



Black Student Experience Project Research Report



July 2025

Contents

Contents.....	2
Foreword.....	3
Executive Summary.....	4
Context.....	6
1. Black student experience in higher education	6
2. Initiatives and programmes to support Black students at universities and students' unions ..	9
3. Black student experience at Kingston University	10
Methodology.....	12
Findings	16
1. General representation.....	16
2. Academic life.....	18
3. Campus life	21
Recommendations	25
Reference List.....	30
Appendix: Survey Questions	32

Foreword

Black students at university continue to face unique and significant challenges in both their academic journeys and broader campus life. Research has shown that Black students frequently feel underrepresented or unwelcome in university settings (Greaves et al., 2022) and many experience a stark contrast between the experiences of Black and White students (Osbourne et al., 2021). These challenges are likely contributing to the Black awarding gap, which at Kingston University stood at 25.4 percentage points in 2021-22.

The Kingston Students' Union (KSU) Black Student Experience Project aims to better understand the experience of Black students at Kingston University. Through a survey and focus groups, we explored how Black students at Kingston have experienced their academic life and campus life, including their experience with societies and sports clubs. From these consultations, we developed a set of recommendations that we believe can serve as a strong foundation for improving the experience of Black students at Kingston.

I had the privilege of leading the focus groups and listening to the stories of many Black students – stories that resonated with my own. I have experienced first-hand the challenges faced by Black students, and I am confident that by implementing the recommendations in this report, we can bring about meaningful changes at Kingston.

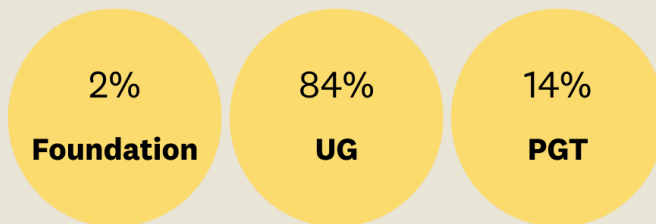
This report is just the beginning - there is still much work to be done to support Black students more effectively, and to ultimately close the Black awarding gap. I look forward to continuing this work with Students' Union and University colleagues.

Ckyra Laurence
KSU Vice President, 2024-26

Executive Summary

44 SURVEY RESPONDENTS

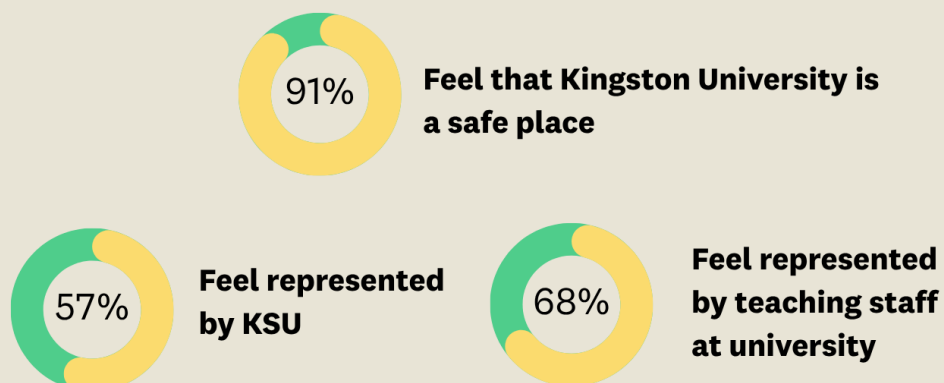
Level of study



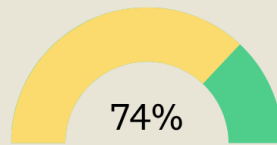
Faculty



Feelings of general representation



Academic life



Rate their overall academic experience as good or very good



Feel supported by lecturers & personal tutors



Feel that material on course reflects diverse perspectives

Perceptions of cause of the Black awarding gap, top 4

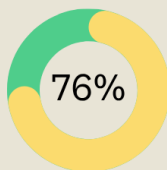
Lack of representation in the university and in the curriculum

Lack of support unique to the needs of Black students

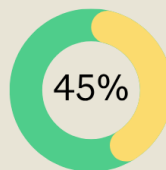
Home environment

Culture and history

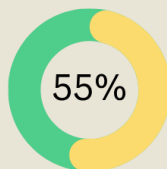
Campus life



Feel part of a community at Kingston



Feel that wellbeing support services understand the specific needs of Black students



Feel that there are enough opportunities for Black students to engage in leadership roles and campus activities

Context

At Kingston Students' Union (KSU), we strive to gather accurate and meaningful student insight so we can best champion their needs. This is enforced in KSU's 2024-27 Strategy, with 'Data and Insight' an enabling theme. Alongside conducting regular research which can be analysed year-on-year, we conduct an annual research project focused on the experiences of a certain student demographic or an important contemporary issue. Based on KU's Access and Participation Plan 2024-28 (APP), KSU have focused this year on the experiences of Black students.¹

This research project aimed to gain a better understanding of Black students' perceptions of their experience at Kingston University, encompassing both academic life and student or campus life. Investigations into student or campus life includes involvement with societies, sports clubs, and other student engagement activities available at Kingston. Research into academic experiences includes risks identified in KU's APP:

- Risk S2: Completion gap between White and Black students.
- Risk S4: Degree awarding gaps between students of White and Black ethnicity.

It is hoped that the implementation of recommendations from this Research Project can help contribute to the achievement of objectives in KU's APP. This includes:

- Objective PTS2: Reduce the completion gap between White and Black students from 8.8% to 1.7% by 2029/30.
- Objective PTS4: Reduce the degree awarding gap between students of White and Black ethnicity from 25.4% to 4.0% by 2029/30.

1. Black student experience in higher education

Across England in 2022-23, the undergraduate student population consisted of:

- 64.8% White students
- 18.2% Asian students
- 8.5% Black students
- 6.0% Mixed students
- 2.5% Other ethnicities.

Meanwhile, Black students have the lowest continuation rates from level four to five (82.6%, 2021-22) and lowest rates of study completion (81.3%, 2018-19) in comparison to other ethnicities.²

There continue to be degree awarding gaps between White students and Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students across England. This report applies the definition of 'awarding gap' from the National Union of Students (NUS) and Universities UK (UUK): "the difference between the proportion of White UK domiciled students who are awarded a first or upper second-class degree and the proportion of UK domiciled Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME)

¹ For the purpose of this project, Black is defined as those whose self-identified ethnicity is Black, Black British, African, Caribbean or Mixed or Multiple ethnic group, as per the UK government list of ethnic groups in England and Wales. 'List of ethnic groups,' Gov.uk Ethnicity facts and figures, <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/style-guide/ethnic-groups/>, accessed 14 October 2024.

² Office for Students' Access and Participation Dashboard, <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/>, accessed 25 April 2025.

students who are awarded degrees in the same class.”³ We use the term ‘awarding gap’ rather than ‘attainment gap’ as we acknowledge that “grade disparities are the result of institutional action or inaction, rather than being caused by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students as individuals.”⁴

Across the UK in 2020-21, the BAME awarding gap sat at 8.8pp, down from 13.2pp three years prior. Whilst this gap has reduced, there remains a substantial disparity between the outcomes of Black students and White students, with an awarding gap at 18.4pp.⁵ To further reiterate this continued disparity in England, the Office for Students’ (OfS) Access and Participation Dashboard highlights an awarding gap of 22.4pp in 2022-23. It shows that 58.7% of undergraduate Black students and 81.1% of White students were awarded a first or upper second-class degree.⁶ There are clear outcome disparities between Black students and students of other ethnicity backgrounds in higher education.

There are many studies which have examined the experiences of Black students in higher education and the challenges they face, especially regarding degree awarding gaps. For example, one study determined there are two main themes underpinning many Black student experiences at university:

1. Recognition of (non)diversity: the shock is recognising the contact between Black and White student experiences.
2. Black bodies out of place: there are multiple ways that Black students are ‘othered’ or ‘misrecognised’ across university contexts, which creates a sense of non-belonging.⁷

Similarly, another report studied the experiences of Black students in an undergraduate STEM programme at a university in England. This concluded that Black students frequently feel underrepresented or unwelcome at university and would benefit from a wider variety of teaching and assessment methods, a shift away from traditional lectures, and an increased focus on small group teaching.⁸

The underrepresentation of Black students is echoed amongst university staff. In 2022-23, just 0.9% of professors (210 of 24,43) and 3.3% of other academic staff (7,080 of 215,990) across the UK were of Black ethnicity.⁹

The barriers and challenges faced by Black students at university in the UK goes beyond academic life. Unite Students’ Living Black at University Report 2022 revealed that Black students have a less positive experience than average in their accommodation in terms of sense of belonging, feeling comfortable in being themselves, and sense of safety and security. It also highlighted how Black students experience racism and microaggressions in their accommodation, plus have low

³ The National Union of Students and Universities UK, ‘Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities: #CLOSINGTHEGAP’ (2019): p. 5, <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/bame-student-attainment.pdf>.

⁴ Universities UK, ‘Closing ethnicity degree awarding gaps: three years on #ClosingTheGap’ (2022), p. 3, <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Reports/closing-the-gap-three-years-on.pdf>.

⁵ Universities UK, ‘Closing ethnicity degree awarding gaps: three years on #ClosingTheGap,’ p. 3.

⁶ Office for Students’ Access and Participation Dashboard.

⁷ Lateesha Osbourne, Julie Barnett, and Leda Blackwood, “‘You never feel so Black as when you’re contrasted against a White background’: Black students’ experiences at a predominantly White institution in the UK,” *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 31/Issue 4 (2021): pp. 383-395.

⁸ Racheal Greaves et al., ‘The Black Student Experience: Comparing STEM Undergraduate Student Experiences at Higher Education Institutions of Varying Student Demographic,’ *Journal of Chemical Education*, Vol. 99 (2022): pp. 58-70.

