

Article in the journal 'Nature'

On 19 October 2022 the journal [Nature published this article online](#).

Before the piece was published the author requested a statement from the University. This initial statement, along with a list of supplementary questions and the answers provided, are included below.

Initial response:

A University of Manchester spokesperson said: "We concluded a thorough internal investigation some time ago led by a professor from another part of the University with knowledge of this subject matter, with senior HR support. This involved interviews with a significant number of staff. This found that none of the colleagues named in the report, including Professor Burton and Professor Schröder, had committed any misconduct. It concluded also that any upset that had been caused was entirely unintentional. Professor Burton was not intentionally 'dismissive' in his response to an email from Professor Jackson. The email was sent to Professor Burton 'for awareness only'. His reply focussed on the need to increase the proportion of BAME staff and students.

"There was no attempt or intention to malign Professor Jackson or his views but rather to engage with him and secure his advice and help on EDI which is extremely important to us. Disappointingly, Professor Jackson did not wish to do this. We are focussed on ensuring that the recommendations and actions from the confidential report are taken forward, which we are doing. We have made Professor Jackson aware of all the report's findings. We strongly refute any claims of attempting to discredit anyone."

Supplementary Question 1 (right to reply):

"Four days later, Jackson got an email from the University vice-president, Martin Schröder, saying he did not believe the university was institutionally racist and that such language "does not get us anywhere". The email included a link to an opinion article from a right-leaning broadcaster calling institutional racism an ill-defined and unhelpful concept. The vice president copied the email to several high-level colleagues."

University response:

"The article Professor Schröder shared on 15th October 2021 was a piece by Mercy Muroki, a member of the UK government's Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities in 2021. It makes the point that there is no single, unambiguous definition of "institutional racism" and that we should concentrate our energy on ensuring ethnic and socioeconomic equality, rather than on debating semantics. Professor Schröder has never claimed that the UK's higher education sector is representative of our wider society or denied the issues of racism in higher education. He has introduced many quite radical measures in his Faculty to address how we attract and support talent from diverse backgrounds. The data on this are very clear; indeed they underpin this university's commitment to EDIA. As soon as Professor Schröder realised that he had upset Professor Jackson he apologised to him for any unintentional upset that he may have caused; this was done by email on 27th October before Professor Jackson submitted his grievance on 18th November 2021."

Supplementary Question 2:

“How do you respond to the criticism that Jackson was asked to fix problems that he didn’t create, namely the university’s lack of diversity, and that this represents an example of the ‘minority tax’ faced by many people in science from underrepresented groups?”

University response:

Professor Jackson wasn’t asked to ‘fix problems’ but was invited to work with our Vice-Dean for Social Responsibility and EDIA to ensure that his valuable perspective and lived experiences were factored into the EDIA-related initiatives that were already underway. The intention was purely to engage Professor Jackson and to use his expertise and advice. In previous discussions during his appointment Professor Jackson had indicated that he would be willing to contribute. We absolutely agree with a previous statement that Professor Jackson made that ‘we collectively need to turn action plans into action.’

Supplementary Question 3:

How do you respond to the criticism that the institution did not productively engage with the problem of racism (ie, making the report and disciplinary actions public) in this instance?

University response:

The investigation concluded that there was no evidence of any racist behaviour. It is the University’s policy that all grievance investigations are confidential, regardless of the staff involved. We take all aspects of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Access very seriously and have a central Directorate solely focused on these matters which is launching a new University-wide strategy this month. Senior leaders are undergoing a full training programme on this topic with individual coaching, and it is anticipated that the programme will be extended across the university in due course.

Supplementary Question 4:

Can you confirm whether it was recommended in the confidential report that Dr. Schroeder apologize to Jackson?

University response:

As per the further statement above - As soon as Professor Schröder realised that he had upset Professor Jackson he apologised to him for any unintentional upset that he may have caused; this was done by email on 27th October before Professor Jackson submitted his grievance on 18th November 2021.

Supplementary Question 5:

Can you confirm whether it was recommended that senior staff receive additional bystander and EDI training?

University response:

Such training was already in train following the appointment of a Director of EDI in August 2021, who has created a new Directorate focused on this vitally important topic. As we have indicated in our previous statement, we are actioning all recommendations from the investigation.