

# EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21



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# Foreword from the Vice-Chancellor



Our 2020-21 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report highlights our key achievements and the work undertaken to create an equal, diverse and inclusive University.

Our vision is to 'transform lives by finding and powering potential, giving people the opportunity to succeed with us whatever their background'. As part of the University's approach to embed and sustain an inclusive culture we have integrated our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) objectives within our Strategic Plan which promotes an inclusive learning and working environment for our students and staff.

This report monitors progress against our EDI objectives and priorities across the University. It also highlights some excellent work undertaken in the last academic year to eliminate disadvantage and potential discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, celebrate our diverse community and foster community cohesion. We have made excellent progress, but we understand the importance of sustained commitment and action across several aspects to drive continuous improvement. We are conscious that we have a long way to go to improving the diversity across our staff population at all levels, further improving our gender and ethnicity pay gaps and reducing the BAME awarding gap for our students.

The Board of Governors and University Executive Group are committed to drive improvement across the University for our student and staff community. We attract the very best and most diverse student and staff populations and ensure equality of opportunity for all.

**“Our vision is to transform lives by finding and powering potential, giving people the opportunity to succeed with us whatever their background.”**



# Introduction

Our commitment to EDI was at the heart of strategic discussions and decision-making processes throughout 2020-21. This has been especially important as the impact of COVID-19 highlights inequalities and has a disproportionate impact on various communities.

We have continued to make important progress in advancing equality of opportunity, embracing and proactively celebrating the diversity of our community, and fostering a cohesive inclusive culture. We have made some excellent progress against our strategic EDI objectives for both our student and staff community. We continue to implement our Athena Swan action plan and are extremely proud to have retained our Bronze award for the Race Equality Charter Mark.

We produce and publish Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Reports, and report every six months to the University's Strategic EDI Board. The EDI Office continues to work closely with the Board of Governors (BoG), Chief Executive Group (CEG), Strategic Business Units (SBU) EDI Teams, Hertfordshire Students' Union (HSU), and especially with Human Resources (HR) and the Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre (LTIC), to monitor progress against our Strategic Equality Objectives and implement initiatives to achieve these. We also support the University's staff networks.

The University publishes an overview of key equality and diversity statistics on an annual basis (as of 31 July) relating to the protected characteristics of its staff and student body. This annual report is published separately, and data from it used in this accompanying progress report.

**We have made some excellent progress against our strategic EDI objectives for both our student and staff community.**

The following sections provide an update against our strategic equality objectives, Charter Marks and other projects and initiatives to advance EDI at the University. At present, we are continuing to use the term Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), however we will shortly be embarking on a consultation to review this.



# Our key achievements in 2020-21

In the last academic year, we have continued to make progress embedding and mainstreaming EDI across the institution. Some of the highlights include:



**Increased the percentage of BAME teaching staff to 24.7%** (2025 target is 25%)



**Increased the percentage of senior academic women (salary scale AM1 and above) to 44.5%** (2025 target is 47%)



**Continued to make progress towards reducing our BAME awarding gap (12%, down from 20% in 2018-19)**



**Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence for the Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre (LTIC)**



Increased the percentage of **BAME staff at salary scale UH9 and above** to 16.6%, exceeding our key performance indicator of 16% agreed in 2019



Implemented **BAME Mentoring and Reverse-Mentoring** programmes



Established an **LGBTQ Law Clinic** to support our community



Signed up to **Purple Spaces** to support our **Staff DisAbility and Wellbeing Network** and help advance disability equality at Herts



Supported 3,290 students through the **COVID Relief Fund**



Installation of **Pride Crossings** at both campuses

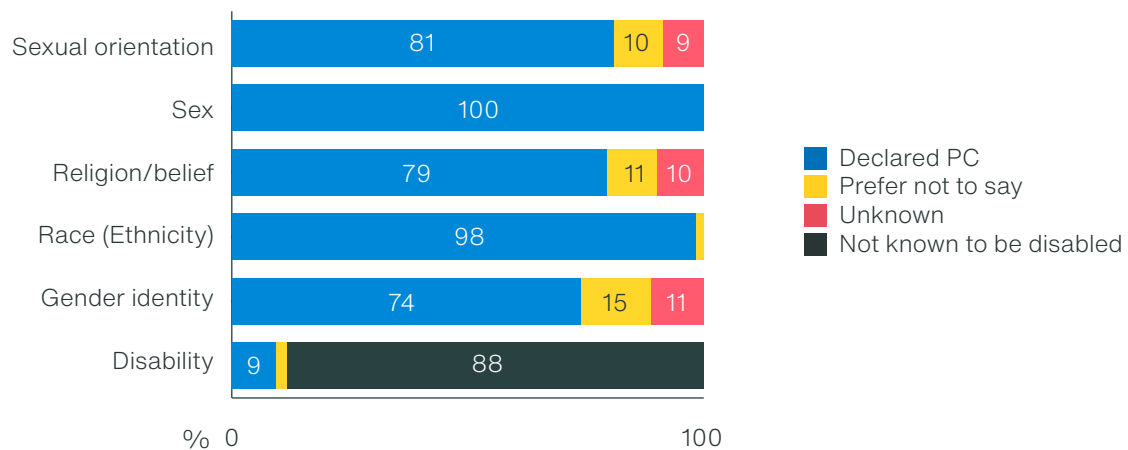
- Retained the Bronze award for the Race Equality Charter
- Three BAME PhD Studentships offered by the School of Humanities
- Established Senior Champions for each of the staff networks
- Established a Staff Men's Health Network
- Expanded our BAME Student Advocate programme with 14 Advocates appointed and trained
- 1,792 instances of engagement with our EDI training, including a combination of both workshops and online modules
- Introduction of various EDI workshops including Disability Awareness, Racial Justice, Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man and LGBTQ Awareness
- Organised and hosted a comprehensive Diversity Calendar of Events



# Our diverse community

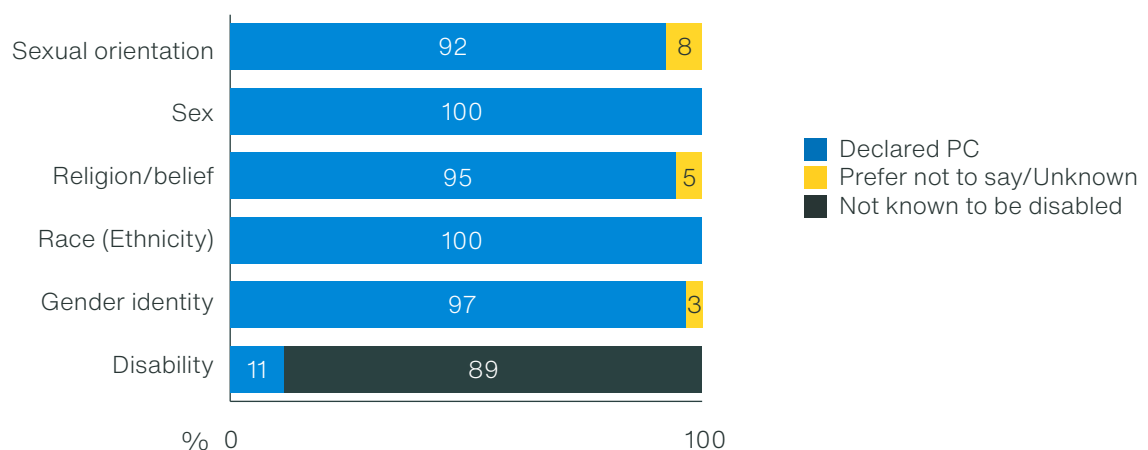
As at 31 July 2021, the University employed a total of 2,531 (2,171.6 FTE) substantive staff comprising 51% academic and 49% professional staff.

