

**UNIVERSITY OF EXETER**  
**EDI TERMLY REPORT TO COUNCIL, 9 DECEMBER 2021**

## **Introduction**

This report summarises progress on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) during the first term of the 2021/22 academic year, including new developments, challenges along with proposed next steps.

In the past year, we have taken the opportunity through our Strategy 2030 development work to take the long view on the type of culture we want to create at Exeter. Broad consultation and engagement with members of our EDI Groups and Networks helped to inform and shape the 2030 strategy ensuring that EDI is at the very core of everything we do. This is reflected in our new [institutional values](#) – Discovery, Respect, Excellence, Inclusion and Community.

As we continue work towards our [EDI Vision 2025](#), the EDI Team have been working with colleagues across the institution to drive forward actions outlined within this report framed within the following seven Themes of Change:-

1. Recruitment, Recognition and Reward
2. Education, Curriculum and Success For All
3. Creating an inclusive culture, norms and values – supported through charters and accreditations
4. Community and Involvement
5. Monitoring and Evaluation
6. HR Policies, Training & Development and Redress
7. Research

With particular thanks to the Provost's team for their support with progressing actions arising from the Provost's Commission for EDI Innovation.

## **1. Recruitment, Recognition and Reward**

### **1.1 Recruitment**

An analysis of our recruitment data (through the lens of race) has been undertaken for both Professional Services and Academic staff over a three-year period as part of our Race Equality Charter (REC) work. Along with the recommendations of the Inclusive HR Task and Finish Group and our REC survey, this analysis forms an essential part of our REC self-assessment, and is currently being utilised to develop our upcoming institutional race equality action plan. We have used some of the preliminary information of this work to inform a deep dive session for the "Exeter Professional" programme.

### **1.2 Pay Gaps**

The University's '[Pay Gaps Report: Gender, Ethnicity and Disability 2020](#)', published in October 2021, contains more detail than reports from previous years. For the first time we have published data about our Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gaps alongside statutory Gender Pay Gap reporting information to reflect our increasingly intersectional approach and our commitment to address all pay gaps at the University.

Our Gender Pay Gap is continuing to close for our contracted staff, and we have also seen a reduction in our Gender Bonus Gap. However, it is disappointing that when we include workers engaged on an ad hoc/claims basis our gender pay gap increases. Whilst the University's commitment to Fair Employment for All (FEFA) has seen over 500 postgraduate research students moved onto formal employment contracts, this area will be a particular area of focus moving forward to make further progress in reducing our Gender Pay Gap.

Data shows an increase in representation of both women and staff from BAME backgrounds in senior roles at the University (including a further increase in the proportion of female professors to 31.8%), however we recognise that there are further actions we can take to improve equality in relation to recruitment, promotion and progression, including in areas where women are over-represented and which build on the success of existing initiatives such as Diversifying Leadership and Elevate development programmes.

Additional analysis of our data this year has provided us with a useful insight into the pay disparities that exist for disabled staff for the first time and this will inform the work of our Disability Equality Group.

Whilst some positive progress has been made in the past year, we are committed to closing the gaps in collaboration with our wider community and through the work of our Equality Groups and the HR Pay Gaps Action Group.

### **1.3 Proportion of BAME Academic Staff**

Our data shows an increase in the proportion of BAME academic staff over the last 3 years (16% in 20/21 compared to 14% in 18/19), however we also need to note the proportion of BAME academic leavers during the same period (19% and 17% respectively).

A more detailed analysis which explores this data in more detail will be provided within the Spring Term report (following submission of our Race Equality Charter application in February).

## **2. Education, Curriculum and Success For All**

### **2.1 Transformative Education Framework**

Through a series of consultations with staff and students across the institution, Dr Vrinda Nayak (Associate Academic Dean for Students, Racial Equality and Inclusion) has developed the University's first transformative education framework, which will support educators in creating a learning experience that equips students to respond to challenges associated with climate emergency, inequality, and social injustice. University community members have been encouraged to increase their cultural competence through access to thought-provoking courses such as [Union Black](#) (launched in time to celebrate Black History Month) and Tina Verhaeghe's Introduction to Inclusivity: Creating a Culture of Belonging sessions – the output of her project as part of the Cultural Competence programme (as referenced in section 6 (f)).

### **2.2 Launch of £50,000 Student Fund for projects focussed on anti-racism and gender safety**

Following the success of last year's student anti-racism projects, we have now launched this year's first call for funding for both anti-racism and gender safety student led projects. More information about the projects funded in Year 1 can be found [here](#) and [here](#). The funding will once again be disbursed in collaboration with the Education Incubator, alongside an expert set of shortlisting panels.

