

Student Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2023 - 2024

Introduction

The Student Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (ED&I) Annual Report 2023-2024 considers the distribution of students with protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010) across the Brunel population, and evaluates their outcomes in terms of attrition and degree awards. This type of reporting supports the University's compliance with the Equality Act (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 (the 'Duties'), particularly by identifying any areas of concern related to our student body.

The protected characteristics considered in this report include Age, Disability, Ethnicity, Gender (Sex), Gender Reassignment (Trans identity), and Sexual Orientation. However, it excludes data on Maternity and Pregnancy, as well as Marriage and Civil Partnership, as Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are not specifically required to report on these categories.

Data coverage

This report primarily draws on internal Brunel data, available on the HELIX Teams site managed by Strategic Planning (links to relevant dashboards and resources are provided at the end of the report).

- The report draws from the latest 3 to 5 years of available full-year data, including student population data up to 2023-24 (based on census data from 1st December 2023), and attrition and degree award outcomes data up to 2022-23 (year end, including PGT awards processed in autumn 2023).
- Population data includes undergraduate (UG), taught postgraduate (PGT), and research postgraduate (PGR) students, while outcomes data focuses solely on taught students (UG and PGT).
- The focus of this report is on the mainstream Uxbridge-campus-based 'core' provision, which constitutes the majority of Brunel student population. Groups such as Apprentices, Online Learners, and Transnational Education (TNE) students have not been specifically included.
- University-level data is supplemented by College-level data to illustrate how patterns may vary across different areas; however, greater variations may exist at the Department and Subject levels.
- A new enhancement in this report is the disaggregation of South Asian, East Asian, and other Asian student groups within the population data by ethnicity. This aims to highlight disparities and uncover specific patterns and trends within these groups. A similar breakdown will be applied to student outcomes data in future reports. However, please note that HESA and the OfS continue to group these categories under "Asian" in national reporting.
- All student numbers (headcounts) have been rounded to the nearest 5, in line with HESA best practices. For example, 1 or 2 students are rounded to 0; 3 to 7 are rounded to 5; and 8 or 9 are rounded to 10.

Although this report is being presented several months later than usual, the next student annual report (covering the 2024-25 population and 2023-24 student outcomes) is expected to be available in Spring 2025.

University-level patterns overview

Before examining specific protected characteristics, the following points outline overall trends impacting the University, which likely had knock-on effects on particular groups.

Population

The size and shape of Brunel's student body has changed in recent years, as illustrated in the following chart:

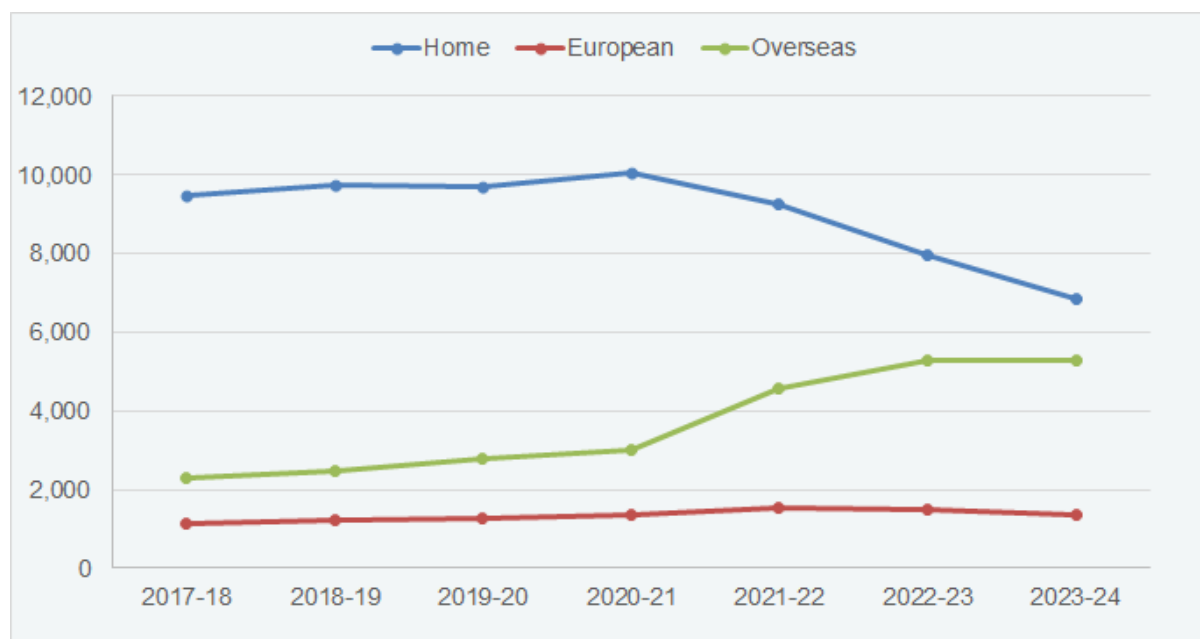


Chart 1: Yearly student totals by fee status

Our population of UK-domiciled ('Home') students has fallen steadily since the Covid-19 pandemic, mainly due to a downturn in undergraduate entrants; but at the same time, we have seen significant rises in the number of Overseas students, primarily at postgraduate taught (Master's) level.

These trends have driven several notable changes in the composition of our protected characteristics. For example, the average age has increased due to the rise in PGT students; the ethnic mix has shifted with international recruitment, with the most substantial growth from India; and there have also been changes in gender/sex composition, as PGT international growth has occurred in subject areas with gender distributions different from those in subjects that have contracted.

Attrition

UG: Attrition rates and absolute drop-out numbers have steadily increased over the past three years for core undergraduate students. In 2019-20, the first year of the pandemic, UG attrition dropped to its lowest level in a decade, partly due to the 'No Detriment' assessment policies and related support measures implemented in spring 2020, which helped improve retention. However, since then, attrition has risen consistently, reaching levels higher than previously seen at Brunel. In 2022-23, 13% of all registered core undergraduates (1,360 students) left without their intended award. Of these, 494 exited with an interim award, while 866 left with no award at all. These figures are a significant cause for concern.

