



THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

LSE Teaching and Learning Centre

# Inclusive Education Action Plan

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this report is to outline a five-year Inclusive Education Action, building on the priorities of LSE 2030 Strategy and the Access and Participation Plan. This Action Plan outlines five areas of activity for the School to focus on in order to build an inclusive education and student experience for all our students throughout their time at the School irrespective of their level of study or background. These include (i) staff development to address academic mentoring, (ii) inclusive practice, (iii) decolonising the curriculum, (iv) de-biasing work, and (v) embedding academic skills into the curriculum. The report's recommendations for a School-wide Inclusive Education Action Plan were approved by the Education Committee in summer 2019 as a means of closing attainment and continuation gaps and creating 'an inclusive, accessible and supported student experience'. The Inclusive Education Action Plan was developed by Dr Sara Camacho-Felix, LSE Teaching and Learning Centre.

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## 1 Introduction

Drawing on two reports, 1) a sector analysis of how Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are responding to closing attainment gaps<sup>1</sup> and 2) interviews with BME students at LSE on their experiences at the School<sup>2</sup>, this paper introduces the School-wide plan to enact a five-year Inclusive Education Action Plan. These two reports have offered evidence of both what works across the sector while ensuring that the Inclusive Education Action Plan is context specific and developed in response to student feedback.

This Action Plan has been created in part as a strategic measure to close Black and Asian student attainment gaps (compared to White students) as a part of the School's Access and Participation Plan (APP) to the Office for Students. The APP is five years in scope and its narrative sets out how the School aims to meet targets in access, continuation, attainment, and progression.

The approach that underpins this Action Plan is fully aligned to LSE's 2030 Strategy, which was launched in April 2019 as a means of continually improving the School's education, research, and impact for the next 10 years. LSE's 2030 Strategy commits the School to 'an inclusive student experience', that 'will foster a strong sense of community and belonging' that is 'reflected in an inclusive curriculum'. The Strategy also aims to champion equity, diversity and inclusion, which invests 'School-wide resources and support to advance diversity'.

In order to achieve these strategic aims, as well as raise continuation and attainment as set out in the APP, this paper proposes a five-year Inclusive

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<sup>1</sup> Camacho Felix, S. M. (2018) *Addressing BME Attainment Gaps at Key British Universities*, LSE TLC.

<sup>2</sup> Camacho Felix, S.M. (2019) *BAME Student Experiences and Recommendations at LSE*, LSE TLC.

Education Action Plan with five key areas of activity. Embedded across all five areas, detailed below, are the concept of student wellbeing and success. See figure 1 for an overview of the Action Plan and areas of activity.

The Inclusive Education Action Plan purposefully moves away from the deficit model, which attempts to ‘fix’ students to match the existing university culture. Such approaches have been widely criticised across the sector, including by the UUK in their recent publication offering sector-wide guidance on addressing BME attainment gaps<sup>3</sup>.

The approach is therefore to change Education practice across the School, which will ensure that diverse students, regardless of ethnicity or disability, have the opportunity to continue and attain good degrees without unnecessary barriers.



*Figure 1 Overview: Inclusive Education Action Plan*

<sup>3</sup> UUK (2019) *Addressing the BME student attainment gap at UK universities*, London: Universities United Kingdom.

## 2 Inclusive Education Action Plan: Five Areas of Activity

### 2.1 Academic Mentoring

The first area of activity is to bolster Academic Mentoring across the School. This is particularly important in increasing continuation rates by developing a sense of community within departments and programmes. Specifically:

- The Action Plan aims to introduce enhanced staff development for Academic Mentors on pedagogies of one-to-one sessions and the links between academic study and mental health. This includes recognising Academic Mentoring as an educational relationship rather than an administrative one, and the need to provide pedagogic guidance. It also involves bringing in strategic partners from around the School, including Mental Health and Wellbeing to provide Academic Mentors with guidance and support on the connections between mental health and academic study.
- As part of bolstering Academic Mentoring, the Inclusive Education Action Plan recommends linking peer study groups within programmes and Student Academic Mentors (SAM), run in departments through LSE LIFE, be explicitly linked to mentor groups.
- Students have been engaged throughout the process, during the initial research on personal tutoring at LSE and in the development and piloting of the Academic Mentoring Portal (AMP). They will also act as co-creators of the staff development workshops that are based on the student lifecycle.
- The Academic Mentoring scheme will be evaluated at key points throughout the next five years, including the impact of Academic Mentoring on students' feeling of community and confidence in their learning.