### **2.3 Launch of "Success for All" student forum**

The "Success for All" student forum has been launched, with termly meetings planned for 2021-2022.

### **2.4 State Sector Recruitment Task and Finish Group**

The University's Task & Finish Group on State Sector recruitment was convened in early 2021 with student, Council, PS and academic representation. In April, the Group proposed a series of recommendations to Council with a view to improving the proportion of state-educated students at

Exeter. Subsequently, a State School Steering Group has been established to oversee the implementations of these recommendations.

## **2.5 Reducing Awarding Gaps Between BAME and White Students**

Over the past five academic years, good progress has been made in reducing the awarding gaps between BAME students and White students. The gap in the award of 'good honours degree' (1<sup>st</sup> and 2:1) for both Home/EU and International fee status students reduced by 4ppt from 13ppt in 2016/17 to 9ppt in 2020/21.

It is important, however, to disaggregate the data where possible, as there is a degree of fluctuation and variability in the data pertaining to ethnic minority awarding gaps between 2016/17 and 2020/21. See Appendix B for further details.

## **3. Creating an inclusive culture, norms and values – supported through charters and accreditations**

### **3.1 Gender: *Athena SWAN*** (next institutional application due January 2024)

Over the summer we received confirmation from Advance HE that the University of Exeter Business School and History were successful in their recent departmental applications and had each achieved a Bronze award. This brings our current total number of Athena SWAN department awards to eleven (see Appendix A for a full overview of awards as at September 2021).

In addition, work continues to advance gender equality at institutional level. We have reviewed our institutional Gender Equality Action Plan through a CV-19 lens (to identify and address the detrimental impacts of CV-19 on gender equality) and also through a gender safety lens and will continue to monitor these through the Gender Equality Group. We are aiming to submit an application to renew our institutional Silver Athena SWAN award in January 2024 (previously April 2023).

### **3.2 Sexual Orientation: *Stonewall Workplace Equality Index*** (application submitted October 2021)

Our application for a Bronze award in the 2022 WEI has been submitted and we await the results - due February 2022. Stonewall have introduced a new marking criterion for this application cycle which includes an emphasis on Bi and Trans inclusion.

### **3.3 Race: *Race Equality Charter Mark (REC)*** (application due February 2022)

Work continues on the Race Equality Charter application and action plan following feedback received from Advance HE over the summer. The feedback was part of a development review, which is a new service offered by Advance HE to prospective charter applicants. Overall, the feedback was positive with several areas identified as examples of good practice. In terms of improving our application, we were advised on ways we could address some of the data gaps we currently have e.g. those areas of business where ethnicity is not currently recorded or where data doesn't go beyond the designation BAME, and were also provided with some suggestions on how to strengthen our action plan.

We anticipate that the updated application and action plan will be ready by mid December 2021, ahead of our February 2022 Bronze Award application deadline.

### **3.4 Disability: *Disability Confident***

Active consultation is currently underway on a comprehensive new Disability Equality action plan. This plan is aligned with our EDI Vision and starts to coordinate disability equality for staff and students across the organisation. The action plan has been informed by disabled staff and students, disability

experts in Student Wellbeing and Occupational Health and by other stakeholders including Estates and IT. It is intended to inform our EDI disability agenda for the next 3 to 5 years.

To help manage risk and compliance with legislation across the University an operational disability group has been set up with representatives from the Students' Guild/Union, Disability Network, AccessAbility and EDI. This group will focus on a coordinated approach to identifying accessibility issues on campus and liaising with colleagues from Health and Safety, Estates and the Mitigations Officer to address them.

As part of our plan to improve culture and increased disability awareness, we have become a member of the Business Disability Forum (BDF) - an organisation focused on disability and employment - and are developing a communication strategy to promote the advice, information and training opportunities they offer. The BDF also provide a self-assessment process which will help to assess our readiness to apply for Disability Confident Level 3 accreditation.

## **4. Community and Involvement**

### **4.1 "Let's Talk"**

September saw the first Let's Talk session of this academic year, bringing together University leaders with members of our BME Network to discuss key issues impacting People of Colour across our University community. The session focussed on the University's Inclusive Education activity and covered multiple aspects including transition to University, what the latest data tells us about awarding gaps, and what actions are being taken to widen participation and embed the principles of inclusive education in our curriculum, teaching and assessment practices and feedback processes. Our next session is taking place in November and will be an opportunity to follow up on some key activities emerging from discussions about last year's [UUK Report](#) around inclusive recruitment and tailored student wellbeing support, and will also be the start of a deep dive into our processes around reporting incidents, and associated support.

