

# The University of Chester



## Equality Report January 2023

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# Foreword



At the University of Chester, we are committed to providing a working, learning, teaching and research environment that is welcoming for all; and allows everyone to flourish, with their ethnicity, sexuality, gender, disability, age or religion respected and valued.

We welcome diversity as an important institutional strength and continue to work to address all forms of discrimination. We have built on the successes of many of our existing initiatives this year, including the annual flagship Diversity Festival, our engaged and proactive staff networks, our innovative remunerated role of Student Race Advocate and our sponsorship of Chester Pride.

Our student body is changing, with more postgraduates, more international students and more Foundation and Apprenticeship students and our approach to inclusivity needs to keep up. This report illustrates our work to maintain a safe and respectful environment where differences are championed, and our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is continually promoted and embedded.

**Professor Eunice Simmons – Vice Chancellor**

This document contains information published on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023 by the University of Chester in accordance with its duties under section 149 of Equality Act 2010 and paragraph 2 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011.

Any queries relating to the content should be directed to [equality@chester.ac.uk](mailto:equality@chester.ac.uk)

# Our University

The University of Chester is an intellectual community and culture in which respect, equity, diversity and inclusion are core to our values. The need to not only comply with equality legislation, but to work to continually improve our policies and culture so that staff and students experience a supportive and welcoming environment, is more imperative than ever.

We strive to embed equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in all that we do, throughout our learning and teaching, research and scholarship, outreach, and leadership. We enhance participation of staff and students in equality events, programmes and initiatives through:

- increasing knowledge and understanding of EDI issues;
- fostering an intellectual environment where people are able to bring their authentic selves to work and study;
- providing a communication framework that invites feedback, diverse thought and generates innovative ideas;
- promoting an organisational ethos of continuous improvement.

## Our Vision

We aim to stand out through our authentic culture and measurable initiatives, embedding 'The Citizen Student' in all aspects of University life.

Students are supported to access a breadth of opportunities – before arrival (to help their transition to University), on their course and beyond graduation.

They will develop flexibility in their career path by experiencing work-based placements and inter-disciplinary research. The curriculum enables the development of subject expertise, digital skills, data competencies and the application of these in the wider world. Sustainability, resilience and personal development are integral to the Chester experience.

The University creates a strong sense of belonging through the tradition of volunteering and citizenship. Both students and staff develop their potential to influence and lead in their subject areas and wider society, and our comprehensive alumni offer is an opportunity for lifelong learning and engagement.

## Our Equality Commitments 2023

- To use equality data more effectively with a view to (i) measuring equality successes across the University and (ii) identifying and addressing areas of underrepresentation through positive action.
- To deliver and evaluate an impactful Diversity Festival 2023.
- To continue to identify ways to effectively manage unacceptable behaviours at the University.
- To develop effective mechanisms to assess and monitor the impact of our diversity and inclusion initiatives and interventions on workplace practice, behaviour and outcomes across the University.
- To review and update the University's equality policies and initiatives to better support both staff and students and capture changing needs.
- To review the academic promotions process and identify barriers to staff diversity at all levels across the University.
- To improve gender equality through the continued application of the University's Athena Swan Charter action plan, in addition to renewing the University's application by January 2024.
- To consider the feasibility of signing up to Advance HE's Race Equality Charter by May 2023.

# Our Achievements

This section provides a summary of key achievements and embedded initiatives.

## Key achievement summary (2022):

- **March:** Successful Diversity Festival 2022 held with over 60 well-attended events
- **April:** Founded the Men's Staff Network
- **June:** Expanded the EDI team with appointment of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer
- **August:** University was a corporate sponsor of Chester Pride
- **September:** New approach to new staff welcome events embedded with a Staff Network and EDI information point
- **October:** Held first Race Equality and Cultural Heritage (REACH) Conference
- **October:** Awarded interim Navajo Charter mark
- **November:** Held first International Men's Day conference
- Excellent work from Student Race Advocates throughout 21/22
- Nine staff funded to undertake Advance HE's [Aurora](#) programme
- Two staff funded to undertake Advance HE's [Diversifying Leadership](#) programme

## Achievements encompassing all Equality characteristics:

### Diversity Festival

The Diversity Festival, which is held each Spring term, is an annual fixture in the University of Chester's calendar. Established in 2006, the festival has been nominated for two national awards and is well-attended and well-respected throughout the region and sector.

The Diversity Festival is designed to inspire and inform our staff and students, as well as the wider community. The festival period hosts in excess of 50 events and typically ranges from 2-3 weeks long. Some events offer a light-hearted way of experiencing other cultures, for example past festivals have included the highly acclaimed Manchester Lesbian and Gay Chorus, and stand-up comedy group Abnormally Funny People (featuring Britain's Got Talent Winner 'Lost Voice Guy').

The festival hosts events across all equality strands and aims to increase awareness and confidence in approaching, discussing and actively promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Each year over 1,000 staff, students and members of the public attend festival events, either in person or online. It is an opportunity to network, engage with the wider community and celebrate Diversity.

Throughout the festival the University has enjoyed hosting a variety of keynote speakers.

**Household names** such as John Barnes and Simon Weston OBE.

**Activists** such as Peter Tatchell.

**Politicians** such as Baroness Oona King.

**Esteemed academics** such as Baroness Valerie Amos.

**Published novelists** such as feminist Laura Bates.

The festival has also hosted a number of day-long conferences, in which staff, students and members of the public are invited to attend keynote lectures and workshops around a central issue. Previous conference topics include Equality Law and Inspirational Women.

The Diversity Festival 2022 took place 1st – 23rd March. The Theme, **‘Rebuilding and Rethinking Equality’** celebrated growing in our equality, diversity and inclusion and pushing back against replaying the same messages. As part of this theme we celebrated resilience, strength, overcoming adversity and a new enthusiasm for the agenda.

Matt Ellison, a thought-provoking transgender speaker, launched the Festival and attracted great feedback. One attendee described his talk as *“moving and important”*.

Matt was followed by Disabled Adventurer Darren Edwards; Founder and President of City of Sanctuary, Dr. Rev. Inderjit Bhogal OBE; Jane van Zyl, CEO of Working Families; Nick Gazzard, founder of the Hollie Gazzard Trust and Catherine Mayer, bestselling author, journalist and activist.

**‘73% strongly agreed and 21% agreed they would come to Diversity Festival events in the future’**

~

**‘65% rated the events they attended as excellent and 28% rated them as good’**

The Diversity Festival also aims to encourage the collaboration of staff on equality, diversity and inclusion topics. The event was well supported by colleagues and people from across the University came together to collaborate and tell their story. The Vice Chancellor launched the festival and numerous events were attended by members of the Strategic Executive Team. Professor Emma Rees, Director of the Institute of Gender Studies collaborated with the festival on several events, including a conversation with the Holly Gazzard Trust and the fantastic International Women’s Day event. Dr Christopher D. Lewis, Senior Lecturer in Music, delivered a well-attended and well-received keynote on the ‘Life of Kenneth Williams’; and Dr James Holt (Associate Professor of Religious Education) and Dr Mark Duffett (Associate Professor – Music, Media and Performance) both led equality talks relating to their specialisms. The Careers and Employability, Student Futures, Outreach and Chaplaincy

teams also all hosted events.

Finally, Nancy Evans, Cemil Egeli and Mark Bendall (Social and Political Sciences) and Helen Fruin (Social Work) all opened their teaching sessions up as Festival Events.

**‘65% strongly agreed and 30% agreed that the organisation of the events they attended was good’**

~

**‘57% strongly agreed and 32% agreed that the event they attended met their expectations’**

The 2023 Festival will take place from 27th February - 10th March 2023. The theme, **‘Action for Change’**, focuses on the actions we can all take to make meaningful changes to inclusion and belonging. Participants will be inspired by our diverse range of speakers, all of whom have really acted for change – however big or small.

To find out more about the Diversity Festival or to submit ideas for future events, please visit the webpage or email [equality@chester.ac.uk](mailto:equality@chester.ac.uk)

## **Staff Groups**

The University has a number of EDI groups for staff and students.

Each of these groups are essential in connecting the University with collective and influential voices. Through these groups staff are given the opportunity to share information, provide peer support and to inform University policy to ensure the advancement of equality, diversity and inclusion at the University of Chester.

Members can feedback during network sessions, and network representatives feedback to the Equality Forum. Feedback is relayed directly to the Director of Human Resources (a member of SET).

- **The Disabled Staff Group**

The Disabled Staff group is one of our oldest groups and it is a valuable forum for members and the University. Members come to the group with questions about their disability, tips for navigating administrative processes (e.g. applying for blue badge), and advice on where they can get support. It is also a vital forum for members to air frustrations and feedback ways in which the University should change to be more inclusive to disabled staff.

The network also act as a consultative group and provide valuable advice on University practice, provision and policy relating to disability and the Equality Analysis process.

The Disabled Staff group has developed in-house ‘Supporting Disabled Staff’ training and have produced internal promotional material, raising awareness of disability. They are University ambassadors for disability and they are a key point of contact for staff who are looking to find out more about disability and how to support disabled staff.

- **The LGBTQ+ Staff Network**

The LGBTQ+ Staff Network has gone from strength to strength over the last year after a lull in activity in 2021. The network meets quarterly and it is closed to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,



Trans and Queer identifying staff only. Members have a direct impact on University policy, providing advice on how to make the University more LGBTQ+ inclusive and it is a key forum for staff to feedback anonymously.

Though the University works to be an environment where everyone can be their authentic selves, for a number of reasons not all people feel comfortable being 'out' at work. The network have supported a number of staff over the last year, who aren't ready to be 'out' at work and home.

The network run a number of LGBTQ+ social and educational events throughout the year and are very engaged with the local community, including Chester Pride, and Navajo. Members are also working with Warrington Council to establish Warrington's first Pride event.

The interim chair (Jules Crane) meets with members of the community who aren't yet ready to engage with the wider group and do not yet feel comfortable being 'out' at work. For an informal, confidential chat you can contact them directly ([j.crane@chester.ac.uk](mailto:j.crane@chester.ac.uk)) or through [lgbt@chester.ac.uk](mailto:lgbt@chester.ac.uk).

#### ▪ **Women's Networking Forum**

The Women's Network is extremely active and they have hosted a number of guest speakers and activities over the last year. Each meeting typically focuses on an issue that impacts women, including imposter syndrome, overcoming self-limiting beliefs, career planning, developing your career, effective communication, effective team working and mentoring. It is also an excellent forum for Aurora alumni to feedback what they have learned to colleagues.

Meetings are well-attended and well-received and include networking and Action Learning Sets. Members provide valuable peer-support and feedback on ways in which the University can be more inclusive and supportive of women.

The network hosts an annual celebration of International Women's Day, which is a key fixture of the Diversity Festival and features a variety of engaging and passionate speakers. Staff have also joined the North West Business Leadership Team (NWBLT) women's network – the Rising Stars. The Rising Stars connect with and influence the work of the NWBLT, alongside the Diversity Drivers (a network for ethnically diverse leaders).

#### • **Parents' Network**

The Parent's Network was established in May 2017, in response to signing up to the Equality and Human Rights Commission 'Working Forward' initiative.

To date, the network have developed a list of 'Parent Peer Profiles' and 'Role Model' profiles (available online) and they have developed a 'Guide to Family Leave' with a view to supporting family leavers and their managers. The network also organised a specialist paediatric first aid course at the University.

The group meet quarterly and meetings are informal, giving attendees the opportunity to raise parenting concerns and for peers to provide invaluable support.

#### ▪ **Carers Network**

The Carers Network is open to any member of staff or any student who undertake a caring role. It predominantly operates via MS Teams. The network has established a close relationship with the Carers Trust Cheshire and Warrington, who attend most network

meetings and provide invaluable advice and support – frequently answering questions Carers did not know they had.

The network provides peer support for unpaid Carers who are undertaking a difficult and rewarding role and, since moving onto Teams, the network has increased in strength with good attendance and beneficial discussions and outcomes.

- **Menopause Network**

Following a successful Menopause at Work workshop at the 2019 Diversity Festival, a menopause network and discussion board were established. The network is an invaluable resource to anybody going through the menopause and the group frequently collect and share publicly available materials (including CIPD articles, OU videos, research papers etc). The network is well attended with a range of guest speakers covering topics such as health, wellbeing and nutrition for Menopause.

It is also a key forum for menopausal people to seek advice and air concerns.

- **Race, Equality and Cultural Heritage (REACH) Network**

The REACH staff group, established in 2021, is an inclusive group of University of Chester professional services and academic colleagues. REACH members are passionate about raising the profile of race issues and cultural heritage at the University of Chester. The group welcomes and celebrates the cultural diversity of their membership and is proud of the histories and cultures reflected. They also provide invaluable feedback on ways in which the University can improve positive representation, informed engagement and the treatment of all individuals and groups with dignity and respect.

In October 2022, the group hosted its first REACH Developmental Conference which was well-attended and saw a variety of interesting internal and external speakers, including members of the Senior Executive Team.



- **Men's Network**

The Men's Network was established in April 2022 with a focus on men's wellbeing at work and issues which affect men's health more widely. The group is open to any member of staff with an interest in men's issues, regardless of gender.

The Men's Network meet monthly, through a combination of online and Hybrid meetings.

In November 2022, the Network hosted their first International Men's Day conference. This was open to staff and students and saw a number of interesting internal

and external speakers, as well as thought-provoking workshops that were run by network members. Workshop topics included loneliness, HE access for young, working class males and priorities for the network.

Attendees fed back that they found the conference empowering and emotional and that it gave men the space to discuss issues that are often stigmatised.

The Men's Network are a vital peer-support group and are working hard to raise awareness about men's health issues across the University.

To join the mailing list of any of the staff groups or for more information, email: [equality@chester.ac.uk](mailto:equality@chester.ac.uk)

## Student Groups

Chester Students' Union (CSU) has several active and engaged societies related to equality and diversity, such as the International Students Society, and the Student LGBT+ Society. These groups have a close link with the CSU's Vice-President for Student Life, with CSU representatives involved in the University committee structure and in community-based steering groups. CSU will have several liberation reps in the coming year – covering areas such as BAME, Women, LGBT+, visible and invisible disabilities. CSU also has the Cultural Heritage network – aimed at sharing the culture of International Students with home students, through several events sharing food, music and traditional dress from several cultures.

