BIRMINGHAM CITY University

ANNUAL EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION REPORT

2023/24

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

At BCU we are committed to ensuring our university is a fair organisation where everyone is able to achieve their potential. Across faculties and professional service departments we continue to focus on improving outcomes for those who are most disadvantaged. This includes removing systemic barriers in our own organisation and working collaboratively with communities and partner organisations where we are able to make a positive impact and advance equality. Our equality objectives reflect this ambition, focusing on improving our performance in key areas such as: eliminating degree awarding gaps, improving graduate outcomes, ensuring our workforce reflects the students and the region we serve using fair, equitable and robust processes. We are continuing to make much needed progress by actively participating in equality standards such as the Race Equality Charter, Athena Swan and Disability Confident to drive improvement and continue to develop inclusive environments.

There have been a number of achievements over the last year including an increase in Athena Swan departmental bronze awards in order to advance gender equality, allowing the University to steadily progress towards achieving the Athena Swan silver award. More students than ever from previously underrepresented communities are progressing into postgraduate research, creating opportunities and strengthening the diversity of the pipeline into academic careers. The role BCU plays in delivering wider public benefit has been recognised nationally. We are second overall in the 2023 Social Mobility Index for providing students with the skills and experiences they need to improve their job prospects. We have been spotlighted for developing impactful guidance on improving inclusivity in relation to physical education in schools during Ramadan. In addition, we have worked in collaboration with the National Trust's Birmingham Back to Backs Museum to shine a spotlight on the story of Caribbean tailor George Saunders, using this to inspire and engage new audiences through themes including migration, heritage, community and enterprise. Through the School of Jewellery, BCU has partnered with De Beers UK Limited to fund Diversity Champions to remove barriers to jewellery related studies and career pathways. There has also been a significant breakthrough in some courses in terms of reducing awarding gaps. In the College of Computing there has been a reduction in the White-Black awarding gap from 50.8% to 4.9%; and the White-Other Ethnicity awarding gap reduced from 28.9% to 1.6%.

BCU has also been rated the best university for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the Midlands, and is among the top 10 universities in the UK, according to the inaugural Honordex report. The digital platform formed its rankings based on available organisational data on EDI performance, allowing prospective and current employees to assess how diverse and inclusive an organisation is. The external scoring framework scored universities out of 100 and across the following key areas: Actions and data; leadership; inclusivity of the leadership team; explicit EDI support; working and learning conditions; social media presence and scores on other ranking sites.

While the average score was 41 out of 100, BCU achieved 58.2 to gain 'intermediate' status, which means it has taken a number of positive actions on EDI and has great opportunities to develop its work further. These findings demonstrate the significant strides we have made in embedding inclusion and diversity into the culture and operations at BCU.

Vice-Chancellor Professor David Mba said:

"We are delighted with the recognition of our continued efforts to create a truly inclusive environment at BCU, which enhances the experience of staff and students alike. That said, we remain committed to creating an inclusive community, and closing awarding, gender and ethnicity pay gaps to ensure equality of opportunity for everyone. Achieving intermediate status takes years of hard work, commitment and focus. The next stop for us is to graduate to the advanced category of 70 -100 points for social impact."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each year public bodies are required by law to publish information that demonstrates compliance with the public sector equality duty. This report provides an overview of BCU's performance during the academic year 2023/24 against the equality objectives set out in the EDI strategy 2020/25. The strategy communicates how the University will advance equality and fulfil its equality duty. Progress is reviewed on a quarterly basis, with reports and updates monitored by the EDI Committee and the Human Resources Committee (a subcommittee of the Board of Governors).

The report provides a detailed picture of the demographic make-up of both students and staff, such as information about gender, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion and socioeconomic circumstances. Unsurprisingly, the profile of the workforce does not reflect the profile of the study body, the city of Birmingham, or the region. This may have implications in terms of how students and staff feel about identity, inclusion and belonging.

Performance in relation to the University's equality objectives shows that there has been positive progress against seven out of the ten objectives that were set in 2020. This includes increasing the numbers of disabled students, work in relation to equality charters, more particularly Athena Swan and Stonewall. Progress in relation to the Race Equality Charter and Disability Confident has increased in pace as a result of the leadership, commitment and support provided by the new University Executive Team. There has also been strong performance with regard to the reporting of harassment, discrimination and victimisation via the Report and Support platform which has provided insight into areas of concern, and enabled resources and attention to be directed where needed in order to tackle issues using early intervention. EDI training remains mandatory for all staff, and completion rates have been high for core members of the workforce. That said, there is more work to do to ensure that visiting lecturers and students receive relevant EDI training. There has also been success in efforts to increase the diversity of the workforce through the 'Grow Your Own' initiative, by creating opportunities for BCU graduates to gain graduate roles, contributing to the University's success in the social mobility ratings referred to above. However, there remain areas of significant concern. The ethnicity degree awarding gap and the gap between students from the most and least disadvantaged neighbourhoods are reducing, but the pace of change is not where it needs to be. Work to address this is underway through various workstreams of the Access and Participation Plan and through Project Zero. Greater focus is being placed on improving academic practice in relation to assessments, personal tutoring and access to support services and resources available to students.

Additional areas requiring attention are pay gaps. While the gender pay gap is indeed reducing, the average earnings were lower for women in March 2023 with a mean pay gap of 7.9% and median gap of 8.0%. The ethnicity pay gap for the same period was 11.9% (mean) and 5.9 % (median) meaning that staff from minoritised communities have lower earnings on average when compared to staff who are white. The difference is even more stark when broken down further, revealing the median ethnicity pay gap for Black staff to be 15.3%.

On a more positive note, the University has renewed its commitment to being Disability Confident and signed up to the Disabled Student Commitment. Over the coming year, there are plans to enhance communication regarding reasonable adjustments and access to work, and to provide a more robust training offer to advance disability equality.

In summary, our priorities for 2024/25 will focus on:

1. Reducing the ethnicity degree awarding gap
2. Reducing gender and ethnicity pay gaps
3. Career and progression opportunities for underrepresented communities
4. Advancing disability equality

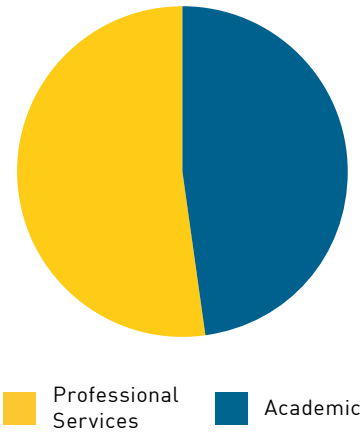
DIVERSITY PROFILE OF STAFF 2023/24

Data source for all staff data: ERP 2023/24 Staff Data, including all staff who have been employed in this time period. Note, that when presenting the number of managers and professors, some staff have worked over multiple positions in one year and as such are counted twice, meaning the total is different from the overall staff headcount.

TOTAL SALARIED STAFF POPULATION:

BCU employs 3452 salaried members of staff, which is split roughly evenly between Academic and Professional Services staff.

Salaried Staff Type	Headcount	Percentage
Academic	1657	48%
Professional Services	1795	52%
Total Salaried Staff	3452	



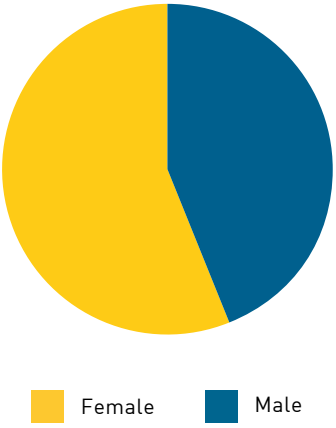
SALARIED STAFF PROPORTIONS BY CHARACTERISTIC:

SEX:

When considering sex, there are slightly more female staff, 56%, than male staff, 44%.

Sex	Headcount	Percentage
Female	1929	56%
Male	1523	44%

**Data Source for all staff data: ERP 2023/24 Staff Data*



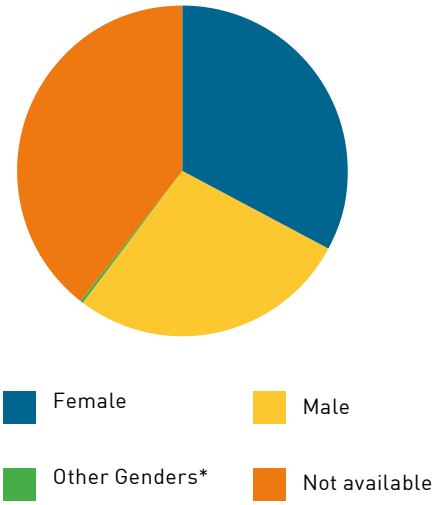
STAFF BY GENDER:

Only 61% of staff have shared their gender with us, with 33% of staff sharing their gender as female and 27% as male. 0.3% of staff have recorded another gender. In this context, gender is self-identified, does not require any sort of legal or documented status and may or may not correspond to sex assigned at birth.

Due to the small numbers a breakdown of manager and professors by gender is not presented here.

Sex	Headcount	Percentage
Female	1139	33%
Male	946	27%
Other Genders*	12	0.3%
Not Available	1355	39%

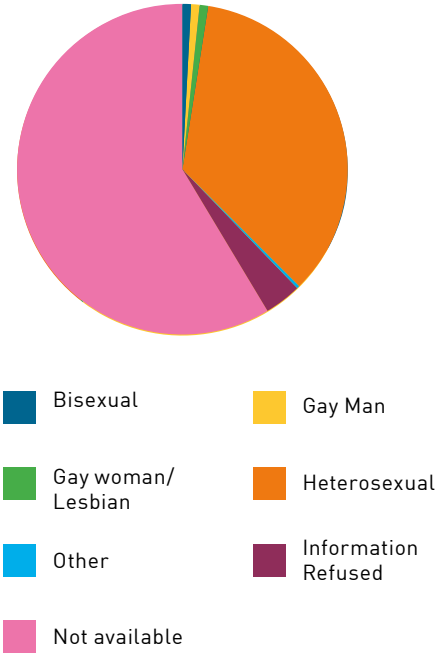
**Due to the small number of responses (fewer than 10), data for non-binary and other gender identities have been combined under a broader category of Other Genders, to protect staff confidentiality. This combination does not imply that these identities are the same, but is a reporting measure to ensure anonymity.*



STAFF BY SEXUAL ORIENTATION:

38% of staff have shared their sexual orientation with the university, with 4% refusing the provide the information and 58% not having provided an answer. Approximately 1% of staff are bisexual, 1% gay men, 1% gay women or lesbian, and 0.3% identify with another sexuality. The remaining 35% are heterosexual.

Sexual Orientation	Headcount	Percentage
Bisexual	35	1%
Gay Man	31	1%
Gay woman/Lesbian	23	1%
Heterosexual	1211	35%
Other	10	0.3%
Information Refused	126	4%
Not Available	2016	58%

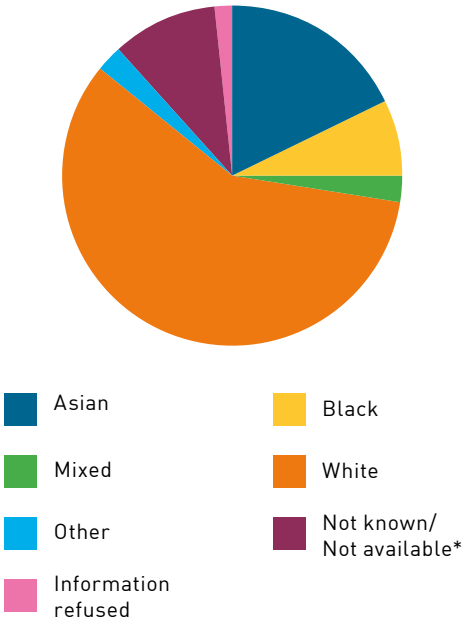


STAFF BY ETHNICITY:

The majority of salaried staff are white - 58%. 18% of staff are Asian, 7% are Black, 3% are of mixed ethnicities and 3% of other ethnicities. 1% refused to share their ethnicity.

Ethnicity	Headcount	Percentage
Asian	617	18%
Black	253	7%
Mixed	88	3%
White	2007	58%
Other	89	3%
Not known/ Not available*	349	10%
Information refused	49	1%

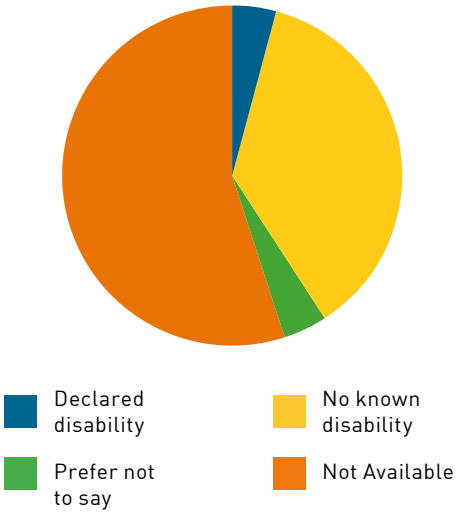
**10% of staff have unknown ethnicity; due to previous data migration processes this combines staff who themselves do not know their ethnicity with those who have not provided any information to the university (not available).*



STAFF BY DISABILITY:

Only 41% of staff have shared their disability status, with 4% actively preferring not to say and 55% not providing any information. 4% of the total staff headcount have shared that they have a disability while 37% have no known disability.

