

## Student Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2021 - 2022

### Introduction

The Student Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2021 – 22 is piloting a new format with a focus on significant equality population, attrition and awarding gaps and a top-level assessment of the University’s compliance with the Equality Act (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 (the ‘Duties’). Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are required to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into their day-to-day business and at least once a year to publish information relating to people who share a protected characteristic who are employees, and / or people affected by its policies and practices, such as students, to demonstrate their compliance with the equality duty. For more information regarding the Duties, see Appendix A.

The report starts by summarising key university-wide equality monitoring data information relating to undergraduate and postgraduate taught students who have a protected characteristic as defined by the equality legislation (see detail below) who are applying to and / or in higher education and affected by its policies and practices highlighting any issues for concern. The report then considers to what extent the University’s current ED&I activity meets its equality duty and what further action is required.

### Student Equality Data

This section presents a summary of top-level university-wide equality data for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students who have a protected characteristic (excluding maternity and pregnancy, and marriage and civil partnership which HEIs are not specifically required to report on). It includes population data for 2022 – 23 and attrition and awarding outcome data for 2021 – 22 for undergraduate students. For the first time, it also includes post graduate taught data highlighting key issues for concern. The data analysis is drawn from Brunel Internal Data provided by Planning: undergraduate data in December 2022 and postgraduate taught data in February 2023. More detailed data can be accessed at [HELIX data and dashboards \(brunel.ac.uk\)](https://brunel.ac.uk/helix). Benchmarking sector data published by Advance HE November 2022 is referred to when considered helpful.

### Gender

It should be noted that this report continues to report on data under the term ‘gender’ because this is how the category has previously been defined within HE and the data collected and analysed across the sector. However, this use of the term is at odds with the term ‘sex’ which is one of the characteristics protected by the Equality Act, 2010. HESA has recently updated their guidance accordingly and Brunel’s Planning Department is currently seeking clarification on what data should be collected and analysed and what terminology should be used.

#### Population

There continues to be a significant gender population gap at Brunel with more male than female students which dates back to the University’s strong technical foundations in the 1960s and in 2022 – 23 this stands at 10.9%. For further detail, see Table 1 below:

Gender	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022 - 23
Female	6725	7020	7465	7995	7880
Male	7875	8090	8810	9895	9830

<b>Not known (incl refused)</b>	35	65	75	65	50
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Table 1: No. of students per gender per year overall between 2018-19 and 2022-23

This is lower than the sector average where there are 10% more female students than male students. However, it does vary significantly between course type and is at its widest in the undergraduate population where there is a gap of 18.7% compared to 4% post graduate taught students and between colleges and course group such as 25.4% more female undergraduates than male students in CHMLS compared to a gap of 55.6% more male students than female in CEDPS. This is also echoed in the postgraduate courses. The number of students whose gender is unknown is very small and thus not statistically significant. For further detail, see Table 2 below.

College	Course Group	Male	Female	Not known (incl refused)
<b>CBASS</b>	Undergraduate	2155	1915	10
	Postgraduate Taught	1135	1100	0
	Postgraduate Research	135	170	0
<b>CEDPS</b>	Undergraduate	3010	860	5
	Postgraduate Taught	1095	375	0
	Postgraduate Research	245	110	0
<b>CHMLS</b>	Undergraduate	935	1605	20
	Postgraduate Taught	460	1390	10
	Postgraduate Research	55	90	0

Table 2: No. of students per gender per college per course group in 2022-23

### Attrition

The recent trend of higher attrition in male students continued in 2021 – 22 with a greater number of male students discontinuing their studies across all course levels amongst undergraduates before completion. In 2021 – 22, it widened from 2.2%, totalling 195 students in 2019 – 20, to 5.7% totalling 650 students amongst the undergraduate population. For more information, see Table 3 below.

Gender	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
<b>Female</b>	215	250	480
<b>Male</b>	410	655	1130
<b>Other</b>	0	5	5
<b>Not known (incl refused)</b>	0	0	0

Table 3: No. of attrition amongst undergraduate students per gender from 2019-20 to 2021-2022

Amongst postgraduate taught students the gender attrition gap has decreased over the last 3 years from 6.5% in 2019-20 to 3.2% in 2021-22.

### Awards

For several years there has been a gender awarding gap with a greater number of female undergraduate students being awarded a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1 known as a 'good degree' compared to

male students. In 2021 – 22, there was a widening of the awarding gap between female and male students from 4.7% the previous year to 7.1%. For further detail, see Table 4 below.

Gender	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Female	77.2%	82.1%	69.6%
Male	72.6%	77.4%	61.5%
Other	80.0%	100.0%	64.3%
Not known (incl refused)	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4: Percentage of 'good' degrees awarded to undergraduate students by gender from 2019-20 to 2021-22

There is some variation between colleges but of particular concern is the gap in CHMLS where 20.1% fewer male than female students, 85 compared to 290, were awarded 'good' degrees.

At postgraduate taught level the overall gap between male and female students being awarded a distinction or merit classification is very narrow. There is a small variation between colleges with a slight increase in the number of female students being awarded a distinction in CBASS but slightly more male students in CEDPS though the numbers are not significant. For further detail, see Table 5 below.

