

# UNIVERSITY OF READING ANNUAL STUDENT DIVERSITY & INCLUSION REPORT 2016 TO 2017 ACADEMIC YEAR

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# INTRODUCTION

University of Reading has long been committed to supporting and promoting equality and diversity to create an inclusive learning environment. This is demonstrated through attracting a diverse range of students from many different backgrounds, embedding inclusive practice in teaching and learning across all courses to ensure high quality learning accessible for all students, undertaking initiatives to optimise student success and engagement, and advancing our inclusive global outlook. Given that the student population at the University has been growing and becoming increasingly diverse, more attention has been given to student equality. In line with the University-wide Equal Opportunities Policy and Diversity and Inclusion agenda, a large amount of work has been established to enhance the University's capability to be more inclusive and to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to fulfil their talent regardless their background.

## **2016/2017 Activity highlights**

A variety of innovative initiatives and student support schemes have been set up to tackle inequalities. There are a number of achievements arising from this commitment but the main ones are:

- Launched the newly developed Inclusive Curriculum Framework which will guide the inclusive pedagogies and curricula design, delivery, and review of all degree level programmes in the future
- Established a Learning Analytics project to scope the remit, issues and benefits it could bring to UoR and to pave the way towards developing a business plan for a learning analytics approach that will enhance the support and attainment of our diverse students.
- Expanded the provision of the STaR mentoring programme for all undergraduates to international postgraduates, resulting in fostering a sense of belonging, particularly important for students who may perceive themselves to be in a minority. The number of STaR mentors increased to 358 in 2016/17. Among them, 66 were international students.
- Expanded the provision of the PAL (Peer-Assisted Learning) programme, creating informal peer learning opportunities for UG students, particularly benefiting non-traditional (mature, part-time, and carer leavers) students or international students who may be finding it difficult to integrate into the University community. In the second year of the scheme (2016/17) PAL provision was expanded to 37 PAL leaders and 281 PAL participants from various modules
- Piloted the “Positive Minds” scheme aimed at improving confidence and resilience of students and providing pre-emptive support to help students combat the likelihood of developing mental health problems.
- Continued the provision of staff training on mental health and D&I training in teaching and learning
- Developed and launched Study Smart, an online course developed in house by our Study Advice team. This online course is designed to facilitate the transition of new entrants into university-level learning through introducing new students to the principles and expectations of studying at university. It covers three key areas: academic integrity, communicating at university and independent learning

- Expanded the THRIVE career mentoring scheme (involving the provision of an alumni/employer mentor to part two undergraduates for a 9-10 month period) that supports students in formulating their career goals and leveraging work experience opportunities – particularly useful for students who may not have the social or family networks that would give them access to such things. The Scheme in 2016/17 recruited approximately 278 mentors (offering a total of 409 mentoring opportunities) and 278 mentees
- Rebranded the halls warden assistant scheme as a mentoring programme. Part of the role of hall mentors is to arrange inclusive social events with the aim to bring residents closer and develop a supportive hall community
- Continued the provision of the Life Tools Talks programme for all students, resulting in enhanced knowledge of key topics (e.g. managing academic demands, improving resilience and personal wellbeing) and practical skills (e.g. academic, communication and social) to help students remove potential barriers to their learning
- The University established a Personal Tutor System (PTS) project to carry out a review of our approach to personal tutoring and to make recommendation on how it could be enhanced to better support our increasingly diverse student body
- Established a working group to develop a new policy on Inclusive Practice in Teaching and Learning, marking a further commitment to inclusive learning environments across the whole institution

### **Priorities for 2017/2018**

Based on the University targets for D&I in relation to students, and the evidence and data presented in this report, the following are the main priorities for further work in the coming year:

- Continuing the work to raise awareness of the ethnicity attainment gap, its causes and ways of addressing it, including compiling a submission for the Race Equality Charter Mark
- Development of a full business case for adoption of Learning Analytics as a tool to enhance student engagement and ensure that appropriate and timely support is directed to all students
- Expansion of the pre-emptive resilience and confidence building ‘Positive Minds’ programme, aiming to reach many more students. The programme aims to reach at least 600 students in 2017/18
- Further expansion of PAL particularly in the light of the HEPI report<sup>1</sup> which flagged independent learning as a key factor in determining how much students learn in HE
- Evaluation of the impact of Study Smart and further improvement for subsequent years
- Implementation of the new Policy on Inclusive Teaching & Learning
- Preparation for the launch of an on-line census survey, the Reading Student Survey of undergraduates.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hepi.ac.uk/2018/01/08/affects-much-students-learn-new-analysis-student-academic-experience-survey-data/>

- Complete the work started in 2016/17, commissioned by the University Executive Board, of the Working Party tasked to bring forward recommendations for action in response to the 2016 “Report of the Universities UK Taskforce examining violence against women, harassment and hate crime affecting university students”

## **Scope of the report**

The report aims to demonstrate the complexity of both how protected characteristics are associated (or not) with students’ journey to and through higher education. The report begins by reviewing the current demographics, and recent changes in those demographics, for our student body in relation to the following six distinctive demographic features:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Religious belief
- Sexual orientation

The report then explores the data regarding the interplay of three main identities (gender, disability and ethnicity) for the current student population against four principal areas associated with students’ journey to and through higher education, namely

- Admission
- Progression
- Retention
- Degree attainment

One of the new features of the report is that this is the first time that we have separated home and international students in this analysis.

Findings are intended to inform future policy, strategy and interventions to help all learners at the University to reach their full academic potential.

## **Key findings**

This report draws out variations in the 2016/17 admission, progression and attainment between female and male, disabled and non-disabled, and between White and BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) students. The key findings are:

### **1. Gender differences in enrolment, progression and attainment:**

- At undergraduate (UG) level women continue, by about 10 percentage points, to have a larger share of applicants and enrolments than men, though this gap has reduced somewhat over the last year. This follows a well-documented national trend.
- At postgraduate taught (PGT) level women continue to have a larger share of applicants and enrolments than men, by about 10 percentage points and form an even higher proportion of enrolments, by about 20 percentage points, though both these gaps have reduced slightly over the last year.
- At postgraduate research (PGR) level, men continue, by about 12 percentage points, to have a larger proportion of applicants than women, but have a lower proportion of the

actual enrolments, by about 12 percentage points, and this gender gap in enrolments has increased significantly in the last year.