By College, overall trends are similar to those seen across the University, with slightly higher attrition in CEDPS and slightly lower in CHMLS. For core students of all fee types and across all undergraduate levels, net attrition in 2022-23 was 13% in CBASS, 16% in CEDPS, and 11% in CHMLS.

When looking at fee status, overall attrition rates in 2022-23 were quite similar between Home and Overseas core students, at 13% and 14% respectively, averaged across all undergraduate levels. Among FHEQ4-level first-year students, attrition was 19% for each fee status.

PGT: Attrition has risen significantly over the last two years for Postgraduate Taught core students primarily due to students leaving in-year without obtaining an award, rather than completing with a lower or interim award (PGCert or PGDip, instead of a full Master's degree). In 2022-23, almost a third of our on-campus PGTs (1,102 students) left without their intended degree, including almost a quarter (819 students) who left with no award at all.

Awards (degree classifications)

UG: The proportion of 1st and 2:1 degree awarded for undergraduates, has dropped substantially in the last two years for core undergraduates, with a corresponding rise in the proportion of 2:2 degrees and (to a lesser extent) 3rd and Ordinary degrees. As per paper SEN/7722 delivered to Senate in spring 2024, these changes are understood to be particularly driven by –

- changes to SR2 affecting undergraduate degree awards from 2021-22 on
- ongoing impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic on different cohorts
- changes to entry tariffs and actual entrant qualifications over the last few years

By fee status, 56% of Home students and 57% of Overseas students achieved a 1st or 2:1 classification in 2022-23. These figures indicate a significant decline in the proportion of 'good degrees' for Home students, down from 66% in 2021-22 and 81% in 2020-21. In contrast, Overseas student award outcomes have shown much less variation, as they have historically attained fewer 1st and 2:1s compared to Home students.

By College, outcomes for both Home and Overseas students are very similar to the University as a whole. The proportion of 1st +2:1s combined was 56% in CBASS, 57% in CEDPS (which increases to 60% when UG Integrated Master's students are factored in), and 55% in CHMLS.

PGT: The distribution of Distinction and Merit classifications at the Master's level remained relatively stable over the three years leading up to 2020-21. However, in 2021-22, the proportion of Distinctions decreased, and by 2022-23, both Distinctions and Merits saw a decline, accompanied by a corresponding increase in the proportion of Pass classifications.

By fee status, 19% of Home PGT students but just 7% of Overseas students achieved a Distinction; while 46% and 43% respectively achieved a Merit. Both groups have seen a fall in their proportion of Distinctions over the last two years, from previous 3-year averages of 23% and 13% for Home and Overseas respectively. The drop is slightly worse for Overseas.

By College, the trend is similar to the University as a whole, but with some variation by College in the precise mix of PGT classifications. For 2022-23, the proportions of Distinctions was 8% in CBASS, 11% in CEDPS, and 15% in CHMLS; while the proportions of Merits was 47% for CBASS, 40% for CEDPS and 38% for CHMLS.

Age

Population

Overall, when considering UG, PGT, and PGR students, the proportion of those under 21 years old at entry has gradually decreased over the past five years, dropping from 68% in 2019-20 to 57% in 2023-24. This shift is primarily driven by changes in UG and PGT recruitment patterns. Correspondingly, the proportions of older students have increased, with the 21-24 age group rising from 18% to 21%, the 25-29 age group increasing from 7% to 12%, and the 30-39 age group growing from 4% to 7%. The percentage of students aged 40 and above has remained relatively stable.

Age	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Under 21	9860	68.1%	10010	65.9%	9670	59.7%	8865	56.4%	8005	56.6%
21-24	2610	18.0%	2855	18.8%	3490	21.5%	3455	22.0%	3005	21.2%
25-29	1005	6.9%	1170	7.7%	1600	9.9%	1785	11.3%	1650	11.7%
30-39	630	4.4%	745	4.9%	985	6.1%	1165	7.4%	1015	7.2%
40+	370	2.5%	420	2.8%	460	2.8%	450	2.9%	475	3.4%

Table 1: No. and % mix of students per Age group

By College:

- The vast majority of undergraduate students remain aged under 21 on entry, with 86% of CBASS, 88% of CEDPS and 83% of CHMLS students falling into this category.
- Among postgraduate taught students, the majority are aged 21-24 across all colleges, with CEDPS having the highest proportion in this group at 49%.
- Postgraduate research students show a more diverse age distribution, with a notable concentration in the 30-39 age group for both CBASS (33%) and CEDPS (32%). In CHMLS, the age range is spread more evenly, with 33% of postgraduate research students aged 21-24.

College	Degree level	Under 21	21-24	25-29	30-39	40+
CBASS	UG	86.2%	10.7%	1.8%	0.9%	0.4%
	PGT	2.4%	44.8%	32.0%	16.2%	4.6%
	PGR	-	10.4%	24.0%	33.0%	32.6%
CEDPS	UG	88.1%	9.7%	1.0%	1.0%	0.1%
	PGT	1.0%	49.2%	33.1%	14.0%	2.7%
	PGR	0.3%	26.0%	27.5%	31.7%	14.5%
CHMLS	UG	82.7%	10.7%	3.0%	2.1%	1.6%
	PGT	0.5%	39.6%	25.3%	20.5%	14.0%
	PGR	-	33.1%	24.1%	25.6%	17.3%

Table 2: % mix of students per Age group, by College and degree level

Attrition

UG: In the 2022-23 academic year, undergraduate attrition rates varied significantly by age group. Whilst the largest absolute number of leavers was among those under 21 years old (1,350 students, a 15% attrition rate), the highest attrition rates were among UGs in their twenties, at 19% for the 21-24 age group, and 21% for students aged 25-29. Meanwhile, attrition for students aged 30+ was lower than the University average.