	CBASS		CEDPS		Distinction	Merit
	Distinction	Merit	Distinction	Merit		
Male	40	300	75	160	15	55
Female	70	310	30	75	60	186
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 5: No. of distinction and merit classifications awarded to postgraduate taught students by gender per college in 2021-22

## Ethnicity

### Population

Brunel continues to have one of the most ethnically diverse student population in the UK. In 2021 – 22, 71% of home domiciled Brunel students identified as non-white compared to the sector average of 27% (Higher Education Statistical Agency). The rate is currently even higher in our internationally-domiciled students at 84.7%. In 2022 – 23, the number of overall students at Brunel identifying as non-White is 76.2% with 41.1% identifying their ethnicity as Asian, 21.5% as White and 15.2% as Black. Over the last 5 years there has been a shift particularly amongst the Asian students with an increase in 10% and a decrease in 9.6% White students. For further detail, see Table 6 below

Ethnicity	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022 - 23
Asian	4540	4810	5320	6460	7300
White	4545	4385	4595	4415	3815
Black	2165	2345	2715	3023	2700
Other (inc mixed)	1305	1375	1445	1485	1315
Arab	815	810	880	1005	905
Chinese	1050	1290	1230	1415	1445
Not known (incl refused)	210	160	155	155	280

Table 6: No. of students per ethnicity per year overall between 2018-19 and 2022-23

It should be noted that there is some disparity between course type though. For example, in 2022 – 23, 37% of Asian students are undergraduates compared to 52.3% on postgraduate taught courses and 19.5% doctoral researchers. 47.4% of the university’s international domiciled students are Asian which amongst the post graduate taught students rises to 61.7%. There are more White postgraduate researchers making up 34.6% and there is a significant increase in black doctoral researchers with an increase of 6.2% over the last 5 years from 65 to 115.

At college level there are also some significant differences: in CBASS, 59% of the overall student population identify as Asian compared to 38% in CEDPS and 32% in CHMLS. In CEDPS, 31% of students identify as Chinese compared to 8.6% in CHMLS and 5.7% in CBASS. In CHMLS, 28.3% of students identify as White compared to 14% in CBASS and 12.4% in CEDPS.

There is also considerable variation between course types such as 75.1% postgraduate taught in CBASS identify as Asian and 28.6 doctoral researcher; in CEDPS 49% of the undergraduates identify as Chinese and 62.5% of the post graduate taught identify as Asian; in CHMLS the gaps between students identifying as White and Asian are much narrower at 25.1% and 29.5% respectively in the undergraduate population, 29.7% and 34.4% in the post graduate taught. Whilst the numbers of students who identify as Black remains low compared to other ethnicities, they are increasing incrementally and in CHMLS 21.3% of post graduate taught students identify Black and 26.7% of their doctoral researchers identify as Black. For more information, see Table 7 below.

College	Course Group	Asian	White	Black	Other (incl mixed)	Arab	Chinese	Not known (incl refused)
CBASS	Undergraduate	1605	925	745	435	220	100	60
	Postgraduate Taught	1515	225	210	85	95	95	10
	Postgraduate Research	50	105	55	15	55	10	10
CEDPS	Undergraduate	1260	755	445	265	175	905	90
	Postgraduate Taught	835	230	160	50	100	90	5
	Postgraduate Research	80	105	30	30	55	50	5
CHMLS	Undergraduate	805	655	520	265	105	120	80
	Postgraduate Taught	505	700	420	110	50	55	10
	Postgraduate Research	25	70	25	10	10	0	0

Table 7: No. of students per ethnicity per college per course group in 2022-23

### Attrition

Attrition levels amongst the University’s undergraduates have increased significantly over the last 3 years across all ethnicities but of most concern are the numbers of students identifying as Black and Asian students. For more detail, see Table 8 below.

Ethnicity	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Asian	235	380	620
White	165	205	340
Black	110	170	380
Other (inc mixed)	105	145	260

<b>Not known (incl refused)</b>	10	10	20
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Table 8: No. of attrition amongst undergraduate students per ethnicity from 2019-20 to 2021-2022

(It should be noted that specific data for Arab and Chinese students was not available).

Amongst postgraduate taught students, attrition rates in 2021-22 were particularly high amongst students identifying as Black amounting to 35.9%, 14.7% more than students identifying as Asian and 16.4% more than students identifying as White and are of particular concern in CEDPS and CHMLS. For more detail, see Table 9 below.

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>CBASS</b>	<b>CHMLS</b>	<b>CEDPS</b>
<b>Asian</b>	145	45	110
<b>White</b>	30	90	35
<b>Black</b>	35	100	40
<b>Other (inc mixed)</b>	30	35	35
<b>Not known (incl refused)</b>	0	5	5

Table 9: No. of attrition amongst postgraduate taught students per ethnicity per college in 2021-2022

(It should be noted that specific data for Arab and Chinese students was not available).

The intersections between male students and different ethnicity generally amplifies the attrition rates with the overall gap between students identifying as Black and Asian male at undergraduate level widening to 9.2% and students identifying as Asian and mixed ethnicity to 5.3% and this issue can be found in each college although with slightly differing gaps. For more detail, see Table 10 below.

	<b>CBASS</b>			<b>CEDPS</b>			<b>CHMLS</b>		
	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Asian</b>	55	95	0	24	145	0	55	45	0
<b>White</b>	50	55	0	10	105	0	30	50	0
<b>Black</b>	65	75	0	10	90	0	30	50	0
<b>Other</b>	10	20	0	5	40	0	10	15	0
<b>Mixed</b>	10	20	0	5	30	0	20	15	0
<b>Not known</b>	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0

Table 10: No. of attrition amongst undergraduate students per college per gender and ethnicity in 2021-2022

### Awards

The awarding gap between students of differing self-identified ethnicities being awarded a good degree has long been an issue both at Brunel and across the sector. 2021 - 22 saw a general decrease in the number of students being awarded 'good degrees' across all ethnicities and a widening of the undergraduate gap between White and Asian students and White and Black students at 12.1% and 24.5% respectively. This was an increase from 10% and 17.6% in 2019 – 20. For further information, see Table 11 below.

