

UNIVERSITY OF READING

ANNUAL STUDENT DIVERSITY & INCLUSION REPORT

2015 TO 2016 ACADEMIC YEAR

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INTRODUCTION

Our annual Diversity & Inclusion Report shows similar overall trends as in previous years but we have made progress on closing several of the gaps seen previously, including in offer rate by ethnicity, and attainment rate for disabled students but significant, stubborn challenges remain and we fall short of being a fully inclusive institution where all students feel welcome and can achieve their full potential. To become such a place is a professional and personal priority for me, as I am sure it is for everyone who works and studies at the University of Reading.

There is a huge amount of knowledge, experience and insight across the University. We need to draw upon it to identify changes that promote equality of opportunity and create an inclusive environment – not just at our campuses in the United Kingdom but in our campuses around the world.

This year we have made some changes to how we present this report, focusing on progress for each characteristic, rather than the previous focus on historic priorities. This has been driven by the changes to our strategy and targets and a need to present the data and subsequent story in a more coherent and easy to follow format.

Below is a summary of our progress over the last year and our areas of focus for the next academic year. The University has identified Gender, Race and Disability as its 3 priorities for students, as such the focus of this report will be on our progress in these areas. For other protected characteristics a summary of the key data and information on our future plans is presented towards the end of the report along with wider information that is relevant more broadly to diversity and inclusion. We additionally reflect on some data separately for home and overseas students defined by fee status, however in some areas, the numbers are small and do not allow us to do this without potentially identifying individuals.

Real change will not happen overnight. It requires cultural and operational change, and effective communication and collaboration between management, student and academic services, schools, departments, and RUSU and student societies.

2015/2016 Activity Highlights

The 2015/2016 academic year has seen an increasing focus on D&I activities and progress for both staff and students. To highlight here, we have:

- Agreed the D&I strategy and targets for students (and staff – reported in the staff report)
- D&I has been included in the curriculum Framework and we have started to develop the D&I toolkit
- Continued to deliver training to staff on D&I in T&L
- Increased the number of staff with training in mental health
- Launched the STaR mentoring programme
- Piloted peer-assisted learning
- Agreed to explore learning analytics as a way of supporting students with diverse needs
- The chaplaincy has run Mindfulness courses for students with anxiety
- Worked with RUSU to support the I Heart Consent campaign
- Piloted a student society session on diversity and inclusion and cultural awareness

Priorities for 2016/2017

The Curriculum Framework which requires all programmes to consider and revise their curricula including content, delivery, assessment and feedback, considering a variety of issues including D&I, will be rolled out this year, and associated with this will be a programme of staff training and support.

Additionally we will prioritise:

- Communicating our targets for student attainment and retention to staff, students and applicants
- Moving forward with learning analytics in order to be able to understand and intervene in some of our attainment gaps
- Working with RUSU Sabbatical and Part-time officers on D&I events and campaigns
- Bringing together research on inclusive pedagogy from across the campus
- Considering the effect of recent changes in admissions procedures on applications, offers and enrolments
- Considering the introduction of specific unconscious bias training for admissions tutors
- Pilot "Positive Minds" aimed at improving resilience of students and supporting students with mental health illnesses
- Monitoring and understanding the attainment of our students on the Malaysia campus

Additionally, we will be reviewing the data that we need for our annual reports in future years to ensure that what we are capturing, reporting on and using is the most meaningful data to present an accurate picture of the institution, and to inform our actions in the future. This means that our next report may present different data than is in this report, meaning that year on year comparisons may not be possible, this is necessary to achieve our aim to have the most appropriate and clear data to work with.

Profile of the student body in 15-16

Gender: Proportion of male students continues to decline slightly and is now at 43% overall.

Ethnicity: Profile is very similar to last year, apart from a small increase (1.5 percentage points at UG, mostly from international students) in number of Asian-Chinese students and a small decrease in the number of black students (Fig 1). The ethnic profile of the PGT and PGR populations has remained remarkably stable, but with increases in the Asian Chinese populations (1 and 1.5 percentage points for home and international populations), and the black PGT population (0.5%). At PGT level there were reductions in the Asian International students enrolled (4 percentage points) but slight increases in the Asian home students (2 percentage points). There was a reduction in black PGR students (1 percentage point).

