

York St John University Annual Report on Equality and Diversity 2020

Note for publication

This report was considered by the People Committee on 25 May 2021, and subsequently by Governing Body on 15 July 2021. For the purposes of publication, personal data in this report were then redacted in line with HESA standard rounding methodology (with the exception of gender data of Governing Body membership).¹

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Higher Education Code of Governance requires governing bodies to promote “a positive culture which supports ethical behaviour, equality, inclusivity and diversity across the institution, including in the governing body’s own operation and composition.”²
- 1.2. This should support compliance with the public sector Equality Duty.
- 1.3. This sixth Annual Report on Equality and Diversity provides a broad overview of progress on equality and diversity and specifically on the achievement of our equality objectives during the calendar year 2020. By posting the report on the University’s website, the University complies with the specific equality duties to publish equality outcomes and report on progress.
- 1.4. Key achievements in 2020:
 - We took a structured approach to embedding equality into our response to the pandemic so that leadership can be confident the University continues to promote fairness and tackle inequalities.
 - We signed up to the principles of Advance HE’s Race Equality Charter, established a self-assessment team and recruited a Pro Vice Chancellor for Learning and Teaching with a track record of supporting race equality.
 - We integrated equality into all aspects of the REF 2021 submission process to go above and beyond requirements.
- 1.5. The report sets out the external and institutional context for equality and diversity, considers student and staff equality data, and reports against key equality objectives. At the end, it provides an outlook on 2021. The report sits alongside the Gender Pay Gap report (PC.20.03.27), the Access and Participation Plan (GB.18.04.104) and the APP Impact Report (Governing Body, March 2021, GB.20.02.66).

2. Governing Body’s responsibilities for equality and diversity

- 2.1. The Committee of University Chairs (CUC) published the latest version of their [Higher Education Code of Governance](#) in September 2020.
- 2.2. Governing bodies need to review and report on the institution’s approach to equality, inclusivity and diversity. Each year, Governing Body and its committees receives relevant reports. In May 2020, People Committee considered the Annual Equality and Diversity Report and noted a report on Gender Pay Gap, before these were presented to Governing Body in July. Additionally, Foundation Committee considered an annual report on student religion and belief. Progress towards equality objectives is integrated into the Vice Chancellor strategic updates to Governing Body and the Annual People and Culture Strategy Report for People Committee (PC.20.02.16a).

¹ <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/about/regulation/data-protection/rounding-and-suppression-anonymise-statistics>

² <https://www.universitychairs.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CUC-HE-Code-of-Governance-publication-final.pdf>

- 2.3. Governing Body has 4 female and 12 male governors, including the (female) Vice Chancellor who started in April 2020; four out of five Governing Body committee chairs are currently men.
- 2.4. Governance and Nominations oversaw the process for the recruitment of new Chairs for Audit and Finance and Capital Development Committees. In the recruitment pack, the Chair of Governing Body stressed the deep commitment of the University to inclusion and diversity, together with diversity of voices, views and experiences in the Governing Body's membership, and the vacancies were advertised in places designated to reach out to under-represented groups. The process has resulted in the appointment of a woman and a man as Chairs, thus redressing the gender balance to 2 women and 3 men.
- 2.5. Governor Mohammed Ali continues to support the University's work on race equality, while Governor Maggie Pavlou champions the University's application to the Athena SWAN Charter.

3. Legislative and policy developments in 2019

- 3.1. A further section of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 came into force, which required the University to make all existing websites accessible. The University's Accessibility Statement is available on our website⁴. Digital accessibility forms a key component of academic staff development and we have produced new and improved guidance for online learning and teaching. Additionally, the Standing Orders for Academic Board specifically require that University papers conform to University standards for digital accessibility.
- 3.2. There have been no significant legislative or policy developments on equality in higher education, however the Office for Students, Universities UK, GuildHE and Advance HE have published guidance on issues ranging from supporting under-represented groups during the pandemic (OfS⁵) to recommendations to tackle racial harassment in higher education (UUK⁶).

4. Equality data

- 4.1. We provide key observations about the diversity of the student body and the workforce. Detailed student equality data are considered as part of the Access and Participation Plan. The staff equality data report follows. In line with our specific equality duty, details of 2019/20 student and staff equality profile are published on the website: yorks.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/equality-data/.
- 4.2. The representation of students and staff is in line with the University's expectations. However, a particular area of concern is the low representation of BAME staff and students. Our application for the Race Equality Charter award and Access and Participation Plan provide a framework to explore this area of concern in more detail and to take action.

Staff equality monitoring data

- 4.3. The headline data for all staff in accordance with five protected characteristics is shown in Table 1. 'Gender' is shown as binary (female/male) as no data are available for non-binary gender. In relation to sexual orientation (LGB) and religion/belief, only the University total is shown. Other characteristics include age, gender reassignment/identity, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership. We ask about transgender status and currently no staff have declared that their gender identity differs from the sex registered at birth. We do not hold data about the remaining protected characteristics.

⁴ <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/accessibility-statement/>

⁵ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/effective-practice/>

⁶ <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/tackling-racial-harassment>

- 4.4. Data are shown using a RAG Assessment and we have benchmarked against national HE statistics (Advance HE 2020 Statistical Report - Disability 5.3%, Ethnicity 10.3%, Gender 54.6% Female). National HE statistics are not available for religion or sexual orientation and we have used figures from British Social Attitudes Survey for Research for religion⁷ (Christian 38%; Other faiths 9%; no religion 52%) and Office for National Statistics for sexual orientation 2.2%.⁸
- 4.5. The data have been drawn from internal records as at 1 November 2020, using HESA fields. With the exception of age and sex, these rely on staff voluntarily giving this information. Table 2 shows disclosure rates. At the launch of the new HR/payroll system in 2021, we will run a campaign to encourage disclosure and link this to work to help people feel safe to be themselves.
- 4.6. In addition to the headline figures this report also includes the detailed breakdown by staff category and at each stage of the recruitment process to help us to identify where the challenges remain in our recruitment pipeline.

Table 1 Representation of staff by protected characteristic as a percentage and with RAG status






Ethnicity	Gender	Disability	Sexual orientation	Religion
 4.6% (40) BAME	 59.3% (525) Female	 9.1% (80) Disabled	 7.7% (70) LGB	 34.8% (40) Christian; 6.3% (55) other faith; 49.2% (435) no religion

Table 2 Disclosure rate by protected characteristic as a percentage

Ethnicity	Gender Identity	Disability	Sexual Orientation	Religion or belief
96.8% (860)	68.6% (610)	97.6% (865)	87.8% (780)	90.3% (800)

- 4.7. Table 1 shows we have made little improvement in relation to attracting BAME staff, with 4.6% (40) of our people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. This includes the London campus where 61.5% (10) of staff are from BAME backgrounds. Our student population for 2019/20 had 11.5% (805) from BAME backgrounds.
- 4.8. There has been no improvement since 2016 when BAME staff formed 5% (35) of the workforce despite an increased focus through the Race Equality Taskforce (leading to the commitment to the Race Equality Charter).
- 4.9. The low representation within some faiths, in particular Muslim at 0.7%, (5) can be correlated with the lack of racial diversity at York St John, and this will have a particular focus for the Race Equality Charter self-assessment team.
- 4.10. At this high level of granularity, the gender balance is good. However, the University has a gender pay gap and we are using the Athena SWAN Charter application process to dig deeper and to take action to address hidden inequalities.
- 4.11. Representation of disabled staff continues to increase, and stands at 9.1% (80), up from 6% (45) in 2016. Our student population has 19.5% (1,365) students with a known

⁷ <https://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/latest-report/british-social-attitudes-28/religion.aspx>

⁸ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2018>

disability. However, the recruitment data report lower levels of declarations of disability. There are several possible reasons, for example if there is a hesitancy of applicants to report disability until they are successfully appointed. This will be further explored with the Disability Staff Network.

4.12. Our LGB workforce population remains relatively high at 7.7% (70) for the second year in a row and significantly higher than ONS data reporting 2.2% of UK population, and presents a year-on-year increase from 5.8% (45) in 2016.

4.13. Table 3 shows a breakdown of the workforce by protected characteristic and staff category. The data is taken from the 1 November 2020.

4.14. The Graduate Teaching Assistants have been shown as a separate role as this is an important recruitment pipeline and whilst classified as a Professional Support role for monitoring purposes it is helpful to be shown as a standalone category (excluded from published report as fewer than 22.5).

Table 3 Representation of staff by protected characteristic for each staff category, as a percentage and with RAG status (Graduate Teaching Assistants excluded as fewer than 22.5)

Staff Category	Disability: disabled		Ethnicity: BAME		Gender: Female	
	RAG	Percentage (Count)	RAG	Percentage (Count)	RAG	Percentage (Count)
Academic	✓	7.5% (25)	–	6.9% (20)	✓	50.2% (160)
Professional Support	✓	10.7% (50)	✗	3.8% (20)	✓	68.4% (330)
Ancillary	✓	7.0% (5)	✗	1.2% (<5)	–	44.4% (35)

4.15. Tables 4, 5 and 6 detail the breakdown of protected characteristics across the different staff categories and by recruitment stages from August 2019 to July 2020. Academic recruitment shows an encouraging trend and we have seen some improvement both in the diversity of our applications and in our appointments. However, the role of graduate teaching assistant is an important pipeline, and on 1 November 2019 there were no known BAME graduate teaching assistants.

4.16. The recruitment data shows 42% of applicants in the year were from BAME backgrounds, this is 340 applications. 48% of these applicants were for four lecturer roles (Computer Science, Japanese, Korean and TESOL). The data for professional support and ancillary staff groups indicate that more is required to attract applications with BAME backgrounds. This will be a priority area in the Race Equality Charter work.

Table 4 Recruitment of Academic staff, as a percentage and with RAG status

Recruitment stage	Disability: disabled		Ethnicity: BAME		Gender: Female	
	RAG	Percentage (Count)	RAG	Percentage (Count)	RAG	Percentage (Count)
Applicants	✗	5% (45)	✓	42% (340)	✓	47% (400)
Shortlisting	✓	6% (15)	✓	29% (50)	✓	45% (110)
Appointed	✗	3% (<5)	✓	20% (15)	✓	51% (45)

Table 5 Recruitment of Professional staff, as a percentage and with RAG status

Recruitment stage	Disability: disabled	Ethnicity: BAME	Gender: Female
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Applicants		8% (120)		16% (220)		56% (885)
Shortlisting		11% (45)		9% (35)		59% (240)
Appointed		4% (5)		11% (10)		66% (80)

Table 6 Recruitment of Ancillary staff (including Maintenance and Grounds), as a percentage and with RAG status

Excluded from published report as fewer than 22.5

5. Progress on equality objectives

5.1. The University operates under a collaborative structure to deliver against equality objectives and meet the requirements of the Office for Students (OfS) and public sector Equality Duty. Details of the structure are referenced in previous annual reports to Governing Body.

5.2. All policies and major projects are subject to the equality impact assessment (EIA), to help us meet the equality duties. In February 2020, the Executive Board approved a revised equality impact assessment process to make it easier to use, more outcome focused, and, where appropriate, integrated into other University frameworks. The Standing Orders for Academic Board and its Committees were updated to ensure that committees will consider equality impact in the undertaking of their business.

5.3. The 2026 Strategy has four equality measures of success:

- Positive TEF metrics in satisfaction, retention and outcomes for underrepresented groups (reference 10).
- Representation of BAME staff and students at least 10% of the University's population (ref. 12).
- All staff are engaged in Equality and Diversity training and development appropriate to their role (ref. 13).
- Median gender pay gap below 10% (ref. 25).

5.4. The following update was provided in the Vice Chancellor's strategic update to Governing Body in March (GB.20.02.50).

Positive TEF metrics in satisfaction, retention and outcomes for underrepresented groups.

5.5. Our current TEF metrics are based on historic data and thus do not reflect our recent upturn in performance on the NSS and DLHE. The impact and use of Graduate Outcomes and NSS in the new TEF Framework remains unclear. Further detail is provided in the APP Impact report to Governing Body. Institutional projects are underway that could impact on this KPI e.g. the Race Equality Charter application and focus on decolonising the curriculum.

Representation of BAME staff and students at least 10% of the University's population.

5.6. Progress on recruiting BAME students has slowed on official Access reports for the latest OfS and HESA data (2018/19). Our internal data shows that we will likely have a small percentage increase for BAME students for 2019/20 and 2020/21. However, it is not clear that this rate will rise to 10% and so we have set this to minor concerns. Staff has increased to 4.6% for the 2019/20 HESA return.

All staff are engaged in Equality and Diversity training and development appropriate to their role.

5.7. In 2018/19, 71% of staff accessed formal equality and diversity training activity; in 2019/20, only 22% accessed formal training. This was low for several reasons. Many sessions were cancelled due to Covid lockdown. Virtual delivery could often not be prioritised by team managers over other deliverables. In the same year, of 99 new starters, 53% (n=52) completed online modules on equality and unconscious bias. Escalation routes for non-completion of probation e-learning modules was relaxed in consideration of staff wellbeing during difficult times. There was a reduction in the central training budget by 67% to spread out across competing priorities. This is not a trend which is expected to continue into 2020/21, although changing circumstances under Covid may once again have an effect. Digital e-learning is Covid-proof, and we should soon be in a position where face-to-face training can resume where appropriate. We will stay close to changing rules and be agile in our response.

Median gender pay gap below 10%.

5.8. Our Median GPG reduced from 18% to 16% last year. This continues our good progress towards our <10% target. Further detail is provided in the [Gender Pay Gap report](#).

6. Strategic initiatives during 2020

6.1. Covid-19 Equality impact

- From the start of pandemic, the leadership stressed their commitment to equality which helped to integrate equality impact assessment into the University's overall response, and, for example, helped shape the health, safety and wellbeing risk assessments, access to learning resources, and hardship funds.
- A 'Covid-19 Equality Impact' resource was created on the intranet. On this page we highlighted key issues related to the pandemic, and provided information helping staff to promote fairness and equality in the University community.
- The staff networks ran joint virtual events to which all staff were invited. These provided a platform for people with different backgrounds and work roles to receive updates from HR and the Return to Campus taskforce, to raise issues and ideas, and to share best practice.