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
<b>Asian</b>	73.4%	79.6%	63.3%
<b>White</b>	83.4%	86.7%	75.4%
<b>Black</b>	65.8%	70.4%	50.9%
<b>Other</b>	66.2%	77.0%	65.5%

<b>Mixed</b>	74.3%	77.6%	74.7%
<b>Not known (incl refused)</b>	82.6%	56.3%	53.3%

Table 11: No. of 'good' degrees awarded to undergraduate students by ethnicity from 2019-20 to 2021-22

Amongst international domiciled students the gaps are even wider at 19.6% between White and Asian students and 35.7% between White and Black Students although there is some variation between college. Again, the intersection between male students and ethnicity amplifies the gaps with the number of Black male students being particularly concerning at 30.4% compared to White male students. For further detail, see Table 12 below.

	CBASS			CEDPS			CHMLS		
	Female	Male	Other	Female	Male	Other	Female	Male	Other
<b>Asian</b>	65.4%	62.4%	0.0%	64.6%	61.3%	100.0%	69.5%	49.2%	0.0%
<b>White</b>	82.0%	68.6%	0.0%	83.1%	77.6%	100.0%	73.7%	62.3%	75.0%
<b>Black</b>	61.2%	38.8%	50.0%	68.0%	49.4%	0.0%	56.0%	26.3%	0.0%
<b>Other</b>	61.1%	70.3%	0.0%	68.4%	67.4%	0.0%	62.5%	50.0%	0.0%
<b>Mixed</b>	73.5%	67.6%	0.0%	100.0%	71.0%	0.0%	90.3%	50.0%	0.0%
<b>Not known</b>	66.7%	57.1%	50.0%	50.0%	33.3%	100.0%	66.7%	50.0%	0.0%

Table 12: Percentage of 'good' degrees awarded to undergraduate students by ethnicity by college in 2021-22

At postgraduate taught level the gaps between White students and Black and Asian students respectively being awarded distinctions in 2021 – 22 was over 19% for both groups. For further detail, see Table 13 below.

Ethnicity	Distinction	Merit
<b>Asian</b>	7.7%	53.5%
<b>White</b>	26.1%	47.7%
<b>Black</b>	7.1%	49.1%
<b>Other</b>	11.0%	49.2%
<b>Mixed</b>	27.4%	40.3%
<b>Not known (incl refused)</b>	38.5%	38.5%

Table 13: Percentage. of distinction and merit classifications awarded to postgraduate taught students by ethnicity in 2021-22

There is slight variation between colleges but the rates have generally been consistent over the last 3 years.

## Age

### Population

The last 3 years have seen a small decline in the number of students enrolling at Brunel who are under 21 and a steady increase in the number of 'mature' students who are 21 years of age and over. This incremental increase in 'mature' students is reflected across the sector although Brunel's progress is slower compared to the national average of over 50% mature students. At Brunel there are specific age groups where this increase has been particularly significant over the last 5 years: 3.4% amongst the 21 – 24 age group and 4.4% in the 30 – 39 age group. For more information, see Table 14 below.

Age group	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022 – 23
<b>Under 21</b>	9885	10225	10620	10435	9820

<b>21 – 24</b>	2415	2575	2780	1865	3525
<b>25 – 29</b>	1115	1120	1365	1865	2035
<b>30 – 39</b>	785	790	985	1375	1605
<b>40+</b>	435	465	595	785	770
<b>Not known (incl refused)</b>	0	0	0	0	0

Table 14: No. of students per age group per year overall between 2018-19 and 2022-23

There is some variation at undergraduate level within the Colleges with CEDPS remaining fairly consistent over 5 years at about 90% being under 21, CHMLS seeing a decrease from 85.7% to 81.4% and there being an increase in the 21 – 24 age group by 3.5% and also in CBASS.

Amongst the postgraduate population, CEDPS remains consistent in its mix of students from different age groups, whilst CBASS has seen a shift across the groups such as a 5 year decrease of 12% amongst the 21 – 24 age group but an increase in the 25 – 29 age group. CHMLS also has seen changes in student age profiles with a decrease of 16% amongst the 21 – 24 age group but an increase by 13.1% in the 30 – 39 age group.

Amongst the doctoral researcher community representation across the age groups has remained fairly stable across the colleges over the last 5 years although there is still some variation by college. For more information, see Table 15 below.

<b>College</b>	<b>Course Group</b>	<b>Under 21</b>	<b>21 - 24</b>	<b>25 - 29</b>	<b>30 - 39</b>	<b>40 +</b>
<b>CBASS</b>	Undergraduate	3605	365	65	40	15
	Postgraduate Taught	35	1010	660	420	110
	Postgraduate Research	0	30	80	105	85
<b>CEDPS</b>	Undergraduate	3535	280	45	25	0
	Postgraduate Taught	10	670	450	260	0
	Postgraduate Research	0	95	115	95	50
<b>CHMLS</b>	Undergraduate	2070	275	70	75	55
	Postgraduate Taught	15	555	445	505	335
	Postgraduate Research	0	45	30	40	25

Table 15: No. of students by age group per college per course type in 2021-22

### Attrition

The attrition gaps between students of different ages at undergraduate level have widened significantly over the last 3 years, by over 100% and again this is reflective of what is occurring across the sector. In 2021 – 22, the gap at Brunel between students who were under 21 years and those in the 21 – 24 age group was 8.9% and only slightly less for those aged between 25 – 29 years and 30 – 39 years. Whilst there is some variance between colleges and the attrition rate for the 21 – 24 age group at CEDPS is particularly high at 24.2% totalling 80 students, all are widening rather than reducing. For further detail, see Table 16 below.

<b>Age group</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
<b>Under 21</b>	510	740	1275
<b>21 – 24</b>	85	120	250
<b>25 – 29</b>	15	35	45

<b>30 – 39</b>	5	10	25
<b>40+</b>	5	10	10

Table 16: No. of attrition amongst undergraduate students per age group from 2019-20 to 2021-2022

Amongst the postgraduate taught cohorts, the 21 – 24 and 25 - 29 age groups ha the highest attrition rate with 275 and 185 students discontinuing respectively which show significant increases over the 3-year period and the intersections with male students identifying as Black and Asian are particularly concerning.

