ‘Global’ careers

Using the grid below, ask students to write some of the career options in the left hand column. Then challenge them to help each other think of how many ways in which their career might be global, cross cultural boundaries, or support social justice e.g. where they work/study; who they work with (locally or remotely); where they might go as their careers progress; what impact their career could have.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career options</th>
<th>Studying and qualifying</th>
<th>Finding work</th>
<th>Working relationships</th>
<th>The focus of your work</th>
<th>Opportunities for career mobility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Social work</td>
<td>Likely to be studying alongside people from different backgrounds. May have opportunities for placements abroad, or to study situations in other countries</td>
<td>Am considering volunteering abroad for a year</td>
<td>Likely to meet people from many cultural backgrounds</td>
<td>Requires sensitivity to a range of different cultural backgrounds</td>
<td>Unsure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Modified from the HEA’s Internationalising the Curriculum Toolkit
Connections outside the classroom

• Have guest lecturers from abroad either physically or virtually
• Have ethnically diverse lecturers present either physically or virtually
• Students and staff collaborate with students/staff abroad on research and learning activities
• Have opportunities for staff and students to contribute their international experiences in the curriculum

A key step towards internationalisation and decolonisation is to look outside the University to find opportunities for students and staff to experience the different perspectives of other researchers, professionals and students. Intercultural experiences help people question assumptions about the way things are done, and help participants empathise and appreciate other people’s perspectives. This could be through the exchange of ideas or people, and involve individuals or groups of people. Opportunities that involve physical travel such as ERASMUS tend to be for individuals but their impact can be extended through finding ways for participants to share their international experiences by embedding them within the curriculum.

Ethnically diverse guest speakers or speakers from abroad can bring new perspectives into the curriculum, particularly if their participation is used as a focus for other activities, such as students undertaking preparatory research into their work, or group work sessions to develop questions to ask the presenter. These kinds of exchanges of ideas through having guest lecturers are becoming easier through the use of digital technology such as Skype, web conferencing or social media such as Twitter, allowing more staff and students to become easily involved. However, it is important to remember that participants are a lot less likely to have a complete intercultural experience as they will not be taken outside their comfort zone by being immersed in a different, unfamiliar environment. You could consider finding other ways for staff and students to explore and understand what that feels like.

• Opportunities to study or work abroad
• Opportunities for placements in intercultural environments
Activity 3 Map Your Links

Using an **interactive map**, click on areas of the world with which staff and students have connections.

1. How does your knowledge of other areas inform your academic practice?
2. What can everyone learn from their communal knowledge of other areas of the world?
3. How could you build on your own and your students' connections to inform curriculum development?

*Taken from the HEA’s *Internationalising the Curriculum Toolkit*

Activity 4

Use the review of reading lists (see below) to identify virtual guest lecturers or interviewees. Students can identify topics that could be explored in an interview, including questions that will encourage interviewees to reflect and share on their personal background such as ‘what are the challenges you have faced in your career?’. Students can take various roles within this as e.g. interviewers, creating briefing notes for the interviewers, doing follow up emails, recording the session, distributing post-session resources etc.

Activity 5

Using the Map Your Links activity, identify former colleagues, research partners, and Brighton alumni who may be interested in undertaking small research or learning and teaching projects, such as sharing local case studies on global topics (and you share Brighton/Sussex examples), virtual student conferences of dissertation topics, real time Twitter discussions using a shared hashtag, and the creation of a shared resources, for instance using Edublogs.
Further resources

- Information on the University of Brighton’s Erasmus scheme
- Placements - see the Careers service website
- Information Services pages on Skype for Business
- Information Services pages on creating screen captures – for example of Skype interviews

*For all activities using technology, please contact your Learning Technologies Advisor at least four weeks in advance of running the session.*
Content within sessions includes global and social justice case studies or decolonised perspectives or comparable examples.

All academic disciplines have emerged from often long histories of research, teaching and practice that have traditionally been dominated by white men, and will have been shaped by their interests and values. Increasingly, they are being scrutinised by researchers looking at the histories of, for example, women, non-Western knowledge systems, and black researchers, and the role of academic disciplines and universities in supporting or benefitting from global events such as the enslavement of black Africans or colonialism. Some disciplines have embraced these criticisms so that they now form an essential part of their university teaching. Others use these critical approaches to scrutinise their disciplines and professions today to uncover the legacies of these histories, while others use them to define professional ethics and codes of conduct.

Reading lists have had global, social justice, alternative, and decolonised perspectives incorporated.

