

The Attainment Gap at LSE

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For the purposes of this report, LSESU has relied heavily on the information made available via the LSE internal web-pages in the 'Award Outcomes by Demographic Characteristics' provided by the Data Management Unit. LSESU would like to thank the Academic Registrar's Division for their assistance in providing this information and for providing additional information where this was requested.

The information provided covers 5 years of awards (from 2009/10 to 2013/14). For taught postgraduates the information available online also includes 2014/15.

The report collated by LSE defines the Attainment Gap as follows:

"An 'attainment gap' in good awards is borrowed from the Equality Challenge Unit's report, who derive it from the difference between groups in the proportion of awards in the top two classifications; upper-second and first class awards to bachelor's, or merits and distinctions to master's and diploma students. The report extends the same measure to proportions of students gaining awards in the top class at both taught levels, first class for undergraduates or distinctions for taught postgraduates."

LSESU agrees with this definition of the Attainment Gap and has produced this policy position using this definition as a basis. For the purpose of this report, LSESU has focussed on the attainment gap between white students and students who define as BME students only, though occasionally attention is drawn to a further breakdown of ethnicity where this is of interest.

This report will focus first on summarising some of the information available in respect of the attainment gap at LSE in respect of the following groups of students:

- UK-Domiciled ("Home") undergraduate students
- International undergraduate students
- Home postgraduate ("PGT") students
- International postgraduate students

This report makes no recommendations; the second stage of this project is to take this information to the BME population at LSE for consideration as part of the upcoming 'Empowerment Project'. The 'Empowerment Project' will focus partly on raising awareness of the gap amongst BME students and encouraging debate regarding what practical solutions could be implemented at LSE and campaigned for nationally. It is important that any solutions are agreed by both students and staff, and that they are relevant to LSE in order for any changes to be sustainable.

Executive Summary

The information presented reflects a persistent disadvantage for BME students whether 'home' or international, undergraduate or postgraduate. BME students are less likely to obtain 'good degrees' than white students, and this has been the case for many years. This information is known nationally, and is reflected for the most part in primary and secondary education in the UK, particularly with black African and black Caribbean students.

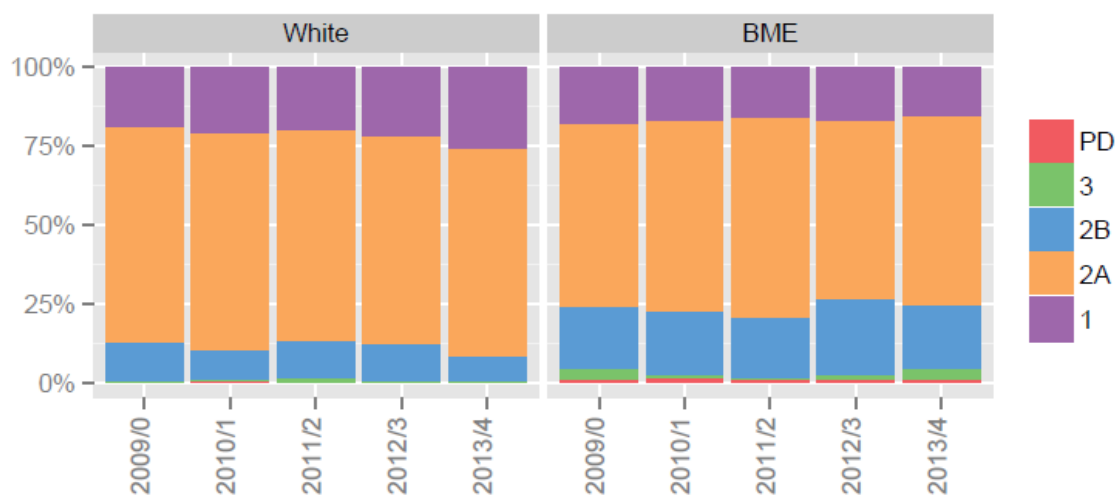
There are many theories for the attainment gap at primary and secondary education levels, but fewer studies have been conducted in respect of higher education. However, a recent NUS survey provides some examples of possible reasons for the attainment gap, including the relationship between students and teachers, and how racial prejudice can impact on achievement.

Home Undergraduate Students

The information available to LSESU details that around 51% of total awards between 2009/10 and 2013/2014 were awarded to white students. Despite this relatively even split in ethnicity, the attainment gap between white home undergraduate students and their non-white counterparts appears to be broadening over time¹:

Year	Good (%)		Gap (%)
	White	BME	
1 2009/0	87.2	75.9	11.3
2 2010/1	89.6	77.3	12.2
3 2011/2	86.7	79.3	7.4
4 2012/3	87.5	73.5	14.0
5 2013/4	91.5	75.3	16.2

Setting aside 2011/12 which appears to be an anomaly throughout this report, what is most concerning about this information is that the gap appears to be at its highest most recently, despite the trend continuing for a number of years:²