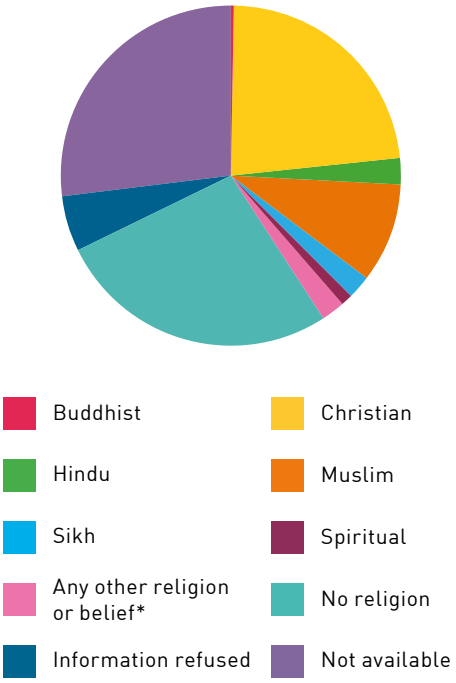
Disability Status	Headcount	Percentage
Declared disability	152	4%
No known disability	1263	37%
Prefer not to say	146	4%
Not Available	1891	55%



STAFF BY RELIGION:

69% of staff have shared their religion or belief with the University, including 27% of staff who have no religion. A total of 40% of staff shared that they do have a religion or belief, comprised of 0.5% Buddhist, 23% Christian, 2% Hindu, 9% Muslim, 2% Sikh, 1% spiritual and 2% other religions and beliefs.

Religion	Headcount	Percentage
Buddhist	17	0.5%
Christian	796	23%
Hindu	81	2%
Muslim	329	10%
Sikh	79	2%
Spiritual	33	1%
Any other religion or belief*	76	2%
No religion	931	27%
Information refused	189	5%
Not available	921	27%



**There are fewer than 10 staff who have shared their religion as Jewish, to protect anonymity, they have been added to the "Any other religion or belief" category. This combination does not imply that these identities are the same but is a reporting measure to ensure anonymity. Due to the small numbers a breakdown of manager and professors by religion is not presented here.*

STAFF BY TRANS STATUS:

Fewer than 10 members of staff have shared that they have a gender identity that does not match their sex assigned at birth, often described as being trans. To protect anonymity this information is not presented in a table or chart. 40% of salaried staff did not provide any data as to the correlation between their assigned sex and lived gender identity.

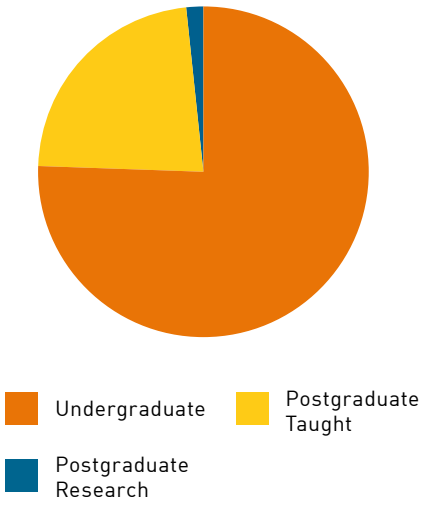
DIVERSITY PROFILE OF STUDENTS 2023/24

Data of current student relates to the year 2023/24

TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION:

BCU has a total of 29,886 students. The majority (79%) of these are undergraduate (UG) students, with the remainder being postgraduate students, 20% of that being postgraduates taught (PGT) and the remaining 1% postgraduate research (PGR).

Student Type	Headcount	Percentage
Undergraduate	23,479	79%
Postgraduate Taught	6,046	20%
Postgraduate Research	361	1%
Total	29,886	



STUDENT PROPORTIONS BY CHARACTERISTIC:

SEX:

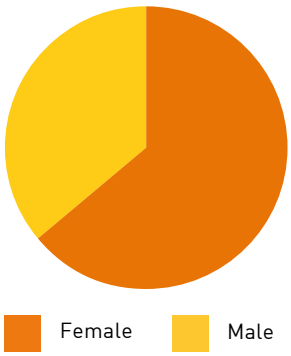
In this report, due to the current availability of data, we have utilised data categorised by sex rather than gender. We acknowledge that sex and gender are distinct concepts, with sex typically referring to biological attributes and gender relating to one's identity and social roles.

The percentage of female students is 64% at the undergraduate level. There is then a drop at the postgraduate level, with 61% for taught students and 62% for research students.

UNDERGRADUATE:

64% of undergraduate students at the University are female and 36% are male.

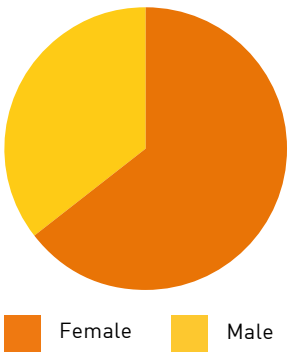
Sex	Headcount	%
Female	15,099	64%
Male	8,380	36%



POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT:

61% of postgraduate taught students at the University are female and 39% are male.

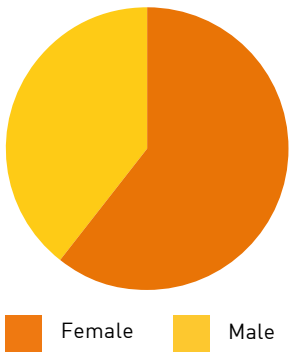
Sex	Headcount	%
Female	3,703	61%
Male	2,343	39%



POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH:

62% of postgraduate students at the University are female and 37% are male.

Sex	Headcount	%
Female	225	62%
Male	136	37%



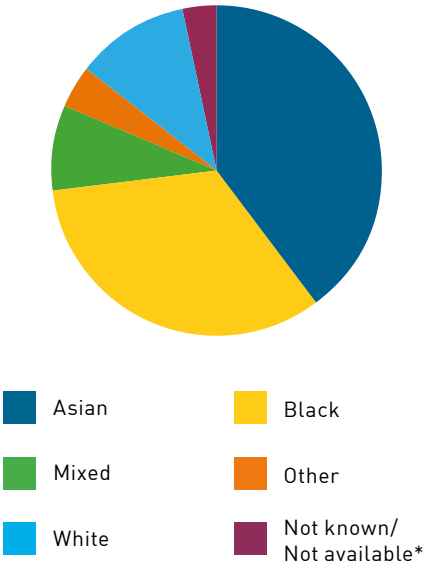
ETHNICITY:

Ethnicity is only collected for UK-domiciled students, i.e. students with a permanent address in the UK.

UNDERGRADUATE:

61% of undergraduate UK domicile students at the University are of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (B.A.M.E) ethnicities, including 28% Asian, 24% Black, 6% mixed and 3% other ethnicities. 38% are white and 2% ethnicities are not available/provided.

Ethnicity	Headcount	Percentage
Asian	6,281	28%
Black	5,273	24%
Mixed	1,356	6%
Other	626	3%
White	8,355	38%
Not available/provided	371	2%

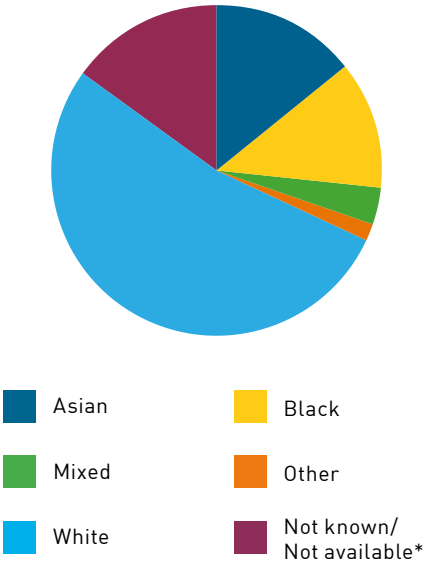


POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT:

37% of postgraduate taught UK domicile students at the University are of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) ethnicities. Including 19% Asian, 12% Black, 4% mixed and 2% other ethnicities.

Proportionally more students' ethnicities are not available/provided at PGT level than UG or PGR, 7 and 4 percentage points, respectively. As such it is not possible to know accurately the drop off in B.A.M.E. representation between UG and PGT levels. However, the proportion of white students have clearly increased between the two levels, from 38% at UG to 53% at PGT.

Ethnicity	Headcount	Percentage
Asian	472	19%
Black	302	12%
Mixed	105	4%
Other	56	2%
White	1,276	53%
Not available/provided	219	9%

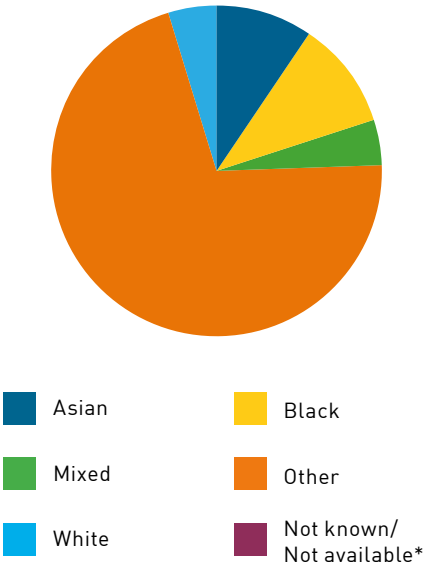


POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH:

20% of UK postgraduate research domicile students at the University are of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) ethnicities. Including 6% Asian, 9% Black, 5% from mixed and other* ethnicities. The number of B.A.M.E. students at PGR is much lower than at UG or PGR levels.

Ethnicity	Headcount	Percentage
Asian	18	6%
Black	26	9%
Mixed and other*	14	5%
White	210	75%
Not available/provided	13	5%

**Due to the small number of responses (fewer than 10) in certain ethnic categories, data for Mixed and Other ethnic identities have been combined under a broader category to protect participant confidentiality. This combination does not imply that these identities are the same, but is a reporting measure to ensure anonymity.*



STUDENTS BY INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION (IMD):

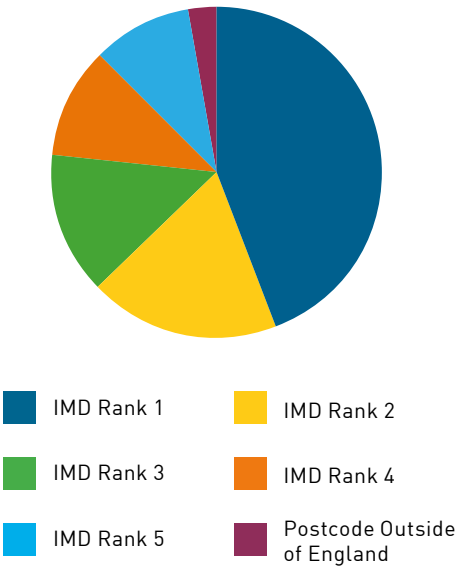
The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation in England and is part of a suite of outputs that form the Indices of Deprivation (IoD). It follows an established framework in broadly defining deprivation to encompass a wide range of an individual's living conditions, across seven different domains of deprivation. Postcode areas are ranked from the most deprived area (rank 1) to the least deprived area (rank 5) and students' home addresses are used in calculating total headcounts. Undergraduate students show a strong skew toward representation from the most deprived quintiles, with 44% of students coming from IMD 1, compared to just 10% from IMD 5. Postgraduate taught students are more evenly distributed, but still have a higher representation from IMD 1, 31%, with less representation from IMD 5, 14%. Postgraduate research students are more balanced across quintiles, with 20% from IMD 1 and 19% from IMD 5.

UNDERGRADUATE:

Nearly half of our UK domicile undergraduate students are from the most deprived areas in England, with 9,789 students coming from areas of IMD rank 1 (most deprived), accounting for 44% of undergraduates.

19% of the students come from IMD rank 2, 14% from rank 3, 11% from rank 4 and 10% from rank 5.