⁹ ‘Higher Education Staff Statistics: UK, 2022/23,’ Higher Education Statistics Agency, <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/16-01-2024/sb267-higher-education-staff-statistics>, accessed 28 April 2025.

levels of trust in the processes of anti-racist strategies.¹⁰ Moreover, a Pearson & Wonkhe study in 2022 on belonging and inclusion discovered differences in perceptions of Black students and White students into how they are treated:

- Fewer Black students (73%) agreed they could be their authentic selves at university in comparison to White students (82%).
- Fewer Black students (77%) agreed they are treated with respect at university in comparison to White students (86%).¹¹

Another recent study at a university with a population of 2% of Black students found racism is ubiquitously experienced by Black students. Researchers also identified that the burden of racism is carried by the victims – it is the Black students who must try to find ways to navigate racist campus culture.¹²

These studies show there are unique and heavy challenges facing Black students in university in both their academic and non-academic or campus life, which likely contributes to the degree awarding gap. Pallavi Banerjee's systematic review links contextual indicators, institutional culture, and degree awarding gaps with various interconnected factors. This includes unconscious bias, limited student engagement opportunities with academic staff, institutional racism, inadequate support systems, and scarcity of social and cultural capital.¹³ A 2024 study into Black student perceptions on why there is an awarding gap concluded that these gaps are marked by "signals of unbelonging." This can include not having any Black tutor or lecturers, extracurricular activities they cannot relate to, frustrations around Black History Months, and the experiences of racial stereotypes and microaggressions.¹⁴ In other words, Black students perceive the awarding gap as partially caused by a lack of fulfilment of the need for belonging.

To reduce the degree awarding gaps, Universities UK have recommended the following approaches:

- Providing strong leadership, marked by commitments from university leaders to removing degree awarding gaps and working together with students.
- Holding conversations about race and changing cultures, through which universities and students co-produce initiatives and approaches to removing degree awarding gaps.
- Developing racially diverse and inclusive communities, including improving staff diversity and the diversity of academic pipelines, such as by actively supporting BAME students transition into postgraduate study.
- Continually gathering evidence and analysing data, including making data related to awarding gaps accessible to staff and students.
- Understanding what works well, which involves having continuous evaluation to build institutional understanding of what works to remove degree awarding gaps.¹⁵

¹⁰ Halpin and Unite Students, 'Living Black at University: Research into the experiences of Black students in UK student accommodation' (2022), https://www.unitegroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Living-Black-at-University-Report_FINAL.pdf.

¹¹ Pearson and Wonkhe, 'Students' perceptions of belonging and inclusion at university' (2022), <https://wonkhe.com/wp-content/wonkhe-uploads/2022/02/Belonging-and-inclusion-survey-Wonkhe-Pearson-Feb-22.pdf>.

¹² Lateesha Osbourne, Julie Barnett, and Leda Blackwood, 'Black students' experiences of "acceptable" racism at a UK university,' *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 33/Issue 1 (2023): pp. 43-55.

¹³ Pallavi Banerjee, 'Connecting the dots: a systematic review of explanatory factors linking contextual indicators, institutional culture and degree awarding gaps,' *Higher Education Evaluation and Development*, Vol. 18/No. 1 (2024): p. 31.

¹⁴ Blessing N. Marandure, Jess Hall, and Saima Noreen, "... They're talking to you as if they're kind of dumbing it down": A thematic analysis of Black students' perceived reasons for the university awarding gap,' *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 50 (2024): p. 1178.

¹⁵ Universities UK, 'Closing ethnicity degree awarding gaps: three years on #ClosingTheGap.'

In 2021, Access HE engaged with students and staff from higher education institutions across London, to gather views of what can be done to address the ethnicity awarding gaps:

- According to students:
 - Listen to students to help create inclusive environments.
 - Make financial support more accessible.
 - Promote events and engagements on race via students.
 - Enable lecturing staff to strengthen their pastoral roles.
- According to staff:
 - Ensure senior leaders responsible.
 - Change pedagogy and curriculum.
 - Work with students to better understand intersectionality.
 - Examine institutional culture.

2. Initiatives and programmes to support Black students at universities and students' unions

Universities and students' union have implemented various initiatives and programmes to support Black students at their institutions. Some examples include:

- University of Kent's "Black Students Guide to Kent" helps Black students navigate university life.¹⁶ The guide includes products and local services relevant to Black students, like Black hair and beauty salons, Black hair products, and restaurants serving Afro Caribbean cuisines. In 2023, funded by the university, Kent Students' Union conducted the Black Student Voices project, which identified a range of actions for the University of Kent and the Union to improve Black student experiences. Actions included: providing mandatory training for all staff on EDI, racism and sensitivity; hire more Black staff across both the University and SU; and the SU to host more cultural events in co-creation with students from those cultures.¹⁷ In 2024, Kent Students' Union also launched a campaign against racism in collaboration with Canterbury Christ Church Students' Union. This centres around a two-part film series featuring eight student athletes from racially and ethnically marginalised backgrounds, who shared how their experiences have been shaped by racial discrimination and prejudice.¹⁸
- University of Southampton's Awarding Gap Project fosters collaboration between students and the University to develop projects to support students and close the awarding gap.¹⁹ A panel, which includes Black undergraduate students, oversee activities and interventions. This includes a 'Black Freshers' Guide', which has information on student services and support and places of worship.
- The Black Sport Collective at the University of Nottingham brings together Black students interested in sport and provides support for them to excel.²⁰ This includes celebrating and

¹⁶ 'A Black Student's Guide to Kent,' University of Kent, <https://student.kent.ac.uk/life/the-black-student-guide-to-kent>, accessed 9 October 2024.

¹⁷ 'Black Student Voices,' Kent Students' Union, <https://ksu.co.uk/student-voice/black-student-voices>, accessed 14 October 2024.

¹⁸ 'A Black Student's Guide to Kent,' University of Kent.

¹⁹ 'Awarding Gap Project,' University of Southampton, <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/studentservices/support-and-wellbeing/awarding-gap-project.page>, accessed 9 October 2024.

²⁰ 'Black Sport Collective,' University of Nottingham, <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/sport/get-active/inclusive-sport/our-campaigns/black-sport-collective.aspx>, accessed 9 October 2024.

highlighting achievements of Black students in sport and creating partnerships with organisations to offer opportunities through sport for Black students.

- The Open University's Black Students' Support Fund provides scholarships for students from a Black background, with a maximum of £25,000 available per student.²¹
- The Manchester 10/10 programme at the University of Manchester provides tailored events and opportunities for Black students to find community and build belonging.²² The programme was designed by the University in collaboration with Black heritage students.

3. Black student experience at Kingston University

Kingston University has a diverse student population. From the 18,844 students enrolled in 2024-25, Black students made up 20.2% of the total student population.²³ This is significantly more than the national average.²⁴ Graph 1 highlights this difference between Kingston University and the UK average.

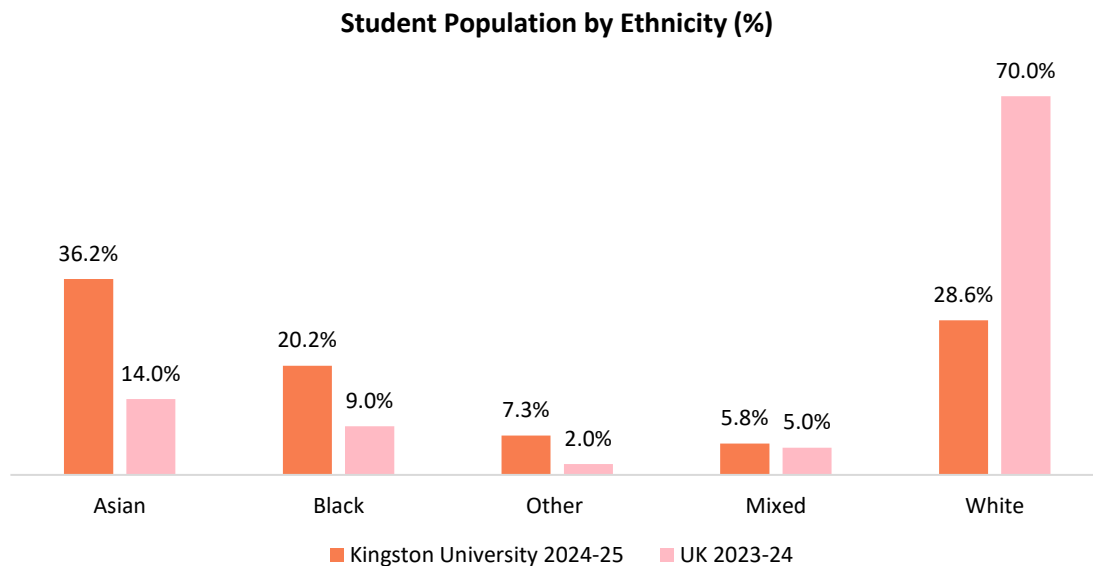


Figure 1: Student Population by Ethnicity (%), Kingston University 2024-25 and UK 2023-24.

When looking at student engagement data, we can see there is room for improving Black student engagement with sports clubs and societies:

- From 574 students with a sports membership, 16.6% were Black students.
- From 1,125 students with a society membership, 18.4% were Black students. (both March 2025).

²¹ 'Black Students' Support Fund,' The Open University, <https://giving.open.ac.uk/blackstudentsupport#:~:text=The%20Black%20Students'%20Support%20Fund,transform%20the%20lives%20through%20education>, accessed 10 October 2024.

²² 'Manchester 10/10,' The University of Manchester, <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/about/social-responsibility/social-inclusion/widening-participation/manchester-10-10/>, accessed 10 October 2024.

²³ Kingston University's Data Insight, per 25 April 2025.

²⁴ 'HE student enrolments by personal characteristics,' Higher Education Statistics Agency, <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he#characteristics>, accessed 25 April 2025.

Additionally, the degree awarding gap between Black students and White students at Kingston University is 29pp (2022/23). The APP target is to reduce this to 4pp by 2029/30.²⁵ Reducing the awarding gap was also a target identified in the University's previous APP. However, instead of seeing improvement, there has been a general increase in the awarding gap between Black students and White students 2020/21, as shown in Table 1.

