



## **8.5 Improving BME graduate employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship in STEM: BSc (Hons) IT**

### **The cohort**

In 2017-18, the cohort for the BSc Business IT course was 20% White students compared to 80% BME students.

### **Factors which triggered the interventions**

- 1. Graduate outcomes** I recognised there was an attainment gap for good honours outcomes between BME and White students as well a low graduate level employment outcome for BME students. The question of why students from BME backgrounds were not gaining graduate level employment was a significant issue.
- 2. Lack of enterprise and entrepreneurship in STEM disciplinary curriculum** I had participated in the International Entrepreneurship Educators Programme run by the National Centre for Enterprise Education and I wanted to improve in-curricula opportunities for all students to undertake enterprise activities to build their social capital.
- 3. Improving access from different groups** There continues to be an under-representation of women in engineering-related disciplines and we were committed to improving access into the subject from a wider demographic of society.

### **Interventions**

- 1. Relevant problems in the curriculum** We developed the curriculum content to improve application of the academic subject to challenges that were relevant to the student cohort experience. For example, how technologies could be used to improve healthcare provision or housing needs. Case studies were designed to be ethnically diverse and be on topics that connected to the students' lives.
- 2. In-curricula enterprise activities using Hackathons and Game Jams** I designed new activities that engaged students in multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary problem-solving to develop student's enterprise mindset including Hackathons that would bring together ethnically-mixed student groups from the course with students in the School of Health and Social Care and the School of Arts and Creative Industries where the student demographics were often very different.
- 3. Client-based projects and work experience** We increased the opportunities for live projects, client briefs and work experience alongside the curriculum to develop employability profile.



**London  
South Bank  
University**

FST 1892

- 4. Engagement with discipline diversity topics** Through the Inventeurs.eu project, we teamed up students in the UK with another School in Europe. This involved them in collaborative digital storytelling whereby students would work to 'remix' stories that connected engineering solutions with inequality stories to develop their understanding of problem-solving in complex situations.
- 5. Engagement with the Association for Black and Minority Engineers** In addition to the range of employment and enterprise activities, we supported transition into employment by engaging students with role models and explicitly discussing BME working lives and experiences in the STEM field.

#### **Outcomes**

In 2015/16 DLHE indicated that 58.4% of these students were in graduate level employment or further study. In 2017/18 this has risen to 86%.