IMD Rank	Headcount	Percentage
1	9,789	44%
2	4,142	19%
3	3,102	14%
4	2,477	11%
5	2,202	10%
Postcode Outside of England	556	2%

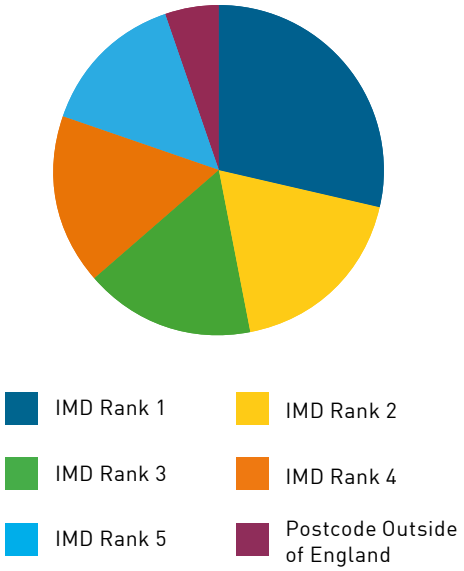


POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT:

Over a quarter of our UK domicile postgraduate taught students are from the most deprived areas in England, with 754 students coming from areas of IMD rank 1 (most deprived), accounting for 31% of undergraduates.

18% of the students come from IMD rank 2, 16% from rank 3, 16% from rank 4 and 14% from rank 5.

IMD Rank	Headcount	Percentage
1	754	31%
2	447	18%
3	388	16%
4	399	16%
5	336	14%
Postcode Outside of England	106	4%

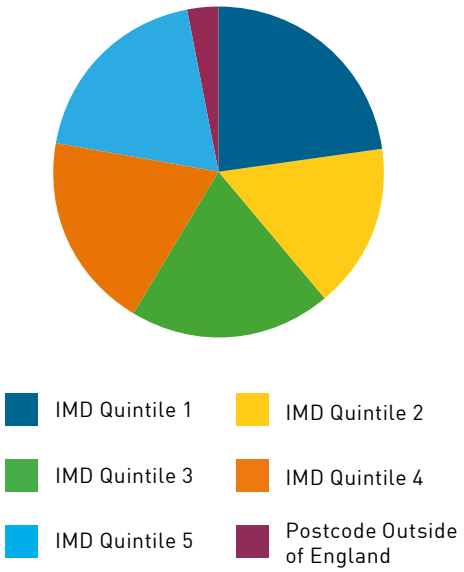


POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH:

Around a fifth of our UK domicile postgraduate research students are from the most deprived areas in England, with 57 students coming from areas of IMD rank 1 (most deprived), accounting for 20% of postgraduate research students.

18% of the students come from IMD rank 2, 22% from rank 3, 18% from rank 4 and 19% from rank 5.

IMD Quintile	Headcount	Percentage
1	57	20%
2	50	18%
3	63	22%
4	50	18%
5	53	19%
Postcode Outside of England	8	3%



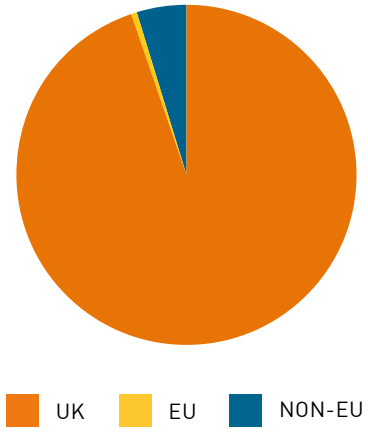
STUDENTS BY DOMICILE:

Domicile refers to the location of a students' permanent address when they enrolled on their course. These have been grouped into UK, European Union (EU) and non-European-Union (non-EU) countries.

UNDERGRADUATE:

The vast majority of our undergraduate students (95%) come from the UK, with the remaining being non-EU at 5% and EU at 1%.

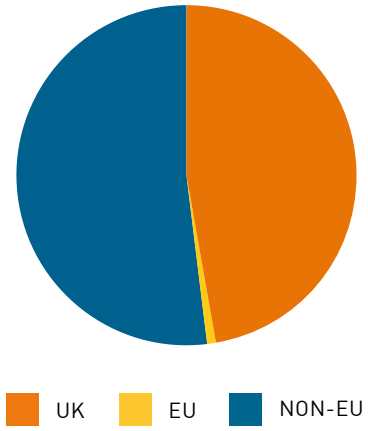
Domicile	Headcount	Percentage
UK	22,268	95%
EU	169	1%
NON-EU	1,089	5%



POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT:

At postgraduate taught the students, the percentage of EU (European Union) remains similar to undergraduate at 1%. We then see more non-EU (Non-European Union) students at 59% compared to 40% UK students.

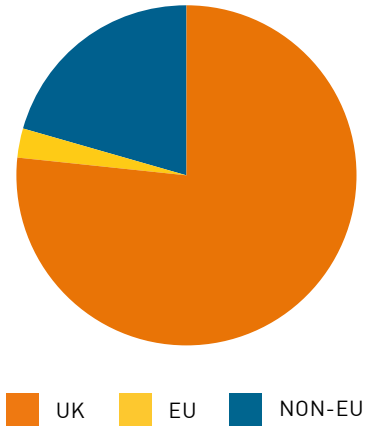
Domicile	Headcount	Percentage
UK	2,430	40%
EU	50	1%
NON-EU	3,571	59%



POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH:

The majority of our postgraduate research students (77%) come from the UK, with the remaining being NON-EU (Non-European Union) at 19% and EU (European Union) at 3%.

Domicile	Headcount	Percentage
UK	281	77%
EU	12	3%
NON-EU	70	19%

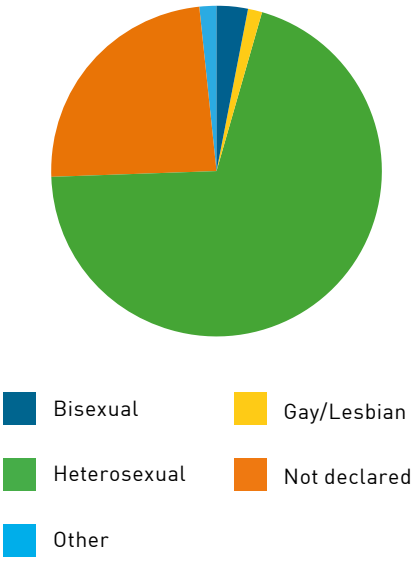


SEXUAL ORIENTATION:

UNDERGRADUATE:

A large proportion of undergraduate students (71%) identify as heterosexual, with 23% not declaring their orientation. Bisexual students make up 3% of UG students, gay and lesbian students represent 1% of the population, and 1% of UG students have a sexual orientation which does not fit in one of these categories.

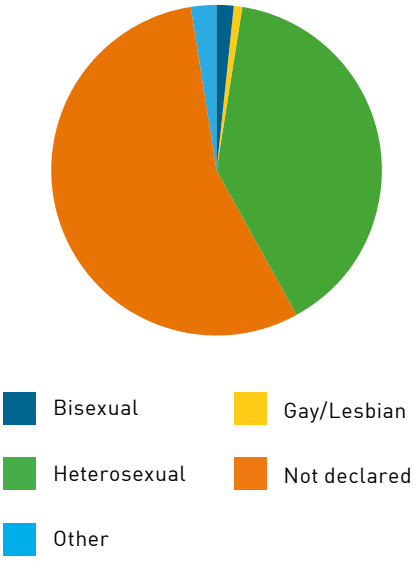
Sexual Orientation	Headcount	Percentage
Bisexual	767	3%
Gay/Lesbian	295	1%
Heterosexual	16,603	71%
Not declared	5,515	23%
Other	346	1%



POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT:

More than half of postgraduate taught students (59%) have not declared their sexual orientation, with 36% identifying as heterosexual. Bisexual students make up 2% of PGT students, gay and lesbian students represent less than 1% of the population, and 3% of PGT students have a sexual orientation which does not fit in one of these categories.

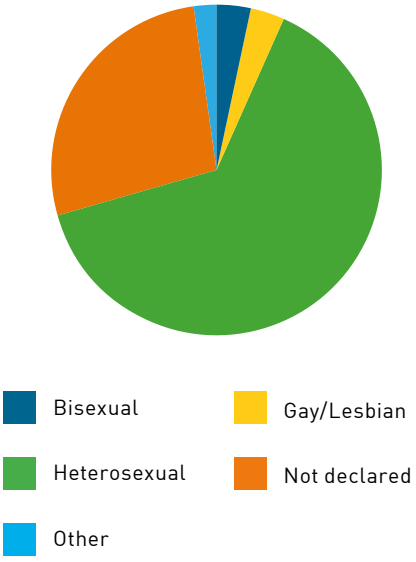
Sexual Orientation	Headcount	Percentage
Bisexual	113	2%
Gay/Lesbian	55	1%
Heterosexual	2,180	36%
Not declared	3,543	59%
Other	160	3%



POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH:

The majority of postgraduate research students (69%) identify as heterosexual, with a notable 20% who have not declared their sexual orientation. Bisexual students make up 4% of PGR students, gay and lesbian students represent another 5% and 2% of PGR students have a sexual orientation which does not fit in one of these categories.

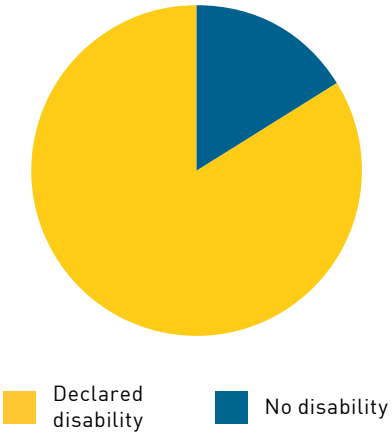
Sexual Orientation	Headcount	Percentage
Bisexual	13	4%
Gay/Lesbian	19	5%
Heterosexual	250	69%
Not declared	74	20%
Other	7	2%



STUDENTS BY DISABILITY:

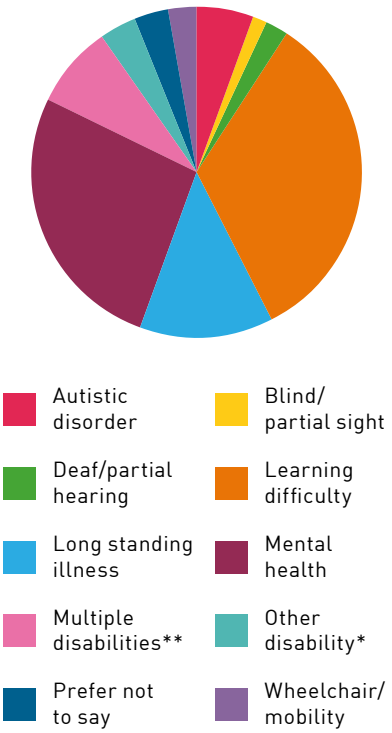
17% of our students have a declared disability, per our official reporting to HESA. This may not match data held by our Student Inclusion team, where students declare disability as they require support.

Disability	Headcount	Percentage
Declared disability	5,122	17%
No disability	24,818	83%



Using the categories defined by HESA, of the students who have declared disabilities, a third have learning difficulties, while just over a quarter, 27%, have mental health conditions. 13% have long standing illnesses, 6% have autism, 2% are D/deaf or have partial hearing, 1% are blind or have partial sight, and 2% have a condition affecting their mobility or use a wheelchair. 4% have other disabilities*, 9% have multiple disabilities** and 4% prefer not to say.

Disability, male	Headcount	Percentage
Autistic disorder	301	6%
Blind/partial sight	58	1%
Deaf/partial hearing	115	2%
Learning difficulty	1,667	33%
Long standing illness	665	13%
Mental health	1,362	27%
Multiple disabilities**	437	9%
Other disability*	202	4%
Prefer not to say	195	4%
Wheelchair/mobility	120	2%



**Due to the small number of responses (fewer than 10) data for Development Conditions and other disabilities have been combined under a broader category to protect participant confidentiality. This combination does not imply that these disabilities are the same but is a reporting measure to ensure anonymity.*

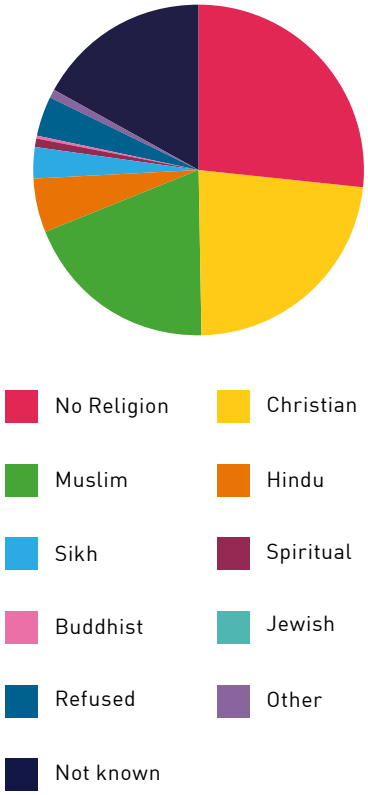
***Multiple disabilities are currently not disaggregated, as such this will encompass other disabilities that are listed here.*

STUDENTS BY RELIGION:

The three largest groups of students by religion are those of no religion (27%), Christian (23%), and Muslim (19%).