Ethnicity	Degree awarding gaps at Kingston University			
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Black	18.7	17.5	25.4	29.0
Asian	9.8	7.4	13.9	16.1
Mixed	13.6	6.9	6.8	9.1
Other	6.7	19.0	16.5	10.9

Table 1: Degree awarding gaps at Kingston University, 2019-20 to 2022-23.²⁶

Kingston University's APP highlights issues that contribute to the awarding gap, including: insufficient academic, personal, and mental health support; insufficient institutional policies and practices; insufficient learning and teaching practices and student engagement mechanisms; and student services that are not sufficiently inclusive and responsive to the needs of students from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, KSU's Advice Service has received anecdotal evidence that racial issues have impacted placement, deadlines, and grades, which may have affected students' academic experience.

The objectives of Kingston University's APP relating to Black student experiences are:

- The reduction of the completion gap between White and Black students from 8.8pp to 1.7pp by 2029-30, reaching 4.1pp by the end of 2027-28.
- The reduction of the degree awarding gap between students of White and Black ethnicity from 25.4pp to 4.0pp by 2029-30, reaching 11.1pp by the end of 2027-28.

Programmes currently in place at Kingston University designed to support Black student experiences include:

- Elevate: a programme to increase employability outcomes for students from Black African and Black Caribbean heritage.
- The International Black Scholarship Programme: international mobility programme for Black students (15 students per year) to empower students to critically debate contemporary global issues such as climate change and antiracism.
- Head Start: A pre-entry programme for 400+ Firm undergraduate offer holders. Open to undergraduate students, with specific targeting to students from underrepresented groups.
- Inclusive curriculum framework and staff training: increased staff training around inclusive teaching practice.
- Inclusive curriculum consultant programme: partnership between students and staff to support embedding of inclusion within the curriculum; promote student engagement and voice in the development of curricula; support course reviews and course enhancement activities.

²⁵ Kingston University Access and Participation Plan 2024-25 to 2027-28, https://assets.kingston.ac.uk/m/686043332c98e44/original/20250319_Kingston_University_APP_2024-25_V1_10003678.pdf.

²⁶ Office for Students Access and Participation Dashboard.

It is also important to note that we acknowledge intersectionality – that Black students' identity is not shaped just by their ethnicity. Lived experiences and sense of self are shaped by many social identities: as parents or carers, as disabled students, as mature students, as holders of religious faith, and so forth. Consequently, the experience of a Black Christian student, for example, may differ significantly to that of a Black Muslim student, and the experience of a Black student parent could be very different to a Black student who is not a parent. This research strives to move towards understanding these complex, intersectional experiences.

Methodology

KSU launched the research project on Black student experiences in November 2024 with the publication of a briefing document, in which we identified the context and issues surrounding Black student experience in the UK. Alongside this, we launched a survey, inviting Black students to share their experiences at Kingston. The survey was open from 4 November until 15 December 2024, achieving 44 responses. A copy of the survey questions can be found in the Appendix.

Demographics – survey respondents:

- Campus where they spend most of their time: 36.4% at Roehampton Vale; 31.8% at Kingston Hill; 25% at Penrhyn Road; and 6.8% at Knights Park.
- How long it takes to travel to campus: 50% take more than one hour; 25% take between 30 minutes and one hour; 18.2% take between 15 and 30 minutes; and 6.8% take less than 15 minutes.
- Level of study: 84.15% undergraduates; 13.6% postgraduate taught; 2.3% foundation; and 0% postgraduate research.
- Faculty: 43.2% from Engineering, Computing and the Environment; 25% from Health, Science, Social Care and Education; 22.7% from Business and Social Sciences; and 9.1% from School of Art.
- Nationality: 61.4% are of UK nationality; followed by 22.7% from international/non-EU; and 6.8% from the EU.
- Gender: 50% of respondents identify as female; 43.2% as male.
- Ethnicity: most respondents are Black or Black British-African at 61.4%; Mixed or multiple ethnic groups at 15.9%; any other Black, Black British, or Caribbean background at 4.5%; and any other Mixed or multiple ethnic background at 2.3%.

Figure 2: Respondents' travel time to university.

Campus	% (n=44)
Kingston Hill	31.8
Knights Park	6.8
Penrhyn Road	25.0
Roehampton Vale	36.4

Table 2: Respondents by campus they spend most of their time at.

Travel time to university (n=44)

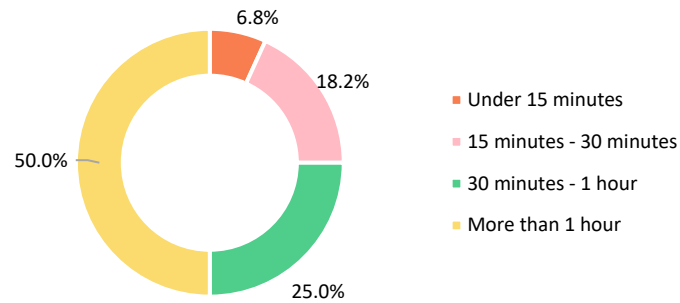


Figure 2: Respondents by travel time to campus.

Level of study	% (n=44)
Foundation	2.3
Undergraduate	84.1
Postgraduate taught	13.6

Table 3: Respondents by level of study.

Faculty (n=44)

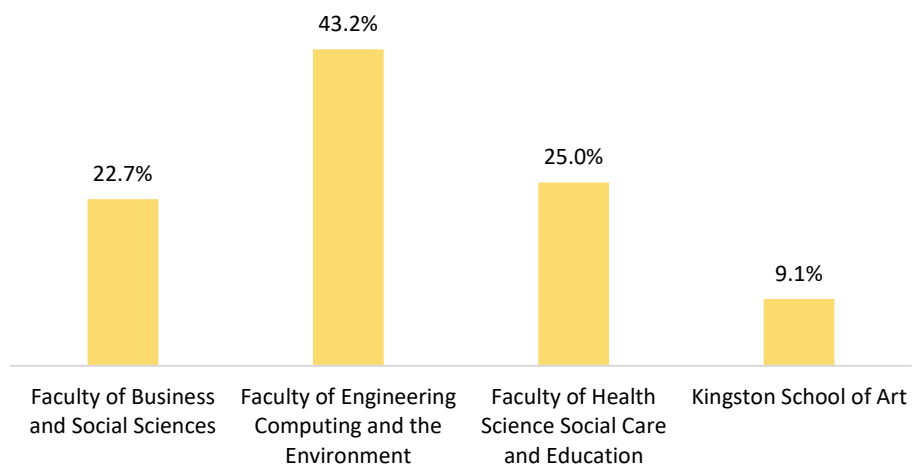


Figure 3: Respondents by faculty.

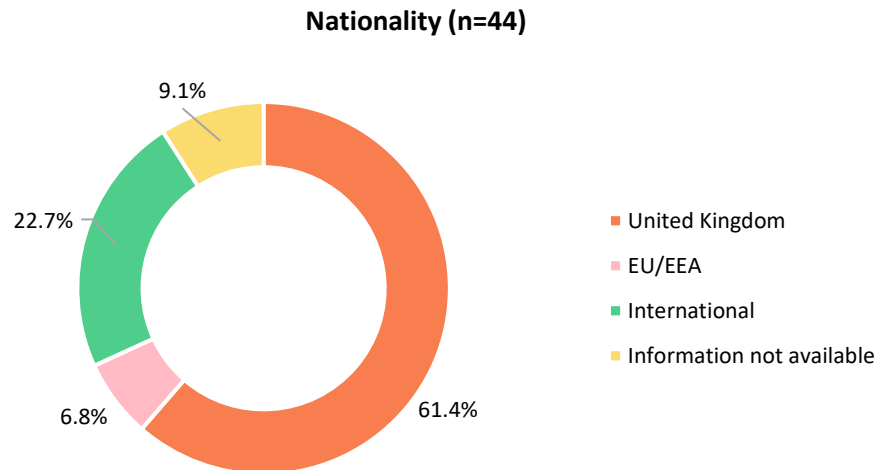


Figure 4: Respondents by nationality.

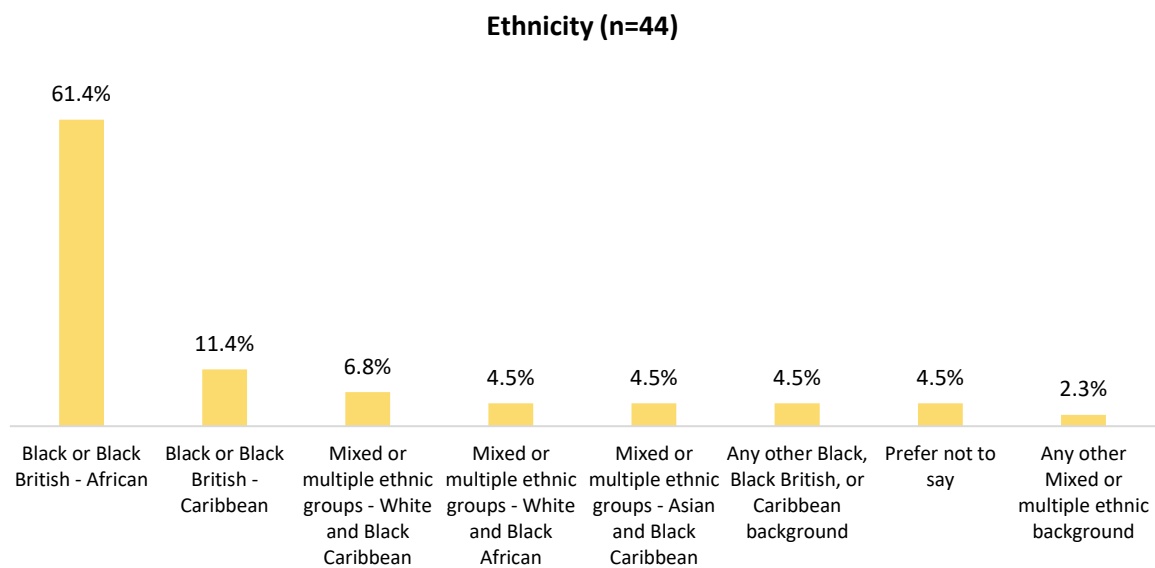


Figure 5: Respondents by ethnicity.