**Fig 1 Staff declaration against protected characteristics (including prefer not to say)**



We continue to have a low prefer not to say/unknown rate in comparison to the sector for religion or belief (20.6% compared to 52.6%), sexual orientation (20% compared to 52%), and trans status (26.1% compared to 68.9%). This tends to occur with long serving staff rather than new starters. However, we can continue to improve on this. Discussions have also started with regards to extending our monitoring to include non-binary.

**Fig 2 Student declaration against protected characteristics (including prefer not to say)**



We have a good percentage of students declaring against all the protected characteristics.





## Age

The four age groups with the highest (51.9%) number of staff are between 41-60 years which are higher than Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) records (HESA, 2021) where the four highest age ranges are 31-50 years. Only 4.5% of our staff are under the age of 25.

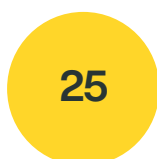
The majority (63.3%) of our students are aged between 18-25, and 10.6% aged over 40.

### % students by age

under 25  
years



25-39  
years



40 years  
and over

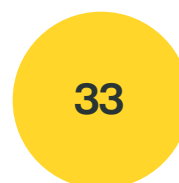


### % staff by age

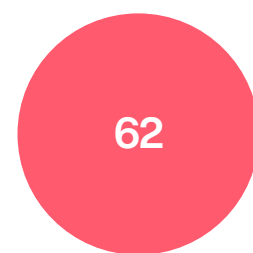
under 25  
years



25-40  
years



over 40  
years



## Disability

9.4% of our staff have declared a disability which is above the sector average of 5.5% (HESA, 2021). The three most reported disabilities are the same for both academic and research and professional categories: long standing illness/health condition; specific learning difficulties and mental health condition.

11.3% of our students have declared a disability, this includes 3.4% who have declared a mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder, and 3.9% with a learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

% staff with disability

9.4%



% students with disability

11.3%

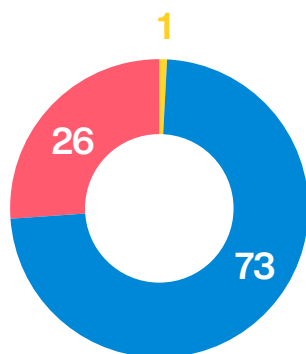


## Gender reassignment

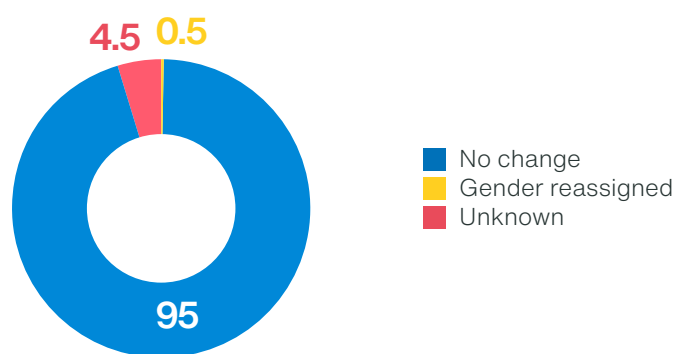
1% of staff have recorded their gender different to that assigned at birth. Our percentage of unknowns has reduced from 31% last year to 26.1%, however, we will continue to explore how we can bring this number down by understanding the reasons for not declaring, and encourage staff to provide this information.

Under 0.5% students have recorded their gender different to that assigned at birth.

% staff by gender reassignment



% students by gender reassignment



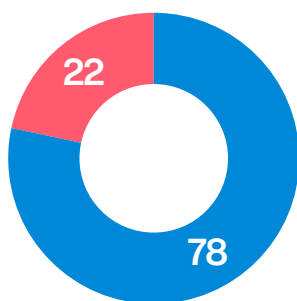
■ No change  
■ Gender reassigned  
■ Unknown

## Race (ethnicity)

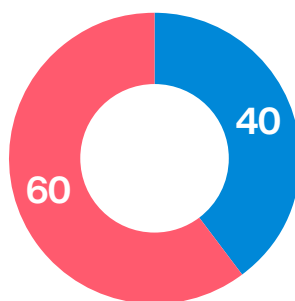
There has been an increase of BAME staff from 19.4% to 21.5% which is above the sector average of 14.3% (HESA, 2021) and also the county's percentage of 19.2% of the population (Hertfordshire County Council Annual Report 2021).

59.7% of our students identify as BAME. This includes 32.1% Asian/Asian British, 17% Black/Black British, 4.4% mixed and 1.6% Chinese. There is a large difference in terms of the representation of BAME staff in comparison to our student community (59.7%).

% staff by ethnicity



% students by ethnicity



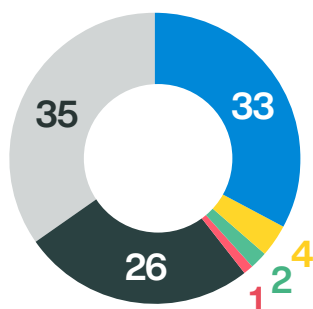
■ White  
■ BAME

## Religion or belief

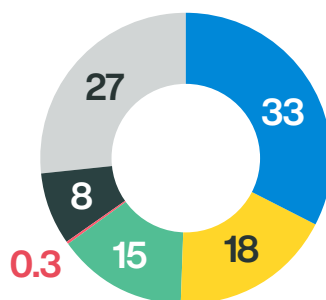
A high percentage of our staff (34.6% all staff) do not follow a religion, 33% are Christian, 3.5% Muslim, 2% Hindu and 1% Jewish.

26.6% of our students do not follow a religion, 32.7% are Christian, 17.9% Muslim, 14.6% Hindu and 0.3% Jewish. There is a large difference in the percentage of our Muslim (3.5%) and Hindu (2.3%) staff in comparison to our student body.

% staff by religion



% students by religion



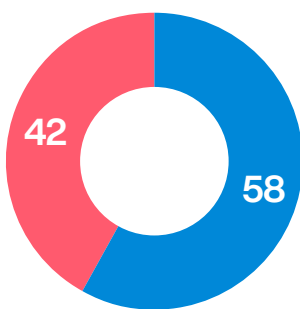
■ Christian  
■ Muslim  
■ Hindu  
■ Jewish  
■ Unknown  
■ Do not follow a religion

## Sex

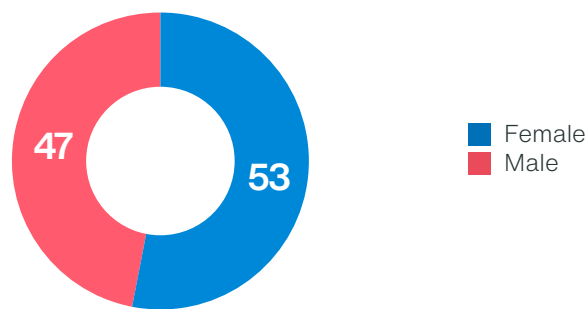
Female contracts are currently 58.1% in total which is higher than the sector with 54.7% (HESA, 2021). The staff profile below identifies higher full-time equivalent (FTE) for female academics (26.5%) compared to males (24.2%). The sector shows that proportionally there are typically more male academics (30.6%, HESA, 2021).