UG Attrition	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
by Age group	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
< 21 years	610	6%	1055	11%	1350	15%
21-24 years	70	8%	175	18%	185	19%
25-29 years	20	10%	30	15%	40	21%
30-39 years	10	10%	20	16%	10	10%
40-49 years	0	4%	5	12%	5	12%
50-59 years	0	14%	5	18%	0	0%
60 years and over	0	0%	0	100%	0	25%
Not Known	0	0%	5	21%	5	27%

Table 3: UG attrition by Age group

PGT: Among core PGTs for 2022-23, the vast majority were in the age-on-entry ranges 21-24, with overall 29% attrition, and 25-29, with overall 34% attrition. The higher rate for those aged 25-29 is true across both Home and Overseas students.

Awards

UG: In the proportions of 1st +2:1s combined for undergraduate, we see little difference between our main 'young' cohort (aged under 21 on entry) and the only substantive mature student cohort (those aged 21-24 on entry), with 55% and 56% respectively awarded a 'good degree' classification. Older age brackets of mature students achieved somewhat better outcomes, but there are too few of them for results to be statistically meaningful.

UG Awards % by Age group	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
< 21 years	79.7%	65.1%	56.0%
21-24 years	78.4%	66.0%	55.4%
25-29 years	85.2%	77.8%	69.8%
30-39 years	90.5%	62.5%	62.1%
40-49 years	87.5%	66.7%	70.0%
50-59 years	50.0%	50.0%	77.8%

Table 4: UG % of Firsts & 2:1s, by Age group

PGT: Focusing on the proportion of Distinctions in 2022-23, the rates were 14% for students in the 21-24 age bracket but increased significantly for older students: 24% among those aged 25-29, 26% among those aged 30-39, and 24% among those aged 40-49.

Disability

Population

The total proportion of students declaring disabilities among the 'core' Uxbridge campus population has reduced slightly over the past few years, from 15% five years ago to 13% in 2023-24. This has particularly been driven by the increasing numbers of international PGT students, just 3.4% of whom declared a disability last year (the much lower rate suggesting that there may be higher levels of undiagnosed disabilities in this group). Meanwhile, a consistent 18% of Home undergraduates have declared a disability in each of the last five years.

Population	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
Disability type	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Disability	2185	15.1%	2300	15.1%	2220	13.7%	2025	12.9%	1780	12.6%
No Disability	12280	84.8%	12880	84.8%	13965	86.2%	13685	87.0%	12325	87.1%
<i>Not Known (inc. Refused)</i>	10	0.1%	15	0.1%	20	0.1%	15	0.1%	50	0.3%

Table 5: No. and % mix of students per Disability type

Disability representation across the Colleges varies significantly by degree level. In 2023-24:

- Among undergraduates, CHMLS had the highest proportion of students who have declared disabilities at 17%, followed by CBASS at 15% and CEDPS at 13%.
- For taught postgraduates, CHMLS also led with 18% of students declaring disabilities, while CBASS and CEDPS recorded lower figures at 5% and 4% respectively.
- Postgraduate research students showed similar trends, with CHMLS and CBASS both having 18% and 16% disability representation, while CEDPS stood at 12%.
- Across all groups, the percentage of students with unknown or refused disability status remains minimal.

College	Degree level	Disability	No Disability	Not Known (inc. Refused)
CBASS	UG	15.4%	84.6%	0.0%
	PGT	5.2%	93.2%	1.6%
	PGR	15.8%	84.2%	-
CEDPS	UG	12.8%	87.1%	0.0%
	PGT	4.0%	95.4%	0.5%
	PGR	12.4%	87.3%	0.3%
CHMLS	UG	17.0%	82.9%	0.0%
	PGT	18.0%	81.4%	0.6%
	PGR	18.0%	81.2%	0.8%

Table 6: % mix of students per Disability type, by College and degree level

Attrition

UG: Over the three academic years from 2020-21 to 2022-23, attrition rates for students with declared disabilities rose from 5% to 12%. A similar trend was observed among students with no known disabilities, whose attrition increased from 6% to 16% during the same period. Historically, the drop-out rates for disabled students have generally matched or been lower than those of non-disabled students which has been evident for a number of years.

UG attrition	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
By Disability type	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Declared disability	95	5%	165	9%	190	12%
No known disability	620	6%	1125	12%	1405	16%
Not Known	0	0%	0	3%	5	9%

Table 7: UG attrition by Disability type

PGT: In 2022-23, disabled PGT students exhibited lower drop-out rates than their non-disabled counterparts, with rates of 24% compared to 31%. This discrepancy may be influenced by students with undeclared disabilities, particularly those from countries where the diagnosis of learning disabilities is less common, who might not be accessing all available support.

Awards

UG: The combined proportion of 1st and 2:1s was 63% for disabled students compared to 55% for non-disabled students. While historically, these groups had similar attainment levels, disabled students have outperformed their non-disabled peers in the past two years, albeit in a context where the overall percentage of good degrees has declined for all groups.

Disability type	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Declared disability	79.1%	73.3%	62.9%
No known disability	79.9%	64.0%	55.0%
Not Known	0.0%	88.9%	61.5%

Table 8: UG % of Firsts & 2:1s, by Disability status

PGT: In 2022-23, attainment among disabled students surpassed that of non-disabled students, with 17% of disabled students achieving a Distinction compared to 10% of their non-disabled peers.

Ethnicity

Population

The ethnic diversity of Brunel's student population has continued to evolve in recent years. As at 2023-24, South Asian students made up the largest group, at 31.7% (marginally lower than the previous year, by 0.9%); while White students accounted for 18.9%, a decrease from previous years. East Asian students comprised 10.0%, showing a gradual increase of 1.7%, while Black students represented 14.6%, slightly lower than in 2021-22. Arab students made up 4.7%, and students from Mixed ethnic backgrounds accounted for 4.3%. The percentage of students whose ethnicity was not known increased to 3.9%, while those from Other Asian backgrounds remained steady at 9.3%. The number of White Gypsy, Roma, or Irish Traveller students rose to 30 in 2023-24, having been so low as to be non-reportable (typically around or fewer than 5 students) in previous years.

