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# Decolonising and internationalising the curriculum – a TILT Practice and Scholarship group

*This blue-sky thinking group on decolonising and internationalising the curriculum is keen to harness the energy, the reflection and the excitement of staff, students and alumni to challenge “traditional” approaches to knowledge creation.*

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## Area of Focus

Launched in 2019, this staff-led Practice and Scholarship group focuses on decolonisation and internationalisation of the curriculum. The group, which is supported by the Trent Institute of Teaching and Learning (TILT), creates space for colleagues across NTU to share ideas and approaches to decolonisation, and has attracted 70 members so far from diverse schools.

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## Context

“Decolonising” is about flattening hierarchies of power, investing in a personal journey of growth and developing a critical historical awareness of how (scholarly) knowledge has come to be produced. It is about deconstructing the power relations that lie within teaching, learning and assessment, and within the wider student experience of NTU. The movement is part of a wider global student campaign to ask many questions of the academy. While decolonisation will look different in different subject contexts, it typically includes incorporating non-Western perspectives into the curriculum and challenging White, Western, and male views. Colleagues at NTU aim to use this group to question how we can empower our students to question received wisdom, productively disrupt power structures, become globally aware graduates, build competence in cultural awareness, and promote inclusive working environments.

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## Interventions

The practice-exchange group was initiated by colleagues in the school of Social Sciences, in response to interest from a wider variety of subject areas and schools. Staff working in areas where conversations around decolonisation are less common expressed a particular interest in a forum where they can mutually support like-minded colleagues.

A 2019 practice-exchange event organised by the group brought together 75 participants including six students. The event featured 11 contributions from NTU and beyond, as well as keynote presentations from internal and external speakers, including two student contributors. The topics that were presented included “Reconceptualising the International: Cosmopolitanism, Decolonialism and Feminism in conversation” and “Employability and the colonised curriculum”.

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## Challenges and next steps

In future the group aims to open up multidisciplinary discussions on decolonisation; forge links between academic, professional, support staff, students and alumni; inform institutional policy; and become a sustainable platform for students and alumni to raise ideas about teaching, learning and assessment.

The group will meet 2-3 times a year and is open to new members. Colleagues are also invited to volunteer for micro-roles involving organisation, event-planning, social media, and liaising with students and other groups. Alumni and students are also gratefully invited to contribute and shape approaches to enriching and personalising the curriculum, empowering people and connecting globally through teaching, learning and assessment practices. For students and alumni, these micro-roles could also provide the opportunity to experiment with leadership and change management roles in a supportive environment.

It is envisaged that the co-chairs and the bi-yearly meetings will provide the stability and structure to ensure synergy in and between the exciting and short/medium term projects to ensure that the stakeholders that make-up the university can influence change.

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