- At UG level, following a drop in the attainment gap (percentage attaining 1<sup>st</sup>/2.1, difference between men and women) from 10.5% to 6.1% last year (close to our 2020 target), the gap has risen again to 8.5% this year. Percentages attaining 1<sup>st</sup>/2.1 were significantly lower for both male and female international students, with a gender attainment gap of 17.02 percentage points.
- 2. There are discrepancies persisting between ethnic groups across many aspects of the whole learner journey of higher education.**
- There are clear divergences between the BAME groups at admission stage. In particular:
    - A noticeably lower proportion of Black students receives offers
    - Chinese students have higher offer rates than other minority ethnic groups, and higher offer rates than White students at PGT level and an essentially identical offer rate at UG level
  - There are more minority ethnic students applying for places on postgraduate courses than White students, especially from Asian groups. This may be explained by the fact that the majority of postgraduate courses applicants are international candidates. But as applicants, they are on average less likely to receive offers, but with considerable variation by ethnicity.
    - Chinese students have the highest offer rate of any ethnicity for PGT courses
    - For PGR courses Arab groups do not obtain as high offer rates as Chinese and Asian other groups, although do better than Black applicants.
    - Black groups have generally lower offer rates than other minority ethnic groups.
  - At UG level a smaller proportion of BAME students gains a first or 2.1, and the gap has widened from 12.63% to 16.68% in the last year, back to the level of 2014/15. Underneath this headline figure there is significant variation by ethnicity.
  - The ethnicity dimension of application and degree attainment at PGT level is complex
    - The numbers are low for some minority ethnic populations (e.g. Black students)
    - The proportion of BAME students achieving a distinction has been consistently smaller than the proportion of White students over the last three years.
- 3. Disabled students are less likely to pass at the first attempt compared to non-disabled students in their degree courses. However, for students in receipt of the DSA the gap between disabled students with DSA and non-disabled students reduces considerably.**

The following table shows progress against those of the 2020 student equality targets agreed with the University Executive Board in July 2016 for which data was available at publication.

Table 1: Progress against D&I targets for Student Equality (“NA” indicates “Not Available at the time of publication”)

2020 Student Equality target (%)		Target (%) for 2020	Actual (%) 2016/17	Actual (%) 2015/16	Actual (%) 2014/15
Race	Reduction of the attainment gap (proportion of 1st/2.1) between BAME and White undergraduate students	12	16.68	12.63	16.5
	Reduction of the postgraduate BAME student failure rate	4	8	6	6
Gender	A minimum gender balance of 30:70 across 75% of our subject areas	30:70	NA	NA	NA
	Reduction in the attainment gap (proportion of 1st/2.1) between female and male undergraduate students	6	8.49	6.08	10.5
	Reduction of the gap between the proportion of undergraduate men and women in full-time employment six months after graduation who are in professional/managerial employment	7	NA	NA	10
Disability	Maintain an attainment gap of <3 percentage points between proportion of disabled and non-disabled undergraduates who achieve 1st class degrees	<3	6.93	0.97	2.66
	Reduction of the gap between the proportion of disabled and non-disabled students assumed to be unemployed six months after graduate	4.5	NA	NA	3.5

## Recommendations

The report has addressed the trends and issues related to admission, progression, retention and attainment and identified where the gaps were, particularly in relation to disability, gender and ethnicity. It is clear that a good deal of progress has made across the board in recent years, however, certain groups of students are still underrepresented or underperforming. These apparent inequalities, particularly key disparities in student admission and attainment by ethnicity, continue to be a cause for concern. Although we recognise that many other factors are impacting in variable ways on these patterns over the years not least the fact that student numbers are seeing significant growth and the average

tariff on entry has reduced from 379 in 2013/14 to 371 in 2016/17, we are continuing to work on these challenging areas using the approaches identified in previous annual reports. We are continuing to implement the recommendations set out in the D&I strategy:

1. To develop an early warning system to allow staff to monitor student progress/engagement in order to enhance engagement and performance of all students – *this is a very substantial initiative and the last year has been spend scoping and considering the specific requirements that will work for the University*
2. Develop a pre-arrival induction to study at HE to ensure that all student understand the expectations of higher education study and provide an opportunity to demystify the experience for all students – *This has been developed and was launched in August 2017*
3. Implement the Diversity and inclusion strand of the Curriculum Framework project to ensure that curricula are appropriately diverse and inclusive – *The Curriculum Framework has been launched and a toolkit for diversity & inclusion has been developed and promoted to Schools. There will now follow a period of curriculum review that will consider D&I as part of its work*
4. Raise the level of understanding amongst staff by providing a suite of training covering the topics of: Diversity & inclusion, unconscious bias, mental health awareness and identifying and challenging harassment etc. – *New online D&I training for all staff has been introduced, plus introductory and advanced online unconscious bias training. CQSD (the Centre for Quality Support and Development) has provided a suite of D&I face to face courses, on Inclusive Teaching, Supporting Students, Dyslexia and Other Specific Learning Difficulties, ADHD and Effectively Supporting Students, ASD/Asberger Syndrome – Learning from Experience, Supporting Students with Mental Health Difficulties.*

In addition to these actions we will be:

- Implementing the new Inclusive Teaching & Learning Policy which aims to ensure that a core set of basic actions are implemented by all teaching staff that will make teaching & learning more accessible for disabled students in particular but will also have positive impacts for a wide range of students
- Continuing to ensure that data on the representation and success of students is made available in such a way that equality trends will be visible at both an institutional and school level
- Ensuring that University committees with the relevant responsibilities are asked to consider and respond to the data and observations presented in this report.
- Focussing on developing an institutional approach to the evaluation of student support activity/interventions
- Continuing to raise awareness of the trends described in this report and equip a wide variety of stakeholders with a better understanding of the issues and challenges experienced by diverse student groups.

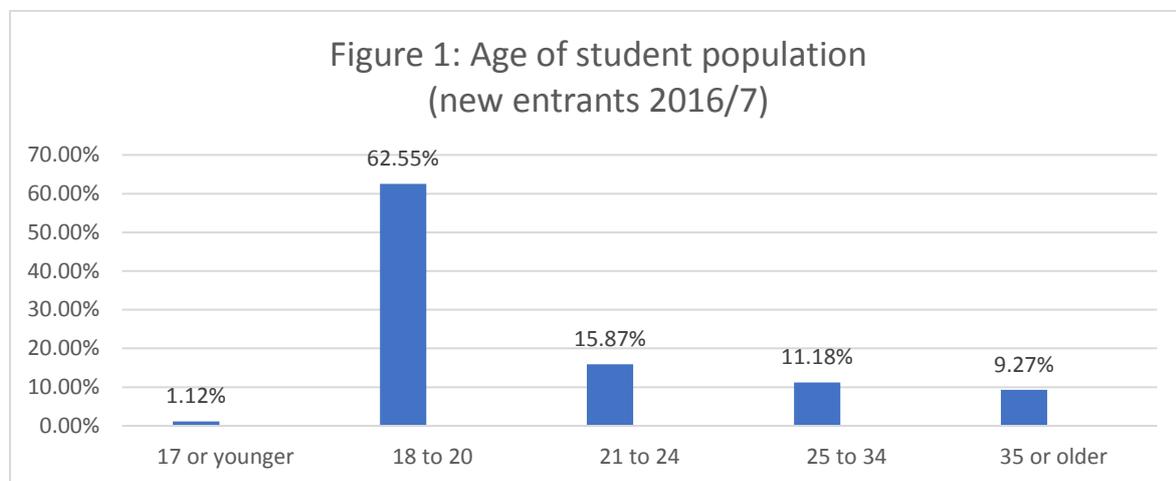
## Profile of the student body in 2016 -2017