Population	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
Ethnicity type	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Arab	805	5.3%	875	5.4%	995	5.5%	910	5.1%	775	4.7%
Black	2340	15.4%	2705	16.6%	3005	16.8%	2665	15.0%	2420	14.6%
East Asian	1295	8.5%	1250	7.6%	1430	8.0%	1475	8.3%	1660	10.0%
Mixed	885	5.8%	910	5.6%	920	5.1%	825	4.6%	715	4.3%
Not Known (inc. Prefer not to Say)	215	1.4%	245	1.5%	315	1.8%	425	2.4%	645	3.9%
Other Asian	1430	9.4%	1445	8.9%	1520	8.5%	1495	8.4%	1540	9.3%
Other ethnic background	485	3.2%	520	3.2%	550	3.1%	475	2.7%	390	2.4%
South Asian	3355	22.1%	3825	23.4%	4880	27.2%	5775	32.6%	5260	31.7%
White	4365	28.8%	4555	27.9%	4330	24.1%	3695	20.8%	3130	18.9%
White - Gypsy, Roma or Irish Traveller	5	0.0%	5	0.0%	5	0.0%	5	0.0%	30	0.2%

Table 9: No. and % mix of students per ethnicity group

There are also some major differences in the distribution of ethnicities by degree level and by College. Alphabetically by group, in 2023-24:

- Arab students were best represented at PGR level, this being particularly driven by funded students from the Gulf.
- Black students had a strong presence at UG level, but their numbers decrease at the PGT level among Home students, despite a rise in Overseas PGT recruitment from Africa.
- East Asian student numbers have declined over the past five years, with their strongest representation now at CEDPS PGR levels.
- Other Asian ethnicities were represented across most levels, other than CHMLS PGR.
- The South Asian PGT population has surged significantly in recent years, driven by increased recruitment from India.
- The White student population has decreased across all levels over the past five years, now making up just 20% of UG core students and 12% of core PGTs, though still 32% of PGR students.

College	Degree level	Arab	Black	East Asian	Mixed	Not Known	Other Asian	Other ethnic background	South Asian	White	White - Gypsy, Roma or Irish Traveller
CBASS	UG	5.0%	17.8%	2.7%	6.9%	2.7%	11.2%	3.4%	30.7%	19.4%	0.1%
	PGT	2.9%	9.3%	3.3%	1.4%	3.1%	7.0%	1.0%	64.6%	7.3%	0.1%
	PGR	12.5%	16.1%	3.2%	3.9%	11.1%	9.7%	3.2%	7.5%	32.3%	0.4%
CEDPS	UG	5.6%	15.3%	3.0%	4.9%	2.6%	11.4%	3.1%	33.1%	20.9%	0.1%
	PGT	4.2%	7.1%	5.2%	1.6%	4.3%	8.3%	1.3%	61.9%	5.7%	0.4%
	PGR	14.5%	7.6%	13.9%	3.6%	10.3%	6.3%	5.4%	12.7%	25.7%	0.0%
CHMLS	UG	4.6%	19.3%	6.0%	6.3%	2.9%	11.9%	3.4%	22.7%	22.9%	0.1%
	PGT	2.0%	18.2%	4.5%	2.9%	6.5%	7.5%	1.3%	26.4%	30.5%	0.2%
	PGR	6.8%	15.0%	1.5%	4.5%	5.3%	3.8%	2.3%	10.5%	49.6%	0.8%

Table 10: % mix of students per Ethnicity group, by College and degree level

Attrition

UG: Attrition levels among the University's undergraduates have significantly increased over the past three years across all ethnicities. In 2022-23, the highest increase was observed among students with an ethnicity recorded as "Not Known" at 23%, followed by Black students at 19%, and Mixed and Other ethnicities at 17% and 16%, respectively. Notably, the highest absolute number of drop-outs was among Asian students, with 620 leaving the University.

UG attrition	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
By Ethnicity group	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Asian	255	6%	415	9%	620	14%
Black	150	8%	320	15%	355	19%
Mixed	60	8%	105	14%	110	17%
Not known	5	6%	15	14%	60	23%
Other	60	6%	125	13%	145	16%
White	180	6%	310	11%	310	13%

Table 11: UG attrition by Ethnicity group

PGT: The attrition data for postgraduate taught students reveals significant disparities based on ethnicity and fee status.

Among Home-fee-status students, the attrition rate is notably higher for Black students, standing at 32%, which is double the 16% rate observed for White students. Asian and Mixed ethnicity students also face higher attrition rates at 21% and 25%, respectively. The fact that Black Home students are dropping out at twice the rate of their White peers is particularly concerning and warrants attention.

For Overseas-fee-status students, the attrition pattern shifts, with Asian students facing the highest rate at 40%. Mixed ethnicity students have an attrition rate of 21%, while Black and White students show significantly lower rates of 12% and 9%, respectively. These figures

underscore the need for targeted interventions to address the underlying causes of these disparities, particularly for Black Home students and Asian Overseas students.

Awards

UG: The table below illustrates the pattern of awarding gaps for undergraduate students by ethnicity over the past few years, specifically the difference in the combined proportion of 1st & 2:1s between White students and Black and Racially Minoritised ethnic groups. After a trend of closing these gaps up to 2020-21, they have widened again in the last two years, with the exception of Mixed ethnicity students.

Diff in % of 1 st and 2:1	2018 -19	2019 -20	2020 -21	2021 -22	2022 -23
(White to) Asian	-14%	-10%	-7%	-12%	-15%
(White to) Black	-21%	-18%	-16%	-23%	-21%
(White to) Mixed	-11%	-9%	-9%	0%	-3%

Table 12: Awarding gaps for undergraduate students between 2020-21 and 2022-23

Quantifying the impact of these gaps on real students: If other ethnicities had achieved the same degree classifications as White students last year, an additional 313 Black and Racially Minoritised ethnic students would have moved from the 2:2 to the 2:1 bracket. This includes 167 Asian students, 91 Black students, 49 students of other ethnicities, and 5 students of mixed ethnicity, who may be seen as having missed out on a good degree.

