

**COMMITTEE:** Union Council

**SUBJECT:** BAME Mentoring Scheme

**APPROVAL DATE:** XX/XX/XXXX

**RENEWAL DATE:** XX/XX/XXXX

**PROPOSER:** Temi Labinjo

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**SHEFFIELD HALLAM STUDENTS UNION NOTES:***(These are FACTS and should be referenced)*

1. There are several factors that contribute to a gap between Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) and White students, ranging from the students themselves, the Higher Education institution, to society (Mountford-Zimdar et al., 2015).
2. Studies have shown ethnic minority students experience less satisfaction and are less supported with their experiences of higher education than white students (Mountford-Zimdar et al., 2015).
3. In Higher Education (HE) in the UK, there is a gap to success and progression from HE and opportunities to obtain equitable outcomes continue to remain restrictive. This can result in barriers in accessing support services by these students from the university (Stevenson, 2019; National Union of Students, 2019).
4. For BAME students seeking support from the university, there may be issues around lack of knowledge of specific cultures, or lack of awareness of issues affecting students from different cultures and backgrounds (Students’ Union 2018/19 Student Voice Report).
5. Understanding the importance of culture, BAME home students, including international students come from diverse cultural backgrounds. For example, in some black communities, male BAME students are told to endure and face their challenges head on, seeking help is seen as a sign of weakness and phrases such as ‘face it like a man’ are commonly used.
6. Other barriers are related to language and speech. A students’ accent can act as a barrier as well as lack of shared cultural background. This makes BAME students more reluctant to contact the university for support.
7. Despite these challenges, many providers continue to support BAME students in the same way as white students, resulting in misdirection of targeted intervention to these specific students.
8. University of Birmingham successfully implemented a BAME mentoring scheme. The program was created based on institutional data that suggests that BAME students were less likely to gain full time employment after graduation compared with white students. A focus group was created with students to obtain their views. The organizers ensued not to emphasize their problems or challenges and they all agreed that the scheme aimed at them did not affect them negatively. The outcome of the focus group, led to the creation of a peer mentoring scheme, which was implemented by pairing senior level students with 1st year BAME students. It was a successful scheme with over 50 peer mentors and mentees. This helped connect them to like- mind students, help them settle, build their confidence and feel part of the student community.
9. One of the ways to provide a more inclusive and diverse support is the introduction of a BAME mentoring scheme. Cropper (2006) suggests that it is important to receive mentoring from an individual who acknowledges, understands and identifies their background, such as difference in identity and ethnicity.

**SHEFFIELD HALLAM STUDENTS UNION BELIEVES:***(These are opinions - what we THINK about the issue at hand)*

1. Even though Sheffield Hallam University has made impressive efforts to acknowledge culture, through the recognition of diverse cultural backgrounds in the university and continuing to offer tutor, academic, wellbeing and social support, more support still needs to be done.
2. A very effective way to address the degree attainment gap is to have an effective BAME mentoring program.
3. That a BAME matching mentoring scheme will be an effective way to ensure BAME students access support. Due to cultural barriers BAME students experience and the difficulty of obtaining culturally- diverse support within Sheffield Hallam University. This scheme would effectively help BAME students improve their confidence and share their experience with a mentor of shared background.

**SHEFFIELD HALLAM STUDENTS UNION RESOLVES:** *(These are actions - what we are going to do about it!)*

1. To conduct research into the effectiveness of the proposed mentoring scheme. In order to do this, a focus group study using Sheffield Hallam University’s ‘listening group’ research method would be a reliable way to explore what BAME students and staff think about the scheme. This would also create a safe space where BAME students can share their experiences and decide if they want to have this scheme, as well as ensure that their problems are not just being emphasized with no solutions.
2. To mandate the Students’ Union under the lead of the President and the BME Rep to implement the mentoring scheme.

Reference: [1] (Equality Challenge Unit, 2012/13 data). [2] Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change, Vol 3, No 1, 2017

1. Cropper, A. (2000) Mentoring as an inclusive device for the excluded: black students’ experience of a mentoring scheme. Social Work Education, 19, 6, 597-607
2. Mountford-Zimdars, A. K., Sanders, J., Jones, S., Sabri, D., & Moore, J. (2015). Causes of differences in student outcomes, Higher Education Funding Council for England.
3. National Union of Students (2019): BAME attainment at UK Universities: #Closing the gap.
4. Sheffield Hallam Student Union (2018/2019): Student Voice Report
5. University of Birmingham (2010): Mentoring Scheme for students. <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/collaboration/equality/Areas-and-themes/students/bme/mentoring-scheme.aspx>