5% of our students are Hindu, 3% are Sikh and 0.9% are of other religions. Spiritual, Buddhist and Jewish students make up less than 1% of our student population each. 4% of students refused to disclose their religion and we have no data on 16% of our students.

Religion	Headcount	Percentage
No Religion	8,122	27%
Christian	6,950	23%
Muslim	5,822	19%
Hindu	1,616	5%
Sikh	943	3%
Spiritual	234	0.8%
Buddhist	115	0.4%
Jewish	26	0.1%
Refused	1,103	4%
Other	259	0.9%
Not Known	4,783	16%



OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

The University has ten equality objectives that are aligned with key plans and strategies including: the University Strategy 2025; the Access and Participation Plan; Learning and Teaching Strategy; and the University's Black Lives Matter Antiracist Commitment Plan. Performance in relation to the equality objectives is documented throughout the report, detailing the progress made in relation to equality targets, equality charters, the implementation of Report and Support - the online reporting tool used to manage incidents of bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation - and the work of the EDI Committee and colleague support networks/steering groups.

The table below provides an overview of progress to date. The colour code indicates the following status: Red **= behind target**; Amber **= in progress**; and Green **= on target**.

The EDI Strategic Objectives 1- 4 align with the targets approved in the BCU Access and Participation Plan. These indicators are overseen by the APP and Project Zero Oversight Group. Additional information about the APP and Project Zero can be found on pages 21 - 25, and page 34 of this report.

BCU continually monitors its progress towards its APP targets through data analysis. Wide-ranging statistical analysis of data provides a range of metrics which assist BCU in the evaluation and effectiveness of our interventions. Our interventions focus on areas including:

- Courses contributing to widening our gaps
- Individual modules contributing to widening our gaps
- Student confidence with assessment and submission
- Student transition from vocational qualifications such as BTEC

No.	Equality Objectives 2020/25	Update	RAG
1	Reduce the awarding gap between students from White and students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities	Target: 4.8% Actual: 24.6%	
2	Reduce gaps in degree outcomes between disadvantaged and less-disadvantaged students	Target: 11.0% Actual: 25.3%	
3	Increase attainment and progression rates for care leavers	Target: 69.0% Actual: 43.5%	
4	Increase reporting of disabled entrants	Target: 15.4% Actual: 17.6%	
5	Review and assess the equality impact of key organisational policies and decisions for differential outcomes	Despite the availability of EIA resources, uptake has been low due to limited awareness and insufficient guidance. To address this, a revised EIA template has been introduced, offering clearer guidance, structured assessment processes, and streamlined decision-making tools. Additionally, a new screening form will help determine the need for full EIAs, ensuring relevant considerations are made from the outset.	

No.	Equality Objectives 2020/25	Update	RAG
6	Seek external accreditation by actively participating in equality standards:		
	Athena Swan	Throughout 2023/2024, BCU has continued to progress and embed Athena Swan principles across the University, at both university and college level through a range of actions and initiatives. We have continued to implement our Bronze (renewal) Action Plan (2022-2027) achieving progress across a range of priority areas and, with the support of the University Executive Team, are on track to apply for an Athena Swan Institutional Silver Award in 2025.	
	Disability Confident	This year we renewed and reaffirmed our status as Level 1: Committed while continuing to make progress on the actions required to achieve the Disability Confident Level 2: Employer, with the aim of completing our self-assessment for the award in the coming academic year.	
	Race Equality Charter	The University has experienced significant change in terms of structure and leadership over the last 18 months. Consequently, this has resulted in changes to the membership of the REC SAT, in addition to the availability, alignment and reliability of data. The final submission is currently being redrafted setting out clear priorities to address racial disparities. Focus will be placed on: Closing the Ethnicity Degree Awarding Gap; Reducing the Ethnicity Pay Gap; and Positive Action linked to Career and Progression Opportunities for Academic and Professional Service Staff.	
	Stonewall Workplace Equality Index	In 2023 the University received a gold employer award for demonstrating its continued commitment to LGBT+ inclusion.	
7	Implement effective mechanisms for students and staff to report harassment and discrimination	The Report and Support system was implemented in 2021. Tracking and monitoring reports form part of the work undertaken by the EDI Committee. The data presented in quarterly reports includes a demonstration of reporting patterns over time, alongside analyses of what reporting patterns show, and how the University responds to them.	
8	Provide comprehensive learning and development opportunities to improve knowledge, understanding and awareness of best practice in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion	Mandatory EDI training for all staff was launched in January 2022. All salaried staff are required to complete this training. While the mandatory completion rate is approximately 94%, the overall EDI training offer is currently being reviewed.	

No.	Equality Objectives 2020/25	Update	RAG
9	Ensure our workforce reflects the students and citizens we serve at all levels	Over 100 BCU graduates have been recruited into the workforce via the 'Grow Your Own' initiative. During 2023/24 a total of 56 students were recruited. BCU's Diversifying Leadership Development Programme is due to be launched in 2024/25 and forms part of the University's new Inclusive Leadership and Management Development Framework.	
10	Develop a Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy for students and staff	In 2023/24, the University's Mental Health Charter Working Group completed its review of existing practice and experience at BCU, conducted via a deep dive into the Charter's enabling themes and four domains (Support; Learn; Work; Live). This work helped not only to identify existing examples of best practice happening across the University, but also to highlight areas where improvement continues to be required. The University has now established a Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Group to lead the development and delivery of a new institutional strategy on mental health and wellbeing.	

The colour code indicates the following status:

RED = behind the target AMBER = in progress GREEN = on target.

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN

BCU's Access and Participation Plan (APP) sets out how we intend to ensure equality of opportunity for all students by addressing gaps in student outcomes at various stages of the student lifecycle. Our APPs can be read in full **here**.

2023/24 was the final implementation year of BCU's Access and Participation Plan for 2020/21 – 2023/24, with objectives and targets covering access, success and progression. The plan incorporated changes ('variations') for 2023/24 to meet the Office for Students' (OfS) evolving priorities and specifically targeted interventions with schools and colleges. To meet this commitment, a £200,000 annual fund has supported expansion and revision of the BCU Forward Programme. This is now known as **BCU Accelerate**, an exciting new programme that aims to increase learner attainment and to encourage a positive approach to learning. This is achieved through intensive work with sixty pupils per year group at BCU's Programme Partner schools, located in Birmingham's most socio-economically disadvantaged areas.

The APP 2020/21 – 2023/24 yielded a number of successes, including:

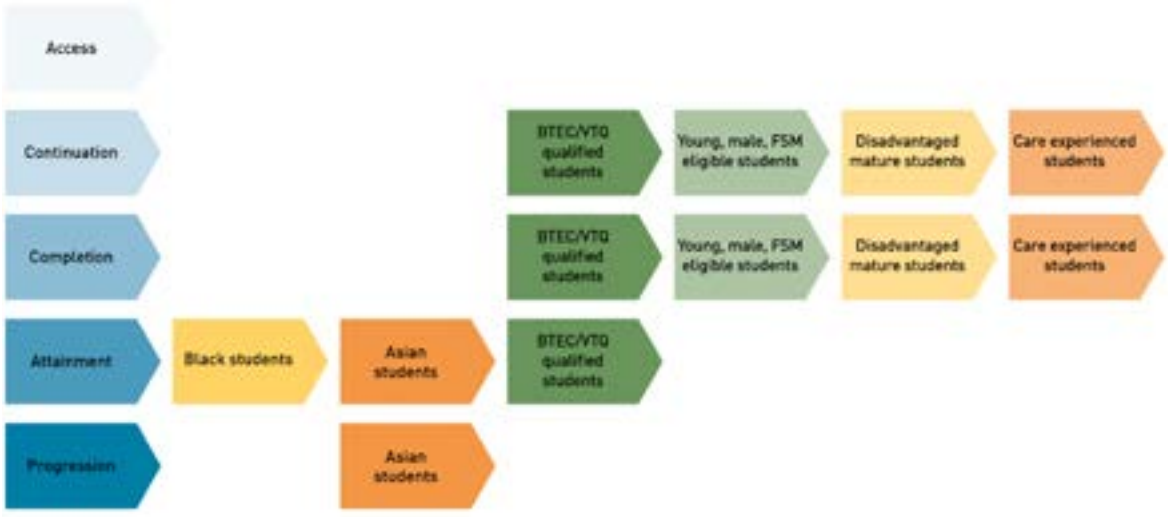
- A reduction in the gap in participation between the most (POLAR Q5) and least (POLAR Q1) historically university-attending groups (full-time first-degree students)
- A reduction in the gap in participation between the white most (POLAR Q5) and white least (POLAR Q1) historically university-attending groups
- A reduction in the gap in entrant non-continuation rates between the least (IMDQ5) and most statistically deprived (IMDQ1) neighbourhoods
- A reduction in the gap in entrant non-continuation rates between White and Black/White mixed ethnicities
- A reduction in the gap in entrant non-continuation rates between young (<21) and mature (21+) students
- A reduction in the gap in degree outcomes (1st or 2:1s) between non-disabled and cognitive disabled students
- An increase in the progression rate for care leavers
- An improvement in the reporting rate of disability

Nevertheless, there remain challenges to equality of opportunity for some student groups at BCU. APP targets related to the ethnicity degree awarding gap are of continuing concern, particularly for Black and Asian students. These are addressed in our new plan, with a fresh, data-led approach in which interventions to address these inequalities are an institutional priority.

In Summer 2023, BCU submitted the new Access and Participation Plan following the OfS' revised guidance. Reforms to the guidance included reducing the duration of APPs to four years and increasing focus on evaluation. BCU was part of a select group of 'Wave 1' universities, working with the regulator to determine the best way to meet new expectations. BCU's new Access and Participation Plan for 2024/25 – 2027/28 was approved by the regulator in October 2023, with implementation commencing in September 2024. This new plan supersedes the APP that started in 2020/21. The new APP includes 12 new objectives and associated targets, aligned to improving outcomes for the six student groups identified as most at risk of inequality of opportunity in higher education. These six APP priority student groups are:

- Black students
- Asian students
- Young (U21) students entering BCU with a level 3 vocational or technical qualification
- Young (U21) male students eligible for free school meals prior to joining BCU
- Mature entrants aged between 21 and 25 years of age living in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK
- Young (U26) students who declare they have care experience before their 16th birthday.

These student groups were identified through a comprehensive assessment of performance, accounting for intersectionality and the OfS's Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EoRR). The diagram below illustrates the student lifecycle stage at which those most at-risk student groups face the greatest risks to equality of opportunity:

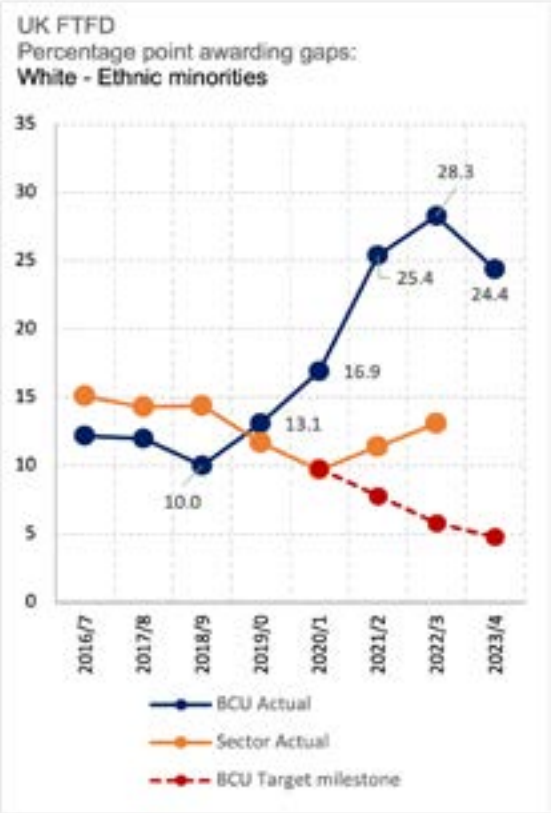


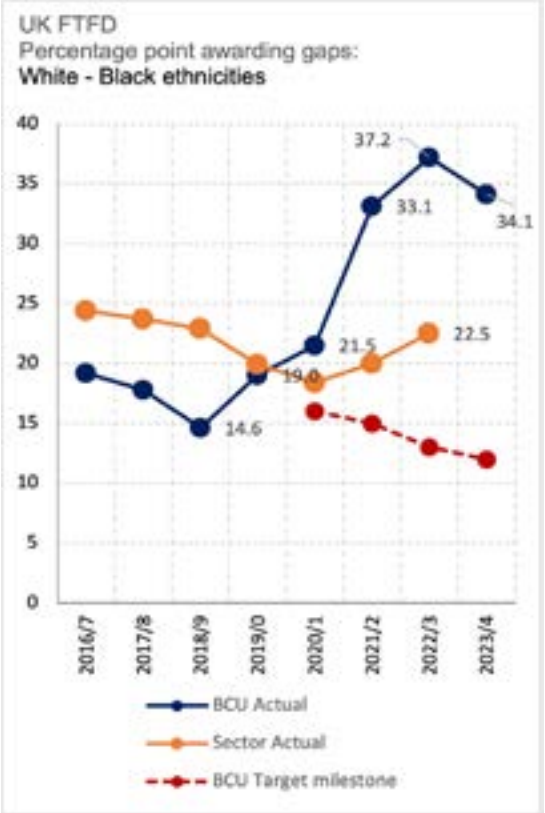
Eight workstreams have been developed to deliver these necessary improvements to equality of opportunity, underpinned by Theories of Change, with a range of activities across the student life cycle:

