

Notes on BAME/WP Initiatives  
University of Glasgow, School of Veterinary Medicine

At present, we have a very low number of UK BAME students on the University of Glasgow, School of Veterinary Medicine BVMS programme is 3.3% for 2019/2020 (3.6%WP). Our international population of BVMS undergraduate students is more diverse. The exact number is not unknown as not all students declare their ethnicity upon registration on the course. The BAME community in the Scotland is 4 % and 12 % within Glasgow city limits.

The Widening Participation programme works with all the secondary schools in the West of Scotland and is available for pupils who meet any of the following eligibility criteria: i) live in a SIMD decile 1 – 4 (SIMD 20/40) ii) are care experienced iii) are estranged from family and living without family support iv) are a carer (provide unpaid care) v) are seeking asylum in the UK vi) have refugee status. In the 5-year BVMS programme we have 56 WP students for the 2021 – 2022 academic year (11% of the total BVMS student population). The students have access to SAAS bursaries and loans and may qualify for a talent scholarship depending on their circumstances. There is a small bursary offered to help with EMS, which some of the students are able to apply for. Over the course of their degree, most WP students have a part-time job, and which is needed for expenses such as petrol, equipment and EMS (seeing practice). As I am the student adviser to the WP students, I am aware of the financial hardships that these students experience over the 5-year programme. I have contacted and spoken with several Scottish Government ministers to try to secure extra funding for the WP students to meet basic expenses. This has been without success. I am trying to negotiate funding for the WP students through the UofG external relations/alumni team.

The BAME community in Scotland and specifically Glasgow is largely in the lower socio-economic areas and will experience the same difficulties as the WP students.

We have recently increased our outreach into the wider community. We are speaking to pupils in 2 of the lowest socioeconomic areas in Glasgow through IntoUniversity hubs. These areas have a higher diverse background than the rural schools that send us the most WP students. We have asked the student body to be involved in this and have had an overwhelming response, which is very positive. This work had been delayed due to Covid, but we have started going into these hubs the last couple of months. We also have links to the asylum seekers, refugees and gypsy, Roma and travellers' communities which we are planning to take these sessions into.

In the School of Veterinary Medicine, we have incorporated 10 EDI modules in the BVMS and BSc programmes. These modules have been developed by vet school staff and cover the following topics: the Equality Act, Unconscious Bias, the Case for Diversity, Allyship, Cultural Awareness, Gender and Sexual Identities, Microaggressions, Intersectionality and Privilege, Racial Equality and Disability Awareness. These are run live sessions or through self-directed learning. The modules run to date have been very well received and elicit genuine and stimulating conversation. By request, we have run some of these modules for staff at the vet school with requests for more topics. We are running several over the next couple of months. We have hosted several events for Black History Month and throughout the year consisting of panels of speakers or single guest speakers discussing their experiences in higher education and as veterinary professionals on EDI topics.

In the communication skills training, the topics of discrimination, harassment and bullying are discussed in every session with the students. In the BVMS 1 course, the students have a workshop

for the whole class and then every student has a one-to-one session within the year. These one-to-one sessions are held through to and including the fourth year of the course. In BVMS 3, the students write their own scenarios for the actors to enact to provide a discussion on a better solution to a consultation that they saw or experienced in practice. In these sessions, the students work in small groups and will often relate stories of discrimination, harassment or bullying that they or their peers have experienced in seeing practice. The students have said that this is the only forum where they feel comfortable discussing these issues. We are addressing this by holding confidential diversity and inclusion surgeries with EDI staff and closed student forums to discuss these issues. We are slowly making progress in these areas, as the students have been reluctant to attend these sessions. The inclusion of the EDI modules in the curriculum has stimulated conversations and students are more willing to talk about issues more recently.

There is a university procedure for staff and students for reporting discrimination, harassment and bullying by filling in a form on the university website. If the person reporting this chooses to remain anonymous, the complaint cannot be investigated due to GDPR restrictions. There is advice to speak to university Respect Advisers, Counsellors or the student representative council, or within the vet school, students can speak to advisers or student support. Most of the students are reluctant to name a person in a complaint as they are afraid of the repercussions. The students frequently report problems during their EMS both during their pre-clinical and clinical rotations. Two recent comments from our WP students that vets in practice have said the students that 'they are a liability and will need to start charging them to see practice' another was told by a clinical director that 'they are just free labour'. The Asians students report daily comments about their race during seeing practice including a particularly vitriolic comment by a vet nurse. We provide a listening service for the students and assure them that they comments are not acceptable but are not able to take the complaints further if the students will not make a formal complaint.

Please feel free to ask if you require any more information on any of these initiatives

Karen