The overall size of our student population has continued to rise in the last three consecutive years. Undergraduate numbers have continued to increase by 2 percentage points per year and make up the majority (70%) of student population at the University in 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table a.7).

The proportions of PGT and PGR students have remained relatively stable, nearly a quarter (23%) of students were studying PGT courses while around 7% were research students in 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table a.7 & Table a.10).

The proportion of International Foundation Programme (IFP) students or students on Foundation Degree has always been small and stable, ranging from 1% to 2% of the total student population in this same period (see Appendix, Table a.4).

### Age

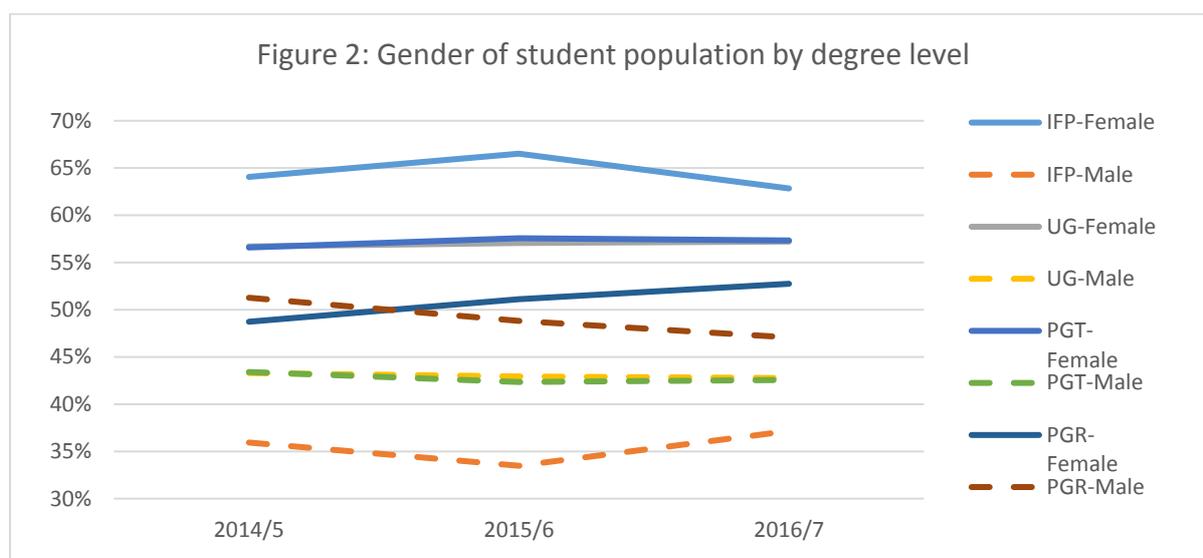


The majority of students at the University (63.67%) were aged 20 and under. The proportion of mature students, that is, those over age 21 upon entry has been steadily in decline. This has been balanced by the continued increase in the proportion of young students at the University (see Appendix, Table a.1). In 2016/17, the proportion of mature students was 3.06 percentage points lower; whereas the proportion of young students was 1.84 percentage points higher than last year (see Figure1).

68.77% of home students were aged 20 and under, compared to 43.16% of international undergraduates (see Appendix, Table a.8 & Table a.9).

More than half (56.98%) of international students were mature students (see Appendix, Table a.3). This may be because most international students are postgraduates.

## Gender



Paralleling the overall increase in student numbers, women have continued to make up the majority of students at the University, with 57.34% on PGT programmes, 57.22% on undergraduate programmes and 52.75% on research programmes (see Appendix, Table b.1, b.7 & b.10). However, this increase was only present for female students. In contrast, the percentage of male students continued to decline slightly. The proportion of men has gradually decreased from 43.88% in 2014/15 to 42.96% in 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table b.1). Overall 56.99% of all students studying at the University in 2016/17 were female.

The same pattern was observed among both UK domiciled and international students with women comprising the majority at every degree level with the exception of IFP international students, where they made up 40% of international students. However, exceptionally there were more women than man in IFP (62.84%) overall and this pattern has been almost unchanged in the last three years (see Figure 2), though note that the actual numbers of IFP students are small (see Appendix, Table b.4-b.6).

