



## Racial Justice Policy

### Introduction

Our vision at St Mellitus College is to see theologically confident and committed followers of Jesus in every church. We seek to do this by providing innovative theological education and training for those called to serve Christ in the church and the world.

*From Lament to Action* -- the Report of the Archbishops' Anti-Racism Taskforce published in 2021 -- highlighted the inequalities that exist across the Church of England and its inadequacy in addressing them. St Mellitus College acknowledges the structural and systemic inequalities which exist within Theological Education Institutions (TEIs), inequalities which are incompatible with the generous orthodoxy which lies at the core of the ethos of St Mellitus College and completely at odds with the fact we are all created in God's image and are all equal in God's sight. St Mellitus College is committed to working with all partners to advance equality through inclusive practice and pedagogy and encourage a culture of learning where students can feel as though they are not only included but that they truly belong within theological education institutes.

As the largest TEI in the United Kingdom, St Mellitus College (SMC) recognises the responsibility it has in taking a lead in this work. It is vital in doing so to acknowledge that secular rhetoric on diversity is insufficient. As our President the Rt Rev Graham Tomlin points out, "It is the gospel, not a secular agenda that drives the Church's vision to combat racism and to see our churches genuinely reflect the varied and multi-faceted wisdom and grace of God in Christ."

This makes it imperative that the college not only addresses and challenges the inequality that exists, but that we strive to reform the structures and racialised systems which have an adverse impact on members of our college community, and abandon any practices which have maintained the status quo. In doing so we recognise that genuine change can only come about by the power of Holy Spirit.

## Policy

1. SMC is committed to ensuring that the diversity that is intrinsic to the Kingdom of God is embedded in the life of the college.
2. SMC benefits from and values the socio-economic, racial and cultural diversity of its staff and students, and is committed to building an inclusive learning community, which is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation as set out in the Equality Act 2010.
3. SMC aims to create a safe and supportive learning and working environment in which all recognise the gospel reality that we are equal in Christ Jesus and where all members of the community feel secure and welcome.
4. SMC is committed to building a community in which diversity is valued, equality is promoted, and discrimination is unequivocally rejected. It will promote diversity and inclusion within the college and stand against racial injustice by combatting any instances of racism or prejudice.
5. SMC will also endeavour to use its position to be an advocate for and to influence change in the sphere of theological education so that all are able to flourish as they respond to God's call.

This policy applies to all staff, students, volunteers and suppliers to SMC.

SMC will take necessary steps to implement this policy effectively and to improve it through regular monitoring, consultation and review.

## Commitments

Our commitment to creating an institution where there is equality of opportunity for all members of the community requires vision, courage and ambition. SMC will promote equality, diversity and inclusion by:

1. Ensuring that support for and commitment to racial justice is demonstrated at the highest levels and that racial justice is embedded in the college's strategic plans and in learning and development across the whole college.
2. A Racial Justice Priority Group engages with and recommends action for the College's commitment to racial justice and prioritise the college's response to issues of racial justice. The Group will keep the college's equality objectives and targets under review, assess progress, identify areas for further development, share and promote good practice and keep up to date with current thinking. The Group will be chaired by the Dean and report directly to the Executive.<sup>1</sup>
3. Intentionally creating a culture of accountability so that the college is always a place where all are equally valued, and any discriminatory conduct is challenged and addressed.<sup>2</sup>
4. Creating clearly identifiable channels to address claims of discrimination, treating these claims fairly and building confidence in and awareness of the processes for such claims. This includes a Racial Justice Student Group that will meet regularly.
5. Continuing to work to diversify the pipeline of those being trained for ordination through the *Peter Stream*, and other pathways.
6. Recognising the individual needs of our students, making reasonable adjustments to provide a learning environment which meets their specific needs and working to improve our practices in terms of reasonable adjustments and accessibility.
7. Regularly reviewing and revamping the curriculum across the college. All tutors will continue to be required to carry out a self-assessment of their course content to ensure a wider representation of theological thought, resources and visiting theologians. This include Learning Resources Diversification.

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<sup>1</sup> A progress report from the RJPG showing strategy and progression is produced annually.

<sup>2</sup> See also [Complaints Policy](#), [Safeguarding Policy](#) (which includes PREVENT)

8. Actively seeking to increase the recruitment of staff from Global Majority Heritage (GMH) and other disadvantaged backgrounds at all levels, to ensure that the college staff reflects the diversity of the areas the college serves.
9. Facilitating the understanding of the GMH staff and students experience by encouraging and supporting GMH initiatives to increase knowledge and broaden perspectives. This will include:
  - a. providing opportunities to discuss diversity issues, in order to inform and develop staff and students;
  - b. promoting and facilitating conversations around racial justice in an environment which is safe;
  - c. examining and challenging the difference in outcomes for GMH students, including consideration of whether attrition rates amongst GMH students is evident and exploring ways in which all can be supported through college training and into curacy;
  - d. developing the work of listening to and gathering stories of experience of GMH students with a view to identifying and highlighting the barriers and obstacles faced in accessing and undertaking theological training actively, working to removing these by engaging in constructive conversations with Dioceses, and laying the foundations for better experiences for students from GMH and other disadvantaged backgrounds;
  - e. supporting early-stage theologians from GMH and other disadvantaged backgrounds by providing opportunities for research; and
  - f. creating opportunities for students who have little or no experience of diversity and who have not had the opportunity to minister in multi-cultural areas to experience other cultures. This will include mentoring, short placement schemes and working with local communities.
10. Being affirming of a wide range of diverse cultures and encouraging the use of worship and liturgy from the breadth of the Anglican Communion.
11. Ensuring that all students are culturally informed and all Tutors receive appropriate training.

**Updated: July 2023**

**Next Review: July 2024**

**Reviewed by: Racial Justice Priority Group**