The British Medical Association (BMA) charter aimed at preventing and addressing racial harassment in Medical Schools.

The BMA have developed a charter aimed at supporting medical schools to provide all medical students with a learning environment of fairness and inclusivity. The charter outlines a set of actions intended to prevent and effectively deal with racial harassment on campus and in work placements.

The charter includes advice for BAME medical students on what they can do if they experience racial harassment. It also gives advice for all medical students and staff on what to do if they witness racial harassment and how to be an active bystander. On the basis that the creation of an inclusive environment is everyone’s responsibility – and should not be shouldered by BAME people alone.

Background

The charter was developed in response to BAME students’ experiences of racial harassment and undermining behaviours. They identified that many learners experience undermining behaviour, microaggressions and racial harassment during their medical training, at medical school and at work placements1,2.

Such behaviour damages self-esteem and confidence, affects learning and contributes to the ethnic attainment gap that emerges through medical school and training3,4. It is an unacceptable barrier to BAME medical students achieving their full potential. It subsequently denies the population from benefiting from the full potential capability of the medical workforce.

Who is the guide for?

For Medical Schools.

What will schools get from the guidance?

- A charter to prevent and address racial harassment
- Guidance on how to implement the charter
- Supportive case studies, testimonials from students, and a glossary on what constitutes racial harassment.

For Medical Students

---

Accompanying the charter, is guidance for BAME medical students on what they can do if they experience racial harassment.

For Bystanders – other students or staff
- The guidance also includes advice for all medical students or staff on what to do if they witness racial harassment and how to be an active bystander.

How can organisations address harassment and undermining?

The charter highlights the importance of:

- **Supporting individuals to speak out**
  - by having clear codes of conduct and access to trained, confidential contacts who can offer support to trainees, offering training on how to challenge behaviour and encouraging active bystanding.
- **Ensuring robust processes for reporting and handling complaints**
  - by including options for anonymous reporting at school and on work placement, reviewing and improving existing complaints procedures where necessary and by keeping students informed about the school’s actions in response to racial harassment complaints.
- **Mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion across the learning environment**
  - by engaging with BAME medical student run organisations or societies, running ED&I training that is not generic but is tailored to the needs of medical students, staff and examiners and actively engage in processes to widen the diversity of staff.
- **Addressing racial harassment on work placement**
  - by setting expectations of placement providers to tackle racial harassment, micro-aggressions and discriminatory behaviour, providing guidance to medical students about what to do if patients are racist or abusive.

Want to know more? The charter can be read in full here: [Racial harassment charter for medical schools](#)