### Awards

There is some significant variance in the number of 'good' awards being made to students of different ages for example those in the age bracket between 25 – 29 years are over 10% more likely to be awarded a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1 than those who are under 21 years or in the 21 - 24 age group at undergraduate level. For more information, see detail in Table 17 below.

Age group	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
<b>Under 21 years</b>	75.3%	79.7%	65.0%
<b>21– 24 years</b>	68.1%	78.4%	65.4%
<b>25– 29 years</b>	77.8%	85.2%	77.3%
<b>30– 39 years</b>	74.1%	90.5%	62.5%
<b>40-49 years</b>	75.0%	87.5%	66.7%
<b>50-59 years</b>	100.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Table 17: Percentage of 'good' degrees awarded to undergraduate students by age group from 2019-20 to 2021-22

At college level, there is some variation between the different age groups particularly with the gender intersect but in general male students receive fewer 'good' awards. For more information, see Table 18 below.

Age group / gender Classification	CBASS			CEDPS			CHMLS		
	Female	Male	Other	Female	Male	Other	Female	Male	Other
<b>&lt;21 years</b>	68.4%	61.0%	50.0%	73.5%	64.9%	0.0%	69.5%	47.6%	0.0%
<b>21-24 years</b>	69.2%	66.7%	0.0%	66.7%	62.9%	0.0%	63.2%	50.0%	0.0%
<b>25-29 years</b>	100.0%	85.7%	0.0%	100.0%	72.7%	0.0%	70.0%	50.0%	0.0%
<b>30-39 years</b>	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	66.7%	100.0%	0.0%
<b>40-49 years</b>	33.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	77.8%	100.0%	0.0%
<b>50-59 years</b>	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 18: Percentage of 'good' degrees awarded to undergraduate students by age group and gender per college in 2021-22

At postgraduate level there is a fairly even distribution of merit classifications being awarded across the different age groups although there is a 10% gap between the 30 – 39 age group being awarded the most distinctions compared to the 40 – 49 age group who were awarded the least. However, there is a range of variance between age groups, level, department and college which need to be reviewed at local level. For further detail, see Table 19 below.

Age group / Classification	CBASS		CEDPS		CHMLS	
	Distinction	Merit	Distinction	Merit	Distinction	Merit
<b>&lt;21 years</b>	-	10	-	-	-	-
<b>21-24 years</b>	40	340	40	130	35	95



<b>25-29 years</b>	30	160	35	70	25	60
<b>30-39 years</b>	30	80	20	25	10	55
<b>40-49 years</b>	5	20	5	10	5	20
<b>50-59 years</b>	5	5	-	-	-	5
<b>60 years and over</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 19: No. of distinction and merit classifications awarded to postgraduate taught students by age group in 2021-22

## Disability

### Population

The number of students at Brunel choosing to disclose that they have a disability, mental health concern or are neuro-diverse continues to be significantly low at 11% compared to the sector average of 17% in 2021 – 22. The 2 types of disability most reported continue to be mental health and learning difficulties but interestingly these disclosure rates have decreased slightly over the last 5 years whereas in the general population they are continuing to rise (Purple Space, 2022). For more detail, see Table 20 below.

Disability	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022 - 23
<b>No disability</b>	12550	13080	14155	15840	15805
<b>Learning difficulty</b>	790	750	805	630	575
<b>Mental health</b>	635	660	680	630	575
<b>Other disability</b>	180	230	225	250	185
<b>Long standing illness</b>	185	175	195	200	230
<b>Multiple disabilities</b>	125	120	125	110	105
<b>Social / communication impairment</b>	60	60	75	95	105
<b>Wheelchair mobility</b>	45	45	35	35	40
<b>Blind or partially sighted</b>	30	30	25	20	30
<b>Deaf or partial hearing</b>	35	30	22	20	30
<b>Not known (incl refused)</b>	0	0	0	0	0

Table 21: No. of students per disability per year overall between 2018-19 and 2022-23

There is some variation between course types in different colleges where in 2022 – 23, 16.8% totally 755 students disclosed in CHMLS compared to 9.9% totally 475 students in CEDPS, and amongst post graduate taught students in CEDPS, this only amounted to 55 students. However, what is most noteworthy is the disparity in disclosure rates between home domiciled and international domiciled students which in 2022 – 23 shows a difference of 13.8%.

### Attrition

The attrition rates for disabled undergraduate students continue to be generally lower than for non-disabled students which should be celebrated. In 2021 – 22, there was a narrow gap of 1.9%. The highest attrition rates were amongst those with

a mental health condition totalling 65 students and specific learning difficulties totalling 55 students. However, there are higher rates of attrition amongst postgraduates with disabilities adding up to 95 students with a gap of 3.9% compared to non-disabled students.

### Awards

Historically disabled undergraduate students have been awarded a higher number of good degrees than 'non-disabled students' although in 2020 – 21, there was a small reversal which has been carefully monitored. In 2021 – 22 this reverted and 8.5% more disabled students were awarded 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1s compared to non-disabled students.

There is some variation at college level between the awarding of good degrees ranging from 75% 'good degrees' being awarded by CBASS amounting to 140 students compared to 67.3% students in CHMLS amounting to 70 students. For further details, see Table 22 below.

College	Disability	Good degrees
CBASS	Declared	75.0%
	Not known	63.7%
CEDPS	Declared	73.3%
	Not known	65.9%
CHMLS	Declared	67.3%
	Not known	62.2%

Table 22: Percentage of 'good' degrees awarded to undergraduate students by disability status by college in 2021-22

There was a slight decrease in students with the most common health conditions including mental health and learning difficulties which although not statistically significant should be monitored carefully.