## Ethnicity

Figure 3: Total student population by ethnicity 2016/7

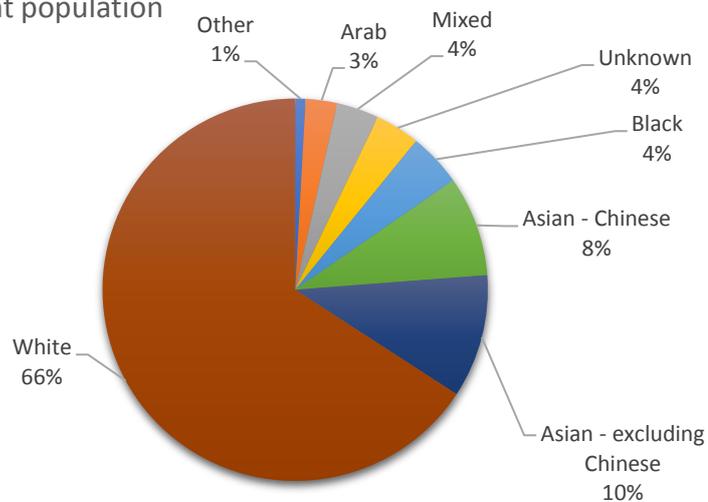


Figure 4 :Home student population by ethnicity 2016/7

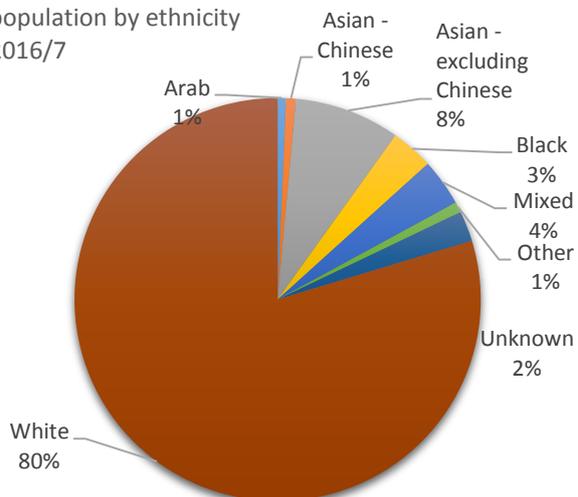
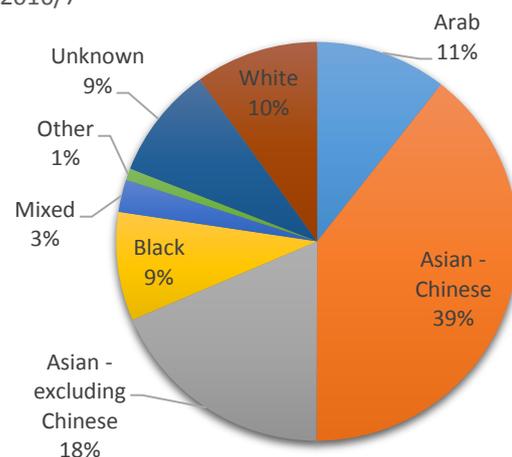


Figure 5: International student population by ethnicity 2016/7



The proportion of BAME students at the University has increased slightly in the last three years but at a very low rate. Ethnic minorities represented 30.30% of degree entrants in 2014/15, and this proportion has risen to 30.44 % by 2016/17. The proportion of White students also increased slightly from 65.51% to 65.80% between 2015/16 and 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table c.1). These increases are balanced by a slight reduction in the proportion of “unknown”.

The main features of ethnic groups were (see Figure 3):

- The Asian group excluding Chinese was the dominant group in the minority ethnic intake in each of the last three years (13% in the 2016/17)
- The proportion of Chinese students was also high (8%)
- Black students (4%) were less well represented than Asian students.

The proportion of the Mixed ethnic group has seen the most growth by 0.28 percentage points, followed by the Chinese group which has grown by 0.15% over the last three years. In

comparison, the proportion of Asian other students has decreased slightly by 0.23 percentage points (see Appendix, Table c.1).

The proportion of each UK domiciled minority ethnic group at the University varied considerably (see Figure 4). The Mixed ethnic group has seen the most increase among minority ethnic groups by 0.34 percentage points from 3.42% in 2015/16, this followed by the Black student group which rose from 3.08% in 2015/16 to 3.4% in 2016/17. The least growth was in UK domiciled Chinese students, decreasing by 0.11 percentage points (see Appendix, Table c.2). It contrasted with the international Chinese group, which has seen the most growth by 3.4 percentage points (see Appendix, Table c.3).

Overall, the percentages of UK domiciled and international BAME groups at the University have consistently increased to 17.86% and 80.85% respectively in 2016/17 (by 0.87% and 1.07%, respectively) from last year. In comparison, the proportion of UK domiciled White students dropped slightly (by 0.67%) from 80.38% to 79.71% by 2016/17. The proportion of international White students has been stable (around 10%) in this time period (see Appendix, Table c.2-c.3).

Higher qualifications have been a positive driver for attracting BAME students. 37.36% of BAME students were on PGT programmes and 40.25% on PGR programmes, compared to 26.68% on UG programmes in 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table c.7, c.10 & c.13)

The proportion of BAME students among international students is high at all degree levels. There has been a steady increase in the proportion of BAME international students at UG level from 73.36% in 2015/16 to 78.18% in 2016/17, and a slight decrease in the proportion of BAME international students at PGT level from 87.47% to 83.36%. The proportion of BAME research students has remained stable at around 82.87% in that period (see Appendix, Table c.9, c.12, c.15).

The proportion of BAME students (78.18%) among international undergraduate students was comparable to the proportion of White students (79.23%) among UK domiciled undergraduates. A higher proportion of international minority ethnic groups were on PGT courses (83.86%) compared to UK domiciled White students (80.58%) (see Appendix, Table c.8 & c.11). Whereas, international BAME research students were almost on a par with UK domiciled White research students (82.34% and 82.37%, respectively) (see Appendix, Table c.14). This pattern has remained rather stable in recent years.

By contrast, a higher proportion of UK domiciled BAME students (18.56%) were on UG programmes compared to 16.54% of UK domiciled BAME students on taught postgraduate programmes and 13.4% on research programmes, respectively (see Appendix, Table c.8).

The proportion of UK domiciled White student was at each degree level very similar (see Appendix, Table c.8, c.11 & c.14). The proportion of UK domiciled White students at all degree levels has been relatively steady with a small decrease by less than 1 percentage point each year for undergraduates (79.23% in 2016/17) and slight fluctuations for postgraduate students (80.58% for PGT and 82.37% for PGR, respectively in 2016/17), varying by 1-2 percentage points over the last three years.

