

# The SDG Accord Reporting 2021 Case Study

- Integration of SDGs in curriculum development
- Focus on Goal 10 - Reduced inequalities

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Describe briefly how the theme selected was implemented within your institution - **max 300 words**.

*Please include (if available) quotes from colleagues or others involved/referenced in the case study.*

In June 2021, Leeds Arts University will be hosting a Learning and Teaching Enhancement Conference on the theme of Decolonising the Curriculum. The conference will convene students and staff from across the university and include a keynote from Professor Marilyn Holness, OBE. The conference will explore students' voiced experience of our curriculum and the university more widely, supported by the Students' Union. The conference will also feature presentations from students and staff regarding activities and initiatives that work toward decolonisation at the institution or elsewhere, spanning research, pedagogy, assessment, and support. The intended outcomes for the conference are to encourage institution-wide awareness, reflection, discussion, and sustainable action toward decolonisation.

In its subject area and intent, the conference underlines the university's commitment to sustainable development goal 10, reducing inequalities, and illustrates how the university is integrating sustainable development goals into the development of the curriculum.

The conference is being organised in response to internal research with our students of Black, Asian, and minority ethnicities which included the finding that curricula were Euro- or North America-centric, impacting on their sense of belonging and well-being. Students recommended decolonising the curriculum, diversifying the learning environment, and ensuring teaching examples and reference lists feature a wide range of practitioners and practices, to the benefit of all students. The conference will provide models of how these practices can be implemented across courses and levels.

Black, Asian and minority ethnicity students are underrepresented at the university and in the creative arts, and the university has set a target to raise the rate of participation in its Access and Participation Plan. University data also shows a lower proportion of these students are awarded 2:1 Degrees and above. It is intended that decolonising actions taken as a result of this conference will support the university to reduce these inequalities.

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Outline the benefits of integrating this theme.

1. Exposure to a wider range of creative theory and practice to the benefit of all staff and students.
  2. Enhanced student experience, including sense of belonging and well-being, for students of Black, Asian and other minority ethnicities.
  3. Positive impact on participation (through active promotion of the university as a place that supports diverse groups) and attainment rates for Black, Asian and minority ethnicity students (through enhanced student experience).
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Outline the barriers (*if any*) encountered in integrating this theme and how you overcame these.

1. Establishing a cross-institutional understanding of students' voiced experience of the curriculum and what decolonisation means: the rationale for setting aside the day for students and all academic and other interested staff to attend the conference.
  2. Acknowledgement of the time and resource commitment to decolonisation of the curriculum: in progress and reliant on institutional actions highlighted during the conference.
  3. Ensuring the commitment translates into sustainable action: part of planning for pre-conference and beyond.
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Please outline your conclusions and recommendations to others - max 200 words

Organisation of the conference has elicited wide interest from staff and the student body, indicating appetite for decolonisation of the Leeds Arts University curriculum but also enabling a range of voices to contribute to this process. Decolonisation is sometimes seen as a matter of diversifying reading lists, but the approach inherent in the submissions accepted for presentation during the conference is one of holistic rebuilding rather than adding onto the current curriculum, and one for exploring all related aspects of pedagogy.

Our recommendation is that the momentum linked with an event like this is sustained: we have hosted a Cultural Identity in Your Creative Practice event in the lead up to the conference and will continue hosting these regularly following the conference. We are building a digital collaborative multi-media resource that will be available for students and staff to contribute to, share learning with peers, and explore further their understanding of decolonisation and related topics (e.g., intersectionality, privilege), decolonising the curriculum, and decolonising the creative arts more generally. Impact of actions highlighted as part of the conference will also be measured via Annual Course Evaluations, qualitative research with students, and monitoring of university participation, continuation, attainment, and progression data.