Reading lists include diverse authors with respect to gender and ethnicity.

Learning activities use global and social justice case studies and explore alternative and/or decolonised perspectives.

These histories of exclusion and oppression cannot be completely overcome today, but they can begin to be addressed by introducing alternative perspectives developed from researchers taking post-colonial, indigenous and global south perspectives as a challenge to traditional thinking. Even the action of reviewing and rewriting reading lists is a step in this direction. Depending on the discipline this may involve bringing women, people of colour, and people writing outside the Western research environment into the reading lists. This can be combined with readings that draw on global case studies, and research that highlights social justice that has positive impacts on race and gender inequalities.

Using these critically within learning activities as comparators and alternatives is a further step, while the next step towards decolonisation would be to re-centre the entire curriculum around this research and these kinds of activities. This may feel unsettling, but just being taken outside your traditional disciplinary ‘comfort zone’ is important, both in terms of individual self-reflection and to begin to understand what different perspectives on the curriculum look like.

Similar issues can also be explored during professional development planning sessions to reflect on particular challenges within professions or the workplace. These could consider the history of the discipline, and also contemporary issues such as unconscious bias and equality and diversity.
• Course visual media (PowerPoints, VLE) appropriately and sensitively represents global diversity

Representing the diversity of research participants and activities in the curriculum is important in incorporating alternative perspectives, but it also plays a role in creating an inclusive environment for staff and students through allowing them to see their own backgrounds represented and valued in the curriculum. This involves creating an inclusive visual environment in teaching materials such as PowerPoints and images in studentcentral. This may be about representing the diversity of the current student body but should also be about representing the future diversity of the discipline or profession that everyone in the learning community is working towards. It is through subtle changes such as this that people’s expectations and ultimately actions will change.

However, visual imagery must be used sensitively to not inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes. A good starting point is to think about who is at the centre of the image, and what they are doing. Traditional approaches to incorporating diversity typically depict white men at the centre of the action, supported by everyone else. A better approach is to ensure that where possible women and people of colour are represented as active and in control. The same approach is useful in identifying global and social justice case studies. Be wary of presenting information that might support stereotypes, especially around race and gender, but where this is unavoidable, for example in historical but key case studies, highlight it as an issue. Always aim to be as culturally, geographically and temporally specific as possible when describing people in, for example, labelling images, setting discussion questions, or making concluding comments, to avoid easy slippages to generalisations that may feed into stereotypes, for instance, referring to Africans, rather than nationals of particular African states.

• Timing of content and activities considered

As this suggests, an important consideration in teaching is planning not just including diversity, but thinking about the message it communicates through its timing. Having a session with a global case study, or a discussion about challenges faced by BME clients demonstrates its importance, but holding it in week 10 may show that it is 10th on the list of important topics, or and ‘add-on’ to the curriculum. Some disciplines may place discussions around professional equality and diversity issues until later in the course in preparation for job seeking, but that suggests that these kinds of issues are external to university life, rather than at the core of disciplinary practice. Moving content earlier in the curriculum but also finding ways to continuously incorporate it is the ideal solution, through emphasising its importance, but then embedding it into routine content.
Activity 6 Diversity reviews

Students can lead activities such as i) reviews of reading lists, visual materials, and case studies ii) audits of materials in the VLE iii) web quest activities to create profiles of BME academics. A follow up activity could involve researching social media such as Twitter and LinkedIn for individuals, organisations and projects that promote diversity in your discipline, and finding ways to incorporate these into reading lists and case studies.

Activity 7 Alternative perspectives discussion

Use these 3 points to start some discussion about course materials – particularly if point 3 is relevant to your discipline

1. Curriculum content consciously includes material from around the world.
2. Curriculum content is set in context, so students understand the geographical and cultural and boundaries of what they are learning.
3. Where a single national perspective is given (e.g. in professionally accredited courses) students develop an understanding of what factors have influenced practice in that national context, and how and why practice may differ elsewhere.

*Taken from IOC questionnaire, cited in the HEA Internationalisation Toolkit – P. 27*

Activity 8

Create a ‘database’ of global, social justice, alternative or decolonised case studies, that is added to and updated by students every year. This can be used across all teaching, that form an alternative ‘canon’ of work for students and staff to draw upon in their assessments and teaching.
Profound approaches to decolonisation

Increasing diversity and global perspectives in the curriculum goes a long way to creating an inclusive learning environment that respects diversity, inspires criticality and raises an awareness of social justice. A deeper change comes with:

• a complete reworking of the curriculum to centralise these approaches
• a profound reflection (‘decolonisation of the mind’) by staff on themselves, their teaching, research and professional identities
• the use of this kind of criticality to structure how students engage with their learning materials.