At postgraduate taught level, 5.9% more disabled students overall were awarded a classification with Distinction but 3% fewer disabled students were awarded a Merit classification. There is slight variation at college level between the awarding of Distinction, Merit and Pass classification but nothing significant. For further details, see Table 23 below.

College	Disability	Distinction	Merit
CBASS	Declared	19.1%	47.9%
	Not known	12.8%	50.9%
CEDPS	Declared	38.5%	28.2%
	Not known	18.1%	46.3%
CHMLS	Declared	14.1%	48.5%
	Not known	14.5%	44.9%

Table 23: Percentage. of distinction and merit classifications awarded to postgraduate taught students by disability status by college in 2021-22

### Religion or belief

#### Population

Brunel continues to be richly diverse in terms of the range of religions and beliefs that students choose to disclose and the three most common types of different religions or belief are Islam, Christianity, and no religion or belief which is in line with the sector average

although Brunel has significantly more Muslim students at 28.2% of the overall population compared to a 9.7% sector average. For more detail, see Table 24 below.

Religion	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022 – 23
<b>Muslim</b>	3980	4275	4755	5365	5200
<b>Christian</b>	3755	3685	4050	4295	3980
<b>No religion</b>	3880	4095	4140	4130	3720
<b>Hindu</b>	1135	1220	1455	2040	2760
<b>Not known (incl refused)</b>	990	940	925	1020	965
<b>Sikh</b>	380	390	430	440	495
<b>Spiritual</b>	140	155	180	215	200
<b>Any other religion or belief</b>	135	155	180	115	200
<b>Buddhist</b>	205	220	210	220	205
<b>Jewish</b>	35	40	45	45	45

Table 24: No. of students per religion per year overall between 2018-19 and 2022-23

In CBASS for example 38.2% of undergraduates disclosed Islam as their religion. Of particular note is the rise in Hindu students by 7.9% and in the postgraduate taught courses, 36.6% of students in CEDPS are Hindus and 38.3% in CBASS although this is not repeated within the doctoral researcher population where numbers of Hindus are relatively low. Amongst the doctoral researchers more broadly the rates between Islam, Christianity and no religion vary from college to college so for example 31.3% of doctoral researchers are Muslim compared to 15.5% in CHMLS.

#### Attrition

Attrition rates amongst the undergraduate population have increased over the last 3 years and the rates that are most significant are those who disclose a particular belief or religion. In 2021 – 22 there was a gap between students who disclose no religion and Islam of 2.5%, and no religion and Christianity of 2.8%. These rates should be carefully monitored as a potential marker particularly with other intersectional data such as ethnicity and appropriate action taken as necessary. For more detail, see Table 25 below.

Ethnicity	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
<b>Muslim</b>	215	285	590
<b>Christian</b>	135	240	385
<b>No religion</b>	150	195	310
<b>Hindu</b>	50	80	140
<b>Any other religion or belief</b>	5	10	20
<b>Sikh</b>	25	45	45
<b>Spiritual</b>	5	10	20
<b>Buddhist</b>	0	5	20
<b>Jewish</b>	0	0	5
<b>Not known (incl refused)</b>	0	0	0

Table 25: No. of attrition amongst undergraduate students per religion from 2019-20 to 2021-2022

At postgraduate taught level, higher numbers of Christian and Muslim students totalling 215 and 165 respectively did not complete their studies compared to students with no religion or faith at 135.

## Awards

In 2021 – 22, there was a significant gap in ‘good’ degrees being awarded between those undergraduate students who have no religion and those who have a religion including 6.4% fewer Christian students and 11.8% fewer Muslim students overall. The gap between Muslim students and those without faith was even wider in CHMLS at 16.6%. For more information regarding different religions at college level, see Table 26 below.

Religion	CBASS	CEDPS	CHMLS
Muslim	61.1%	61.0%	53.9%
Christian	64.3%	64.4%	63.4%
No religion	70.8%	72.7%	70.5%
Hindu	62.8%	58.3%	65.9%
Not known (incl refused)	70.1%	79.2%	70.5%
Sikh	66.7%	66.7%	57.1%
Spiritual	69.2%	66.7%	100.0%
Any other religion or belief	78.9%	66.7%	88.8%
Buddhist	65.2%	75.0%	83.3%
Jewish	75.0%	-	66.7%

Table 26: Percentage of ‘good’ degrees awarded to undergraduate students by religion from 2019-20 to 2021-22

The same trend is visible in postgraduate taught students with 69.1% of those with no religion being awarded a distinction or merit, 8% more than Muslim and Christian students. there is some variation between the rate of distinction and merit award classifications between college. For more detail, see Table 27 below.

Religion/ Classification	CBASS		CEDPS		CHMLS	
	Distinction	Merit	Distinction	Merit	Distinction	Merit
Muslim	40	235	15	60	5	35
Christian	25	130	30	45	15	70
No religion	100	275	35	65	40	80
Hindu	15	145	10	30	5	20
Not known (incl refused)	10	20	10	20	5	15
Sikh	-	20	-	5	-	5
Spiritual	5	5	-	-	5	5
Any other religion or belief	-	5	-	5	-	-
Buddhist	-	10	-	10	-	-
Jewish	-	5	-	-	-	5

Table 27: No. of distinction and merit classifications awarded to postgraduate taught students by religion by college in 2021-22

## Sexual orientation

### Population

85.2% of the student population at Brunel self-identify as heterosexual compared to other sexualities although there has been a slight decrease over the last 5 years by 2.3%. Only a small percentage choose not to disclose their sexual orientation and this has remained consistent over the last 5 years at 7.2%. Other sexual orientations have also remained

consistent aside from the 'other' option which has seen a small increase by 1.9% since 2018 – 19. For more detail, see Table 28 below.