Intersectionality:

To gain insight about intersectionality, we asked respondents whether they identified with any of the following demographic characteristics:

- Home/UK fee paying student
- International student
- Commuter student
- Mature student
- Disabled student
- Parent or Carer
- First Generation student
- Doing part time work alongside study

We found that the most common intersection of demographic characteristics among the respondents was Black student and Home student (16 respondents), followed by Black student and international student (7 respondents). Other intersections are as follows:

- Black student, Home student, and commuter student (4 respondents)
- Black student, Home student, commuter student, First Generation student, doing part time work alongside study (3 respondents)
- Black student, Home student, doing part time work (2 respondents)
- Black student, Home student, mature student (2 respondents)
- Black student, Home student, commuter student, doing part time work (2 respondents)
- Black student, Home student, commuter student, First Generation student (2 respondents)
- Black student, international student, doing part time work (1 respondent)
- Black student, international student, mature student (1 respondent)
- Black student, international student, mature student, First Generation student, doing part time work (1 respondent)
- Black student, international student, mature student, Parent or Carer, First Generation student, doing part time work (1 respondent)
- Black student, Home student, Parent or Carer (1 respondent)
- Black student, Home student, commuter student, Parent or Carer (1 respondent)

These intersections are just a small example of the diverse student population at Kingston. They illustrate the complexity of student characteristics and how these likely contribute to their personal experience of academic and student life.

Demographics – focus group participants:

Following the survey, we conducted two focus groups with a total of six students, which aimed to dig deeper on the most pertinent topics that emerged from the survey. Below are the demographics of students who participated in the focus groups:

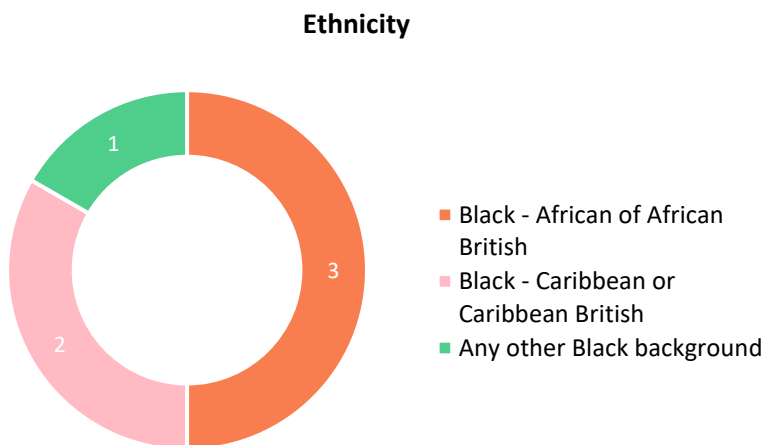


Figure 6: Ethnicity of focus group participants.

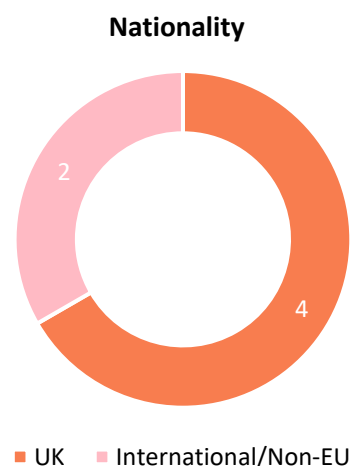


Figure 7: Nationality of focus group participants.

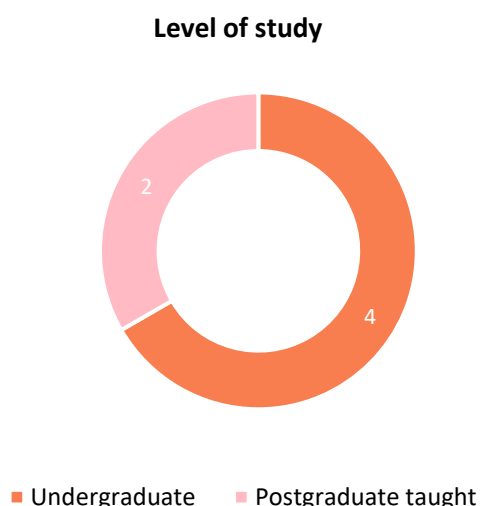


Figure 8: Level of study of focus group participants.

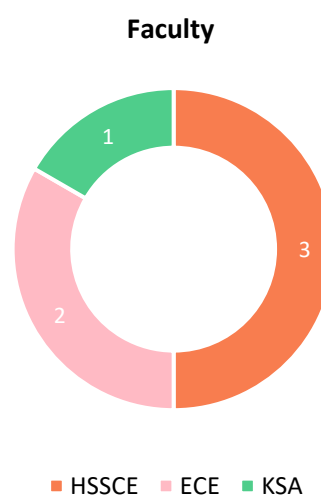


Figure 9: Faculty of focus group participants.

Findings

Feedback from student consultations flagged areas for improvement in student representation, academic life, and experiences on campus. It is important to note that these findings are based on the experience of Black students involved in the research project and may not represent the experience of all Black students at Kingston University.

In the presentation of these findings, we refer to all survey respondents and focus groups participants as 'students.'

1. General representation

In the survey, we asked students their top three reasons for choosing Kingston University as their place of study. The most common reason was 'it offers the course I want to do,' followed by 'it has a good reputation', as shown in Figure 10. We also asked for students to plot to what extent they agree with a series of statements about representation at Kingston, with results shown in Figure 11. We can see that the highest level of agreement was for the statement 'As a Black student, Kingston University feels like a safe space,' while the lowest level of agreement was for the statement 'I feel represented by Kingston Students' Union.' Meanwhile, the highest level of disagreement was for the statement 'I feel represented by teaching staff at Kingston University.' In sum, the responses indicate that the students felt least represented by Kingston Students' Union and by the teaching staff at Kingston University.

Top reasons for choosing Kingston University

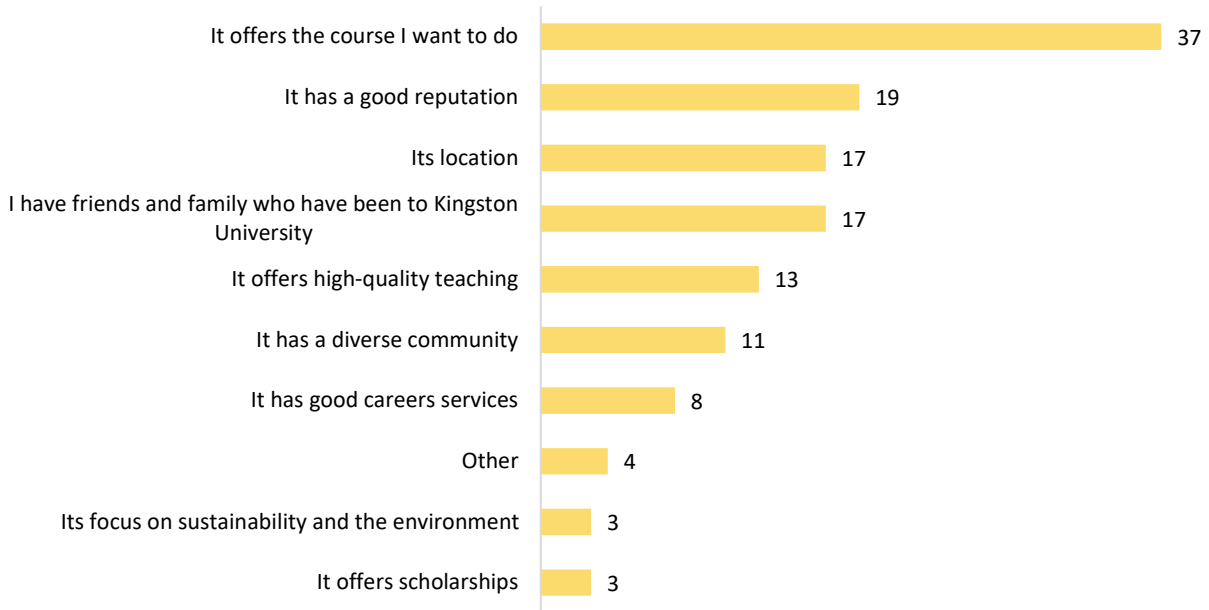


Figure 10: Students' top three reasons for choosing Kingston University as their place of study.

Agreement to statements related to general representation at Kingston (n=44)

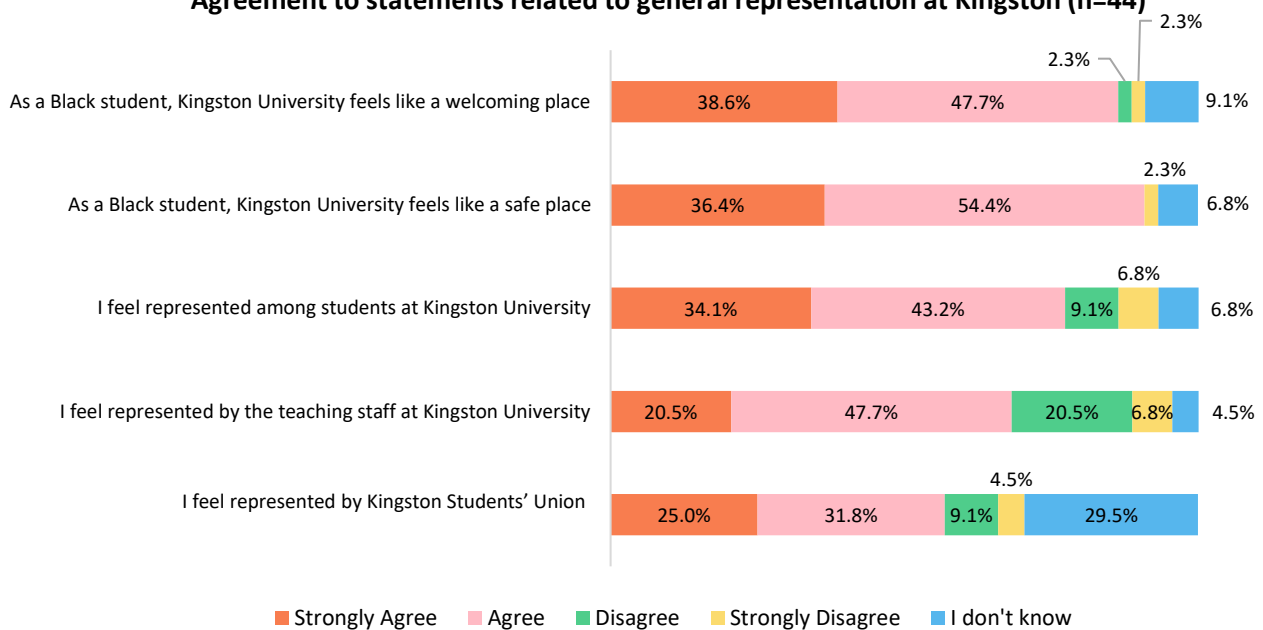


Figure 11: Agreement to statements related to general representation at Kingston.