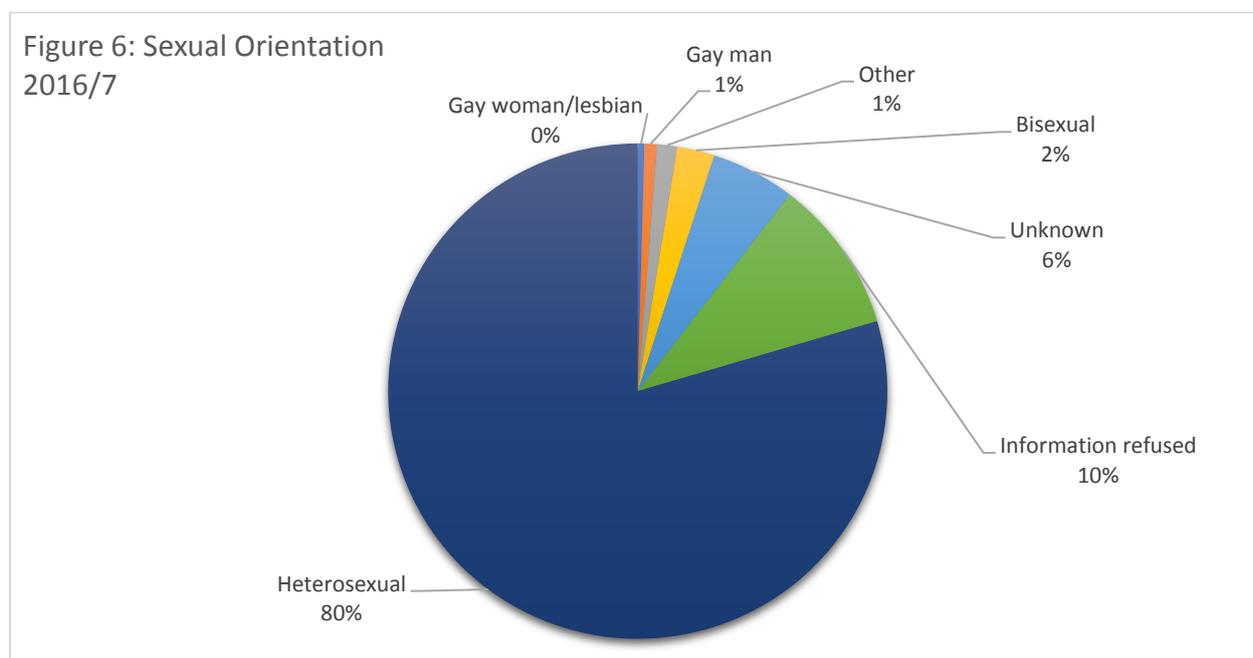
## Disability

Disability disclosure rates have steadily increased among students, rising from 10.95% in 2015/16 to 11.77% in 2016/17; only 4.09% of the declared disabled students receive DSA (see Appendix, Table d.1). However, disability disclosure rates varied by degree level, with the highest proportion among undergraduates. 13.75% of students at this level disclosed as disabled, compared to only 7.11% by taught postgraduates and 7.63% by research postgraduates (see Appendix, Table d.7, d.10 & d.13).

The proportion of IFP students declaring as disabled more than doubled between 2015/16 and 2016/17, increasing from 4.72% to 12.8% (see Appendix, Table d.4).

Disability disclosure rates were significantly higher among UK domiciled students (13.98%) than for international students (2.88%) (see Appendix, Table d.5-d.6).

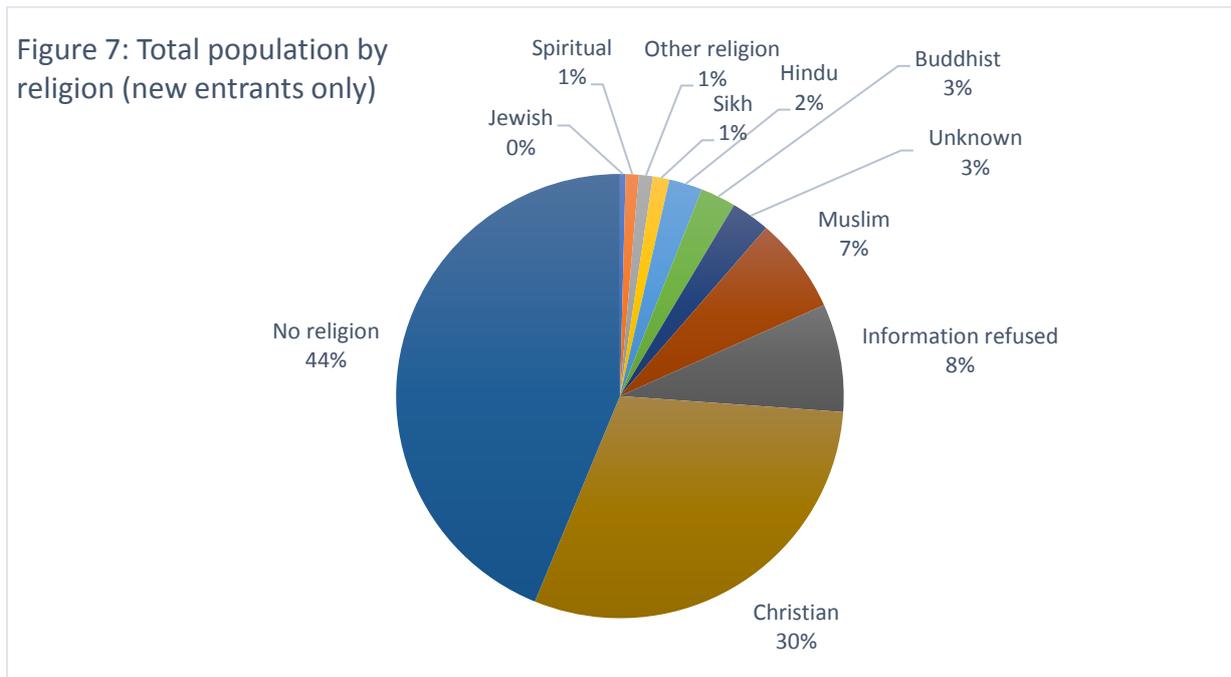
## Sexual orientation (new entrants only)



Sexual orientation information was unknown for 5.45% of all students. This proportion has dropped by 2.86 percentage points from 2014/15 (7.64%) and remained stable since 2015/16 (4.78%) (see Appendix, Table e.1).

There has been little change in the proportion of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) students and 3.67% of our new entrant students identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual. The percentage of 'information refused' has increased slightly by 1.01 percentage point from late year and in 2016/17, 10.2% preferred not to say (see Figure 6)).

*Religious belief (new entrants only)*



Regarding Religion and Belief, 92.12% of students provided information, 7.78% refused to provide information. The percentage of ‘information refused’ (8%) was the same as last year (see Appendix, Table f.1).

The highest proportion of new entrants considered themselves to be of no religion (43.79%). The largest religious group was Christian (30.06%), followed by Muslims (6.94%) (see Figure 7). This was similar to last year.

## Main demographic features against priority areas (Gender, Ethnicity, Disability)

### Gender

#### Recruitment and admissions

With the exception of research postgraduates, the majority of applicants at every degree level were female. More UG applicants were women than men (55.32% compared to 44.68%). Similarly, female applicants for PGT courses were 11.03 percentage points higher (55.45% compared to 44.42%). In contrast, 56.15% of PGR applicants were male, although the proportion of women applicants has increased slightly since last year. The gender difference overall has reduced slightly compared to last year (see Appendix, Table g.4, g.7 & g.10).

In terms of offer and enrolment rates, the same proportions of male and female UG applicants were offered places at UoR which resulted in roughly the same proportions of applicants enrolling. However, a higher proportion of female PGT and PGR applicants were made offers in comparison to male applicants (70.40% compared to 66.70% for PGT applicants and 35.5% compared to 25.8% for PGR applicants). This resulted in a higher proportion of female applicants enrolling (23.10% against 18.7% for PGT applicants, and 17.7% against 10.8% for PGR applicants, respectively) (see Appendix, Table g.4, g.7 & g.10).