Sexual Orientation	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022 – 23
<b>Heterosexual</b>	12800	13215	14195	15485	15130
<b>Bisexual</b>	355	435	480	535	570
<b>Other</b>	220	235	330	430	605
<b>Gay man</b>	100	100	115	120	115
<b>Gay woman / lesbian</b>	55	65	80	80	60
<b>Not known (incl refused)</b>	1105	1125	1145	1300	1280

Table 28: No. of students per sexual orientation per year overall between 2018-19 and 2022-23

There are no significant disparities between the undergraduate and postgraduate populations or by colleges.

#### Attrition

The attrition rates amongst undergraduate and postgraduate taught students who do not disclose as heterosexual are slightly higher than those who do particularly amongst bisexual and gay women / lesbians but the numbers are very small.

#### Awards

In 2021 – 22, overall heterosexual undergraduate and postgraduate students were awarded slightly fewer 'good degrees' or distinctions and merits than students with other sexualities, all of whose rates had continued to increase from the year before whilst the rates amongst heterosexual students had decreased by over 16%. For further detail, see Tables 29 and 30 below.

Sexual Orientation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
<b>Heterosexual</b>	74.3%	80.2%	64.7%
<b>Bisexual</b>	90.1%	75.0%	78.7%
<b>Other</b>	63.6%	63.9%	68.5%
<b>Gay man</b>	75.0%	78.6%	81.0%
<b>Gay woman / lesbian</b>	71.4%	76.5%	76.9%
<b>Not known (incl refused)</b>	78.9%	79.2%	62.4%

Table 29: No. of 'good' degrees awarded to undergraduate students by sexual orientation from 2019-20 to 2021-22

Sexuality/ Classification	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	Distinction	Merit	Distinction	Merit	Distinction	Merit
<b>Bisexual</b>	5	15	10	25	10	30
<b>Gay man</b>	5	5	5	5	5	5
<b>Gay woman / lesbian</b>	-	-	-	-	-	5
<b>Heterosexual</b>	240	630	235	630	245	915
<b>Not known (incl refused)</b>	35	60	25	75	20	90
<b>Other</b>	5	15	5	25	5	35

Table 30: No. of distinction and merit classifications awarded to postgraduate taught students by sexual orientation from 2019-20 to 2021-22

Because of the small numbers, it is not possible to comment at college level to preserve student confidentiality.

### **Gender Reassignment**

It should be noted that 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. Planning is currently seeking clarification on what data should be collected, what terminology used and reported on.

### *Population*

The number of students who are choosing to disclose that they do not identify in the same sex as they were assigned at birth although remaining a very small proportion of the overall student populations has increased significantly over 5 years from 80 students in 2018 – 19 to 195 in 2022 – 23. For further detail, see Table 31 below.

<b>Sex assigned at birth</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022 - 23</b>
Yes	14060	14575	15705	17265	17130
Not known (incl refused)	490	475	470	490	435
No	80	125	170	195	195

Table 31: No. of students who identify or not as same gender / sex at birth from 2018-19 to 2022-23

There is a slight variation of number of students who do not identify in the same sex as they were assigned at birth ranging from 80 students in CEDPS, 65 students in CBASS to 30 in CHMLS.

### *Attrition*

Whilst the rate of attrition for students who express their gender identity differently to the sex that they were assigned at birth is slightly lower than those who do not, the numbers are so small across the University that there is no statistical significance. On a positive note there has only been a marginal increase in attrition rates amongst those who do express their gender identity differently to the sex that they were assigned at birth from the year before compared to those who do not.

### *Awards*

Given the very small numbers of undergraduate and postgraduate taught students who choose to express their gender identity differently to the sex that they were assigned at birth, it is currently not possible to draw any statistical significance from the data year on year.

### **Commentary and Recommendations**

Brunel has one of the most diverse student populations in the UK. Within the student population there are generally fewer female students and those disclosing disabilities particularly amongst international domiciled students compared to the sector average. Attrition and awarding data show that students identifying as Black and male students are

more likely to not complete their studies and be awarded fewer 'good' degrees. Whilst quantitative data analysis is very helpful in providing an insight into student outcomes, without qualitative data too, it is very difficult to gain a sense of whether students with protected characteristics have a positive experience at Brunel. For example, whilst the disability data on attrition and awarding presents a largely positive picture of student success, anecdotally a significant number of students with disabilities struggle with isolation and integration issues. In addition, a third of students who disclose a disability do not actively seek help from the Wellbeing Services and many others do not even disclose that they have a disability until they find themselves struggling.

A set of recommendations have been drawn up to address these issues and the work will be coordinated by the ED&I Lead for Students in conjunction with colleagues across the university. Progress will be reported regularly to the Student Experience and Welfare Committee. For details of the implementation plan, see Appendix B.

### **Meeting the Equality Duty**

The second section of this annual report presents a summary of the steps that the University has taken over the last 12 months to give due regard to the equality duties. This aligns with the equality objectives that the University is required to set out and publish every 4 years. For more information, see Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021 - 2024.Final \(brunel.ac.uk\)](#). Progress towards meeting the equality objectives is overseen by the Dean of Culture and Inclusion and is reported annually to the Executive Board. Once the current review of the University Strategy has been completed in spring 2023, the current ED&I will also be reviewed.

It should be noted that regular staff training is offered by the ED&I Leads to ensure that decision-makers are fully aware of the aims of the equality duty and that in their strategic planning and operational activity, they have shown 'due regard' to what may affect people with protected characteristics and if they are to be disproportionately disadvantaged, what mitigations should be made. In addition, a 'road show' is currently underway around the University's key committees and panels to ensure that members exercise due diligence to ensure due regard has been carried out by the relevant team or department.