"I don't have much of an experience in other campuses except for Roehampton, but I have never had a Black teaching staff or have seen any Black members of staff on campus. However, there is plenty of student representation." (Female, Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White or White British and Black African or Black African British, ECE Undergraduate, Home student)

This sentiment was echoed by students in the focus groups – student feel that they do not see much representation of Black culture at the University or within KSU, although they appreciated the existence of the African Caribbean Society (ACS). With regards to representation by the teaching staff, two students at the focus groups noted that they had only seen one Black teaching staff on their course. This observation is consistent with the data – in 2023, only 7% of the academic staff at Kingston were Black, although this marked an improvement from 2021, which was 4%.²⁷ Some comments illustrate these points:

"I like the ACS community (...) is quite nice because I'm coming from Essex (..) so there's not like a large Black demographic there. So it's nice to, you know, come to uni and see all people that look like myself, if you know what I mean." (Male, Black Caribbean or Black Caribbean British, ECE Undergraduate, Home student)

"I don't see representation at all socially. Instead, I see representation of other cultures, which is brilliant because I love representation and global representation of different cultures and languages, but not much of the Black experience is like for me, I'm a British Caribbean and like I don't really see much about." (Female, Any other Black background, HSSCE Undergraduate, Home student)

"It seemed as though other ethnicities just had greater affinity to each other, and it got a bit lonely sometimes. If we could maybe have events that helps us get together, that way you can meet more of your 'own people.'" (Female, Black African or Black African British, HSSCE Postgraduate, international student)

2. Academic life

Most students in the survey (74.4%) rate their overall academic experience at Kingston as very good or good, while 23.3% rated it as fair, and 2.3% rated it as poor.

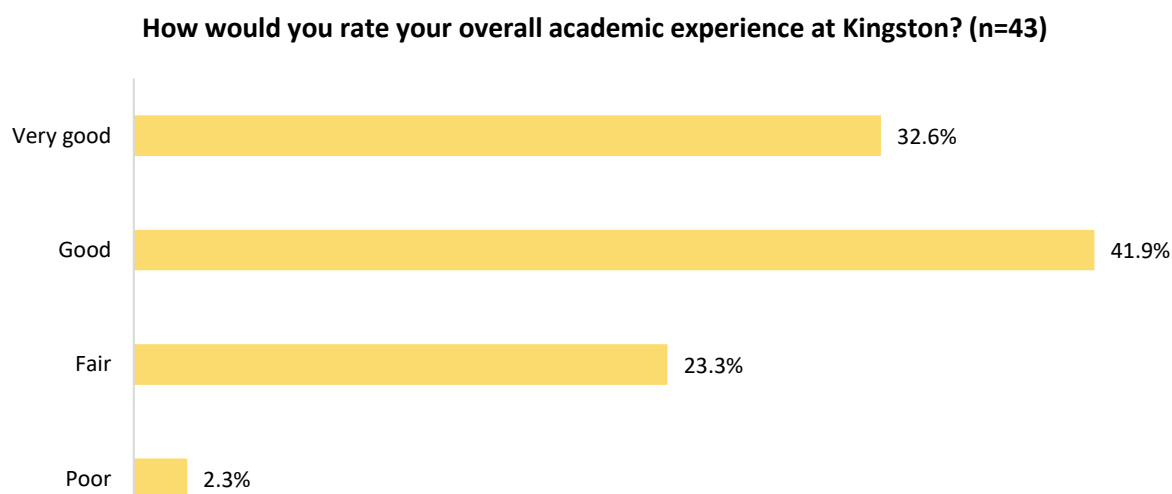


Figure 12: How would you rate your overall academic experience at Kingston?

²⁷ Kingston University Race Equality Charter Mark Application 2024, p. 58.

The survey also asked for students' agreement to a series of statement about academic life at Kingston.

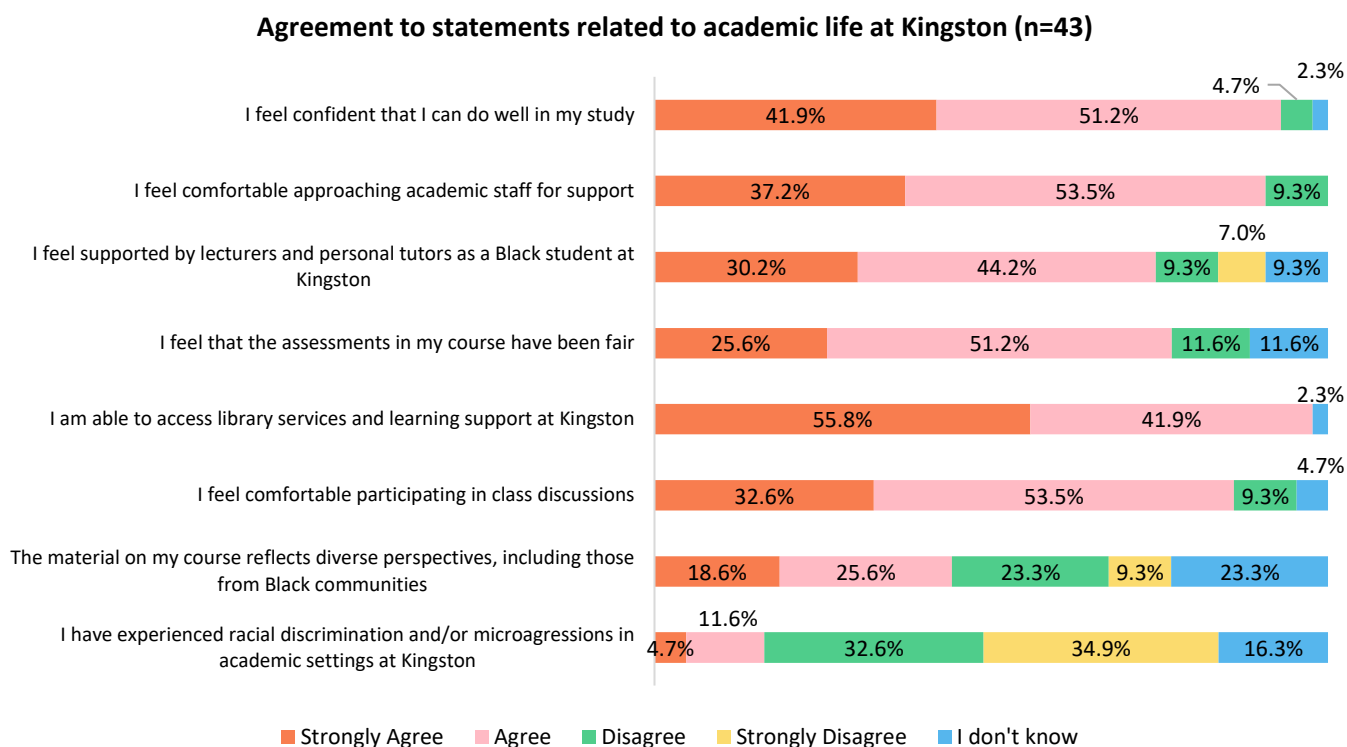


Figure 12: Agreement to statements related to academic life at Kingston.

We can see that the highest level of agreement was for the statement 'I am able to access library services and learning support at Kingston' (97.7%), and the lowest level of agreement was for the statement 'I have experienced racial discrimination and/or microaggressions in academic settings at Kingston' (16.3%). It must also be noted that only 44.2% of respondents agreed to the statement 'The material on my course reflects diverse perspectives, including those from Black communities,' indicating an issue of lack of representation of Black communities in the curriculum. A comment from a student illustrates this point:

"Sometimes when having a discussion about for example racism. It's hard to voice your opinion just in case it 'offends' my peers. So with topics like that I sometimes don't say anything." (Female, Black African or Black African British, FBSS Undergraduate, Home student)

A student in the focus group noted a similar experience with regards to being a Black student in the classroom. They noted that the cultural and media references that they referred to in discussions in the classroom were often not understood by the lecturers and other students in the class:

"The only thing I probably would say (...) being the only Black student in my class, right (...) somehow have a slight effect and it just comes down to what my lecturers or other students on my class have watched because (...) I've seen (movies) that's like predominantly Black, they're going to be like, what the hell is that?" (Male, Black African or Black African British, KSA Undergraduate, Home student)

Seven students who completed the survey stated they have done a placement as part of their course. A majority (five of the seven) agreed that they had 'received appropriate support for my placement(s)'.

We also asked students their perceptions or opinions about the cause of the Black awarding gap at Kingston. The responses can be categorised as follows, with some selected responses quoted in verbatim. The numbers in brackets are the frequency the topic was mentioned by students.

