**Motion from Student Council to the University of Aberdeen regarding dissertation Ethics committee reform**

Proposer: Radeen Moncrieffe, BAME Inclusions Officer

Backers: Faridah Olaifa, BAME Convenor

Council notes:

1. The current system for reviewing dissertations and the ethical nature of the experimentation has proven to be flawed, as non-bme students researching area’s regarding life as a bme person has come to the attention of the bme forum who were alarmed at the methods used and how the research was approved in the first place. Especially seeing as it is stated in Appendix 2 of the university’s ethics guide that power dynamics should be taken into consideration and the possible problematic nature of the research in terms of power however the examples given do not illustrate race – the power difference between white students and non-white students, which it should.
2. The current ethics system allows for research to be passed that can put the emotional well-being of bme students on campus at risk. This was demonstrated in a sociological research project by an unnamed 4th-year sociology student – who is white – concerning black people on campus, with the purpose to experiment using black people and their experiences.
3. When this was raised to the bme after bme students being asked to be experimented on were concerned by the nature of the dissertation, especially given the power dynamics.
4. The 4th year student agreed to go back to the ethics committee to have this reviewed again. The ethics committee saw no problem with the research method despite there clearly being problems that the bme forum all took issue with.

Council believes:

1. There should be clearer instructions in the ethics guide regarding race and power dynamics when researching
2. There should be a specialist third party who approves of the ethics committee’s decisions regarding race, such as the bme forum and/or staff from bme backgrounds.

Council resolves:

1. To suggest an ethics committee reform to the University regarding the way race is included in the ethics document/ to make ethics document a lot clearer.
2. To suggest to the University the possible involvement of a third party to be involved in the final decisions regarding the ethical nature of academic experiments and for that third party to be from a specialist group and/or a bme staff member. For example, a committee within the university consisting of BME staff or if an insufficient number of BME is available, a third party BME rep from NUS and/or UCU BME could be consulted.

**Primary Sources**