Our student community is similar in female/male proportional split to the staff community with 53.1% female and 46.9% male students.

% staff by sex



% students by sex



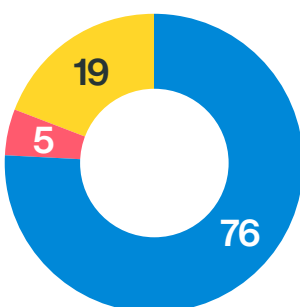
■ Female  
■ Male

## Sexual orientation

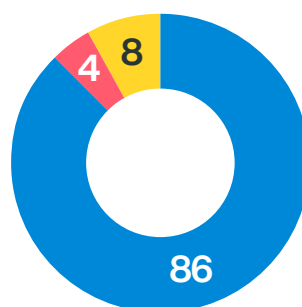
The majority of staff (76%) are heterosexual, 2% bisexual, 2% gay men and 1% gay woman/lesbian (5% LGB compared to a sector average of 2.6%).

The majority (85.8%) of our students identify as heterosexual, 4.2% as lesbian, gay, bisexual, with 7.8% not known/information refused.

% staff by sexual orientation



% students by sexual orientation



■ Heterosexual  
■ LGB  
■ Unknown/Prefer not to say







# Progress against our institutional equality objectives

**Increase senior BAME staff (salary scale UH9 and above) to 16% (from 13%) by 2025**

		Year		
Ethnicity Band	Ethnicity Group	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
BAME	Asian	4.30%	5.20%	4.90%
	Black	2.70%	3.30%	3.60%
	Chinese	3.20%	3.60%	3.70%
	Mixed	1.10%	1.40%	2.40%
	Other	1.90%	2.00%	1.90%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13.30%</b>	<b>15.50%</b>	<b>16.60%</b>
Not Available	Not Available	0.20%	0.20%	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.20%</b>	<b>0.20%</b>	
Refused	Refused	1.80%	1.50%	1.70%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1.80%</b>	<b>1.50%</b>	<b>1.70%</b>
White	White	84.70%	82.80%	81.70%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>84.70%</b>	<b>82.80%</b>	<b>81.70%</b>

It is really encouraging to see that we have achieved our target of 16% within two years of agreeing the key performance indicator. We will not become complacent and will continue to maintain, and if possible, improve on this. It is important to be mindful that this can also reverse with just small numbers of individuals leaving.

## BAME mentoring scheme

The scheme is designed to support BAME colleagues to develop and progress their University career experience. Mentors support their mentees with their acquisition and development of skills/knowledge/experience during the nine-month scheme.

### Key aims of the scheme:

- Support BAME professional and academic staff to develop and progress to salary scale UH9 and beyond
- Mentors share their experience and/or knowledge and provide guidance or advice
- Mentees can explore opportunities available and how to overcome barriers
- Mentees and mentors commit to attending regular meetings for the duration of the scheme and completing agreed actions
- Mentors will evaluate and measure their progression and will review objectives set within the mentoring partnership.

The evaluation of the scheme has shown it has been successful, with 100% of the mentees and mentors finding the mentoring sessions useful to very useful.



## BAME reverse mentoring scheme

The purpose of the reverse mentoring scheme is to enable governors and senior leaders within the University to better understand the experiences of people of colour, and raise awareness of the barriers and challenges to career progression that exist for people of colour at our University and across the sector.

### Key aims of the scheme:

- Increase the awareness of senior leaders about the experiences of people of colour, and the barriers and challenges to career progression that exist
- Better understanding of experiences of people from different backgrounds
- Better understanding of racism, microaggression and white privilege in the workplace and outside of the workplace
- Acknowledge the problems that need to be dealt with
- Gain a contextual understanding of the data
- Identify two actions for change and implement identified actions at the end of the 12 months
- Support the University's EDI objectives

The evaluation of the scheme has shown it has been successful, with 100% of the mentees and mentors finding the mentoring sessions useful to very useful.

### Increase BAME teaching staff to 25% (from 19%) by 2025

Ethnicity Band	Ethnicity Group	Year		
		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
BAME	Asian	7.00%	8.10%	8.40%
	Black	5.40%	5.60%	6.30%
	Chinese	2.60%	4.80%	4.70%
	Mixed	2.00%	1.90%	2.40%
	Other	2.60%	2.60%	2.90%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19.60%</b>	<b>23.00%</b>	<b>24.70%</b>
Not Available	Not Available	1.30%	0.30%	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1.30%</b>	<b>0.30%</b>	
Refused	Refused	1.50%	2.00%	1.70%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1.50%</b>	<b>2.00%</b>	<b>1.70%</b>
White	White	77.60%	74.70%	73.60%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>77.60%</b>	<b>74.70%</b>	<b>73.60%</b>

We continue to make good progress against this key performance indicator, with 24.7% BAME teaching staff. Although this is really encouraging, we are conscious that ethnicity of teaching staff can vary significantly across Schools, and that we are a significant way off to reflect our BAME student community.

**We continue to make good progress against this key performance indicator, with 24.7% BAME teaching staff.**

#### Mentoring scheme for women

The Network of Women + Professors (NW+P) works in collaboration with the University, supporting the institutional Athena Swan action plan to promote career progression and achieve progress towards gender equality in the professoriate. We have established a mentoring scheme to support women aspiring for Reader, Associate Professor and Professor levels, and to contribute towards the University's key performance indicator to increase the representation of women at salary scale AM1 and above. Our network offers nationally and internationally recognised colleagues who have demonstrated success in their field of endeavour, to offer individual mentoring support to people who identify as women (women+) at the University.

#### Academic promotions

The University has reviewed its academic promotion process with the aim of ensuring fairness and transparency. The aim of the academic promotion cycle is to encourage academic and research staff progression/promotion for Professor, Reader and Associate Professor roles.

The Deans/Heads of Strategic Business Units (SBU) ensure the SBU panel is as diverse and representative as possible, and the Chair of the panel has completed relevant EDI training beforehand. When reviewing the applications, the SBU panel

will need to ensure transparency, consistency and criteria-based evaluation against the criteria stated in the Professorship and Readership/Associate Professorship University Policy Regulations. Workshops specifically aimed at BAME and female applicants are held with external guest speakers and previously successful candidates invited to share their experiences and give advice.

The 2020-21 promotion round saw an increase in both BAME and women colleagues promoted to Reader, Associate Professor and Professor, and in equal number to male colleagues.

### Increase senior academic women (salary scale AM1 and above) by 10% (from 42.7% to 47%) by 2025

	Year					
	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21	
Gender	FTE	%	FTE	%	FTE	%
Female	59.35	42.7%	63.29	44.4%	<b>59.19</b>	<b>44.5%</b>
Male	79.60	57.3%	79.30	55.6%	<b>73.72</b>	<b>55.5%</b>

This objective is supported by the institutional and School Athena Swan action plans. We continue to see a rising proportion of senior academic women compared to men. Moving forward, it will be important to explore what further initiatives and actions can be taken at both the institutional and School level to progress this objective.



### Women rise: critical perspectives on leadership in higher education

The Academic Women's Action Group (AWAG) and the Network of Women+ Professors (NW+P) organised a conference on women and leadership in July 2021. The conference was for women early career researchers, PhD students, academic staff, aurora/diversifying leadership alumni, and those aspiring to academic management.

