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# LiberatEd:

liberating the curriculum through  
student-staff collaboration

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*[she/her]*

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# What is LiberatEd?

“LiberatEd is an initiative created by Edinburgh University Students' Association and led by Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), Disabled, LGBT+ and Women students from across the University, aimed at challenging the academic establishment to become more diverse, more inclusive, and more critical of historically dominant narratives.”

- *LiberatEd, [eusa.ed.ac.uk/liberated](https://eusa.ed.ac.uk/liberated)*

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# What is LiberatEd?

- Campaign launched in academic year 2016/17
  - Student-led...
    - Students' Association's Liberation Campaigns, particularly BME Officer
    - Vice President Education
    - UG and PG students in various Schools (primarily CAHSS)
  - But collaborative
    - Allies across the University
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# LiberatEd Principles

- LiberatEd is collaborative project between students and staff, led by marginalised communities
  - Those with lived experience of oppression do not require an academic qualification to validate their perspectives
  - LiberatEd is about more than reading lists and quotas, it is a reimagining of academic life
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# What does that look like in practice?

- **Diversifying existing Eurocentric and male-dominated reading lists** to include academics and texts from underrepresented backgrounds.
  - **Mainstreaming intersectional and critical perspectives** throughout curricula and at all levels of study, including at Pre-Honours.
  - **Hiring more BME, Disabled, LGBT+ and Women academics**, and providing both academics and students from underrepresented groups with opportunities for career development and progression.
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# What does that look like in practice?

- **Ensuring that teaching and assessment methods are inclusive**, for example, by empowering students from underrepresented groups to make their voices heard in lectures, tutorials and labs.
  - **Equipping all teaching staff with the knowledge, skills and confidence to challenge problematic behaviour**, including racist, sexist, ableist, homophobic and transphobic microaggressions.
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# What about LiberatEd in STEM subjects?

- Everyone benefits from a more diverse curriculum e.g. adding a core module on trans healthcare to the Medical curriculum, or including information on how symptoms present in People of Colour
  - It's not just about reading lists, what about case studies? Do they represent the realities of a diverse modern community e.g. LGBT+ relationships
  - Is the classroom environment inclusive? Are all voices equally heard? Who is doing the work in group tasks?
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# What about LiberatEd in STEM subjects?

- Research shows that BME students are less likely to access academic and pastoral support – how are you making yourself available and welcoming to students from marginalised groups?
  - Are students being disadvantaged by your assessments? Anonymous marking is key.
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# Why liberate the curriculum?

- **Comparatively low recruitment of students from marginalised communities:** Talented students from underrepresented groups are choosing other institutions.
  - **Student and staff retention:** Talented students are dropping out, and staff are leaving, for other institutions and in some cases academia.
  - **The BME Attainment Gap:** Black students are consistently under-achieving.
  - **Encouraging critical thinking:** Edinburgh aims to produce graduates who are “engaged and critical thinkers”.
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# How can students get involved?

- **Talking to your class and elected reps about subjects or perspectives which are missing from your courses** and asking them to pass this information on to staff.  
Alternatively, you could include suggestions for reading lists at a Staff-Student Liaison Committee, or in your mid-semester feedback.
  - **Requesting texts from marginalised authors and academics be added to the Library's collection** using the [Request a Book form](#) on the University's website.
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# How can students get involved?

- **Arranging a LiberatEd workshop in your School** to gather feedback on subject-specific issues relating to liberating the curriculum.
  - **Joining the [LiberatEd Facebook Group](#).**
  - **Organising an event focusing on the experiences of a specific marginalised group in Higher Education.**
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# What have we achieved?

- **LiberatEd workshops:** predominantly in CAHSS (Literatures, Languages and Cultures; History, Classics and Archaeology; Social and Political Science; and Philosophy, Psychology and Language Science); students and staff deconstructing the curriculum.
  - **Project Myopia:** award-winning contributor-led site articulating the value of works by marginalised
  - **Three pre-honours courses:** Understanding Gender in the Contemporary World; Introduction to Queer Studies; Introduction to Race Studies
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# What have we achieved?

- **Regular Library exhibitions:** Black History Month; LGBT+ History Month
  - **Decolonising the Curriculum panel:** over 100 students and staff in attendance
  - **Community:** 100+ students engaged in online discussion and resource sharing
  - **Positive student media coverage:** multiple articles featuring interviews and discussion
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# Any questions?

*Feel free to drop me an email ([sarah.moffat@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.moffat@eusa.ed.ac.uk))  
if you want to know more!*

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# Further Resources

- *LiberatEd website:*  
<https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation/campaigns/academic/liberated/>
  - *Project Myopia:* <https://projectmyopia.com/>
  - *Diversity Reading List*, gathers philosophy texts written by authors from under-represented groups:  
<https://diversityreadinglist.org/>
  - *Decolonising Science Reading List:*  
<https://medium.com/@chanda/decolonising-science-reading-list-339fb773d51f#.om5w2ivfq>
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