### **4.2 Gender Safety**

Over the summer and the Autumn term we have been working in close collaboration with our student and staff communities and key regional partners including Devon and Cornwall Police, Exeter City Council and Devon Rape Crisis to develop further interventions in support of gender safety which remains an area of considerable concern across our community, and to ensure that the University of Exeter is a welcoming environment where everyone feels safe, supported and able to thrive. Engagement has included open sessions of the Provost Commission alongside regular meetings with a variety of student societies and individuals to talk through planned interventions and listen to ideas emerging from across the University community.

Professor Janice Kay and Mike Shore-Nye have been leading the University's response through the Gender Safety group, which includes a number of student representatives, where further interventions to support gender safety across our campuses are being developed. Work underway includes:

- A refreshed digital EDI mandatory training module, and additional module focussed on Consent that launched for all students from September 2021. Compliance figures will be available for the next report, and communications promoting this training will go out throughout the year.
- The creation of a bespoke Bystander Intervention training programme for all students which will be rolled out during 2021/22 – this will include a specific focus on race equality and gender safety.

- Working with our Students Unions and an external organisation ([Tender](#)) to develop an enhanced training offer for students that will include peer to peer training and a focus on healthy relationships. Initial training with student leaders is taking place this term.
- The introduction of a Night Bus in Exeter (in collaboration with Stagecoach) which launched in September 2021. Following feedback from the student community and the Guild the night bus operates 3 days a week until 4am to support students returning from the City Centre in the early hours.
- Following consultation with our student community, we have made free personal alarms and drink spiking test kits available from various locations across all of our campuses.
- Working in conjunction with Devon Rape Crisis, we have introduced a new joint post based part-time on our Streatham Campus to support students at the University of Exeter who have experienced sexual violence and to support the University in its work on gender safety, student education, staff training and combatting sexual harassment and violence on campus. The new roleholder started in post in late September.

### 4.3 Hate Crime Awareness Week

The Diverse Communities Team from Devon and Cornwall Police attended stalls on both our Penryn and Streatham campuses showcasing how to report Hate Crimes and held a virtual event in conjunction with the Chinese Community Wellbeing Society giving advice and support to our Chinese community and taking/answering any questions raised.

### 4.4 Bi Visibility Day 2021

23 September 2021 marked the 22<sup>nd</sup> International Bi Visibility Day. With social media reach through our University Twitter accounts to our community demonstrating the University's commitment to Bi equality, as well as showcasing some influential bi role models from sport, academia and entertainment. To find out more about the day click [here](#).

### 4.5 Black History Month 2021

This year our BHM celebrations started with a [newsletter](#) to all members of our community, with a message from the VC outlining the progress the University has made towards supporting all people of colour, and the continued journey to making our institution an anti-racist university. Throughout October, networks, colleges and societies hosted a range of events from the Black Heroes of Mathematics Conference 2021 to conversations on mental health, diversity, politics, self-expression, empowerment and wellbeing with Sophia Thakur, Vogue Woman of the Year, best-selling author and multi-award-winning performance poet.



### 4.6 Festival of Compassion

The Festival of Compassion is a university-based event, taking place 19 – 28 November, which will consolidate and present some of the key current thinking related to compassion, and offer practical suggestions about how to actively implement compassion for wellbeing both in university and in life beyond it. A mix of online/hybrid and face-to-face activities including workshops, speaker events and 'taster' sessions with practitioners are planned.

## 5. Monitoring and Evaluation

## 5.1 Cultural Index

As part of the implementation of our [EDI Vision 2025](#), work is progressing well to identify Key Performance Indicators to measure the impact of our EDI activities in a robust and meaningful way through the development of an index of measures which will help us measure gaps and impacts of interventions as we work towards shaping an Inclusive and Compassionate Culture. The index will contain metrics pertaining to Inclusion, Wellbeing and Cohesion administered through both qualitative and quantitative responses from our community. We want to ensure that the metrics and question set are underpinned by research-based, validated frameworks including but not limited to: HSE Management Standards, WHO5, Belonging Index, Team Clime, SoQ. This needs to be an approach that complements data that the university holds by proxy i.e. data relating to grievances, leavers, progression/ pay disparities etc. to show a holistic picture of our community, and expanding our metrics from Student and Colleague engagement to experience. We are currently in the process of exploring external provider options for tools that can help us embed and run the index surveying and engagement to reduce the time spent on analysis (by embedding live analytics) and focusing our efforts on effective actions/ initiatives in response to community feedback.