Disability: 10.95% of our students declared a disability in 15-16. This is a small increase from 9.81% last year

Age on entry: Fewer of our 15-16 student body were aged above 25 on entry than in previous years; 61.83% were aged 20 or under on entry (fig 2)

Sexual Orientation (new entrants only): 3.88% of our new entrant students identify as either bi-sexual or gay

Religious Belief (new entrants only): More than 90% of our new entrants felt comfortable declaring a religious belief, with small increases in those declaring "no religion" or "any other religion or faith" compared to last year. The largest groups were Christians (32%) and Muslims (7.29%)

Fig 1. TOTAL student population by ethnicity

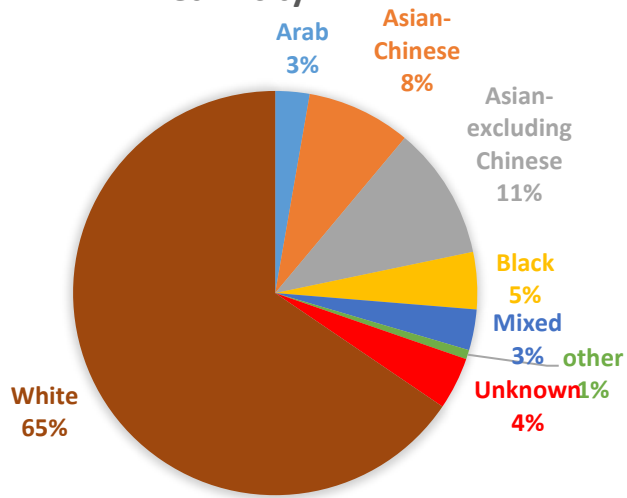


Fig. 2 Age on entry of student body in 15-16

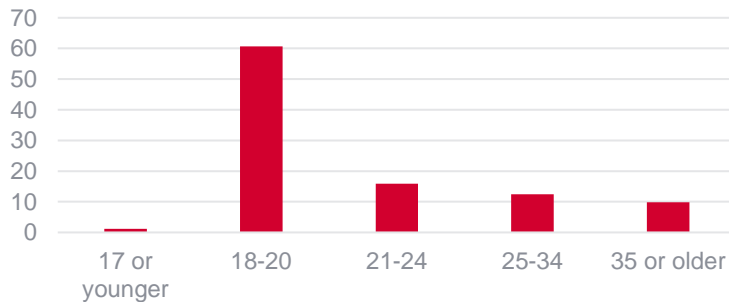
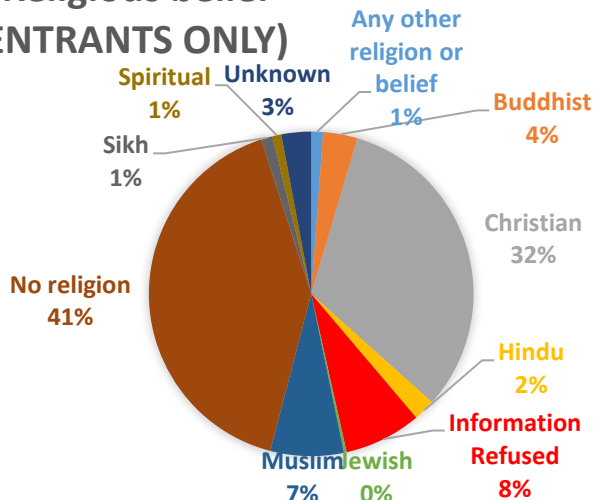


Fig 3. Religious belief (New ENTRANTS ONLY)



Headline data for progress against priorities

GENDER

RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS

- The gender balance of the home and international UG applicants is broadly similar, although the gap between numbers of female and male applications is slightly larger for international students in 2015/16 than in previous years.
- The proportion of our UG applicants who are male continued to decrease in 2015/16 (44%)
- This is mirrored in offer and enrolment proportions, with only 42% of UG applicants who enrolled being male.
- The patterns at PGT level are very similar to those at UG

The decline in applications from young men at these levels is a national phenomenon and is particularly concerning in relation to application/enrolment rates of young men from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- At PGR level the picture from previous years continues. A higher proportion of applications are male (60%), however, this is largely accounted for by the applications from international students where 62% of applicants were male in comparison to 52% of home applicants
- There is a higher offer rate to female applicants (35% of female applicants were offered a place whereas only 26% of male applicants are offer a place). Although there is a significant difference in the offer rate to home and international students the gender gap was roughly a 7-8 percentage point difference within each group.
- Almost equal proportions of genders actually enrol.