PGT: Focusing on Home students to eliminate distortion from fee status, the data reveals disparities in Postgraduate Taught (PGT) attainment. Last year, 28% of White students and 22% of Mixed ethnicity students earned a Distinction. In contrast, only 17% of Asian students and 7% of Black students achieved Distinctions, highlighting significant awarding gaps for these groups, particularly Black students.

Gender/Sex

Formally, "Sex" is a characteristic protected by the Equality Act 2010. Data on Sex has been collected and reported by Brunel and at the national level by HESA for equality monitoring purposes. This continues under HESA's new Data Futures collection, which records options as Female, Male, or Other (where legally documented).

It's important to note that data on 'gender', which covers a broader range of identities, is not collected in the same way. Instead, Brunel and HESA collect data specifically on legal Sex, not gender. Historically, 'sex' and 'gender' have been used interchangeably in reports, including this one, to enhance readability. However, given the increasing importance of distinguishing between these terms, future reports will likely focus on Sex to clarify that it refers to UK legal Sex – i.e. Female, Male, or Other.

The term 'gender' may still be used informally where confusion is unlikely, but it should only be capitalised when referring to Gender Reassignment. Trans individuals will be represented in data based on Gender Reassignment or Trans identity, which is distinct from Sex.

Population

In 2023-24, the total core student population at Brunel comprised 46% women and 54% men, proportions that have remained relatively stable over the past five years. While the broader UK higher education sector has a higher proportion of students who are women, Brunel's higher proportion of men students is largely attributable to the University's subject mix.

Population	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
by gender/Sex	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Female	6825	46.7	7225	46.2	7785	45.1	7640	45.3	7290	45.5
Male	7720	52.9	8395	53.4	9390	54.5	9175	54.4	8680	54.2
Not Known (inc. Refused)	60	0.4	70	0.4	65	0.4	50	0.3	50	0.3

Table 13: No. and % mix of students by gender/Sex

Gender/Sex distribution across the Colleges and by degree level varied thus in 2023-24:

- CBASS is the College with greatest gender parity, with women making up 47% of undergraduates, 54% of PGTs and 56% of PGR students.
- CEDPS continues to have a significant majority of men, with women comprising only 21% of undergraduates, 30% of taught postgraduate (PGT) students, and 34% of postgraduate research (PGR) students.
- In contrast, CHMLS had a stronger women presence, with 62% of undergraduates, 71% of PGTs and 65% of PGR students being women.
- The number of students with an unknown/non-declared gender/Sex is very small and not statistically significant.

College	Degree level	Female	Male	Not Known (inc. Refused)
CBASS	UG	47.1%	52.7%	0.2%
	PGT	54.0%	45.9%	0.1%
	PGR	55.9%	41.9%	2.2%
CEDPS	UG	20.8%	78.6%	0.6%
	PGT	29.8%	70.1%	0.1%
	PGR	34.1%	65.6%	0.3%
CHMLS	UG	62.2%	37.7%	0.1%
	PGT	70.8%	29.0%	0.2%
	PGR	65.4%	33.8%	0.8%

Table 14: % mix of students per Gender/Sex, by College and degree level

Please also note that gender diversity often varies significantly within departments and down to the course level. Subject areas are expected to be aware of these distributions and monitor trends accordingly.

Attrition

UG: For 2022-23, across all UG levels of study by gender, we see a 19% attrition rate for men vs 10% for women. While overall attrition rates have increased substantially over the past two years, attrition rates for men have consistently been almost twice the rates for women over the past five+ years. This gap is a notable cause for concern.

UG attrition	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
by gender/Sex	N	%	N	%	N	%
Female	255	4%	465	8%	560	10%
Male	655	8%	1130	14%	1575	19%

Other	5	12%	5	5%	5	12%
Unknown	0	-	0	-	0	-

Table 15: UG attrition by gender/Sex

PGT: For 2022-23, there was 33% attrition among men vs 28% among women, with this gap being wider for Home students than for Overseas students.

Awards

UG: 'Good degree' proportions dropped across the board in 2022-23, whilst maintaining the small but significant attainment gap by Sex which has been evident for a number of years. Those latest figures show 58% of women vs 55% of men achieving a 1st or 2:1.

PGT: Women also achieved more Distinctions than men, 13% vs 8%, in 2022-23; whereas in past years this was more even.

Gender Reassignment

Brunel takes a more inclusive approach to gender expression and gender identity than the legal parameters of the 'gender reassignment' characteristic as defined by the equality legislation. However, our data collection obligations as set by the OfS mean that our data on this topic is based on a rather clunky question, asking students to self-declare whether their gender identity is the same as they were assigned at birth (rather than, say, declaring a Trans identity) – with 'No' answers meaning their gender has changed, whilst 'Yes' answers mean it is unchanged.

Population

In 2023-24, 96% of students identified as the same gender they were assigned at birth, while 3.4% chose not to disclose or refused to answer. A small but consistent-with-previous-years proportion, 0.8%, identified as a different gender from the one assigned at birth.

Population	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
Same gender as at birth?	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Yes	14005	96.8%	14690	96.6%	15640	96.5%	15110	96.1%	13555	95.8%
Not Known (inc. Refused)	365	2.5%	375	2.5%	405	2.5%	470	3.0%	480	3.4%
No	100	0.7%	135	0.9%	155	1.0%	145	0.9%	115	0.8%

Table 16: No. and % mix of students who identify or not as same gender / sex as at birth

Attrition

UG: There is no statistically discernible difference in attrition rates between groups by Gender Reassignment status.

UG attrition	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
by Gender Reassignment (No = diff to Sex at birth)	N	%	N	%	N	%
Information refused	15	7%	25	13%	35	19%
No	10	11%	15	15%	15	15%
Not known inc. refused	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Yes	690	6%	1250	11%	1550	15%

Table 17: UG attrition amongst by Gender Reassignment status

PGT: while declared -as-Gender-Reassigned students show a higher attrition rate in the two most recent years (43% in 2022-23, compared to 31% among same-as-at-birth students), this is based on relatively small numbers and not necessarily statistically significant.

