

# Education, Reparations & Justice



Education, Reparations,  
and Justice: The Legacy  
of Slavery in Post-16  
Learning

**Dr Leona Vaughn**

# Education, Reparations & Justice

International Day of Remembrance of Slavery  
Victims and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

**Acknowledge** the past

**Repair** the present

**Build** a future of dignity and justice

*'It is about taking action today to dismantle the structures that continue to hold back people of African descent' United Nations, 2025*

# Caricom Ten Point Plan for Reparatory Justice 2014

European Governments to:

- Engage in reparatory justice programmes in the Caribbean
- Apologise for harms of slavery; restore 'historical memory'; and address intentional under-development: including repair to health/education/knowledges

2025 is also

African Union 'Year of Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations'

The Second United Nations International Decade of People of African Descent

# Acknowledge the Past

Between 15 and 19 million African victims kidnapped, trafficked & enslaved

1761-1807 UK profit approx. £8 billion

Reparations: \$100–131 trillion, including up to \$23 trillion post-enslavement, *plus* 'Unquantifiable Harm'

UK alone: \$18 trillion owed to 14 countries

***Over 400 years of slavery, the wealth generated and calculations of reparations for generations of harm***

# Acknowledge the Past

## Ipsos MORI Black History Month Polling: Britain's involvement in the Slave Trade

October 2021

Government  
Petition  
2021

268,772

Teach Britain's colonial past as part of the UK's compulsory curriculum

Ipsos Poll

60%

Always teach Britain's involvement in slave trade at primary school

Ipsos Poll

65%

Always teach Britain's involvement in slave trade at secondary school

# Repair the Present

*Without education on past harms and continuing damage to people of African descent, support for repair is low*

## Financial Reparation

### ***Ipsos MORI Poll, 2021***

21% agree 'The UK govt paying compensation to governments of the countries where people were kept as slaves under British rule'

32% agree 'The UK govt apologising for things which past UK govt did wrong, even if they happened long before anybody who is alive today was born'

23% agree 'The UK govt paying compensation to people living in Britain whose ancestors were enslaved.'

**£1.25 billion** – today's value of

compensation to enslavers. This Government loan was repaid in 2015

# Acknowledge the Past, Repair the Present

**Enslavers used their profits and compensation to, amongst other things, build churches, schools, colleges and universities in the UK**

*Universities Studying Slavery – “sharing best practices and guiding principles as they engage in truth-telling educational projects focused on human bondage and the legacies of racism in their histories”*

➤ *11 of 104 members are UK Higher Education Institutions*

*Is there no legacy of racism in academia?*

# Repair the Present

210 Black Professors (61 women) out of 24,430 in UK

(2022/23 figures - [Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2024](#))

2 out of 164 UK Vice Chancellors are Black, both men ([Awolowo, 2024](#))

1.2% of 19,868 UKRI studentships were awarded to Black or Black Mixed students ([Leading Routes, 2019](#))

Black Caribbean, African & Any Other Black Background demographics “are **more** likely to go on to higher education than average, but less likely to obtain high grades, enter 'prestigious' universities, end up in a highly-skilled job, study further or have career satisfaction” ([House of Commons, 2023](#))

# Repair the Present

***What is happening in Higher Education to Black and other racialised and minoritised staff and students?***

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24% - students experienced racial harassment on their courses

20% - students experienced physical racial attack

Over 50% of staff described being racially excluded in work

Over 25% staff experienced racial jokes, insults, and name-calling

1 in 20 students left courses due to racial harassment

3 in 20 staff left employment due to racial harassment

EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (2019) TACKLING  
RACIAL HARASSMENT: UNIVERSITIES CHALLENGED



## Race, Ethnicity & Equality in UK History: A Report and Resource for Change

ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OCTOBER 2018

Hannah Atkinson, Suzanne Bardgett, Adam Budd, Margot Finn,  
Christopher Kissane, Sadiya Qureshi, Jonathan Saha, John Siblon  
and Sujit Sivasundaram

# Repair the Present

*Universities Studying Slavery  
attempts to repair historical  
memory, in order to shape acts  
to repair present harms – what is  
UK History makeup?*

