Position statement on enhanced support for BAME students and colleagues

The aim of the Pharmacy Schools Council is to represent the pharmacy schools in the UK, both in terms of policy development as well as facilitating the exchange and uptake of best practice amongst its members. This emphatically includes the active promotion of the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion, as well as widening participation, in all our spheres of activity, be it associated with students, academic staff or professional outreach to colleagues in the broader pharmaceutical and scientific community.

Following the unlawful killing of George Floyd in America we have seen a rise and refocus on issues related to the inequalities experienced by black people within the UK and internationally. We acknowledge that more needs to be done in our institutions to actively promote equity, particularly for our black students and staff but also for other minority ethnic groups. This has led us to reconsider our practices and we wish to share our intentions and commitments here, with a focus on black students and staff but also with a clear understanding that these same (or very similar) principles can and will be applied to our whole community.

We commit to the following areas of activity (these are not exclusive but form a framework of priority areas):

a) The eradication of deliberate, intentional racist language or interactions and also the active discouragement and prevention of unconscious bias and microaggressions.

Race is a protected characteristic and any active and deliberate racism will be dealt with via our respective institutional disciplinary procedures. We recognise that prejudiced comments and attitudes, unconscious or not, make those they are directed at feel excluded. This can lead to negative educational and social outcomes for students as well as the creation of an unproductive working environment for colleagues which can in turn adversely impact their academic careers. We therefore commit to educating ourselves, our staff and our students so as to ensure we provide leadership in the creation of inclusive and supportive learning environments within our respective institutions.

b) The promotion of inclusion and representation of black and other minority ethnic individuals on committees, in leadership roles and in discussion and policy groups

In order to produce the next generation of BAME leaders for our profession and the scientific/professional support community, it is essential that we make every effort to not only provide but actively encourage the participation of these colleagues and students within all areas of our Schools of Pharmacy. We wish to see normalisation of black and other minority ethnic colleagues being included at all levels of decision making and leadership within our institutions. We fully acknowledge that working in diverse teams will deliver more robust innovation, change and progress within pharmacy education and research. We also fully appreciate that we need to ensure that, during recruitment processes, we do all that we reasonably can to ensure that

there is encouragement for black and other minority ethnic colleagues to apply and also to have representation on interview and selection panels.

c) The provision of targeted support for black and ethnic students and colleagues so that they have equity in their roles and careers within pharmacy.

We recognise that there are many areas whereby active encouragement and practical support is needed and overdue. These include, but are not limited to, support in applying for pre-registration placements and subsequent support during the pre-registration year, supporting academic achievement and the reduction of the award gap, encouraging career progression particularly in leadership roles, greater provision of mentorship and facilitating availability and interaction with positive role models, encouragement and assistance with applications for promotions. We particularly wish to actively encourage more black students to pursue careers in research (especially at PhD level) so as to produce the next generation of academic and scientific leaders with suitable diversity.

d) The encouragement of open and constructive dialogue within our institutions

We believe that one barrier to progress has been the lack of dialogue and opportunities for active listening to the lived experiences of our BAME colleagues and students, hence we will actively encourage means by which, in a safe and trusted environment, issues relating to race and racial inequality can be discussed openly and constructively, with students and colleagues from the black and broader ethnic minority communities being encouraged, supported and appreciated for raising awareness of their concerns and viewpoints as and when they wish to do so. This will include facilitated peer to peer discussions to build understanding within our wider community.

e) The examination of teaching practices and materials so as to ensure that black and minority ethnic patient communities are properly reflected throughout the curriculum

There are many ways in which both health outcomes and health interventions can be affected by a patient's cultural and socio-economic background. We acknowledge that further work needs to be done to ensure that our curricula more accurately reflect the needs and aspirations of all the communities our graduates will serve. We are therefore committed to examining our materials, delivery methods, patient examples and all other relevant aspects of our teaching to ensure that we develop graduates who are able to deliver culturally competent pharmaceutical care to patients and the public.

f) The establishment of regular and meaningful reviews to reflect on achievements or shortcomings in our pursuit of the above goals

We are determined to elicit real and meaningful positive change in our institutions, but in order to do so it is essential that we develop measurable goals to assess our progress, quantitatively where possible, in a regular and transparent manner. This will include monitoring of degree award statistics so as to ensure we are aware and can address any awarding gaps that may be apparent. We will instigate a process of reflection and consultation with BAME students and colleagues, so as to ensure that we maximise equity in our communities and institutions.

Please note that the term BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) is employed in this statement as it is the term widely used in public discourse when discussing differences between ethnic groups and racism. However, we acknowledge that different ethnic groups experience racism differently and the term BAME should not be used in a 'one size fits all' approach. Education providers should therefore consider, where the data allow, the impact of policy measures on specific ethnic sub-groups rather than the homogenous definition of BAME.