PGT attrition	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Information refused	15	15%	5	9%	40	44%
No	5	12%	10	31%	25	43%
Not known inc. refused	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Yes	295	14%	480	19%	1090	31%

Table 18: attrition amongst postgraduate taught students per Gender Reassignment status, from 2020-21 to 2022-23

Awards

UG: The proportion of Firsts and 2:1s awarded has declined in all categories since 2020-21, but again there is no statistically significant gap in awards outcome by Gender Reassignment status.

UG awards	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Information refused	78.6%	67.9%	66.7%
No	61.1%	68.8%	63.6%
Not known inc. refused	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Yes	79.9%	65.2%	56.3%

Table 19: UG % of Firsts & 2:1s, by Gender Reassignment status

PGT: Similarly, the proportion of Distinctions has declined across the board since 2020-21. but there is no statistically significant difference by Gender Reassignment status.

PGT awards	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Information refused	19%	16%	9%
No	16%	6%	8%
Not known inc. refused	0%	0%	0%
Yes	17%	14%	10%

Table 20: PGT % of Distinctions, by Gender Reassignment status

Religion or Belief

Population

Brunel continues to be richly diverse in terms of the range of religions. In 2023-24, Muslim students comprised the largest religious group at 32.9%, continuing an upward trend. Hindu students also saw strong representation at 17.0%, while those with no religion declined to 15.5%. Christian students made up 21.6% of the student body, a slight decrease from previous years. Smaller groups, including Sikhs (3.1%), Buddhists (1.3%), and those with other beliefs (1.5%), remained relatively stable. 5.5% of students preferred not to disclose their religion, while a small percentage (1.4%) had unknown or unspecified religious affiliations. The Jewish community had the smallest representation, at 0.2%.

Population	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
Religion or Belief	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Muslim	4210	30.3%	4655	31.4%	5220	32.2%	4995	31.8%	4660	32.9%
No Religion	3510	27.1%	3745	24.0%	3820	20.1%	3465	16.7%	3050	15.5%
Christian	3765	21.2%	3550	22.7%	3260	23.6%	2630	22.0%	2195	21.6%
Hindu	1215	8.7%	1435	9.7%	1995	12.3%	2695	17.1%	2400	17.0%
Prefer not to say	325	2.3%	505	3.4%	795	4.9%	765	4.9%	785	5.5%
Sikh	390	2.8%	435	2.9%	440	2.7%	485	3.1%	440	3.1%
Not Known (inc. Refused)	515	3.7%	345	2.3%	130	0.8%	210	1.3%	205	1.4%
Buddhist	205	1.5%	190	1.3%	190	1.2%	165	1.0%	180	1.3%
Any other religion or belief	150	1.1%	155	1.0%	180	1.1%	200	1.3%	210	1.5%
Spiritual	140	1.0%	140	1.0%	125	0.8%	75	0.5%	0	0.0%
Jewish	40	0.3%	45	0.3%	45	0.3%	40	0.3%	30	0.2%

Table 21: No. and % mix of students per Religion/Belief

The data (split across two tables below, 22a and 22b) shows variation in religious representation across different course groups and levels of study within the three Colleges.

- Muslim students form the largest religious group in many areas, particularly in undergraduate programmes in CBASS and CEDPS, where they represent 38.7% and 38.5%, respectively.
- Christian students have higher representation in Postgraduate Research (33.8%) particularly across CBASS and CHMLS. Figures for "No Religion" likewise is higher in Postgraduate Taught programmes, especially in CBASS (38.4%) and CEDPS (21.1%).
- Hindu students are most prominent in Postgraduate Taught courses in CEDPS, making up 43.8% of students. This figure is driven by recent patterns of recruitment from India.
- Other religious groups, such as Sikh, Spiritual, and Buddhist students, tend to have smaller proportions across all levels of study. Notably, Jewish students consistently form a very small percentage across all categories, while students preferring not to disclose their religion make up a moderate proportion, especially in postgraduate courses.

College	Degree level	Muslim	Christian	No Religion	Hindu	Prefer not to say
CBASS	UG	38.7%	22.7%	16.2%	10.7%	5.4%
	PGT	28.6%	7.1%	38.4%	13.5%	1.4%
	PGR	13.5%	33.8%	31.6%	4.5%	7.5%
CEDPS	UG	38.5%	16.8%	21.1%	11.2%	6.7%
	PGT	8.3%	21.2%	13.1%	43.8%	2.3%
	PGR	31.1%	15.4%	29.0%	4.2%	6.6%
CHMLS	UG	32.0%	27.5%	19.9%	8.4%	6.0%

College	Degree level	Muslim	Christian	No Religion	Hindu	Prefer not to say
	PGT	33.9%	19.1%	17.2%	13.3%	6.0%
	PGR	13.5%	33.8%	31.6%	4.5%	7.5%

Table 22a: % mix of students by Religion or belief, by College and degree level

College	Degree level	Sikh	Not Known (inc. Refused)	Any other religion or belief	Buddhist	Spiritual	Jewish
CBASS	UG	3.3%	0.3%	1.6%	0.8%	0.0%	0.2%
	PGT	4.4%	1.5%	0.0%	3.7%	1.4%	0.1%
	PGR	0.8%	5.3%	1.5%	1.5%	0.0%	-
CEDPS	UG	2.5%	1.4%	0.1%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%
	PGT	4.2%	1.6%	4.5%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	PGR	0.6%	9.4%	0.3%	3.0%	0.0%	0.3%
CHMLS	UG	2.4%	0.4%	0.0%	1.3%	1.3%	0.8%
	PGT	0.0%	5.1%	2.1%	0.0%	2.2%	1.2%
	PGR	0.8%	5.3%	1.5%	1.5%	0.0%	-

Table 22b: % mix of students by Religion or belief, by College and degree level

Attrition

UG: Undergraduate attrition rates increased across most religious groups in 2022-23 compared to previous years. The most notable rise was among Sikh students, whose attrition rate rose to 27%, up from 10% in 2021-22. Those identifying with "Any other religion or belief" also saw an increase, reaching 17% from 10% the previous year. Attrition rates for Muslims (17%) and Hindus (14%) followed similar upward trends, while Christian students' attrition increased by just +2%pt, to 14%. Attrition among students with "No religion" or "Not known" both increased to 13%, while Spiritual students also experienced a marked increase to 20%. Jewish students were the exception, with their attrition rate dropping back to 3.1% (in line with 2020-21 levels), albeit this is based on a relatively small total number of students.