0.4% Historians are UK Black

2.7% undergraduate History students  
are UK Black

Less than 3% of Postgraduate History  
students are Black

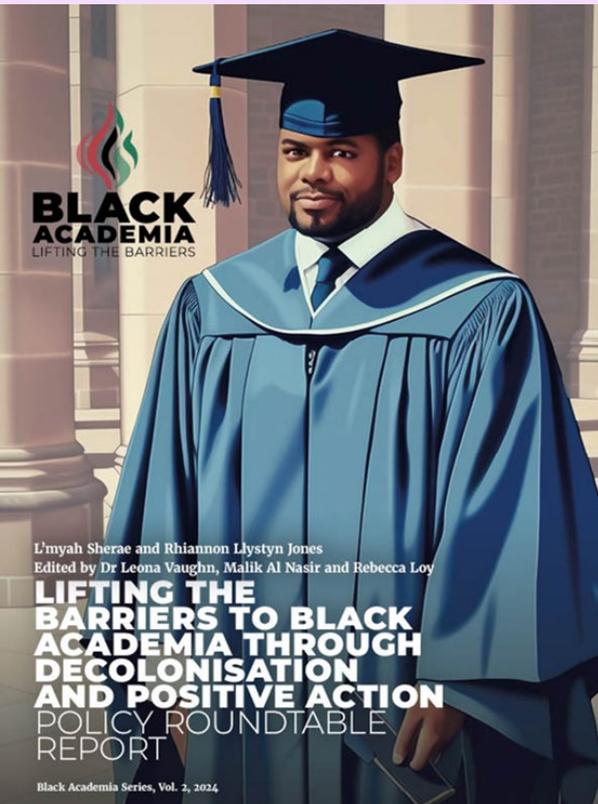
(RHS, 2018; Advance HE, 2024)

IMAGE: ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY REPORT

# Universities & Reparative Justice

**Universities Studying Slavery outlines the concept of reparative justice for universities – but can we afford to wait for members to sign up?**

- Promote reconciliation practices as institutions seek to move beyond acknowledgement and atonement to working towards equity in the present
- Create and sustain multi-university collaborations addressing systemic reconciliation and repair



**BLACK ACADEMIA**  
LIFTING THE BARRIERS

**POLICY BRIEFING**

**LIFTING BARRIERS TO BLACK ACADEMIA**  
CREATING SUSTAINABLE ACTIONS FOR REPARATIVE JUSTICE IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES

DR LEONA VAUGHN (UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL) AND MALIK AL NASIR (UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE)

**OVERVIEW**

The 1999 Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report peeled back the lid on institutional racism in the UK, instigating a step change across all British institutions in efforts to achieve racial justice and equity.

Twenty-five years on, progress in higher education institutions (HEIs) is slow. Only 49 UK HEIs out of 295 hold a Race Equality Charter Award – none at gold level. Under-representation of Black academics, students and staff, and inequality in their experiences at HEIs are a key challenge. The 'Inclusive Britain' action plan for the UK government's Race Disparity Unit (March 2022) aims to improve not just the rates of access, but the experience and success of 'ethnic minority' students and to enhance the quality of graduate employment. It stated that HEIs will revise access and participation plans. The action plan also resulted in updated guidance for employers on the use of positive action under the Equality Act 2010.

'Barriers to Black Academia' is an initiative created by UK Black academics Dr Leona Vaughn and Malik Al Nasir to explore how to address the under-representation of academics of African descent as a form of reparative justice in all subject areas and at all levels of higher education including access to research funding. It is supported by the University of Liverpool and University of Bristol.

This work identifies key steps that should be taken by the UK government's Race Disparity Unit, HE funders, HEIs and the bodies that manage and coordinate them to:

- Mandate disaggregated monitoring data collection and publication (where possible) by HEIs of both staffing and student experience - by race/gender/disability/socioeconomic status and by subject/research area
- Monitor and ensure the application of the Equality Act 2010's 'equality duty' by Research Councils and HEIs in respect of the allocation of research funding
- Increase the use of the Act's 'positive action' provision to enable HEIs to urgently address racial inequality in access to postgraduate study and research
- Mandate HEI sign up to the Race Equality Charter

The Barriers to Black Academia Online Symposia Analytical report and the Policy Roundtable report are available to download from [www.blackacademia.co.uk](http://www.blackacademia.co.uk)

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# Repair the Present

## ***Barriers to Black Academia Policy Paper - Key Recommendations***

- 1. Mandate collection and intersectional analysis of disaggregated diversity monitoring data for all HE staff and students**
- 2. Mandate the use of Positive Action legal provisions for e.g. scholarships, bursaries and employment**
- 3. Mandate race equality actions**