CSU also hosts the #ProudtoBe Fund, a pot of money to help students to challenge systemic oppression and build communities. Some of the events enabled by this fund are:

- facilitating students to travel to Manchester to celebrate Eid
- an on- campus event celebrating Nigerian Independence Day
- purchasing huge numbers of pronoun badges which are freely available for students.

The Wellbeing team also set up a 'Student Menopause Support Network' and 'Student Parent Support Network'. They had their first in-person meet ups in Warrington and Chester in December 2022, with further ones planned for Shrewsbury and Birkenhead campuses in the future. There is also a network for international students – the International Student Community.

Wellbeing recently consulted students to see what support they would like to see from the University. Off the back of this consultation there are plans to set up a support group for Students identifying as male.



## University School of Law

In March 2014, the University's School of Law launched the Forum for Research into Equality and Diversity, which focused on research and knowledge transfer activities in diversity and equality in the workplace and in higher education. In 2015, FRED won the Global Equality

and Diversity Research award for an outstanding example of research methods and insights into diversity and equality in organisations, companies or services from a shortlist which included IBM and Queen Mary, the University of London, and the Institute of Education. Since its establishment, the Forum have delivered a number of conferences including “The Equality Act 2010: 5 years on” and “Gendered Experiences of Academic Staff”. The Forum have also undertaken a significant piece of Research entitled “Gendered Experiences of academic staff in relation to research activity and the Research Excellence Framework 2014.” Most recently, the Forum published Davies, C. (2019) Exploring positive action as a tool to address under-representation in apprenticeships. This report is based on research commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Prof. Chantal Davies (Professor of Law) and Prof. Hannah Bacon (Professor of Feminist Theology) are currently seeking to establish a Centre for EDI and Social Justice to take over the good work that FRED has done.

Prof. Davies has also been appointed to the Law Society’s ‘Women Solicitors Committee’ which recently hosted an event to celebrate 100 years of Women in Law. She also now sits on the Advance HE EDI Committee and will be working to support EDI work across the HE sector in this role.

Prof. Davies led on the inclusive economy agenda for the Local Enterprise Partnership’s ‘Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission’. The commission launched a [report](#) with sub regional recommendations in November 2022.

## Chaplaincy



The University Chaplaincy team shifted to a multi-faith chaplaincy in August 2021, with recruitment of our first Muslim chaplain. The team has further grown over the past year and a number of associate chaplains joined the University, providing valuable advice and guidance from a broad range of faiths.

## Community Links

The University of Chester enjoys strong links with key communities in Cheshire, Chester and North Wales, as well as other key organisations, such as Cheshire Police, the Unity Centre and the Countess of Chester Hospital. These links have been developed through day-to-day contact between University staff and their counterparts, through the Diversity Festival and through attendance at key networking groups (such as the Cheshire Equality Leads Forum).

## Warrington Community Events

This year, Prof. Hannah Bacon (Department of Theology and Religious Studies) was seconded to run activities for the Faculty of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences specifically around EDI topic. Hannah has been running outreach and knowledge exchange events in Warrington that develop the University's links with the local community, including charities, government bodies and other groups and organisations. These events have seen great attendance. Hannah has (thus far) coordinated the following events in Warrington:

### June 2022

#### Warrington Literature Festival

- Is Christianity Feeding the Secular Commercial Dieting Industry? (Professor Hannah Bacon – Professor of Feminist Theology)
- The Secret Life of Kenneth Williams (Dr Christopher Lewis – Senior Lecturer in Music)
- Russell Pollard – When Words Don't Work: An exploration of conflict

### October 2022

#### Black History Month

- Time for Change – Action not Words
- Can Discrimination Ever Be Justified? Dr Donna Jackson (Senior Lecturer in History)
- Exploring the mythology of the 'white working class' – Joes Rigby (Senior Lecturer in Sociology)
- Time for change and removing the 'rose tinted spectacles' – Arfana Ali (MA student and former Race Advocate)

### November 2022

#### Interfaith Week

*The BIG Debate: Faith and the Climate Crisis*

A diverse panel of Warrington faith leaders, University students and staff, and representatives working in the community for change, come together to debate this crucial issue.

### January 2023

#### Holocaust Memorial Day

*Ordinary People*

- Dr Jennifer Verson (Visiting Lecturer in Jewish Studies)
- Professor Tim Grady (Professor of History)
- Dr Kara Critchell (Senior Lecturer in History)
- Dan Cole (Employability Assistant)

Time Square and online - Friday 27th January

[Booking page](#) and more information  
[Poster](#)  
[Website](#)

## Upcoming events at Warrington include:

### February 2023

#### LGBT History Month

*Behind the Lens*

Time Square

Wednesday 22nd February (TBC)

### March 2023 (As part of UoC Diversity Festival):

#### International Women's Day

#EmbraceEquity

Hidden Figures, a Movie Star, and the Women of Bletchley Park: The Hidden Histories

Behind our Mobile Phone Apps

Wednesday 7th March - Time Square and online - [Booking page](#) and more information

#### International Women's Day

#EmbraceEquity

Introducing Healthwatch Warrington

Thursday 16th March - Time Square - [Booking Page](#) and more information

## Positive Action

Positive Action is a key focus for the University. This is demonstrated in the way the recent vacancies for the senior roles of Provost and Deputy Vice Chancellor, and Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience were advertised, with recruitment across targeted ethnicity, LGBTQ+, disability, gender equality and generic diversity recruitment sites.

## Equality Forum

The University's Equality Forum is open to all staff and students. The Forum is integral to the University's EDI provision for the following reasons:

- a space for staff and students to raise equality concerns from all areas and levels of the University;
- forum to present and workshop current and upcoming initiatives;
- allows staff and students to feed into University strategy and goals;
- provides University with opportunity to obtain multi-lens feedback.

Forum debate is typically directed by Advance HE or Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) guidance. It is active throughout the academic year, meeting on a quarterly basis and it is led by the Strategic Director of HR and supported by the HR Manager for Organisational Development & Equality.

For more information about the Equality Forum email [equality@chester.ac.uk](mailto:equality@chester.ac.uk).

## University Training

The Equality Team offers a full suite of EDI training and development to members of staff across the institution.

Training is flexible and available in several formats, from day-long, intensive sessions for managers, to shorter sessions for new staff, online sessions and sessions with a specific focus on good interview practice.

In addition, the Equality Team has developed a module accredited under the University's Work Based and Integrative Studies (WBIS) framework. This is taught twice a year and is also open to external participants, alongside University staff. The accredited module is delivered at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and will be worth 20 University credits, upon completion of a work-based assignment.

All staff are required to complete an online Equality and Diversity training module, the content of which has been developed by the University, enabling us to update in line with legislation and business priorities instantly and at no extra cost. All staff are also required to complete mandatory online Safeguarding and Prevent training.

Between April and September 2021, the University rolled out mandatory Race Equity, Unconscious Bias and Microaggression training to all staff. This was undertaken by over 1200 staff and work continues in 2022 to build upon the foundation created by this training.

A new iteration of Unconscious Bias training is being developed by one of the 2022/23 Student Race Advocates.

## Healthy University

The University of Chester aspires to become a Healthy University, Our Healthy University, which is committed to "creating a learning environment and organisational culture that enhances the health, well-being and sustainability of its community and enables everyone to achieve their full potential".

Further details of the strategy are [here](#).

As part of this commitment we want to encourage all staff to take a proactive approach to their own wellness by following the 5 steps to well-being: Connect, Be active, Be Mindful, Keep Learning and Give to Others.

In support of this, the University has created a hub of resources covering Coronavirus Wellbeing Support; Well Body; Well Mind; Keep Well; Relate Well; Dying, Death and Bereavement; Health4All; Community Contacts and Network; Managing Well; Financial Wellbeing; and Smoke Free Campus.

## Mental Health First Aid Training

The University offers Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training courses by our in-house approved MHFA England Instructors remotely and in-person to: raise awareness of mental health; help spot symptoms; reduce stigma; enable staff to offer initial help; and guide individuals towards professional/other support.

# LGBTQ+ Achievements:

## Chester Pride

The city of Chester's first Pride event took place on 5th October 2013, organised by Cheshire West and Chester Council and major local employers. It took the form of an afternoon event in the Town Hall and Town Hall Square. The event was a great success and was repeated on a larger scale in 2014 and 2015, with a parade through the streets of Chester, followed by events and attractions in Grosvenor Park (2014) and Castle Square (2015 – 2019 and again in 2022).

The University is an enthusiastic supporter of Pride and every year a group of staff and students march in the parade and run a stall in Castle Square. This is a valuable opportunity to promote the University as an LGBTQ+-inclusive place to work and study, whilst also supporting an important local charity and celebrating the LGBTQ+ community.



In 2022, we expanded our support by becoming one of Chester Pride's main sponsors with our largest donation to date. When staff who volunteered to help with Pride were asked for feedback they said they liked:

“The sense of community in the parade, seeing more colleague allies there than ever before” ... “Meeting new people and being part of the celebration” ...

## Navajo Charter Mark

The University of Chester has an active LGBTQ+ Staff Network. This is open to any member of staff who identifies as being part of the LGBTQ+ community.

In 2019, the group applied for and achieved the Navajo Merseyside and Cheshire LGBTIQA Charter Mark, an equality mark supported by LGBTIQIA community groups across Merseyside and Cheshire.

In 2022, the equality team submitted a document highlighting the University's work to become more LGBTQ+ inclusive (with consideration of the action plan for improvement that was agreed in 2019). The University was awarded an interim Navajo Charter mark and will be undergoing full assessment in April 2023 in pursuit of a full renewal.

The institutional Charter Mark is an indication of good practice, commitment and knowledge of the specific needs, issues and barriers facing LGBTQ+ people. By gaining this charter, the University became part of the Navajo community, working with other organisations to support and promote LGBT+ rights. The University is one of only two universities in the region to receive the award.

In August 2022, we established closer ties with Navajo when our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer (Jules Crane), joined Navajo's ranks as an institutional charter assessor.



This has given us an opportunity to support Navajo and the valuable work they do whilst also gaining a unique insight into LGBTQ+ inclusive best practice.

## Gender Focussed Achievements:

### Gender Pay

The University of Chester is committed to reducing the gender pay gap by recruiting, developing, promoting, and rewarding staff fairly regardless of gender and supporting initiatives that mitigate against the underlying causes of the gender pay gap. The purpose of the Gender Pay Gap Report is to identify the gender pay gaps across the organisation as at the snapshot date of 31st March 2021 and can be accessed [here](#).

### Aurora

Aurora is Advance HE's successful women-only leadership development programme. This programme is a unique partnership initiative bringing together leadership experts and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to take positive action to address the under-representation of women in leadership positions in the sector. Since its launch, almost 10,000 women from HEIs across the UK and Ireland have participated. By participating in the Aurora programme, the University aims to enable leadership potential in woman and to embed strong network across the sector.

The University of Chester has partly-funded places in this programme since 2013, and this year the University supported nine members of staff through the Aurora programme. Programme intake was varied and included women from the Faculty of Health and Social Care, Sport and Active Lifestyle, Learning and Information Services, the Faculty of Education and Children's Services, Chester Medical School, Human Resources, History and Archaeology, Careers and Employability and the Centre for Professional and Economic Development.

Aurora alumni greatly benefited from the programme this year and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

“I grew in confidence by attending Aurora and since signing up I have been working with a mentor at the University and have signed up to complete an MA”

“Fantastic resources were provided that I know I will continue to refer back to throughout my career”

### Athena Swan

Advance HE's Athena Swan Charter is a framework which is used across the globe to support and transform gender equality within higher education (HE) and research. It was established in 2005 with a view to encouraging and recognising commitment to advancing the careers of women in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) employment. The Charter is now used to address and reflect on gender equality more broadly, and not just barriers to progression that affect women.

The University of Chester undertook a two-year assessment with Athena Swan and was

recognised for its commitment to gender equality with a Bronze institutional Athena Swan award in May 2018. The Department of Psychology also holds a departmental Athena Swan Bronze award.

The institutional award is due for renewal in January 2024. Renewal assessment comprises of an internal assessment including quantitative (staff data) and qualitative evidence (policies, practices, systems and arrangements). The aim of this reassessment is to identify both challenges and opportunities. The renewal will assess progress against the 2018 action plan for the University and will be facilitated by our Self-Assessment team (comprised of academic and professional services staff from across the University). This Self-Assessment team, who worked hard to achieve the 2018 award, are currently working on the 2024 renewal.

By being part of Athena Swan, the University is committed to adopting the charter's key principles within our policies, practices, action plans and culture. These principles are:

- adopting robust, transparent and accountable processes for gender equality work;
- addressing structural inequalities and social injustices that manifest as differential experiences and outcomes for staff and students;
- tackling behaviours and cultures that detract from the safety and collegiality of our work and study environments, including not tolerating gender-based violence, discrimination, bullying, harassment or exploitation;
- understanding and addressing intersectional inequalities;
- recognising that individuals can determine their own gender identity, and tackling the specific issues faced by trans and non-binary people;
- examining gendered occupational segregation, and elevating the status, voice and career opportunities of any identified under-valued and at-risk groups;
- mitigating the gendered impact of caring responsibilities and career breaks, and supporting flexibility and the maintenance of a healthy 'whole life balance';
- mitigating the gendered impact of short-term and casual contracts for staff seeking sustainable careers.

More information about Athena Swan and our charter principles can be found [here](#).

## **Proctor's Office and RESPECT**

At the University of Chester, we are committed to providing a respectful and safe environment for all members of its community. The RESPECT project works to promote positive cultural change and prevent unacceptable behaviours from occurring in the first place. The RESPECT project and Proctor's Office have seen a number of EDI successes this year:

### Safer Streets 3:

The project has seen fantastic results including the successful bid of the Safer Streets funding which resulted in £550,000 being awarded to the University. This funded improved lighting across campus, accredited training for over 20 Sexual Violence Liaison Officers (SVLO) to support the launch of the SVLO Service, consent & healthy relationship train the trainer training, the implementation of a new safety app and a taxi scheme for students.