## 5.2 New Wellbeing, Inclusion and Culture Board

A new Wellbeing, Inclusion and Culture (WIC) Board has been set up as part of the recent Governance Review. It will focus on Culture and Culture Change to embed inclusion and wellbeing throughout the University. Chaired by the Provost, it reports directly into the University Executive Board and met for the first time in November. Key priority areas for the WIC Board will include workload (of both academic and PS colleagues), inclusion (including Athena SWAN, Race Equality work and gender safety, as well as the work of all of our equality groups) the development of a holistic mental health and wellbeing strategy, Future of Work project and the Exeter Academic.

## 6. Training & Development

Training and Development is a vital part of the University EDI Vision to 2025. Key training and development priorities for 2021/22 are as follows:

- (a) Male Allies – exploring a pilot programme to explore the crucial support of men in helping to prevent violence against women;
- (b) Bystander training for staff and students (as detailed in 4.2);
- (c) Student EDI Induction training – exploring opportunities for further improved provision through the development of a bespoke programme;
- (d) Unconscious Bias training;
- (e) [Elevate](#) Training (Leadership and Development Programme for BAME Women) - following the success of the 2020 round, working with our GW4 partners to plan a 2021 round, extending the programme to other universities in the south-west region;
- (f) Cultural Competence Community of Practice – completion of first cohort and support with their continuing projects. Exploring next steps in our partnership with Georgetown University.

## 7. Research

Supporting an inclusive research culture is a key strand of our Research and Impact Strategy and the new Strategy 2030. The multifaceted nature of the challenges to equality, diversity and inclusivity within a research context need close attention in terms of supporting our researchers, those participating in research and those benefitting from research. Increasing attention by funders is allowing greater momentum for wider sector change. However, this also brings with it a greater need to consider research-related data within that EDI context, including both quantitative data (e.g. research performance data, research outputs data etc.) to qualitative data (capturing lived experiences). The pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges and will potentially cast a long

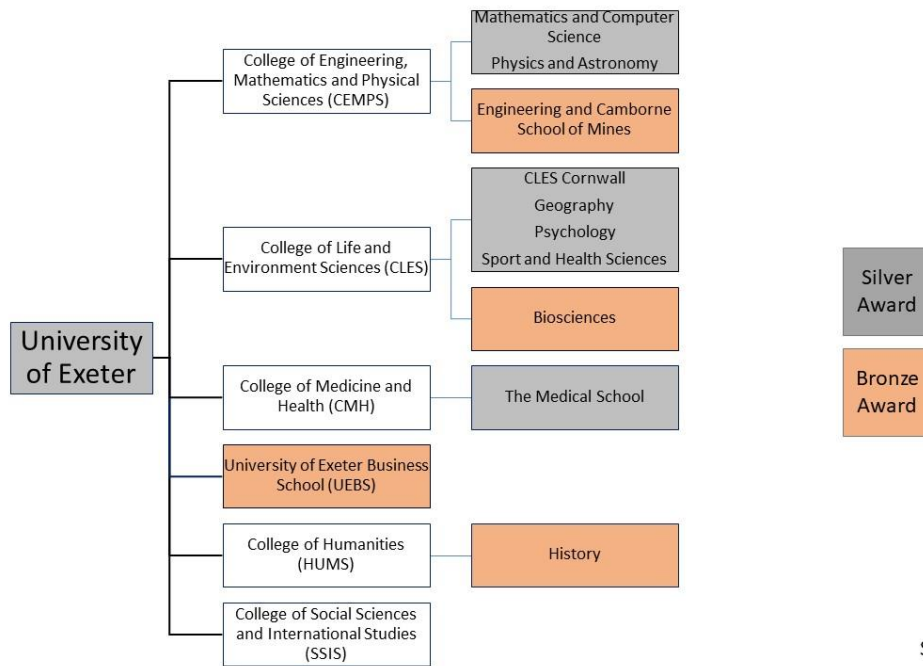
shadow on researchers and the progress and nature of their research. In order to provide some focus within a research context, the Research and Impact Executive Committee are establishing a Research and EDI Task and Finish Group. A one-year part-time Research and EDI Manager has been appointed from 1<sup>st</sup> November. The role will focus on co-ordinating the activities of the Task and Finish Group to better understand the available data and to work with our EDI Groups and Networks to better understand and recommend research-focused interventions which would benefit our community.