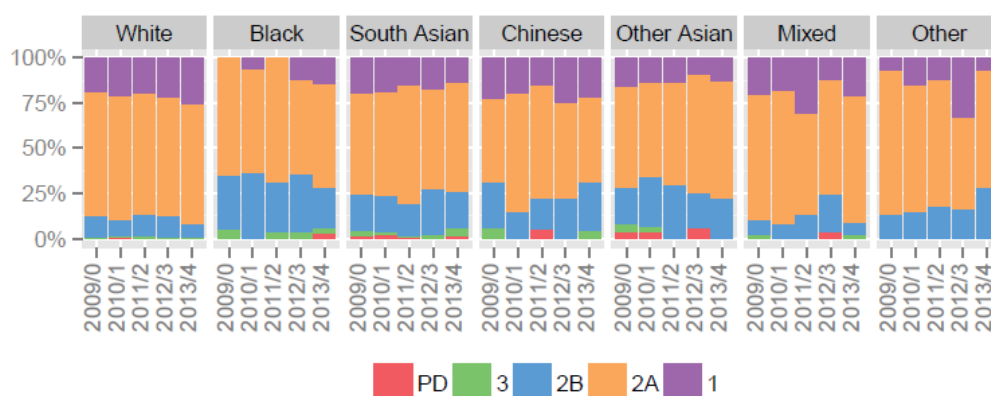


Whilst this report focusses predominantly on the attainment gap between white and BME students, further breakdown of this information shows that the gap is most prevalent amongst specifically black students, as opposed to other ethnic

¹ 'Award Outcomes by Demographic Characteristics', M. Devlin, Data Management Unit, ARD (March, 2015) pg 15

² 'Award Outcomes by Demographic Characteristics', M. Devlin, Data Management Unit, ARD (March, 2015) pg 14

backgrounds:³



International Undergraduate Students

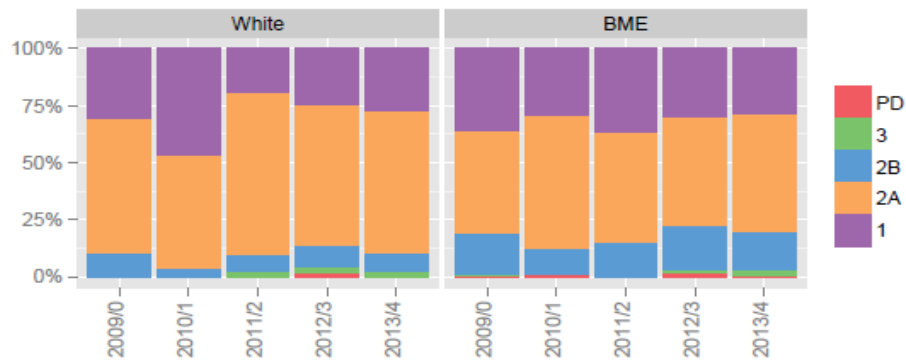
Over 75% of international undergraduate students defined as 'BME' over the 5 year period; a much greater proportion than home undergraduate students. The gap still exists (at an average of 8.22% over the 5 year period) between international white students and international BME students obtaining 'good degrees' overall.

Year	Good (%)		Gap (%)	First (%)		Gap (%)
	White	BME		White	BME	
1 2009/0	89.5	80.7	8.8	30.3	35.7	-5.4
2 2010/1	96.6	87.5	9.1	46.6	29.2	17.4
3 2011/2	90.5	85.0	5.5	19.0	36.4	-17.4
4 2012/3	85.8	77.4	8.5	24.8	29.7	-4.9
5 2013/4	89.5	80.3	9.2	27.4	28.5	-1.2

It is worth noting that the average gap for international students (between white achievement and BME achievement) is lower than the gap for home students in respect of those obtaining 'good' degrees, by an average of 4 percentage points. In addition, as you can see from the information provided above and below, with the exception of 2010/11, a higher proportion of international BME students obtained 'firsts' than their white counterparts:⁴

³ 'Award Outcomes by Demographic Characteristics', M. Devlin, Data Management Unit, ARD (March, 2015) pg 17

⁴ 'Award Outcomes by Demographic Characteristics', M. Devlin, Data Management Unit, ARD, (21 November, 2015) pg 7



Whilst more BME students obtained firsts, the reason why the gap still exists within those obtaining 'good degrees' is because a smaller proportion of white international students are obtaining the bottom grades (2:2, 3rd or 'PD') than international BME students. International BME students are more likely to perform 'poorly' than their international white counterparts, but are also overall more likely to perform 'exceptionally' than their international white counterparts; this is not reflected in any other demographic.

The gap between undergraduate international BME students and undergraduate home BME students has ranged between 3.9% and 10% over the past five years, with international BME students achieving more 'good' degrees than their UK counterparts. This is interesting when you consider that BME students account for 75% of international students and only 49% of home students. The data suggests that the reasons for the gap are more likely to be related to specifically UK issues, rather than worldwide issues.

