

# Race, Equity, and Belonging: Addressing the Challenges Facing Black Students in Higher Education

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# Introduction

- Racial equity and the need to close the White/Black awarding gap
- Empowering the Black student voice
- Research led interventions
- Belonging and inclusion
- Student Success - doing the work



# Institutional White/Black awarding Gap

The University's APP has a number of targets relating to Student Success, specifically retention and good degree attainment gaps. Student Success schools monitor progress of students against these targets and milestones. The APP includes specific 5-year targets set by Office for Students (OfS) to:



**Reduce White/Black  
awarding gap from 19.1% to 10%**

# What and How: 'Nothing about us without us'



**Students are at the heart of what we do**

Highly valued **co-creation** programmes, offering students **full and direct participation**.

**Black Student Voices** (BSV) research project led by students to create change for Black students. **BSV Summit held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023.**

**Diversity Mark** - award-winning **collaborative initiative** run in conjunction with **Students, Academics, Kent Union** and **Student Success Team**, facilitated by **student interns – Diversity Mark Officers**

**Belonging and Representation is** part of the solution



# Diversity Mark

University of  
**Kent**

Developing accessible, culturally diverse and inclusive learning resources and experiences.

Through staff-student co-creation and reflective academic practice.

**Dr Triona Fitton + DMO Ola Ozoemana both diversified 'Education in a Global World'**



- Diversified course materials, noting important global majority authors on reading list
- Spotlighted Paolo Freire and bell hooks
- Co-created content with students
- Global diversity of perspectives in workshops
- Amplified student voices
- Involved students in feedback process redesign



# Academic Excellence Scholarship Longitudinal Project

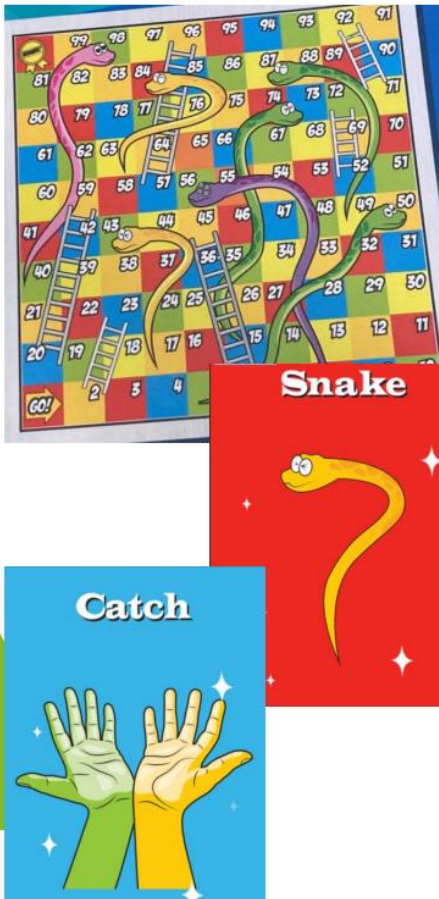


- ❑ Research draws on **findings from our 3-year longitudinal study of 25 recipients of academic excellence scholarship (AES) students** who commenced their undergraduate studies at the University of Kent in the 2019-2023.
- ❑ **Our research focus:** critically compare ‘high-potential’ students’ learning strategies, motivations, and resource accumulation across their undergraduate study. Sample design enables us to compare students by ethnicity, entry qualification, and class background.
- ❑ **Theoretical frameworks:** **Bourdieu’s theory** highlights how cultural and social capital are rewarded in education, reinforcing privilege but offering limited insight into race or agency. **Critical Race Theory (CRT)** addresses this by centring the role of racism and whiteness in shaping racially minoritised students’ experiences, such as through microaggressions and Eurocentric curriculum. **Self-Determination Theory (SDT)** complements these by focusing on individual motivation, emphasising the need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy.



