

Guidance for Starting and Sustaining a Change-Making Group: Learning from MedRACE

Congratulations on taking this important step toward building a sense of belonging within your school or college. Forming a group focused on equity, inclusion, and community is a powerful move, and one that can play a meaningful role in closing attainment and satisfaction gaps.

[MedRACE](#) (Medicine Raising Awareness and Celebrating Excellence) is a student–staff collaborative group at Leicester Medical School, formed in 2020 in response to the [BMA Racial Harassment Charter](#). Our mission is to proactively address racial harassment and inequalities within medical education and placements. Since our formation, we have worked to address the four core pillars of the charter and have extended our work beyond medicine as well. You can read more about our work [here](#).

We've had the privilege of supporting other schools and colleges in creating their own identity-based or equity-focused groups. This document outlines the steps we took to establish MedRACE, in the hope that it may serve as a helpful starting point for your own journey. The impact of fostering inclusion reaches far beyond the classroom, and we're excited to help others build spaces that matter.

This guide represents just one of many ways to establish a group like MedRACE. Your path may look different depending on your context, goals, and the needs of your community. Please feel free to adapt this resource in the way that best serves your setting.

It's also important to acknowledge that some of the conversations this work involves, particularly those reflecting on lived experiences of discrimination or exclusion, can be difficult. These discussions must take place in a safe, supportive, and respectful environment. Prioritising care within your core group helps lay the foundation for wider change across your school or college.

Key considerations before starting

- **Define your core values and mission**
Early on, outline what your group stands for and hopes to achieve. This helps steer decisions, collaborations, and communication.
- **Create a welcoming participation model**
Use flexible, project-by-project involvement to reduce pressure and increase accessibility for students and staff.
- **Support your members**
Prioritise practical support for both students and staff - think protected time, recognition, and psychological safety.
- **Consider safeguarding and well-being**
Anti-racism work can be emotionally heavy. Set expectations for respectful dialogue and ensure support systems are in place. These will vary depending on your setting.
- **Reflect as you go**
Regularly ask: What's working? What's not? Make feedback and adaptability part of your culture.
- **Clarify early priorities**
Focus on listening, safety, and manageable follow-up actions to stay grounded and effective.

Creation of MedRACE

1. Identify a need.

E.g., increasing reports of racial harassment on placements clarified MedRACE's purpose, to address this through structured support and education.

2. Identify interested individuals (students & staff).

Get students and staff involved early - it helps build trust and keeps things fair. Staff can reach places or make changes that students can't, and students know what's really going on day to day.

3. Establish a group structure.

Assign clear roles (e.g., lead, secretary, project coordinator) so tasks are distributed, and meetings run smoothly. Update these roles as the group grows.

4. Identify local support services.

Start with personal tutors, student wellbeing teams, or EDI officers to understand what's already available. More information of this can be found [here](#)

5. Explore national resources.

National charters or toolkits (e.g., BMA's Racial Harassment Charter) can support your goals.

6. Hold your first meeting.

Choose a platform that works for your team. Ours was MS Teams due to dispersed placements. Tip: schedule recurring meetings (for us, it's the first Thursday of every month at 5:30 pm) and document minutes, actions, and follow-ups.

7. Clarify key priorities (Steps 1–4).

Revisit the core need and identify a few manageable follow-up actions to get started. Focus on listening and creating safety for honest conversations.

Development of MedRACE

8. Start developing your group identity.

- Name the group (keep it short and meaningful)
- Create a logo (use bold, clear design)
- Identify visible points of contact (people peers can approach safely)

9. Establish a social media presence.

Use consistent, simple handles across platforms (e.g., Instagram, LinkedIn). Schedule 1–2 thoughtful posts weekly. Use tools like Canva and Grammarly to polish content

10. Evaluate practical needs.

At meetings, reflect on what students/staff are facing. For us, stories of racial harm went unreported, so we partnered with the [Standing Together team](#) to develop active bystander training tailored to real experiences.

11. Co-create with university services.

Work with existing university services to deliver workshops or initiatives with broader reach.

12. Formalise the agenda process.

Use meeting minutes to shape your next agenda. This keeps actions visible and encourages follow-through.

13. Manage multiple priorities.

You might spot a few issues at once. Try narrowing them down to three focus areas. Pick project leads who are passionate about each one. It's also totally fine for people to step in when they have time and step out when they need to - someone else can pick things up.

Sustainability of MedRACE

14. Monitor your impact.

Create feedback loops with anonymous forms, feedback sessions, or termly reflection points to track what's changing.

15. Collaborate with other schools/societies.

Other faculties may face similar challenges. We've supported groups outside medicine by sharing our story and offering peer advice.

16. Think nationally.

Submit abstracts to conferences, join national forums, and present your work. We've found this both affirming and an excellent way to expand our reach.

17. Request recognition for contributors.

Advocate for contributors to be acknowledged through certificates, LinkedIn posts, or even academic credits.

18. Be open to working beyond your subject.

Inclusion doesn't stop at one school. We partnered with a local Scout group to teach bystander skills at camp, as well as with the Magpas Air Ambulance team. Be imaginative - EDI work belongs everywhere.

Top Tips for Starting and Sustaining a Change-Making Group

- Regularly pause to assess what's working, what isn't, and why. Build in time each term for honest group check-ins.
- Focus on one or two manageable projects first. Early wins build confidence and momentum.
- Trust takes time. Model openness, protect confidentiality, and validate lived experiences.
- Even in small teams, delegate clearly. Defined roles help prevent burnout and ensure accountability
- Good staff-student relationships are key. Link in with leadership early by attending key meetings, sharing updates, and taking ideas to executives.
- Keep clear meeting minutes, action trackers, and follow-up notes.
- Use what already exists. Tap into institutional support, national charters, or other societies.
- A recognisable name, logo, and social media identity help build legitimacy and invite engagement.
- Shout out achievements, both small and big. Recognition fuels morale and future involvement.
- Allow for changing levels of engagement and welcome people back without guilt.

If you'd like further support, feel free to contact us at medrace@leicester.ac.uk.