#### **1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act of individuals with a protected characteristic in work and education**

##### *Update*

- The Student Code of Conduct has been updated to ensure that the student community are aware of what behaviour is acceptable and what is not, that they understand their rights and how to report any inappropriate behaviour. In addition, guidance has been developed on how to take appropriate action if people behave in ways that are not respectful or inclusive. Students from the Media Department created a video to launch the revised code.
- Several student ED&I policies and procedures have been developed revised and / or updated to ensure that they set out clearly the university's responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to address discrimination, harassment and any other unlawful behaviour. These include the new Student ED&I Work Placement Policy, the updated Policy to Support Disabled Students, Prevent Policy, introduction of the Fitness to Practice Procedure (formerly Professional Suitability Procedure) and the current review of Student Complaints Procedure and UUK guidance on Staff Student Sexual Misconduct.

- A bystander Initiative was launched in November 2021 as part of the 'Be the Change' campaign which aims to educate the university community in a bystander intervention to help prevent instances of power-based personal violence and create a safe campus culture. An online module for students has been added to Bright Space to help make them aware of their responsibilities and provide them with the tools to be more active as Bystanders towards unacceptable / inappropriate behaviour.
- Anti-racism training is being rolled out across the colleges as part of the university's work to develop an anti-racist university and to tackle the awarding gap. Feedback to date has been very positive.
- The Student Support and Welfare Team provide regular advice and support to students who feel they may have experienced discrimination, harassment or been treated unfairly. In addition, they provide other advice and guidance on any equality or diversity issue. Students are encouraged to report any incidents of inappropriate behaviour, harassment or discrimination through the Report and Support tool – they have the choice to disclose personal details or make an anonymous report. However, in practice very few reports are made: in 2021 – 22 there were 30 incidents of bullying and harassment reported, 20 of hate crime, 19 of online harassment and stalking, and 12 of sexual harassment. This is a direct contradiction of what anecdotally students are sharing that they are experiencing. What is currently lacking is the availability of data on how these reports are processed, what support is provided and what outcomes achieved. A piece of development work is currently being conducted to the University's new CRM by Student Services to address this.
- A Review of Student Reporting Procedures is currently underway to gain comprehensive feedback from students and doctoral researchers about the barriers they perceive in the University's current procedures for reporting their experiences of unfair treatment, harassment and discrimination whilst studying / doing research degrees at Brunel. This is part of a wider piece of work that the University is conducting in response to very low levels of reporting of incidents (this year's student cases will be reported to Senate by OSCCA in April 2023).
- The Students Union and the Student ED&I team are currently working on a project to support students with informed consent including the provision of training and an awareness campaign. It is hoped that this will contribute to reducing unwanted and uninvited instances of sexual assault and harassment.
- The Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech has been revised and a new Panel has been set up to ensure the University has a good understanding of their responsibilities under the Equality Act where a decision may have an impact on freedom of speech or academic freedom, that colleagues are able to identify it and notify colleagues of the various risks arising.
- As part of the University's work to address sexual violence and harassment, a new Sexual Violence Liaison Officer has been appointed to support students and staff who may be impacted by sexual violence.
- There are also lots of great initiatives around the university to tackle discrimination and harassment such as the ED&I committees which have been set up in each college, the ByUs Physiotherapy student/staff meeting group which meets regularly to discuss concerns and issues around racism or other prejudice faced within their programme or university experience, the Education Department which is working to addressing racism in student placements. The University is currently preparing a response to the Office for Students' Consultation on [a new approach to regulating harassment and sexual misconduct in English higher education](#).



## Assessment

A lot of policy and procedural work has been conducted over the last 12 months to tackle discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is unlawful, but anecdotally we know there are many cases of unacceptable attitudes and behaviour that students experience such as racism and sexual harassment. As a result, there is a considerable amount of work outstanding to operationalise this. It is hoped that the findings of the Review of the Student Reporting Procedures Survey will help inform both the barriers to reporting and enable the University to gain a better understanding of the scale and the scope of the issues that students are experiencing. An implementation plan will be developed and will then need to be carefully monitored. There is an ongoing need for more awareness work across the community and more preventative work to continue to build a fair, respectful and inclusive culture to ensure that the university's commitment is fully put into practice.

At this time, the university has given due regard to meeting its equality duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct towards those with a protected characteristic applying for or engaged in Higher Education and will continue to give due consideration to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act of individuals with a protected characteristic in work and education. Further details will be available in the ED&I Strategy action plan 2022 – 23 (awaiting completion).

## **2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic\* and those who do not**

### Update

- ED&I training on staff and student issues is provided through Organisational Development and the Academic Professional Development Unit including tailored sessions such as active bystander, anti-racism, introduction to development an inclusive curriculum. In addition, the Associate Deans for Equality and Diversity have developed an ED&I resource area on Bright Space where case studies and good practice can be shared.
- Academics are continuing to develop inclusive and accessible pedagogy, assessments and learning environments to tackle attrition and awarding gaps with regular advice and support from the ED&I Lead.
- A wide range of interventions and student support are provided through Student Services and the Widening Access Team to support students from disadvantaged and minoritized backgrounds such as minorities ethnics,
- To ensure that students with disabilities and mature students are university ready, appropriate adjustments are put in place and positive action is put in place where appropriate. (For more information, [Our Access and Participation Plan | Brunel University London](#)).
- There is regular engagement with the Students Union to gain a better understanding of the inequalities that students face. Academics from CHMLS ran a stall at Freshers' Fair on 'Everyday In/Equalities' to begin a dialogue with new students on respect/fairness in teaching and learning.
- Annual monitoring of the attrition and awarding gaps is conducted by the academic departments and staff are able to build a picture of the composition of their students' ED&I characteristics in real time through the new dashboard that has been developed.