Some disciplines may struggle to achieve this, and for most this will be a long term, ongoing ambition as new staff and students join the community, and new research shapes the curriculum. Every course will experience this in a different way, but indicators may include an embracing of changes in power relationships through embedded staff and student partnership working, identifiable processes to incorporate alternative perspectives into the curriculum, and a learning environment where no one is excluded. An indicator that decolonising is being undertaken is that people will feel uncomfortable, making this a difficult, but profoundly transformational educational process.
Keele University’s Manifesto for Decolonising the Curriculum identifies 11 points, which are summarised here:

1. Decolonising the curriculum means, first of all, acknowledging that knowledge is not owned by anyone. It is a cumulative and shared resource that is available to all. Knowledge (and culture) is collectively produced and human beings of all races, ethnicities, classes, genders, sexual orientations, and disabilities have as much right as elite white men to understand what our roles and contributions have been in shaping intellectual achievements and shifting culture and progress.

2. Decolonising the curriculum is to recognise that knowledge is inevitably marked by power relations.

3. Decolonising is about rethinking, reframing and reconstructing the current curriculum in order to make it better, and more inclusive. It is about considering how different frameworks, traditions and knowledge projects can inform each other, and how new perspectives emerge from mutual learning.

4. Decolonising is not just about bringing in minority ethnic writers and texts, but also how we read ‘traditional mainstream’ texts. It concerns not only what is taught and how it is critiqued, but how it is taught.

5. Decolonising means identifying ways in which the university structurally reproduces colonial hierarchies.

6. Decolonising the curriculum means creating spaces and resources for a dialogue among all members of the university on how to imagine and envision all cultures and knowledge systems in the curriculum.

7. Decolonisation is not a project over which one group can claim sole custodianship. Non-white and white academics and students are in this together.

8. Decolonising requires sustained collaboration, discussion and experimentation among groups of teachers and students, who themselves have power to make things happen on the ground.

9. Decolonising is thinking about how students experience the university differently. Race, gender, disability and class all demonstrably impact student attainment and experiences of exclusion from the university environment.

10. Decolonising requires the courage to admit that any knowledge could and should be open to challenge and question; regardless of its original power relations.

11. Decolonising is about how we can ensure a system where all those who engage with the university to make their living, or to study, can do so under conditions of dignity, respect and security.
Activity 8

The move from changing learning activities and redesigning modules to undertaking a full scale review is one that will be specific to each course. Reflection and discussion are key to whichever approach is taken. Some ideas for starting this process:

• Use Keele’s Manifesto to kickstart staff and student discussions, using a simple ‘sticky dot’ voting technique to find out which points participants feel resonate with their experiences, and work in groups to explore how these could be expressed within the course or taken forward in practical activities.

• Working in consultation with students, create programmes of staff self-assessment based around deeper approaches to unconscious bias, the exploration more complex topics such as intersectionality, and techniques of facilitating discussions around topics such as race, to support the ongoing development of an inclusive but vibrant learning environment.

• Use the initial work on diversity and internationalisation to revisit course values, and find ways to ensure that it is these values that shape student learning experiences, through resources, learning activities, assessment and feedback.

Next Steps

Create plan for staff/student partnerships to make and evaluate changes

The next steps are to reflect on current practice within your curriculum, through using the printable grid on the following page. Ideally this should be done through discussion with staff and students, at a time and place where course materials can be looked through. Each of the lines of the grid can then be used to start a plan to make changes, ideally involving staff and students working in partnership on developing ideas, creating activities and evaluating them. More information on staff/student partnership working is available here (link).
## The Diversity and Decolonisation Ideas Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idea</th>
<th>We could do more on this</th>
<th>We need some support</th>
<th>We have done this!</th>
<th>We have some good practice</th>
<th>We could do something really innovative</th>
<th>This could be a longer-term goal</th>
<th>We don’t think we’ll ever do this</th>
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<td>Content within teaching sessions includes alternative, decolonised perspectives and/or comparable examples</td>
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<td>Learning activities use global and social justice case studies</td>
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<td>Learning activities explore alternative and/or decolonised perspectives</td>
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References

HEA Internationalising the Curriculum Toolkit
Keele Manifesto for decolonising the curriculum