



ICAEW Black talent action plan

“We are very proud to welcome ICAEW as a signatory and Major Supporter of the Charter. There is a clear determination across finance and professional sectors to improve equality of opportunity for talented Black professionals, and a growing recognition that the Charter is a meaningful way to achieve this.” *Harry Matovu QC. Co-founder, The Charter for Black Talent in Finance and the Professions*

FOREWORD

The Charter for Black Talent in Finance and the Professions reflects the aspiration to create a world in which all talent can thrive equally in business and at every level across the financial and professional services sectors. It was launched in 2020 by Harry Matovu QC and Michael Eboda, Founder and CEO of Powerful Media, in response to the under-representation of Black employees at some of the largest financial and professional services companies. The FRC’s key facts and trends report, for example, highlights that in 2020 only 6.7% of Partners at the largest firms identified as being Black, Asian or from another Minority Ethnic group.

The fundamental objective of the Charter is to bring about long-overdue and meaningful change through action led from the top of each firm by senior executives who are fully accountable for the delivery of progress measured against clear action plans and ambitious targets.

ICAEW were the first professional body to become both a supporter and signatory to the Charter. It demonstrates our commitment to improving equality of opportunity for our Black colleagues and members. We see our role as not just increasing representation of Black staff at ICAEW, but taking the lead on improving diversity across the profession, working in partnership with our members and employers.

We have already started on this journey, with the establishment of our free Black members community. Open to all, it provides a vital network of like-minded individuals committed to supporting and developing Black chartered accountants throughout their careers. ICAEW has been focused on improving fair access to the profession for many years. A number of specific events have been delivered this year in collaboration with employers to attract more Black applicants to training roles, and ICAEW supporting the 10,000 Black Interns programme. We realise that we and the profession still have a distance to travel, with much focus in the next year on establishing a baseline of data so that any future plans are focused and maximise impact.

ICAEW would like to applaud those employers who have joined us in signing up to the Charter, we hope this number will grow in future years.

ICAEW is committed to the creation of a world in which all talent can thrive equally in business and at every level across professional services. This action plan is part of various work to deliver our strategic theme of strengthening the profession by attracting talent and building diversity.

Ultimately inclusion is up to all of us. Through educating ourselves about different cultures, viewpoints and experiences, and having empathy for others, accountancy will be a profession that is open and welcome to all and reflects the diverse communities it serves.

David Franklin FCA, Managing Director, Belonging and Supporting, ICAEW

INTRODUCTION

1. This plan has been developed in consultation with ICAEW's membership and wider research including:
 - a) A series of roundtable discussions with Black members to understand the issues they faced in developing their careers;
 - b) Discussions with senior leadership at a number of member firms to understand how they were approaching this issue;
 - c) Research focussed on other professional and membership bodies to identify any areas of best practice; and
 - d) Discussions with colleagues across ICAEW to share findings and to ensure alignment in corresponding activity.

2. ICAEW's proposed plan considers Black representation through four lenses:
 - a) Representation amongst employees;
 - b) Representation within the membership;
 - c) Representation on ICAEW's committees and advisory groups; and
 - d) Access to the profession.

3. The existence of data and the ability to set meaningful targets varies amongst these four areas, so the proposed actions and milestones have been tailored accordingly. **This is an initial plan which will need to evolve, particularly as more data becomes available across each strand.**

REPRESENTATION AMONGST EMPLOYEES

4. ICAEW's HR department have established the required baseline data and are well ahead with a broader programme of support for employees, providing a solid base for ICAEW's commitment and action plan.