PROGRESSION, RETENTION AND ATTAINMENT

- The proportion of home male students who fail to progress is consistently around 4% in comparison to 1.4% for female students.
- There continues to be a higher UG 'passed at the 1st attempt' rate for home female students (92%) and home male students (84%), however the gap has reduced slightly from around 10 percentage points in the previous year.
- There is also a gender gap in UG 'passed at the 1st attempt' rates for international students with a higher proportion of female students passing at the first attempt. However, the gap has fluctuated in the last 3 years ranging from 15 to 4 percentage points.
- A higher proportion of home students 'pass at the first attempt' than international students (89% as opposed to 81% in 2015/16)
- A higher proportion of female students continued to achieve 1st class or 2.1 UG degrees both for home and international students. The pattern for international student fluctuates significantly but the pattern for home students is more stable (84% of female students as opposed to 79%). This gap is however significantly reduced in comparison to the previous 2 years.

- There was a small difference in the proportion of each gender achieving 1st class UG degrees (1.5 percentage points for home students) but a greater difference for 2.1 degrees (5 percentage points for home students)
- At PGT level when all students are taken together there appears to be a rough parity of degree attainment across both men and women students. However, when home and international students are examined separately we can see that in 2015/16 40% of female home PGT students achieved a distinction result in comparison to only 28% of male students. But a slightly higher proportion of international male students (20%) attained distinctions in comparison to female international students (18%)
- There were no significant differences in retention rates between the male and female students at either UG or PGT level

RACE AND ETHNICITY

RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS

Three quarters of UG international applicants did not declare their ethnic identities so we can only consider the ethnicities of home applicants. At PGT level declaration rates were strong with only 2.9% unknown. There were tiny number of BAME Home PGR applicants so only international BAME PGR applicants can be considered.

- The percentage of white UG applicants offered a UoR place was 83%, but for each of the other ethnic groups the proportion was lower (Chinese 79%, Asian 68%, Arab 65%, Black 59%).
- The proportion of BAME UG applicants to take up a UoR offer is also lower than for White applicants (White 17% Chinese 16%, Arab 16% Asian 12%, Black 9%).
- The PGT offer rate for White international applicants was higher than for White home applicants 77% and 61% respectively.
- The offer rates for Arab, Asian and Black home applicants were all higher than for White applicants (73%, 64%, 64% in comparison to 61% for White applicants) and slightly lower for Chinese applicants (58%).
- However, the proportion of BAME International PGT applicants to be offered a place was lower and in some cases significantly lower than for White international applicants (Chinese 71%, Asian 71%, black 59%, Arab 52% in comparison to 77% for White applicants)
- At PGR level 38% of White applicants were offered places in 2015/16 and a similar proportion of Chinese applicants, however offers were made to only 25% of Asian applicants, 21% of Black applicants and 20% of Arab applicants.

PROGRESSION, RETENTION AND ATTAINMENT

- Fewer than 2% of students withdrew at UG, PGT and PGR level. The numbers become too tiny to consider the ethnic profile of withdrawers
- There is a significant UG ethnicity gap in progression rates. In 2015/16 there was a 10 percentage point difference between the progression rate of white students and BME students, however this represents a narrowing of the 2013/14 gap (which was 12 percentage points).
- The ethnicity gap in UG progression rate is much more significant for home students than for international students. There is a 10 percentage point gap for home students but only a 4 point gap for international students. This is a consistent difference over the last 3 years.
- There has been a significant improvement in the progression rate of International Asian Chinese students – an increase of 11 percentage points since 2013/14.

- Black and 'Other' ethnic groups have the lowest progression rates.
- Although there remains a very significant UG ethnicity attainment gap, the proportion of BAME student attaining a 1st or 2.1 degree increased to 74% in 2015/16 in comparison to 84% for white students. This is a significantly reduced attainment gap standing at 10 percentage points in comparison to the 18 percentage point gap in 2013/14.
- There are differences in the attainment patterns of ethnic groups according to domicile status however there are so few white UG international students that benchmarking against them is not appropriate. However, a higher proportion of International BAME students achieved a 1st or 2.1 degree classification than home BAME students (76% as opposed to 72%).
- At PGT level there also remain significant ethnicity attainment gaps, the biggest and most consistent of which is the gap between BAME and white students attaining a distinction outcome. In 2015/16 this gap was 12 percentage points (reduced from 21 in 2013/14). The gap exists across both home and international students, but is narrower for international students as a lower proportion of white international students attain distinction levels.