UG attrition by Religion or Belief	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Any other religion or belief	9.2%	10.0%	17.1%
Buddhist	2.3%	12.0%	11.0%
Christian	7.3%	12.4%	14.4%
Hindu	3.9%	8.5%	13.5%
Jewish	3.1%	12.5%	3.1%
Muslim	6.0%	11.5%	16.5%
No religion	6.7%	11.5%	13.1%
Not known (inc. refused)	5.7%	11.2%	13.1%
Sikh	5.3%	10.3%	27.1%
Spiritual	7.3%	13.2%	19.6%

Table 23: UG by Religion or Belief

PGT: Postgraduate attrition rates increased across religious groups in 2022-23 compared to previous years. Notable outliers include Hindu and Sikh students; however, it is important to recognise that these higher rates were largely driven by funding and continuation issues affecting a subset of international PGTs from India during this period.

PGT attrition by Religion or Belief	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Any other religion or belief	25.0 %	17.4%	15.4%
Buddhist	8.2%	21.3%	25.0%
Christian	16.3 %	16.5%	19.3%
Hindu	19.9 %	24.0%	45.0%
Jewish	0.0%	22.2%	50.0%
Muslim	15.0 %	21.6%	30.9%
No religion	11.5 %	12.7%	15.4%
Not known (inc. refused)	15.7 %	13.4%	28.9%
Sikh	25.0 %	28.8%	66.3%
Spiritual	14.8 %	22.9%	29.0%

Table 24: % of attrition amongst undergraduate students per religion from 2020-21 to 2022-23

Awards

UG: The proportion of 1st and 2:1s (combined) as awarded in 2022-23 was 54% for Christian students, also 54% for Hindu, 49% for Muslim, and 71% for those with No Religion.

UG Awards	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Any other religion or belief	80.0%	78.0%	66.7%
Buddhist	83.3%	70.8%	68.2%
Christian	79.4%	64.6%	54.0%
Hindu	88.7%	61.5%	54.4%
Jewish	88.9%	71.4%	72.7%
Muslim	75.1%	59.8%	48.7%
No religion	81.6%	72.3%	71.1%
Not known (inc. refused)	79.4%	71.6%	64.4%
Sikh	83.8%	65.1%	51.3%
Spiritual	73.7%	73.9%	65.6%

Table 25: UG % of Firsts & 2:1s, by Religion/Belief

PGT: Focusing on the proportion of Distinctions in 2022-23 for postgraduates by religion, 14% of Christian and 12% of Muslim students achieved Distinction, compared to 29% of those with No Religion.

Sexual orientation

Population

In 2023-24, the majority of students (85%) identified as heterosexual or straight, representing a slight decrease from 2021-22 and earlier. Those who preferred not to disclose their sexual orientation increased to 8% (up +1%pts year on year), whilst a further 1% of students has an unknown or refused-to-declare sexual orientation. The net proportion of students declaring an LGBTQ* identity has dropped slightly year on year; with those declaring as Gay men or Gay women/Lesbians having the least representation, at 0.5% and 0.3% of the overall core population respectively.

Among Home students, across all levels, some 5.5% (390) identify within the LGBTQ* student community, rising to 6.4% (370) amongst the international student body.

Population	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
Sexual orientation	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Heterosexual or straight	12655	87.4%	13255	87.2%	14025	86.6%	13360	85.0%	12015	84.9%
Prefer not to say	920	6.4%	935	6.2%	1050	6.5%	1060	6.7%	1095	7.7%
Bisexual	420	2.9%	450	3.0%	480	3.0%	495	3.2%	430	3.0%
Other sexual orientation	220	1.5%	290	1.9%	375	2.3%	490	3.1%	290	2.1%
Gay man	100	0.7%	110	0.7%	110	0.7%	95	0.6%	70	0.5%
Gay woman/lesbian	70	0.5%	80	0.5%	75	0.5%	55	0.3%	50	0.3%
Not Known (inc. Refused)	65	0.4%	75	0.5%	90	0.6%	170	1.1%	205	1.4%
Other	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Table 26: No. and % mix of students per Sexual orientation

Further variation is evident by College and degree level, with PGR students generally having higher proportions of LGBTQ*-identifying students.

College	Degree level	Hetero-sexual or straight	Prefer not to say	Other sexual orientation	Bisexual	Gay man	Gay woman/lesbian	Not Known (inc. Refused)
CBASS	UG	88.4%	5.8%	1.5%	2.9%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%
	PGT	79.1%	11.6%	3.5%	3.8%	0.2%	0.3%	1.4%
	PGR	70.6%	10.4%	3.2%	4.3%	2.2%	0.0%	9.3%
CEDPS	UG	88.6%	6.8%	1.7%	2.2%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%
	PGT	84.3%	8.8%	1.9%	2.7%	0.1%	0.0%	2.3%
	PGR	73.1%	11.5%	2.4%	2.7%	0.6%	0.3%	9.4%
CHMLS	UG	86.9%	6.1%	2.0%	3.4%	0.7%	0.5%	0.3%
	PGT	82.2%	7.5%	1.0%	3.1%	0.5%	0.4%	5.1%
	PGR	77.4%	8.3%	0.8%	3.8%	2.3%	2.3%	5.3%

Table 27: % mix of students by Sexual Orientation, by College and degree level

Attrition

UG and PGT: Attrition rates amongst undergraduate and postgraduate taught students who do not disclose as heterosexual are slightly higher than those who do, particularly amongst bisexuals and gay women / lesbians. However, the numbers of students concerned is relatively small.