	ACTION	TARGET
1	Increase Black representation within ICAEW's UK staff base	0.5% increase per annum for next 5 years,
2	Increase the number of senior Black staff within ICAEW (defined as Head level and above)	Increase by 2 employees over the next 5 years
3	Establish a process to capture and monitor the number of Black candidates applying for roles at ICAEW.	Capture baseline data for the year to June 2022
4	Use candidate baseline data to set targets for the following three years	Targets to be set by August 2022

5	Establish a range of support initiatives to help Black talent to progress within ICAEW (e.g. offer Black Focus groups in ERG's, mentoring by senior staff)	Support initiatives to be in place by September 2021*
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* Initiatives implemented so far include: establishment of a specific employee resource group (ERG) on Race Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage (REACH); and a personal development workshop specifically tailored for Black staff.

REPRESENTATION WITHIN THE MEMBERSHIP

- Although a Diversity Survey was launched in late 2020, the response rate to this was low, meaning that ICAEW cannot accurately say what the composition of its membership is from a D&I perspective. This needs to be addressed as a priority.

	ACTION	TARGET
1	Include Diversity data in the 2022 membership renewal (including an option of 'prefer not to say')	Put in place for Fees & Subs renewal in October 2021
2	Establish baseline data from the membership renewal process	Data collation to be complete by June 2022
3	Analyse baseline data and use this to inform member support initiatives	Analysis and recommendations to be complete by September 2022
4	Create a Black Members Community, offering networking, support and inspiration to help the development of Black talent within the profession	Community established in 2021, with future growth targets established by September 2022 (when membership diversity composition is known)

REPRESENTATION ON ICAEW'S COMMITTEES AND ADVISORY GROUPS

- One of the findings shared with ICAEW's Board in September 2020 was the issue of Black representation on ICAEW's Council, main committees, and District Societies committees. As well as Black members questioning the adequacy of representation, concerns were raised as to how empowered any Black members on those committees may feel in speaking up on issues of D&I.
- Increasing Black representation on established bodies such as these will take time, as will implementing any changes required to ensure that committee members from minorities are actively encouraged to voice their opinions. The ability to set specific targets against individual committees will vary depending on their constitutions, nomination processes, and regulatory requirements, hence the need to consider each case individually.

	ACTION	TARGET
1	Establish baseline data for Black representation across all of ICAEW's committees and Advisory Groups	Complete data collation by 31 December 2021

2	Identify relevant groupings of different types of Board/Committee against which specific targets can be set (e.g. Advisory Groups, Committees with no electoral process, Committees requiring elections, etc)	Determine groupings by March 2022
3	Using baseline data, establish specific 5-year targets for Black representation within each grouping (in time for the Committee review process)	Targets to be set by May 2022
4	Establish a mentor scheme for senior/experienced active Black members to support those with less experience	Scheme to be established in Q1 2022

ACCESS TO THE PROFESSION

8. D&I initiatives to improve access to the profession are well advanced and there is a positive story to tell. The recent announcement of ICAEW signing up to the 10,000 Black Student Interns programme forms the main focus of activities specifically designed to support Black students, although output from the data analysis being undertaken may give rise to further targeted measures.

	ACTION	TARGET
1	Having signed up to the 10,000 Black Student Interns Programme in 2021, promote the programme to ICAEW networks, so that interested firms are also aware. (aimed at undergraduates/graduates)	2 Interns to start with ICAEW in Summer 2022. Target is 500 placements to be offered by the profession over a five-year period.
2	Facilitate a Black Heritage Student event for school leavers and their influencers - promoting the routes to the profession and creating greater awareness of the opportunities.	Delivered in November 2021
3	Hosted a joint event with Target Jobs for Black Heritage Students (undergraduates) in Career Development.	Delivered in April 2021
4	Establish baseline data for Black representation in ICAEW's student intake in the UK, monitor on an annual basis and set targets for improvement	Baseline established by Q2 2022
5	Work with a data scientist to identify trends in student performance across a wide varied of diverse groups, including Black Heritage Students, with a view to identifying future interventions which might be needed.	Analysis complete in Q2 2022
6	Conduct qualitative research into the experiences of Black ACA students, use this to identify possible ways to support them and share findings to help others	Research complete by end of 2021