**Towards Decolonising Geography: Questions for Module Convenors**

This document provides a starting point for redressing forms of disadvantage associated with racism and colonialism, making concrete steps towards decolonisation across the pedagogy and content of our modules. Before we can take action, we need to **identify and recognise the intellectual limits and racialised structural disadvantages or exclusions that may be embedded in our curricula** (i.e., content of modules and programmes) **and pedagogies** (i.e., teaching, assessment and feedback methods).

**Content**

1. To what extent does the **content** presume a particular profile/mindset of students and their orientation to the world, and could consideration be given ways of thinking about it from different perspectives? Are some students and their knowledges and experiences structurally marginalised by the content in ways that could be addressed?
2. Do the assumptions that frame the content reproduce global histories of Western domination, thereby limiting what counts as authoritative knowledge and whose knowledge is recognised? Can the way in which **knowledge is made (epistemology) be examined more critically to open up** other practices and experiences?
3. Should the module allow students to understand the origins and purposes of the field of study in its **historical context**? If so, to what extent does it already facilitate this, and/or how can the development of such an understanding be introduced? Can ‘origin stories’ be considered in how they shape the discipline and its recognised participants in shaping knowledge practices?
4. Does the module allow for, encourage or support a **critical approach** to relevant literature and other sources as a central feature of study, in particular in relation to intersectional colonial power relations (such as patriarchy, gender, disability, sexuality and othering)?
5. Could particular topics, readings, or field sites be potentially **traumatic or painful** to students either in general or in particular? If so, should they be examined (are they necessary?), signaled, or managed in some way that acknowledges those painful racialised histories?
6. Are there opportunities for students to feed into the content design of the module? Are there recent **developments in the field or relevant current events** that address systemic racism, which can be a foci for discussion?
7. Are there opportunities for students to reflect on the political economy of higher education in the UK and its effects on their position as learners and the formation of knowledge across/within disciplines? (E.g. the university embedded in a neoliberal system, the politics of knowledge, black in STEM)
8. To what extent does my module acknowledge/cultivate an appreciation for **diverse entry points** around a particular subject?
9. Does the demographics of the authors that are represented reproduce white and western privilege? What is the effect of this on the diversity of views with which the students learn? And, is there an effect on student engagement because of a lack of diversity? How can issues of equity in research be addressed and discussed?

*Action:* **Making a space for collective reflection and action.** We suggest that in the first and final lecture a space is made to reflect on the relation of their discipline to coloniality, and students are given a chance to use their experiences to examine why this issue matters in the present.

**Pedagogy**

1. To what extent could pedagogical changes, designed to **level the playing field for students** from different backgrounds and with different needs, be (a) identifiable and (b) achievable? And, how are these effected by teaching in a digital medium?
2. To what extent could **students be engaged in decolonising** the module (co-creation)?
3. Is my/our pedagogy *transparent* in terms of a) what students are expected to learn, b) how they are expected to learn it and demonstrate their learning, and c) how it is assessed?
4. Do the dynamics of the lecture / seminar / tutorial / office hour help to engage students who have been discouraged from **actively participating or taking risks in academic work** as a result of structural and/or interpersonal racism?
5. Are module convenors aware of **racialised patterns of attainment** in the module? Are there areas of overturn forms of racialised disadvantage that need to be addressed?
6. Are there adequate means of **giving feedback** on how teaching is delivered that are open to students and staff, in line with the questions raised above?
7. Are teachers and students encouraged and enabled to reflect on our own positionality and lived experience in relation to the module's subject matter *(this may be a discussion of white privilege, a sense of belonging and being represented in the discipline*)?
8. Are students given opportunities in their learning to **widen their circles of contact** or

experience?

1. To what extent are teachers and students aware of what might constitute racist or racialising behaviour in a learning context? Do staff and students **know how to challenge** and report this if it occurs? Are we teaching students how to identify, recognise and responsibly take action for an anti-racist classroom?

*Action:* Developing inclusive pedagogies means seeking to level the playing field for students with diverse backgrounds and needs, by challenging and countering the inequalities produced by structures influenced by relations of racialised colonial difference. **Decolonising Geography can mean encouraging, supporting and empowering students** to understand and navigate their environments, and to cultivate their own critical thinking and practice.

The above is adapted from the ***Decolonising SOAS Learning and Teaching Toolkit for Programme and Module Convenors May 2018*, downloadable from:**

https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/decolonisingsoas/learning-teaching/toolkit-for-programme-and-module-convenors/

Resources, Reading Lists and Glossary are available on **Decolonising 2** on *Teams*.