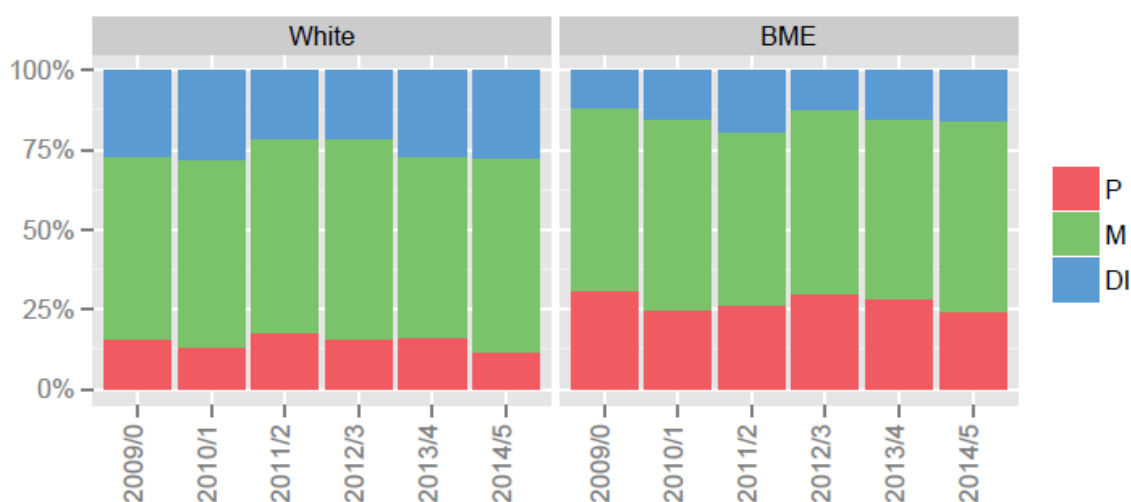
In particular, we note that the ethnic make-up of international BME students is likely to be very complex, where even students who define as being from a particular ethnic background (i.e. Chinese) may have much more varied backgrounds; as an example, one student may be Chinese, born and raised in China, and another may be Chinese but born and raised in the United States). This makes it more difficult to draw useful conclusions from any information that we have available to us.

Home Postgraduate Taught Students

The split for home PGT students is around 69% white students and therefore 31% BME students. When looking at similar comparisons to those outlined above, in the case of UK-based postgraduate students, the gap is again very much in favour of white students, by between 10 and 15 percentage points over the past six years. This range is not too dissimilar to the undergraduate level which is between 11% and 16% over the past five years. It is interesting to note that in 2011/12, the drop in the gap experienced at UG level was also reflected at PGT level.

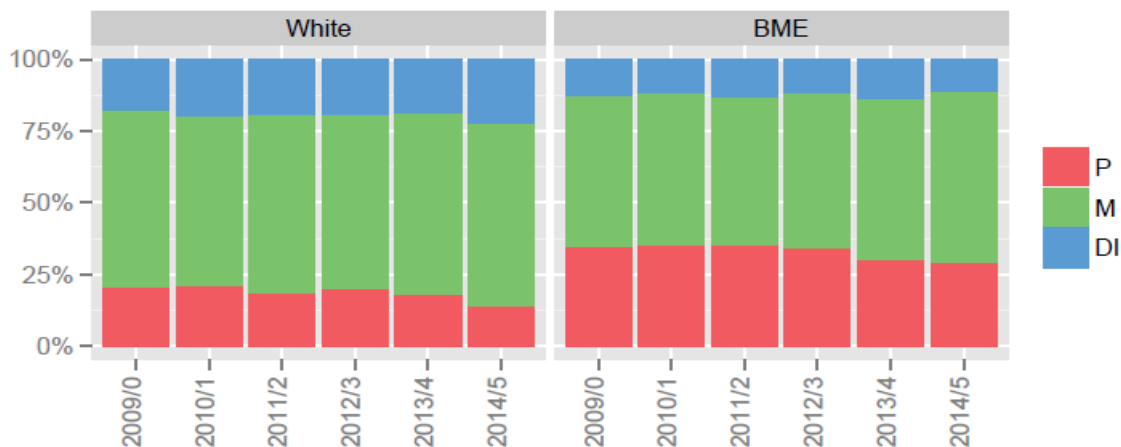
	Year	Good (%)		Gap (%)
		White	BME	
1	2009/0	84.0	69.0	15.0
2	2010/1	86.7	75.0	11.7
3	2011/2	82.3	73.8	8.4
4	2012/3	84.1	70.1	14.0
5	2013/4	83.9	71.6	12.2
6	2014/5	88.2	75.5	12.7

Unlike at undergraduate level, the gap has not been consistently worsening or lessening over the past six years but does appear to have levelled out towards the average (12.3%) of the six years.