#### Purpose:

- Critically engage with, and challenge masculine concepts of 'leadership'
- Provide colleagues with the opportunity to speak openly in a safe space and formulate individual and institutional actions around addressing inequalities within academic career progression at the University
- Fast-track to delivering advice that is given through mentoring

The event was successful with over 70 people attending.

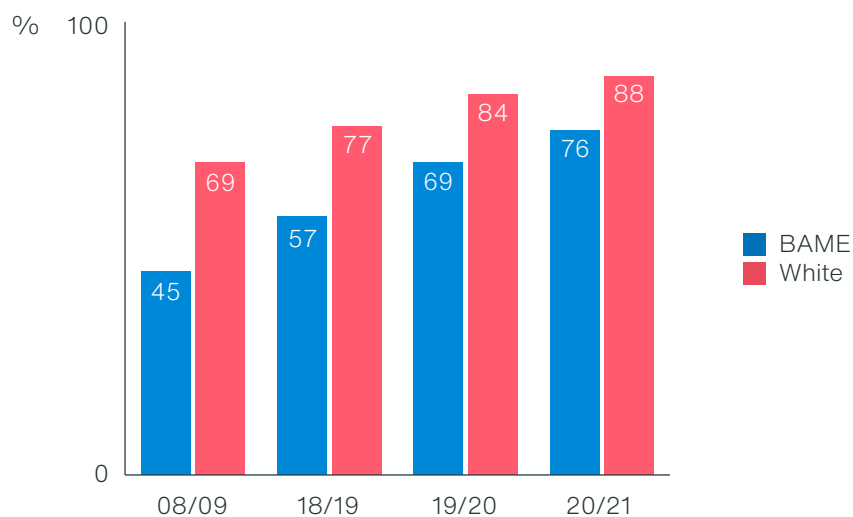
### Reduce the BAME awarding gap by half by 2025 (baseline 2019-20 18% - target 9%)

The University has several plans in place that include actions to reduce the BAME awarding gap for students. These include the:

- Access and Participation Plan (APP)
- Race Equality Charter (REC) Mark
- Annual School Student Educational Experience action plans
- Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Reports (AMER) at programme level

Overall, more students achieved a First/2:1 degree in 2020-21 (81%) compared to 75% in 2019-20 and 66% in 2018/19. The percentage of white students achieving a First/2:1 degree increased to 88% from 84% in 2020-21 and the percentage of BAME students achieving a First/2:1 degree increased to 76% from 69% in 2020-21).

Fig 3 **Percentage of students achieving a First/2:1 degree**



Considering Home/EU and International student data separately (figures 4 and 5); the University's awarding gap for Home/EU students has reduced from 21 percentage points in 2018-19, to 15 percentage points in 2019-20, and to 12 percentage points for 2020-21 (calculations from un-rounded data). The awarding gap for International students has reduced from 14 percentage points in 2018-19 to three percentage points in 2019-20, and then very slightly increased to four percentage points in 2020-21.



Fig 4 Awarding gap for Home/EU students

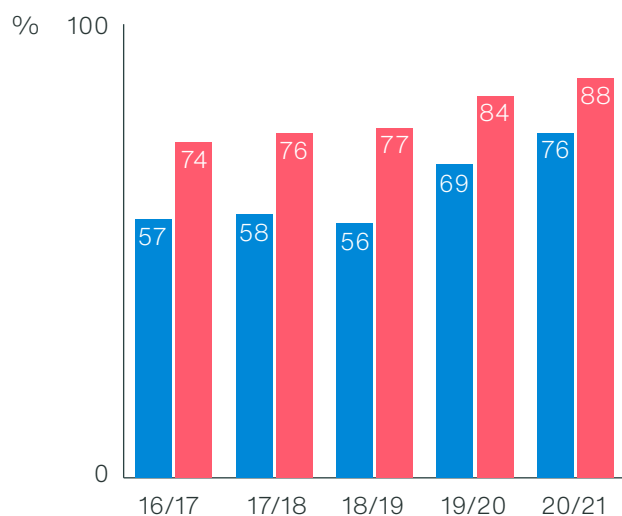


Fig 5 Awarding gap for International students

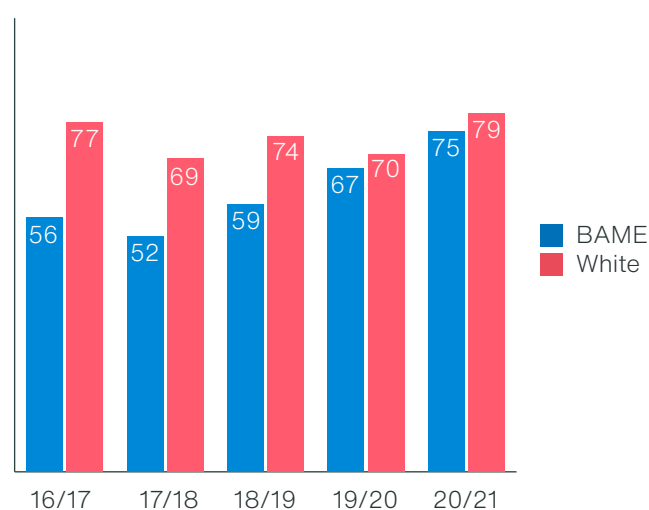


Table 1 School awarding gap data (2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21)

School	Ethnicity split (Home/EU only)	% of First/2:1 degree 2018-19	Gap 2018-19	% of First/2:1 degree 2019-20	Gap 2019-20	% of First/2:1 degree 2020-21	Gap 2019-20
Hertfordshire Business School	BAME	58%	31%	73%	18%	74%	17%
	White	89%		91%		91%	
Creative Arts	BAME	57%	23%	71%	13%	67%	21%
	White	80%		84%		88%	
Physics, Engineering and Computer Science	BAME	56%	19%	73%	15%	77%	9%
	White	75%		87%		86%	
Education	BAME	51%	19%	68%	12%	72%	1%
	White	70%		79%		73%	
Health and Social Work	BAME	36%	28%	50%	25%	75%	15%
	White	65%		75%		90%	
Humanities	BAME	67%	16%	76%	10%	82%	7%
	White	83%		86%		89%	
Law	BAME	61%	16%	70%	10%	77%	17%
	White	77%		80%		94%	
Life and Medical Sciences	BAME	67%	10%	69%	17%	79%	10%
	White	77%		86%		89%	

Six schools (Hertfordshire Business School, Physics, Engineering and Computer Science, Education, Health and Social Work, Humanities, Life and Medical Sciences) showed a reduction in their awarding gap for 2020-21 compared to 2019-20, while two schools showed an increase (Creative Arts, Hertfordshire Law School).

### Launch of BAME Institutional Action Plan

Recognising the necessity of all parts of the University working together to consider race (ethnicity) equality within and beyond the curricula, the BAME Student Success Working Group (BSSWG) developed a cross-Institutional Action Plan (IAP). The IAP focuses on reducing the BAME awarding gap and was approved by the Academic Board in June 2020. In line with best practice guidance, the plan reflects the need to take a whole University approach to tackling factors influencing awarding gaps, from the Board of Governors and Chief Executive Group, down to individual members of staff. It includes SMART actions for committees, academic schools (including actions for module leaders and programme leaders), central units including Learning Teaching Innovation Centre, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Careers and Employment, and Marketing and Communications. It also identifies actions for individuals including a requirement for every member of staff to have an identified race (ethnicity)-related equality objective within their appraisal. The IAP was launched in September 2020 via a live online event fully supported by senior members of the University.