### Sexual Violence Liaison Officer (SVLO) Service:

This is a team of dedicated SVLOs who have undertaken accredited training to help them support students wishing to make a disclose of sexual violence to the University. The service is not an emergency service but exists to support students who want to understand their options and how to access additional support. SVLOs listen empathetically, without judgement. The service is student led, so any actions for the SVLO will be made in agreement with the student. All students can access the service, regardless of when or where the incident took place, and who it involved. Disclosing students do not have to report anything to the police.

Since the Sexual Violence Liaison Officer Service launched in September 2022, it has had good take up, having received 23 referrals so far. The service has been designed to be as inclusive as it can be, with all students being able to access it unless they are studying abroad. Students can access the service in a number of accessible ways including our Report a Concern webform, emailing, phoning or in person at InfoPoint. The service's registration form requests information relevant to EDI to ensure any necessary accommodations have been made. Students accessing the service are also allowed to choose whether the appointment is in person, on teams or on the phone, as well as who they have the appointment with. The service has a page on our intranet with pictures of the team and a blurb for each SVLO and we encourage students to view this page so they can choose who they feel most comfortable with. Comms for this service have taken inclusivity into account and used a range of online and physical materials, which have been distributed across all sites and not just gender specific areas (for example, both male and female toilets).

The Northwest Sexual Violence Awareness Week visited Exton Park, Kingsway, Queens Park, Wheeler, Warrington and Shrewsbury sites to raise awareness of sexual violence. We were joined by local partners who provide support to victim/survivors of sexual violence, including Body Positive who specialise in LGBT+ support. Survivors UK, who support men, boys and non-binary people who have experienced sexual violence, provided information to distribute to students. Local police crime information leaflets were also available in a variety of different languages. A calendar of events for the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence was collated and made available to students to engage with.

### Unacceptable Behaviours Group:

As part of the RESPECT project, there is a monthly Unacceptable Behaviours Group (UBG) where staff and students are invited to discuss the progress of work focused on making the University a safer, more inclusive and supportive place to be a part of. Some previously discussed topics include preventing sexual violence, drug & alcohol misuse, anti-racism and supporting the LGBTQ+ community.

The 'Living Black' report was discussed at UBG in July 2022 and an action plan was drafted by the Residential Life Manager as an institutional response to these findings. Progress with this action plan will feed into UBG and the Equality Forum.

During the latter part of 2022, Recovery Ally training sessions were offered to both staff and students, run by Recovery Connections. The sessions focussed on what recovery is, stigmatising language and how to support someone who identifies as in recovery. There were 20 places for staff and 20 places for students in total. Interest was high and we had a waiting list for the student sessions. Feedback was positive, with 91.7% of survey respondents stating we should continue to offer this training. In line with this subject, our drug and alcohol policy has been reviewed and acknowledges our student population who chose

not to drink or use drugs.

The Proctor's Officer have recently welcomed a Race Advocate to the team. He plans to raise awareness of the impact of racism and the reporting/supporting options that we have for students. He will also be working on our "Anti-Racism" moodle modules too.

We have condensed the Consent and Healthy Relationship workshops into an online module in an attempt to reach a wider audience and have seen 104 staff and students engage with the training. The in-person sessions have been offered to all students, across different campuses. Thorough content warnings were provided to attendees, and they were allowed to leave at any point during the sessions, with a staff member checking on their wellbeing if they did.

The Tackling Harassment: Promoting Cultural Change in Higher Education online module has also been extensively promoted and saw 90 staff and students engage with the training. This training looks at being an active bystander and how to handle a disclosure.

### Training:

There will shortly be a dedicated section on Moodle with training content relevant to preventing and educating both staff and students on unacceptable behaviours. We would encourage all staff to complete the *Tackling Harassment: Promoting Cultural Change in Higher Education* module, which will show you how to be an active bystander and how to handle disclosures from students. Additionally, there is a moodle module on consent you may wish to complete.

Our online training content is constantly in review and new modules will be added over the coming year.

## **Institute of Gender Studies**

The core tenets of the University of Chester's [Institute of Gender Studies](#) – founded in 2016 – are inclusivity, intersectionality, and interdisciplinarity. The team are committed to providing not only a platform for established researchers and practitioners working in the field, but also for undergraduate and postgraduate students from a range of disciplines.

The Institute's [annual research seminar series](#) has been running since 2016, and is now online, attracting speakers and audience members from numerous countries. An active cohort of doctoral researchers is also based in the IGS – around 12 at the time of writing – working on a wide range of gender-related issues. The Institute also plays an active role in the University's annual Diversity Festival, co-hosting high profile events.

In 2023 the IGS will host its tenth anniversary [Talking Bodies conference](#) in Chester. Around 150 academics, artists, activists and practitioners from around the world will converge on campus for a week in June. There are three Talking Bodies publications to date and, in addition, the Institute is home to the [Palgrave Studies in \(Re\)presenting Gender](#) and [The Routledge Companion to Gender, Sexuality, and Culture](#).

The Institute works with members of the local community and encourages its students actively to engage in EDI initiatives which have a measurable impact on people's lives. One very recent example is the work of one of our MRes in Gender Studies students whose work on sexual health care for non-binary and trans people was singled out for praise by her employer.

For further information on any aspect of the Institute's work, please contact its Director, Professor Emma Rees: [e.rees@chester.ac.uk](mailto:e.rees@chester.ac.uk).

## Race Focussed Achievements:

### Race Equality Challenge Group

In June 2020, the Vice Chancellor established a Race Equality Challenge Group with a view to promoting and co-ordinating the advancement of race equality and diversity across the University. The goal of this group is to make a practical and tangible difference to how all staff and students feel about and respond to race equality at the University. The University seeks to make long-term, systemic change.

Though the Race Equality Challenge Group core membership remains small, it grew in 2022 and now includes the Vice-Chancellor, the Strategic Director of HR, the HR Manager for Diversity, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer, an undergraduate and a postgraduate student representative, two members of academic staff, two members of Professional Services staff, one CSU representative, and the University's Senior and Muslim Chaplain. This Core Group comprises a range of ethnicities, ensuring that the burden of 'fixing the problem' is not left solely to BAME staff.

Every article, webinar or how-to guide on any equality topic will highlight senior leadership as one of the most important aspects of making change. The Vice-Chancellor chairs the Group and this Senior Leadership commitment ensures that race equality stays at the heart of our culture, the centre of our strategy and at the very core of our vision.

The Race Equality Challenge Group have built recommendations from the Equality and Human Rights Commissions' 2019 report 'Tackling racial harassment: Universities challenged' into their work and actions.

### Student Race Advocates (SRA)

The Group developed the role of Student Race Advocate (SRA) and 10 SRAs were recruited in 2022/23. The role is paid and aims to actively support and promote the needs of Black, Asian and other minority ethnic students. Our 2022/23 cohort of Student Race Advocates have been assigned specific projects that will provide them with experience that fits their personal development goals, whilst also providing them with the opportunity to meaningfully advance the University's race equality provision. The role will give the students the opportunity to promote race equality across the University and suggest creative ways to improve inclusivity and the availability of BAME student opportunities. SRAs are working to provide support for BAME students, assistance with welfare issues, feeding back on policy, mentoring, buddying and reverse mentoring as well as developing conferences and events.

The establishment of a Race Equality Discussion Board on the University's intranet has allowed space for people to share articles, podcasts, TEDX talks and events to enable others to learn more about this important topic.

In 2022, the University fully-funded two places on Advance HE's 'Diversifying Leadership' programme. This programme is designed to support early-career academics and professional services staff from BAME backgrounds who are about to take their first steps into a leadership role. It explores themes of power and influence, demystifying leadership, cultural identity and cultural capital. It aims to increase visibility and authentic leadership and features leadership stories from high-profile HE leaders. A further 2 places are being fully funded in 2023.

The University have made a number of changes to the Recruitment and Selection process with the intention of promoting race equality:

- The Competency Based Interview Question Bank has been updated to include over 20 equality and diversity focussed questions
- It is mandatory for all recruitment and selection panels to ask at least one equality question – exploring each candidates commitment to equality and diversity
- The selection panel recommendation form also encourages the interview panel to discuss and reflect on their own Unconscious Biases and Positive Action and consider all aspects of EDI in reaching a decision on appointment.

Feedback following this change has been positive, with one interviewee commenting that it showed the University's commitment to equality and diversity.

## **Disability Focussed Achievements**

### **Disability Confident**

The University of Chester is a level 2 Disability Confident Employer. As a Disability Confident Employer, the University is committed to the scheme's many actions which underlie its core themes of employing the right people for the University and retaining and developing our disabled staff. The University continually reviews how it implements the core actions fully and which of the optional activities it will engage in.

# Our People – Section One

## Health and Wellbeing Staff Survey (2022)

The Health and Wellbeing Staff Survey ran from 28<sup>th</sup> March – 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022. There were a total of 918 responses and this was a short pulse survey which focused on:

- The facilitation and promotion of health and wellbeing
- Employee confidence to disclose health and wellbeing concerns and ask for help
- Line manager confidence to deal with health and wellbeing issues
- The levels of importance, awareness and use of existing health and wellbeing support mechanisms
- 85% of staff believed the University provides services and support mechanisms which actively promote health and wellbeing
- 70% believed their managers actively promote health and wellbeing
- 79% believed their line manager facilitated a working environment that positively influenced their health and wellbeing

Line managers demonstrated great confidence in managing health and wellbeing:

- 92% were very or somewhat confident to manage someone with a disability or long-term health condition
- 95% were very or somewhat confident spotting early warning signs of mental ill health
- 93% were very or somewhat confident to deal with health and wellbeing issues in their team.

When asked about awareness of the support mechanisms available to staff, the awareness of staff network groups ranged from 28% to 57%. As such, the Equality team have done a great deal of work towards raising awareness of the staff network in 2022.

## Disciplinary Action, Harassment and Grievances etc.

There were 39 employee relations cases between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 (32 in 2020/21). Approximately 1765 members of staff worked at the University within that time period. The following are the significant Equality characteristics of the cases (2020/21 data in parentheses, where appropriate):

- 60% (72%) of cases involved white staff, 14% (6%) of cases involved staff of 'other' ethnicity, and 26% (22%) of cases involved individuals for whom ethnicity was not known or refused.
- 51% (44%) of staff involved were female, 40% (47%) were male and the remainder were cases involving several staff.
- 60% (56%) of cases involved professional services staff and 40% (34%) involved academic staff.
- There were 3 (2) formal capability cases, 1 (1) of which involved disabled staff.
- 2 (2) staff were issued with a formal sanction (warning or dismissal) as a result of disciplinary procedures, 1 (2) of whom were professional services staff, and all of whom were white, male and not disabled.

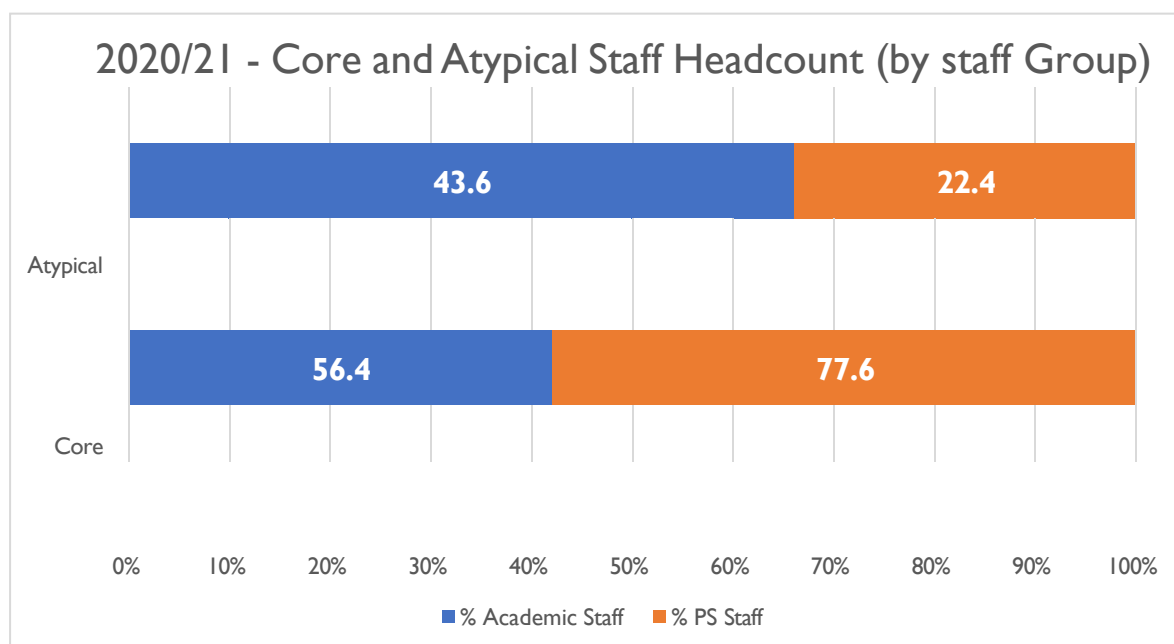
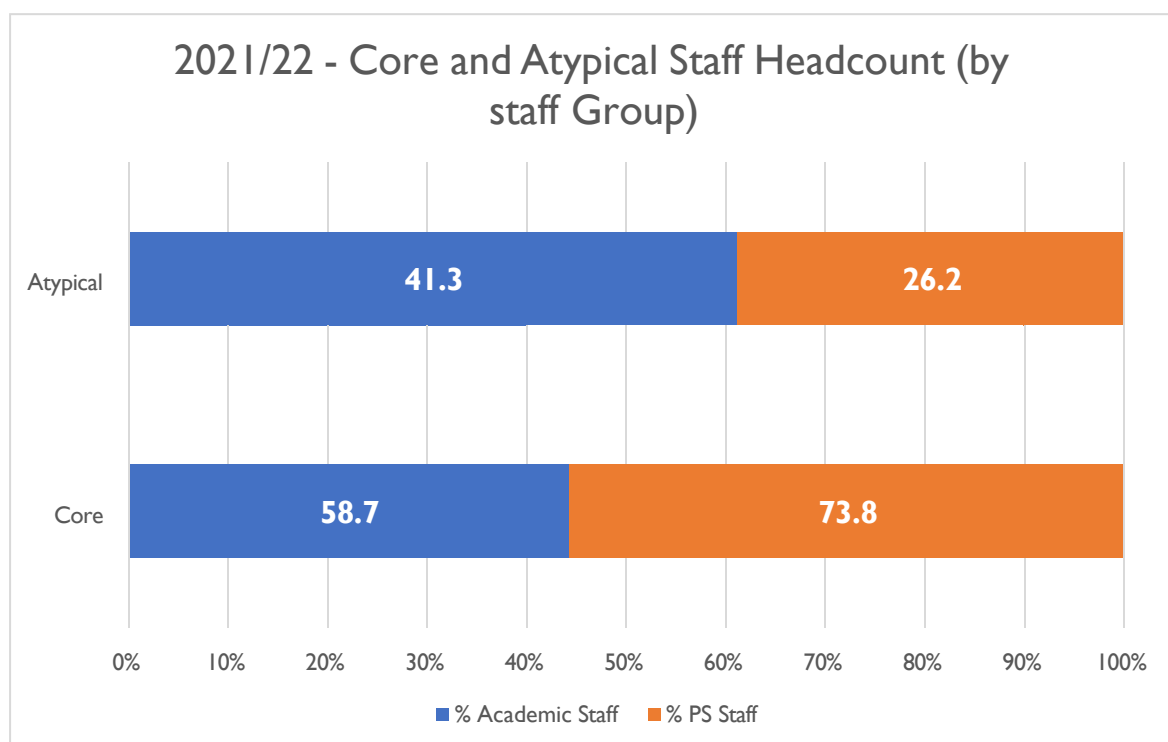
- 2 (3) members of staff were dismissed as a result of unsuccessful completion of their probationary period. 1 (2) of the staff dismissed was white (whilst the other did not declare their ethnicity), 1 (3) was male, and none (0) were known to be disabled.
- 2 (3) grievances were submitted, 2 (2) of which were submitted by white staff, and 1 (2) of which were submitted by female staff.
- There were 7 (4) formal dignity and respect cases. 4 (3) of these were student complaints against members of staff. 1 case involved both female complainants and respondents, 3 involved female complainants and male respondents, 1 involved a female complainant against both male and female respondents, and 2 involved male complainants and female respondents.

