**UNIVERSITY OF CHICHESTER ENGLISH & CW STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

**TO DECARBONISING AND DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM**

We acknowledge that humanity is facing a planetary catastrophe in the form of the climate crisis and mass extinction. In response to this global emergency, we ascribe as educators to UN Sustainable Development Goal 4.7:

By 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.

In support of Goal 4.7 and its decolonial principles of environmental justice and inclusivity; and in response to calls from youth-led movements including Black Lives Matter (BLM) and Students Organising for Sustainability United Kingdom (SOS UK); we make the following commitments:

1. As well as addressing the aesthetic, psychological and philosophical dimensions of literary texts, our curriculum will engage students in discussion of how literature can explore and address ecological and social justice issues. For example: nature as metaphor; apocalyptic fiction; global fiction addressing colonial histories and their impact on the planet; gender, race, class and other social forces at work in narrative conflicts. Existing texts will be examined through this lens; new texts will be added to deepen and extend these discussions.
2. We recognise the vital importance of delivering a curriculum that fully reflects human diversity in the authors and texts that are studied. Our curriculum will therefore include writers from communities who have been consistently marginalised in educational and cultural institutions for reasons of race, sex, gender reassignment, class, sexual orientation or disability. Reading lists will also contain creative texts featuring characters or speakers from these communities.

* Thus, every reading list will include Global Majority practitioners and/or Global Majority scholarship[[1]](#footnote-1). This will not only be ‘tokenised’ into one week that focuses on ‘race’. Rather, the question of how concepts of ‘race’ – often invisibly – structure society and influence all writers, will be addressed throughout the module.
* We will apply this same principle to writers from other marginalised groups, including the working class, aiming for a truly inclusive curriculum that reflects the lived experience and complex histories of all our students and potential students.
* Without being assumed to ‘represent’ a group, but with the intention of highlighting ‘hidden histories’, whether in class or via annotated Reading Lists, authors and texts on reading lists will be respectfully identified in relation to key characteristics of human diversity, thus enabling students to easily research topics of critical and creative interest.
* Work in translation and in local vernaculars will be included on the curriculum, challenging the notion of the centrality of English, and of Standard English, to literature.

1. Every module that has an historical scope will critically engage with issues such as colonialism, imperial power and environmental justice. These issues will not be treated separately to the history of literature, of production, writing and dissemination – particularly when focusing on British, European and North American contexts. This engagement will include and prioritise scholarship and creative writing by Global Majority academics and creative writers.
2. In general, academic staff commit to creating spaces and resources for a dialogue among all university members on how to imagine and respect all cultures and knowledge systems in the curriculum, and to consider how the university can help reframe our understanding of the world – how it works, and how it could work more equitably and sustainably in the future.[[2]](#footnote-2)

* Academic staff will collaborate with colleagues in the Dept of Humanities on a shared [Reading List](https://rl.talis.com/3/chichester/lists/9A495A77-5043-AA94-1462-1AE824D454D6.html) of inclusive and sustainable pedagogical texts.
* Issues of cultural appropriation and misappropriation will be discussed in class, upholding values of empathy and the creative imagination, and creating a safe space for exchange of views, but stressing the vital importance of research and an informed understanding of privilege and the limits of empathy.
* Through our Classroom Code of Conduct, and a commitment to learning through staff training and mutual support, we will seek to recognise, challenge and eliminate racist and otherwise prejudiced dynamics in the classroom, in pedagogy, in research events, in staff meetings, in digital communications and on media platforms.
* Academic staff accept the responsibility to challenge Eurocentrism in all their research. If asked to speak at all white events or on all white panels, or be published in all white edited volumes and journals, we will query the situation and endeavour to change it. To this end, we will maintain active lists of academics of colour in our fields and share these with organisers. Depending on the context we may also refuse to participate.

1. The values behind this Statement are embedded in the student-led University Community Charter, and student voices and experience will continue to shape this Commitment

* Curricula will be updated in response to student feedback, via module evaluations, programme boards and any other communications students wish to present.
* In recognition of the need to redress imbalances in regard to recruitment, achievement and retainment, we will continue to actively encourage and support undergraduate and postgraduate students from groups consistently marginalised in HE, including those from the white working class. This will include employing, mentoring and sharing the work of postgraduate and early career researchers.

1. Wherever possible, students will be encouraged to engage directly with the natural world, though outdoor learning and set tasks involving outdoor activities.
2. Finally, we will encourage and support systems of recycling textbooks and class materials, including methods of reselling to other students, and reusing photocopies.

1. While upholding the right of all people to self-definition, and acknowledging the inherent limitations of any collective term used to indicate ‘race’, we are using the term ‘Global Majority’ to refer to people, including those of mixed heritage and those born in the UK, whose ancestral origins are African, Asian, Caribbean, Chinese, Middle Eastern, North African, Romany, and the indigenous peoples of the South Pacific islands, the American continents, Australia and New Zealand. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Adapted from *The Keele University Manifesto for Decolonising the Curriculum*, 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)