A deep dive into research through an EDI lens and specifically matters relating to ethnicity (involving members of our BAME Network) took place in September. A number of actions were identified which will inform the work of the Research and EDI Task and Finish Group and it was agreed that similar deep dives with other EDI networks would be undertaken.

## **8. Recommendation**

Council is asked to NOTE the update and progress made to date.

**Appendix A: Overview of Athena SWAN awards held at institutional and departmental level as at September 2021.**





## Appendix B: Progress Report - Reducing Awarding Gaps Between BAME and White Students.

Over the past five academic years, good progress has been made in reducing the awarding gaps between Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)<sup>1</sup> students and White students. The gap in the award of 'good honours degree' (1<sup>st</sup> and 2:1) between BAME students and White students (both Home/EU and International fee status) reduced by 4ppt from 13ppt in 2016/17 to 9ppt in 2020/21.

It is important, however, to disaggregate the data where possible, as there is a degree of fluctuation and variability in the data pertaining to ethnic minority awarding gaps between 2016/17 and 2020/21. In relation to the award of 'good honours degrees', the following overall changes should be noted:

- The gap between Asian and White students has reduced from 17ppt to 11ppt;
- The gap between Black and White students has reduced from 31ppt to 12ppt;
- The gap between Mixed and White students has increased from 1ppt to 3ppt; and
- The gap between Other Ethnicity and White students has reduced 13ppt to 5ppt.

The consideration of 'good honours degrees' can, however, hide further gaps when it comes to the award of 1<sup>st</sup> class degrees specifically. For BAME students compared to White students, whilst there has been some fluctuation over the past five academic years, there has been no overall reduction in the 1<sup>st</sup> class awarding gap, which stood at 12ppt in both 2016/17 and in 2020/21.

Further disaggregation provides additional insight, for example, the 1<sup>st</sup> class awarding gap between Black and White students has only reduced by 2ppt over the past five academic years, from 20ppt in 2016/17 to 18ppt in 2020/21. This indicates that for some demographic groups the reduction in the 'good honours degree' awarding gap has been influenced more by the increasing number of 2:1 awards than an increasing number of 1<sup>st</sup> class degrees.

In accordance with its current [Access and Participation Plan](#) (APP) and the conditions of its registration with the Office for Student (OfS), the University is required to set targets for reducing BAME awarding gaps and to report progress towards achieving them. This does, however, apply to UK domiciled students only, and as a subset of overall student degree outcomes data published in the University's [Degree Outcomes Statement](#), shows some marked differences in awarding gaps.

The overall BAME awarding gap ('good honours degree') for UK domiciled students has reduced from 9.7ppt in 2016/17 to 6.6ppt in 2020/21. The Black:White awarding gap, which was and remains the highest gap, has steadily reduced over the same period from 28.9ppt to 14.6ppt in 2020/21. This indicates that the 2020/21 APP target for the Black:White awarding gap of 18.5ppt will be met. Despite fluctuations, awarding gaps for Asian (9ppt in 2020/21) and Arab or Other (11.2ppt in 2020/21) have also reduced over the same period. The gap experienced by those from the Mixed ethnic group remains low at 0.8ppt.

The gap in the proportion of BAME students (cf white students) awarded a 1<sup>st</sup> class degree has also reduced overall, from 11.3ppt in 2016/17 to 6.6ppt in 2020/21, however gaps remain for all BAME groups except those from Mixed ethnic group. This indicates that the awarding gaps are at both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2.1 levels for UK domiciled students. The static nature of the BAME:White awarding gap at 1<sup>st</sup> class level overall, compared to a reduction in the 1<sup>st</sup> class gap for UK domiciled students, may be attributable to the fluctuating, but persistent, UK-domiciled:International 1<sup>st</sup> class awarding gap which, in 2016/17, stood at 8ppt, but by 2020/21 was 12ppt. There is an important intersection

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<sup>1</sup> BAME is also referred to elsewhere as ABMO (Asian, Black, Minority Ethnic and Other)

between ethnicity and fee status with potential ramifications for our international student recruitment ambitions.

These changes have occurred within the context of an overall increase in the award of 'good honours degrees', from 87% in 2016/27 to 93% in 2020/21, and in 1<sup>st</sup> class degrees, from 26% in 2016/17 to 39% in 2020/21. The increase largely occurred within the last two COVID-19 impacted academic years, during which emergency policies and procedures were put in place to provide a 'safety net' for graduating and other students. The pivot to on-line, open-book examinations is also thought to have played a part in enhancing the accessibility of examinations and other assessments, and thus the performance of some underrepresented groups of students.