## Our People – Section Two



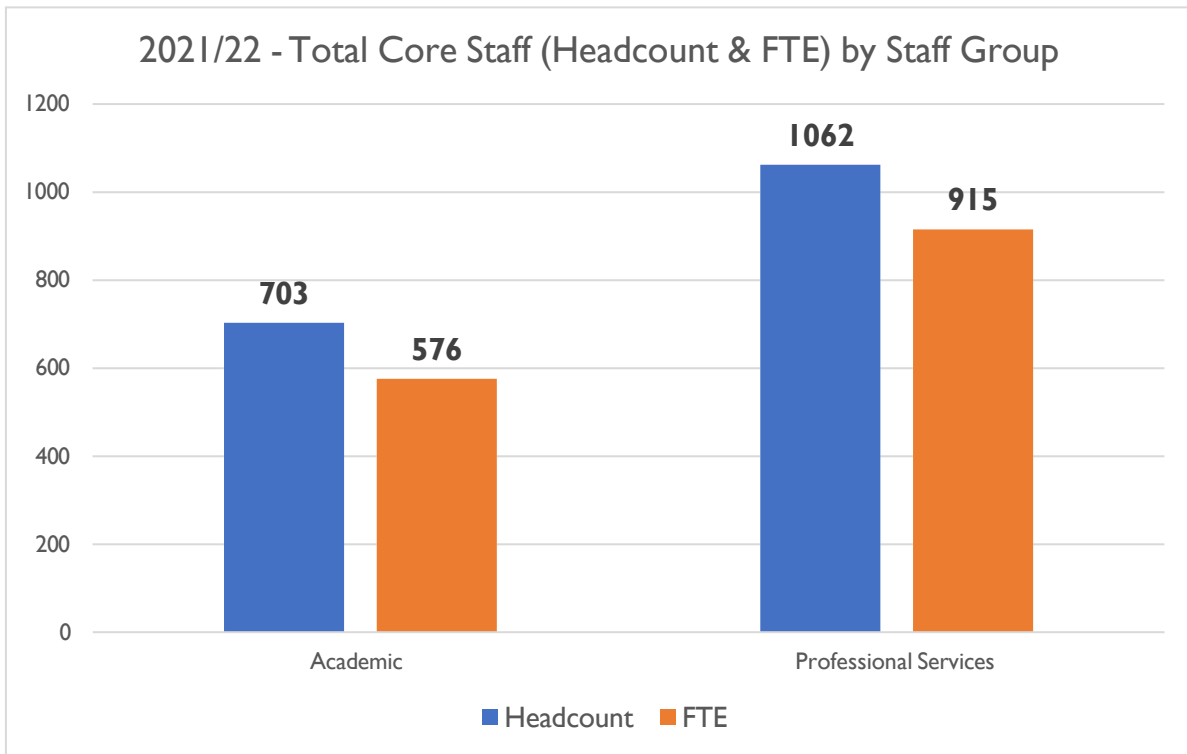
The following section is a data overview of our University demographics in the academic year 2021/22. All data is taken from HESA reporting.

### Infographic 1 Total Core and Atypical Staff Headcount by staff group



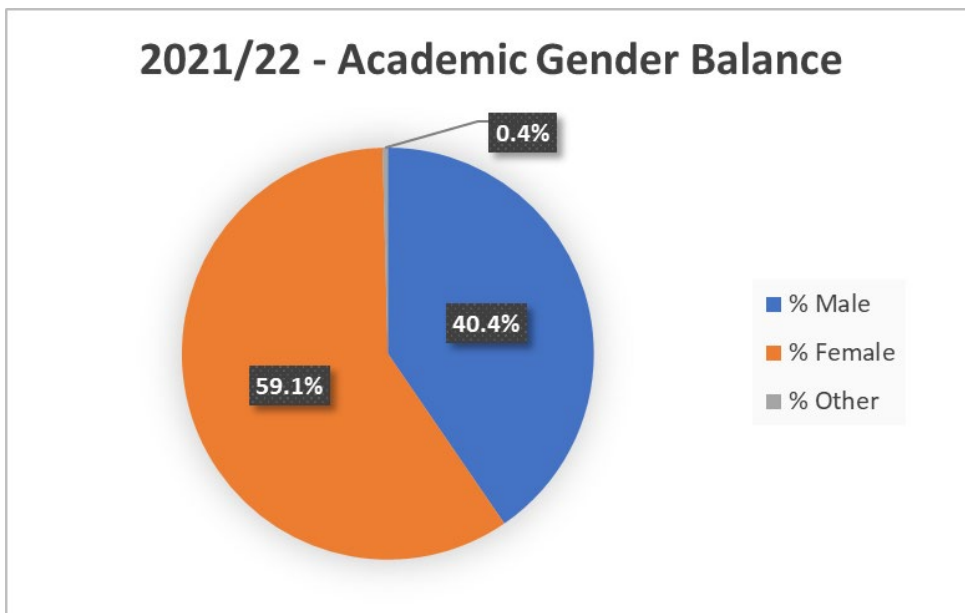
**Figures 1 and 2:** Above is a comparison of atypical and core contracts by staff group (2021/22 vs 2020/21). Atypical contracts are typically casual whereas core contracts include standard fixed term and permanent contracts. There has been an increase in atypical professional services contract. This is partly due to an increase in employed students in Student Ambassador roles. There has been a decrease in academic atypical contracts.

### Infographic 2 Total Core Staff (Headcount and FTE) by staff group

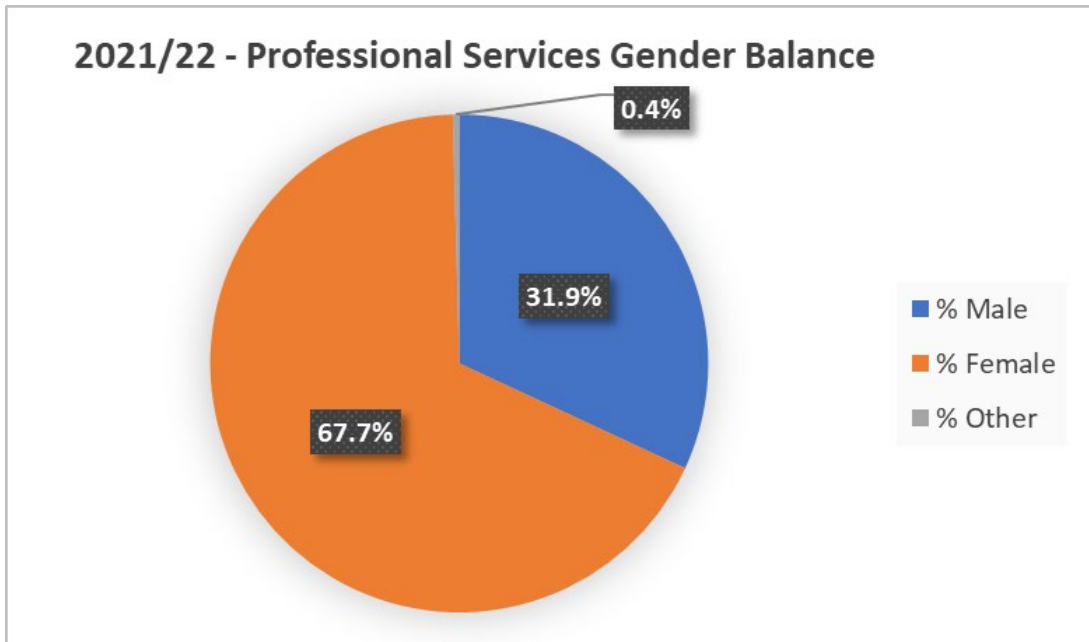


**Figure 3:** Demonstrates the distribution of core staff in 2021/22 (both headcount and Full-Time Equivalent). There are a greater number of professional services staff than there are academic staff.

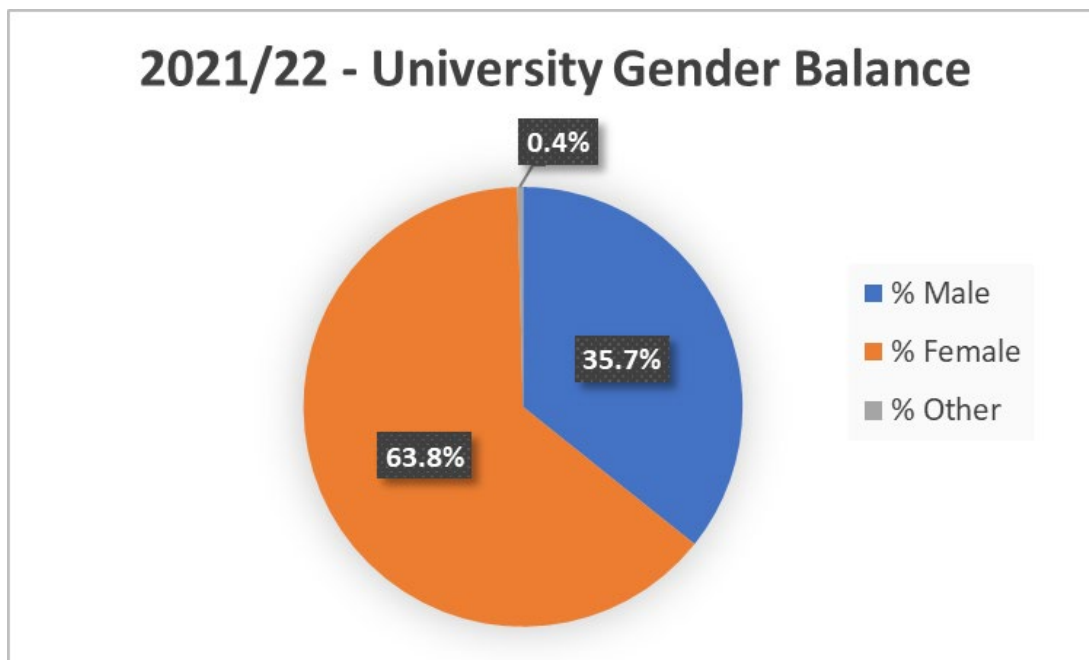
### Infographic 3 Gender



**Figure 4:** Demonstrates the gender balance of Academic staff at the University (2021/22). The University’s academic staff are predominantly female. 0.4% of academic staff are gender diverse.

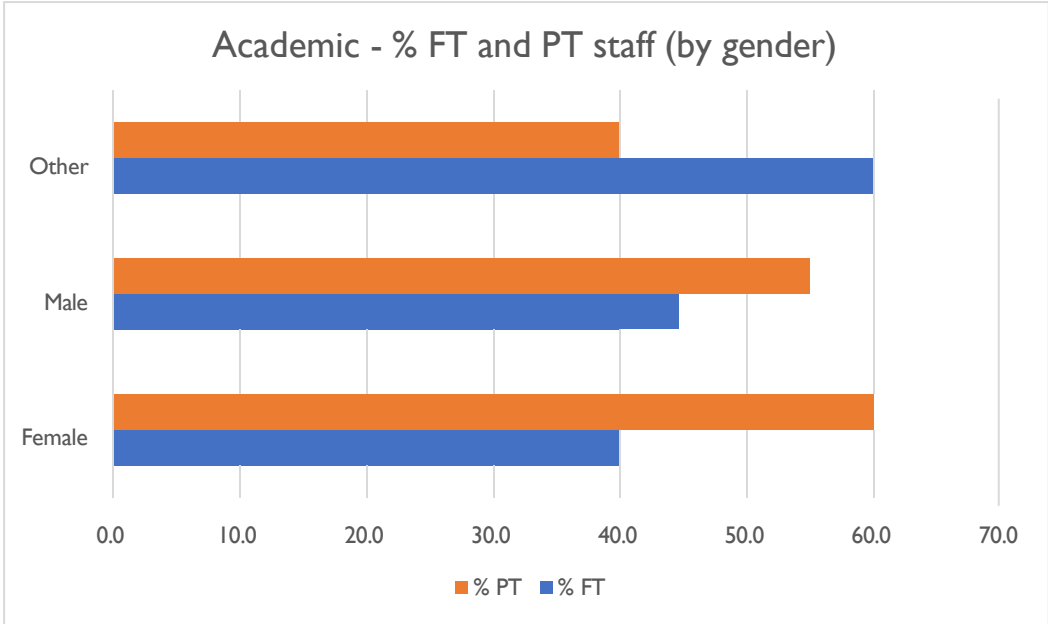


**Figure 5:** Demonstrates the gender balance of Professional Services staff at the University (2021/22). The University's Professional Services workforce is significantly female dominated. 0.4% of professional services staff are gender diverse.