International Postgraduate Taught Students

52% of international PGT students are white, and 48% BME. The range of the attainment gap for international PGT students is slightly more consistent at PGT level than at UG level, with a range of only between 12.4% and 16.4%. There was no discernible drop in the gap in 2011/12 as with the other three demographics; interestingly, the gap was at its highest for this demographic in 2011/12.



In respect of PGT students, degree attainment appears to be less affected by students' country of origin. Unlike their undergraduate counterparts, BME PGT international students are not more likely to achieve 'distinctions' than white PGT international students:

Year	Good (%)		Gap (%)	Distinction (%)		Gap (%)
	White	BME		White	BME	
1 2009/0	79.7	65.2	14.5	22.3	11.1	11.2
2 2010/1	79.1	64.7	14.4	19.4	11.7	7.7
3 2011/2	81.3	64.9	16.4	19.4	11.7	7.6
4 2012/3	80.0	65.8	14.3	18.9	13.2	5.7
5 2013/4	82.1	69.7	12.4	17.4	12.3	5.0
6 2014/5	86.2	71.0	15.3	18.8	13.8	5.0

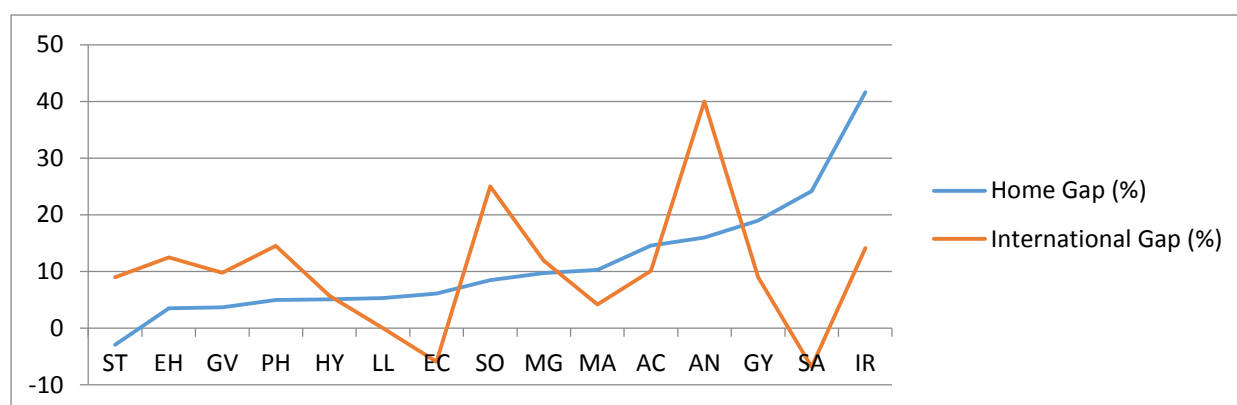
Breakdown by Department - Undergraduate

When assessing the departmental breakdown of these results, it is clear that certain departments perform better than others. The largest gap is in the Department of International Relations, whereas in the Department of Statistics there is currently a gap in favour of BME students. The table below outlines the gap for international students (between BME international students and white international students) versus the gap for home students (between BME home students and white home students):

Dept. Code	Home Gap (%)	International Gap (%)
Statistics	-2.9	9
Economic History	3.5	12.5
Government	3.7	9.8
Philosophy	5	14.5
International History	5.1	5.7
Law	5.3	0
Economics	6.1	-5.9

Sociology	8.5	25
Management	9.7	11.9
Mathematics	10.3	4.2
Accounting	14.6	10.1
Anthropology	16	40
Geography & Environment	19	9
Social Policy	24.2	-6.8
International Relations	41.6	14.1

Using the attainment gap for home students as a baseline, there does not appear to be any strong correlation between the attainment gap experienced by undergraduate international students and home students within the Departments of the School:



The Department with the biggest discrepancy between BME UG international students and BME UG home students is Social Policy (SA). In SA, the gap is at its highest for home students (24%), but BME international students achieve more 'good' degrees than their white counterparts.

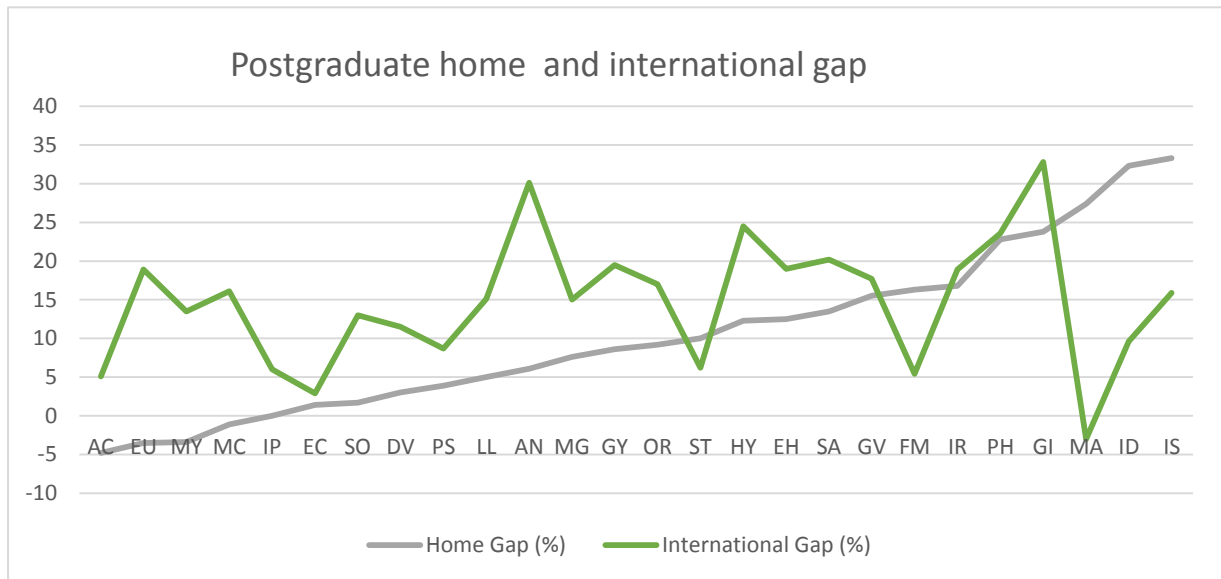
Breakdown by Department – Postgraduate

The picture for postgraduates is similar to that with undergraduate students; the breakdown by department again shows no useful correlation between international achievement and home achievement. The Department which performs least well at postgraduate level is the Gender Institute (GI) which has an attainment gap of 23.8% for home students and 32.8% for international students. The Department which performs the best overall is Accounting (AC), where the gap is in home student's favour, and only 5.1% for international students.

The table below outlines the gap for international students (between BME

international students and white international students) versus the gap for home students (between BME home students and white home students):

Dep	Home Gap (%)	Interntnal Gap (%)
Accounting	-4.8	5.1
European Institute	-3.5	18.9
Methodology	-3.4	13.5
Media & Communications	-1.1	16.1
IPA	0	6
Economics	1.4	2.9
Sociology	1.7	13
International Development	3	11.5
Social Psychology	3.9	8.7
Law	5	15.1
Anthropology	6.1	30.1
Management	7.6	15
Geography & Environment	8.6	19.5
Management Science Group	9.2	17
Statistics	10	6.2
International History	12.3	24.5
Economic History	12.5	19
Social Policy	13.5	20.2
Government	15.5	17.7
Finance	16.3	5.4
International Relations	16.8	18.9
Philosophy	22.8	23.6
Gender Institute	23.8	32.8
Mathematics	27.4	-3
Employment Relations and	32.3	9.6
Information Systems and Innovation	33.3	15.9



What this information tells us is that the factors which contribute to the difference in attainment between white students and black students are likely to be different for international students and home students. Given the number of other variables involved in exploring the international student experience, and given that BME international students are more likely to achieve firsts, this report will focus primarily on research undertaken in the UK regarding the attainment gap. It is worth noting however that a large proportion of international students come from the USA, where similar attainment gaps are well documented.

Departmental Breakdown

There are some Departments which appear to perform particularly poorly in terms of the attainment gap. Using a definition of 'poor' as being anything over 10%, the only Department who has scored over 10% for home, international, postgraduate and undergraduate students is the Department of International Relations. Of course there are some departments who only run postgraduate courses and vice versa, and those would not be eligible. The Department of Anthropology scores over 15% for all demographics with the exception of undergraduate home students, where the overall problem is most pronounced. The Department of Social Policy scores over 10% (and up to 24.2%) for all demographics except international undergraduate students where the gap is 6.8% in BME students' favour.

The Department of Government has scores of over 15% for both international and home postgraduate students but scores of under 10% for undergraduates. In the case of home undergraduate students, the score is below 5%. Similarly, the department of International History scores poorly for postgraduate students overall but has scores of around 5% for undergraduate students.

The Department of Law does well in all areas except for international postgraduate students where the score is 15.1%. Interestingly, for undergraduate international students, the score is 0%, meaning that there is no difference whatsoever between BME students and white students over the past five years.

Home students within the Department of Mathematics are also more affected by the gap than international students, which fits with recent popular narrative over the standard of mathematics education in the UK. By contrast, home students in the Department of Sociology are less affected by the gap than international students.

Looking at home students in particular, the 5 Departments with the 'poorest' scores are International Relations (UG), the Information Systems and Innovation Group (PG), Employment Relations and Organisational Behaviour (PG) and Mathematics (PG). The 5 Departments with the best scores for home students are Accounting (PG), the European Institute (PG), Methodology (PG), Statistics (UG) and Media and Communications (PG). These five interestingly all have gaps in favour of BME students between -4.8% and -1.1%.