DISABILITY

RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS

- 8.3% of UG applicants declared a disability. The vast majority of applicants who declare a disability are UG. There was a 0.6% increase in the proportion of applicants who declared a disability in 2015/16.
- The proportion of disabled UG applicants that receive offers is the same as that for non-disabled applicants. However, the proportion of offer holders that actually enrolled is significantly higher (20% as opposed to 14.5%). This is a similar trend to previous years although the difference between the two almost halved in 2015/16.
- There is a similar higher proportion of disabled offer holders who enrol at PGT level in comparison to non-disabled. (39% as opposed to 19%)

Both these trends reflect the fact that students with disabilities are more likely to thoroughly research a smaller number of institutions and to commit to enrolling when they are assured of the appropriate support.

- However, in the last 2 years there was a lower offer rate to disabled PGT applicants (60% as opposed to 67% in 2015/16)
- Only small numbers of PGR applicants declared a disability but of these a higher proportion were made offers and then enrolled than those with no disability.

PROGRESSION, RETENTION AND ATTAINMENT

Due to future changes in the support available for students, our analysis comparing students in receipt of DSA support and those without.

- Slightly lower proportion of UG disabled students 'passed at the first attempt' (88% for non-disabled, but only 84% of disabled students without DSA support and 86% for those with DSA support).
- Although the proportion of disabled students attained 1st or 2.1 degrees is comparable, a lower proportion achieved 1st class degrees (22% of disabled student in comparison to 26% of non disabled students. This is however a narrower gap than previous years.
- Disabled PGT students attained a similar proportion of merit and distinction level degrees in 2015/16, but there remains a trend that a higher proportion of disabled students in receipt of DSA support achieved these levels in comparison to those not in receipt of DSA. This must be a concern given that fewer students will be eligible for DSA in future years.

- In 2015/16 a higher proportion of UG disabled students withdrew from their studies than non disabled UG students. It was also a higher proportion than in previous years although the numbers are relatively small in total.
- The numbers of disabled student withdrawals at PGT and PGR levels were too small to make any judgements about patterns

Other protected characteristics

Whilst the majority of our analysis and activities have been on the 3 strategic priorities, this does not mean that there is not an intention or indeed ongoing action to address wider issues.

Age: As part of the institutional Athena SWAN action plan we are working with the Graduate School and RUSU to develop support networks for students who are parents, and to support mature students

Sexual orientation: As part of the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index we have enhanced support for and raised awareness of LGBT+ issues amongst the staff body across campus. This has a benefit also for students – for example a new rainbow postcard scheme allows students to identify staff who are LGBT+ allies. We supported our students to take part in Reading PRIDE for the first time in 15-16.

Other Information

Student complaints and appeals

Complaints

This section contains details of the protected characteristics of the students who raised formal complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure. This information has been gathered directly from their RISIS record. In academic year 2015/16 there were **17** Stage 2 complaints received, of which 7 were submitted by the same student. For the purpose of this report those 7 will be counted as a singular case and hence the totals below equal 11.

Gender: 5 Female, 6 Male

Age: 4 out of 11 complaints were made by those under the age of 25, the remainder being from those aged 36 and upwards

Disability: All 11 complaints were made by students without a disability

Home /International: 7 complaints were made by Home/EU students and 4 by internationals

Ethnicity: 6 complaints were made by Asian students, with 5 by white students, possibly suggesting an over-representation of Asian students but numbers are so low as to be only suggestive rather than meaningful.

Appeals

This section contains details of the protected characteristics of the students who submitted formal appeals. This information has been gathered directly from their RISIS record. In the academic year 2015/16 there were 96 appeals received from separate students. Some case progressed through multiple stages but each individual student has been counted only once.

Gender: 39 Female, 57 Male

Age: 69 out of 96 complaints were made by those under the age of 25

Disability: 16 complaints were made by students with a declared disability, 80 by those without a disability

Home /International: 71% of complaints (68) were made by Home/EU students

Ethnicity: 45% of appeals came from White students, 14.5% from Black students, 25% from Asian students with the remainder from several other categories. This possibly suggests an over-representation of non-white students in the appeals system.

Appendices

All the data referred to in this report can be found in the accompanying spreadsheet.