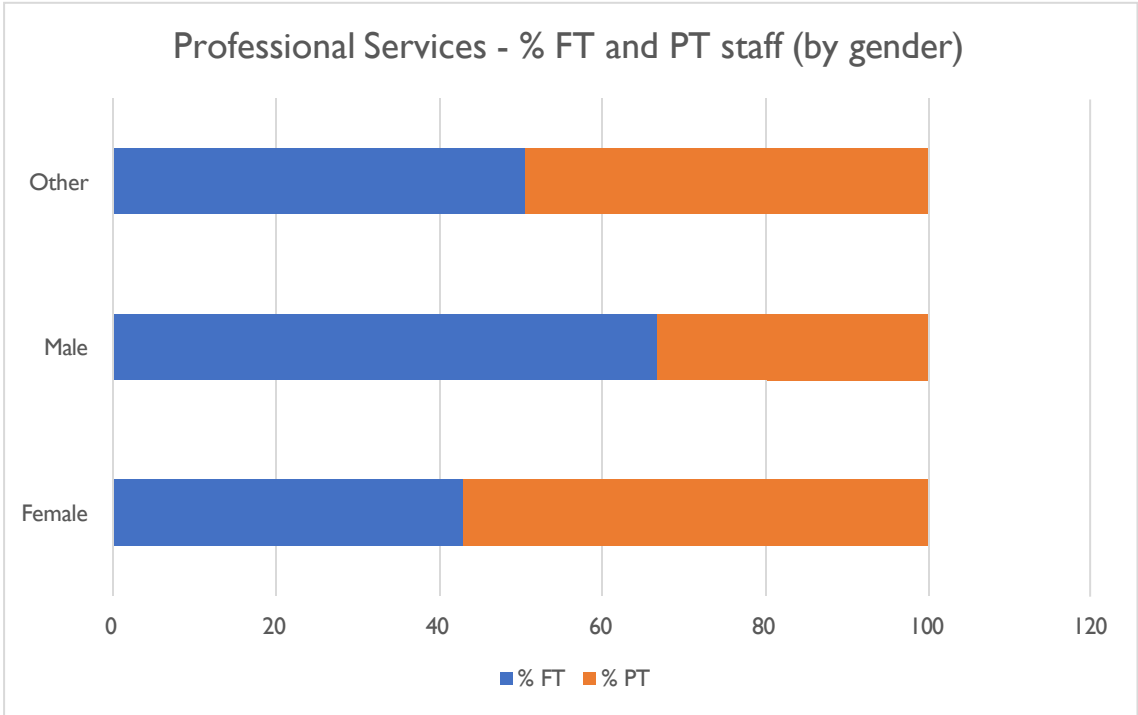


**Figure 6:** Demonstrates the gender balance of all staff at the University (2021/22). The gender balance of academic staff is more equal than the gender balance of professional services or the University as a whole.

**Infographic 4 Gender and Full-time/Part-time by staff group**

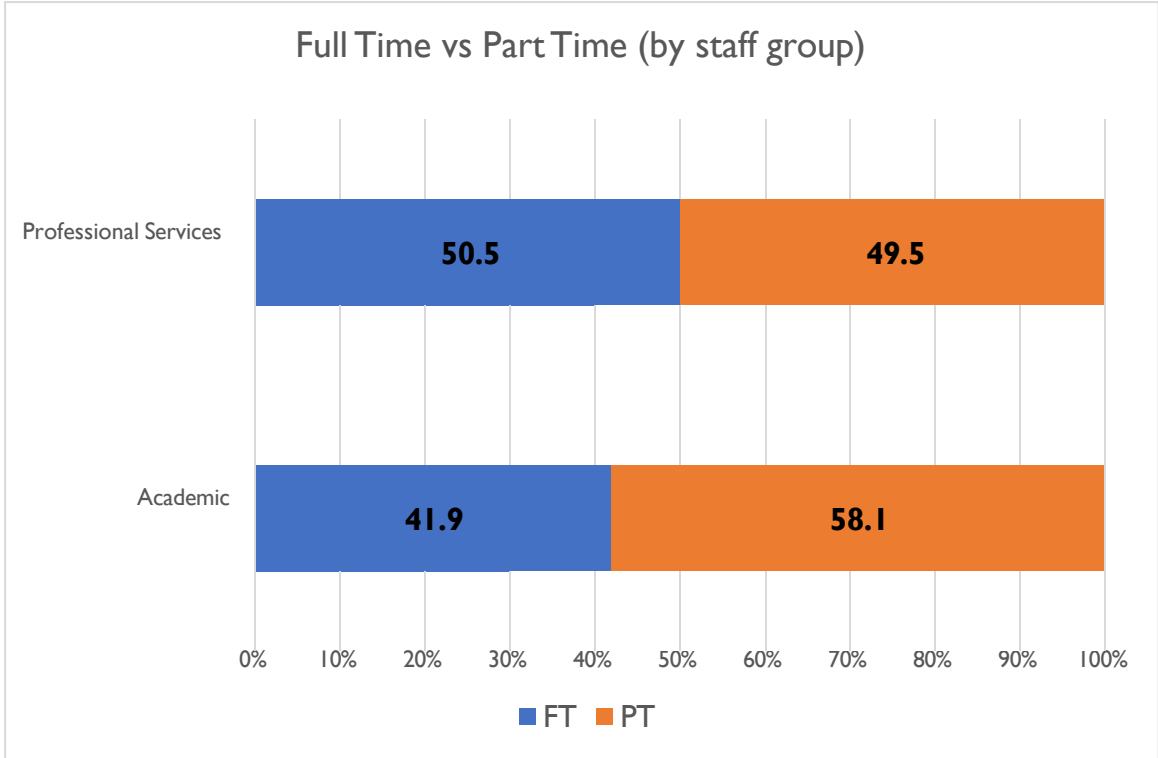


**Figure 7:** % of staff working full time vs part time contract (by gender and academic only). This demonstrates that a greater percentage of academic female staff (60% of female workforce) work part-time contracts than male staff (55%.)



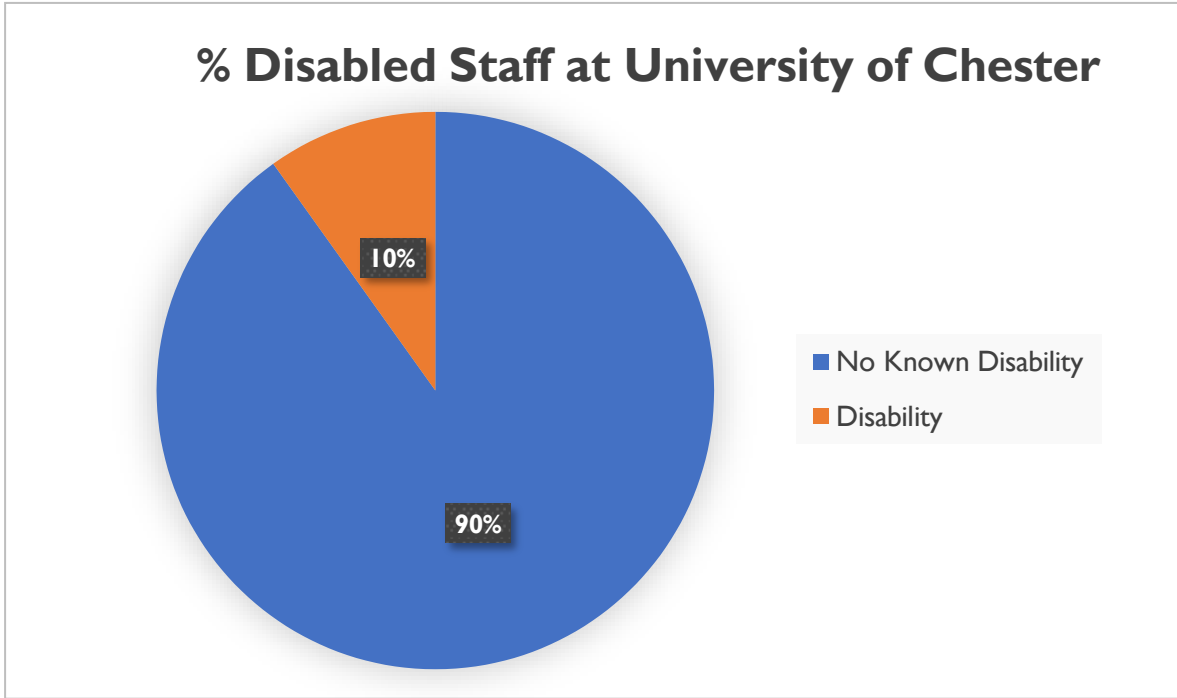
**Figure 8:** % of staff working full time vs part time contract (by gender and professional services only). This demonstrates that a greater percentage of professional female staff (58% of female workforce) work part-time contracts than male staff (50%.)

**Infographic 5 Full-time vs Part-time by staff group**

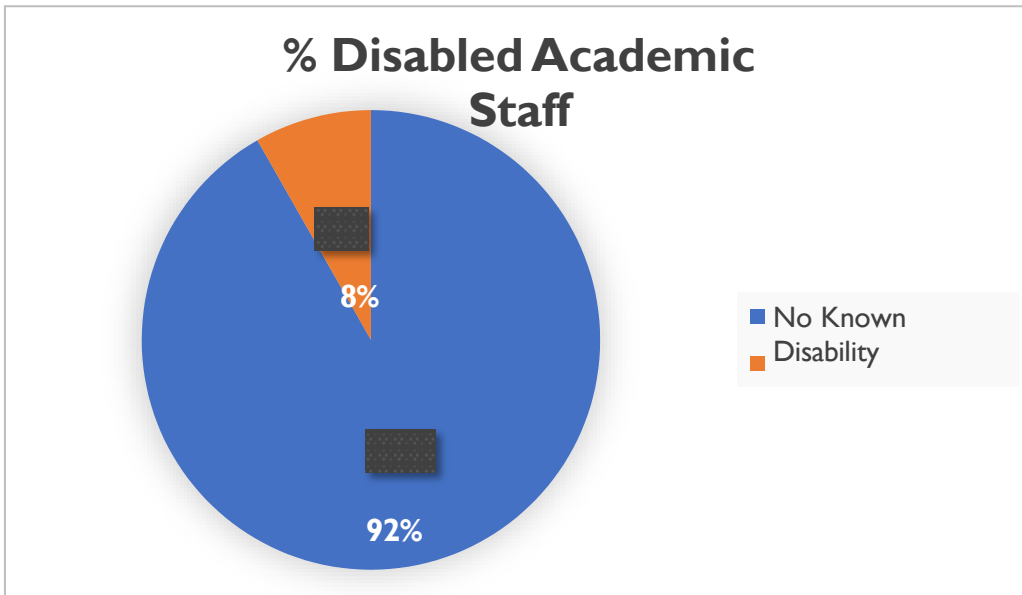


**Figure 9:** Demonstrates the divide between full time and part time working (by staff group). A greater number of academic staff work part-time than professional services staff.

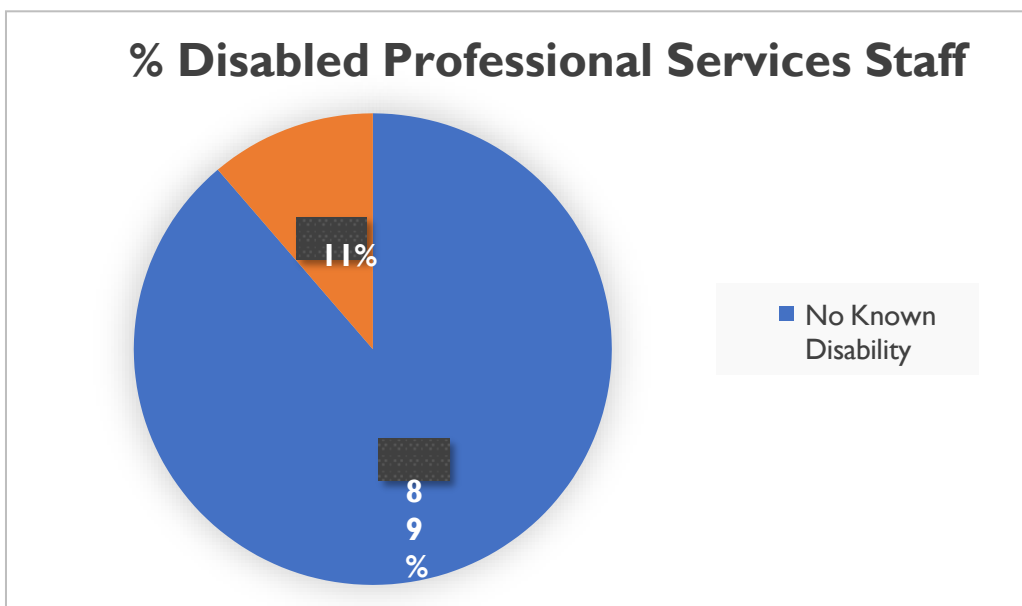
**Infographic 6 Disability**



**Figure 10:** Demonstrates the percentage of all UoC staff who identify as disabled. The number of disabled staff has decreased slightly when compared to last year (see Figure 13).



**Figure 11:** Demonstrates the percentage of all Academic staff who identify as disabled. The number of academic disabled staff has decreased by 1% since last academic year (see Figure 13).

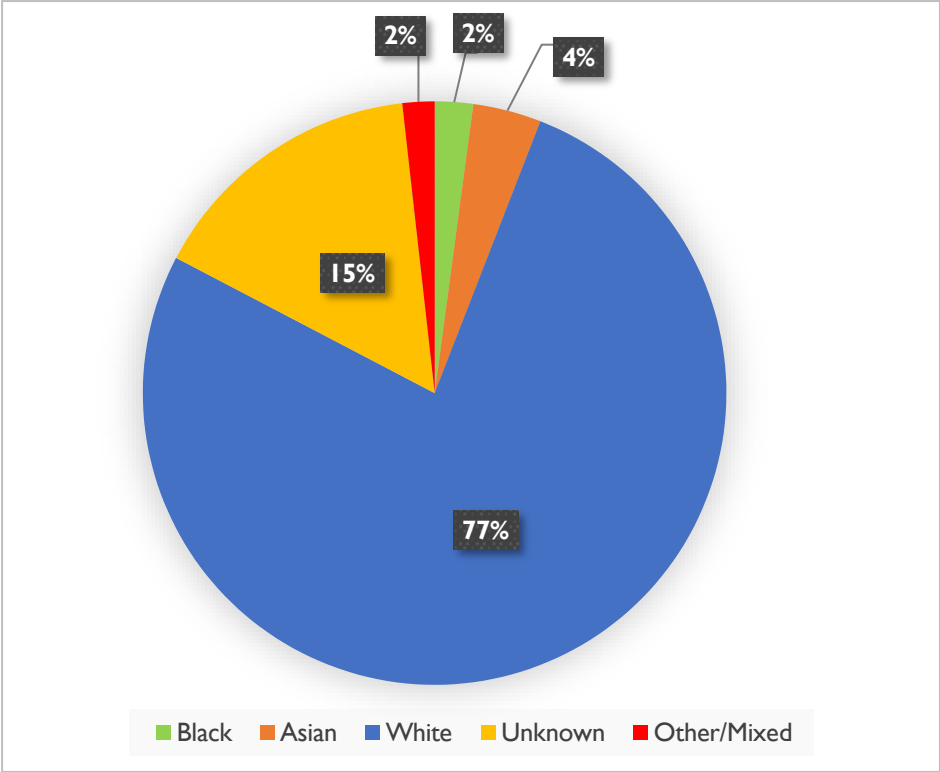


**Figure 12:** Demonstrates the percentage of all professional staff who identify as disabled. The number of disabled staff has increased slightly since last academic year (see Figure 13).

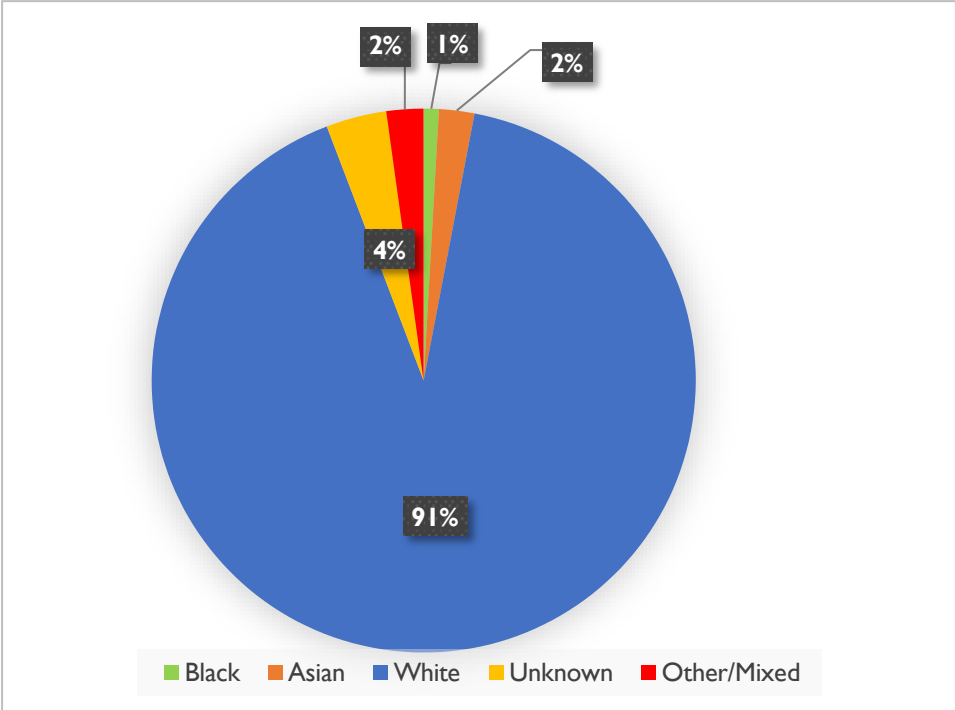


**Figure 13:** Percentages of disabled staff in 2020/21 (academic, professional services and all staff).

**Infographic 7 Ethnicity**

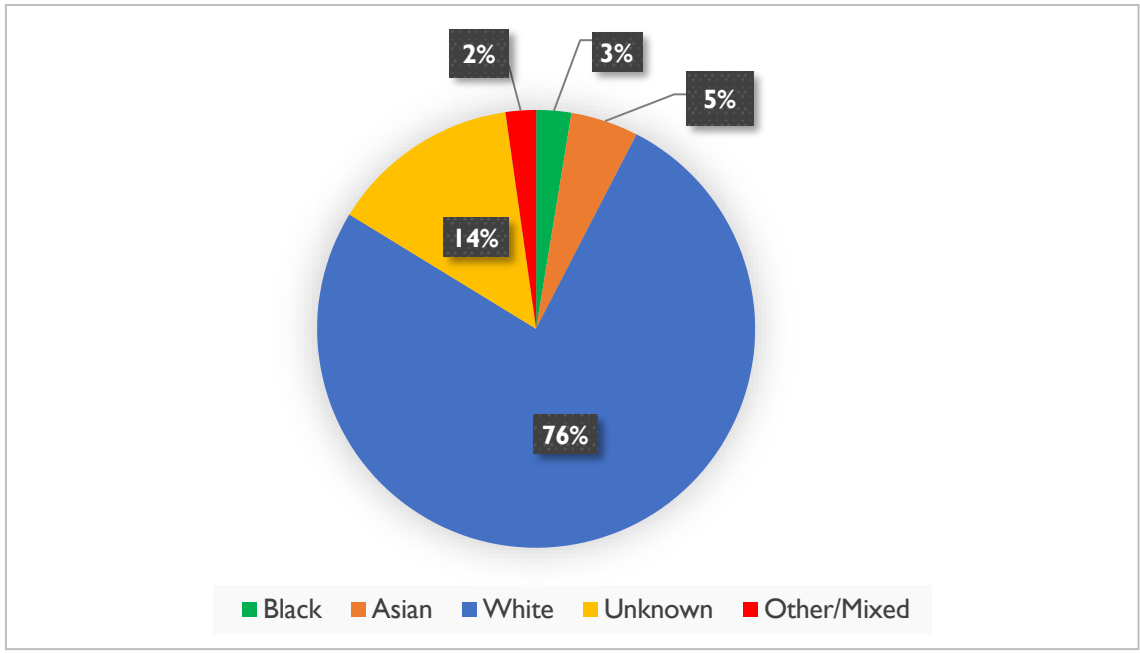


**Figure 14:** Percentage ethnicity of all University staff (2021/22).

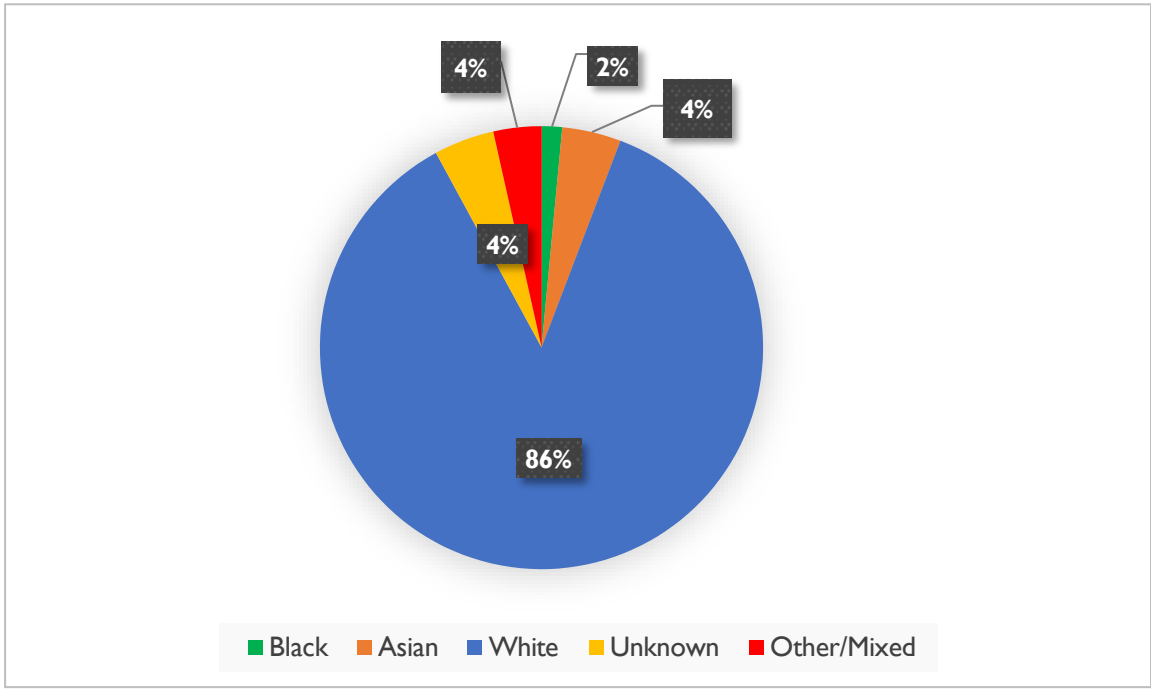


**Figure 15:** Percentage ethnicity of all University staff (2020/21).

**Summary:** There was an increase in unknown ethnicity this academic year which likely accounts for the large decrease in numbers of white staff. Numbers of black staff increased by 1% and numbers of Asian staff increased by 2%



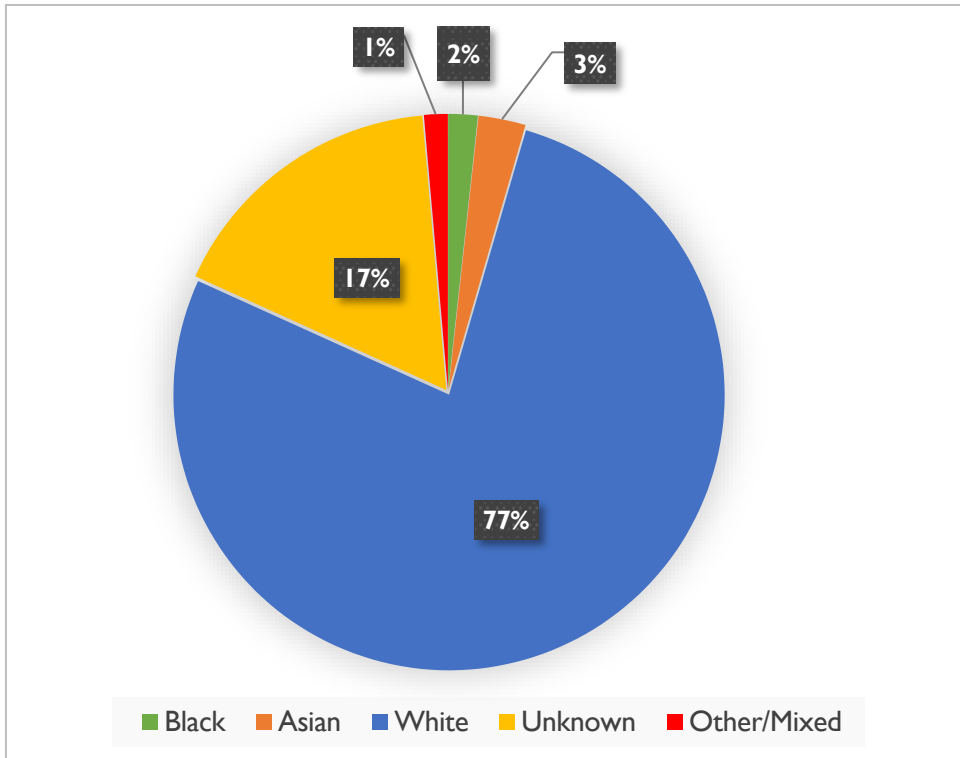
**Figure 16:** Percentage ethnicity of academic staff (2021/22).