### BAME PhD studentships

The School of Humanities is committed to supporting BAME students to progress into academia as a career. In order to address the under-representation of BAME PhD students, the School of Humanities agreed to fully fund a three-year studentship each in English, History and Philosophy. The studentship includes a full tuition fee waiver for three years and a bursary for each year at the rate of the UK Research Council.





# Advancing equality of opportunity

The University is committed to tackling inequality through identifying opportunities and addressing barriers faced by our student and staff community.

## Charter marks

The University holds several equality charter marks ensuring our continuous commitment to advancing equality for both our student and staff community.



**The Athena Swan charter mark** is a national initiative that recognises commitment to tackling gender inequality in higher education and research. Originally designed to target improvement for women within science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine subjects, and senior positions, it has now been extended to include arts, humanities, social science, business and law.



We hold an **Institutional Bronze award** and are committed to working towards the Silver award.

Several of our schools including Hertfordshire Business School, Hertfordshire Law School, School of Creative Arts, Education, Engineering and Computer Science, Humanities, and Life and Medical Sciences currently hold a **Bronze award**.

The School of Health and Social Work, and Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics hold a **Silver award**.



We are committed to ensuring a positive experience for our disabled students and staff, and work towards an inclusive institution. We have established a working group and are undertaking a self-assessment to become a **Disability Confident Employer (Level 2)** to ensure that we are going the extra mile to attract, retain and support disabled people.



We have held the **HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) award** since 2010, recognising our efforts to enhance working conditions for our researchers. Among other aims the principles of HREiR includes promoting diversity and equality in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.



Research has highlighted that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on individuals' mental health and wellbeing. We are committed to the **Student Minds, University Mental Health Charter** to provide a framework to support students with their mental health.



We are proud to have retained our **Bronze award** with some very positive feedback from Advance HE. We are only one of 17 universities in the UK to hold a **Race Equality Charter Mark** Bronze award. This highlights our continuous commitment to improving the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic students and staff at the University.



We are one of only 17 UK institutions to partner with **Stammerers Through University Consultancy** (STUC) and we will be working with the relevant stakeholders to explore how we can improve the experiences of our students and staff who stammer.



**Stonewall's Diversity Champions** programme ensures that all LGBTQ+ staff are accepted without exception in the workplace. We are proud to have renewed our membership of the programme in 2021 to further embed LGBTQ+ inclusion for our staff and students.

We will be reviewing the requirements of the **Workplace Equality Index** and developing a plan for a submission over the next couple of years.

## Equality Impact Assessments

We have reviewed our **Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) Toolkit** to ensure EIAs are integral to our change management and decision-making process. These have been incorporated into the development and review of proposals (policies, projects, restructures, and services) to ensure fairness, equity, informed decisions, and outcomes.



## COVID-19 and the equality diversity and inclusion implications

The impact of COVID-19 continues to impact society at large, and we have continued our 'people first' approach, supporting our students, staff and managers. We also recognise the disproportionate impact on various communities, including their mental health and wellbeing that can have a practical impact on their ability to study and work. We have therefore increased our efforts in this area with a key focus on staff and student wellbeing.

Throughout 2020-21, the Occupational Health (OH) and Health, Safety and Sustainability (HSS) teams continue to provide a variety of services to staff and managers. This includes:

### Staff support

- 516 staff engaged with the **Stress Awareness online course**
- 22 staff accessed **occupational physiotherapy**
- More than 260 OH appointments for **support and wellbeing services**
- All staff under 50 offered **free flu vaccinations**, resulting in over 250 vaccinations given
- Established **Wellbeing Working Group** to support coordination and communication of Wellbeing activities across the University
- Over 35 **wellbeing workshops, talks and information sessions** delivered to University staff
- **Wellbeing Champions network** supported to share relevant information with SBUs and departments, additional specific training provided to support LGBT+ staff and Mental Health during the COVID-19 pandemic
- 113 staff engaged with the **Employee Assistance Programme**
- 235 staff teams consisting of 1,059 participants engaged in the **Big Step Challenge**





### Wellbeing workshops on the psychology of laughter and luck

Professor Richard Wiseman delivered a virtual talk to staff on his research into the psychology of humour, happiness and illusion. The session was promoted to staff through the Wellbeing Champions Network, the internal staff hub and emails, including one from the University's Secretary and Registrar. As a result, it was one of the best attended wellbeing events this year with 137 staff attending for the duration of the session. With a focus on the principles 'keep learning' and 'take notice' in the five ways to wellbeing, this session explored what makes us laugh, why humour is important in our everyday lives and shared tips for boosting happiness. Following the success of this event, Richard Wiseman then delivered another event on 'The Science of Luck'. This explored how mindset, alongside the way people think and behave can make everyone 'luckier'. Including practical techniques on developing a 'lucky' mindset, this session was also well engaged with 83 staff members in attendance, generating lots of conversation, positive feedback, and teaching staff new skills.

### University Big Team Challenge

The Big Team Challenge (BTC) encouraged teams of five working collectively to make their daily step count contribute towards a virtual route.

Results showed significant improvements in physical activity, wellbeing levels and staff-connectedness. Challenges took place February-May and engaged an impressive 619 unique participants (nearly 30% of staff). BTC produced a 28% increase in male participants compared to the traditional weekly in-person sessions (pre-COVID). Around 7% of staff who took part declared a disability.



**Over 230 PC loans were made to students.**

## Student support

Due to the closure of Learning Resource Centres (LRCs) and moving teaching online, the University continued to support students through various initiatives.

### Student IT support

Many students who previously relied on IT equipment on campus were unable to access alternatives for various reasons. In response to this, the University loaned Chromebooks to students for the duration of academic year 2019-2020. These devices were recalled ahead of Semester A (2020) and put back into use for the reopening of the LRCs in September 2020. In anticipation of continuous requirements, a working group was established in June 2020 to manage the scheme. Over 230 PC loans were made to students. The PCs were initially loaned for one Semester, but it was extended until the end of June 2021. Each PC was added to our library system Koha so that each loan could be managed. 117 Student Success laptops (Widening Access and Student Success funding) were distributed until the end of May 2021. As additional funding is received, this is ongoing.

### COVID-19 Relief Fund

In 2020, the University, along with funds from the Office for Students (OfS) made a total of £122,874 available to the COVID Relief Fund, to support with the hardship students faced following the spread of COVID-19 and during lockdown conditions. 402 students received the bursary in this first phase of applications (64% acceptance rate).

In 2021, an additional £271,434 was made available from the OfS and needed to be distributed in full to students by 31 March 2021. The fund opened from 17-23 February 2021, and successful applicants were awarded up to £300 each to support students facing rent-related hardship. We made 2,021 payments to students who met the eligibility criteria, and were able to do this as we contributed some funds from the University's finalist assistance fund (which had much fewer applications this year) and the Widening Access Student Success budget. An additional £203,789 was made available in May with a requirement for disbursement by the end of July. We also contributed £100,000 from the University's Financial Assistance Fund (UFAF) to this amount and were able to award £240 each to 1,269 students who met the criteria. In total, we supported 3,290 students in 2021.

**In total, we supported 3,290 students in 2021.**

### Active students

The Active Students team delivered an in-person programme to students on campus at the start of term. Over the delivery period of six and a half weeks (delivery ceased due to November lockdown), the team delivered an impressive 54 sessions each week totalling 58 hours, which attracted a throughput (number of visits) of 3,248.

Feedback from students shows they wanted to make friends and socialise - with little else on offer on campus, Active Students was a lifeline for many.

## Dean of Students

Our Dean of Students worked collaboratively with various teams including the Students' Union to ensure students were supported in terms of their accommodation, wellbeing and time at the University.

- Across all three (Counselling, Disability and Mental Health Support) the team met and **supported 5,643 students**
- Specific learning difficulties remain the most reported disability to the team. With Dyslexia specifically disclosed as the most common difficulty followed by anxiety/depression. Students reported more mental health challenges and the team responded to this need by **increasing the team of Mental Health advisers**
- In addition, the team has developed a partnership with Endsleigh Health Assured, and now provide a **24-hour support line**, which offers in-the-moment support to our student body, in conjunction with online support, webinars, video chats and ongoing counselling sessions
- Working closely with Student Support and Welfare, Student Wellbeing have **supported students in accommodation to remain safe** and to access the support they needed either through **food vouchers** for those experiencing financial difficulties, **emotional support** through internal and external support mechanisms, and access to activities virtually and in person to **combat social isolation**
- The **Facebook group** which was started to support students through isolation at the beginning of the pandemic, is still going well with 1,400 members to date
- The **Autism Support Group** continues to meet monthly and are very much looking forward to the first social evening engagement in person on 1 December 2021
- The Student Union are working closely with the **Disability team within Student Wellbeing** to grow the Disabled Student Network, and there is a University Disability Forum meeting set for January 2022.

“ I never knew what a difference having the right adjustments in place for my studies could make. My disability adviser could not have been more helpful, they are one of the reasons I did so well and the hard work obviously. Degrees are not easy things, but I am really proud of what I achieved, and I know I wouldn't have done that well without the adjustments. ”

Anonymous

“ The wellbeing sessions are very informal – you can dictate what's spoken about. If you've got particular concerns, that can be the topic of conversation. When you have poor mental health, it can get very noisy inside your head. The sessions are a chance to empty your brain of intrusive thoughts and do some mental exercises to help calm those down. ”

Sian, Student



## Human resources advancing equality, diversity and inclusion

HR's Equality Working Group comprises representation from each of its services and meets regularly to advance EDI activity. Human Resource Equality Group works closely with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Office.

The timeline below summarises the key projects and initiatives undertaken during 2020-21. Further information is available within HR.

### Progress report timeline (i) – August 2020-January 2021:

Launched anonymous shortlisting	Aug	
	Sep	Commenced visiting lecturer review
Launched: BAME mentoring	Oct	
Mandatory training gap analysis	Nov	Launched: New exit questionnaire
Programme leader EIA resulting in revised R&S process for role	Dec	Staff pulse survey New recruitment web pages
Equal pay review	Jan	BAME mentors trained Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity annual report Academic promotions - stage 1 report
Ethnicity/Gender pay gap reports Academic promotions - stage 2 report	Feb	
	Mar	Staffing dashboards Academic promotions - stage 3 report
Racial justice workshop Race Equality Charter Mark	Apr	
	May	SBU Equality action plans Diversifying leadership aftercare alumni project Diverse Interview Panels
People Management Report Disclosure & Barring Service process LGBTQ awareness	Jun	
	Jul	Recruitment volunteer scheme Academic promotions - stage 4 report Visa update Disability Confident



## Staff training and development

We have a firm commitment to the Continuous Personal Development (CPD) of our staff, ensuring all managers and staff are equipped with the required knowledge, skills and tools in order to carry out their roles and progress further to reach their full potential.

**Mandatory training:** All new starters are required to complete online modules such as EDI Essentials (79%), and Unconscious Bias (82%), and attend a half day EDI Essentials workshop (93%) during their probation period. The attendance rates are shown as percentages and reported to the EDI Board.

The EDI Office and HR have jointly designed and delivered various EDI related workshops, including:

- Autism awareness
- Deaf awareness
- Disability awareness
- EDI essentials for managers
- Racial justice
- Uncomfortable conversations with a black man

Our approach to these workshops is to encourage an open conversation and learning in a safe space, respecting difference of opinion. There have been 1,792 instances of EDI training during 2020-21 which include a combination of both workshops and online modules. The evaluations and feedback show a high standard of delivery and knowledge from the facilitators.

**“ An incredibly powerful session, I was blown away by the array of concepts articulated... and extremely well managed! ”**

**“ A very well and passionately facilitated session. ”**



### Disability Awareness Workshop

A request was made by the Dean of School of Physics, Engineering and Computer Science (SPECS) for a Disability Awareness workshop for managers in the school. The Staff DisAbility and Wellbeing Network (DAWN) facilitated two focus groups with staff with disabilities in the School to establish what is working well, and what could be done to further support them. The workshop was then designed and delivered over two separate dates to 28 managers covering models of disability, disability reporting, reasonable adjustments, terminology, manager's responsibilities, and feedback from the focus groups. The training has been extended to other Schools and feedback has been positive.



## Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre (LTIC)

Throughout the year, our LTIC continued to support blended learning approaches, ensuring our practice was as inclusive as possible. The very positive audit outcomes of the Academic Standards and Audit Committee on the use of the Inclusive Curriculum and Guided Learner Checklist indicated widespread implementation.

### Summary comments from the Academic Standards and Audit Committee audit report

**The sites reviewed gave clear indication that in general, teaching, learning and assessment practice recognises student diversity. All sites strive towards making the student learning experience accessible, relevant and engaging.**

**Teaching materials (of high quality) were accessible, appropriate and supported by a range of secondary resources that encouraged and enabled student engagement.**

The identification of a new key performance indicator: 'to ensure that every programme adopts a blended flexible pedagogy by 2025' provided an opportunity for us to work with staff and students across the University to develop our Herts Learning principles (launched at the Annual Learning and Teaching Conference, July 2021). Students from different backgrounds and experiences shared their considerations of blended and flexible approaches, identifying specific requirements as well as examples of positive practice. Inclusive and accessible practice is embedded within Herts Learning, and programme teams will be required to demonstrate how their curriculum design meets the principles.

We expanded our BAME Student Advocate programme with 14 Advocates appointed, trained and supported by our Widening Access and Student Success (WASS) team. The Advocates worked with staff and students in academic schools and with teams in professional departments including Careers and Employment, Hertfordshire Sports Village, Marketing and Communication as well as Learning Teaching Innovation Centre.

## BAME Careers Event

For the third year in a row, the advocates, with support from staff in Widening Access and Student Success, and Careers and Employment, organised and ran our BAME Careers Event, which had over 280 student sign-ups. The programme ensured a range of speakers representative of the diversity of our student body and included session topics aimed to develop confidence and self-assurance for life after graduation (eg building income streams, mentorship and achieving your dream career).



**“ Being a member of the BAME student success working group at the University has been of huge importance to both my academic and personal life. Collaborating with staff members and other students helped me develop an arsenal of rhetorical and data-driven tools I would later use to challenge institutional racism within the academy. ”**

## Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence - CATE

The work of our BAME Student Success Working Group (including our BAME Student Advocates) (BAMESSWG) has been recognised nationally by Advance HE through a prestigious Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence. The group adopts a democratic and participatory approach, stressing how important it is that meetings are not dominated by staff voices, but highly and explicitly value all perspectives. The student-staff partnership, central to the work of the BAMESSWG, relies on everyone's commitment to personal understanding of race (ethnicity), racism and white privilege, the sharing of lived experiences, an openness to critical reflection and the challenging of assumptions.