UG attrition	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Bisexual	8%	12%	16%
Gay man	5%	9%	17%
Gay woman/lesbian	5%	14%	19%
Heterosexual	6%	11%	15%
Information refused	7%	10%	17%
Not known inc. refused	0%	0%	0%
Other	7%	11%	19%

Table 28: UG attrition by Sexual orientation

Awards

UG: University-wide drops in the proportion of Firsts and 2:1s awarded over the last two years are reflected in outcomes for Heterosexual students, but are not as evident for LGBTQ* groups – with the caveat that absolute numbers in those groups are relatively small.

UG Awards	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Bisexual	30	75%	40	80%	55	71%
Gay man	5	79%	5	81%	10	78%
Gay woman/lesbian	5	76%	10	77%	10	71%
Heterosexual	625	80%	1155	65%	1385	56%
Information refused	40	79%	60	63%	95	55%
Not known inc. refused	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other	10	64%	20	67%	40	64%

Table 29: UG % of Firsts & 2:1s, by Sexual orientation

PGT: whilst the proportion of Distinctions awarded among heterosexual students has declined in line with overall trends, numbers awarded in LGBTQ* groups are too limited to draw any further conclusions from.

PGT Awards	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Bisexual	10	17%	10	20%	5	10%
Gay man	5	50%	5	36%	0	8%
Gay woman/lesbian	0	33%	0	25%	5	50%
Heterosexual	220	18%	220	14%	195	10%
Information refused	25	16%	20	11%	20	11%
Not known inc. refused	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other	5	7%	5	10%	10	8%

Table 30: PGT % of Distinctions, by Sexual orientation

Conclusions and future work

This report has been focused on highlighting the distribution of different protected characteristics across the core Brunel student body, along with patterns of student attrition and award outcomes, to foster an improved understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion factors affecting our community.

- Undergraduate attrition rates have risen significantly, with 13% of core undergraduates leaving without their intended award in 2022-23. This trend is concerning, especially as previous low levels were partly due to temporary measures during the pandemic.
- The increase in attrition rates across all ethnicities, particularly among Black Home students (32%) and Asian Overseas students (40%), highlights the need for targeted retention strategies.
- Nearly a third of PGT students left without their intended degree, with a significant rise in attrition rates, indicating potential issues with student satisfaction or support.
- The drop in 'good degrees' among Home students (from 66% to 56%) reflects broader trends in academic performance, which may require attention.
- Although numbers are small, attrition rates for students with declared disabilities have increased significantly, which may indicate a potential lack of adequate support.
- The widening awarding gaps between ethnic groups, especially the significant dropout rate among Black Home students and Asian Overseas students, indicates systemic issues.
- Despite higher attainment for disabled students, the awarding gaps for Black and racialised minoritised Ethnic groups show that disparities persist, warranting further investigation.
- Men students have consistently higher attrition rates than women students across all levels, with a notable 19% attrition for men versus 10% for women in undergraduates.
- Despite the overall men majority in enrolment, women's attainment (58% achieving 1st or 2:1) surpasses men's (55%), indicating a gender gap in academic success.
- Attrition rates are notably higher among students who do not identify as heterosexual, particularly among bisexual and lesbian/gay students, though the sample sizes are small.
- This trend could suggest a potential lack of support and acceptance for LGBTQ+ students within the university environment.

It is also important to note that production of this report has been delayed, and does not necessarily cover every element which may be desirable for future ED&I annual reporting. It will be particularly desirable to contextualise data reporting with an evaluation of the extent to which the University's current ED&I activities fulfil its equality duties, and to identify any further action needed. Additional topics worth considering either in the next annual report (2024-25, expected to be produced in spring 2025) or in supplementary analyses would be:

- Research Student outcomes data, focusing on progression vs drop-out rates and submission or completion times. Separate dedicated analysis is appropriate given the unique nature of PGR students (including their research-focused roles, funding structures, and longer academic timelines); their experiences differ significantly from those of UG and PGT students and outcome metrics cannot be calculated in the same way.
- Graduate Employment data from the GO survey, covering UG, PGT and PGR students.
- Application & Admissions pipeline analysis by protected characteristic.
- Consideration of groups such as Apprentices, Online learners or Transnational Education students studying at partner campuses, in addition to mainstream UG/PGT/PGR provision at the Uxbridge campus.
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- Comparisons against sector averages and benchmarks, drawing from OfS and HESA data.
- Further intersectional analysis, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how different aspects of identity – such as race, gender, religion, and disability – may intersect and impact student experiences and outcomes.
- A deeper review of data on Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment, focusing on LGBTQ* identities. There are potentially very useful insights to be gained from looking at specific nuances in this data, but the smaller absolute number of students in certain of these groups makes it more challenging to surface such nuances in a top-level report like this one.
- Consideration of how differential outcomes by protected characteristic may also intersect or co-vary with outcomes for different access & participation characteristics.

Data sources

Dashboards of Brunel internal data are available to staff and students via the HELIX Teams site. To access (if you have not already joined this team) go to the Teams app, 'teams' section, select 'Join or create team', and then click 'Join' under the 'GRP-Planning-HELIX' icon. Key sources for this report were:

- UG/PGT/PGR population data : in 'Student data' channel, Files tab, 'Student characteristics' folder, file [December Census - Long Term Characteristics Trends - PROTECT.xlsx](#)
- UG attrition and awards data: in 'Annual Monitoring and Surveys' channel, Files tab, 'Attrition and awards' folder, file [UG Attrition and Awards by Characteristic.xlsx](#)
- PGT attrition and awards data: same location, file [PGT Attrition and Awards by Characteristics.xlsx](#)

In addition:

- Latest national 'B3 metrics' outcome data for England (to end 2022-23), including continuation rates, degree completion, and the graduate employment outcomes, was published by the Office for Students (OfS) in July 2024 at <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-outcomes-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/>
- Latest national student population data for the whole UK (to end 2022-23) was published by HESA in September 2024 at <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students>
- Some further relevant sector benchmarking data was published by Advance HE in November 2023 at <https://advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/equality-higher-education-statistical-reports-2023>