

Supporting anti-racism in higher education: 2026/27 guidance and allocations

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To: Heads of universities in Wales

Respond by: 12 October 2026 and 18 October 2027 to
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Theme: Anti-racism

Summary:

This publication provides guidance to support anti-racism in higher education, and 2026/27 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 2026/27 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 this [achievement](#) by April 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 and was followed by the [2025/26 supporting anti-racism in higher education guidance](#) publication in October 2025.
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 are continuing to make progress against their anti-racism action plans, as developed through the race equality charter. The charter supports the process of becoming anti-racist universities. We expect universities to continue to deliver against their charter action plans in 2026/27.

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 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 April 2026 Medr published its regulatory conditions which includes requirements for the staff and learner welfare condition. As part of the regulation institutions are to conduct self-evaluation and submit to Medr a two-year welfare action plan. Medr's equality of opportunity condition will come into effect in 2027/28. A part of meeting

these regulatory condition requirements universities will be expected to continue with their compliance against anti-racism commitments.

9. Welsh Government's [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan's update](#) 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.

2026/27 allocations and conditions of funding

12. In 2026/27 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 2024/25 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 2024/25 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 2026**. 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 2026/27, 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 2026/27 until the new registration process for equality of opportunity is operational from 2027/28). 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 of/ working towards a charter award.

14. In 2026/27 allocations are as follows:

Institution	2026/27 Medr allocation (with £50K floor) £	2026/27 Sector matched funding (no floor) £	2026/27 Total £
University of South Wales	146,396	146,396	292,793
Aberystwyth University	59,540	59,540	119,081
Bangor University	70,765	70,765	141,530
Cardiff University	224,540	224,540	449,079
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	109,476	109,476	218,952
Swansea University	135,151	135,151	270,301
Cardiff Metropolitan University	87,420	87,420	174,839
Wrexham University	55,059	55,059	110,118
The Open University in Wales	111,653	111,653	223,305
Total	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. In 2024, Universities UK and NUS UK published a [letter](#) to the sector to outline outlines its efforts to tackle hate speech

and racism, to alleviate fear, to improve community relations and to protect freedom of speech.

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 in reviewing leadership and governance and engaging with their staff and learner welfare action plans from 2026/27.
18. From May 2026 Medr has funded Advance HE to set up an Equality, diversity and inclusion community of practice to support institutions to deliver on their commitments and to share and test positive practice, including on anti-racism.

Deliverables and monitoring

19. Monitoring information and deliverables for 2026/27 should build on the 2024/25 and 2025/26 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 2026/27 anti-racism action plan,
 - ii. The university's monitoring template, including progress and deliverables to July 2027; 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 2026/27 funding and reporting

22. The submission date for universities' anti-racism action plans is **Monday, 12 October 2026**. Please submit to wa.inclusion@medr.cymru.
23. The 2026/27 monitoring submission date is **Monday, 18 October 2027**. Please return the completed monitoring (**Annex B**) to 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 for more information about equality impact assessments.

Further information and submissions

26. For further information please contact Savanna Jones (savanna.jones@medr.cymru)
27. Please submit your anti-racism action plan to wa.inclusion@medr.cymru by **Monday, 12 October 2026**.
28. Please submit your monitoring template to wa.inclusion@medr.cymru by **Monday, 18 October 2027**.

Medr

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