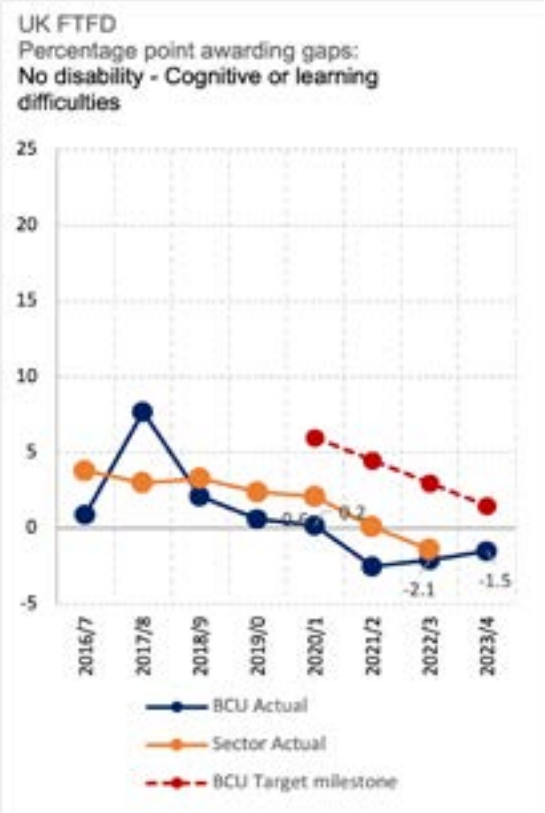
- **Accelerate scholarship** for students at Programme Partner schools and colleges, as well as those from lower income households, supporting disadvantaged students to access higher education at BCU.
- Enhanced Welcome Week and Extended Induction alongside financial assistance to tackle digital poverty, supporting students through their transition to university life
- Success Survey to identify students' strengths and areas of focus, facilitating access to bespoke personal and academic support
- Peer Navigators helping students navigate university life
- Dedicated 'Thrive' Tutors delivering academic support
- Assessment redesign, with accessible assessment briefs, improved marking criteria and training to ensure assessment design and delivery follows good practice guidance
- Employability support through work experience placements, alumni mentoring and enrichment activities
- Comprehensive package of personal, academic and financial support for Care Leavers

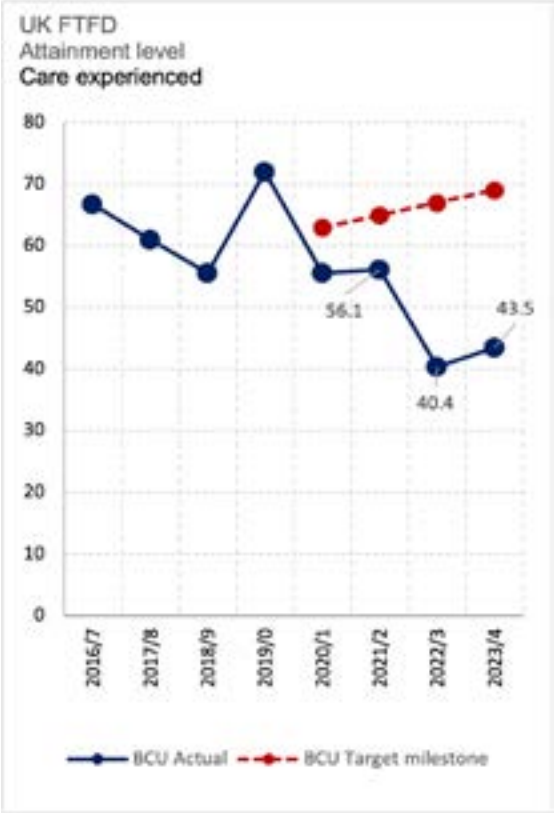
BCU was also selected as one of six providers to receive funded evaluation support from Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) and Advance HE's expert evaluators. This successful project took place between October 2023 and March 2024 and aimed to tackle the ethnicity degree awarding gap through production of robust Theories of Change and evaluation plans. This enriched and enhanced BCU's approach to APP intervention planning, implementation and evaluation. Our contribution to this project focused on our work to improve assessment practices. Further information is available on the **TASO website**.

BCU's success is measured by our students' experiences, and we are committed to reducing gaps in student continuation, completion, attainment and progression. BCU aims to become a sector leader in evaluating APP interventions, establishing and demonstrating sector best -practice in ensuring positive outcomes for those students facing the greatest challenges to equality of opportunity in higher education. A robust evaluation loop and constant review of effectiveness throughout the implementation of the BCU APP 2024/25 to 2027/28 will ensure that we take a 'what works' approach, stopping actions which are not having an impact and developing new interventions as required.


UK FTFD
Percentage point awarding gaps:
White - Ethnic minorities
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
28.3
25.4
24.4
16.9
13.1
10.0
2016/7
2017/8
2018/9
2019/0
2020/1
2021/2
2022/3
2023/4
BCU Actual
Sector Actual
BCU Target milestone


UK FTFD
Percentage point awarding gaps:
White - Black ethnicities
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
37.2
33.1
34.1
22.5
21.5
19.0
14.6
2016/7
2017/8
2018/9
2019/0
2020/1
2021/2
2022/3
2023/4
BCU Actual
Sector Actual
BCU Target milestone


UK FTFD
Percentage point awarding gaps:
No disability - Cognitive or learning difficulties
25
20
15
10
5
0
-5
0.2
-2.1
-1.5
2016/7
2017/8
2018/9
2019/0
2020/1
2021/2
2022/3
2023/4
BCU Actual
Sector Actual
BCU Target milestone


UK FTFD
Attainment level
Care experienced
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
56.1
43.5
40.4
2016/7
2017/8
2018/9
2019/0
2020/1
2021/2
2022/3
2023/4
BCU Actual
BCU Target milestone

REPORT AND SUPPORT

Review of work on harassment and discrimination

Objective 7 of the University's **EDI Strategy 2020-25** reads: "Implement effective mechanisms for students and staff to report harassment and discrimination. Ensure complaint procedures are fit for purpose and offer effective redress". The relevant success measure is "Yearly increase in reporting of harassment and discrimination 2020/25".

The University uses the **Report and Support** online reporting system to capture reports of all unacceptable behaviours. The system is available to students, staff, and third parties to report any incidents of concern, regardless of their location or the involvement of other members of the University community; for example, a student can report harassment experienced outside the University, from a third party, and will be offered support accordingly.

Report and Support is bolstered by an ongoing communications campaign delivered under the #YourVoice handle, with promotion of the system through social media, digital screens, posters, and in prominent places such as staff email signatures and desktop computer backgrounds.

The total number reports of discrimination and harassment received through Report and Support across the last two academic years is as follows:

	2022 - 23	2023 - 24
Discrimination	42	56
Harassment	74	87

The data for 2023-24 therefore shows that the University is on target against the success measure identified in the EDI Strategy.

The following charts demonstrate the pattern of reporting of discrimination and harassment across the last two years (2022/23 and 2023/24):

Noticeable peaks of reporting of unacceptable behaviours fall at times when people, especially students, are typically in close proximity e.g. on campus or in accommodation together. Where there were noticeable reporting peaks in 2023/24 for discrimination (October and November 2023) and harassment (January and March 2024), the underlying reports were analysed by the University's EDI Committee and were not linked to any specific issue or incident.

Quarterly reports on data captured through Report and Support are presented to the EDI Committee and provide trend analysis, helping to inform action planning.

During 2023/24 the University has continued to develop its work combatting discrimination and harassment. In particular, the University has partnered with West Midlands Police to bring in a dedicated Police Constable working across campuses, alongside existing WMP Liaison officers, to offer support to students affected by unacceptable behaviours. Furthermore, the University has introduced the new role of Safeguarding and Support Officer to deliver training to staff and students on the use of Report and Support, and to lead the continuous improvement of the system. Lastly, new campaigns on allyship and being an active bystander have also been delivered. Further innovations will be delivered across 2024/25 to ensure that the University continues to deliver against its strategic aims in this area, and that all members of the University community can thrive in an inclusive, safe environment.

MENTAL HEALTH CHARTER

The University continued its membership of the University Mental Health Charter Programme during 2023/24 and remains dedicated to developing and maintaining a whole-institution approach to mental health, and to shaping a future in which all students and staff can thrive.

In 2023/24, the University's Mental Health Charter Working Group completed its review of existing practice and experience at BCU, conducted via a deep dive into the Charter's enabling themes and four domains (Support; Learn; Work; Live). This work helped not only to identify existing examples of best practice happening across the University, but also to highlight areas where improvement continues to be required.

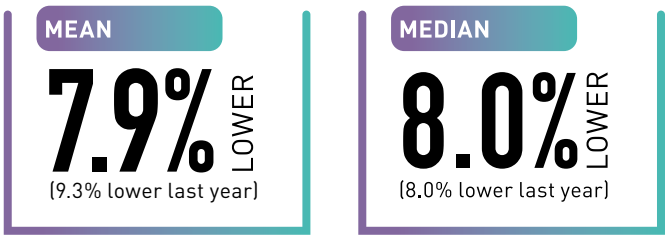
By way of driving and framing the required improvement, the University has now established a Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Group to lead the development and delivery of a new institutional Strategy on mental health and wellbeing. In alignment with that Strategy and in alignment with a drive for progress towards a whole-institution approach to mental health, a Student Suicide Prevention Strategy was developed during 2023/24 and will be delivered from 2024/25 onwards. Both strategies will provide a clear, consistent framework for the University's delivery of activities in these areas, creating an environment where best practise can flourish and where students and staff can feel safe and supported. Once the University is confident that such an environment exists, we will apply for a Mental Health Charter Award by way of external verification that the steps we have taken, and will continue to take in the future, meet the needs of our community.

PROGRESS ON GENDER AND ETHNICITY PAY GAPS

GENDER PAY GAP

Gender pay gap reporting is an annual statutory requirement for all UK employers who have more than 250 employees. The gender pay gap shows the difference between the average earnings of all men and women in the university regardless of their role or grade.

What is our gender pay gap?



This compares with the gender pay gaps, as of 31 March 2022, of 12.3% at the median and 14.8% at the mean in the Higher Education sector and 14.9% at the median for the whole economy (UCEA (January 2024), Equality and Pay Gaps).

What is causing our gender pay gap?

The main factor contributing to our gender pay gap is the current distribution of men and women across our pay grades, where we have a greater number of female staff in our lower grades and a greater proportion of male employees in more senior positions. This is reflected in the figures for the division of males and females for the pay quartile bands.

Ethnicity pay gap

This is the first year the University has published its ethnicity pay gaps. While there is currently no mandatory reporting requirement for publishing this information, in the interest of openness, transparency and consideration of the wider EDI agenda, BCU has chosen to monitor and report its ethnicity pay gap as a voluntary initiative.

What is our ethnicity pay gap?

BCU has chosen to report its ethnicity pay gap in two different formats:

1. An aggregated grouping methodology comparing White and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups collectively for simplicity and ease of comparison with other organisations who frequently adopt this methodology
2. Adopting the Office for National Statistics (ONS) methodology of five high-level ethnic groups to provide a greater insight into the issues facing specific ethnic groups

The figures below are the pay gaps for comparing White and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups collectively:

MEAN

ethnicity pay gap is

11.9%

MEDIAN

ethnicity pay gap is

5.9%

The table below shows the median ethnicity pay gaps divided into the five high-level ethnic groups:

Ethnic Group:	2022:	2023:	Year on year change:
Asian to white	15.6%	12.1%	-3.5% improvement
Black to white	14.5%	15.3%	0.8% worsening
Mixed to white	3.1%	2.8%	-0.3% improvement
Other to white	-16.0%*	-4.9%*	11.1% improvement
Not known to white	3.1%	2.8%	-0.3% improvement
Information refused	1.9%	4.2%	2.3% worsening

**The negative figure for the 'Other to White' ethnicity pay gap shows that the pay gap is in favour of the Other ethnic group.*

The table below shows the mean ethnicity pay gaps divided into the five high-level ethnic groups:

Ethnic Group:	2022:	2023:	Year on year change:
Asian to white	13.0%	12.6%	0.4% improvement
Black to white	15.6%	17.6%	-2.0% worsening
Mixed to white	8.7%	9.0%	-0.3% worsening
Other to white	-5.7%*	-4.2%*	-1.5% improvement
Not known to white	5.9%	8.3%	-2.4% worsening
Information refused	5.8%	7.8%	-2.0% worsening

**The negative figure for the 'Other to White' ethnicity pay gap shows that the pay gap is in favour of the Other ethnic group.*

What actions are we undertaking to reduce our pay gaps?