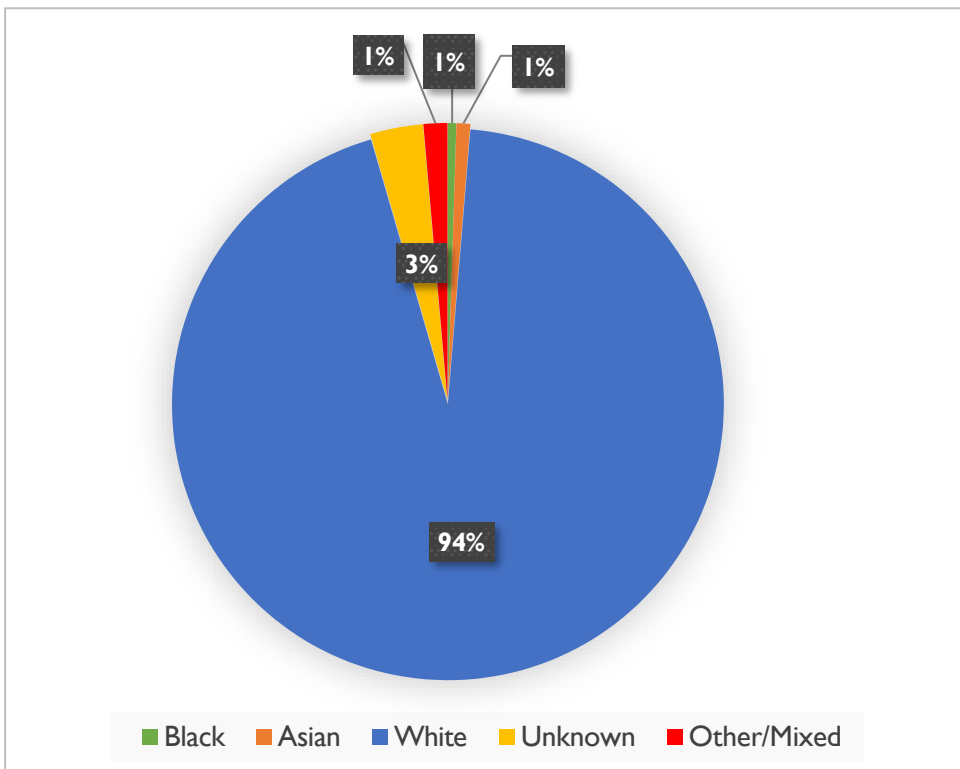
**Figure 17:** Percentage ethnicity of academic staff (2020/21).

**Summary:** There was an increase in unknown ethnicity this academic year which likely accounts for the decrease in numbers of white staff. Numbers of black staff increased by 1% and numbers of Asian staff increased by 1%. Numbers of Other/Mixed ethnicity decreased by 2%.





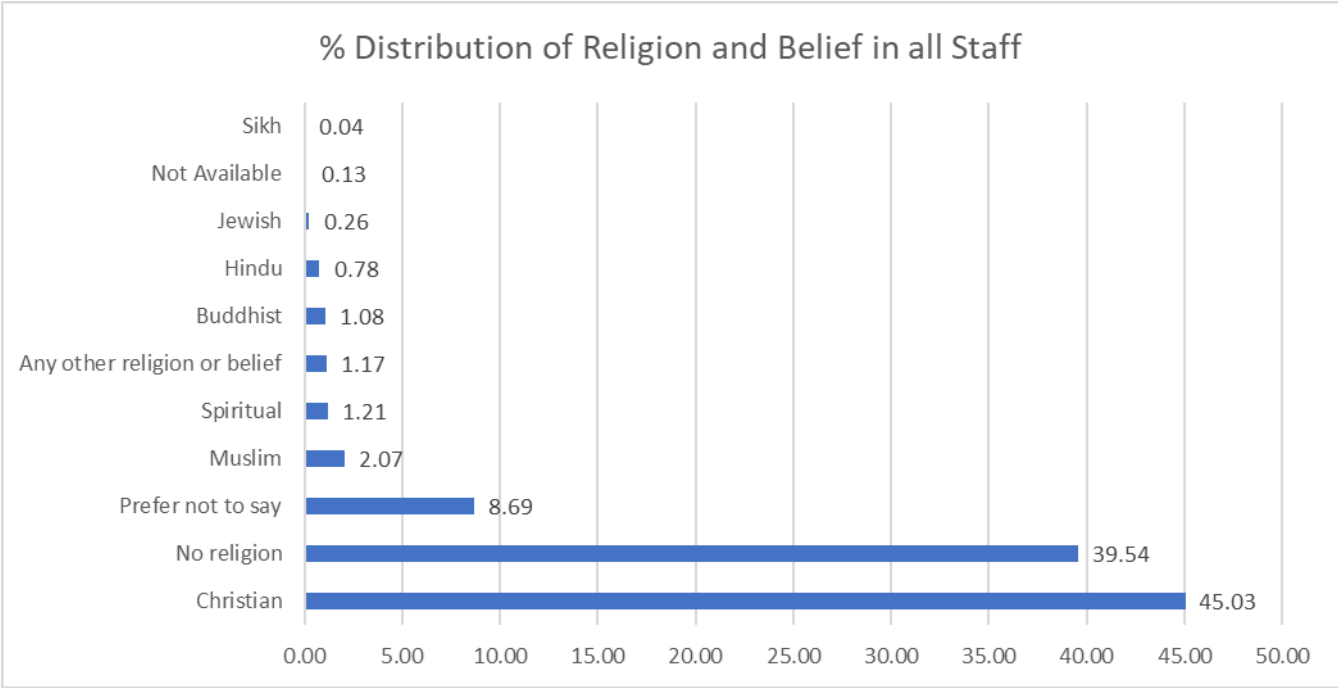
**Figure 18:** Percentage ethnicity of professional services staff (2021/22).



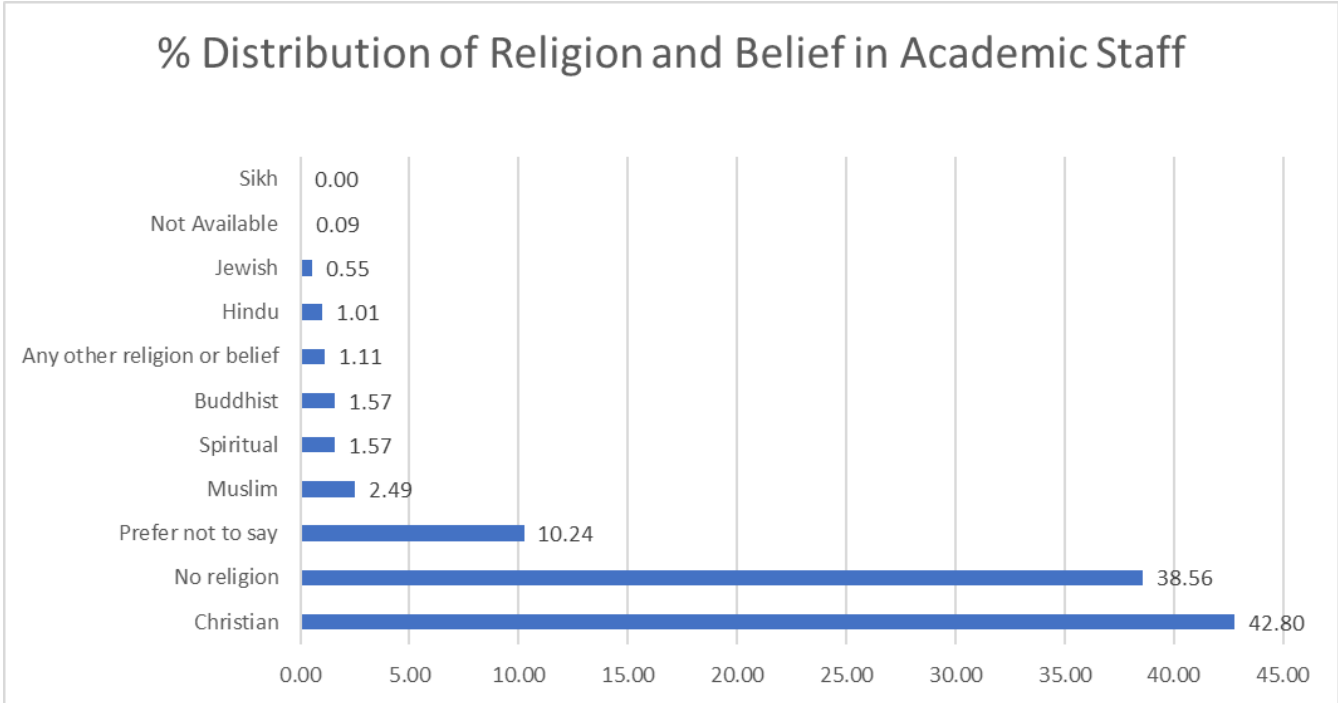
**Figure 19:** Percentage ethnicity of professional services staff (2020/21).

**Summary:** There was an increase in unknown ethnicity this academic year which likely accounts for the decrease in numbers of white staff. Numbers of black staff increased by 1% and numbers of Asian staff increased by 2%.

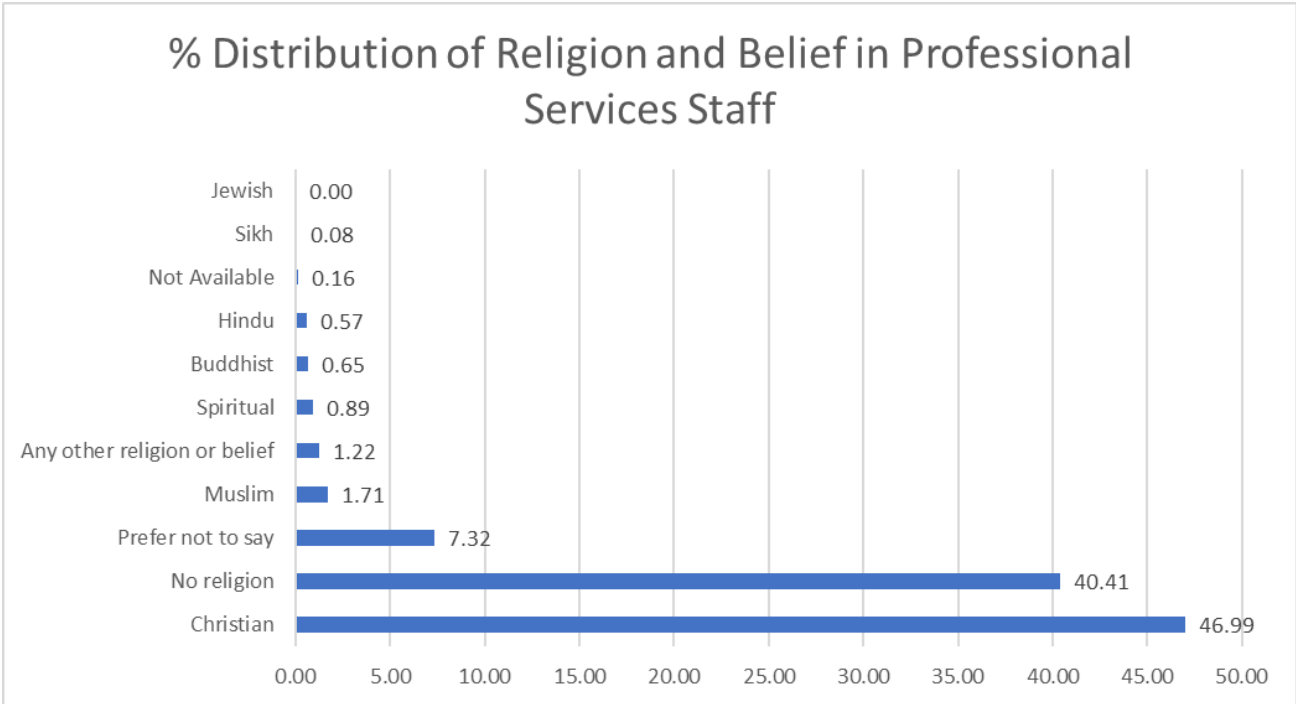
**Infographic 8 Religion and Belief**



**Figure 20:** Percentage religion and belief of all staff.



**Figure 21:** Percentage religion and belief of academic staff.



**Figure 22:** Percentage religion and belief of professional services staff.

**Summary:** The religions and beliefs most represented in the staff body are: Christian, No religion, Muslim, Spiritual and Any other religion or belief.

# Our Students

## Student Numbers, Mode and Gender

The most complete institutional student data is from the 2021/22 academic year. UK HE sector data provided by way of comparison are drawn from HESA data and AdvanceHE, for which the most recent complete reporting year is 2020/21 (some 2021/22 data has been made available nationally and is provided).

The student numbers during this academic year were 14,325 of whom 11,175 were full-time and 3,150 were part-time:

| <u>MODE</u>  | <u>TOTAL</u>  |               | <u>Female</u> |            | <u>Male</u>  |            |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| <b>FT</b>    | 11,175        | 78%           | 7,365         | 66%        | 3,810        | 34%        |
| <b>PT</b>    | 3,150         | 22%           | 2,195         | 70%        | 955          | 30%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>14,325</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>9,560</b>  | <b>67%</b> | <b>4,765</b> | <b>33%</b> |

### All Students – Gender

|                                 | Male | Female |
|---------------------------------|------|--------|
| University of Chester           | 33%  | 67%    |
| HE Sector (2021/2) <sup>1</sup> | 43%  | 57%    |

### First-year Full-time Undergraduate Students – Gender

|   | Male  | Female |
|---|-------|--------|
| University of Chester                     | 33%   | 67%    |
| HE Sector (England, 2020/21) <sup>2</sup> | 43.3% | 56.5%  |

The University's Faculty of Health, Medicine and Society account for most of the gender imbalance (82% female), with the remainder of the undergraduate student body being 69% female.