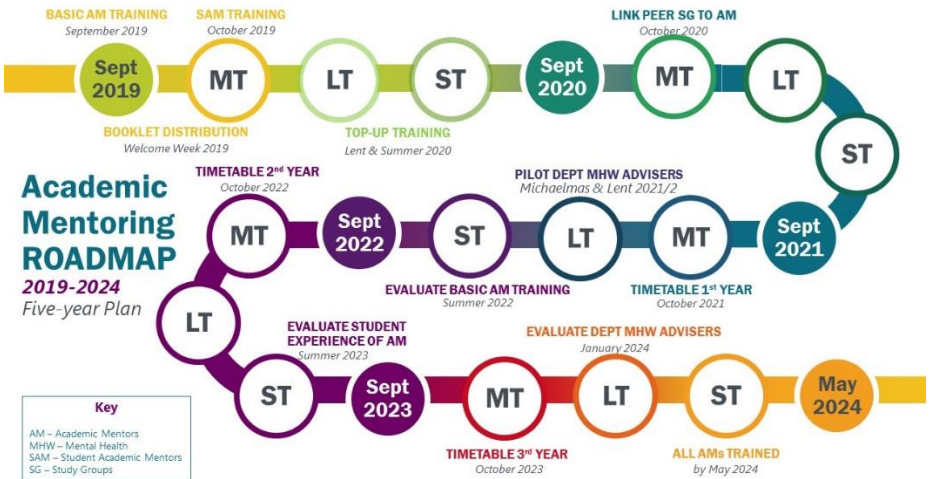


Figure 2 Academic Mentoring Roadmap

## 2.2 De-Biasing Staff Development

The second area of activity is to introduce de-biasing staff development workshops for all staff. Specifically:

- These staff development workshops, to be piloted in the 2020-2021 academic year, would adopt a blended approach – involving both an online, reflective component and an in-class interactive component. The aim is to introduce both an awareness of key areas of bias and how they affect students. The staff development workshops would create an awareness of the structure of power, and how that shapes biases and stereotype-threat. It will also focus on anti-racism and anti-ableism training.

- In order to ensure a properly blended programme, the de-biasing online, reflective component will require the input of learning technologists to ensure that it is not simply a box ticking exercise.
- The pilot will be evaluated through pre- and post-engagement surveying of staff to monitor changes in attitudes. It will also include reflections from those teaching the workshops. For the online aspects of the course, user analytics will be used to understand how staff engaged with the reflective components and to determine if and how staff returned to the online activities, as they will be designed to be revisited. Depending on the results of the evaluation, adjustments will be made to the programme.

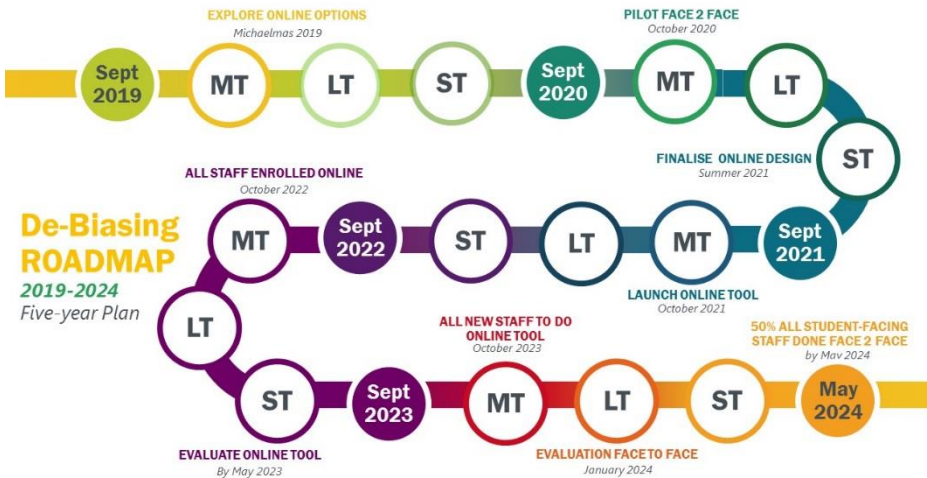


Figure 3 De-Biasing Staff Development

## 2.3 Inclusive Practice

The third area of activity is to introduce inclusive practice into annual monitoring of programmes and provide resources for department to embed inclusivity into their teaching practice. This approach draws on [Kingston University's Inclusive Curriculum Framework](#) and [UCL's Inclusive Curriculum Health Check](#). The School has already included questions of inclusion and



diversity in relation to learning outcomes, education activities and assessment in its new course and programme approval procedures.