One of the wonderful, and unpredicted consequences of our partnership work with students on the BAMESSWG and our Advocate programme has been the wider impact of their work in race (ethnicity) equity upon graduation. For example, Daniel Akinbosedo who was one of the first student members of our BAMESSWG in 2016, now studying for his PhD at Sussex, has become a brilliant activist for race (ethnicity) equity and has published articles in the Times Higher Education (December 2019, June 2020 August 2020), WonkHE (June 2020), and featured in a vlog for Advance HE (Oct 2020). We have been lucky enough to welcome Daniel back to the University as a panellist at our Institutional action plan launch, and as a speaker during Black History Month.



# Celebrating the diversity of our community

“ I have thoroughly enjoyed attending the interesting and thought-provoking events in this year’s programme. I have gained a new understanding of LGBT+ history and immediately added my own Pronouns to my email signature after hearing from Chloe, Chair of the LGBT+ Student Society. ”

We embrace, celebrate and are proud of the diversity of our community. In 2020-21, in partnership with the Student’s Union and Staff Networks, the University organised, hosted or sponsored multiple events throughout the year to celebrate the diversity of community, build strong community relationships and lead the way with inclusion. Some of which are highlighted below.

Throughout October, students and staff across all our Schools and departments came to together to engage with over 50 different educational and thought-provoking online events including workshops, debates, exhibitions, poetry, cookery demonstrations, and talks to celebrate **Black History Month**.

The aim of these events was to inspire and engage our University community, helping to expand our view of the world. Each week we championed a different theme - #BlackIsHere, #BlackIsDiverse, #BlackIsJoy and #BlackIsPower.

For **Inter Faith Week** 2020, the Chaplaincy held an online Jewish/Christian/Muslim discussion on faith and COVID-19, looking at how the respective faiths were dealing with the situation and what comfort they offered their followers.

In 2021, we delivered an impactful programme of events and activities to mark **LGBT+ History Month**. Our programme was designed to improve awareness, education and understanding of LGBTQ+ history and the LGBTQ+ community. We wanted to create a space where together we could challenge prejudice and drive positive change. There was excellent engagement with the programme with real positive feedback.

We celebrated **Pride** in June 2021, with a comprehensive programme of events organised by the Staff LGBTQ+ Network in collaboration with the EDI Office, the Student’s Union and other teams from across the institution. This included colleagues from across the institution to share and celebrate how they include LGBTQ+ representation and perspectives in their curriculum, a panel discussion exploring Faith within the LGBTQ+ Community, and a Pride parade.

As part of the month, we installed a Pride crossing at each of the campuses, further highlighting our commitment and support towards our LGBTQ+ community, and ensuring our campuses are welcoming for all.





# Fostering inclusion and community cohesion

We strive towards developing an inclusive culture where everyone can bring their whole self to work.

## Chaplaincy services

Our Chaplaincy services welcome those of all faiths and none, providing an inclusive place for our community. The Chaplain is a committed LGBTQ+ Ally and works closely with the EDI Office supporting various diversity events. The Chaplain facilitated an Instagram live Q&A with the Student LGBTQ+ society covering the work of the Chaplaincy and support available to members of the society. The Chaplaincy also reissued a candid online interview with the Dean of St Albans on being a gay faith leader. The Chaplain also published a blog: 'I'm gay...does that mean God doesn't love me?'

To mark Remembrance, the Chaplain invited staff and students to knit or crochet red, white (peace) and purple (animals) poppies to be placed in the Chaplaincy garden alongside information on how different faiths had contributed to the war effort.

**The Chaplain facilitated an Instagram live Q&A with the Student LGBTQ+ society covering the work of the Chaplaincy and support available to members of the society.**





## Standing in solidarity with our community

We will always stand side-by-side with our community, especially at a time when they are feeling anxious and vulnerable. We proudly issued a statement to mark **Bi-Visibility Day** and another statement supporting our Trans community following an intensification of transphobia and transmisogyny in the media and society. These are supported by initiatives and actions we are taking to advance LGBTQ+ equality.

**“We are both delighted to be members of Stonewall’s diversity Champions programme with a commitment to advancing LGBTQ+ equality at the University. Over the next year, we will be working closely with the Staff LGBTQ+ Network, the Student LGBT+ Society, the Student Union and various departments from the University to pro-actively advance LGBTQ+ equality, ensuring our processes and policies are inclusive of all LGBTQ+ identities.**

**We recognise the value and benefits diversity brings to our community. We will continue to engage our staff and student networks, ensuring the voices and experiences of our bi staff and students are heard and reflected in everything we do. We are excited to be working hard to develop an inclusive culture, where every member of our community can be their whole self, and that whole self will be welcomed.**

**We stand with our bi staff and students and celebrate all that you bring to our University community.**”

**Professor Matthew Weait  
Deputy Vice Chancellor and Senior LGBTQ+ Champion**

We supported our BAME community following the publication of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities Report and reiterated our commitment to race (ethnicity) equality following England’s exit from the UEFA European Football Championship in 2021.

## Herts LGBT+ Law Clinic

The LGBT+ Law Clinic (a new service launched in April 2021) provides free legal advice and support for the LGBT+ community in the region.

The team will provide legal advice for clients on issues including discrimination at work, tenancy disputes, hate crime and relationship breakdown as well as guidance for change of name and gender recognition certificate applications.

Developed with support from the Law Society’s LGBT+ Lawyers Division, the clinic’s professional and confidential service is provided by solicitors or trained University of Hertfordshire Law students working under the supervision of qualified solicitors, including lawyers from the LGBT+ Lawyers Division of the Law Society. All LGBT+ clinic students receive equality, diversity and inclusion training before working with clients, with specific guidance and training around LGBT+ issues and transgender awareness. This specialist training has been provided with support from Andy Calvert at Tokko Youth Space, a charity based in Luton supporting young adults.

The clinic also has the support of the University of Hertfordshire’s LGBT+ Student Society and LGBTQ+ Staff Network.



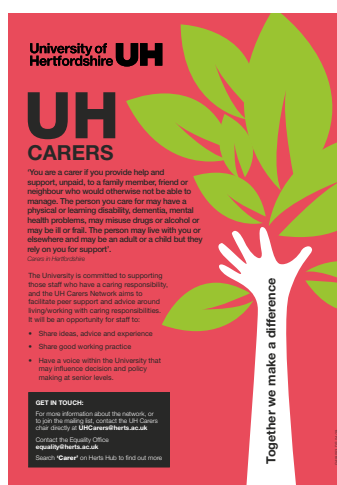
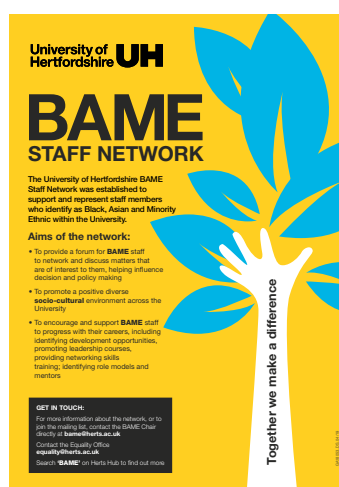


## Staff networks

Staff networks play a key role in providing a safe space, supporting their members, and offering a voice for often disadvantaged groups. They are integral to the University's governance to mainstream and embed EDI. We are proud of the engagement of our staff networks and the difference they make.

