

## Supporting anti-racism in higher education: 2025/26 guidance and allocations

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**To:** Heads of higher education institutions

**Respond by:** 13 October 2025 and 23 October 2026 to [wa.inclusion@medr.cymru](mailto:wa.inclusion@medr.cymru)

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**Theme:** Anti-racism

### Summary:

This publication provides guidance to support anti-racism in higher education, and 2025/26 anti-racism funding allocations, match funding expectations and monitoring requirements.



## Introduction

1. This publication provides guidance to support anti-racism in higher education, along with 2025/26 anti-racism funding allocations, match funding expectations and monitoring requirements.
2. This funding was originally provided in HEFCW circular [W22/05HE: Consultation on funding to support race equality in higher education](#), to tackle anti-racism and support culture change in higher education, in line with race, access and success policy developments and the [Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan](#). The initial publication included the conditions of match funding and the expectation that universities achieve a race equality charter award by 2024/25. All universities confirmed to HEFCW their intention to meet this commitment by the end of 2025.
3. This publication should be read together with HEFCW circular [W23/06HE: Safe and inclusive higher education: supporting equality and diversity education](#). In October 2024 Medr published its [2024/25 supporting anti-racism in higher education guidance](#) which set the scene for the higher education sector.
4. Welsh Government is committed to an Anti-Racist Wales by 2030. In 2024 Welsh Government published a refreshed [Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan](#) to ensure progress at pace against specific actions, including on tertiary education. We expect universities to take account of and contribute to these actions.
5. We welcome that eight Welsh universities now have the race equality charter Bronze Award. Universities have made significant progress in working towards achieving the race equality charter. The charter supports the process of becoming anti-racist universities. We expect all universities to continue to deliver against their charter action plans in 2025/26.

## Medr's duties and responsibilities

6. Medr has a strategic duty to promote equality of opportunity in tertiary education including as this relates to under-represented groups and people with protected characteristics. A detailed explanation is provided in [Medr/2024/03](#) paragraphs 8-11.
7. Medr has published its [strategic plan](#) which sets out our funding commitment to work with the Welsh Government and the sector to make progress towards achieving an anti-racist Wales and ensure inclusive learning and work environments for all, regardless of identity. Medr's [operational plan](#) also sets out that we will work with the Welsh Government and tertiary education providers to contribute to the Welsh Government's Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, including: monitoring tertiary education providers' progress against action plans and/or charter commitments, and developing and publishing race equality monitoring data.
8. In 2025/26, Medr will be consulting on new regulatory conditions of registration and funding which will include its staff and learner welfare and equality of opportunity conditions. The welfare condition includes a requirement related to staff and learner safety, which in this context means freedom from harms including harassment, violence, misconduct and hate crime. Medr's regulatory powers will also place an expectation on providers to support equality of opportunity for under-represented

students. Under-representation means those experiencing social, cultural, economic or organisational barriers or disadvantage.

9. Welsh Government's [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan's update](#) has strengthened its emphasis on leadership and priority groups. It is expected that accountability for universities' commitment to anti-racism will be overseen by the appropriate senior staff (such as Pro-Vice-Chancellors) and supported by governing bodies. It is also expected that universities improve their engagement and support to the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

## The purpose of anti-racism funding

10. This funding is to prevent inequality, tackle racism and support the embedding of anti-racist policies and practices within universities. It contributes towards changing the culture and meeting the expectations of Welsh Government's Anti-racist Wales Action Plan.
11. While this funding is framed in terms of race and ethnicity, universities should take a holistic approach to recognise how race and ethnicity intersect with other protected characteristics and societal groups and issues including, but not limited to, identity based harassment, violence and abuse, wellbeing and mental health, refugees and asylum seekers and religion and belief.

## 2025/26 allocations and conditions of funding

12. In 2025/26 funding allocations:
  - i. are subject to universities committing to match fund allocations (as in previous years and as set out in the funding table below);
  - ii. use HESA 2023/24 student data, which are based on the HESA standard registration population, reduced to a headcount (i.e. if a student has more than one enrolment, they are counted once);
  - iii. use student data which includes the whole student body: all modes, level and domiciles;
  - iv. are based on verified 2023/24 HESA data which has been verified by the university;
  - v. as is our usual practice, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama student data are included within University of South Wales data and allocation; and
  - vi. will be made as one payment in **October 2025**. Where reporting is unsatisfactory or limited we reserve the right to reclaim funding.
13. Our expectations for the use of match funding are that:
  - i. the Medr allocation should not result in any decrease in universities' existing resourcing of anti-racism developments, including their commitment to achieve and demonstrate progress and continued commitment to their charter accreditation;
  - ii. universities commit additional resource to support anti-racism actions, over and above the Medr £1m total allocation;
  - iii. where any existing anti-racism activities or services are funded through fee and access plan or other sources in 2025/26, the delivery of these activities and services may be increased by Medr funding provided through this

guidance or the related anti-racism university match funding (fee and access plans remain operational in 2025/26 until the new registration process is operational from 2026/27). Where this is the case, the university must make clear in all reporting and anti-racism monitoring how, and to what level, this funding has enhanced activities and services, and this may be subject to audit by us;