Specifically:

- LSE's inclusive practice questions for annual monitoring will be developed in collaboration with students. They will help create the questions that will be reflective in nature and ensure that programme teams consider how they will become more inclusive over the next academic year. Students will also sit in on review processes, as student scrutineers, to offer feedback to programmes on how they are doing in terms of inclusive practice.
- There will also be an introduction of resources and support for departments and programmes to improve their inclusive practice. This would also include the introduction of key software to help academics who teach be aware of inclusive considerations online.
- The evaluation of this new process will be twofold: 1) analyse the completed inclusive practice questions to see how programmes become more inclusive year-on-year, and 2) capture the student scrutineers' evaluations of the inclusion on programmes to monitor the evolution of the results of practice. This evaluation will also service as evidence for adapting the resources designed to support departments.

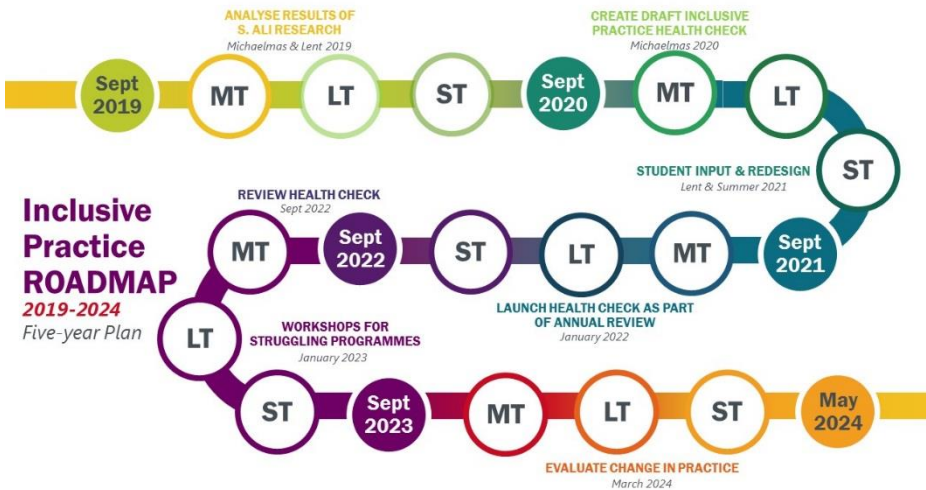


Figure 4 Inclusive Practice Roadmap

## 2.4 Decolonising the Curriculum

The fourth area of activity is to create decolonising the curriculum frameworks. This is a direct response to the interviews and focus groups conducted with BME students from across the School. They reported feeling alienated by curriculum that did not reflect their own experiences or had readings written by people who did not look like them. Yet students were excited by courses that offered texts and viewpoints that mirrored their own. Therefore, the School aims to encourage a curriculum in which diverse perspectives are embedded.

- These frameworks will be co-developed by academics teaching on programmes and students studying on the programmes and editable to enable academics and students to take into account specific disciplinary contexts.
- In order to make this an initiative that departments and programmes would have time and space to engage with, the Inclusive Education

Action Plan recommends the development of two annual secondments on 0.2 contracts to the TLC, where these academics could reflect, create, edit and use the decolonising frameworks to change their curricula.

- By focusing on a framework that is editable, evaluation will be continual. As new programmes engage with them, they will be able to evaluate the frameworks, question how to use them to analyse their own curriculum, edit them, and then use the new versions in their decolonising work. This will ensure that evaluation is built in and developmental in design.