6.2. Implementation of Race Equality Taskforce recommendations

- YSJU joined Advance HE's Race Equality Charter. The Pro Vice Chancellor for Learning and Teaching is the Executive Sponsor of the self-assessment team.
- Student Complaints and Casework project established.
- Anonymous marking policy introduced and rolled out.

6.3. Athena SWAN Charter application

- Advance HE remote development review informed further development on the draft Athena SWAN Charter application.
- Pro Vice Chancellor for Learning and Teaching is the Chair and Sponsor of the self-assessment team.
- Timeframe for submission relaxed to take account of institutional changes and impact of the pandemic.

6.4. REF 2021 and equality

- While equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) was mandatory, the University were able to incorporate it as an important theme throughout and went beyond requirements.
- REF Sub-Committee meetings had equality as a standing item, with the Equality and Diversity Group attending all and contributing to equality and diversity.

- Equality impact assessment was run three times as a means to embed EDI in all decision-making.
- Selection of staff with significant responsibility for research adhered to the YSJU Code of Practice and no feedback was received that the process for Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) was anything other than clear, fair and inclusive.
- The Equality and Diversity Adviser reviewed the environmental statements which enhanced the submission.
- Unconscious bias training was run face-to-face as well as online to reach as many staff as possible.

6.5. Students' Voice

- A diverse group of students was recruited to contribute to the Access and Participation Plan Tracking and Evaluation Sub-group, bringing the Student Voice to the process.
- The self-assessment teams for both Athena SWAN and Race Equality Charter have SU Officers as members.
- The SU LGBTQ+ Officer is a member of the LGBTQ+ Staff Network Steering Group and the Trans Inclusive Network.
- Students and staff collaborated in a working group to plan and deliver Black History Month 2020.
- The BAME Liberation Officer (SU) co-led the development of the Decolonial Practice work (see below)

7. Outlook on 2021

- On 29 April 2021, Governing Body approved the refreshed Strategy 2026. The following key performance indicators have replaced the equality objectives:
 - Enable positive access, awarding and progression outcomes for all students in line with our Access and Participation Plan 2020-2025.
 - Eliminate the gender pay gap (GPG) and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic pay gap (2026 staging targets: 5% mean and median GPG, retain zero pay gap for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff).
 - Diverse student population of 10,000 including undergraduates, postgraduates (including research students) and degree apprentices.
- In 2021 we will build a race equality movement at York St John University, including the provision of race equality training to Executive Board and the REC Self Assessment Team.
- We will provide a range of opportunities for wider staff teams to access Race Equality training
- We will develop a collaborative approach to EDI staff development, with an emphasis on supporting the Gender and Race Equality Charters.
- We have recently appointed a new Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement and the job description for this role has a focus on progressing our decolonial pedagogy and curriculum plans (as set out in LTSE Strategy).
- Our Learning and Teaching Annual Conference is focusing on Teaching for Social Justice with a strong EDI focus.
- Our 'YSJ Pedagogy in Transition' paper sets out the overarching principles that will inform and enrich our teaching for social justice approaches over the coming year. The pedagogic coordinates set out in this paper (curiosity, communities, compassion and collaboration) offer staff and students a framework for develop inclusive teaching.
- A group of students and staff worked together to launch a YSJ Decolonial Practice event in February 2021. This event (attended by over 80 members of staff and students) showcased decolonial pedagogy and curriculum initiatives from across YSJ. Dr Gurnam Singh offered a keynote. The event introduced the 'Remapping the Territory: Decolonising York St John' Padlet which is a digital platform that shares YSJ and sector best practice (<https://padlet.com/yorksjsj/decol>). An active TEAMS group was also established.

- In June EB, insert Equality and Diversity Adviser and the co-chairs of the REC SAT are working on a joint plan for the delivery of the next stage of the REC implementation plan. Whilst this plan has yet to be agreed it is likely to include the following elements:
 - A mentoring scheme for members of our BAME community
 - Drawing on sector case studies we will ask an EDI consultant to work with us to design an EB Listening Exercise to offer BAME students and staff meaningful opportunities to share with their experience of being students and staff of colour at YSJ. The Chair of the BAME Network and the SU BAME Liberation officer supports this approach
 - We will host two half day SLT workshops facilitated by an external to review all race related data and testimony. This will include REC survey data, complaints, appeals, recruitment, staff retention, pay, attainment, retention, completion, progression data. One half day will focus on students and one half day will focus on staff.

From September 2021, the University will be offering a York Scholars bursary with specific provision for members of the BAME community.

At School level, diverse representation in REF 2021 submission will be considered alongside steps to promote and support equality, diversity and inclusion in research careers.