- University-wide EDI training
- Implementing recruitment-focused EDI action plans
- Ensuring our pay structure and progression through it is fair and equitable
- Focus on equality in professorial appointments and pay
- Increasing diversity in job advertising and in shortlisting and interview panels
- Positive action training and support for under-represented groups
- Leadership and mentoring programmes for female and BAME staff
- Continuing with the Athena Swan action plan to make further progress on gender equality
- Supporting female colleagues' development with the Women in Higher Education Network (WHEN) programme
- Completing a recent review of our family friendly policies to see how we can support more colleagues

What progress have we achieved for these actions?

Regarding implementation of recruitment-focused EDI action plans, following internal audit and external consultant reporting, a series of actions were identified to strengthen the University approach to EDI in recruitment. As a result, unconscious bias training became mandatory for all colleagues. Likewise, development and delivery of in-person recruitment and selection training session with a focus on best-practice inclusive recruitment commenced; paired with this, more accessible job-related documents (such as person specifications) that clarify essential criteria, as well as the method and stage of assessment for each criterion, were developed. Recruitment team colleagues are also working more closely with the EDI Partners, as well as colleagues with responsibility for Athena Swan.

Regarding increasing diversity in job advertising and in shortlisting and interview panels, the University is changing its approach to selection, making multi-element selection mandatory for all roles to move away from interview-only processes. Panel composition has also been considered, with a requirement for all panels to be as representative of our city and student population in terms of gender and ethnicity as possible. This also extends to shortlisting to include more diverse perspectives when considering applications. Adverts for new vacancies are written more sensitively with consideration given to the use of inclusive language, and positive action statements are included where underrepresentation is identified in the hiring department or College.

ATHENA SWAN

The Athena Swan Charter recognises the advancement of gender equality within higher education in terms of representation, progression and success for all. The Transformed Charter (2021) recognises not just barriers to progression that affect women, but also work undertaken to address gender equality more broadly. It covers women, men where appropriate, and trans staff and students in academic, professional and support roles. This support is in relation to:

- Representation
- Journey through career milestones
- Working environment for all staff
- Progression of students into academia.

Throughout 2023/2024, Athena Swan principles have continually been embedded and deepened across the University, both at college and institution-wide levels, through a range of actions and initiatives.

At University level, we have continued to implement our Bronze (renewal) Action Plan (2022-2027) achieving progress across a range of priority areas and, with the support of the University Executive Team, are on track to apply for an Athena Swan Institutional Silver Award in 2025. This, in addition to the fact that for the first time, every BCU college is engaged with the Athena Swan agenda, either in terms of preparing an award submission or implementing a five-year Action Plan, makes 2023/2024 a momentous year.

To prepare for college-wide engagement with the Athena Swan Charter, the Athena Swan Project Manager has delivered induction and training for new College Academic Leads (EDI). The College of English and Media (ADM) gained a Bronze Departmental Award in January 2024. The College of Art and Design (ADM) will submit their Bronze Award application in November 2024, closely followed by Royal Birmingham Conservatoire in January 2025. While following a standard application process, each departmental submission is unique because each discipline and context raises particular issues in relation to gender representation and progression. BCU also prioritises an intersectional approach to its analysis of workforce and student data, which highlights additional inequalities across disciplines and career stages.

The Athena Swan Steering Committee (ASSC) co-chaired by Professor Maxine Lintern (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)) and Dr Kate Carruthers Thomas (Athena Swan Project Manager) continues to oversee the implementation of the University's Athena Swan Institutional Action Plan and provide overall direction to the gender equality agenda. ASSC membership is reviewed annually to ensure it is representative and responsive to changes within the university.

Dr Kate Carruthers Thomas
Athena Swan Project Manager

RACE EQUALITY CHARTER

The University signed up to the Race Equality Charter in November 2020. The Charter provides a vehicle for understanding the lived experiences of students and staff to enhance insight and knowledge of the culture of the University through the lens of race.

Qualitative and quantitative data has been collected from BCU systems, surveys and focus groups conducted with students and staff to identify challenges and highlight areas in need of focus in order to advance race equality. The breadth of areas and information included in the submission covers all aspects of the student journey and employee lifecycle, resulting in a Race Equality Action Plan that should be implemented across the organisation.

A significant volume of work has been done to get to the position of submitting a draft application for the REC. The University has experienced significant change in terms of structure and leadership over the last 18 months. Consequently, this has resulted in changes to the membership of the REC SAT, in addition to the availability, alignment and reliability of data, which accounts for a significant proportion of the application. It has also resulted in delays in making the submission. The final deadline for making a submission in the current format was 29 November 2024.

The final submission is currently being redrafted setting out clear priorities to address racial disparities. Focus will be placed on addressing the following areas:

- Closing the ethnicity degree awarding gap
- Reducing the ethnicity pay gap
- Positive action linked to career and progression opportunities for academic and professional service staff

The REC action plan will be linked to key plans and strategies i.e. BCU Strategy 2030, the Access and Participation Plan, Project Zero, the University's Antiracist Commitment Plan and Athena Swan action plan to facilitate an intersectional and joined up approach.

PROJECT ZERO

Project Zero is an ambitious business improvement programme that focuses on closing the Ethnicity Degree Awarding Gap (EDAG) at BCU. The project was commissioned by Academic Board in January 2024 and has created a cross-University focus on reducing the EDAG both through professional services and academic colleges.

Core activities implemented to date include:

- Collaborative learning sessions with Project Area Leaders
- Deep dives into service provision in both professional services and academic faculties
- Data analysis and insights on business success and efficacy for students of Black African/ Caribbean and South Asian heritage
- Increasing focus on enhancing the voices of students of Black African/Caribbean and South Asian heritage on a variety of areas of student experience
- A series of professional development and insights conversations about racism continue to be held with staff
- Ongoing advice and support provided to colleagues through a variety of resources

The main themes emerging from student feedback relate to academic support and learning; access and utilisation of resources; and access to mental health and wellbeing support. Specifically, Project Zero is focusing in on:

1. Interactive teaching methods and the creation of a more inclusive teaching environment
2. Improving the role of personal tutoring, found to be crucial to the success of students
3. Tailored academic support and small group interactions
4. A more personalised approach to communication from the university
5. Consistent and proactive approach to promoting resources
6. Improved access to resources, particularly in relation to booking space in the library and giving students greater access to IT equipment
7. Greater awareness and ease of access to mental health support services
8. Building a sense of belonging and community

Project Zero continues to provide recommendations based on findings from its various workstreams to enable agile and rapid turnaround for enhanced student experience.

RACE EQUITY AND INCLUSION STEERING GROUP

Progress Update:

Over the past few months, the group has maintained its momentum in pushing forward with group events and activities despite challenges in member availability due to absence and workload. Member engagement remains an area of great focus for the group. To try and address this, we held an away day in September. The aim of the away day was to reconnect with old and new members and to allow colleagues to network, sharing their views and opinions regarding the future of the group.

A key objective arising from the away day is to broaden the committee membership to include additional roles such as secretary, communications officer, engagement officer, and more. The aspiration is that this will enable the group to thrive and increase member engagement. This will be actioned between October and December 2024. We have been able to introduce the Tea Break concept, which is a Race Equality Matters initiative, to BCU's other EDI staff groups (LGBT+ Network and Disability Steering Group) so that we can discuss how we can work together to provide a safe place for staff to talk on varied topics which relates to the workspace. There are plans in place for sessions to be launched from November 2024.

Events (Past and Upcoming):

Race Equality Week was held in February. This is an annual UK-wide movement uniting hundreds of thousands of organisations and individuals to address the barriers to race equality in the workplace. Under 2024's theme of "#ListenActChange", the Race, Equity Inclusion (REI) Steering Group hosted an open discussion. The discussion focused on exploring microaggressions to understand the definition, impact, recognition, and on the importance of creating supportive environments which acknowledge diversity while mitigating the harmful effects of microaggressions in personal and professional settings. The discussion also focused on the importance of different cultures in the workplace and ways to expose ourselves to different cultures.

In June, the group hosted an in-person discussion reflecting on Windrush and its relevance today, as well as creating a space to share personal stories and experiences. During October, as part of Black History Month, there are plans to host sessions at both campuses exploring the theme 'Reclaiming Narratives'.

Upcoming plans will include events and activities to raise the profile of the REI steering group; to work more closely with the EDI team on initiatives; as well as continuing to raise awareness of the cultural diversity we have within the university.

LGBT+ INCLUSION

Since the launch of the 'Going for Stonewall' project in 2019, BCU has continued to make significant strides in promoting LGBTQ+ inclusion and broader EDI initiatives. Over the years, BCU has embedded this work into its core values, ensuring ongoing impact and alignment with best practices. Here are the key updates and future directions for 2024:

- **LGBT+ History Month:** Every February since 2005, LGBT+ History Month has been celebrated in the UK. This year, events included the EDI team running a Staff LGBT+ Allies Follow-on Workshop, designed to complement the LGBT+ allyship module already run year-round. Also included was a talk by a representative from Stonewall to hear about some sector best practice in LGBT+ allyship.
- **Birmingham Pride:** Working with the LGBT+ staff network, we were able to again march in Birmingham Pride. Birmingham Pride, which began in 1997, is a significant cultural event celebrating the LGBTQ+ community. BCU marched as part of *UNIfied* at Pride, which brings together seven local institutions (Aston University, Birmingham City University, Birmingham Newman University, University of Birmingham, University College Birmingham, University of Law and University of Wolverhampton). We also had a presence within the Smithfield Live space.
- **New Low-Income Ticket Scheme at Birmingham Pride:** As part of its ongoing commitment to community engagement and inclusivity, BCU has partnered with Birmingham Pride to sponsor a new low-income ticket scheme. The new scheme offers a 50% reduction on the full-face value price of a general admission ticket for individuals living in the West Midlands who receive certain allowances or benefits. This initiative aimed to make Birmingham Pride more accessible, breaking down financial barriers and ensuring that everyone, regardless of their financial situation, can participate and celebrate.
- **Showcasing Racing Pride and Pre-Pride Reception:** In the run-up to Pride, as part of Innovation Fest, in partnership with the EDI team, CEBE, the LGBT+ staff network and Racing Pride, we held an event focusing on the need for greater diversity within motorsport - aligning with the Racing Pride initiative - which advocates for LGBTQ+ inclusion in the industry. The event featured discussions on the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in motorsport, highlighting the importance of visibility and representation, with founder and British racing driver Richard Morris sharing his journey. As part of this initiative the event also served as a Pre-Pride reception, inviting *UNIfied* at Pride to engage with attendees. This reception not only underscored BCU's dedication to supporting diversity in various fields, but also provided a platform for networking and building a stronger, unified community ahead of Pride celebrations.
- **LGBTQ+ Steering Group Development:** With the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI) on hiatus until 2025, work had to be done to find an alternative to ensure work on LGBTQ+ inclusion continued. As a result, BCU is focusing on establishing an LGBTQ+ steering group. This strategic decision allows the University to recalibrate its approach, focusing on internal feedback and stakeholder engagement. The steering group will bring together key stakeholders to develop a comprehensive action plan that addresses key areas of LGBTQ+ inclusion. This plan will build upon the work previously initiated by the Stonewall Project Officer, incorporating suggested actions, and leveraging insights from past experiences. The steering group will ensure that efforts are tailored to the specific needs of the BCU community, promoting sustainable and meaningful change.

LGBT+ STAFF NETWORK

Following last year's Network survey and resulting identified priorities, we have focused on staff advocacy and creating more social opportunities and in-person events over 2023/24. We have worked with colleagues to produce a wide range of internal communications recognising varied LGBT+ identities and experiences while promoting allyship and resources. We also updated BCU's rainbow lanyard to reflect the inclusive progress pride flag.

We have held monthly hybrid member meetings as well as regular in-person social events, including coffee meetups across campuses, meals off-campus, a summer picnic, a pre-pride reception and an LGBT+ History Month quiz and bake sale, which raised £218 for Saving Lives / Birmingham AIDS and HIV (BAH) Memorial: The Ribbons Education Legacy.

Alongside supporting key annual events such as Student Welcome and LGBT+ History Month, the Network again worked with the EDI Team to coordinate BCU's attendance at Birmingham Pride in May, the largest community event in Birmingham, as part of our local joint-universities collaboration.