Academic Women's Advancement Group (AWAG) has three active co-chairs and 100 members. In partnership with the Research Office, the network hosted two Grant Writing away days for both early career and senior researchers. The network also runs peer reviewing for applications for promotion, has regular monthly meetings that are well attended and organised with NW+P the Women Rise symposium.

The **Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) network** works closely with their Senior Champion and continues to meet on a weekly basis, covering various topics including lunch and learn sessions. The membership of the network is 105 and continues to grow. Key projects the network has been involved in include the Race Equality Charter submission, the mentoring and reverse mentoring scheme and the co-delivery of the Racial Justice workshop.



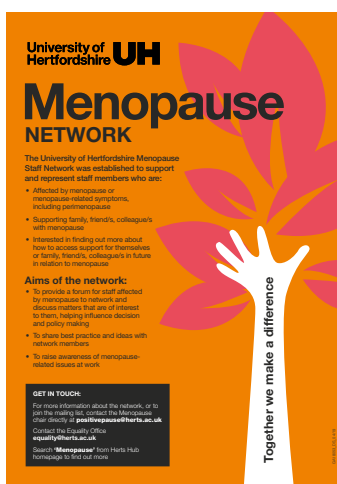
**Integral to the University, we are proud of the engagement of our staff networks and the difference they make.**



The **Carers (UHCARERS) network** is chaired by the EDI Office and has 48 members. Due to capacity, the network has not met as regularly as we would have liked, which we are hoping to improve. We will also be looking for a new chair to take the group forward.

The **Disability and Wellbeing Network (DAWN) network** (28 members) been very active this year holding monthly online meetings for members to come together and share experiences and successes. The network provided two very well attended sessions on specific disabilities, one on Autism and one on Deaf Awareness. The two co-chairs have attended six Equality and Diversity Inclusion Team (EDIT) meetings with Strategic Business Units, the majority of which have led to the delivery of follow-up sessions. Hence, there have been five Disability Confident Managers workshops delivered with 45 participants attending.

The **Staff Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer + (LGBTQ+)** network has two active co-chairs and a deputy chair with 50 members. They have several representative roles, including a trans and ally rep. The network usually meets twice a month for social catchups, as well as reading groups and debates. The network organised this year's Pride month events and contributes to LGBTQ+ History Month and Black History Month, among other events in the calendar.



The **Menopause Network** (positivepause) network has two active co-chairs and 50 members. The network has hosted regular meetings/events and dates set to end of the year. Aims are clear and members very involved. The network contributes towards Athena Swan work and the development of the menopause policy.



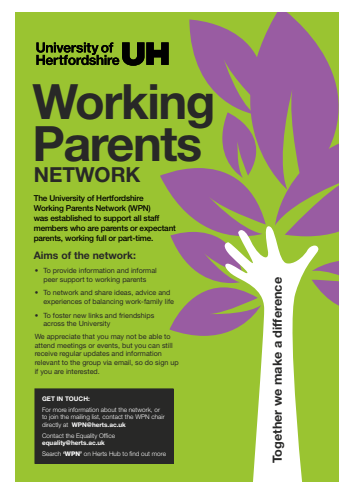
The **Men's Health Network** was established and launched for International Men's Day in November 2020. Since then, the network has developed a good level of membership and continues to meet on a weekly basis. The meetings provide a safe space for members to talk about various issues and concerns and peer support.

**The meetings provide a safe space for members to talk about various issues and concerns and peer support.**

The **Network of Women+ Professors (NW+P)** has 48 members and has welcomed new co-chairs. These Termly well-attended meetings that contribute towards our institutional Athena Swan action plan. NW+P members had their first meeting with their senior champion and worked closely with the Learning and Organisational Development team to launch a NW+P mentoring scheme, focussing on helping women succeed in academic promotion. The first tranche of mentees is now placed with mentors and further capacity

is available to grow the scheme. In collaboration with AWAG, the group organised the 'Women Rise' conference on women's leadership in HE, which took place on 8 July 2021.

The **Working Parents (WPN)** has a committed chair and 98 members. The Chair has met with their Senior Champion and is working towards consistent meetings.



## Hertfordshire Students' Union

# Hertfordshire Students' Union/EDI Office partnership overview

The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Office continues to work closely with the Student's Union and elected officers in engaging with and supporting students at the University of Hertfordshire.

## Hertfordshire Students' Union work with National Centre for Diversity

Following an assessment with our staff, students, and external partners, Hertfordshire Students' Union has been awarded the Investors in Diversity for Small Charities Accreditation until March 2023 through the National Centre for Diversity.

Additionally, we are thrilled to have won Students' Union of the Year at the [National Centre for Diversity \(NCFD\) FREDIE Awards 2021](#) in recognition of our commitment to embedding the NCFD's values of Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement at the University of Hertfordshire.

We received the award after the reveal of [NCFD's 2021 Top 100 Most Inclusive Workplaces Index](#), which took place during an online ceremony. We were the highest ranked students' union listed in the index, reaching 61st place.

## Support and development for students

University of Hertfordshire students represent a rich diversity of backgrounds, experiences, nationalities, ethnicities and cultures – in support of this, we have continued to work with the University and our student-led societies to develop a series of events to celebrate the diversity of our student community.

## Ongoing EDI projects

Hertfordshire Students' Union (HSU) is working with staff from the University's Widening Access and Student Success team, and Careers and Enterprise team to launch a BAME Empowerment Programme, aimed at providing leadership development training to BAME students throughout the year.

Additionally, HSU has undertaken significant insight work into the experiences of our BAME student community, with findings around students' academic experiences, pastoral support and wellbeing needs. They are working with the EDI team to shape recommendations for actions to address these findings moving forward.



# Looking ahead

Over the next 12 months, we will strive to build on the progress we have made this year and continue to make a difference for our diverse student and staff community. Some of the upcoming projects and initiatives include:

- Implementation of the **Race Equality Charter (REC) Action Plan**
- Implementation of our **Institutional BAME Action Plan** and continuation of reducing the **BAME Awarding Gap**
- Submission for **Level 2 of the Disability Confident Scheme**
- Commencement of a gap analysis against **Stonewalls Workplace Equality Index** and agreement of an **Action Plan to advance LGBTQ+ equality**
- Continue implementation of the **Athena Swan Action Plan**
- School of Life and Medical Sciences submission of **Athena Swan Silver award**
- School of Education and Humanities submission of **Athena Swan Bronze/Silver awards**
- Support attendance on **Advance HE's Aurora programme** for female staff aspiring to leadership positions






- Support attendance on **Advance HE's Diversifying Leadership programme** for BAME staff aspiring to leadership positions
- Support attendance on **Navigator programme** providing a personal development programme for male staff
- Participate in the **Herschel programme** for female technicians wishing to progress their careers
- Roll out **Active Bystander training**
- Design and deliver a workshop on the **Power of Privilege**
- Undertake a comprehensive **consultation use of the term BAME** across the University
- Explore the establishment of a **Diversity Events Working Group** to support the co-ordination and delivery of our Diversity Calendar of Events
- Continue to **collaborate with Hertfordshire Students' Union** to advance EDI for our students
- Establish partnership **working with external partners to advance EDI** across the county



**University of Hertfordshire**  
Hatfield, UK  
AL10 9AB

+44 (0)1707 284000  
[herts.ac.uk](http://herts.ac.uk)

 [/uniofherts](https://www.facebook.com/uniofherts)  
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