- Lack of representation in the university and in the curriculum (5)

"(...) there can be a lack of role models in academic/professional spaces (which leads to lower expectations)." (Male, Black African or Black African British, ECE Undergraduate, Home student)

"Lack of connection to the lecturers and relatability of subject to some of our experience." (Male, Black African or Black African British, FBSS Postgraduate, international student)

- Lack of support unique to the needs of Black students (5)

"(...) Black student haven't been empowered enough to access help they need to achieve excellently in their academics." (Female, Black African or Black African British, HSSCE Undergraduate, Home student)

- Home environment (5)

"(...) due to cultural differences, that Black households have a less effective approach to education. This is not to say that Black households value education less. But that they focus on more practical or vocational skills rather than academic pursuits. This leads to inefficiencies in educational approaches such as a lack of exposure to study tools and strategies." (Male, Black African or Black African British, ECE Undergraduate, Home student)

- Culture and history (4)

"Black students may not feel as confident in themselves compared to white students due to the culture they come from being seen as poor and of a lower standard than their white counterparts. Black students face the stigma of crime as people associate a variety of crimes with black people mostly young Black males." (Male, Black African or Black African British, ECE Undergraduate, Home student)

- Lack of confidence (3)
- Tendency to 'suffer in silence' and hesitant to seek help (3)

"Black students do not feel as recognised and are used to suffering in silence so often cries for help go unintentionally unnoticed. White people are vocal about what they need. Black people, not so much, it seems." (Female, Black African or Black African British, FBSS Undergraduate, international student)

- Financial issues (3)

- Lack of motivation (2)

Some students in the focus groups reported that they could not really resonate with the causes of the Black awarding gap as suggested by students in the survey. They felt that they had always received help when they needed it. However, a student noted that they could understand why a lack of motivation could be one of the causes for the Black awarding gap:

"I haven't really had any issues like my course or anything. And whenever I've needed help, I can, like, I've just asked my lecturer and they've looked in for me." (Male, Black Caribbean or Black Caribbean British, ECE Undergraduate, Home student)

"I find it easy to ask for help, but I can see why people might actually (have) a lack of motivation." (Female, Black African or Black African British, HSSCE Undergraduate, Home student)

Another student in the focus groups, who was an international student, reported that financial challenges faced by international students could create a different university experience than that of Home students, which in turn could contribute to the Black awarding gap.

Furthermore, KSU Advice Service data from 2023-24 indicates that Black students were more likely to have a query about academic appeal when they accessed the Advice Service. The table below shows a comparison of the percentage of students by ethnicity and by the type of query with which they came to the Advice Service:

Ethnicity	Type of query (%)					
	Academic appeal	Mitigating circumstances	Academic integrity	Complaint	Student Conduct and Behaviour Disciplinary	Other
Asian (n=97)	39.1	13.4	16.5	5.2	2.1	9.3
Black (n=79)	57.0	11.4	12.7	5.1	3.8	7.6
White (n=51)	33.3	13.7	3.9	15.7	2.0	21.6
Other (incl. Mixed) (n=20)	35.0	5.0	20.0	10.0	10.0	10.0

Table 4: KSU Advice Service cases by ethnicity and type of query, 2023/24

Of the 79 Black students who accessed the Advice Service in 2023/24, the largest proportion was from the Faculty of Health, Science, Social Care, and Education (48.1%), followed by Faculty of Business and Social Sciences (24.1%), Faculty of Engineering, Computing and the Environment (19%), and Kingston School of Art (8.9%).

3. Campus life

Most students in the survey rated their overall sense of belonging as a Black student at Kingston as moderate (52.6%), while 34.2% rated it as very strong or strong, and 13.2% rated it as slight or not at all.

How would you rate your overall sense of belonging as a Black student at Kingston? (n=38)

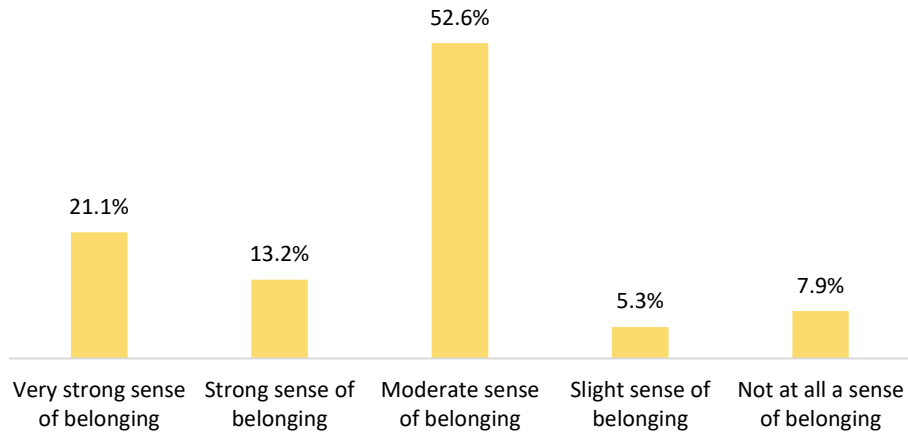


Figure 13: How would you rate your overall sense of belonging as a Black student at Kingston?

Some comments from students in the survey provide insight on the factors that influenced their sense of belonging at Kingston:

"Being 1 of 3 Black people on my course last year was very discouraging." (Female, Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White or White British and Black Caribbean or Caribbean British, KSA Undergraduate, Home student)

"My class has groups from (countries). They sit with each other. There are only two Black persons in class. Each ethnic group to themselves." (Male, Black Caribbean or Black Caribbean British, ECE Postgraduate, international student)

Some students in the focus groups reported that their supportive lecturers have created a sense of belonging at Kingston, but they had not been feeling a sense of belonging in terms of their Black identity and culture. Some comments below illustrate these points:

"Personally, I do feel a sense of belonging at Kingston due to the extracurriculars I've been doing. But when I was thinking about it just now, I find that sense of belonging is just in terms of my, like the person, my personality, and the things I'm into. I don't have a sense of belonging in terms of my Black identity." (Female, Any other Black background, HSSCE Undergraduate, Home student)

"I'm gonna give that to the lecturers. If it weren't for the lecturers, I wouldn't have any sense of belonging in the school. The lecturers tend to e-mail me personally to help (...) So if it's not for them, I wouldn't feel, you know, like I belong." (Male, Black Caribbean or Black Caribbean British, ECE Postgraduate, international student)

In the question of 'How has your experience as a Black student at Kingston impacted your mental health?', most students in the survey (55.3%) said that it has had no impact, while 36.8% said that it has had positive impact, and 7.9% said it has had negative impact.

How has your experience as a Black student at Kingston impacted your mental health? (n=38)

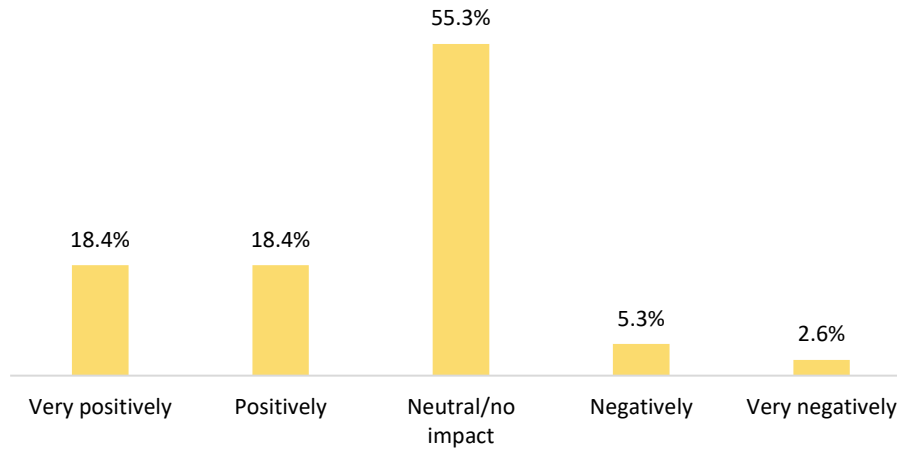


Figure 14: How has your experience as a Black student at Kingston impacted your mental health?

Most students in the survey (84.%) said that they had not considered leaving the university due to experiences related to their race, while 7.9 per cent said that they had.

The survey also asked for students' agreement to a series of statement about their student life at Kingston.

Agreement to statements related to student life at Kingston (n=38)

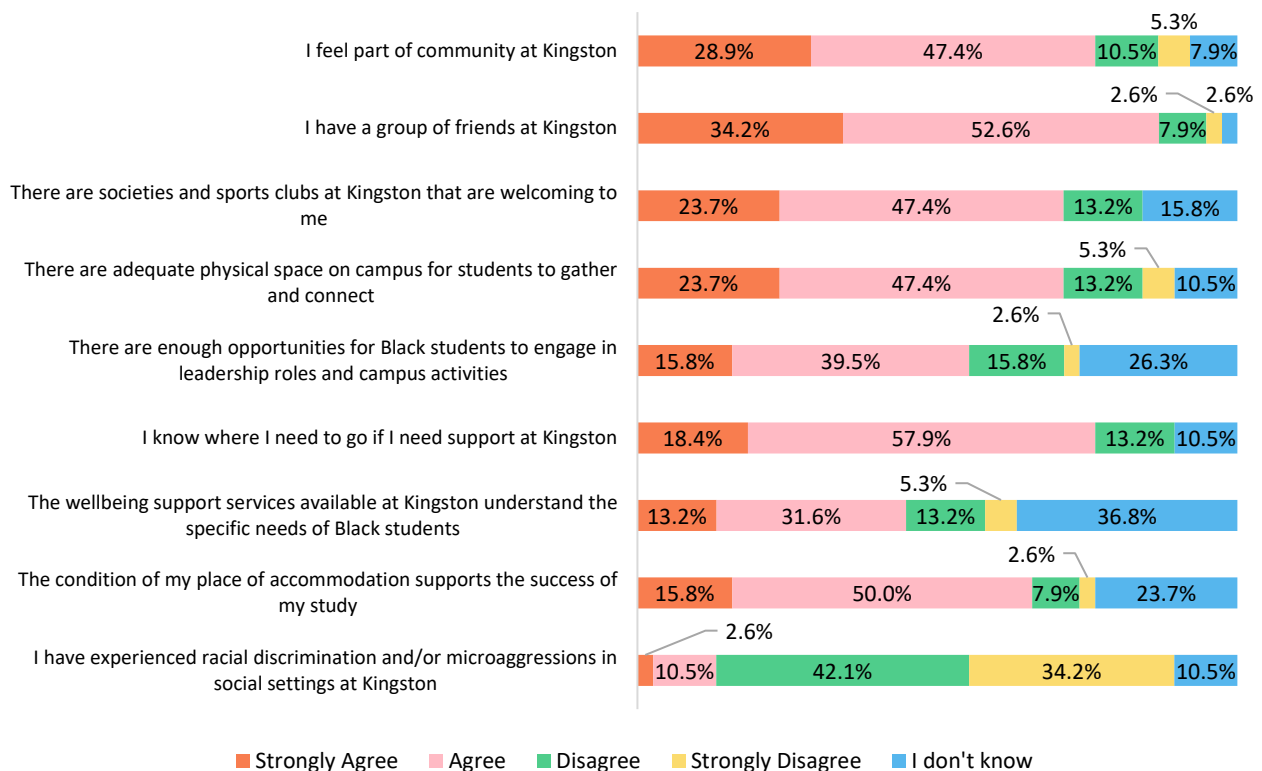


Figure 15: Agreement to statements related to student life at Kingston.

