

Race and Ethnicity Alliance Pledge

Background

The Race and Ethnicity Alliance (“REA”) is a collaboration between The University of Law’s DIA Advocates (“DIAs”), The University of Law and professionals within the legal and business sectors. The aim of the REA is to provide a forum for law and business students to work directly with members of the legal and business sectors to support the promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion (“DEI”), with a specific focus on race and ethnicity.

A key aim of the REA is to support organisations in the legal and business sectors to make a real and sustained commitment to improving their practices of inclusion around race and ethnicity. The REA is keen that organisations publicly declare for this commitment, through a pledge that organisations can sign up to, which includes a commitment to working with the DIAs on progressive practices

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REA believe that people should not be held back from entering and succeeding within the legal and business sectors because of their race or ethnicity.

We know that people from non-White British racial or ethnic backgrounds are keen to enter and succeed in the legal and business sectors but their rates in entering certain areas of these professions and progressing within them into senior roles are much lower than that of their White British peers.

REA helps organisations to understand the reasons behind these inequalities in success and progression and to make changes to ensure equality of opportunity.

Signing the Race and Ethnicity Alliance Pledge (the “**Pledge**”) would mean that you have made a formal promise that your organisation will work towards achieving one or more of the commitments below.

We would encourage Pledge participants to attend the REA meetings that take place on a quarterly basis to build on the working relationship with the DIA advocates and collaborators and keep up to date with the general agenda of DEI topics.

Further to this, each year, our DIAs will be instructed to meet and provide you with next steps to improve your current DEI practices. These sessions will act as an annual review to encourage collaboration and information sharing, as this will yield personalised and constructive feedback.

We would encourage you to share this Pledge with your contacts, internally and externally, to raise awareness and celebrate your commitment.

Commitment 1: Effective race and ethnicity network

Explanation

We want to ensure that organisations not only have a race and ethnicity network, but that it is an effective network that will help usher in positive changes.

Criteria

Evidence of the network's progress/ actions over a calendar year.

- **Cultural events Calendar**

We want to ensure that organisations recognise and celebrate a range of events, as well as to consider them within their structures and forward planning.

- **Staff Surveys**

Staff surveys to determine how inclusive the workplace is. This is with the hope that in identifying issues, a work environment that is more conducive to retention of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds can be fostered.

- **Campaigns**

A campaign titled "What a lawyer looks like" "What a barrister looks like" "What a business owner looks like". The campaign will include members of underrepresented groups within these organisations, which will hopefully bust myths about who should be in certain professions.

Guidance

The network should be linked to the business's people, practices and culture.

Members should range from across the organisation in seniority and be linked up effectively with the HR areas of the firm so there is an open dialogue between those who can make tangible changes.

- **Cultural events Calendar:** Ensure culture events calendar is easily accessible on your employee portal and encourage all employees to take part in cultural events, for example: non-Muslim employees taking part in fasting/iftar during the leadup to Ramadan.
- **Staff Surveys:** Questions should be on an anonymous basis and focus on worker satisfaction and constructive criticism.
- **Campaigns:** Profiles and stories are a great way to increase exposure and personalise issues of DEI.

ULaw could produce this series with all the Pledge's participants, and it can be shared with university students as well as on each firm's webpage.

Commitment 2: Publish data on race and ethnicity

Explanation

Data can be extremely useful in showing an organisation where it needs to improve. Being open and honest with employees and identifying such areas can show tangible improvements over time. We are particularly keen to see what measures are put in place to support professional development.

Publication of the racial pay gap to mirror the mandatory publication of the gender pay gap.

Criteria

- Evidence of the data being shared internally/externally.
- Publication of the racial pay gap to the public.

Guidance

- Staff members should be given the opportunity to anonymously feedback on the data presented.
- The raw data alone is not enough. It should be accompanied with explanations and where the firm has identified it wants to improve.
- Encourage colleagues to record ethnicity data on your HR system, to aid understanding and assessment of your colleague base.
- Consider sharing racial pay gap either externally and/or internally.

Commitment 3: Retention, recruitment and progression framework.

Explanation

Much of the focus amongst diversity and inclusion is at entry level. We would like to see organisations commit to progressing and retaining a diverse range of talent.

Criteria

Evidence of discussion/parameters of how your business has worked to support retention, inclusive recruitment and progression.

Guidance

- Ensure that there are diverse hires at senior level.
- Ensure diverse hires remain at the firm, are accommodated for and are progressing within the firm.

- Have anti-discrimination at the forefront of your progression, retention and hiring frameworks.
- Be open and transparent about recruitment practices and run sessions on these so candidates all have access to the same information prior to applications.
- Review where and how you are advertising for vacancies to ensure you are reaching a wide range of talent.
- Have a diverse panel of interviewers including non-members of the recruitment team.

Commitment 4: Anti-racism training.

Explanation

Anti-racism training for all members of staff at different levels of the organisation. This training can aid in the recognition of systemic racism and its manifestation, as well as how to identify biases within the workplace.

Criteria

Evidence of the training sessions.

Guidance

- Training sessions should involve active listening and participation.
- Make use of scenarios and, quizzes to test knowledge.
- Dedicate a team meeting to discussing thoughts on training sessions as a consolidation exercise.

Commitment 5: Prospective employee engagement.

Explanation

- **Work experience:** With the introduction of the Solicitor Qualifying Exam (“**SQE**”), we would like to see law firms make a pledge to offer the work experience necessary to pass the SQE. Some law students might choose to undertake prep courses that do not include this experience as a result of their personal financial situation.
- **Reverse mentoring:** A range of senior members of the organisation to be part of a reverse mentoring programme. The students will also be offered work experience or a shadowing opportunity.

- **Schools / college outreach:** Joint schools outreach activities with firms and The University of Law.

Criteria

- **Work experience:** Examples of inclusive work experience programs. Evidence of inclusive internships.
- **Reverse mentoring:** Feedback from mentees and mentors on how the scheme has been useful.

Guidance

- **Work experience:** Create ways in which aspiring legal professionals can experience what it is like to work in a law firm. This can be virtual, physical, live or recorded sessions. This list is non exhaustive but shows that there are lots of ways to increase exposure to legal working life.
- **Reverse mentoring:** Consider what will work best for your workforce. One to one mentoring or group mentoring. A key focus of this sessions should be on the premise that they are mutually beneficial for mentor and mentee. An open and honest dialogue should be established at the inception of the program.
- **Schools / college outreach:** Strengthen ties in the local community by reaching out to schools, including ones that your firm may not have a historic connection with. Shift the focus away from solely university and college and engage the younger generation before they can form misconceptions about what it takes to be a lawyer.

Commitment 6: Time code and performance review recognition for diversity and inclusion activities.

Explanation

Reward those who contribute to diversity and inclusion work within their organisation and ensure that it is recognised as part of the employee's contribution to the organisation.

Criteria

Evidence of recognition for DEI work.

Guidance

The extra time and commitment that employees put into DEI work should have a formal procedure by which it can be rewarded.

This could be with a DEI time code or this work being a factor considered when deciding bonuses.

[INSERT NAME OF ORGANISATION] hereby agree to...

[PLEASE LIST YOUR COMMITMENT NUMBER/S AND A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF HOW YOU INTEND TO MEET IT]

Signed:

Name:

Job Role:

Email address: