Justification for Black Students' Scholarship

TEDI-London has identified that a disproportionately low number of black individuals are entering the engineering workforce after they graduate in comparison with their counterparts. Specifically, Black engineering and technology graduates are less likely to gain employment within the engineering workforce, which is a well-paid professional sector [1], than their White and Asian peers. [2]

Equality issues are apparent in labour market outcomes. Black graduates are less likely to enter highly skilled employment or further study than their White or Asian counterparts. [3] Of those who were employed 6 months after graduating, 61.9% of White engineering and technology graduates were working in the engineering sector, compared with 50.3% of their BME peers (an 11.6 percentage point difference). Looking specifically at the difference in outcomes between White and Black engineering and technology graduates, 61.9% of white engineering and technology graduates were working in the engineering sector within 6 months of graduation in 2015-16 compared to only 41.6% of black engineering and technology graduates – a difference of 20%. [4]

Educational attainment whilst at university may be a contributing factor to fewer Black students entering the engineering workforce. 65.9% of Black students who qualified in engineering in 2018 to 2019 attained a first or upper second-class degree, compared with 76.1% of Asian students and 83% of White students. [5] This observation holds across HE more widely. Just 57.5% of Black students attained a first or upper second-class degree in 2017 to 2018, compared with 70.5% of Asian students and 80.9% of White students. [6] As a first or upper-second class degree is a necessity to enter many engineering-focussed graduate schemes, [7] this attainment gap will preclude some Black students from entering the engineering workforce.

Given that the difference in attainment outcomes persists even when factors such as age, gender, course or prior attainment are taken into account, the Office for Students suggests that factors such as institutional structures and curriculum may be pertinent. [8] These are areas that TEDI-London's innovative approach to teaching, coupled with a targeted scholarship, aim to address.

According to the Advance HE UK Student Engagement Study, Black students also spend the largest amount of time working for pay whilst at university, 'often employed in jobs which bear no relation to the careers that they aspire towards through their studies, and in many cases these jobs are relatively low-skilled'. [9] The potential effects include Black students having less time to dedicate to their studies due to their part-time work commitments and less capacity to take on work experience that is relevant to their course of study. If, on average, Black students' work experience is comparatively less valuable when applying for engineering jobs than their peers, this may also negatively influence their employment prospects within the engineering sector.

TEDI-London's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 sets out our aim to 'help address the global shortage of engineers and provide a diverse engineering workforce which will transform the discipline'. Our Access and Participation Plan has a target of 48% of our students being from BAME backgrounds by 2025.

[1] https://targetjobs.co.uk/career-sectors/engineering/284465-engineering-salary-round-up-from-graduate-to-chartered-engineer

[2] https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/bame-student-attainment-uk-universities-closing-the-gap.pdf?mc_cid=0263df3146&mc_eid=a074c3256a p12

[3] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/differences-in-student-outcomes/ethnicity/

[4] https://www.engineeringuk.com/media/156187/state-of-engineering-report-2018.pdf p213

[5] https://www.engineeringuk.com/media/232298/engineering-uk-report-2020.pdf p120

[6] https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/bame-student-attainment-uk-universities-closing-the-gap.pdf?mc_cid=0263df3146&mc_eid=a074c3256a p12

[7] https://targetjobs.co.uk/career-sectors/engineering/284787-which-engineering-employers-accept-graduates-with-22-degrees

[8] Office for Students. 'Topic briefing: Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students', 2018.

[9] Advance HE UK Engagement Survey p26 – Available at https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/advance-he/Advance%20HE%20UKES%202019_1572367661.pdf

We propose the following package of support as **positive action** specifically targeted at **increasing participation** by Black students in the engineering workforce after graduation:

1. Black students who have been made an offer to study at TEDI-London and are assessed as 'home' students for fee status will be eligible to apply for a scholarship grant to the maximum value of £8,600 per year. It will be the applicant's choice whether to offset this money against tuition fees or to utilise this money for maintenance costs. We feel that this is a proportionate means of meeting our legitimate aim of providing a diverse engineering workforce and increasing participation by Black students in the engineering workforce. This financial support will help to free students from a requirement to work for pay to support themselves whilst studying. In turn, this should leave more time to dedicate to their study and to access relevant work experience, having a positive effect on both educational attainment and employability prospects within the engineering sector.

2. Scholarship recipients will also be offered financial support to the maximum value of £1,200 (£400 for each year of their degree) to attend engineering or career events, with this money being used to cover the cost of entry, transport, accommodation, or any other costs incurred. By lifting a financial barrier and encouraging attendance at engineering or careers events, we aim to help address the lower participation by Black graduates in the engineering workforce.

3. Scholarship recipients will be assigned a coach in their second year, to meet with on an informal basis once per term. It is envisaged that this mentor will provide both coaching and careers advice to the scholarship recipient and that they will be either a member of TEDI-London academic staff, or a part of TEDI-London's industry network. By giving Black students specific careers guidance, we aim to help address the lower participation by Black graduates in the engineering workforce.