- 13 departments across the University have conducted action research projects funded by Access and Participation to understand and address the awarding gap. Findings will be disseminated at an Awarding Gap Day which the Pro Vice Chancellor for Education and Dean of culture and Inclusion are planning in May 2023.

### *Assessment*

The various population, attrition and awarding gaps amongst students described in the first part of this report clearly demonstrate that not all the University's students and doctoral researchers are benefitting from equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic\* and those who do not. Undoubtedly a huge amount of work is underway to address the gaps and a lack of equal opportunity for all but a much greater understanding of the inequities and the barriers that prevent students with protected characteristics from reaching their full potential is needed. More detailed analysis at departmental and modular level as part of the annual monitoring process needs to be conducted, so a proactive approach can be taken for students who are not succeeding or progressing sufficiently. A deeper understanding of the impact of the entry level qualifications on different protected characteristics is needed as well as the ED&I challenges that students face such as through surveys, at student rep committees, through the Students Union so that appropriate action can be taken. A systemic approach needs to be taken to embed inclusive design into the teaching and assessment framework.

At this time, the university has given due regard to meeting its equality duty to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not and will continue to give due consideration. Further details will be available in the ED&I Strategy action plan 2022 – 23 (awaiting completion).

### **3. foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not**

#### *Update*

- A range of initiatives / campaigns and promotion of awareness days have been conducted to support students (and staff) to become more knowledgeable and confident about diversity and different social and cultural identities including National Inclusion Week, Black History Month, Disability History Month, LGBT+ History Month, Diwali, International Women's Day.
- 14 training sessions have been provided to staff, new academics, graduates teaching assistants and doctoral researchers on student ED&I issues through Organisational Development and the Academic Professional Development Unit.
- There is regular work being done to build students' knowledge and understanding of being part of a diverse community and how to be inclusive and respectful. Workshops are provided to the Students Union's clubs and societies, student representatives and Residence Ambassadors to help foster good relations.
- Brunel has maintained its Silver award in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index in recognition of our work on LGBTQ+ inclusion and is now in the top 100 employers at no.88 for our work with students and staff.

#### *Assessment*

For the past few years the main focus for Student ED&I has been putting in place a policy framework, but the last twelve months has seen a real increase in effort to formalise how to

foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Student Services has set up a Student Action and Engagement Group working closely with the Dean for Culture and Inclusion and the Communications Team to plan, co-ordinate, and deliver activity across the university to raise awareness of and celebrate diversity and ED&I to students at Brunel. Anecdotally the majority of the university's students are proud of our diverse community and are keen to be respectful and inclusive yet are needing more knowledge and understanding about how to become so. However, given that instances of unacceptable behaviour and/or attitudes still occur, more work needs to be done. In addition, with a constantly changing global student population, there is a real need for culture awareness and ED&I training for students to ensure that everyone is knowledgeable and confident about diversity and difference. It is recommended that this becomes mandatory and is embedded within a core teaching module.

At this time, the University has given due regard to fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not and has built a strong foundation. It will continue to give due consideration to fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic. Further details will be available in the ED&I Strategy action plan 2022 – 23 (currently under review).

HS, March 2023

## Appendix A

### Equality Duties

#### ***Guidance from The Essential Guide to the Public Sector Equality Duty: England (and Non-Devolved Public Authorities in Scotland and Wales)***

As a public sector institution, Brunel University London must have *due regard under* the Equality Act 2010 to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act of individuals with a protected characteristic in work and education
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic\* and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are often referred to as the three aims of the general equality duty.

The protected characteristics are age, race, religion / belief, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity.

The Act explains that the second aim (advancing equality of opportunity) involves, in particular, having due regard to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life, or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

It states that meeting different needs includes (among other things) taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities. It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from the different groups. It explains that compliance with the general equality duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others (though only if permissible otherwise under the Act).

To comply with the general equality duty, a public authority needs to have due regard to all three of its aims. When this guide refers to the general equality duty, it is referring to all three aims, as set out in the Act.

Having *due regard* can include a number of different measures but could include:

- reducing any disadvantage to individuals who have a protected characteristic
- meeting the needs of people who have a protected characteristic where the needs are different to others encourage individuals with protected characteristics to get involved in University activities where their representation is disproportionately low
- encourage positive interactions between people with differing protected characteristic.

## Appendix B

### Implementation Plan

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
1	Student recruitment to ensure marketing materials are fully diverse and inclusive attracting a range of applicants from a wide variety of backgrounds	Review current materials and identify gaps at departmental level where more diverse communications / imagery is needed	CMSR	12 months
2	University Staff need to be skilled and confident in providing an inclusive, respectful and welcoming experience for all students	Staff need to complete their mandatory equality and diversity training. In addition, further modules, sessions should be provided as needed	OD	12 months
3	Teaching, learning and assessment needs to be accessible and inclusive, and culturally relevant	Embed ED&I into curricular framework, QA processes such as Programme and Module Design and Review Processes	PVC for Education / QA	12 months
4	A deeper understanding is required of the barriers that leads to low attrition and awarding gaps	Analysis of departmental equality data to understand the potential equality impacts on students' progress and how those with protected characteristics are potentially disadvantaged.	PVC for Education / Directors of teaching and learning	12 months
5	Accessibility needs to be built into an inclusive curriculum framework to ensure needs of disabled students are fully met	Implement recommendations made following review of Abrahart case	PVC for Education / UEC	12 months
6	International students with disabilities need to be actively encouraged to disclose and to seek help and support from Wellbeing Services	Develop promotional materials and a communications plan	CMSR / Head of International	6 months
7	Build deeper understanding of the barriers that students from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups face to ensure they are university ready and able to succeed.	Map different community groups – focus on Muslim students, and PGRs	ED&I / Student Engagement	12 months

