

Our statement of intent Social justice at Queen Mary Careers & Enterprise panels

Context

Panels can be powerful moments – where our students can look to those with more career experience than them and learn about different ways they could live their lives. Hopefully they leave feeling inspired and emboldened.

We, Queen Mary Careers and Enterprise, want to ensure that our panel events bring inspiration and confidence to *all* our students. By way of context, 91% of Queen Mary students are from state schools, 53% are of Asian ethnicity, 7% are Black, 57% are the first in their family to go into higher education and 6% of students declare some kind of disability. Our panels should represent the lived experiences of our student population as much as possible because [research shows](#) that people tend to respond well to those who are similar to us in some way (in terms of ethnicity, personality traits, background, gender etc.)

We also recognise that the labour market is [structurally unfair](#). Some of our students will have a much harder time finding work and ‘succeeding’ within it than others. We cannot change this reality. But we do recognise that, as a careers service, we have the agency to make some positive changes. We commit to using that agency with the employers that we work with to help them to deepen their inclusive practices and celebrate the great work that is already being done.

We also recognise that there are specific student cohorts at Queen Mary who find it harder to find work. In 2018 we analysed 5 years of Queen Mary graduate destinations data. We found that Bangladeshi graduates (particularly women) and students on bursaries related to household income were the least likely to be in graduate-level work. The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services [found](#) that nationally graduates with social conditions/autism were least likely to have obtained full-time work compared to those without a disability. While ‘graduate destinations’ datasets are by no means *comprehensive* measures of what makes a satisfying career for our graduates, they do point to serious inequalities in the labour market. We commit to trying to better understand the barriers faced by these groups and to discuss these issues in our career panels.

Our four priorities

1. Increase the representativeness of career panels in line with the demographics of the Queen Mary [student body](#). Publish our results at the end of each academic year with accompanying discussion. 2020-21 will be our benchmarking year.
2. Commit to raising issue/s of social justice in discussion with employers before centrally organised careers panel events - give employers the option to disclose diversity statistics relating to their workforce and whether they are part of any diversity initiatives.
3. Commit to asking at least one question relating to social justice in all careers panels.
4. All career consultants and event facilitators to receive training in ‘inclusive panel best practice’.

How will we do it?

1. Increasing representativeness of panel events

- Use Queen Mary alumni where possible and link with the Alumni Team and academic schools to achieve this
- There are two pathways here;

a) When **engaging with an employer** to book speakers for events, staff will use the Employer Speaker Agreement Form. This will help us to monitor our representation by collecting demographic data and will encourage employers

to provide more information on how social justice issues are being addressed in their workplace.

b) When **booking alumni speakers** for events staff will use an Alumni Speaker Agreement Form. This form asks speakers to provide demographic data (which will be used to monitor our annual targets) but does not ask questions about company policies.

- We will monitor the data generated by our speakers relating to ethnic representation, gender, sexual orientation, and disability at the end of the year.
- Special category data is collected for monitoring purposes. It is optional to provide this information and is given with the consent of the speaker. Please see the [Special Category Data statement](#) for more information.

2. Asking questions of employers before central careers panels (NB this is specifically for the core events team)

Conversations with employers will happen in four stages:

- When inviting employers to events, they will be asked in the first instance to find a representative who is a Queen Mary alumni. Where this is not possible, we will ask employers to think about the profile of Queen Mary students (by providing the most recent statistics) and where possible ask if it's possible for them to find a representative who reflects this profile. We acknowledge that for some companies this is easier than others so it's important for us to say that it's not a binding request but rather a suggestion.
- The employer/speaker will be asked to complete an Employer Speaker Agreement Form to confirm their attendance, in this form they are given the opportunity to provide optional information about:
 - Ethnic diversity at the organisation
 - Whether they are part of any diversity initiatives (e.g. Race Equality Charter, Stonewall's Equality Index, The Social Mobility Index)
 - Whether or not the employer has a plan for going carbon neutral by 2050 (as per government legislation)

The employer has the option to share this with students and it is clear the information is being collected to celebrate good initiatives.

- The demographic data will be used anonymously for reporting purposes and, only if the speaker has specified, will be brought up in conversations during the panel. Before an event takes place, we recommend booking a short call with each speaker. This call would cover the event format and the issues the speaker is comfortable discussing from their agreement form with examples of some questions which will be asked on the panel.

3. Asking questions of employers and alumni during panels

- We commit to raising the issues of social justice during central careers panels to educate ourselves, students and panellists. Exemplar questions could include:
 - What are challenges surrounding ethnicity and diversity faced in your sector?
 - Do you think having a background where university was seen as the 'norm' has given you any advantages in the job market?
 - What are the barriers to entry in your sector for disabled graduates - how have you seen individuals/employers overcome these?
 - Are there any useful organisations doing good work in this area which you can point people to?

We will create a bank of questions that our students related to these issues which we can draw from going forwards.

4. Career panels training

- We will run a training session for all Careers and Enterprise staff who run events to include information on student population data, monitoring, how to have discussions around social justice etc. Students to participate in this if possible.

Contextual student demographics 2019-20

- 91% of our students are from state schools
- 69% of our students are from a Black, Asian or other non-white background including 53% Asian and 7% Black
- 57% are the first in their family into Higher Education
- 27% are from households where the annual taxable income is less than £10k
- 6% of students self-declare a disability

Taken from: <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures>