

The Experiences of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Students with the Open University Students Association

By Student Voice Researcher Hannah Vo



Hannah looks at the experiences of BME students and how the Association can improve the take up of volunteering roles by BME students. Supported by an Association mentor, Hannah conducted telephone interviews with OU students from the BME community as well as researching information on the experiences to BME students. Hannah explores the themes of self-esteem, connection, contribution and experience of BME students engaging with the Association

Both students interviewed by Hannah confirm they feel the BME community is well represented in OU publicity material. The interviewees commented that a lack of diversity at Association events and activities was obvious, but they did not feel out of place and engaged as a student rather than seeing their identity specifically in terms of the BME community.



The importance of a student community which positively influences the student experience and a lack of diversity in student representation are key issues within the UK HE sector and not limited to the OU Students Association.



Language barriers can be an issue for some BME students, however the interviewees commented that this issue had not presented itself as English is the common language for OU study.



Engagement with the BME community through collaboration with the OU to identify the difficulties faced by BME students.

Improvement is needed to raise awareness and engagement with the Association across the wider student community. The Association's website and communication channels are often overlooked in favour of OU website and module forums.



Click on the link below to read more about Hannah's investigation.