Doing the same for international students, the 5 Departments with the 'poorest' scores are Anthropology (UG), Gender Institute (PG), Anthropology (PG), Sociology (UG), International History (PG). The Departments with the 5 best scores for international students are Social Policy (UG), Economics (UG), Mathematics (PG), Law (UG) and Economics (PG); all except economics have gaps in favour of BME students.

The Attainment Gap in Primary and Secondary Education

Primary and secondary education are of course different from tertiary education. Many studies have been undertaken into the reasons for the attainment gap in primary and secondary education in both countries and these studies provide a wealth of understanding of the possible reasons for the attainment gap. Below we present some of the findings from these studies with the aim of considering some possible reasons for the attainment gap in higher education.

In both the United States and the United Kingdom, the attainment gap is noticeable in pupils well before higher education. In the US, research conducted by the National Centre for Education Statistics found that white students achieved on average 5% better than black students in grade school.⁵ In the UK, there are similar findings; one study by the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion at LSE found that whilst BME (and particularly black) students show more progress than white students between the ages of 11 and 16, they still achieve considerably lower scores than the national

⁵ <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/studies/2009455.aspx> (14.12.2015)

average in their GCSEs.⁶ Information available from the Department for Education corroborates these findings, and highlights that the gap at GCSE level in recent years is actually only present in the case of black pupils, as opposed to students who fall under the BME umbrella term:⁷

Table B: Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*- C GCSEs (or equivalent) grades including English and mathematics by major ethnic groups.

Major Ethnic Grouping	2012/13 (%)	2013/14 (%) '2013 methodology'	2013/14 (%) '2014 methodology'
white	60.2	60.1	56.2
mixed	62.6	60.9	57.7
Asian	64.2	63.8	60.8
black	58.1	56.3	53.1
Chinese	78.2	76.4	74.4
all pupils	60.6	60.3	56.6

This analysis is somewhat consistent with our findings in respect of home undergraduate students at LSE, wherein the gap between black students is more pronounced than with the BME students in general. However, school age pupils from BME backgrounds other than 'black' appear to be achieving better at primary and secondary school than white students; this is not reflected in higher education which may be a sign of a worsening experience for BME students.

In primary and secondary education, researchers have often made the connection between other factors which may contribute to the attainment gap, such as socio-economic class.⁸ Other studies have found that in removing socio-economic class, the gap still exists but is somewhat smaller.⁹ The information that we have available to us suggests that the latter is true at LSE, as the gap still exists amongst

⁶ Deborah Wilson, Simon Burgess and Adam Briggs, 'The Dynamics of School Attainment of England's Ethnic Minorities' (2006), pg 1

⁷ Department for Education 'GCSE and equivalent attainment by pupil characteristics, 2013 to 2014 (Revised)' (2015), pg 9
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/399005/SFR06_2015_Text.pdf

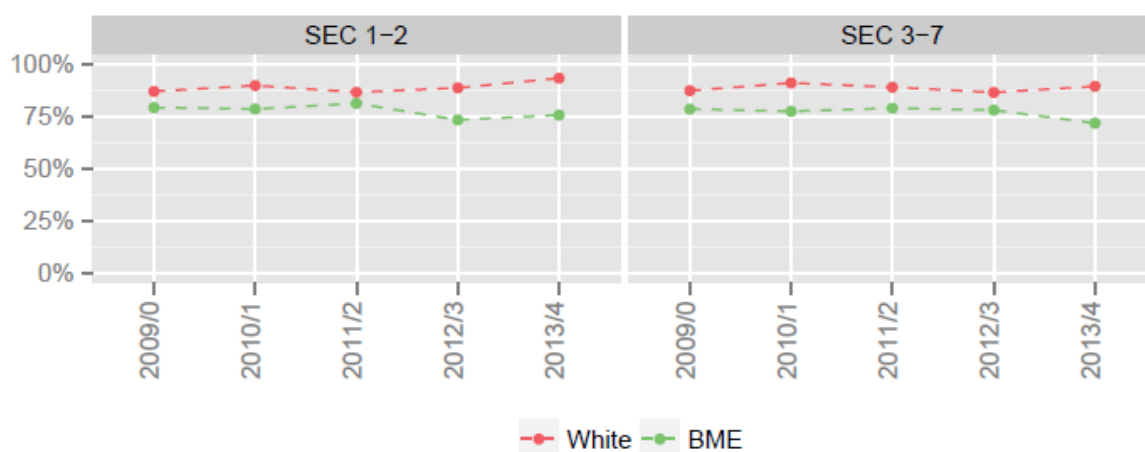
⁸ Deborah Wilson, Simon Burgess and Adam Briggs, 'The Dynamics of School Attainment of England's Ethnic Minorities' (2006), pg 1

⁹ <http://www.tandfonline.com/gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/doi/pdf/10.1080/13803611.2015.1009915> J. Lenkeit et al. pg 62

white and BME students of the same socio-economic class.¹⁰

Some studies have argued that the criteria set for determining socio-economic class does not account for the complexities of BME backgrounds.¹¹

9.2.2 Socio-Economic Class and ethnicity



Other studies considered whether parents' first language or the student's first language is English could be a contributing factor in the attainment gap. However, longitudinal studies suggest that this is not the case as black students whose first language is English continue to perform worse than other BME students for whom English is not their first language.¹² At LSE, we note that the attainment gap is more predominant within home students, who are likely to be more proficient in English than international students, for whom English is more likely to be a second language. The gap nevertheless exists for both home and international students, meaning that this is not likely to be a feasible reason for the gap at LSE.