Key activity 2023/24 and internal links:

- Big Student Welcome Fair (13 Sep) – Rainbow lanyard and support information stall
- Black History Month (October) – LGBT+ Black musicians playlist and webpage **[Link]**
- National HIV Testing Week (5 – 11 Feb) – HIV Myth Busting collaboration with Marketing and Nursing **[video/article]**
- LGBT History Month (February) – Collaborative calendar of events across BCU
- University Mental Health Day (14 Mar) – Stall at mental health and wellbeing fair
- Transgender Day of Visibility (31 Mar) – Network blog **[Link]**
- International Asexuality Day (6 Apr) – 'Exploring Asexuality' talk with Dr Anusnigdha
- Lesbian Visibility Week (22 – 28 Apr) – Network recommendations list **[Link]**
- International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (17 May) – Network blog **[Link]**
- BCU Innovation Fest (23 May) – Racing Pride speaker event and pre-pride reception collaboration **[Link]**
- Birmingham Pride 2024 (25 May) – Network stall and UNIfied at Pride parade **[Link]**
- International Non-binary People's Day (14 Jul) - Network statement **[Link]**

DISABILITY CONFIDENT

Disability Confident is a government run scheme which supports employers to employ and keep disabled people in work.

This year we renewed and reaffirmed our status as Level 1: Committed while continuing to make progress on the actions required to achieve the Disability Confident Level 2: Employer, with the aim of completing our self-assessment for the award in the coming academic year. Feedback from the disability steering group has been vital throughout this process.

A summary of the status and progress of the required actions (in bold) are included below.

Theme 1 – Getting the Right People for your Business:

In order to **promote a culture of being Disability Confident in our recruitment**, the disability confident badge is displayed on our jobs website and explicitly mentioned in adverts. We **provide an inclusive and accessible recruitment process** including offering alternative formats of application forms. We have ensured that planned updates to recruitment systems are checked by a diverse range of staff and EDI professionals.

The recruitment team ensure that we **offer an interview to disabled people who meet the minimum criteria for the job**, and that **reasonable adjustments** are offered in selection processes in order to **be flexible when assessing people so disabled job applicants have the best opportunity to demonstrate that they can do the job**. New recruitment training has been piloted which emphasises **appropriate disability equality awareness**.

Theme 2 – Keeping and Developing your People:

The EDI team lead on celebrating and raising awareness of Disability History Month each year, partly to contribute to **promoting a culture of being Disability Confident**.

Over the past year a new reasonable adjustment process for staff has been put in place, including an optional adjustments passport which **supports employees to manage their disabilities or health conditions**. We have ensured this is front and centre in induction documentation for new staff and their managers. We have also been improving our understanding and processes for staff who are applying for Access to Work grants, although there is still progress to be made in this area.

As part of **ensuring there are no barriers to the development and progression of disabled staff**, the IT training team will include accessibility tools within their standard IT training suite, to make sure that staff are including their disabled colleagues as default. Collaboration with the communications team aims to ensure that internal communications are as inclusive as possible too. The learning team actively ensure their training is accessible and any in person workshops are physically accessible.

To **ensure that managers are aware of how they can support staff who are sick or absent from work** and as part of wider engagement with managers, our HR and learning team have included sickness policies that are referenced in manager briefings and manager toolkits, including an e-learning module. The HR business partnering team have recently attended a session with the Business Disability Forum to promote access to resources to themselves and managers around understanding of particular conditions and access to their advice services.

We **value and listen to feedback from disabled staff** primarily by ensuring the EDI team regularly attend the disability steering group and collaborate with the chair and co-chair on projects whenever possible. The staff survey is also an important tool in collecting feedback from staff and responses have been analysed by protected characteristics.

Key priorities for 2024/25:

- Completing the self-assessment for Disability Confident Level 2
- Continue to build on communications around reasonable adjustments and access to work
- Build on understanding of disability and specific conditions via training and e-learning
- Improving disclosure rates to be able to accurately monitor pay, progression and retention of disabled staff

DISABLED STUDENT COMMITMENT

To support continuous efforts to improve the experiences of disabled students, the University has signed up to the Disabled Student Commitment, with the support of Vice-Chancellor Professor David Mba.

The Disabled Student Commitment is the legacy of the Disabled Students' Commission, which spent several years researching the experiences of disabled students and the barriers they encounter in HE.

The Commitment is a call to action for higher education providers (HEPs) to address those barriers by measuring the experiences of disabled students against the Commitment and drawing up a University action plan to remove barriers for disabled students and improve their experiences.

The Commitment includes 43 recommendations for a holistic approach to improving the experiences of disabled students. The key themes are:

1. Students sharing information about their disability
2. Enabling students to make an informed choice about what and where to study, and how to access support
3. Enabling successful transition into HE and through their course, including supporting social and 'extra-curricular' activities
4. Enabling students to achieve positive outcomes - inclusive curriculum design, staff training, processes / policies / procedures that don't create barriers
5. Supporting successful transition into further study or employment

Work has begun to form a working group made up of key staff stakeholders across the University, and to develop a range of activities to seek the feedback of disabled students. This includes undergraduate, postgraduate, apprentices and international students with the full range of protected characteristics and other backgrounds / experiences.

This will help the University map our provision against the Commitment's recommendations for HEPs and identify the gaps and barriers here at BCU. The early stages of the project are focussed on developing a range of channels through which we will listen to the experiences of disabled students, including those students who may never have shared with the University that they are disabled and students on the full range of programmes.

DISABLED STEERING GROUP

The group formed in Spring 2020 with the aim of progressing disability equality for staff and students, including raising awareness of the experiences of disabled staff and students. Membership includes disabled staff and allies, including representation from professional services, academic colleagues, and the Students' Union.

Summary of Disability Steering Group activities throughout 2023/24:

1. The group receives regular updates from our Estates Department on access issues and makes representations to the Estates Department where we identify access issues. The group has shared feedback about a range of estates accessibility issues and successfully lobbied for access professionals to be involved at an early stage of building construction and renovation.
2. The group continues to widely highlight the experiences of disabled staff. This year we have made sustained progress towards improved policies and procedures in this area, having seen the publication of the Reasonable Adjustments Policy for staff, including the introduction of the Disability Passport for staff. We provide feedback on disabled staff experiences to colleagues working on the University's journey towards *Disability Confident Employer* (level 2). Improving the experiences of disabled staff and disabled job applicants continues to be a significant focus of the group's work.
3. Members of the group work with our IT department to identify improvements that we can make to the accessibility of IT services. In particular this year we have begun discussions on improving the awareness of staff and students of access features in their devices and on rationalising the assistive software available to staff and students.
4. The Chair of the Group is working with the Chair the Race Equity and Inclusion Steering Group, the Chair of the LGBT+ staff network and the University EDI Unit to develop a joint initiative based on Race Equality Matters' Tea Break concept, which we hope will provide a space for themed discussions about diversity and inclusion issues that matter to staff.

EDI COMMITTEE PROGRESS UPDATES

The University EDI Committee plays a pivotal role in tackling the EDI challenges facing BCU. The Committee sets the direction, and oversees the development of EDI activity across the University. It facilitates effective communication of EDI matters, helping to share examples of best practice to advance equality. The committee structure ensures the focus is placed on all stages of the staff and student journey including, but not limited to: access, continuation, attainment, progression, recruitment, employment practice, reward and recognition to ensure fairness and integrity are embedded in all that we do.

It is used to drive the implementation and progress of the University EDI strategy using data and evidence-based practice to drive the focus of activity, advising on emerging EDI developments for the HE sector. The Committee holds the University to account, ensuring that it moves beyond meeting its statutory responsibilities and the requirements of the public sector equality duty, to achieving ambitious goals that transform lives and people's futures.

The Committee meets four times each year, and during the last committee cycle it explored a number of priorities and endorsed proposals subsequently submitted to the University Executive Team for approval. Below are examples of the breadth and range of items tabled for discussion by the Committee during 2023/24. Please note, this list is not exhaustive:

- EDI Strategy Progress Review
- Ethnicity Degree Awarding Gap
- Access and Participation Plan
- Project Zero
- Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gaps
- National Student Survey Results
- Staff Survey Results
- Recruitment Process Improvements
- Conferment Process Outcomes
- EDI Manadatory Training Reports
- Faculty and Department Restructures
- Policy Reviews
- Equality Charters
  - » Athena Swan
  - » Disability Confident
  - » Race Equality
- Report and Support Trend Analysis and Interventions
- Equality Impact Assessments
- University of Sanctuary

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Following the recruitment of College Academic Leads for Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in 2023, a parallel approach has been developed for Professional Services Departments (PSDs). This began its roll out across the University from summer 2024 and is due for completion by the end of the calendar year.

Each department has or will nominate an EDI change champion to act as advocates for EDI in the department and to ensure University equality objectives are prioritised. The role of change champions includes promoting key messages from the central EDI committee and good practice, to allow dissemination of important information across the organisation.

The champions will form the membership of the refreshed Professional Services EDI Committee and will meet for the first time in Autumn 2024. This new approach aims to benefit the organisation by:

- Having support available to drive behavioural and cultural change
- Presenting opportunities to continually raise awareness of the University's equality objectives and related plans
- Having a named point of contact for staff in departments who can provide informal guidance on EDI initiatives and opportunities
- Access to a pool of contacts who can assist with consultation in relation to EDI matters

Change champions will work closely with their directors and EDI Business Partners to ensure their work is embedded in the PSD and aligned with the EDI work of the wider institution.

A number of PSDs have already successfully appointed change champions or have added to their existing EDI groups and committees. Many PSDs are fully integrated into the work of the University EDI committee and have contributed significantly to meeting the equality objectives. They are vital to the progress achievements outlined in the rest of this report, and this new approach will ensure this work is joined up and recognised at all levels.

ARTS, DESIGN AND MEDIA (ADM)

The College Academic Leads for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work collaboratively, to chair the Faculty EDI Committee (FEDIC), sharing the responsibility to chair the meeting and set the agenda. The leads also attend the BCU EDI Central Committee and Faculty Executive Team (FET), to provide a voice on EDI-related matters, to communicate updates on progress and provide detail on actions. Some highlights of the EDI work undertaken by the FEDIC and the wider faculty over the past year are highlighted below.

Figure 1. A montage of images taken during the Reimagine EDI Symposium 1 on 26 June 2024:

The reimagine symposium was a significant piece of work for the college academic leads for EDI during their first year in the role and enabled the team to explore and collaborate with a range of internal colleagues and specialists. The symposium was also an opportunity for colleagues to provide responses on a range of EDI matters for consideration and action. The event, which included keynote speakers, interactive workshops and opportunities to network, was very well received. Colleagues shared that they had soon after implemented some of the suggested best practice within their team.

Work has been undertaken across the faculty aimed at narrowing the ethnicity degree awarding gap and on other priorities of the Access and Participation Plan (APP). For example, by running pilots for the University in English and Media and the introduction of the star diagram in personal tutorials in Jewellery, Fashion and Textiles.

The Faculty has also made significant progress on Athena Swan awards. Architecture is working towards an application Bronze Award in 2025, Art and Design are hoping to submit at the end of 2024, Digital Arts are continuing investigations into data collection for the award, and we are particularly proud that English and Media and Jewellery, Fashion and Textiles were both successful in achieving their Bronze awards this year.

The College Academic Lead for Architecture has been working with colleagues in HR to pilot new data statistical information on the staffing of our Colleges within the Faculty. This has provided a significant development in understanding our colleges, and how they are represented, including for Athena Swan applications.

The College of English and Media have successfully run a number of successful EDI initiatives including an EDI review of draft timetables, a new mentoring scheme, a student EDI competition, and installing a fridge which would allow students to take home any unsold packed food from catering for free.

The College of Jewellery, Fashion and Textiles have produced a film in celebration of the student's good news stories of EDI. The film will be used on the BCU website, social media platforms, open days etc. The College has also undertaken a number of outreach and widening participation projects. This includes working with De Beers, to identify underlying barriers to application for jewellery-related courses and over time, increase numbers of applicants of all genders from disadvantaged socioeconomic and diverse backgrounds.

Areas in need of greater focus:

- Reference to disability case study
- Accessibility, including actions referring to Moodle
- HR recruitment strategy - working with HR to reach out to challenge lack of applications from underrepresented communities
- Awarding gaps, examples of good practice to communicate to colleagues
- Highlighting and addressing student hardship
- Developing and delivering EDI strategies for colleges
- Qualitative staff survey (College) – Further feedback from staff, to identify EDI success stories and areas for improvement.
- Reimagine EDI Symposium 2, to welcome and engage both staff and students.

Report provided by the College Academic Leads for Equality Diversity and Inclusion:

College of Architecture - Nicholas Irvin
College of Art and Design - Ally Standing
College of Digital Arts - Cathy Easthope
College of English and Media - Karen Patel
College of Jewellery, Fashion and Textiles - Louise Martin

BUSINESS, LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (BLSS)

BLSS is made up of five colleges, Law, Social and Criminal Justice (LSCJ); Psychology; Accounting, Finance and Economics; Business, Digital Transformation and Entrepreneurship; and the Graduate School of Management. The committee reports to the faculty leadership team on progress in relation to the University EDI objectives and their implementation in the faculty. The EDI college leads meet monthly to share best practice across the faculty.

