Action on Decolonising the curriculum in Scotland

*Professor Rowena Arshad, University of Edinburgh*

The production of knowledge, the nature and validity of knowledge is not a neutral project. During colonial times, as Edward Said suggests, knowledge became a commodity of colonial exploitation as with other natural resources. Disciplines, that are part of the Academy will not have been immune to the process of colonisation. How we gain an understanding of the world will have been grounded in cultural world views that have either either ignored or been antagonistic to knowledge systems outwith those of the colonisers. Our research and teaching methodologies, all instruments of knowledge production, were also used as ways to classify, organise and represent knowledge. Concepts of ‘academic freedom’ or discipline integrity often allow many scholars to distance themselves from any responsibility to engage with the decolonisation project. Decolonising the curriculum is about being prepared to reconnect, reorder and reclaim knowledges and teaching methodologies which have been submerged, hidden or marginalised. The talk will explore how academics and disciplines are taking decolonising forward as well as examining the barriers that continue to persist.

**Professor Rowena Arshad** was until recently Head of Moray House School of Education and Sport at the University of Edinburgh. Her research and work has been in the area of ‘race’ – largely looking at how institutions and policies can better achieve race equality and the challenging of racism in it’s various forms. Her latest co-edited book with colleagues Terry Wrigely and Lynne Pratt - ‘Social Justice – Re-examined’ is aimed at student teachers and looks at a range of equality issues from race, class, gender, disability to issues of learning for sustainability. She is also a co-Director of the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES).