University of Essex

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Annual Report 2023-24

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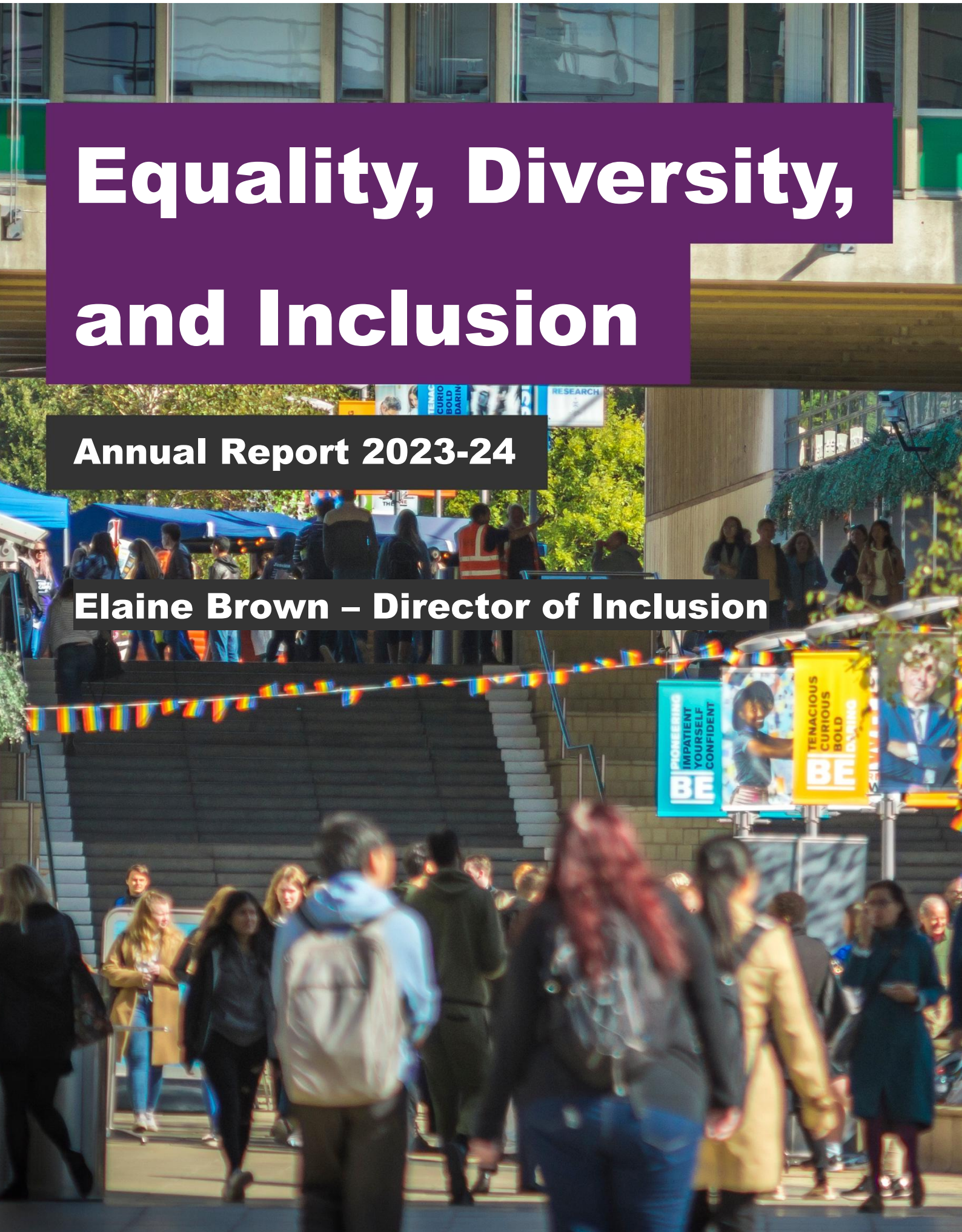

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Background

1. At Essex, we are strongly committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), making it a core aspect of everything we do. Our goal to cultivate a sense of belonging by building a community that embraces diverse perspectives, experiences, and ideas is woven throughout our University Strategy to 2028. We strive to continue to build and sustain an inclusive environment where every individual feels valued and is treated with dignity and respect. We see these ambitions as fundamental to our mission of excellence in education and excellence in research for the benefit of individuals, communities and society.
2. We are legally required under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it, and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This includes publishing information annually, such as our equality objectives, to demonstrate compliance, especially regarding those with protected characteristics.
3. The 2023-24 EDI Annual Report:
   - Summarises key EDI activities and trends.
   - Reports progress toward equality objectives and challenges.
   - Outlines priorities for 2024-25.
4. The report highlights how we meet, and sometimes exceed, our legal obligations, addressing discriminatory practices and fostering inclusivity.
5. It also reviews progress made since the 2022-23 report and includes updates up to November 2024, focusing on key achievements and challenges.
6. Where we use the term “gender” throughout this report, we are referring to legal sex at birth.

Our commitment to Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

7. Intersectionality is central to our EDI efforts, especially in our equality charters, where we have continued to address gaps across diverse identities. Our priorities include combating all forms of discrimination including antisemitism, Islamophobia, misogyny, racism, sexual harassment, and violence against women as well as focussing on accessibility.
8. Our statement on academic freedom and free speech within the law acknowledges that sometimes we convene difficult and uncomfortable conversations on our campuses, whether in the classroom, within research, or during events. It also states that we are committed to enabling people to speak freely within the law by providing a supportive and inclusive environment, within which people can expect to learn, grow, and develop through challenge. (Full statement on our website.)
9. Our EDI Policy 2019-25 aligns with the University's mission and goals, as outlined in our People Supporting, Education, and Research Strategies, embedding EDI throughout University operations. It reinforces our commitment to inclusion, fairness, and belonging, ensuring everyone understands their rights and responsibilities. It is integrated into key University documents, including prospectuses, admissions policies, recruitment materials, and employment policies.

Equality Objectives

10. Our five equality objectives are set out in our University strategies, specifically, our Education, Research and People Supporting Strategies. These are to:
    - Continue to monitor, analyse, and publish gender and ethnicity pay gaps, as a basis for adjustments to policy and practice to close any gaps.
    - Ensure equality and diversity in relation to student outcomes and measures of student success.
    - Benchmark our inclusive environment against internal and external recognition frameworks including Vitae, AdvanceHE, Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI), University of Sanctuary, Athena SWAN, Race Equality Charter and Mental Health Charter).
    - Increase diversity of representation at all levels of the organisation so that the University better reflects the community its serves and encourages these communities to reach their potential.
    - Promote our institutional commitment to an inclusive working environment to every member of our community, so that we can create a workplace which enables our people to succeed.
11. The associated performance indicators below are designed to drive meaningful and lasting cultural change.

Equality Objective 1: To continue to monitor, analyse and publish gender and ethnicity pay gaps as a basis for adjustments to policy and practice to close any gaps.

Performance Indicator: To reduce our institutional mean gender pay gap from 17.6% as at March 2018 to under 5% by 2028 and to have no significant pay gaps (>5%) in relation to other protected characteristics.

Gender pay gap

12. Our mean gender pay gap has continued to decrease, and was 14.07%, on 31 March 2024 down from 14.97% on 31 March 2023. This reduction is a positive sign of the progress we are making in addressing gender pay disparities. Our median gender pay gap has seen an increase, returning to 18.62% after a previous decrease to 16.80%. This fluctuation can be attributed to minor shifts in the distribution of men and women across pay bands, which can affect the median. Notably, there has been substantial improvement in our mean bonus gender pay gap, which has decreased to 4.67% in favour of men, down from 7.60% the previous year. Our median bonus gender pay gap has remained at zero unchanged from last year. The proportions of men and women receiving a bonus were similar to the previous year, with 9.11% of men and 12.96% of women receiving a bonus in the year ending 31 March 2024 (compared with 9.06% of men and 12.71 % of women receiving a bonus in the previous year).
13. Our equal pay for work of equal value remains within our +/- 5% tolerance range, for most grades except for grade 11 and our “Other grades” categories which show a gender pay gap in favour of men (7.35%) and (8.25%) respectively[1].
14. Overall, progress is being made in reducing our gender pay gap, and we will continue in our efforts and actions to do so. See our 2025 Gender Pay Gap Report for more detailed analysis and actions we are taking to reduce our pay gaps.

[1] The majority of staff who are in the “Other grade” categories are those on Knowledge Transfer Partnership contracts, who are employed by the University and hosted with an external employer. The pay for those staff aligns with the salary structure of the host employer.

Table 1: Summary our gender pay gaps for the last three years the minus sign indicates gaps in favour of men.

Mean Hourly Rate

31-Mar-22	31-Mar-23	31-Mar-24
-15.10 % Pay Gap	-14.97 % Pay Gap	-14.07 % Pay Gap
Men £23.85 / Women £20.24	Men £25.19 / Women £21.42	Men £26.43 / Women £22.71

Median Hourly Rate

31-Mar-22	31-Mar-23	31-Mar-24
-18.60 % Pay Gap	-16.80 % Pay Gap	-18.62 % Pay Gap
Men £22.41 / Women £18.24	Men £23.22 / Women £19.32	Men £24.27 / Women £19.75

Mean Bonus

31-Mar-22	31-Mar-23	31-Mar-24
-19.46 % Pay Gap	-7.60 % Pay Gap	-4.67 % Pay Gap
Men £752.69 / Women £606.24	Men £920.24 / Women £850.30	Men £788.97 / Women £737.10

Median Bonus

31-Mar-22	31-Mar-23	31-Mar-24
0.00 % Pay Gap	0.00 % Pay Gap	0.00 % Pay Gap
Men £500.00 / Women £500.00	Men £750.00 / Women £750.00	Men £500.00 / Women £500.00

Ethnicity and disability pay gaps

15. On 31 March 2024, our ethnicity pay gap favoured Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic staff by 4.83%, down from 6.39% last year. This is because most Black Asian and Minority Ethnic staff are in academic roles. At the time of reporting there was a non-disclosure rate of 16.6% for ethnicity. Through our recent work we have increased ethnicity disclosure by 3.23% over the past year.
16. As part of our Race Equality Charter (REC) action plan, a consultation process took place to consider additional ethnicity categories. Following this process, we are pleased that new ethnicity categories were added on HR Organiser on 31 August 2024 and we hope that these changes will further increase our ethnicity disclosure rates.
17. The disability pay gap is 3.06% in favour of staff with declared disabilities, but with a high non-disclosure rate of 56.24%, it is difficult to draw any conclusions from this data. We will continue efforts to improve disclosure through our "Your Profile Counts" campaign.

Equality Objective 2: To ensure equality and diversity in relation to student outcomes and measures of student success

Performance Indicator: By 2022, to have no significant (> 5%) equality awarding gaps for measures of student success at institutional level; and to maintain this through the period 2022-25 (University Strategy KPI 6)

18. As outlined in our Education Strategy to 2028, student success is central to our mission. We aim for a curriculum and assessment approach that enables all students to achieve excellent outcomes, regardless of their background. Our ambitious goal is to eliminate significant equality gaps in progression and degree outcomes, measured by specific protected characteristics (including age, disability, ethnicity, sex) and socio-economic background (Index of Multiple Deprivation) (IMD). To do this, it is important to take a realistic and transparent approach to analysing the data we collect.

19. This update will provide information over the last five years by the protected characteristics mentioned above on Undergraduate (UG) student and Postgraduate (PG) student registration, degree outcomes and progression including looking at data for UK and Non-UK domiciled students.

20. Our Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2025 outlines our intention to address risks in access, continuation, completion, attainment and progression for students who may face barriers to their success in the student lifecycle stages. Our strategies to address inequity in student outcomes are closely monitored by our Education Committee.

21. An annual report on Access and Continuation is also submitted to Education Committee each Spring.

Registered UG Students

22. **Table 2** shows that in 2023-24 our total UG population decreased by 14.3% compared with the previous year, from 12,810 in 2022-23 to 10,980 in 2023-24 (highlighted in light yellow in Table 2). This decrease is largely attributed to a 38.7% reduction in UK Domicile students which reduced from 8,845 in 2022-23 to 5,425 in 2023-24 (highlighted in in dark blue). Despite this overall decline, our student population by ethnicity remained proportionately consistent over the last five years.

23. All-Domicile students by ethnicity decreased in 2023-24, with notable declines among White students (down 15% from 6,085 in 2022-23 to 5,170 in 2023-24), Black students (down 14.8% from 2,460 in 2022-23 to 2,095 in 2023-24), and Chinese students (down 19.8% from 1,085 in 2022-23 to 870 2023-24 highlighted in light orange in Table 2). The reduction in numbers is mainly attributed to

the drop in UK White students (down 39.3% from 4,835 in 2022-23 to 2,935 in 2023-24) and UK Black students (down 36.7% from 2,155 in 2022-23 to 1,365 in 2023-24 highlighted in light pink).

24. In Non-UK Domicile students, Chinese students have experienced the most decline (18.5% from 1,025 in 2022-23 to 835 in 2023-24 highlighted in light purple) this could be associated with changes in UK Student Visa requirements, reflecting a broader trend in international student registration. All the other non-UK ethnicities have seen an increase compared to last year.

Table 2: Registered UG students over the last five years by Ethnicity (UK and Non-UK)

Domicile	Ethnicity	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Domicile	**Grand Total**	**13,595**	**100%**	**14,205**	**100%**	**13,655**	**100%**	**12,810**	**100%**	**10,980**	**100%**
	White	6,855	50%	7,130	50%	6,730	49%	6,085	48%	5,170	47%
	Black	2,485	18%	2,710	19%	2,670	20%	2,460	19%	2,095	19%
	Asian	1470	11%	1,465	10%	1,390	10%	1,420	11%	1330	12%
	Chinese	1185	9%	1135	8%	985	7%	1085	9%	870	8%
	Mixed	745	6%	815	6%	790	6%	730	6%	620	6%
	Other	455	3%	480	3%	495	4%	525	4%	525	5%
	Unknown	400	3%	470	3%	595	4%	510	4%	375	3%
UK Domicile	**Grand Total**	**9,300**	**100%**	**9,845**	**100%**	**9,630**	**100%**	**8,845**	**100%**	**5,425**	**100%**
	White	4,850	52%	5,200	53%	5,165	54%	4,835	55%	2,935	54%
	Black	2,235	24%	2,420	25%	2,370	25%	2,155	24%	1,365	25%
	Asian	1060	11%	1,020	10%	920	10%	830	9%	515	10%
	Chinese	95	1%	90	1%	75	1%	60	1%	35	1%
	Mixed	615	7%	650	7%	630	7%	570	6%	345	6%
	Other	250	3%	260	3%	235	2%	215	2%	135	3%
	Unknown	200	2%	205	2%	235	2%	175	2%	95	2%
Non-UK Domicile	**Grand Total**	**4,295**	**100%**	**4,370**	**100%**	**4,035**	**100%**	**3,975**	**100%**	**5,560**	**100%**
	White	2,005	47%	1,930	44%	1,570	39%	1,250	31%	2,235	40%
	Black	250	6%	290	7%	295	7%	305	8%	730	13%
	Asian	410	10%	450	10%	465	12%	585	15%	810	15%

Domicile	Ethnicity	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	Chinese	1090	25%	1050	24%	910	23%	1025	26%	835	15%
	Mixed	130	3%	165	4%	160	4%	155	4%	270	5%
	Other	210	5%	220	5%	260	6%	305	8%	390	7%
	Unknown	200	5%	270	6%	370	9%	340	9%	285	5%
% Gap (UK - Non-UK)	White	5.5%		8.6%		14.7%		23.3%		13.9%	
	Black	18.2%		18.0%		17.3%		16.7%		12.1%	
	Asian	1.9%		0.1%		-1.9%		-5.3%		-5.1%	
	Chinese	-24.4%		-23.1%		-21.8%		-25.1%		-14.4%	
	Mixed	3.6%		2.8%		2.5%		2.5%		1.5%	
	Other	-2.2%		-2.4%		-4.0%		-5.3%		-4.5%	
	Unknown	-2.5%		-4.1%		-6.8%		-6.6%		-3.3%	

UG Student Degree outcomes

25. The data in **Table 3a** shows that the percentage of UG students receiving Good degrees decreased by 2.5% (from 80.2% in 2022-23 to 77.7% in 2023-24 highlighted in light orange). The gap between Black Asian and Minority Ethnic students and their White counterparts has widened by 4.8%, indicating a decrease in Black Asian and Minority Ethnic students achieving Good degrees from 77.1% in 2022-23 to 72.4% in 2023-24 (highlighted in light yellow).

26. In contrast, the gap between young and mature students has narrowed by 3.6% this year, despite a continuing decline in Good Degrees for young students (see highlighted in light green in Table 3a).

27. The gap based on 'Sex' narrowed by 1.8% in 2023-24 as a result of a 3.2% decrease in the number of women achieving a Good degree (see highlighted in light pink in Table 3a). While this may be a one-off occurrence, coinciding also with a less severe decrease in the percentage of men achieving a Good degree, we will continue to monitor this data closely lest it become a trend that needs further investigation.

28. The gap for students with declared disabilities increased slightly, by 0.5% (see highlighted in dark blue in Table 3a).

29. Overall, the data indicates that particular attention needs to be drawn to Good degree outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students which has continued to decline.

30. The 2023-24 IMD data is not yet available due to a regulatory change moving from Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Return to Data Futures. The process of generating IMD data was based on our HESA Student Return processes which are currently being adjusted to our new Data Futures processes but is not yet available.

Table 3a: UG Student Degree Outcomes over the last five years for Age, Disability, Sex and IMD where students achieve 1st or 2:1

Characteristics		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022/23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
University		2,566	82.2%	3177	87.3%	2937	81%	2982	80.2%	2443	77.7%
Age	Mature	303	75.0%	277	77.4%	327	77.3%	501	77.4%	494	77.9%
	Young	2,263	83.3%	2900	88.4%	2610	81.9%	2481	80.7%	1949	77.6%
	% Gap	***-8.3%***		***-11.0%***		***-4.6%***		***-3.3%***		***0.3%***	
Disability	Declared Disability	278	83.0%	369	88.7%	344	80.4%	360	81.4%	325	79.3%
	No Disability Declared	2,288	82.1%	2808	87.1%	2593	81.5%	2622	80.0%	2118	77.4%
	% Gap	***0.9%***		***1.6%***		***-1.1%***		***1.4%***		***1.9%***	
Sex	Woman	1390	83.2%	1660	88.3%	1610	82.4%	1725	82.5%	1395	79.3%
	Men	1,175	81.0%	1510	86.3%	1325	80.1%	1250	76.9%	1045	75.5%
	Not Declared	0		5	50.0%	5	100%	5	100.0%	5	100%
	% Gap	***2.2%***		***2.0%***		***2.3%***		***5.6%***		***3.8%***	
Ethnicity	B.A.M.E	1,144	79.5%	1499	85.2%	1389	78.1%	1446	77.1%	1164	72.4%
	White	1,365	84.5%	1597	89.4%	1469	84.5%	1467	83.5%	1225	83.6%
	% Gap	***-5.0%***		***-4.2%***		***-6.4%***		***-6.4%***		***-11.2%***	
IMD	Q1 & 2	697	78.5%	833	84.8%	718	75.0%	686	72.9%		
	Q4 & 5	721	86.7%	825	91.7%	709	86.6%	729	82.5%		
	% Gap	***-8.2%***		***-6.9%***		***-11.6%***		***-9.6%***		***0.0%***	

Note: Where N is <10, figures have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 5.

31. The data in **Table 3b** shows that Black students experience the largest incremental change, where the gap widened by 22.3% in 2023-24. Non-UK Black students receiving a Good Degree increased by 12%, However, in contrast, UK Black students achieving a good degree decreased by 10.3%. It is concerning to observe that this group has seen a continuous decrease from 72.3% in 2021-22 to 58.2% in 2023-24 (see highlighted in dark blue in Table 3b). This has highlighted the need for targeted support for UK Black students.

32. It must also be noted that the awarding gap closing between student groups during the pandemic and then widening afterwards has been recognised across the sector as being the statistical effect of no-detriment policies, rather than a real-world adjustment in terms of positive outcomes for more disadvantaged students. Therefore, the work on awarding gaps needs to be benchmarked against evidence prior to the pandemic, and new plans need to be put into place, such as those outlined in our Access and Participation Plan 2025.

33. The performance of Asian and Arab students narrowed by 1.7%. The gap between UK and Non-UK Arab and Asian students narrowed by 1.6% in 2023-24; however, both groups experienced an overall decline in achieving a Good degree (highlighted in light orange in Table 3b). The gap between UK Chinese and Non-UK Chinese students achieving a Good degree widened by 17.4% due to a reduction of UK Chinese; however, it should be noted that the number of UK Chinese compared to Non-UK Chinese students is much lower and, therefore, the percentages are less meaningful (see highlighted in light pink).

34. The percentage point gap for Mixed students narrowed by 5% in 2023-24 (highlighted in light yellow). This is a result of both UK and Non-UK Mixed students achieving a Good degree decreasing by 6.35% and 11.3% respectively. A positive trend should be noted for Other students (see highlighted in light green in Table 3b), with a 4.1% narrowing of the gap as more UK students earned Good Degrees. However, the gap for White students widened by 9.8%, mainly attributed to the quantity of Non-UK White students decreasing by 44.3%, leading to a reduced percentage of Non-UK White students achieving a Good degree (reducing from 85.9% in 2022-23 to 78.1% in 2023-24) [see highlighted in light grey].

Table 3b: UG Student Degree Outcomes by Ethnicity (UK and Non-UK) over the last five years where students achieved a 1st or 2:1.

Ethnicity	UK & Non-UK	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Asian & Arab	Non-UK	45	78.9	75	82.4	71	76.3	72	78.3	88	70.4
	UK	54	87.0	202	93.5	147	84.5	111	75.0	88	68.8
	% Gap	***-8.1***		***-11.1***		***-8.2***		***3.3***		***1.6***	
Black	Non-UK	32	68.1	41	74.5	49	70.0	40	65.6	45	77.6
	UK	74	75.4	399	81.8	370	72.3	359	68.5	251	58.2
	% Gap	***-7.3***		***-7.3***		***-2.3***		***-2.9***		***19.4***	
Chinese	Non-UK	209	82.9	374	86.0	354	79.7	536	85.5	401	84.1
	UK	14	66.7	33	89.2	24	92.3	12	85.7	8	66.7
	% Gap	***16.2***		***-3.2***		***-12.6***		***-0.2***		***17.4***	
Mixed	Non-UK	10	83.3	10	76.9	15	93.8	21	91.3	16	80.0
	UK	82	82.8	82	83.7	102	85.7	99	86.8	70	80.5
	% Gap	***0.5***		***-6.8***		***8.1***		***4.5***		***-0.5***	
Other	Non-UK	66	77.6	98	81.7	101	80.2	84	79.2	78	77.2
	UK	158	81.9	185	88.9	156	78.8	112	67.1	119	69.2
	% Gap	***-4.3***		***-7.2***		***1.4***		***12.1***		***8.0***	
White	Non-UK	370	82.6	395	88.0	461	84.9	359	85.9	200	78.1

Ethnicity	UK & Non-UK	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	UK	995	85.4	1,202	89.8	1,008	84.1	1,108	82.9	1,025	84.9
	% Gap	***-2.8***		***-1.8***		***0.8***		***3.0***		***-6.8***	
Data extracted on 03/10/2024											

35. **Table 3c** below shows that the largest decrease of Good degrees was for Mixed students by 11.3%. The largest decrease was for Women identifying as Mixed reducing by 8.9% (87.5% in 2022-23 to 78.6% in 2023-24 (highlighted in light yellow). In contrast, most other ethnic groups exhibited minimal gender differences in performance, suggesting that gender disparities are not a widespread issue among these populations.

36. Black students experienced declines in achieving a Good degree, with the gap widening by 2.2% due to a decrease in the percentage for Women (5.5%) and Men (7.7%) achieving a Good degree (see highlighted in dark blue) which underscores the importance of sustained efforts to close the attainment gap for Black students. The percentage points for Asian and Arabs, Chinese, Other and White students narrowed by 1.2%, -0.7%, -3.2% and -2.1% respectively in 2023-24.

37. When looking at the attainment rate for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Students compared with White students, the rate for Black students is the lowest (highlighted in in dark blue in Table 3c).

Table 3c: UG Student Degree Outcomes over the last five years by Ethnicity and Sex where students achieved a 1st or 2:1

Ethnicity	Sex	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Asian & Arab	Women	75	83.3	105	91.3	105	87.5	95	79.2	85	73.9
	Men	125	86.2	170	87.2	115	79.3	85	70.8	90	66.7
	% Gap	**-2.9**		**4.1**		**8.2**		**8.4**		**7.2**	
Black	Women	260	81.3	245	80.3	230	74.2	225	68.2	185	62.7
	Men	145	65.9	190	79.2	190	70.4	170	66.7	115	59.0
	Not Declared	0		0							

Ethnicity	Sex	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	% Gap	15.4		1.1		3.8		1.5		3.7	
Chinese	Women	130	83.9	200	87.0	190	79.2	270	88.5	180	87.8
	Men	95	79.2	205	85.4	185	80.4	275	82.1	230	82.1
	Not Declared							0			
	% Gap	4.7		1.6		-1.2		6.4		5.7	
Mixed	Women	55	84.6	50	90.9	55	84.6	70	87.5	55	78.6
	Men	35	77.8	40	72.7	60	85.7	50	83.3	30	85.7
	Not Declared	0									
	% Gap	6.8		18.2		-1.1		4.2		-7.1	
Other	Women	115	79.3	155	88.6	145	82.9	105	77.8	110	75.9
	Men	110	84.6	130	83.9	110	73.3	90	66.7	85	68.0
	% Gap	-5.3		4.7		9.6		11.1		7.9	
White	Women	730	84.9	865	89.6	855	85.5	920	85.2	755	84.8
	Men	635	84.7	730	89.0	610	83.0	540	80.6	465	82.3
	Not Declared			5	100.0	5	100	5	100.0	5	100
	% Gap	0.2		0.6		2.5		4.6		2.5	

Note: Where N is <10, figures have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 5.

38. The data in **Table 3d** below reveals that with the exception of Chinese students, the percentage point gaps for all other ethnicities and White students achieving a Good degree showed a negative gap with most of them widening by 6% to 8% in 2023-24, compared with the previous year (highlighted in light orange). Notably, Asian and Arab students face a 14% gap and Black students a 23% gap compared with their White counterparts (highlighted in light orange).

39. Over the last three years, the gaps for UK Black students and Asian and Arab students has continued to increase, mainly due to the decrease of Black students (14%, from 72% in 2021-22 to 58% in 2023-24) and Asian and Arab students (15%, from 84% in 2021-22 to 69% in 2023-24) achieving a Good degree (see highlighted in light yellow in Table 3d). In contrast, the gap between,

Non-UK Black students and Non-UK White students narrowed significantly, by 19.8%, with the percentage of Good degrees achieved by Non-UK Black students increasing by 12% and Non-UK White students' attainment decreasing by 7.8% (see highlighted in light pink).

Table 3d: UG Student Degree Outcomes over the last five years by Ethnicity (UK and Non-UK) where students achieved a 1st or 2:1

Domicile	Ethnicity	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Domicile	Asian & Arab	199	85.0	277	90.0	218	82.0	183	76.0	176	70.0
	White	1,365	85.0	1,597	89.0	1469	84.0	1,467	84.0	1,225	84.0
	% Gap	**0.0**		**1.0**		**-2.0**		**-8.0**		**-14.0**	
	Black	406	75.0	440	81.0	419	72.0	399	68.0	296	61.0
	White	1,365	85.0	1,597	89.0	1469	84.0	1467	84.0	1225	84.0
	Gap	**-10.0**		**-8.0**		**-12.0**		**-16.0**		**-23.0**	
	Chinese	223	82.0	407	86.0	378	80.0	548	85.0	409	84.0
	White	1,365	85.0	1,597	89.0	1,469	84.0	1,467	84.0	1,225	84.0
	Gap	**-3.0**		**-3.0**		**-4.0**		**1.0**		**0.0**	
	Mixed	92	83.0	92	83.0	117	87.0	120	88.0	86	80.0
	White	1,365	85.0	1,597	89.0	1,469	84.0	1,467	84.0	1,225	84.0
	Gap	**-2.0**		**-6.0**		**3.0**		**4.0**		**-4.0**	
	Other	224	81.0	283	86.0	257	79.0	196	72.0	197	72.0
	White	1,365	85.0	1,597	89.0	1,469	84.0	1,467	84.0	1,225	84.0
	Gap	**-4.0**		**-3.0**		**-5.0**		**-12.0**		**-12.0**	
UK Domicile	Asian & Arab	154	87.0	202	94.0	147	84.0	111	75.0	88	69.0
	White	995	85.0	1,202	90.0	1,008	84.0	1,108	83	1,025	85.0
	Gap	**2.0**		**4.0**		**0.0**		**-8.0**		**-16.0**	
	Black	374	75.0	399	82.0	370	72.0	359	69.0	251	58.0
	White	995	85.0	1,202	90.0	1,008	84.0	1,108	83	1,025	85.0
	Gap	**-10.0**		**-8.0**		**-12.0**		**-14.0**		**-27.0**	

Domicile	Ethnicity	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	Chinese	14	67.0	33	89.0	24	92.0	12	86.0	8	67.0
	White	995	85.0	1,202	90.0	1,008	84.0	1,108	83	1,025	85.0
	Gap	**-18.0**		**-1.0**		**8.0**		**3.0**		**-18.0**	
	Mixed	82	83.0	82	84.0	102	86.0	99	87.0	70	80.0
	White	995	85.0	1,202	90.0	1,008	84.0	1,108	83	1025	85.0
	Gap	**-2.0**		**-6.0**		**2.0**		**4.0**		**-5.0**	
	Other	158	82.0	185	89.0	156	79.0	112	67.0	119	69.0
	White	995	85.0	1,202	90.0	1,008	84.0	1,108	83	1,025	85.0
	Gap	**-3.0**		**-1.0**		**-5.0**		**-16.0**		**-16.0**	
Non-UK Domicile	Asian & Arab	45	78.9	75	82.4	71	76.3%	72	78.3	88	70.4
	White	370	82.6	395	88.0	461	84.9	359	85.9	200	78.1
	Gap	**-3.7**		**-5.6**		**-8.6**		**-7.6**		**-7.7**	
	Black	32	68.1	41	74.5	49	70.0	40	65.6	45	77.6
	White	370	82.6	395	88.0	461	84.9	359	85.9	200	78.1
	Gap	**-14.5**		**-13.5**		**-14.9**		**-20.3**		**-0.5**	
	Chinese	209	82.9	374	86.0	354	79.7	536	85.5	401	84.1
	White	370	82.6	395	88.0	461	84.9	359	85.9	200	78.1
	Gap	**0.3**		**-2.0**		**-5.2**		**-0.4**		**6.0**	
	Mixed	10	83.3	10	76.9	15	93.8	21	91.3	16	80.0
	White	370	82.6	395	88.0	461	84.9	359	85.9	200	78.1
	Gap	**0.7**		**-11.1**		**8.9**		**5.4**		**1.9**	
	Other	66	77.6	98	81.7	101	80.2	84	79.2	78	77.2
	White	370	82.6	395	88.0	461	84.9	359	85.9	200	78.1
	Gap	**-5.0**		**-6.3**		**-4.7**		**-6.7**		**-0.9**	

Note: Where N is <10, figures have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 5. Data extracted on 03/10/2024

UG Progression

40. The data in **Table 4** below indicates an overall improvement in successful progression rates for most ethnic groups, particularly among Asian students, who saw an increase of 8%, and Other students, with a 7% increase (highlighted in light green). This positive trend suggests that our efforts to support diverse student populations are having a beneficial impact on academic achievement and retention. Additionally, most ethnic groups have experienced a reduction in repeating rates, ranging from 1% to 4%, indicating that students are navigating their programmes more successfully (highlighted in light blue).

41. While Chinese students maintained stable progression rates, however, their repeat rate increased by 1%, and we will keep this under review to see if a trend emerges.

42. There has been a decrease in unsuccessful progression rates across all ethnicities, particularly among Asian and Other groups (6%) (highlighted in light pink in Table 4). There are a number of unknown progression outcomes for 2023-24; we will have this information as we move further into the 2024-25 academic year when the reassessments and registration processes have been completed.

Table 4: UG Progression Status by Ethnicity over the last five years

Ethnicity	Progression Status	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Asian	Successful	1,250	85	1,215	83	1,055	76	1,010	71	1,050	79
	Repeat	85	6	135	9	145	10	150	11	85	6
	Unsuccessful	135	9	120	8	190	14	260	18	165	12
	Unknown	0	0					0	0	35	3
Black	Successful	2,100	85	2,120	78	1,955	73	1,825	74	1,620	77
	Repeat	230	9	390	14	410	15	365	15	245	12
	Unsuccessful	155	6	195	7	305	11	270	11	210	10
	Unknown									25	1
Chinese	Successful	950	80	975	86	770	78	905	83	720	83
	Repeat	25	2	60	5	50	5	40	4	40	5
	Unsuccessful	215	18	100	9	165	17	140	13	105	12
	Unknown					0	0			10	1
Mixed	Successful	635	85	655	80	615	78	550	75	485	78

Ethnicity	Progression Status	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	Repeat	50	7	90	11	90	11	70	10	65	10
	Unsuccessful	60	8	70	9	80	10	105	14	60	10
	Unknown							0	0	5	1
Other	Successful	360	79	365	76	345	70	340	65	375	71
	Repeat	30	7	45	9	60	12	45	9	35	7
	Unsuccessful	65	14	75	16	90	18	140	27	110	21
	Unknown									0	0
Unknown	Successful	285	71	280	60	260	44	200	39	160	43
	Repeat	25	6	60	13	45	8	40	8	30	8
	Unsuccessful	90	23	130	28	290	49	270	53	165	44
	Unknown	0	0			0	0	5	1	25	7
White	Successful	5,905	86	6,040	85	5,425	81	4,870	80	4,280	83
	Repeat	340	5	525	7	540	8	470	8	345	7
	Unsuccessful	605	9	565	8	765	11	745	12	515	10
	Unknown	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	25	0
Grand Total		13,600	100	14,210	100	13,655	100	12,810	100	10,980	100

43. **Table 5** below reveals that, compared with White students, all other ethnic groups (except for Chinese) experienced an overall decline in the percentage of those achieving Good degrees. In 2023-24, decreases from these ethnicities ranged from 1% to 8% (highlighted in light orange). In contrast, Other and White students demonstrated stability in their achievement percentages.

44. Mixed and Black students experienced the highest declines in Good degree achievement, with decreases of 8% and 7%.

45. We recognise the importance of implementing effective support strategies to improve graduate outcomes for all our students and addressing equality attainment gaps.

Table 5: UG Degree Outcomes by Ethnicity over the last five years

Ethnicity Groups	Degree Outcomes	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Black	1st or 2:1	406	75	440	81	419	72	399	68	296	61
	2:2 or 3rd	137	25	103	19	163	28	186	32	193	39
Asian & Arab	1st or 2:1	199	85	277	90	218	82	183	76	176	70
	2:2 or 3rd	35	15	30	10	49	18	57	24	77	30
Chinese	1st or 2:1	223	82	407	86	378	80	548	85	409	84
	2:2 or 3rd	50	18	65	14	92	20	93	15	80	16
Mixed	1st or 2:1	92	83	92	83	117	87	120	88	86	80
	2:2 or 3rd	19	17	19	17	18	13	17	12	21	20
Other	1st or 2:1	224	81	283	86	257	79	196	72	197	72
	2:2 or 3rd	54	19	45	14	67	21	77	28	76	28
Unknown	1st or 2:1	57	81	81	89	79	86	69	78	54	75
	2:2 or 3rd	13	19	10	11	13	14	20	22	18	25
White	1st or 2:1	1,365	85	1,597	89	1,469	84	1,467	84	1,225	84
	2:2 or 3rd	248	15	190	11	272	16	288	16	238	16
Grand Total	Total	3,122	100	3,639	100	3,611	100	3,720	100	3,146	100

Registered PG Students

46. Table 6 shows that the total number of registered Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students has declined by 9.8%, falling from 5,758 in 2022-23 to 5,194 in 2023-24 (highlighted in light orange). Despite this decrease, the ethnic representation among PGT students has remained consistent with 2022-23, with Asian students constituting 50% of the population. However, the number of Asian students experienced the largest decrease (19.3%) (highlighted in light blue in Table 6), driven largely by an 18.4% decline in Non-UK Asian students (3,130 in 2022-23 to 2,555 in 2023-24), which could be attributed to the changes to UK Student Visa requirements. In contrast, Black students across all domiciles experienced the largest increase (3%) of registrations (769 in 2022-23 to 831 in 2023-24 – a 8.1% growth highlighted in light pink), largely due to a 22.4% rise in Non-UK Black students.

47. The percentage of UK-domiciled White students fell by 4%; however, the number of Non-UK White students more than doubled (378 in 2022-23 to 818 in 2023-24) resulting a 116.4% (highlighted in light yellow), resulting in an overall increase of 1% in the percentage of White students registering to study at Essex.

Table 6: Registered PGT Students over the last five years by Ethnicity (UK and Non-UK)

Domicile	Ethnicity Groups	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Domicile	White	1,059	44	1,249	40	1,194	28	1,130	20	1,077	21
	Black	256	11	315	10	405	9	769	13	831	16
	Asian	337	14	887	28	1987	47	3196	56	2,579	50
	Chinese	406	17	286	9	249	6	239	4	234	5
	Mixed	102	4	115	4	131	3	105	2	136	3
	Other	137	6	149	5	175	4	188	3	213	4
	Unknown	120	5	112	4	123	3	131	2	124	2
	Grand Total	2,417	100	3,113	100	4,264	100	5,758	100	5,194	100
UK Domicile	White	709	68	891	68	847	67	754	70	262	66
	Black	176	17	212	16	199	16	144	13	67	17
	Asian	70	7	76	6	78	6	66	6	24	6
	Chinese	3	0	6	0	14	1	15	1	5	1
	Mixed	47	4	66	5	62	5	47	4	20	5
	Other	17	2	21	2	21	2	22	2	6	2
	Unknown	27	3	34	3	38	3	30	3	12	3
	Total	1,049	100	1,306	100	1,259	100	1,078	100	396	100
Non-UK Domicile	White	352	26	358	20	347	12	378	8	818	17
	Black	80	6	103	6	206	7	625	13	765	16
	Asian	267	19	811	45	1909	64	3130	67	2,555	53

Domicile	Ethnicity Groups	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	Chinese	403	29	280	15	235	8	224	5	229	5
	Mixed	55	4	49	3	69	2	58	1	116	2
	Other	120	9	128	7	154	5	166	4	207	4
	Unknown	93	7	78	4	85	3	106	2	118	2
	Total	1,370	100	1,807	100	3,005	100	4,687	100	4,808	100
% Gap (UK - Non-UK)	White	42.0		48.0		55.0		62.0		49.0	
	Black	11.0		10.0		9.0		0.0		1.0	
	Asian	-12.0		-39.0		-58.0		-61.0		-47.0	
	Chinese	-29.0		-15.0		-7.0		-4.0		-4.0	
	Mixed	0.0		2.0		3.0		3.0		3.0	
	Other	-7.0		-5.0		-3.0		-2.0		-2.0	
	Unknown	-4.0		-1.0		0.0		1.0		1.0	

48. Table 7 provides information on the PGT progression rates by ethnicity, based on internal data. In 2023-24, ‘Other’ ethnicity students had the highest success rate, at 83.7%, an increase of +7% from 2022-23 (76.3%). ‘Other’ ethnicity students also had the lowest ‘unsuccessful’ rate (9.3%), which is a decrease of -9% from 2022-23 (18.4%).

49. Despite a +2% rise from 2022-23 (70.9%), White students had the lowest success rate (72.9%) across the Ethnicity groups. The largest gap in success occurs between ‘Other’ Ethnicity students and White students at +11% (highlighted in light blue).

50. The proportion of ‘unsuccessful’ Mixed Ethnicity students increased by +7% from 2022-23 (4.8%) to 2023-24 (11.5%), the largest increase by Ethnicity group (highlighted in light purple).

51. Over the six-year period from 2018-19 to 2023-24, Black students have had the lowest average success rate (70.9%), and Chinese students have had the highest average ‘unsuccessful’ rate (21.7%) (see highlighted in light orange).

52. Appendix B provides information on the PGT continuation rates for the University, compared with the sector. The data includes all the student characteristics that are available in the OfS dataset at the postgraduate level (Age on Entry, Disability, Ethnicity, Sex, IMD, and Domicile).

Table 7: PGT Progression Status by Ethnicity

Ethnicity Groups	Progression Status	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Asian	Successful	245	72.1	640	71.9	1395	70.1	2255	70.7	1980	76.9
	Repeat	55	16.2	105	11.8	150	7.5	195	6.1	165	6.4
	Unsuccessful	45	13.2	145	16.3	445	22.4	745	23.4	415	16.1
	Unknown							5	0.2	15	0.6
Black	Successful	180	70.6	200	63.5	285	70.4	580	75.3	610	73.5
	Repeat	45	17.6	75	23.8	45	11.1	75	9.7	45	5.4
	Unsuccessful	30	11.8	45	14.3	70	17.3	110	14.3	165	19.9
	Unknown					0	0.0	5	0.6	5	0.6
Chinese	Successful	305	66.3	205	68.3	200	76.9	190	74.5	190	77.6
	Repeat	35	7.6	30	10.0	20	7.7	20	7.8	15	6.1
	Unsuccessful	120	26.1	65	21.7	45	17.3	45	17.6	45	18.4
	Unknown							0	0.0		
Mixed	Successful	75	75.0	80	69.6	100	76.9	85	81.0	105	80.8
	Repeat	15	15.0	25	21.7	15	11.5	15	14.3	10	7.7
	Unsuccessful	10	10.0	10	8.7	15	11.5	5	4.8	15	11.5
	Unknown									0	0.0
Other	Successful	90	64.3	110	73.3	135	77.1	145	76.3	180	83.7
	Repeat	20	14.3	20	13.3	10	5.7	10	5.3	15	7.0
	Unsuccessful	30	21.4	20	13.3	30	17.1	35	18.4	20	9.3
	Unknown										
White	Successful	770	72.6	920	73.6	880	73.6	790	70.9	765	72.9
	Repeat	165	15.6	200	16.0	130	10.9	85	7.5	85	8.1
	Unsuccessful	130	12.3	135	10.8	185	15.5	210	18.8	160	15.2
	Unknown							30	2.7	45	4
Grand Total		**2,490**	**100**	**3,140**	**100**	**4,285**	**100**	**5,795**	**100**	**5,170**	**100**

53. **Table 8** shows that the registered postgraduate research (PGR) population increased by 10.4% in 2023-24 rising from 1,014 students in 2022-23 to 1,119 in 2023-24 (highlighted in light orange in Table 8). This growth reflects a positive trend in PGR registration. The trend over the last five years shows that the overall percentage of White students across all domiciles has been decreasing and experienced a further 2% decrease in 2023-24 to 47%. Despite this they still constitute the largest ethnic group among our PGR students (see highlighted in light pink). Interestingly, the actual number of White students has increased by 7.1% (from 492 in 2022-23 to 527 in 2023-24), driven significantly by a substantial rise in Non-UK Domicile White students, which surged by 97.3% in 2023-24.

54. In contrast, the overall percentages of Other, Black, and Asian students have all seen modest increases in 2023-24, with respective gains of 2%, 1%, and 1% (see highlighted in light blue in Table 8). The most significant growth within these groups came from Non-UK students, particularly in the Other, Black, and Asian categories, which saw increases of 52.3%, 57.1%, and 27.2%, respectively. This growth suggests that the University is becoming increasingly diverse and may be attracting more international students across various ethnic backgrounds.

Table 8: Registered PGR Student population over the last five years by Ethnicity (UK and Non-UK)

Domicile	Ethnicity Groups	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Domicile	White	554	54	528	53	527	51	492	49	527	47
	Black	67	6	60	6	74	7	82	8	97	9
	Asian	102	10	99	10	120	12	120	12	143	13
	Chinese	68	7	74	7	83	8	92	9	95	8
	Mixed	50	5	47	5	44	4	49	5	46	4
	Other	112	11	109	11	99	10	88	9	118	11
	Unknown	81	8	84	8	79	8	91	9	93	8
	Grand Total	1,034	100	1,001	100	1,026	100	1,014	100	1,119	100
UK Domicile	White	366	75	361	73	390	72	379	71	306	70
	Black	31	6	32	7	40	7	40	7	31	7
	Asian	18	4	21	4	28	5	28	5	26	6
	Chinese	2	0	4	1	5	1	5	1	3	1

Domicile	Ethnicity Groups	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	Mixed	21	4	20	4	21	4	22	4	15	3
	Other	16	3	22	4	23	4	23	4	19	4
	Unknown	32	7	32	7	35	6	40	7	35	8
	Grand Total	486	100	492	100	542	100	537	100	435	100
Non-UK Domicile	White	188	34	167	33	137	28	113	24	223	33
	Black	36	7	28	6	34	7	42	9	66	10
	Asian	84	15	78	15	92	19	92	19	117	17
	Chinese	66	12	70	14	78	16	87	18	92	13
	Mixed	29	5	27	5	23	5	28	6	31	5
	Other	96	18	87	17	76	16	65	14	99	14
	Unknown	49	9	52	10	44	9	51	11	58	8
	Grand Total	548	100	509	100	484	100	478	100	686	100
% Gap (UK - Non-UK)	White			40.0		44.0		47.0		37.0	
	Black	-1.0		1.0		0.0		-2.0		-3.0	
	Asian	-11.0		-11.0		-14.0		-14.0		-11.0	
	Chinese	-12.0		-13.0		-15.0		-17.0		-12.0	
	Mixed	-1.0		-1.0		-1.0		-2.0		-2.0	
	Other	-15.0		-13.0		-12.0		-10.0		-10.0	
	Unknown	-2.0		-3.0		-3.0		-4.0		0.0	

55. It was positive to note an improvement in the successful progression rates of our UG students for most ethnic groups, Good degrees increasing for Non-UK Black students and the narrowing of attainment gap based on Sex and Age. We were also pleased that the ethnic make-up of our UG and PGR students remained relatively consistent, even as our PGR student population has increased. However, we note that, overall, the number of UG students who received a Good degree declined by 2.5%, and that the gap between Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students and White students has continued to increase (4.8%) in 2023-24 with a notable gap of 22.35% for UK Black students.

56. We note the urgency of addressing this and have ongoing strategies in place, including continuing to develop our approaches to assessment so that our practices are inclusive, effective and scalable to support student success; completion of curriculum review and associated actions related to inclusive education practice; listening to student feedback and actions in our refreshed Access and Participation Plan 2025. Progress with these initiatives is monitored by the Education Committee.

Access and Participation Plan

57. The Access and Participation Plan (APP) is a condition of registration with the OfS. It sets out our analysis of and approach to closing any gaps that are identified in our measures of student success by student characteristic and student lifecycle stage and asks us to consider an Equality of Opportunity Risk Register in doing so. Throughout Spring 2024, we held a series of workshops bringing together key individuals across the institution to identify where we should focus our proposed intervention strategies at the University of Essex. These areas of focus were agreed as:

- **Access**: Applications and Registrations from men have been declining as a proportion of the total for a four-year period, and men are particularly underrepresented on Health courses.
- **Continuation and Completion**: Students who enter the University holding a BTEC qualification are less likely to continue and complete than those holding A levels.
- **Attainment**: There is an ethnicity attainment gap for Black students when compared to White students.
- **Progression**: The progression rates to graduate level employment and further study for young students are below the national average.

58. Each of these four areas has a dedicated set of activities designed to address the gap and to provide an opportunity for analysis and to contribute to the national evidence base. In most cases, the academic year 2024-25 will be considered a benchmark for evaluation and the impact of the interventions will be measured from the 2025-26 academic year for a period of between three and four years. The objectives within the APP are in line with the institutional KPI-06, Student Outcomes (Equality and Diversity), to have no significant equality attainment gaps for measures of student success at institutional level; and to maintain this through the period 2025-28.

59. The APP 2025 was submitted to the OfS on 31 July 2024 and approved on 8 November 2024.

Transitions and Transformations project

60. The Black Researcher's Journey is a four-year initiative funded by Research England and the Office for Students, aimed at improving opportunities for Black researchers at the University of Essex. Now in its third year, the project has become a key part of the University's activities and processes, with continuous input from students shaping its development. The programme's Black Researcher's Hub

(BRH) is integrated into the Chart My Path student portal and provides resources for skill development, events, testimonials, and a co-developed pedagogic framework. Two new features (the Grow your Skills tool and Sponsorship space) offer self-assessment and personalised mentoring opportunities, further enhancing support for students at all study levels.

61. Over the past year, the project has partnered with internal and external organisations to deliver a range of impactful activities. Notably, two paid internships were offered in collaboration with Vitae and Colchester and Ipswich Museums, providing valuable work experience for students. The first BRH Symposium was held, featuring student research presentations, career panels, and networking opportunities. Additionally, the project was highlighted in a case study shared with the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON), further expanding its influence and reach within the higher education community.

62. The project's Challenger Lab, a 10-week programme co-created with Essex Startups and Experience Haus, saw postgraduate students applying design skills to address challenges in the postgraduate experience. Another significant achievement was the successful delivery of the Leadership and Coaching programme by project partner In Professional Development (InPD). Fourteen students participated, gaining leadership skills and group coaching, with some now pursuing the CMI Level 5 Certificate in Management and Leadership. This initiative has bolstered participants' confidence and agency, aligning with the project's broader goals.

63. In June 2024, the project expanded its focus on anti-racism and allyship by offering Train the Trainer training, delivered by Diverse Minds, to appropriate staff in People and Culture and departmental Inclusivity Leads. This training, along with last year's "Mentoring with Race in Mind" training videos, will eventually be made available for the entire University, ensuring ongoing learning and institutional engagement with race equity.

64. Our Transitions and Transformations Academic Sponsorship programme is now in its second project year, with five academic sponsors trained during 2023 and the next training event due to take place in November 2024.

EDI Support for Students

65. In 2023-24, the Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service (SWIS) continued to support students through various initiatives aimed at improving access to counselling and tailored services. Students seeking counselling could choose between in-person and virtual sessions and were invited to specify any needs related to gender, disability, or ethnicity to better engage in therapy. SWIS, in partnership with HealthHero (a professional and independent employee assistance organisation offering access to services like counselling, legal guidance and financial advice), has successfully met all such requests. Additionally, the Student Reasonable Adjustment Policy was expanded to accommodate students undergoing diagnostic evaluations for conditions like Attention Deficit

Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism or with recent evidence of adjustments from prior education providers.

66. SWIS partnered with Disabled Students UK (DSUK) to conduct the Access Insight Survey, gathering valuable feedback from students. The survey results, published in October 2024, will be used to benchmark Essex against other institutions and enhance support services. SWIS also worked with the Careers Team to improve accessibility for prospective disabled students during Open Days, making changes to the reasonable adjustments request form, accessible parking, and campus routes.

67. In collaboration with Essex Police, SWIS hosted a workshop to raise awareness about Forced Marriage and Honour-Based Abuse, particularly for international students. The workshop equipped 40 participants with information and tools to access support services. Additionally, SWIS developed a comprehensive guide for first-generation students with input from various departments, organising mixers and peer-support events that attracted over 120 students, fostering a supportive community.

68. SWIS engaged with the student body to raise awareness of Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen, and Boater (GTRSB) heritage through a communications campaign, including a blog post that received 233 engagements. This initiative aimed to reduce stigma and improve support for GTRSB students, upholding the University's commitment to honouring its GTRSB pledge.

Equality Objective 3: To benchmark our inclusive environment against internal and external recognition frameworks including Vitae, AdvanceHE, Stonewall WEI, University of Sanctuary, Athena SWAN, Race Equality Charter and Mental Health Charter

Performance Indicator: To achieve an Institutional Bronze Race Equality Charter award by the end of 2022.

Performance Indicator: Sustain our position as a Top 100 Stonewall Employer.

69. We remain actively engaged with various Equality Charter frameworks that help us evaluate our efforts and enhance equity and inclusion for specific groups. The feedback gained from these frameworks enables the University to identify actions to address inequities and implement them effectively.

70. However, participation in external charters is just one aspect of the University's broader inclusion strategy. These charters offer an external structure, constructive feedback, and a means to benchmark our progress against other institutions while learning from best practices. Decisions about which charters to engage with, along with any resulting action plans, are made through the University's governance and management structures. This ensures a clear commitment to upholding our statutory duties, including academic freedom, freedom of speech within the law, and the Public Sector Equality Duty. In this process, we carefully assess the risks and benefits of engaging with different charters. Further details can be found in Appendix A.

Athena SWAN

71. In April 2024, we successfully renewed our institutional Bronze award. The feedback received from Advance HE highlighted several areas of best practice, including signing the Age-friendly Employer Pledge, implementing our Tackling Harassment and Sexual Violence Against Women Action Plan, and introducing the Body at Work policy suite. Our institutional action plan was also commended for its clear structure and use of relevant metrics.

72. We will ensure momentum for our gender equity work is maintained so that our institutional actions will have a positive impact on gender equity at Essex.

73. As part of our efforts to embed intersectionality, collaboration between our Athena SWAN and Race Equality Charter self-assessment teams (SATs) have increased. To support this intersectional approach, our inaugural annual meeting between the SATs was held in June 2024, allowing for

knowledge sharing, discussion of challenges and provide a platform to address intersectional inequities identified in our Athena SWAN staff survey.

74. Our ambition is to apply for a Silver award when we renew in 2029 demonstrating the positive impact of our gender equity work.

Race Equality Charter

75. Following the achievement of our Bronze award for the REC, we have continued working on delivering our institutional action plan. Progress includes:

- The launch of a refreshed institutional approach to performance and development reviews (PDRs) in February 2024, with staff training and a system to track PDR frequency. Academic promotion workshops were delivered in February and May 2024.
- Race considerations as part of our recruitment training for managers as well as publishing an institutional positive action statement on our recruitment pages and linked to our job packs.
- Additional ethnicity categories on HR Organiser (following a consultation process).
- Reducing the grade for participation in our Future Leaders from grade 8 to grade 7.
- Black Researchers journey through our Transition and Transformation project (see paragraphs 56 to 60).

76. The REC SAT will continue to monitor and review our REC action plan to ensure we are delivering on our institutional comments to enhance race equity at Essex.

Workplace Equality Index

77. In November 2023, we submitted our application for the Workplace Equality Index (WEI) and were pleased to receive a Silver Award in 2024. Alongside this achievement, we ranked 101st, our highest position since 2020. Following a feedback session with our Stonewall Relationship Manager in August, we are refreshing our WEI action plan.

78. Feedback included:

- **Inclusive Policies and Support**: Our strong, LGBTQ+-inclusive policies, particularly around family leave and trans inclusion, ensure that all staff have access to benefits and support.
- **Recruitment and Onboarding**: Steps to attract LGBTQ+ talent, such as LGBTQ+ equality statements in job packs and bias reduction training, help create an inclusive recruitment process.
- **Employee Network and Leadership Engagement**: Our LGBTQ+ employee network is well-supported, with dedicated resources and senior leadership actively involved in promoting inclusivity through events and mentorship.

University of Sanctuary

79. We have been a University of Sanctuary since December 2021 and continued to be a place of sanctuary offering sanctuary scholarships and support to our sanctuary scholars. We submitted our reaccreditation application in March 2024 and were reaccredited by City of Sanctuary UK for a further period of three years.

80. Our Sanctuary network meet once per term to check on progress on our Sanctuary activities which includes, offering two sanctuary scholarships each year, maintaining our Sanctuary web pages, celebrating Refugee Week annually, working with external organisations such as Refugee Asylum seeker and Migrant Action Colchester, and Colchester City Council.

81. In 2023-24, our community actively participated in various events, including one of our Sanctuary students and an academic from Sociology and Criminology attending the Refugee Week Collaborative Arts Project at King’s College London, alongside other Universities of Sanctuary. Additionally, during Refugee Week, our Art Exchange hosted ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) students from Colchester Institute for an art project, with their work displayed in the gallery, supported by the Centre for Migration Studies.

82. Our Centre for Trauma, Asylum and Refugees, in collaboration with the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust, hosted a conference on 19 June 2024 to mark the 26th anniversary of Refugee Week. The event brought together humanitarian workers, refugees, human rights activists, clinicians, and researchers to explore themes of home, hope, and art in times of war.

83. We strengthened our relationship with the Eastern ARC Universities of Sanctuary, which include universities of East Anglia, Sussex and Kent[2]. The network meets bi-monthly and is planning a formal launch in March 2025.

Times Higher Education Impact Rankings

84. For three consecutive years, Essex has ranked in the top 100 universities in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, which assess contributions to the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2024, we ranked 58th out of over 2,000 institutions globally, with notable success in the categories of 'Gender Equality' and 'Reduced Inequalities,' reflecting our commitment to social justice and equity.

85. In the category of 'Gender Equality,' we were lauded for excelling in female academic representation, gender equality research, and policies supporting all genders, including trans and non-binary individuals. Our family-friendly policies were also commended.

86. In the category of 'Reduced Inequalities,' we were recognised for our anti-discrimination policies, inclusive recruitment practices, accessible facilities, and strong support for students with disabilities and those from developing countries.

Mental Health Charter

87. In recognition of our commitment to the mental wellbeing of our students and staff, we recognise that equality Charters can be a useful mechanism to assist us in evaluating our progress in achieving our aim in supporting an enabling environment for members of our staff and student communities as set out in our People Supporting Strategy to 2028. We signed up to the Mental Health Charter in in 2021 and were pleased to submit our application to Student Minds in Autumn 2023. We are awaiting the outcome of our application which we expect to receive in Spring 2025.

University Mental Health Charter

student minds

[2] Home - Eastern Arc

Equality Objective 4: To increase diversity of representation at all levels of the organisation so that the University represents the community it serves and encourages these communities to reach their potential (People Supporting Strategy 2028)

Performance Indicator: An increase in disclosure rates (target 90%) for all protected characteristics by 2022 and for this to be maintained throughout the period 2022-2028.

Current staffing position

88. Tables 13-20 below provide information about the University's staffing profile, analysed by grade, grouping gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability and is looking at data between academic years 2019-20 to 2023-24. Data for tables 13, 14 and 16 uses census data at 1 December each year. Data for tables 15a and 15b and 19 refer to the whole academic year and table 18 used data as at 1 September 2024.

Table 13: All University of Essex Staff by selected protected characteristics

Categories	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Gender					
Women	55.89%	56.66%	56.29%	57.45%	56.05%
Men	44.11%	43.34%	43.71%	42.55%	43.95%
Ethnicity					
White	74.05%	71.12%	70.06%	66.93%	62.87%
B.A.M.E.	13.27%	13.49%	14.39%	16.61%	16.87%
I prefer not to say	1.12%	1.15%	0.96%	1.23%	1.28%
Unknown	11.56%	14.24%	14.59%	15.24%	18.98%
Sexual Orientation					
Heterosexual	39.45%	38.26%	39.41%	43.08%	43.92%
Bi	1.42%	1.57%	1.88%	2.42%	2.56%

Categories	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Gay man	1.38%	1.29%	1.16%	1.28%	1.19%
Gay woman/lesbian	0.67%	0.82%	1.03%	1.00%	0.95%
Other identity not listed	0.48%	0.54%	0.75%	0.98%	0.83%
I prefer not to say	2.98%	2.93%	2.73%	3.59%	3.96%
Unknown	53.62%	54.58%	53.04%	47.65%	46.57%
Disability					
Yes	2.76%	2.61%	2.32%	1.92%	1.58%
No	68.08%	62.81%	55.02%	44.33%	40.97%
Unknown	29.16%	34.57%	42.65%	53.75%	57.45%

89. **Table 13** shows the proportions of University of Essex staff by selected protected characteristics, excluding on-demand staff.

90. The proportion of Men and Women has remained stable over the five-year period. This year, there is a slight (but not significant) rise in the proportion of men employed at Essex.

91. Analysis by Ethnicity shows an increase in non-disclosures rates increasing from 15.24% in 2022-23 to 18.98% as of 1 August 2024; however, this has improved by 3.23% (as of 1 October) since this data was taken following an email campaign in July 2024 and changes to the ethnicity categories available for staff to disclose at the end of August 2024.

92. The proportion of staff disclosing their Sexual Orientation has increased each year since 2020-21, so it is difficult to know if the trends in the proportions of the disclosed Sexual Orientation reflect an actual change in the staff population or are the result of new disclosure categories for sexual orientation. For example, the proportion of staff disclosing that they are Bi-sexual has increased each year since 2019-20.

93. Disclosure of Disability has decreased each year between 2019-20 and 2022-23; however, we noted an increase since the census point for 2023-24 following ongoing work to improve disclosure. Future work to help increase disclosure rates for staff will include providing more information on the descriptions of disability and re-wording the question asked on HR Organiser so that it is in line with HESA's question, *'Do you have an impairment, health condition or learning difference that has substantial and long-term impact on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities?',* which may encourage neurodiverse staff to declare. We will also be working to increase our overall disclosure by exploring the migration of student staff data onto HR Organiser.

Table 14: Selected protected characteristics grade 9-11

Categories	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Gender					
Women	34.45%	37.56%	45.70%	46.12%	46.39%
Men	65.55%	62.44%	54.30%	53.88%	53.61%
Ethnicity					
Unknown	7.18%	7.69%	8.59%	8.28%	9.16%
B.A.M.E	15.79%	17.65%	21.65%	23.95%	24.35%
I prefer not to say	0.96%	0.90%	1.46%	1.63%	1.71%
White	76.08%	73.76%	68.30%	66.15%	64.78%
Sexual Orientation					
Unknown	47.37%	47.96%	50.43%	43.98%	42.89%
Bi	0.96%	0.90%	1.29%	1.77%	1.79%
Gay man	1.44%	1.36%	1.46%	1.85%	1.71%
Gay woman/lesbian	0.00%	0.00%	1.20%	1.11%	1.27%
Heterosexual	43.06%	42.99%	41.49%	46.34%	46.98%
I prefer not to say	7.18%	6.79%	3.52%	4.29%	4.69%
Other identity not listed	0.00%	0.00%	0.60%	0.67%	0.67%
Disability					
Yes	4.78%	5.43%	1.98%	1.70%	1.56%
No	76.56%	75.57%	64.60%	57.80%	54.28%
Unknown	18.66%	19.00%	33.42%	40.50%	44.15%

94. **Table 14** is provided to monitor the diversity of staff in senior grade (9-11) at the University, particularly by ethnicity and gender where we are trying to increase representation.

95. The table is a subset is of the data in Table 13. The data for 2023-24 shows that there is 7.22% more men than women in grades 9-11; however, the proportion of women in these grades have been increasing year on year and is now 46.39% compared to 34.45% in 2019-20. This is due to positive actions we are taking to improve gender equity including actions to reduce our gender pay gaps.

96. While there is a slight increase (0.88%) in grade 9-11 staff who did not disclose their ethnicity, this proportion is about half of that observed among University staff across all grades (see table 13).

97. The proportion of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic staff in grades 9-11 has continued to increase each year which is an encouraging trend.

98. Disclosure of Sexual Orientation has increased in grades 9-11 since 2021-22 but non-disclosure remains high at 42.89%. Non-disclosure of Disability has increased to 44.15% in 2023-24 making it difficult to draw conclusions from this data.

Table 15a: New Starters by Gender and Ethnicity

Academic Years	New Starters (Gender)	%
2019-20	Women	59.58%
	Men	40.42%
2020-21	Women	61.05%
	Men	38.95%
2021-22	Women	56.64%
	Men	43.36%
2022-23	Woman	60.74%
	Men	39.26%
2023-24	Woman	49.06%
	Men	50.94%
2019-20	B.A.M.E	17.32%
	Unknown	10.50%
	White	72.18%
2020-21	B.A.M.E	19.80%
	Unknown	10.80%
	White	69.39%
2021-22	B.A.M.E	18.60%
	Unknown	32.45%

Academic Years	New Starters (Gender)	%
	White	48.53%
2022-23	B.A.M.E	17.49%
	Unknown	25.61%
	White	56.90%
2023-24	B.A.M.E	27.44%
	Unknown	32.64%
	White	39.92%

99. **Table 15a** and **15b** show new members of staff at the University of Essex in the given academic year by protected characteristics, excluding on-demand staff. There was a significant drop in the number of new staff in 2023-24, due to a pause in staff recruitment, resulting in significantly different figures compared with the previous years. For the first time since 2019-20, the University recruited more Men than Women in 2023-24.

100. The variability of the level of 'Unknown' makes it hard to draw conclusions about Ethnicity proportions year on year. However, the 2023-24 figures show a 9.95% increase in the proportion of new starters who are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, which is the largest percentage increase since 2019-20. Disaggregated Ethnicity reveals that this is mostly due to an increase in the proportion of staff declaring their ethnicity as Asian or Asian British.

Table 15b: New Starters by Ethnicity (disaggregated)

101. The analysis of this table is in paragraphs above.

Academic Years	New Starters (Ethnicity)	%
2019-20	Unknown	10.50%
	Asian or Asian British	7.03%
	Black or Black British	1.54%
	Mixed	2.08%
	Not Stated	1.27%
	Other Ethnic Groups	5.40%
	White	72.18%

Academic Years	New Starters (Ethnicity)	%
2020-21	Unknown	10.80%
	Asian or Asian British	7.04%
	Black or Black British	3.36%
	Mixed	3.70%
	Not Stated	0.80%
	Other Ethnic Groups	4.90%
	White	69.39%
2021-22	Unknown	32.45%
	Asian or Asian British	6.43%
	Black or Black British	3.22%
	Mixed	3.64%
	Not Stated	0.42%
	Other Ethnic Groups	5.31%
	White	48.53%
2022-23	Unknown	24.94%
	Asian or Asian British	7.60%
	Black or Black British	4.35%
	Mixed	3.33%
	Not Stated	0.66%
	Other Ethnic Groups	1.40%
	White	56.90%
2023-24	Unknown	32.22%
	Asian or Asian British	16.01%
	Black or Black British	4.16%
	Mixed	4.57%
	Not Stated	0.83%

Academic Years	New Starters (Ethnicity)	%
	Other Ethnic Groups	2.29%
	White	39.92%

Table 16: Staff Turnover (aggregated)

Categories	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Gender					
Women	5.72%	6.51%	8.48%	7.32%	8.04%
Men	4.40%	5.86%	7.39%	7.47%	6.16%
Ethnicity					
White	4.93%	6.17%	7.19%	6.66%	6.56%
B.A.M.E	5.54%	5.84%	11.52%	9.23%	8.86%
I prefer not to say	7.41%	3.85%	6.67%	4.55%	7.14%
Unknown	6.09%	7.65%	8.30%	8.78%	9.36%
Sexual Orientation					
I prefer not to say	4.35%	2.94%	6.96%	6.20%	4.55%
Unknown	5.56%	6.58%	9.39%	8.36%	7.25%
Bi	6.67%	5.88%	5.06%	8.05%	9.76%
Gay man	2.94%	13.33%	11.63%	15.22%	7.50%
Gay woman/lesbian	6.25%	0.00%	8.57%	5.56%	6.45%
Heterosexual	4.73%	6.02%	6.58%	6.14%	7.29%
Other identity not listed	0.00%	0.00%	10.34%	12.00%	10.71%
Disability					
Yes	4.23%	4.62%	5.48%	2.90%	1.96%
No	5.27%	6.04%	7.58%	5.72%	5.05%
Unknown	4.86%	6.90%	16.82%	6.98%	9.44%

102. **Tables 16** and **17** shows the turnover of staff (specifically resignations) during each year by protected characteristics. Staff turnover has been relatively stable over the last five years. In 2023-24, there was a small increase in turnover for Women and a small decrease in turnover for Men. While the data does not provide details as to the reasons for resigning, the pending review of our leaver questionnaire to capture data by protected characteristics may help provide us with more insight into why people leave by protected characteristics.

Table 17: Staff Turnover - disaggregated

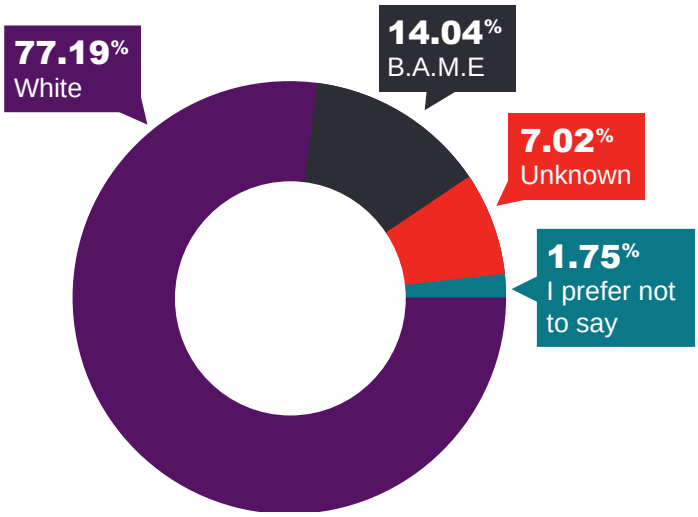
Categories	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Arab	10.00%	0.00%	4.00%	12.00%	6.25%
Asian or Asian British	5.05%	8.91%	15.70%	9.14%	6.56%
Black or Black British	8.00%	8.00%	8.93%	11.46%	17.81%
Chinese	5.17%	5.26%	8.64%	12.94%	8.97%
Mixed	7.14%	5.08%	11.54%	7.69%	8.57%
White	4.93%	6.16%	7.19%	6.66%	6.56%
Other ethnic background	3.23%	1.67%	9.46%	3.95%	6.25%
I prefer not to say	7.14%	3.70%	6.67%	4.55%	7.14%
Unknown	6.25%	7.98%	8.30%	8.78%	9.36%

103. **Table 18** highlights the University's progress toward balanced representation amongst our academic leadership roles, with women holding 47.37% of leadership roles and men 52.63, showing a nearly equal gender distribution. Within our academic leadership roles, ethnic diversity is still an area requiring some improvement, with 14.04% of leaders declaring Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds alongside 77.19% for White declarations. In terms of sexual orientation, 70.18% identify as heterosexual, and in the category of disability only 5.26% of our academic leaders have declared themselves 'disabled'. Within each of these categories, there are still high non-disclosure rates, reflective of our overall staff non-disclosure rates, which we hope to resolve through our "Your Profile Counts" campaign. The roles included in this table can be found in Appendix C.

Table 18: Academic Leadership – protected characteristics 2023-24

Gender (Sex)

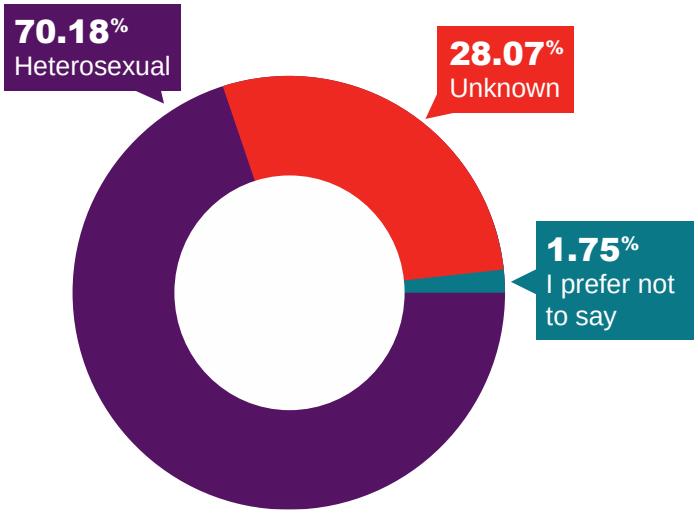
Ethnicity



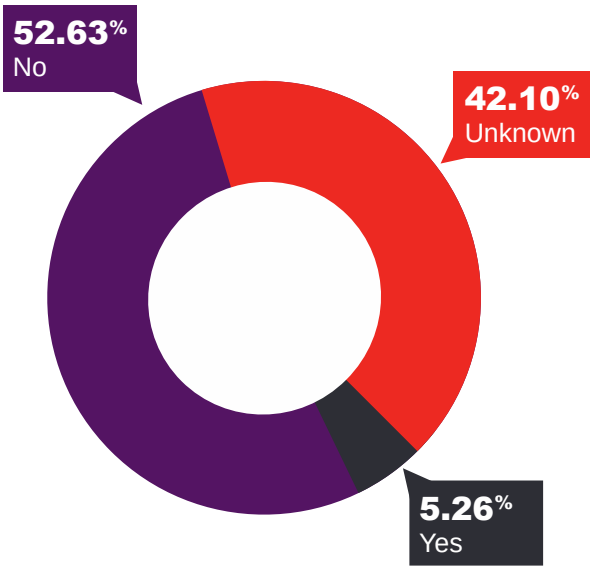
Disaggregated Ethnicity

White	77.19%
Black or Black British	5.26%
Asian or Asian British	3.51%
Mixed	1.75%
Other ethnic group	3.51%
Unknown	7.02%
I prefer not to say	1.75%

Sexual orientation

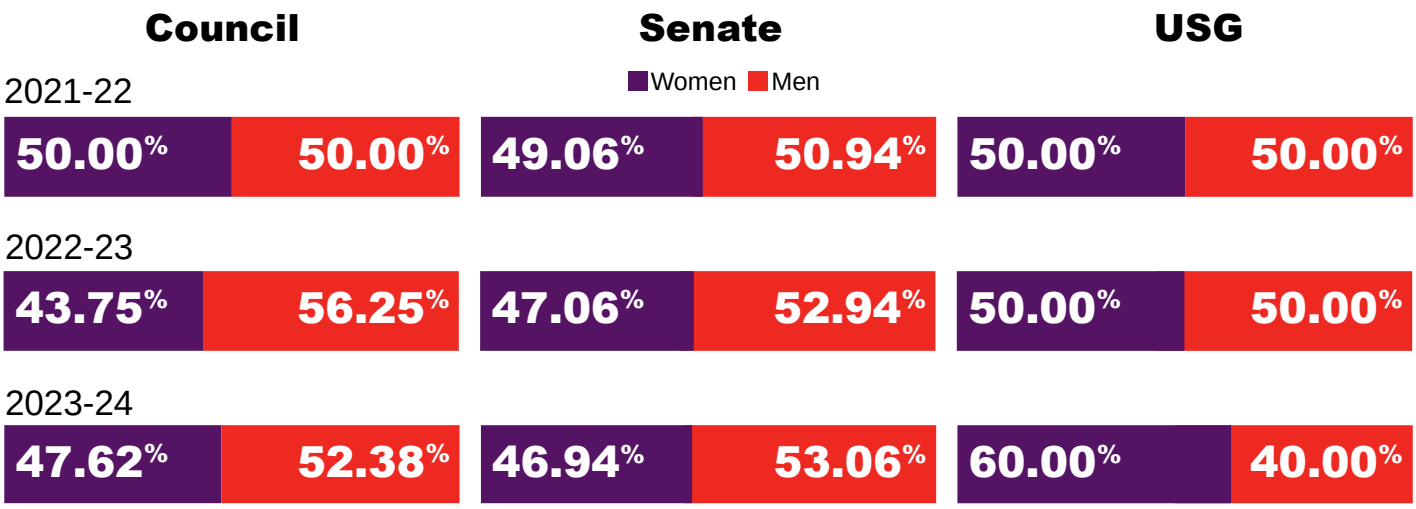


Disability



104. **Table 19** shows the proportions of Council, Senate and USG members by Gender (Sex). This is based on membership for the 2023-24 Academic Year. The proportion of Women increased in 2023-24 for both Council and USG, with USG moving from 50% for the first time in three years. The proportion of Women on Senate remained at similar levels in 2023-24.

Table 19: Governing Committees by Gender (Sex)



105. **Table 20** below shows the proportions of Council, Senate and USG by Ethnicity. This is based on membership for the 2023-24 academic year. The proportion of White and Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic staff remained the same for the third year for USG. There was an increase in 'Unknown' and 'I prefer not to say' for Senate and the proportion of Council which is White increased this year to a three-year high of 80.95%.

Table 20: Governing Committees by Ethnicity

	Council			Senate			USG		
Ethnicity	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**
White	77.27%	68.75%	80.95%	80.00%	77.78%	71.43%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%
B.A.M.E	18.18%	25.00%	19.05%	15.56%	20.00%	18.37%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%
I prefer not to say	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.22%	0.00%	4.08%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Unknown	4.55%	6.25%	0.00%	2.22%	2.22%	6.12%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Supporting and Celebrating Neuro-inclusion

106. In May 2023, USG approved recommendations to enhance neurodiversity support, including the development of guidelines on neuro-inclusion for employees and managers. These guidelines, approved by the People, Culture and Inclusion Group (PCIAG) and published in October 2024, are designed to raise awareness of neurodiversity, empower managers to engage in supportive discussions, and ensure appropriate reasonable adjustments are identified.

107. During Neurodiversity Celebration Week, the University promoted neurodiverse awareness through various initiatives. A blog post highlighted ongoing efforts to create a neurodiverse community, and staff shared personal stories about parenting neurodiverse children and their experiences. On 22 March, a hybrid coffee morning allowed staff and students to hear from a panel with lived neurodiverse experiences, followed by targeted training sessions on neurodiversity and emotional intelligence for a departmental team, and a presentation on workplace inclusivity at the Essex Business School (EBS) EDI Conference. In July, a blog by the Inclusion Manager addressed the global Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) medication shortage, offering alternative support resources.

108. These initiatives have fostered greater awareness and engagement, evidenced by increased self-referrals for neurodiversity support and rising interest in mentorship and peer support among neurodiverse staff. Building on this momentum, we plan to establish the Neurodiverse Staff Support Forum in academic year 2024-25, to support and connect neurodiverse employees further.

Ageing in the Workplace

109. Since signing the Age-friendly Employer Pledge in September 2023, we have progressed on developing a mid-life review, piloting group career coaching sessions, conducting health checks, and working with Payroll to improve pension support.

110. In a successful 12-month review with the Centre for Ageing Better in September 2024, we outlined these achievements. Going forward, we will focus on raising awareness of the benefits of a multigenerational workforce within our management training and supporting managers in fostering inclusive team environments.

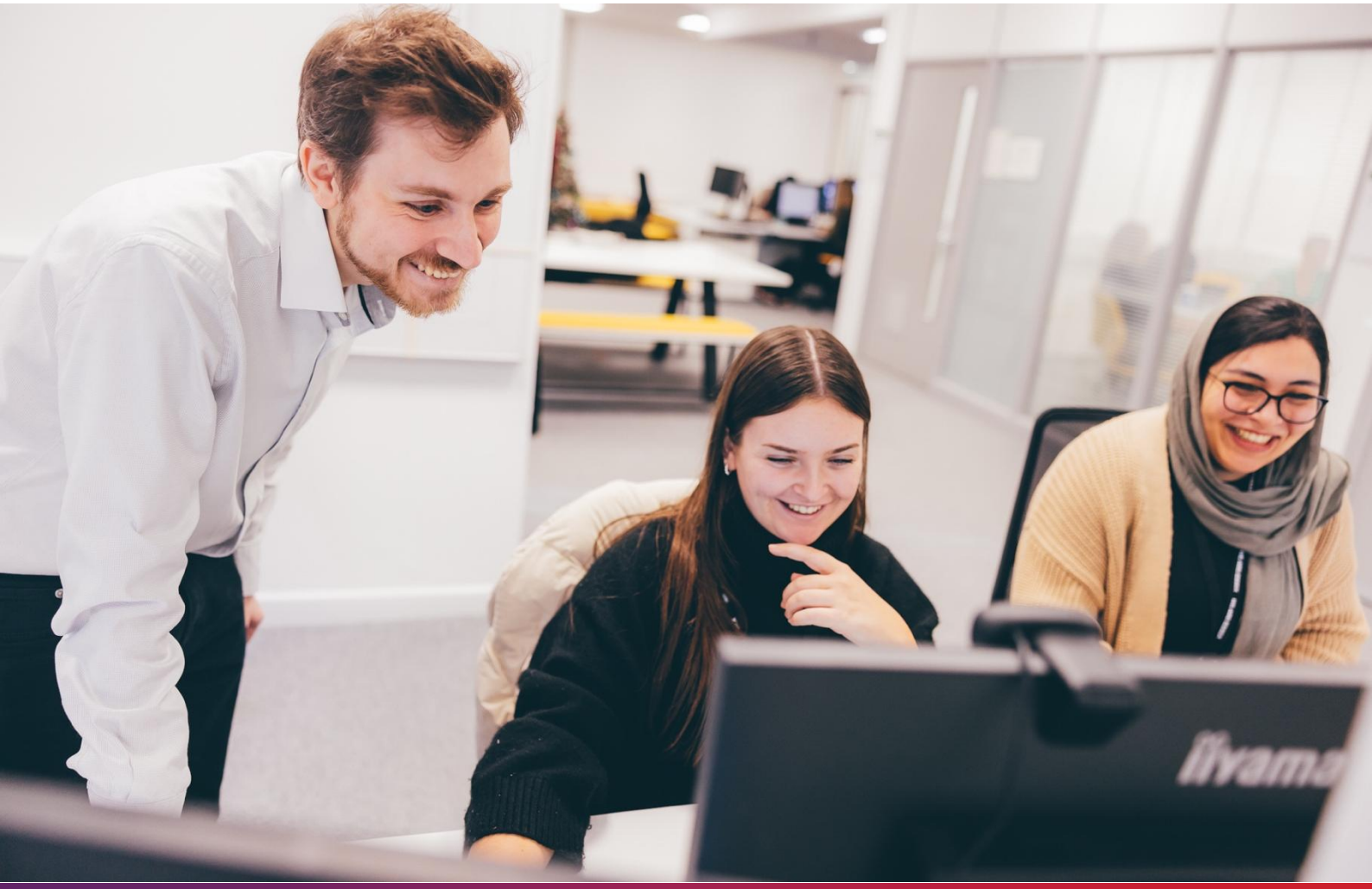
We're an Age-friendly Employer

Disclosure Rates, Your Profile Counts and Review of Categories

111. We ran "Your Profile Counts" campaigns in October 2023, April 2024, and throughout the summer 2024 using Essex Weekly blogs, digital screens across our campuses, payslip messages, and emails to explain the benefits of EDI data disclosure, its security, and update options on HR Organiser. Presentations were delivered to various departments, with plans to deliver to all departments.

112. In line with our commitments to the REC and the WEI, we reviewed and amended our internal disclosure categories for sexual orientation and ethnicity, consulting widely through focus groups, staff surveys, and community groups to gather feedback on potential improvements.

113. These campaigns have positively impacted disclosure rates and our latest HESA data showed that improvements for Gender (+7.64%), Nationality (+10.49%), Sexual Orientation (+3.92%), and Religious Belief (+3.95%) and ethnicity improved by 2% following an email campaign in July 2024. We acknowledge that more needs to be done to increase disclosure rates for disability and building upon our neuro-inclusion work we are considering how best to change the way we describe this category to help increase disclosure. Our ‘Your Profile Counts’ campaign will continue throughout academic year 2024-25.



Equality Objective 5: To promote our institutional commitment to an inclusive working environment to every member of our community so that we can create a workplace which enables its people to do their best (People Supporting Strategy to 2025).

Performance Indicator: Evidence 100% completion of new equality, diversity and inclusion training (How We Work at Essex) delivered through induction and annual refresher training for all staff and role holders. This will help colleagues to understand our values, shared responsibilities and to meet legislation requirements.

Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Within the Law

114. The University upholds academic freedom, freedom of expression, and inclusion, recognising that academic freedom as vital to university life. Our commitment to lawful free speech aligns with our EDI objectives, reinforced by policies that support diverse views and respectful dialogue. In July 2024, Council approved a new institutional Code of Practice and Speaker Protocol, with key EDI policies updated to reflect our stance on academic freedom.

115. Our Speaker Code of Practice ensures lawful and open expression by outlining a risk-based process for all speakers, covering University, Students' Union, and Faith Centre activities. This code sets expectations for all participants, fulfilling both statutory obligations and our commitment to free speech.

116. Following the change of government in July 2024, further implementation work on requirements under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 has been paused until further notice.

117. We continue monitoring external speaker notifications, with the Safeguarding Advisory Group reviewing data each term. From August 2023 to July 2024, external speaker notifications decreased by 2%, with 75% of events held on-campus. Where necessary, speakers were approved with mitigating measures to support lawful discussion.

118. The table below summarises all external speaker notifications and approvals for 2023-24 (August 2023 – July 2024), noting a 2% decrease in notifications. Of these, 75% were for on-campus events, and speakers requiring additional review were approved with mitigating measures to ensure compliance.

Table 21: External Speaker Notifications and Approvals 2023-24

781	**Approved**	**33**	**Approved with mitigations or conditions**
10	**Referred to the highest decision maker in the provider's process**	**0**	**Requests rejected**

EDI Training

119. Our essential staff training, How We Work at Essex, covers EDI topics, such as discrimination, bystander intervention, and addressing harassment, including Islamophobia, antisemitism, and misogyny. A Booster course refreshes this content for existing staff, with recent updates emphasising support for Muslim staff and students, renewed focus on bystander intervention, and key policies like our Zero Tolerance Approach to harassment. Current course completion rates stand at 93.72% as of November 2024, with ongoing efforts to reach 100%.

120. In academic year 2023-24, we continued to integrate EDI themes like microaggressions and privilege into our Strategic and Future Leaders programmes, receiving strong feedback that team-level sessions would further benefit staff. A new session on addressing pay gaps was also introduced. Additional EDI training included lectures for Biomedical Science students, presentations on harassment, racism, and disability access to YUFE[3] colleagues, and Tackling Misogyny, Sexism, and Sexual Violence training. Participant feedback endorsed extending these sessions and delivering them in-person across our three campuses in academic year 2024-25.

Leadership development training

121. We supported leadership development which enabled four candidates to attend Advance HE's Aurora leadership programme for women as well as supporting three candidates to undertake the Diversifying Leadership programme for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic aspiring leaders. Additionally, we were pleased to support one member of staff to participate in the Stonewall Leadership Programme.

[3] The Young Universities for the Future of Europe alliance

122. Leadership development was further supported through the delivery of management development programmes and workshops, and bespoke support for managers. The core management development programmes are designed to develop the leadership skills of individuals who are preparing to manage, manage operational teams or are new to line management. Four programmes were delivered to 102 colleagues.

123. Management Accelerator workshops were delivered to support the application of management policy and topics in practice. Topics included Managing: Recruitment, Induction, Effective PDRs, Wellbeing, Workload, Flexible working requests, Absence, Capability, and Conduct through a combination of facilitators and professional services experts. 28 sessions were delivered to 233 managers.

124. Additionally, 21 leadership-focussed bespoke interventions were supported on request that were delivered to 356 colleagues. These were based on leadership-related themes, such as building team communication, planning workload, leadership styles and establishing team charters. The approach to deliver these was often to facilitate wider team-based workshops to bring a team together and focus towards understanding their responsibilities, values and approaches to communication.

125. Our peer mentoring database continues to be a resource enabling staff to access mentoring support, whilst external mentoring opportunities such for example through Eastern ARC continue to be available to Essex staff.

Tackling Antisemitism

126. The University has a zero-tolerance approach to harassment, bullying and hate incidents for employees, workers, contractors, students and visitors. Our aim is to ensure the University to be a place where diversity is respected and valued and to ensure to discriminative behaviour.

127. The University adopted and published its support for the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism in 2016: this is contained in our University guidance Harassment and Bullying and has now also been placed onto our Report and Support webpage and linked to the Staff Directory.

128. On 13 February 2024, members of USG and other senior managers were provided with antisemitism awareness training by the Union of Jewish Students. This will enable a top-down approach to addressing antisemitism, leading on our expectation of attitudes and behaviours from the top.

One Essex Inclusivity and Inclusion Champions

129. Our staff forums and networks have continued to meet throughout the year, providing support to staff members as well as feedback and updates as part of our regular One Essex Inclusivity Group meetings (chaired by the Director of Inclusion). The Chairs of the staff forums have used these meetings to raise any issues they may have, such as encouraging participation from members, and we have encouraged the forums to identify ways in which they may work together to address intersectionality amongst their groups. Consequently, we have been able to cross-promote events as well as encourage regular use of the EDI Calendar, which was launched in November 2023.

130. In the 2023-24 academic year at the request of the Group, we received updates from our Inclusion Champions on their work and commitments to advance equity and inclusion. The Chairs of the staff forums received these updates appreciatively and took advantage of the opportunity to ask questions as they pertained to their networks.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Events

131. In academic year 2023-24, various EDI events were organised by staff forums and departments. Key events included the launch of the Trans and Non-binary Forum's meet-and-greet in November 2023 and Holocaust Memorial Week in January, highlighted by a campus-wide name reading. Occupational Health hosted training sessions on Autism, Trans Health, ADHD, and Dyslexia in the Workplace, along with menopause awareness events. A menopause awareness blog, sharing personal experiences from our staff community, was published on Menopause Awareness Day.

132. Throughout the year, the University marked several awareness weeks and months. Women's History Month saw panel discussions and mixers, while Neurodiversity Celebration Week featured personal blogs and a Q&A coffee morning with neurodiverse staff and students. EBS hosted an EDI conference on neurodiversity and mental health in June, while the LGBTQ+ Forum held a BBQ with a "Living Library" event and a raffle for the Gender Affirmation Fund. Additionally, Southeast Asian Heritage Month and Eid were celebrated with cultural events and personal blogs.

133. Events during Black History Month in October, themed "Reclaiming Narratives," featuring activities such as "Blind Date with a Book" in the library, "Sip and Paint" on Southend campus, and a Lakeside Theatre performance of Windrush Secret (organised by our Students' Union). The Centre for Public History held an event on 30 October in the Ivor Crew Lecture Theatre, where Professor Jonathan Saha from Durham University spoke the "Six Lessons from Reports into Racism in UK Higher Education."

Creating an inclusive environment for Muslim staff and students

134. Following a consultation (concluded in January 2023) to understand the lived experiences of our Muslim staff and students on our campuses and to consider adopting a definition of Islamophobia, we were encouraged to see that incidents of Islamophobia was rare at Essex with 94.61% of survey respondents reported no experiences of Islamophobia in the past year. Feedback from this consultation led to several actions to enhance inclusion, including establishing an Inclusion Champion for Muslim staff and students, creating a Muslim Staff Network, publishing awareness articles, and planning a targeted Report and Support campaign addressing Islamophobia.

135. In July 2024, an institutional definition of Islamophobia (see appendix F) was approved by Council and shared in a blog by the new Inclusion Champion, along with a statement from the Acting Vice-Chancellor. This definition and statements of support are now featured on the Report and Support webpages and linked to the Staff Directory[4].

[4] Islamophobia - Report + Support - University of Essex

136. The University was also named runner-up for the Aziz Inclusion Award in September 2024, recognising our commitment to improving the campus experience for British Muslim students.

Young Universities for the Future of Europe

137. During 2023-24, YUFE officially transitioned to an AISBL (Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif), an international non-profit association under Belgian Law. This change signifies a pivotal moment in YUFE's evolution, shifting from a project-based approach to establishing a sustainable, long-term initiative. With this new organisational structure, the YUFE Central Office Team in Brussels gains legal personality, enhancing its capacity for policy development.

138. As the lead institution for YUFE's EDI efforts, we have facilitated this transition by reviewing and updating the YUFE EDI Strategy and action plan, both approved for immediate implementation by the YUFE Executive Committee in June 2024. Additionally, we developed a YUFE Gender Equity Plan, also ratified by the Executive Committee, to further support our commitment to these principles.

139. Looking ahead to the end of 2024, our priorities include creating a YUFE Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy, launching a pilot YUFE EDI Ambassadors Programme, and developing content for the next phase of inclusive leadership workshops. We will also produce a report summarising YUFE's EDI policy-development progress and recommendations for future initiatives.

Priorities for 2024-25

140. We take pride in the progress achieved toward our Equality Objectives, recognising the strides made in nurturing a more equitable and inclusive University environment. We are also equally mindful that much work remains to realise full equity and inclusion for all members of our community. Our focus for academic year 2024-25 will centre on the following key priorities:

- **Sustaining Equality Charter Initiatives:** We are committed to maintaining the momentum in our equality charter work, ensuring the successful delivery of the Race Equality Charter, Athena Swan, Workplace Equality Index and University of Sanctuary actions that form the backbone of our Institutional commitment to EDI.
- **Enhancing Student Engagement through the Transitions and Transformations Project:** To support student engagement, we will continue delivering our Transition and Transformation project, which includes new initiatives such as three sessions led by the Brilliant Club, aimed at helping postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students build their academic careers. Additionally, the Essex Inclusion Project will offer training for postgraduate students, encouraging them to inspire local schools with their research, while Diverse Minds will be

brought in to launch an action learning and peer coaching program open to undergraduate, PGT, and PGR students.

- **Preparing for Compliance with OfS conditions and Worker Protection Requirements:** Building on our existing work, we are preparing to meet the OfS Condition of Registration E6 on Harassment and Sexual Misconduct, with compliance required by August 2025. We are also advancing our efforts to ensure full compliance with the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, specifically addressing sexual harassment in the workplace.
- **Assessing Implications of the Employment Rights Bill 2024:** We will consider the potential impact of the Employment Rights Bill 2024, which proposes key reforms in worker protection and equality monitoring, such as disability and ethnicity pay gap reporting and gender equality action plans, should these become requirements by 2026.
- **Increasing Disclosure Rates in Key Areas:** Recognising the need for improvement, we are committed to increasing disclosure rates, through our work in the 'Your Profile Counts' campaign, particularly regarding disability and ethnicity, to enhance understanding and support of our community's diverse needs.
- **Advancing Education and Access and Participation Goals:** We will continue to deliver on the objectives set out in our Education Action Plan and Access and Participation Plan, with the aim of achieving equitable and positive outcomes for all students.

141. By addressing these priorities, we hope to continue fostering an environment that upholds equity, supports diversity, and champions inclusion at every level of our institution.

Appendix A: The University approach to external assurance and benchmarking diversity schemes

Background

1. The Minister of State for Higher and Further Education, Michelle Donelan, wrote to the University on 27 June 2022 following the third reading of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill in the House of Commons. The letter highlighted a 'growing concern that a 'chilling effect' on university campuses leaves students, staff, and academics unable to freely express their lawful views without fear of repercussion'. As part of the University's statutory duty to take steps that are reasonably practicable to ensure freedom of speech within the law, the letter asked universities to carefully consider their participation in external assurance and benchmarking diversity schemes.
2. The University currently participates in a range of charters and benchmarks related to equality, diversity and inclusion, as well as utilising other external standards to ensure we deliver excellence in research and education. Current examples are: the HR Excellence in Research framework; the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA, which recognises the need to improve the ways in which researchers and the outputs of scholarly research are evaluated); the Athena SWAN award; and the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index Diversity Programme.
3. This paper addresses the issues raised by the letter from the Department of Education and sets out the University of Essex approach to managing these risks.
4. The concerns raised in the Minister's letter were as follows:
    - Whether membership of a scheme is potentially in tension with the creation of an environment that promotes and protects free speech?
    - How membership of a scheme is genuinely the best way of achieving our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, rather than addressing the issues independently?
    - Universities should not feel they are being pressured to take part in such initiatives to demonstrate their support for the cause the scheme addresses and demonstrate how this is the case.
    - Universities should 'be thinking carefully and independently about their free speech duty when signing up to these sorts of schemes' and demonstrate how this is the case.
    - Membership of these schemes, the initiatives that flow from them, and the creation of new, highly paid, management roles should represent good value for money for taxpayers or students and a value for money case should be made.

Whether membership of a scheme is potentially in tension with the creation of an environment that promotes and protects free speech?

5. All our inclusion work takes place within the wider institutional context for staff and students, where we have statutory duties both to uphold academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law and as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The actions taken in response to the Reindorf Review have been undertaken in the context of and used to reflect and to reinforce the University's commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law. These actions include the revisions to the Speaker Code of Practice and External Speaker form, training, and risk review process.

6. The University's commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law provides the context for the exploration of the benefits and disbenefits of the University's relationship with the use of charters and benchmarks as a whole, within which the University's portfolio approach to equality, diversity and inclusion is situated.

How membership of a scheme is genuinely the best way of achieving our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, rather than addressing the issues independently?

7. External charters and benchmarks are tools that can be used to shape inclusion work, particularly when organisations are at an early stage of maturity in relation to an area of equality and diversity, as is the case at the University. External charters are only one part of the wider inclusion agenda at the University, but provide an external framework, constructive challenge and access to best practice in other organisations facing similar challenges. Risks emerge when charters are implemented uncritically and seen as a 'tick box' exercise, rather than a structured and time-limited approach to promoting cultural change. There is ample evidence that engagement with external charters has led to an improved understanding of the barriers facing groups with particular shared protected characteristics and promoted inclusive practices.

8. An appropriate use of charters and benchmarks as a component of the University's portfolio approach to equality, diversity and inclusion through which a plurality of voices can be heard on our campuses, is therefore the best current means of securing expert evaluation of the University's practices to support its commitments and obligations in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Universities should not feel they are being pressured to take part in such initiatives to demonstrate their support for the cause the scheme addresses and demonstrate how this is the case, and should 'be thinking carefully and independently about their free speech duty when signing up to these sort of schemes' and demonstrate how this is the case.

9. External benchmarking supports a process of self-evaluation, on the basis of which the University makes conscious choices about which areas of further work are relevant to and contribute to our strategic aims. This is part of the University's portfolio approach to equality, diversity and inclusion

which supports and works alongside mechanisms to support academic freedom and freedom of expression within the law, including our arrangements for external speakers. Which charters to submit to, and any resulting action plans, are agreed through the University's governance or management structures, where there is a clear understanding and commitment to upholding the statutory duties of the University in relation to both freedom of speech and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

10. These checks and balances ensure that the use of charters and benchmarks is judicious and appropriate, and that safeguards are in place to promote academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law and that these safeguards are understood and effective. The approvals processes required prior to the use of a particular charter or benchmark being agreed enable explicit and independent consideration to be given to the risks and benefits of use of the charter. Proposals for actions as a result of the charter self-evaluation process are also carefully considered, to ensure that they contribute to, and do not create any unnecessary tensions with, the University's duty to uphold academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law.

Membership of these schemes, the initiatives that flow from them, and the creation of new, highly paid, management roles should represent good value for money for taxpayers or students and a value for money case should be made

11. The portfolio approach to equality, diversity and inclusion requires that the components of that portfolio are open to scrutiny and challenge. The portfolio itself and the way that it is delivered are expected to change over time, as new voices emerge, and the University's practices and culture develop.

12. The Minister also raised specific concerns about value for money, including where delivery of charters and benchmarks led to the creation of 'new, highly paid management roles'. No new management roles have been created at the University to deliver charters or benchmarks, and where additional resources have been needed these have been supported through bids to the rigorous annual planning round, as for all other new posts. Where new initiatives are identified as part of a charter, in addition to those identified through the standard annual planning processes, action plans are drawn up and given appropriate scrutiny, including whether they represent good value for money, through the University's management or governance structures.

13. While regular review is built into the University's portfolio approach to equality, diversity and inclusion, it is recommended that regular reviews are established as an explicit requirement for all charters, benchmarks and the posts that support them to ensure they continue to be relevant to the University's needs, remain the best means of evaluating our practices and provide value for money for the University in pursuing its mission and charitable objects.

Conclusions

14. At its meeting on 14 July 2022, Council noted the specific consideration to the risks and opportunities arising from the use of charters and benchmarks as a feature of the University's portfolio approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and, in particular:

- Noted the context provided by the University's commitment to promoting academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law, within which the University's portfolio approach to equality, diversity and inclusion is situated, as outlined in the paper.

- Endorsed the appropriate use of charters and benchmarks as a component of the University's portfolio approach to equality, diversity and inclusion through which a plurality of voices can be heard on our campuses, as the best current means of securing expert evaluation of the University's practices to support its commitments and obligations in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

- Noted the checks and balances in place to ensure that the use of charters and benchmarks is judicious and appropriate, and that safeguards are in place to protect and promote academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law, and that these safeguards are understood and effective.

- Noted the approvals processes required prior to the use of a particular charter or benchmark being agreed, enabling explicit and independent consideration to be given to the risks and benefits of use of the charter. Proposals for actions as a result of the charter self-evaluation process are also carefully considered, to ensure that they contribute to and do not create any unnecessary tensions with the University's duty to uphold academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law.

- Endorsed the need for periodic reviews of the utility and value for money of the use of individual charters, benchmarks and the posts that support them, to ensure that they continue to be relevant to the University's needs, remain the best means of evaluating our practices and provide value for money for the University in pursuing its mission and charitable objects.

Appendix B: Postgraduate Taught Continuation Rates: Essex compared to the sector.

Introduction

1. The only sector data available related to Postgraduate Taught student outcomes, split by student characteristics, comes from the Office for Students' Student Outcomes (Condition B3) metrics[5]. Within these there are measures for Continuation (remaining in Higher Education, or successfully graduating, a year and 15 days after commencing), Completion (tracking cohorts of students remaining in Higher Education, or successfully graduating, four years and 15 days after commencing) and Progression (the proportion of qualifiers who have progressed to professional or managerial employment or any type of further study, 15 months after completing their course).
2. For the purposes of this analysis, we have drawn out the Continuation metric to measure PGT continuation rates at Essex compared with a benchmark group. This is measured by identifying a cohort of entrants and following them through the early stages (one year and 15 days for full time students) of their course to track how many continue in active study, or qualify, in subsequent years. To be counted as continuing, a student must either have qualified or recorded as still actively studying. As the vast majority of full time PGT study will be for a year from commencement, this measure provides us with the most recent available data about one-year outcomes.
3. The population used here is Postgraduate Taught Masters, full time, students only. The cohorts covered here are those students entering 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22[6], aggregated for a single figure. The analysis that has been provided includes all the student characteristics that are available in the OfS dataset at the Postgraduate level (Age on Entry, Disability, Ethnicity, Sex, IMD, and Domicile).
4. The benchmark group is the S10 Group - a group of comparator institutions in terms of size and academic focus. The S10 Group is comprised of: Brunel, City, Essex, Goldsmiths, Kent, Reading, Royal Holloway, Sussex, Surrey, UEA.

[5] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-outcomes-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/

[6] Note, this does not include 2022/23 or 2023/24 data yet. 2022/23 continuation is determined from the 2023/24 data return, which is due to be released in Spring 2025.

Essex compared to the S10 group

5. Table 1 finds that Essex, when compared against the benchmark group average, matches or exceeds the average on nine of the sixteen demographic splits. Ethnicity – Mixed (-1.9pp); Age – 25 to 30 years (-1.3pp); Domicile – Non-UK (-1.0pp); No Disability reported (-0.7pp); Sex – Men (-0.6pp); Ethnicity – White (-0.4pp); Age – Under 25 years (-0.1 percentage points, pp) are the splits that lie below the S10 average. [*Note the numbers for Ethnicity-Other are too small for Essex to have data presented*].

Appendix Table 1: Essex compared to average of the S10 group, by split indicator

6. Of the remaining splits, in the majority of instances Essex is on par with the benchmark average, but far exceeds it in the Ethnicity-Asian (+5.6pp); Ethnicity-Black (+4.10pp); and Disability-Disability Reported (+1.9pp), whereby continuation rates at Essex are far higher than those of the benchmark average.

7. Noting that an average of a benchmark group may be influenced by one or two institutions showing outlier performance (particularly good or bad), we also provide here (table 2) a rank of Essex against the same group (and so in all instances, the rank is out of 10). In no splits of the data do we rank in the top two of the S10 group. Our better performing splits are Ethnicity-Asian (3rd, 2.2pp from 1st) and Ethnicity Black (3rd, 8.5pp from 1st, though this instance is an example of such an outlier, with first – UEA – being over 5.6pp above all other institutions).

8. Our lowest, and most common rank is 7th where we find this for Age on Entry-Under 25 years, Age on Entry-25 to 30 years, No Disability Reported, Ethnicity-White, IMD-Q3, Q4 or Q5, Sex-both Men and Women, and Domicile-both UK and Non-UK.

Appendix Table 2: Rank position of Essex compared to the S10 group, by split indicator

Split indicator type	Split Indicator	
Age on Entry	Under 25 years	7 (92.5)
	25 to 30 years	7 (90.0)
	31 years and over	6 (89.6)
Disability	Disability Reported	6 (90.3)
	No Disability Reported	7 (91.5)
Ethnicity	Asian	3 (94.8)
	Black	3 (87.1)
	Mixed	6 (84.8)
	Other	
	White	7 (90.6)
IMD	Q1 or Q2	5 (87.7)
	Q3, Q4 or Q5	7 (91.0)
Sex	Female	7 (92.6)
	Male	7 (90.3)
Domicile	Non-UK	7 (92.0)
	UK	7 (89.9)

Appendix C: Departmental Athena Swan

Department	Current award held	Date of next submission
Faculty of Science and Health		
Psychology	**Silver**	March 2026
Department of Health and Social Care	**Silver**	September 2028
School of Life Sciences	**Silver**	November 2025
Sports, Rehabilitation and Exercise Science	**Bronze**	September 2026
Department of Mathematical Sciences	**Silver**	December 2028
School of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering	**Bronze**	January 2025
Faculty of Social Sciences		
Language and Linguistics	**Bronze**	March 2025
Sociology	**Bronze**	May 2025
Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic Studies	**Bronze**	May 2025
Department of Government	**Bronze**	November 2025
Department of Economics	**Bronze**	September 2026
Essex Business School	**Bronze**	July 2025
Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER)	**Bronze**	March 2027
Faculty of Arts and Humanities		
Literature, Film and Theatre Studies	**Bronze**	November 2028
Law	**In progress**	March 2025
East 15 Acting School	**In progress**	TBC

Department	Current award held	Date of next submission
Philosophical, Historical and Interdisciplinary Studies (PHASE)	TBC	School created in 2023-24 academic year following the merging of two departments.

Appendix D: Table 21: Academic Leadership roles considered in Table 18

Academic Leadership Roles	
Deputy Vice-Chancellor	University Deputy Deans
Pro-Vice-Chancellors	Faculty Deans
Executive Deans	Heads of Department
University Deans	Institute Directors

Appendix E: EDI related blogs including those Inclusion Champions in Reporting Period

Date	Inclusion Champion	Blog Title	Subject
05/10/2023	Madeline Eacott	Black History Month	Black History Month
12/10/2023	Bryn Morris	Invisible Disabilities Week	Invisible Disabilities
31/10/2023	Prof Nancy Kula	Menopause Awareness Month	Menopause
09/11/2023	Andrew Keeble	The Festival of Lights: Celebrating Diwali at the University of Essex	Diwali
15/11/2023	Chris Greer	Trans Awareness Week and Trans Day of Remembrance	Trans Awareness Week and Trans Day of Remembrance
23/11/2023	Prof Nancy Kula	Ending the cycle: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women	Violence Against Women
01/02/2024	Chris Greer Monica Illsley	LGBTQ+ History Month	LGBTQ+
07/03/2024	Andrew Keeble	Being Inclusive During Ramadan	Ramadan
02/10/2024	Prof John Preston	A message from our new Inclusion Champion for Muslim staff and students	Introduction

Date	Inclusion Champion	Blog Title	Subject
07/11/2024	Prof John Preston	Islamophobia Awareness Month	Islamophobia Awareness
19/09/2024	Monica Illsley	Bisexual Awareness Week	Bisexual Awareness Week
19/11/2024	Prof Graham Underwood	A Message from our Inclusion Champion	Men's Health Awareness Month
21/11/2024	Prof Sanja Bahun	Celebrating Sukkot with our Jewish Community	Sukkot

Appendix F – University of Essex working definition of Islamophobia

‘Islamophobia is any distinction, exclusion, or restriction towards, or preference against, Muslims (or those perceived to be Muslims) that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of one’s human rights and the fundamental freedoms as protected by the Equality Act 2010 in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life. It can be rooted in racism as a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness (or perceived Muslimness) and can include bullying, physical violence, xenophobia, or religious discrimination or persecution’.