Proportion of male undergraduate students:

| 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 37%  | 37%  | 36%  | 33%  | 33%  | 33%  | 33%  | 34%  | 30%  | 31%  |

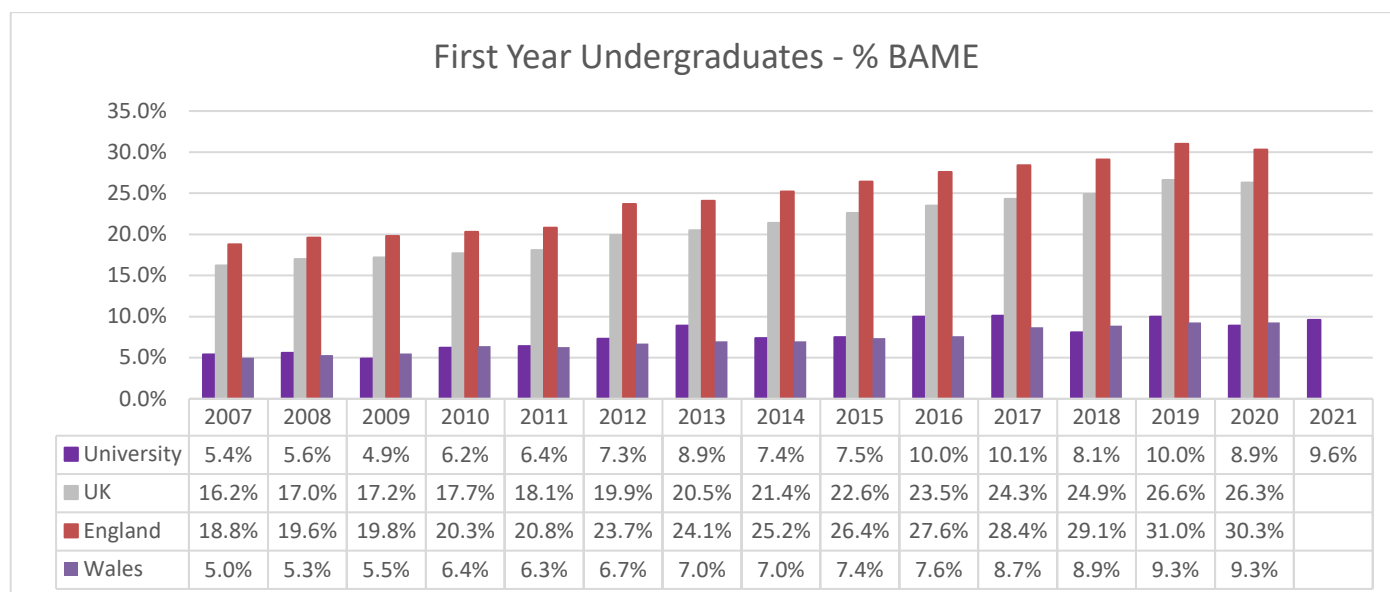
<sup>1</sup> HESA Student Record 2021/2, copyright Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited.

<sup>2</sup> HESA Student Record 2020/1, copyright Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited.

## Students – Race and Ethnicity

|   | White | Black | Asian/<br>Chinese | Other | Mixed | Not<br>known |
|---|-------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------|--------------|
| University of Chester (UK domicile only)    | 88.7% | 3.2%  | 3.9%              | 0.6%  | 2.7%  | 0.9%         |
| University of Chester (all domicile)        | 74.2% | 7.1%  | 13.7%             | 1.0%  | 2.6%  | 1.4%         |
| HE Sector (England, 2020/21) (UK domicile)  | 69.3% | 8.9%  | 13.3%             | 2.1%  | 4.7%  | 1.7%         |
| HE Sector (England without London, 2020/21) | 73.8% | 7.3%  | 11.4%             | 1.5%  | 4.3%  | 1.6%         |

First-year BAME undergraduate intake (UK domicile only) (HE Sector 2020/21 benchmark also provided for UK, England and Wales)



## Students – Disability

|                              | Declared disability | No known disability | Unknown |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------|
| University                   | 16%                 | 84%                 | 0%      |
| HE Sector (England, 2020/21) | 15.2%               | 84.8%               | -       |

## Students – Age

|   | 21 and under | 22-25 | 26+   |
|---|--------------|-------|-------|
| University of Chester (all)                             | 68.1%        | 10.6% | 21.3% |
| HE Sector – England from Advance HE (2022) <sup>3</sup> | 67.9%        | 14.3% | 17.8% |

**Note:** Data excludes postgraduate students and those studying at partner colleges.

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## Students - Religion and Belief, Sexual Orientation and Trans

The University commenced collection of data on students' religious and other belief in 2017/18 and on sexual orientation in 2019/20. Collection of data regarding sexual orientation and trans began in 2020/21.

Students' responses to questions on their religious belief indicate the following:

| <b>Description</b>                                  | <b>University</b> | <b>HE Sector – England<br/>from Advance HE<br/>(2022)</b> |
|---|-------------------|---|
| No Religion   | 45.9%             | 41.7%   |
| Prefer not to say/<br>information refused/<br>blank | 3.7%              | 7.1%  |
| Any other religion or<br>belief                     | 1.1%              | 1.7%  |
| Spiritual   | 1.5%              | 1.4%  |
| Buddhist  | 0.5%              | 1.0%  |
| Jewish  | 0.1%              | 0.5%  |
| Christian   | 36.7%             | 28.0%   |
| Muslim  | 6.5%              | 10.4%   |
| Not known   | 0.0%              | 3.5%  |
| Hindu   | 3.4%              | 3.6%  |
| Sikh  | 0.6%              | 1.1%  |

Students' responses to questions on their sexual orientation indicate the following:

| <b>Description</b>                     | <b>University</b> | <b>HE Sector –<br/>students in<br/>institutions returning<br/>data, Advance HE<br/>(2022)</b> |
|--|-------------------|---|
| Bisexual                               | 5.7%              | 4.5%  |
| Gay man                                | 1.5%              | 1.4%  |
| Gay woman/Lesbian                      | 1.5%              | 0.9%  |
| Heterosexual                           | 81.5%             | 72.9%   |
| Other                                  | 3.2%              | 1.9%  |
| Information refused/<br>unknown/ blank | 6.6%              | 18.4%   |

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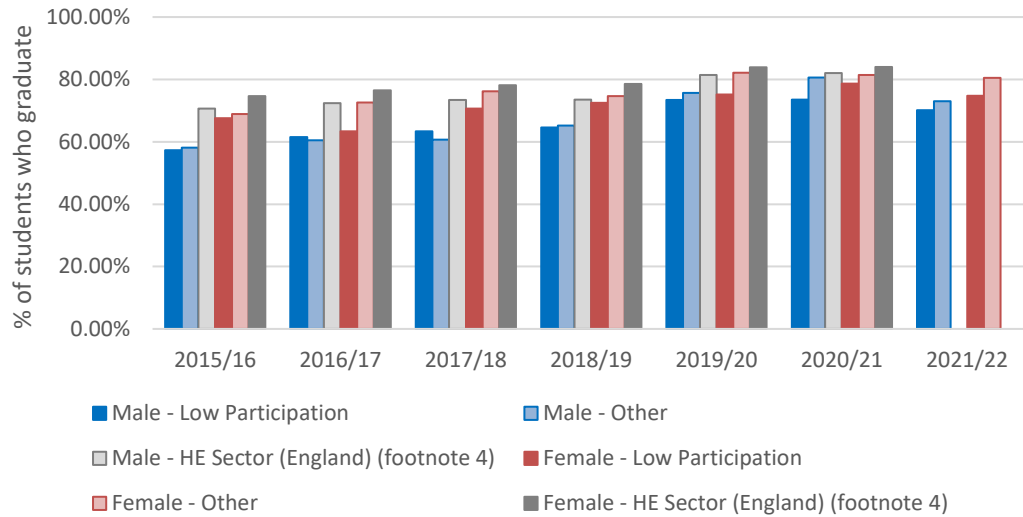
Students' responses to question on whether their gender identity is the same as was originally assigned at birth:

| <b>Description</b>        | <b>University</b> | <b>HE Sector – students in institutions returning data, Advance HE (2022)</b> |
|---------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Yes                       | 97.9%             | 83.2%   |
| No                        | 0.6%              | 0.9%  |
| Information refused/blank | 1.5%              | 15.9%   |

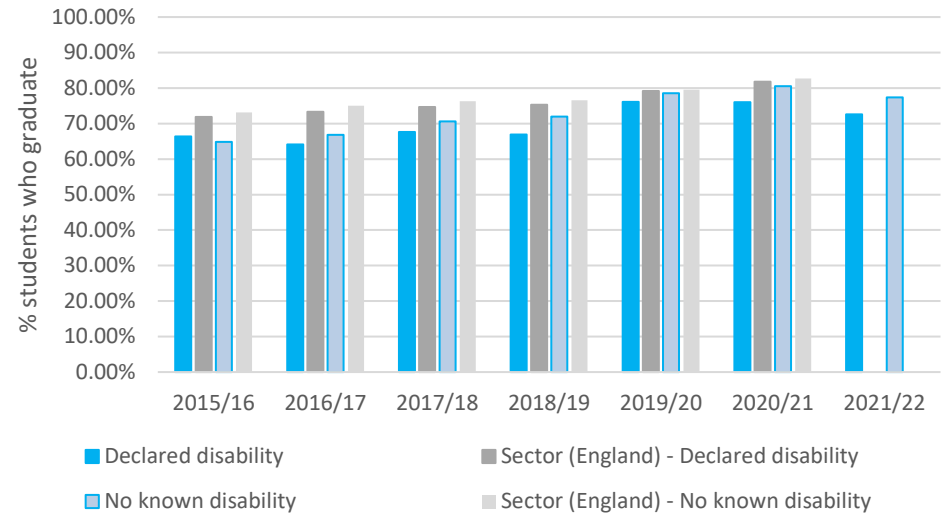
### **Student Attainment**

The graphs overleaf show Class I and 2i Honours degree undergraduate classifications for the academic years 2015/16 to 2021/22 inclusive by gender, disability and ethnicity. Sector research has indicated that this is a complex area with many interrelated factors and the information from the attached should be interpreted with care.

### 1:2i: Gender and Polar Group



### 1:2i: Disability status



### 1:2i: BAME Group





Gender (and POLAR Group)

| Degree class          | Gender | Polar Group       | 2015/16 |                  | 2016/17 |                  | 2017/18 |                  | 2018/19 |                  | 2019/20 |                                  | 2020/21 |                     | 2021/22 |                     |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|----------------------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|---------------------|
|                       |        |                   | Chester | Sector (England) | Chester | Sector (England) | Chester | Sector (England) | Chester | Sector (England) | Chester | HE Sector (England) <sup>4</sup> | Chester | HE Sector (England) | Chester | HE Sector (England) |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2i | Male   | Low participation | 57.3%   | 70.6%            | 61.5%   | 72.4%            | 63.4%   | 73.4%            | 64.6%   | 73.5%            | 73.4%   | 81.4%                            | 73.5%   | 82.0%               | 70.1%   | Unavailable         |
|                       |        | Other             | 58.1%   |                  | 60.5%   |                  | 60.7%   |                  | 65.2%   |                  | 75.7%   |                                  | 80.6%   |                     | 73.0%   |                     |
|                       | Female | Low participation | 67.6%   | 74.6%            | 63.4%   | 76.5%            | 70.6%   | 78.1%            | 72.5%   | 78.6%            | 75.2%   | 83.9%                            | 78.7%   | 84.0%               | 74.8%   | Unavailable         |
|                       |        | Other             | 68.89%  |                  | 72.6%   |                  | 76.2%   |                  | 74.6%   |                  | 82.1%   |                                  | 81.4%   |                     | 80.5%   |                     |

Disability

| Degree class          | Declared Disability | 2015/16 |                  | 2016/17 |                  | 2017/18 |                  | 2018/19 |                  | 2019/20 |                  | 2020/21 |                               | 2021/22 |                  |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|-------------------------------|---------|------------------|
|                       |                     | Chester | Sector (England) | Chester | Sector (England) | Chester | Sector (England) | Chester | Sector (England) | Chester | Sector (England) | Chester | HE Sector - Advance HE (2022) | Chester | Sector (England) |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2i | No                  | 64.8%   | 73.1%            | 66.8%   | 75%              | 70.6%   | 76.3%            | 72%     | 76.6%            | 78.5%   | 79.5%            | 80.5%   | 82.7%                         | 77.4%   | Unavailable      |
|                       | Yes                 | 66.4%   | 71.9%            | 64.1%   | 73.3%            | 67.6%   | 74.7%            | 66.9%   | 75.3%            | 76.1%   | 79.2%            | 76.0%   | 81.8%                         | 72.6%   | Unavailable      |

<sup>4</sup> HESA Student Record 2019/20 & 2020/21, copyright Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited.

Ethnicity (UK domiciled only)

| Degree class          | Ethnicity | 2015/16 |                  | 2016/17 |                  | 2017/18 |                  | 2018/19 |                  | 2019/20 |                  | 2020/21 |                             | 2021/22 |                             |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|-----------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|
|                       |           | Chester | Sector (England) | Chester | Sector (England) | Chester | Sector (England) | Chester | Sector (England) | Chester | Sector (England) | Chester | HE Sector Advance HE (2021) | Chester | HE Sector Advance HE (2022) |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2i | White     | 67.2%   | 78.4%            | 69.6%   | 80%              | 72%     | 80.9%            | 73.2%   | 81.6%            | 79.7%   | 83.9%            | 81.3%   | 85.7%                       | 78.5%   | Unavailable                 |
|                       | BAME      | 53%     | 63.4%            | 49.1%   | 65.9%            | 57.1%   | 67.7%            | 54.2%   | 68%              | 68.1%   | 71.7%            | 69.3%   | 76.7%                       | 67.1%   | Unavailable                 |

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# Our Responsibilities

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 prescribes a duty, to which all public authorities are subject, to have due regard to advancing equality in the exercise of all their functions. The duty requires public authorities to:

- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- (c) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Section 149 goes on to explain that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- (i) removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- (ii) taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and
- (iii) encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

These goals are reflected in the design of policies, delivery of services and engagement strategies employed by the University to ensure an inclusive environment for all staff and students. These are kept under review through audit, review and equality impact assessments. The Act states that meeting different needs involves taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities. It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups and states that compliance with the duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.

The duty covers the following eight protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Public authorities also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status. This means that paragraph (a) of the duty applies to this characteristic, but that paragraphs (b) and (c) (advancing equality and fostering good relations) do not apply.

The Vice-Chancellor is the University's senior officer responsible for Equality. The Strategic Director of HR leads the day-to-day senior management team responsibility for Equality work. The University's approach is characterised by operational responsibility for Equality being shared by all staff throughout the University, including through senior Equality leads in academic and support departments, and the Equality Forum which disseminates information, assists promotion and generates innovation throughout the University.

The University has a small but proactive Equality and Diversity team, whose main purpose is to engage with staff and students in taking individual responsibility and interest in equalities matters across the University. We do this by raising awareness,

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providing extensive training, leading the Equality Forum, supporting diversity events, developing community links, and facilitating support networks.

The Equality and Diversity team maintain up to date knowledge to inform effective policy and good practice, and regularly consult with different groups to ensure all staff and students needs are being met.

The key Equality and Diversity members of staff are the Strategic Director of HR, (Rashmi Patel), the HR Manager for Diversity, and Development (Kathryn Leighton), the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer (Jules Crane).

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