# Student Success Snakes and Ladders staff activity

Dr Yetunde Kolajo and Lucy Panesar Centre for  
the Study of Higher Education (CSHE)



# Inspirational speakers



Dr April-Louise  
Pennant



Nathan Ghann



Pauline Campbell



Professor Jason  
Arday



Dr Nira  
Chamberlain MBE

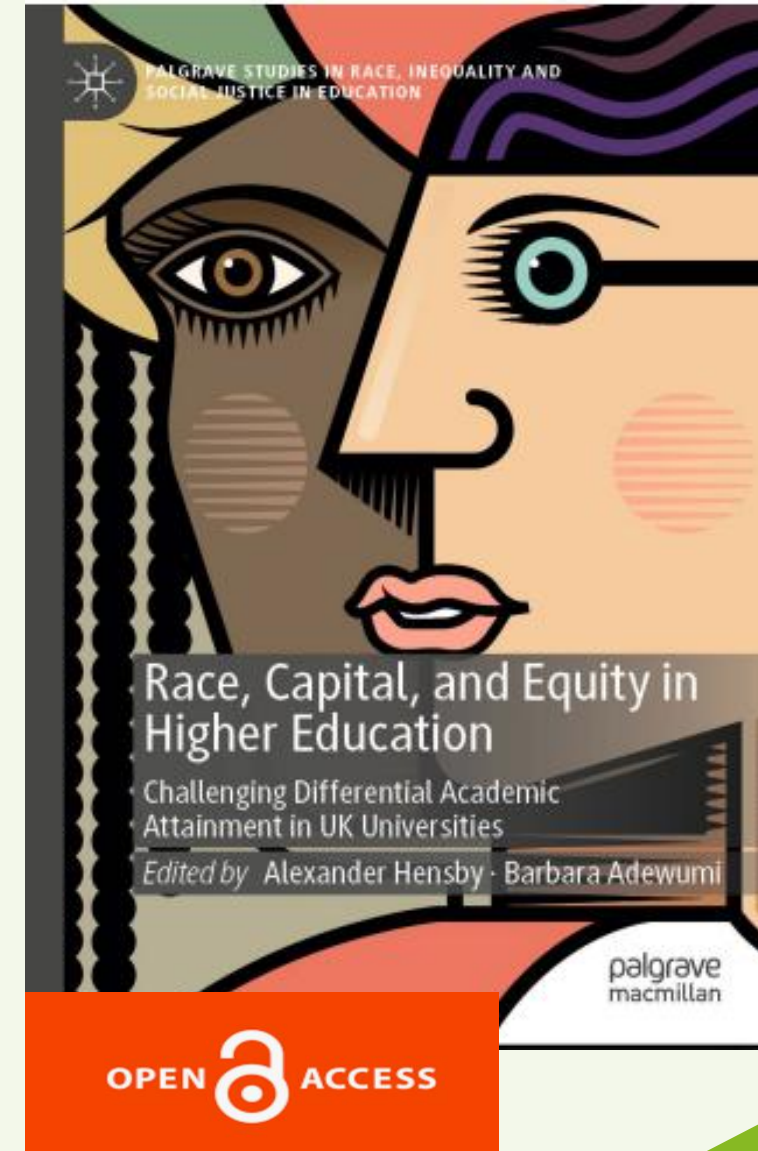
# Doing the work

<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-51617-7>

**Chapter 4: BAME Students' Extracurricular Belonging at University: Building Networks, Representation and Capital** by Alex Hensby, Barbara Adewumi, Anne-Marie Twumasi and Dave S.P. Thomas. Page 85

**Chapter 7: Doing the Work: Institutional Policy , Research, and Practice for Closing the White–BAME Awarding Gap** by Alexandra De La Torre, Elizabeth Buswell, Ellen Dowie and Jan Moriarty. Page 169

**Chapter 10: Race Equity and Inclusive Curriculum: Diversity Mark and Making a Lasting Impression on the Institution** by Barbara Adewumi. Page 243



# References:

- Adewumi. B and Mitton. L (2022) [Diversifying the Social Policy Curriculum: A Collaborative Approach](#)
- Ghann, N, (2024) Belong HE podcast <https://open.spotify.com/episode/1WoRLTxK48s8ryZ9VWvXFH>
- Hensby. A and Adewumi. B. (Eds), (2024) *Race, Capital and Equity in Higher Education*, Palgrave Macmillan <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-51617-7>
- [Kolajo, Y and Panesar, L \(2024\) Snakes and Ladder's activity](#)
- Pennant, A. (2024) *BabyGirl, You've Got This! Experiences of Black Girls and Women in the English Education System*, Bloomsbury Academic

**Thank  
you.**