The gender differences for home and international applicants by degree level were broadly similar with a higher proportion of women successful in getting offers and accepting their offers (see Appendix, Table g.5-g.6, Table g.8-g.9 & Table g.11-g.12). But there were some noticeable exceptions to these general trends. At PGT level, the offer rates for UK domiciled male applicants were higher (69.70% compared to 65.10%) but the take-up rates were lower (47% compared to 49.9%): see Appendix, Table g.8.

#### Progression, retention and attainment

There were clear gender differences in progression, retention and attainment. Fewer men than women progressed onto the following year (92.06% compared to 95.43%) (see Appendix, Table g.13). Likewise, fewer men obtained good degree awards (74.18% compared to 82.67% receiving a 1<sup>st</sup> class/2.1; 76.47% compared to 77.33% receiving a distinction/merit) (see Appendix, Table g.28 & g.31).

**Progression (UG only):** Among UK domiciled undergraduates, the proportion of female students failing to progress has been smaller over the last three years. 3.84% of male students failed to progress in 2016/17, compared to 1.86% of female entrants. Furthermore, females were more likely than males to pass at the first attempt, although the gap has reduced from 8.17% to 7.19% over the last three years (see Appendix, Table g.14).

Similar patterns were observed amongst international students with a higher proportion of females passing and passing at the first attempt. The gap between females and males for passing at the first attempt rate has narrowed by 3.86 percentage points since 2014/15. In 2016/17, 82.75% of females passed at the first attempt in comparison with 78.08% of males (see Appendix, Table g.15).

**Retention:** In comparison with male students at UG and PGR level, female undergraduates (95.73% against 94.35%) and female research students (96.42% against 94.89%) had slightly higher retention rates, yet at PGT level males had a slightly higher retention rate (93.15% against 92.5%) (see Appendix, Table g.19, g.22 & g.25).

The pattern of retention between female and male for UK domiciled students at all degree levels varied in a number of ways but the overall retention rates were pretty comparable:

- The retention rates for UK domiciled were comparable to international undergraduate students with a higher proportion of female undergraduates remaining in their studies (see Appendix, Table g.20-21).
- At PGT level, a higher proportion of the UK domiciled males continued their studies (92.47% against 90.79%) (see Appendix, Table g.23).
- At PGR level, UK domiciled female students were on a par with their male counterparts with respect to the retention rate (94.88% and 94.61% respectively) (see Appendix, Table g.26).

International students who were female at all degree levels were more likely to keep going with their studies than male students. However, the gender difference has remained small over the last few years except for research degree students, for whom the gender difference increased from 0.11% to 4.26% between 2015/16 and 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table g.21, g.24 & g.27).

**Attainment:** A higher proportion of females have achieved a 1<sup>st</sup> class or 2.1 on the whole, with 82.67% of females and 74.18% of males achieving a 1<sup>st</sup> class /2.1 in 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table g.28). Similarly, a higher proportion of UK domiciled females received 1<sup>st</sup> class/2.1 degrees (84.55% and 77.46%, respectively) (see Appendix, Table g.29). The same pattern was observed, and to a more significant extent, among international students (73.86% and 56.84%, respectively) (see Appendix, Table g.30).

The 1<sup>st</sup>/2.1 attainment gap between UK domiciled female and male students increased slightly from 5.74 percentage points in 2015/16 to 7.09 percentage points in 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table g.29). In comparison with UK domiciled students, the gap between international students was larger, increasing to 17.02 percentage points in 2016/17 from 10.29 percentage points last year (see Appendix, Table g.30).

There was a reduction in the attainment gap of first class degree achievers between female and male undergraduates, with a slightly higher proportion of female students receiving 1<sup>st</sup> class degrees (26.94% compared to 25.06%) (see Appendix, Table g.28). Among UK domiciled students, again, a slightly higher proportion of females received 1<sup>st</sup> class degrees and the gap by gender was smaller (28.16% against 26.81%, respectively) (see Appendix, Table g.29). However, the gap by gender within international students increased by over 5 percentage points between 2015/16 and 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table g.30). In 2016/17, 21.25% of international students who were female received 1<sup>st</sup> class degrees, while only 15.79% of male students did so.

At PGT level, females were as likely as males to achieve a distinction (26.50% against 26.34%) and a merit (50.83% against 50.13%). This is a slight improvement from last year but the overall pattern has been much the same over the last three years. In addition, females

were more likely to pass and less likely to fail than their male counterparts (see Appendix, Table g.31).

In the cohort of UK domiciled PGT students, a higher proportion of females achieved distinction degrees (around 41% compared to 32%), whereas higher percentages of male students achieved merit (53% compared to 47%) and pass degrees (10% compared to 8%) (see Appendix, Table g.32).

In contrast to UK domiciled PGT students, on the whole international taught postgraduates who were male had a slightly higher tendency to achieve distinction degrees (21% against 19% respectively) whereas a slightly higher proportion of females obtained merit (52% against 49%) and pass degrees (24% against 22%) (see Appendix, Table g.33).

## **Ethnicity**

### **Recruitment and admissions**

In aggregate, BAME groups comprised 21.78% of the applicants and the White group 58.6% (with 19.62% unknown) (see Appendix, Table h.4). But BAME students comprised a large share of PGT and PGR applicants (69.19% and 69.12% respectively) (see Appendix, Table h.7 & h.10). However, their representation across each minority ethnic group varied. At PGT level, a large proportion of applicants are Chinese (32.18%), higher than the proportion of White students (27.02%), while a smaller proportion are Black (11.81%). At PGR level, after White the largest ethnic groups of applicants are Arab (19.35%), Asian others excluding Chinese (18.83%), and Black (16.58%), with a much smaller proportion Chinese (5.29%) (see Appendix, Table h.7 & h.10).

There was a higher proportion of unknown ethnicities among the UG applicants, around 20%, compared to 4% postgraduate applicants, but overall the percentage of the unknown ethnic groups at all degree levels has fallen gradually year on year (see Appendix, Table h.4, h.7 & h.10).

BAME ethnic groups overall were less successful in gaining places on degree study than White groups. The offer rate varies considerably between different ethnic groups by degree level.