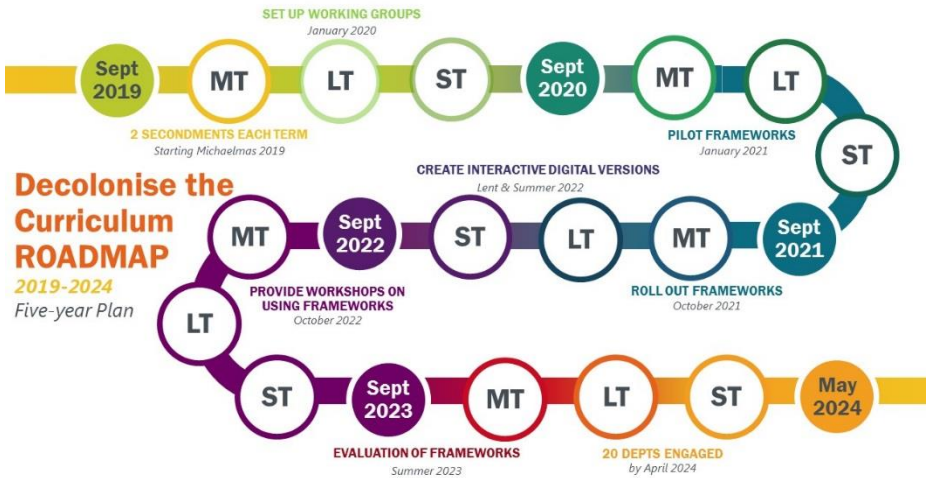


Figure 5 Decolonising the Curriculum Roadmap

## 2.5 Embedding Study Skills into the Curriculum

The fifth area of activity is to embed explicit teaching of academic skills and transition into higher education (and expectations) to increase continuation

rates across the School. Both research on academic literacies<sup>4</sup> and the interviews with BME students show that by embedding academic skills instruction into the curriculum, students from diverse educational backgrounds develop a better understanding of academic expectations, which lowers assessment anxiety.

- Several departments at the School (Geography & the Environment; International History; Law; Philosophy; Social Policy; Sociology) have begun piloting different models of this into the curriculum of their 1st year of undergraduate study. LSE LIFE has co-developed some of these models embedding academic skills with Sociology and others, and it has created digital resources to support students as they transition into higher education.
- Therefore, LSE LIFE would take a lead in analysing the evaluations of these models and the departments have developed. The evaluation would lead to the creation of multiple templates of action for the School. These templates will then be rolled out to all undergraduate programmes for each to develop their own conscious embedding of academic skills and transition skills. The aim is for every first-year undergraduate student to have received explicit skills instruction as a part of their disciplinary learning by 2025.

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<sup>4</sup> Wingate, U. (2016) *Academic Literacy and Student Diversity: The case of inclusive practice*, Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

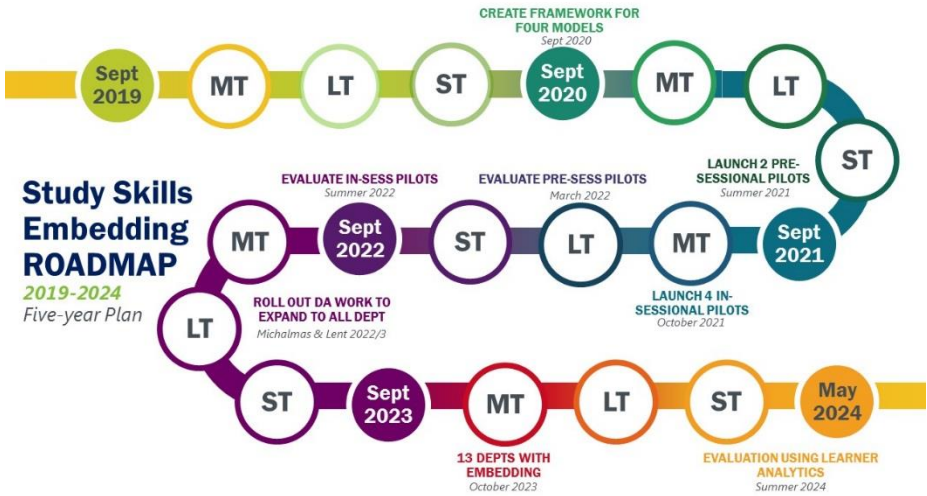


Figure 6 Embedding Study Skills Roadmap



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