Most studies reviewed as part of this project appear to rule out teacher bias as a possible explanation, due to the standardised testing models used, where examinations are marked by external assessors which no prior knowledge of the pupil.¹³ Of course, students at LSE are predominantly assessed using a form of

¹⁰ Award Outcomes by Demographic Characteristics', M. Devlin, Data Management Unit, ARD, (21 November, 2015) pg 51

¹¹ Jenny Lenkeit, Daniel H. Caro & Steve Strand 'Tackling the remaining attainment gap between students with and without immigrant background: an investigation into the equivalence of SES constructs' (2015) pg 64

¹² Jenny Lenkeit, Daniel H. Caro & Steve Strand 'Tackling the remaining attainment gap between students with and without immigrant background: an investigation into the equivalence of SES constructs' (2015) pg 62

¹³ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~uctpb21/Cpapers/DustmannMachinSchoenberg2011.pdf>

standardised testing but these tests are marked anonymously, therefore ruling this out as a reason for the attainment gap at LSE also.

However, some studies did note that a possible explanation for the gap may be related to racial stereotyping and lowered expectations from teachers, which in turn adversely impacts actual achievement in those groups.¹⁴ This particular theory is not only difficult to prove, but shows that closing the attainment gap will require a root and branch overhaul of the relationship between students and teachers, and any assumptions (conscious or otherwise) made therein. In current discourse in higher education, there is a push to resolve any such racial prejudice by employing more BME staff and a push to de-colonise, or improve racial diversity within the curriculum and curriculum resources.

NUS Research

In 2009, the NUS Black Students' Campaign commissioned a report outlining its assessment of the reasons for the attainment gap, and possible solutions. The report, entitled 'The Race for Equality' was published in 2011 following a literature review, three focus groups and a survey which gathered nearly 1000 responses from black students of varying denominations. The respondents were from Further Education and Higher Education; home and international; undergraduate and postgraduate amongst others. This report did not provide simple answers, but made clear that whilst the problem itself was also highly complex the existence of the attainment gap between white students and black students in higher education is irrefutable.

The NUS report listed a number of possible causes for the attainment gap, following analysis of the free-text answers provided by students and a literature review. Unsurprisingly, many of the causes outlined by the report find their roots well before students arrive at university. For example, respondents cited poor prior educational experience and a lack of useful information, advice and guidance from family and friends as contributing factors.

However, the NUS report also drew upon similar research undertaken by the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES), which found that the attainment gap still exists between black and white students of similar backgrounds. The DfES report found that black students were in general less satisfied with their education

¹⁴ Jenny Lenkeit, Daniel H. Caro & Steve Strand 'Tackling the remaining attainment gap between students with and without immigrant background: an investigation into the equivalence of SES constructs' (2015) pg 62

experience than their white peers¹⁵. This is reflected at LSE, where BME students are generally less satisfied than their white counterparts, except in respect of 'Organisation and Management' and 'Access to Learning Resources' and when asked if they felt that they had received sufficient advice and guidance with their studies. Given the findings of the NUS report outlined above, it may be that this discrepancy comes from a difference in expectations between BME students and white students. Some of the reasons cited in the NUS report were that BME students felt that they were being treated less favourably than white students in terms of the contact hours offered for BME students. One in three students stated that they did not feel comfortable bringing their perspective to the higher education classroom. At further education levels this number was lower, with 73% saying that they did feel comfortable bringing their perspective to the classroom. Respondents felt that the non-white perspective was not considered as part of their subject areas.

In addition to this, the respondents of the NUS survey cited a lack of representation of black staff as an issue which affected their ability to engage fully in programmes. At LSE in 2014, 71% of the staff was white (including those whose information was unavailable/refused), compared to only 52% of undergraduate and postgraduate taught students (over the past 5 years). According to the data available, whilst 29% of staff were BME in 2014, the proportion of BME staff represented in senior roles is very low. As an example – 79% of Assistant Professors & lecturers, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers & Readers and Professors are white according to the staff equality data available on the LSE website:¹⁶