- iv. match funding or Medr funding can be used to meet the costs of relevant membership subscriptions, externally facilitated training or other external expertise;
- v. universities must contribute effectively to the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan goals and actions;
- vi. universities maintain their commitment to the standards set out in the Race Equality Charter and actions in their action plan;
- vii. universities work collaboratively and effectively across the tertiary sector and with external partners, including those with lived experience to develop and share learning and practice; and
- viii. the match funding and the Medr allocation leads to an increase in pace and progress towards tackling racism to embed anti-racist practices, improving race equality, and the continued achievement and/or progression towards a charter award.

14. In 2025/26 allocations are as follows:

Institution	2025/26 Medr allocation (with £50K floor)	2025/26 Sector matched funding (no floor)	2025/26 Total
	£	£	£
University of South Wales	160,566	160,566	321,132
Aberystwyth University	53,881	53,881	107,762
Bangor University	73,830	73,830	147,660
Cardiff University	224,721	224,721	449,443
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	106,160	106,160	212,320
Swansea University	144,340	144,340	288,679
Cardiff Metropolitan University	77,948	77,948	155,896
Wrexham University	54,345	54,345	108,689
The Open University in Wales	104,210	104,210	208,420
<b>Total</b>	1,000,000	1,000,000	2,000,000

## Resources and information

15. In July 2023 Universities UK published [Tackling racial harassment in higher education: progress since 2020](#) to review the impact of the 2020 guidance on how universities tackle racial harassment in HE and how they can improve further. Universities UK has also published a series of reports on [changing the culture](#) and religion and belief tackling [antisemitism](#) and [islamophobia](#)) to provide practical guidance to inform race considerations.

16. In March 2024, the Black Leadership Group launched the [Higher Education Anti-Racism Toolkit \(HEART\)](#). It has a ten-point plan to embed anti-racism in higher education systems (including strategy, pedagogy and the student and staff experience). Universities might find this a useful resource.
17. Welsh Government has developed a maturity matrix as a self-evaluation tool linked to the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. The maturity matrix is attached as **Annex A** for information. Universities may find this a useful resource.
18. As Medr develops, through consultation, its regulatory conditions and guidance on staff and student welfare and equality of opportunity, we encourage universities to review their anti-racism activities, taking account of regulatory and conditions which will apply to them from 2026/27.

### **Deliverables and monitoring**

19. Monitoring information and deliverables for 2025/26 should build on the 2024/25 plans submitted to Medr informed by learning from the race equality charter process and action planning outcomes, as well as staff and learner experiences. A monitoring template has been provided in **Annex B** and returns to us should include:
  - i. The university's 2025/26 anti-racism action plan,
  - ii. The university's monitoring template, including progress and deliverables to July 2026; and
  - iii. A funding statement to account for the Medr allocation and university match funding.
20. Where universities' action plans are the same their race equality charter action plans they can submit the charter action plan to avoid duplication and unnecessary burden of reporting.
21. Should Welsh Government set new expectations on higher education or the tertiary sector during the funding period, we may provide additional information briefings and/or ask for additional monitoring.

### **Monitoring dates and returns for 2025/26 funding and reporting**

22. The submission date for universities' anti-racism action plans is **Monday, 13 October 2025**. Please submit to [wa.inclusion@medr.cymru](mailto:wa.inclusion@medr.cymru).
23. The 2025/26 monitoring submission date is **Friday, 23 October 2026**. Please return the completed monitoring (**Annex B**) to [wa.inclusion@medr.cymru](mailto:wa.inclusion@medr.cymru).

### **Assessing the impact of our policies**

24. We have carried out an impact assessment screening to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality. We anticipate a positive impact on race, sex, disability, age, religion and belief.

25. We also considered the impact of this policy on the Welsh language, and Welsh language provision within the HE sector in Wales and potential impacts towards the goals set out in the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Contact [wa.inclusion@medr.cymru](mailto:wa.inclusion@medr.cymru) for more information about equality impact assessments.

### **Further information and submissions**

26. For further information please contact Savanna Jones ([savanna.jones@medr.cymru](mailto:savanna.jones@medr.cymru)).
27. Please submit your anti-racism action plan to [wa.inclusion@medr.cymru](mailto:wa.inclusion@medr.cymru) by **Monday, 13 October 2025**.
28. Please submit your monitoring template to [wa.inclusion@medr.cymru](mailto:wa.inclusion@medr.cymru) by **Friday, 23 October 2026**.

# Medr

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