- At UG level, a higher proportion of Chinese applicants (86.5%), similar to the proportion of White applicants (86.6%), but a smaller proportion of Black applicants (74.7%) were offered a place. Such variations were also evident among UK domiciled UG applicants. As over three quarters of UG international applicants did not declare their ethnic identities, we only consider in this report the ethnicity differences of UK domiciled applicants. There has been little change in the high proportion of unknowns for UG international applicants in the last three years (see Appendix, Table h.5-6).
- At PGT level, Chinese students had the highest offer rate (74% in 2016/17), higher than White students (69.5%), whilst Black students the lowest offer rate (60.1%) (see Appendix, Table h.7).
  - In the UK domiciled BAME groups, the Mixed ethnic group had the highest offer rate (68.1%), similar to White applicants (68.6%); the Black group the second highest rate (64%); whereas Arab applicants had the lowest (36.4%) offer rate (see Appendix, Table h.8).

- Arab international students (52.1%) have the lowest offer rate; whilst Asian students, in particular Chinese students (74.1%) have the highest offer rate (Appendix, Table h.9).
- As for applications at PGR level, overall a higher proportion of UK domiciled (60%) and international (36%) Chinese applicants received offers; in contrast, a much smaller proportion of UK domiciled and international Black applicants (54.5% and 18.9%, respectively) were offered a place compared to other ethnic groups. UK domiciled Arab applicants usually had the highest offer rates (83.3%), significantly higher than UK domiciled White students (46.5%); in contrast, international Arab applicants (19.6%) were as unlikely to be offered a place as Black applicants (see Appendix, Table h.11-12).

Among UK domiciled applicants at PGR level, the offer rates for most BAME groups were higher than the offer rate for White applicants (see Appendix, Table h.11).

- Arab, Chinese, and Asian others have been consistently doing better in gaining offers than White applicants over the last three years.
- The offer rates for Black applicants rose from 40% in 2015/16 to 54.5% in 2016/17 and above White applicants (46.5%) for the first time.

### **Progression, retention and attainment**

**Progression (UG only):** The progression rates for both BAME and White UG students continued to increase slightly and the gap remained the same as last year around 4%, where White students (95.22%) were more likely than BAME students (91%) to pass at 1<sup>st</sup> /2<sup>nd</sup> attempt (see Appendix, Table h.13).

The lowest progression rate at the first attempt was for Other Ethnic entrants (70.27%), followed by Black students (71.13%). In contrast, the highest was for Mixed ethnic and Asian groups (86.55% and around 83.4%, respectively) (see Appendix, Table h.13).

There was distinctive variation in progression for UK domiciled BAME entrants (see Appendix, Table h.14):

- Arab (61.9%) and Black entrants (71.22%) had the lowest progression rates.
- Chinese entrants were most likely to progress at the first attempt (88.64%) of minority ethnic groups, this rate comparable to White students (90.29%).

BAME entrants overall were less likely than White students to progress onto the following year.

**Retention:** Fewer than 5% of students withdrew across all degree levels over the last three years apart from the significant increase for taught postgraduates from 3.61% in 2015/16 to 7.22% in 2016/17, the highest withdrawal rate in recent years (see Appendix, Table h.19, h.22 & h.25).

BAME groups as a whole were more likely than White students to remain in their studies, although the difference was small. In terms of the difference within individual ethnic groups, a significantly higher proportion of Chinese students and smaller proportions of Other ethnic and Black groups continue their studies. However, the withdrawal rate (4%) for Chinese students at PGR level was higher than for other minority ethnic groups in 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table h.25).

The withdrawal rate for BAME students at all degree levels has decreased by around one percentage point year on year since 2014/15 except the fluctuation for the students at UG level which increased from 2% in 2014/15 to 6% in 2015/16 and then dropped to 1% in 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table h.19).

The same trend was also seen among White students with reduced withdrawal rates over the last three years at all degree levels apart from at UG level where the withdrawal rate increased from 3.21% to 5.33% and then fell to 1.87% in this same period.

There was variation by degree level within ethnic groups however. Over the last three years there were consistently higher retention rates for Chinese students at UG (99.59% in 2016/17) and PGT level (99.30%), and for Mixed ethnic (98.18%) and Black (97.4%) at PGR level (see Appendix, Table h.19, h.22 & h.25).

**Attainment:** Following a significant increase in 2015/16 the proportion of BAME undergraduate students receiving a 1<sup>st</sup> class/2.1 decreased by 6 percentage points to 68%, whereas the proportion of White students achieving a first/2.1 has been fairly static, around 84% over the last three years. However, the proportion of BAME students attaining a first/2.1 did remain slightly higher than that achieved in 2014/15 (see Appendix, Table h.28).

There remain stark gaps among some minority ethnic groups. Mixed group (71.15%) was most likely, whereas Arab students (58.98%) were least likely to get a first or 2.1. Black students were the least successful and most likely to gain a third class of degree (7%). There seems to have been little improvement over the last few years in this pattern (see Appendix, Table h.28).

But if looking at the attainment of first class degrees rather than 1<sup>st</sup> class and 2.1 combined, there were some different results. The gap between minority ethnic and White students narrowed, and some groups (Arab, 23.08%) were almost on a par with White students (29.15%), while other ethnic groups (Chinese, 21.46%, Mixed ethnic groups, 21.15%) were not far behind (see Appendix, Table h.28).

Among UK domiciled students, fewer BAME students received a 1<sup>st</sup>/2.1 than White students. The attainment gap has increased steadily from 11.28% to 15.37 percentage points in recent three years. 84.31% of White students compared to 69% of BAME students received a first/2.1 in 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table h.29).

At PGT level, the attainment gap for Distinction level degrees between BAME and White groups has remained static and significant, with 18% of BAME students and 35.57% of White students gaining Distinctions in 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table h.31).

Overall, White students were more likely than BAME to achieve a distinction or merit.

## **Disability**

### **Recruitment and admissions**

The vast majority of applicants who declared a disability were UG students. The proportion of applicants who claimed a disability has increased gradually by over 1 percentage point each year. 9.3% of UG applicants declared a disability in 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table i.4).

There was little difference in the proportion of offers between disabled and non-disabled applicants at UG level, 83.70% compared to 83.40% respectively in 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table i.4). This pattern has remained unchanged in recent years. Furthermore, the proportion of offer holders that actually enrolled has constantly been significantly higher for disabled applicants (24.5% compared to 16.3% for non-disabled applicants in 2016/17), although the gap has narrowed gradually over time (see Appendix, Table i.4).

For UK domiciled applicants at UG level, the proportion of disabled applicants that received offers was almost the same as for non-disabled applicants, 83.82% as opposed to 84% in 2016/17. But the actual enrolment rate for disabled applicants was higher than for non-disabled students (24.3% compared to 16.4%) (see Appendix, Table i.5). The same trend was observed among international applicants as well (see Appendix, Table i.6).