We can see that the highest level of agreement was for the statement 'I have a group of friends at Kingston' (86.8%), while the lowest level of agreement was for the statement 'I have experienced racial discrimination and/or microaggressions in social settings at Kingston' (13.1%).

With regards to KSU activities and services, 47.4% of students in the survey (n=38) had not accessed the KSU Advice services, 7.9% said they had, and 34.2% did not know that KSU provides Advice service.

Furthermore, 47.4% of students in survey had engaged with other activities and opportunities provided by KSU, and 31.6% had not. Of the students who had engaged with KSU, the most common type of engagement was as a member of societies and/or sports clubs (13 respondents), followed by attended KSU events (10 respondents), voted in the elections (4 responses), as an academic rep (3 respondents), and as a candidate in the elections (1 respondent).

Lastly, in both the survey and the focus groups, we asked students what the University and the Union could do to improve the experiences of Black students. Their responses can be categorised as follows, with some selected responses quoted in verbatim:

- More engagement and communications with Black students (10)

"Being vocal and asking Black students what can be done." (Male, Black Caribbean or Black Caribbean British, ECE Undergraduate, Home student)

"Empowerment is needed, being that some of the black students haven't learnt how to express themselves fully which at the end leave them behind everything." (Female, Black African or Black African British, HSSCE Undergraduate, Home student)

"I'll say maybe advertise it more (...) For instance, I didn't really know there was like the Union for like Black students (...) I think it's going to help more Black students (...) I would love to speak more to people that I can relate to. (...) During like the first week of uni when they're like introducing the course and everything, they can also bring that out, bring that on as well." (Female, Black African or Black African British, HSSCE Undergraduate, Home student)

"Encourage Black students to join these societies and unions." (Male, Black African or Black African British, ECE Undergraduate, Home student)

- More events for Black students (6), which goes hand in hand with making Black culture and communities in the university more visible (2). Examples of events suggested by students included carnival-like event that encourages Black students to wear their traditional attires, African Caribbean Society (ACS) events that are more inclusive, and Black food trucks on campus.

- More initiatives to welcome and prepare Black students for university (5)

"Find out all new students both undergraduate and postgraduate who are Black and meet and greet them. Let them meet other Black persons and make friends. Let them feel comfortable at the university on the first than to be start classes and feel marginalized and feel like the minority in every class." (Male, Black Caribbean or Black Caribbean British, ECE Postgraduate, international student)

"Make it more conducive for more Black students to apply and enrol." (Male, Black African or Black African British, FBSS Postgraduate, international student)

“More activities targeted towards integrating international African students during their first year to adjust to a different culture.” (Male, Black African or Black African British, ECE Undergraduate, international student)

- More Black course reps (3)

Having a Black course rep would be great because I think I'll be able to talk about things that they understand compared to a White course rep because I may say like, you know, I feel like I'm not really getting a lot of opportunities. Why is that, White course rep maybe say, oh, you're not pushing yourself hard enough. That (Black) course rep may say, OK, maybe because of their under representation, you know, there are certain things that, you know, we both experience. So we have to try and find ways to go through that. So stuff like that, that would be great to have. (Female, Any other Black background, HSSCE Undergraduate, Home student)

- More career or professional development support for Black students (3)

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research project, KSU recommends the following measures to improve the experience of Black students at Kingston University.²⁸ We also recognise that Kingston University's Access and Participation Plan 2024/25-2027/28 and Race Equality Charter Submission 2024 have set action plans to address issues related to Black student experience. These recommendations are intended to complement the University's existing action plans.

1. Improving communications with Black students about relevant programmes and activities at Kingston
 - a. Publish a guidebook for Black students that includes signposting to relevant services and activities at Kingston University (e.g., academic rep system) and Kingston upon Thames (e.g., Black beauty shops, Afro-Caribbean restaurants).
 - b. Deliver tailored communications with relevant information for Black students. These communications include KSU newsletters, social media posts, as well as open forums for Black students facilitated by KSU. This includes ensuring clarity on the support available to Black students, such as bursaries/grants, extra-curricular opportunities, and academic support.
2. Actively foster a more inclusive environment for Black students on campus
 - a. Collaborate with Black-led student societies and provide appropriate resources to improve the delivery of events for Black students and events that showcase Black cultures and identities, across all four campuses throughout the academic year.

²⁸ These recommendations are a synthesis of the research findings, discussions with KSU Sabbatical Officers, and various resources, including: (i) Universities UK, 'Closing ethnicity degree awarding gaps: three years on #ClosingTheGap,' (ii) Kingston University Access and Participation Plan 2024-25 to 2027-28, (iii) Evangel Anwuaso, 'The invisible weight: understanding academic pressure among Black students,' Student Space, <https://studentspace.org.uk/wellbeing/the-invisible-weight-understanding-academic-pressure-among-black-students>, accessed 29 April 2025, (iv) 'Empowering Underrepresented Minority Students: Strategies for Success in Higher Education,' HE Professional, <https://heprofessional.co.uk/edition/empowering-underrepresented-minority-students-strategies-for-success-in-higher-education-release>, accessed 29 April 2025.

- b. Encourage Black-led student societies to develop a community of Black students to develop a sense of belonging and mutual support. This community should be hosted by KSU and the KU BAME Staff Network to enable students to have ownership of this space.
 - c. Improve the provision of Afro-Caribbean food across all campuses and KU events.
 - d. Implement cultural competency training for all staff and students at Kingston University, as outlined in KU's Race Equality Charter.
 - e. Increase Black student engagement in the Inclusive Curriculum Consultant programme, as outlined in KU's Race Equality Charter.

- 3. Enhancing support specific to the needs of Black students
 - a. Improve programmes to prepare Black students for university, including tutoring, study groups, and other academic support programs to bridge academic preparation gaps and succeed in their coursework, as outlined in KU's Race Equality Charter.
 - b. Enhance wellbeing support for Black students, including efforts to reduce stigma about help seeking behaviours and mental health difficulties, and improve training for wellbeing staff to understand the specific challenges faced by Black students, as outlined in KU's Race Equality Charter.
 - c. Ensure all courses have the opportunity to recruit Black students to become Course Reps, and that all Black students who become Course Reps feel empowered to raise academic feedback to relevant KU committees.
 - d. Deliver a programme to support Black students in improving their career and professional development, as outlined in KU's Race Equality Charter.
 - e. KSU Advice Service to establish an outreach and support plan to enhance the accessibility of the Service to Black students.

- 4. Improving staff diversity at Kingston University, including wellbeing staff, as outlined in KU's Race Equality Charter.

No	Recommendation	Responsibility	Main issue				
			Lack of representation by KSU	Lack of representation by teaching staff	Lack of representation of Black communities in the curriculum	Lack of support unique to the needs of Black students	Lack of sense of belonging
1.	Improving communications with Black students about relevant programmes and activities at Kingston.						
1.a.	Publish a guidebook for Black students that includes signposting to relevant services and activities at Kingston University and Kingston upon Thames.	KSU & KU	*			*	*
1.b.	Deliver tailored communications with relevant information for Black students. These communications include KSU newsletters, social media posts, as well as open forums for Black students facilitated by KSU.	KSU	*			*	*
2.	Actively foster a more inclusive environment for Black students on campus.						
2.a.	Collaborate with Black-led student societies and provide appropriate resources to improve the delivery of events for Black students and events that showcase Black cultures and identities.	KSU	*				*
2.b.	Encourage Black led student societies to develop a community of Black students to develop a sense of belonging and mutual support.	KSU	*			*	*

No	Recommendation	Responsibility	Main issue				
			Lack of representation by KSU	Lack of representation by teaching staff	Lack of representation of Black communities in the curriculum	Lack of support unique to the needs of Black students	Lack of sense of belonging
2.c.	Improve the provision of Afro-Caribbean food across all campuses and KU events.	KSU & KU	*				*
2.c.	Implement cultural competency training for all staff and students at Kingston University.	KU & KSU				*	*
2.d.	Increase Black student engagement in the Inclusive Curriculum Consultant programme.	KU			*		*
3.	Enhancing support specific to the needs of Black students.						
3.a.	Improve programmes to prepare Black students for university.	KU				*	*
3.b.	Enhance wellbeing support for Black students.	KU & KSU				*	*
3.c.	Ensure all courses have the opportunity to recruit Black students to become Course Reps, and that all Black students who become Course Reps feel empowered to raise academic feedback to relevant KU committees.	KSU	*			*	*
3.d.	Deliver a programme to support Black students in improving their career and professional development.	KU				*	*
3.e.	KSU Advice Service to establish an outreach and support plan to enhance the accessibility of the Service to Black students.	KSU	*			*	

No	Recommendation	Responsibility	Main issue				
			Lack of representation by KSU	Lack of representation by teaching staff	Lack of representation of Black communities in the curriculum	Lack of support unique to the needs of Black students	Lack of sense of belonging
4.	Improving staff diversity at Kingston University, including wellbeing staff.	KU		*			*

Table 5: Main issues and recommendations.