Awarding Gaps

One of the key university objectives that the Faculty has been working on in the past year is the Access and Participation Plan (APP) with particular focus on reducing awarding gaps between white and Asian and Black students - and among the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) groups. The new College Course Performance Committee was instrumental in providing oversight and ensuring that course improvement plans are in place and up to date. Through Teaching Excellence and Student Experience (TESE) and APP leads, there has been more awareness among staff about the importance of reducing and eliminating awarding gaps in line with the University's Project Zero. This has resulted in academic staff challenging their own practice and how they assess students. A faculty and college level risk register of modules based on first attempt pass rates and awarding gaps below the faculty thresholds has been created and module leaders have been asked to prepare module improvement plans. Each college now also has a continuous monitoring and enhancement (CME) working group that meets regularly to review the improvement plans and overall student engagement. There have been some improvements in awarding gaps on the faculty trigger courses (Business Management, Accounting and Finance, Law and Psychology) however, the gap remains higher that the 10% aimed for. In addition, there has been a notable increase in the gaps on Marketing courses. The new process and governance that the faculty has put in place should see a significant drop in awarding gaps in the 2024-25 academic year.

Student Disability

The College of Psychology has two new Wellbeing Leads. Through their initiatives and organisation of support and communicating with module leaders and the student inclusion team it is hoped that the reporting of disabilities will increase.

Athena Swan

The three Business School Colleges are planning to jointly apply for the bronze award in the summer of 2025 and meetings have been taking place over the summer to progress this. In LSCJ, work is also underway for the Bronze Award including running the Culture Survey. In the College of Psychology, the Athena Swan working group are meeting regularly, the survey for staff is being designed; the qualitative study with the students has been conducted.

Other EDI related activities

In the LSCJ college, the EDI-CAL delivered two EDI Inductions to welcome new staff. And at the college away day, staff were asked to identify their biggest achievements (personal and professional) in the last academic year, to support an atmosphere of inclusion and recognition.

Other activities include, training and workshops provided through the Education Development Service (EDS) but also in house through:

- College meetings
- Teaching and learning enhancement days
- Neurodiversity awareness days

Talks and workshops took place in the summer where Psychology staff had two EDS organised workshops, on decolonising the curriculum and on designing assessments.

Plans for 2024/25

The key priority for the 2024/25 academic year remains focused on the following:

1. Reducing the degree awarding gaps between White, Black and Asian students and between students from different socio-economic backgrounds.
2. Workforce representation at all levels and structures that reflects the makeup of our student body, the city, and the region by conducting EDI impact assessments on decisions and policies we make.
3. The Faculty will continue to seek external accreditation by submitting Athena Swan applications for bronze and silver awards.

COMPUTING, ENGINEERING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT (CEBE)

As a headline student outcome for the faculty, we are pleased to note clear improvements in **ethnicity degree awarding gaps** in the **College of Computing** at the end of the academic year 2023/24. For the college, the data shows a reduction in the White-Black awarding gap from 50.8% to 4.9%; and a White-Other Ethnicity gap reduced from 28.9% to 1.6%. A key priority for 2024/25 is to ensure that good practice is identified and implemented into all three CEBE colleges to ensure consistently positive outcomes across the faculty, supported by the work of the Faculty's EDI Committee and in tandem with central initiatives such as Project Zero.

The University is currently collating evidence from the Computing College Academic Lead team to share these practices more widely, in particular around proactive and visible tracking and monitoring of performance data; delivering early interventions including peer learning mentoring and enhanced support for final year projects; and work on embedding inclusive assessment design with expertise from the EDS team.

We are delighted with the recent launch of the **Cal Henderson fund**, generously providing $500,000 of secured funding for CEBE's current and prospective students in 2024/5 from underrepresented backgrounds. To date, nine Level 3 students have been identified as eligible for funds in each College. In total, 294 applications were received for other funding categories. From those, five Level 4 students have been awarded a year-long scholarship, and approximately 50 other students have been identified to receive bursaries in their first year.

Our recently appointed **Learner Developer team** is now fully embedded in our academic support system, co-located with the EDS Centre for Academic Success as part of the Faculty's implementation of the Access and Participation Plan. Branded as 'Thrive Tutors', the Faculty's four learner developers are already making valuable impact in student support (especially for those who may be under-confident in key areas of foundational knowledge such as maths and programming). In 2024/25, they will be working closely with academic staff from the outset to ensure that we provide appropriate support (for example, in closing the gap for students from vocational learning backgrounds).

Within our colleges, there has been a significant programme of events and activities held during the year designed to bring EDI objectives to life for staff and students. The College of Built Environment ran a staff EDI day in May 2024, using a participatory approach to co-design an agenda with action points in teaching, research, and governance. In Computing, the EDI team designed and ran an event for college students from underrepresented groups in coordination with IN2STEM; and in Engineering, Equal Engineers have supported a number of key activities. These included well-received staff workshops which opened up honest conversations around race and bias in summer 2024; a similar session specifically for the technician team in September; and industry networking events for students. In addition, the Engineering Technical Team were shortlisted for University Engineering Team of the Year 2024 at the national Engineering Talent Awards 2024, highlighting their inclusive support for student achievement.

Finally, work is underway in both Built Environment and Engineering targeting an Athena Swan award for each college separately, planning for a provisional submission date in September 2025.

HEALTH, EDUCATION AND LIFE SCIENCES (HELS)

Members of the HELS EDI Sub-Committee include the Associate Dean, Clinical Advisor, Athena Swan rep, Students' Union Equality and Inclusion Officer, College Academic Leads for EDI, and a Libarian.

Key updates:

Differential attainment at module level and awarding gaps have been the main focus of activity for the EDI Sub Committee. The now-embedded Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement (CME) process has proved useful; Course Leaders are required to identify and present key data sets and anecdotal information analysing attainment at the module level and awarding gaps. The purpose of this process is to examine in a timely manner where change may be required and to use internal modifications to support this. CME meetings are held regularly throughout the academic year to ensure data is explored semester by semester, thereby forensically tracking the student journey. Module leaders support this process by completing a module review which also looks at module attainment and awarding gaps as well as progression and retention and how this aligns with the student and staff experience. Additional opportunities exist to scrutinise attainment and award gaps via award boards, during programme-level strategic and operational reviews and via the work of the PALS and CALS. At the faculty level, the faculty mission statement around EDI/Inclusivity has been reviewed by the CAL's and shared with the Heads of Colleges / Deputy Dean. This will be launched across the faculty in the upcoming academic year.

Regarding staff, staff development workshops use problem and inquiry-based learning, to facilitate staff to reflect critically on the semantics and pragmatics of 'inclusion speak' and the opportunity to evaluate their own practice. Furthermore, staff consultations are well established and facilitated through the CALs weekly drop ins, as well as at college team meetings. Lastly, teaching and learning interview panels now have a diverse student body of inclusivity ambassadors to support interview processes.

Various new schemes have been launched or furthered to support EDI initiatives. These include:

- The Inclusivity Ambassadors Project now has 38 trained inclusivity ambassadors who co-create and work in partnership with staff to promote and embed a culture of inclusivity within the faculty. Their remit includes working in partnership with staff to develop and review faculty policies, strategies, and course curricula, supporting staff interview processes, facilitate student facing belongness events such as BREW@HELS, and more.
- We have instituted a more visible welcome for new students, working with professional services and the Students' Union to ensure pop up welcomes throughout the year.
- The creation of the Menopause Conversation Space follows the success and principles of the Menopause Cafés to engage staff in this area. Work continues with CALs to explore strategies to enhance engagement and evaluate the impact of this work.
- The Neurodiverse Library Café was established, hosted monthly. Attendance and impact of the sessions has been monitored to create further actions.
- Established Graduate Student Success Advisor/ Student Nurse Support Navigator role.

This year, the completion on Athena Swan Bronze Awards across the whole faculty was achieved. Some EDI CALS have taken on the role of Athena Swan lead. Work continues in each college to ensure actions align with EDI strategy for maximum impact at faculty level.

The Faculty MAID (Module Assessment Information Document) has been put in place to provide clear and consistent approaches to assessment information. Further to this, a faculty -wide marking and assessment matrix created, to provide consistent, clear, and transparent information. This is in the process of being rolled out currently.

ADD continues to support all trigger courses as well as others to integrate academic skills and literacy throughout the course in a holistic, meaningful way.

Module and course convenor workshops/forums are held to assure intensive focus on assessment and feedback practices are embedded in all colleges. These are being rebranded as the Enhancing Teaching, Learning and Leadership Forum to reflect the focus of the workshops.

Areas Requiring Greater Focus:

- Timetabling requires re-evaluation, with it proving an ongoing challenge to students.
- Infrastructure requires improvement to be more inclusive; one example being the lack of an appropriate contemplation room to ensure students and staff have sufficient space for contemplation and/or prayer.
- Care leavers require greater support from the faculty to improve access and attainment rates.

STUDENTS' UNION (BCUSU)

Our Purpose:

"To have a positive impact on the experience of all BCU students, so they can achieve their full potential."

Introduction

This update pulls together the work of the organisation in regard to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). It pulls in information from the BCUSU EDI Committee, work undertaken from officers, and the work of BCUSU staff.

BCUSU EDI Committee

The committee meets bi-monthly and has representatives from SMT, People and Culture, multiple Executive Officers, and University staff members from the EDI team. It is chaired by the VP Equity and Inclusion.

People and Culture

Led by the People and Culture team, a year-round training plan has been delivered for all staff with some sessions linked to EDI, such as neurodiversity training ('Great minds don't have to think alike' from Every Mind at Work); discussion-based training on race and racism ('Brave Conversations about Race' from BCU); and LGBT ally training, which went out to all staff, including officers. Our 'core' staff and student staff must all complete mandatory Educare Equality and Diversity training either before or immediately after starting employment at BCUSU.

BCUSU Representing Students

Below are examples of BCUSU's work in representing student issues relating to EDI and their outcomes, collaboratively worked on with the wider university.

- We have worked with the University's data and IT teams to ensure that we have access to up-to-date information from students at enrolment regarding their EDI-related statuses.
- The sensory room, which was noted as having been agreed to in the last report, has been created and is being utilised by students and by staff from the Disability team to support students that they work with.
- Our officers helped students to raise awareness of the effects the issues the School of Art's lift were having on accessibility, which led to a faster resolution in improving the lift's functionality.
- We held a well-attended LGBTQ+ Fair at City South Campus in February 2024 for LGBTQ+ History Month, which raised awareness around LGBTQ+ issues and also celebrated the LGTBQ+ community.
- We ran a Women's History Month marketplace on campus which showcased female owned local businesses and gave them a platform for students to purchase their products.
- Our Vice President Equity and Inclusion ran a Disabled Students Conference in November 2023. The conference was open to all students and hosted workshops, talks and activities on how to become a good ally and support disabled students.
- We worked with student representatives at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC) on ensuring that students' Disability Support Statements are reflected in the practical assessments in music, acting and theatre courses.
- Our Vice President Equity and Inclusion and BCU's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Administrator co-wrote guidelines for students on using the multi-faith room, prompted by student feedback.
- BCUSU supported several student societies, along with BCU, to host regular Iftar events during Ramadan in 2024. These were well attended, with over 100 attendees on average, and they provided free food and dedicated prayer for all attendees.
- Following last year's work on spaces for Friday prayer, BCUSU worked with the Islamic Society and BCU to secure two slots for prayers, allowing for more students to take part in the prayers while making the most of the space available to us.
- Our Vice President Equity and Inclusion and Vice President Student Voice hosted a successful Reclaim the Night march in March 2024 aiming to raise awareness about gender-based violence and to advocate for safer streets and communities, particularly for women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and marginalised groups.
- Our Vice President Equity and Inclusion worked with the Assistant Director for Student Services on a paper regarding students being able to 'self-certify' for an EC. This will benefit students who may face barriers accessing medical notes or other proof due to financial, cultural, or personal reasons. This approach promotes fairness, reduces stress, and ensures all students have equal access to academic support, especially those from marginalised or underrepresented groups.
- BCUSU is working with the university to now give students access to their IT accounts for a period after being withdrawn from their course. This policy will be particularly beneficial from an EDI perspective as it will support students facing challenges such as health issues, financial difficulties, or personal crises, which may have led to their withdrawal. It promotes fairness by helping all students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, maintain continuity and access support.

BCU Committees

BCUSU staff and officers have strong involvement on various University committees related to EDI, including the main BCU EDI Committee, Mental Health Charters, Disabled Student Group, LGBT+ Staff Network Group, and a joint BCUSU and BCU Awareness/ History Month Working Group. This allows the organisation to feed in student voice, advocate for our students, and understand the University EDI direction.