7a. Job Type by Ethnicity - Headcounts

	Asian	Black	Chinese	Mixed	Not Known/Info Refused	Other	White	Grand Total
LSE Fellows	5	4	5	3	13	4	106	140
Assistant Professors	12	0	6	10	19	2	121	170
Associate Professors	11	1	7	7	12	6	166	210
Professors	10	1	3	2	28	1	216	261
Hourly Professional Services	55	37	24	27	35	4	245	427
Operational/Support (SB01 - SB05)	67	86	11	23	52	12	437	688
Managerial/Professional (SB06 - SB08)	38	22	9	9	35	8	394	515
Senior Management (SB09 - SB10)	5	0	0	0	4	0	40	49
Hourly Research	9	0	8	5	9	2	78	111
Research	13	3	3	4	19	9	170	221
Teaching Only Roles	40	5	33	15	45	11	336	485
Grand Total	265	159	109	105	271	59	2309	3277

15

http://nusdigital.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/document/documents/16295/55fe0b07fc84a19ec0a61bd8f86dbe9a/2011_NUS_Race_for_Equality.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJKEA56ZWKFU6MHNQ&Expires=1450097816&Signature=hziQQ8UAdlvyM5boKsdvLCTgwO0%3D (pg 19)

16

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/staff/equityDiversityInclusion/docs/Equality-data-reporting/2014-Staff-by-job-type.pdf>

Respondents to the NUS survey noted that as a result there was a hegemonic manner of teaching which was predominantly white-focussed and did not account for varying ethnic backgrounds. In particular, respondents felt that there was an assumption that providing different types of student with the same experience would yield the same results for all types of students, which is unlikely to be the case.

LSE Student Comments

As explained above, the NUS report highlighted that student satisfaction is generally lower for BME students than white students. A review of the NSS results for 2015 provides interesting insight into the experiences of BME students at LSE, and what parts of their experience at LSE those students consider to be the contributing factors. The comments below are taken from individual home BME students, and therefore cannot be taken as conclusive experiences representative of a wider group, but are nevertheless the real-life perceptions of the LSE experience. Many of these comments corroborate the conclusions arrived at by the NUS research and other research. The comments have been summarised to maintain confidentiality.

One student noted their perception that the School lacked appreciation for their extra-curricular responsibilities. They stated that it felt as though “the course leaders forget some of us were not born with a silver spoon” and that many students “have to work 5-6 shifts a week, look after siblings, cook dinner, drive people around, pay bills, pray, etc”. The student noted that these responsibilities meant that they were less able to read large documents which they found fundamentally unengaging. The student states: “we don't have time to sit around after our nights out and read 40 pages of boring, boring self-righteous I'm white and I'm saving the world nonsense.”

The student goes on to state that their expectations of “intellectual stimulating discussions during classes about real life sociological issues” had largely not been met. The student stated that they had found the classes centered on student’s ability to regurgitate the readings.

Another student noted that the teaching on their course was “brilliant” and “the lecturer's care and passion for the module can be seen in every single PowerPoint slide she reads out”. The student noted that this was particularly clear when lecturers try their “hardest to cover sociology cross-culturally and regards ethnic differences to be important”. The student noted that whilst they felt that one module which was aimed specifically at discussing race was overly theoretical and unengaging, “it was a nice breath of fresh air away from the Eurocentric, happy, brilliant, white curriculum I am otherwise forced to face”.

The student noted that they valued lecturers who approached race critically and honestly. The student noted the excellence of one particular lecturer, who was the first non-white teacher to have taught the student. The student comments the positive impact being taught by a person of colour had on their learning experience as someone “who we can relate to, teach something otherwise dominated by white people”.

The student commented further: “there is nothing wrong with white people that is not my point my point is that when discussing something as important as racial identity and the historical construction of race, having a middle-class white woman/man talking about it is just silly, ignorant and offensive to the students who have to endure racial discrimination both subtly within university and outside of it when going about their daily lives. Thus, I really appreciate the truthfulness this course expressed and the encouragement of students to really voice their struggles and experiences within a safe environment”.

The student also commented on how being taught by BME members of staff helped them to see themselves in the academic field. The student commented that seeing BME staff in high-level academic positions helped them to “feel success in terms of academia and 'making it' from prestigious institutions was possible”.

A third BME student noted that they found adapting to the LSE environment particularly challenging and noted that students are “expected to decipher the nature of university study and especially at a really high calibre in the cut-throat, competitive LSE environment”. The student noted that this was particularly difficult “as an 18-year-old who has just come from an underprivileged comprehensive state school” and that they had felt “very much thrown into the deep end”. The student noted that they would have found coaching or mentoring useful, in addition to skills sessions or workshops “about what exactly is expected at the LSE and how we can do what they expect”. The student also noted the intimidation they felt in approaching staff for help in office hours.

Empowerment Project

The report above outlines the complex nature of the reasons for the attainment gap at LSE and nationally. The complexity of the problem renders making any recommendations to LSE about ways in which it could begin working towards addressing this gap impractical at this stage. In particular, the information that we have available does not centre the gap within LSE in a manner which LSE could reasonably contribute to closing the gap. The next part of the project therefore is to bring this information to the BME population at LSE and discuss practical solutions for closing the gap at LSE specifically.

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