Reference List

- Anwuaso, Evangel. 'The invisible weight: understanding academic pressure among Black students.' Student Space. Accessed 29 April 2025.
<https://studentspace.org.uk/wellbeing/the-invisible-weight-understanding-academic-pressure-among-black-students>.
- Banerjee, Pallavi. 'Connecting the dots: a systematic review of explanatory factors linking contextual indicators, institutional culture and degree awarding gaps.' *Higher Education Evaluation and Development*, Vol. 18/No. 1 (2024): pp. 31-52.
- Gov.uk Ethnicity facts and figures. 'List of ethnic groups.' Accessed 14 October 2024.
<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/style-guide/ethnic-groups/>.
- Greaves, Racheal, et al. 'The Black Student Experience: Comparing STEM Undergraduate Student Experiences at Higher Education Institutions of Varying Student Demographic.' *Journal of Chemical Education*, Vol. 99 (2022): pp. 56-70.
- Halpin and Unite Students. 'Living Black at University: Research into the experiences of Black students in UK student accommodation.' (2022). <https://www.unitegroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Living-Black-at-University-Report-FINAL.pdf>.
- HE Professional. 'Empowering Underrepresented Minority Students: Strategies for Success in Higher Education.' Accessed 29 April 2025.
<https://heprofessional.co.uk/edition/empowering-underrepresented-minority-students-strategies-for-success-in-higher-education-release>.
- Higher Education Statistics Agency. 'Higher Education Staff Statistics: UK, 2022/23.' Accessed 28 April 2025. <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/16-01-2024/sb267-higher-education-staff-statistics>.
'HE student enrolments by personal characteristics.' Accessed 25 April 2025.
<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he#characteristics>.
- Kent Students' Union. 'Black Student Voices.' Accessed 14 October 2024.
<https://ksu.co.uk/student-voice/black-student-voices>.
- Kingston University Access and Participation Plan 2024-25 to 2027-28.
https://assets.kingston.ac.uk/m/6860433332c98e44/original/20250319_Kingston_University_APP_2024-25_V1_10003678.pdf.
Race Equality Charter Mark Application, 2024.
- Marandure, Blessing N., Jess Hall, and Saima Noreen. "... They're talking to you as if they're kind of dumbing it down': A thematic analysis of Black students' perceived reasons for the university awarding gap.' *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 50 (2024): pp. 1172-1188.
- The National Union of Students and Universities UK. 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities: #CLOSINGTHEGAP.' (2019).
<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/bame-student-attainment.pdf>.

Office for Students Access and Participation Dashboard. Accessed 25 April 2025.

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/>.

The Open University. 'Black Students' Support Fund.' Accessed 10 October 2024.

<https://giving.open.ac.uk/blackstudentssupport#:~:text=The%20Black%20Students'%20Support%20Fund,transform%20their%20lives%20through%20education>.

Osbourne, Lateesha, Julie Barnett, and Leda Blackwood. "You never feel so Black as when you're contrasted against a White background": Black students' experiences at a predominantly White institution in the UK.' *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 31/Issue 4 (2021): pp. 383-395.

'Black students' experiences of "acceptable" racism at a UK university.' *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 33/Issue 1 (2023): pp. 43-55.

Pearson and Wonkhe. 'Students' perceptions of belonging and inclusion at university.' (2022).

<https://wonkhe.com/wp-content/wonkhe-uploads/2022/02/Belonging-and-inclusion-survey-Wonkhe-Pearson-Feb-22.pdf>.

University of Kent. 'A Black Student's Guide to Kent.' Accessed 9 October 2024.

<https://student.kent.ac.uk/life/the-black-student-guide-to-kent>.

The University of Manchester. 'Manchester 10/10.' Accessed 10 October 2024.

<https://www.manchester.ac.uk/about/social-responsibility/social-inclusion/widening-participation/manchester-10-10/>.

University of Nottingham. 'Black Sport Collective.' Accessed 9 October 2024.

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/sport/get-active/inclusive-sport/our-campaigns/black-sport-collective.aspx>.

University of Southampton. 'Awarding Gap Project.' Accessed 9 October 2024.

<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/studentservices/support-and-wellbeing/awarding-gap-project.page>,

Universities UK. 'Closing ethnicity degree awarding gaps: three years on #ClosingTheGap.'

(2022). <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Reports/closing-the-gap-three-years-on.pdf>.

Appendix: Survey Questions

Introduction

Welcome to the Black Student Experience Survey!

We're doing this survey to understand your experience as Black students at Kingston University, which includes both your academic life and your social student life at Kingston. Your input will help us develop a set of recommendations for both the University and KSU to improve support and enhance the experience of Black students at Kingston.

By completing the survey, you have the opportunity to enter a draw to win one of four £50 cash prizes. To qualify for the prize draw, please complete the entire survey by 24 November 2024.

If you have any concerns or questions about this project, please email us at suresearch@kingston.ac.uk.

Kingston University's counselling and wellbeing services are available and free to access for all Kingston students: <https://www.kingston.ac.uk/health/wellbeing-services/>.

Thank you for sharing your experiences - we value your voice!

1. KSU is committed to upholding the principles of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Any answers you give here will be stored in a secure location with limited access to key KSU staff members. Your answers will be analysed to identify how students engage and how KSU can shape its work to provide the best service for its members. They may be cross-referenced with existing engagement data to identify trends in our members' views. Results may be shared amongst KSU staff but will be anonymised to remove any identifying information. Please indicate below whether you agree for your information to be used in this way.
 - Yes
 - No

Demographics

2. What is your K Number?
3. What is your level of study?
 - Foundation
 - Undergraduate
 - Postgraduate taught
 - Postgraduate research
4. In which department do you study?
5. Which campus do you spend most of your time at?
 - Kingston Hill
 - Knights Park
 - Penrhyn Road
 - Roehampton Vale

6. How long on average do you travel to campus?
 - Under 15 minutes
 - 15 minutes – 30 minutes
 - 30 minutes – 1 hour
 - More than 1 hour

7. Which of the following best describes where you live during term-time?
 - In a Kingston University accommodation
 - In a private student hall
 - In a rented room in a shared house
 - In a rented own place
 - In a house that I own
 - With parents or relative
 - Prefer not to say
 - Other (please specify)

8. Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?
 - Black or Black British – African
 - Black or Black British – Caribbean
 - Any other Black, Black British, or Caribbean background
 - Mixed or multiple ethnic groups – White and Black African
 - Mixed or multiple ethnic groups – White and Black Caribbean
 - Mixed or multiple ethnic groups – Asian and Black African
 - Mixed or multiple ethnic groups – Asian and Black Caribbean
 - Any other Mixed or multiple ethnic background
 - Prefer not to say
 - Other (please specify):

9. Which of these characteristics do you identify with? Please select all that apply.
 - Home/UK fee paying student
 - International student
 - Commuter student
 - Mature student (over 21 years of age at the beginning of undergraduate studies, or over 25 years of age at the beginning of postgraduate studies)
 - Disabled student
 - Parent or Carer (responsible for caring for someone else)
 - First Generation student (the first in your immediate family to attend university)
 - Doing part time work alongside study
 - None of the above
 - Prefer not to say

General representation

10. What are your **top three reasons** for choosing Kingston University as your place of study?
 - It has a good reputation

- It offers high-quality teaching
- It offers the course I want to do
- It offers scholarships
- I have friends and family who have been to Kingston University
- It has a diverse community
- Its location
- It has good careers services
- Its focus on sustainability and the environment
- Other (please specify):

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

(Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, I don't know)

- As a Black student, Kingston University feels like a welcoming place
- As a Black student, Kingston University feels like a safe place
- I feel represented among students at Kingston University
- I feel represented by the teaching staff at Kingston University
- I feel represented by Kingston Students' Union

Would you like to say more about your answer?

Academic life

12. How would you rate your overall academic experience at Kingston?

- Very poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very good

Would you like to say more about your answer?

13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

(Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, I don't know)

- I feel confident that I can do well in my study
- I feel comfortable approaching academic staff for support
- I feel supported by lecturers and personal tutors as a Black student at Kingston
- I feel that the assessments on my course have been fair
- I am able to access library services and learning support at Kingston
- I feel comfortable participating in class discussions
- The material on my course reflects diverse perspectives, including those from Black communities
- I have experienced racial discrimination and/or microaggressions in academic settings at Kingston (Microaggressions are negative language and behaviours which, whether intentional or unintentional, communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative attitudes toward stigmatised or culturally marginalised groups).

Would you like to say more about your answer?

14. Have you done placement(s) as part of your course?

- Yes – if yes, go to question 15
- No – if no, go to question 16

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
(Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, I don't know)
'I received appropriate support for my placement(s).'

16. In 2021-22, there was a 25.4 percentage points awarding gap between Black and White students at Kingston University. In 2021-22, there was a 25.4 percentage points awarding gap between Black and White students at Kingston University. This means that 81.2% of White students were awarded a first or upper second class degree, and 55.8% of Black students were awarded degrees in the same class. This degree awarding gap is not exclusive to Kingston University, it is a widespread issue in higher education.

From your experience, what do you think could be causing this awarding gap?

Student life

17. How would you rate your overall sense of belonging as a Black student at Kingston?

- Not at all a sense of belonging
- Slight sense of belonging
- Moderate sense of belonging
- Strong sense of belonging
- Very strong sense of belonging

Would you like to say more about your answer?

18. How has your experience as a Black student at Kingston impacted your mental health?

- Very negatively
- Negatively
- Neutral/no impact
- Positively
- Very positively

Would you like to say more about your answer?

19. Have you ever considered leaving the university due to experiences related to your race?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure
- Prefer not to say

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:
(Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, I don't know)

- I feel part of community at Kingston
- I have a group of friends at Kingston
- There are societies and sports clubs at Kingston that are welcoming to me

- There are adequate physical spaces on campus for students to gather and connect
- There are enough opportunities for Black students to engage in leadership roles and campus activities
- I know where I need to go if I need support at Kingston
- The wellbeing support services available at Kingston understand the specific needs of Black students
- The condition of my place of accommodation supports the success of my study
- I have experienced racial discrimination and/or microaggressions in social settings at Kingston

Would you like to say more about your answer?

21. Have you accessed the Advice service provided by KSU?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure
- Prefer not to say
- I didn't know KSU provides Advice service

22. Have you engaged with any activities and opportunities provided by KSU?

- Yes – if yes, go to question 23
- No – if no, go to question 24
- I'm not sure
- Prefer not to say

23. Which of these KSU activities and opportunities have you engaged with? Please select all that apply.

- I am/was a member of societies and/or sports clubs
- I attended KSU events (e.g., Freshers, Diwali Carnival, Black History Month events)
- I voted in the elections
- I ran as a candidate in the elections
- I am/was a course rep/faculty rep/campus rep
- Other (please specify):

24. Could you tell us the reasons why you haven't been engaging with KSU activities and opportunities?

Final question

25. What is the one thing the University and the Union can do to improve the experiences of Black students?

26. Will you be interested in participating in a paid focus group about this project?

- Yes
- No