The proportions of disabled applicants at PGT (3% in 2016/17) and PGR level (3.2%) have been consistently over the last three years substantially smaller than at UG level (9.3% in 2016/17) (see Appendix, Table i.7 & i.10).

The offer rates for disabled applicants at PGT level on average were slightly lower than for non-disabled applicants (66.70% as opposed to 68.8%). However, more disabled students were actually enrolled (44.8%) than non-disabled applicants (20.4%) (see Appendix, Table i.7). This pattern was also seen in home and international disabled applicants (see Appendix, Table i.8-9).

Unlike the disabled applicants at UG and PGT level, disabled applicants for PGR courses were more successful in getting offers (44.2% compared to 29.5%) and also more likely to take up their offers than their non-disabled peers (33.7% compared to 13.1%) (see Appendix, Table i.10). This pattern was more noticeable among international applicants. In 2016/17, 16% of international disabled applicants were enrolled in comparison with 6.3% of non-disabled applicants, while the enrolment rates for UK domiciled disabled and non-disabled offer holders were 41% and 34.2% respectively (see Appendix, Table i.12-13).

The offer and enrolment rates for disabled international applicants at PGR level have markedly dropped, although the application rates have been fairly stable over the last three years. The percentage for PGR disabled offer holders dropped 4 percentage points from last year to 16% in 2016/17, and the enrolment rates fell from 10% to 6.3% in that period (see Appendix, Table i.12).

### **Progression, retention and attainment**

As DSA funding is only available for UK domiciled students, our analysis considers home students only when comparing students with and without DSA support.

**Progression (UG only):** Disabled students overall were slightly less likely than non-disabled students to pass at the first attempt. This was particularly prominent for disabled students without DSA support (see Appendix, Table i.13). A smaller proportion of UK domiciled disabled students passed at the first attempt in comparison with their non-disabled counterparts. This has been a consistent pattern in the last three years (see Appendix, Table i.14).

The proportion of disabled students with DSA support passing at the first attempt has increased by 2 percentage points in the last year, though it is slightly lower compared to

disabled students without DSA support in 2014/15. In the last two years, things have changed, with a higher proportion of disabled students with DSA support passing at the first attempt. This pattern was particularly marked in 2016/17 where 87.86% of disabled students with DSA support passed at the first attempt, almost on a par with non-disabled students (88.83%), while a lower proportion (83.3%) of disabled students without DSA support passed at the first attempt (see Appendix, Table i.14).

There was a tendency that disabled students with DSA were more likely, and disabled students without DSA support less likely, to pass at the first attempt.

**Retention:** Disabled students at UG level overall were less likely than non-disabled students to withdraw from their studies (see Appendix, Table i.16). In particular, disabled students with DSA (1.93%) were least likely to withdraw in comparison with disabled students without DSA (2.8%) and non-disabled students (5.38%) in 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table i.17). The pattern has existed in previous years and also was observed among PGT disabled (with and without DSA) and non-disabled students (see Appendix, Table i.19 -20).

There was a similar trend for students at PGR level as in previous years with a lower withdrawal rate for disabled students than for non-disabled students (see Appendix, Table i.22). However, in 2016/17 more disabled students with DSA (6.98%) withdrew from their studies than non-disabled students (4.13%) and disabled student without DSA (4.31%) (see Appendix, Table i.23). However, the numbers were relatively small overall and it is therefore difficult to place a lot of significance on these changes.

**Attainment:** In 2016/17, 75% of disabled undergraduates received a first/2.1, representing a decrease of 5% from last year. This proportion remains smaller in comparison with non-disabled UG students receiving a first/2.1 (79.5%) (see Appendix, Table i.25).

More UK domiciled disabled students with DSA achieved a 1<sup>st</sup> class degree in 2016/17 (22.93%) than disabled students without DSA (19.05%), but there has been significant fluctuation in these rates in the last three years. Consistently over the last two years non-disabled students have achieved a higher proportion of firsts than disabled students, with or without DSA, with 28.62% firsts for non-disabled students in 2016/17 (see Appendix, Table i.26).

At PGT level, there was little difference in terms of the proportions of distinction and merit level degrees between disabled and non-disabled students (see Appendix, Table i.28). Moreover, UK domiciled disabled students with DSA (35.48%) for the first time this year outperformed non-disabled students (35.32%) with a slightly higher proportion of distinction achievers (see Appendix, Table i.29). This might be due to considerably less non-disabled students receiving distinction in recent years.

The numbers of disabled international students at PGR were too small to undertake any meaningful analysis and thus this group was not considered in this report.

## **Other information**

### **Student complaints and appeals**

## **Complaints**

This section contains details of the protected characteristics of the students who raised formal complaints at Stage 2 of the University's complaints procedure. This information has been gathered directly from their RISIS record. In academic year 2016/17 there were 20 Stage 2 complaints (including group complaints) received from 28 different students.

Gender: 21 Female (75%), 7 Male (25%)

Age: 16 of 28 complaints (57%) were made by those under the age of 25, the remainder being from those aged 26 and upwards

Disability: 23 complaints (82%) were made by students without a disability; the remainder being from disabled students

Home/International: 23 complaints were made by Home/EU students and 5 by internationals

Ethnicity: 4 complaints were made by Asian students, with 1 by Mixed ethnic group, 3 by unknown, 20 by White students, possibly suggesting an over-representation of Asian students but numbers are so low as to be only suggestive rather than meaningful.

## **Appeals**

This section contains details of the protected characteristics of the students who submitted formal appeals. This information has been gathered directly from their RISIS record. In the academic year 2016/17 there were 161 appeals received from separate students. Some case progressed through multiple stages but each individual student has been counted only once.

Gender: 75 Female, 86 Male

Age: 125 out of 161 appeals were made by those under the age of 25

Disability: 31 appeals were made by students with a declared disability, 130 by those without a disability

Home/International: 68.3% of appeals (110) were made by UK domiciled students

Ethnicity: 45.3% of appeals came from White students (73), 13.6% from Black students (22), and 29.1% from Asian students (47) with the remainder from several other categories.

This possibly suggests an over-representative of non-white students in the appeals system

## **Appendix**

All the data tables referred to in this report can be found in the accompanying Appendix, available on the University of Reading, Diversity and Inclusion website, under Annual Reports, specifically at

[https://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/Diversity/Diversity and Inclusion Student Datasets Appendix 31 January 2018 Final.pdf](https://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/Diversity/Diversity_and_Inclusion_Student_Datasets_Appendix_31_January_2018_Final.pdf)

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