



**EQUALITY,  
DIVERSITY  
AND INCLUSION  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2019-20**

University of  
Hertfordshire **UH**







# Foreword from the Vice Chancellor

I am pleased to present the University of Hertfordshire's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) annual report, which highlights key achievements in 2019-20 and the work we have done to create an equal, diverse and inclusive University. We continue to have a firm commitment to EDI, and 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 our approach to embed and sustain an inclusive culture we have integrated our EDI objectives within our strategic plan, which promotes an inclusive learning and working environment for our students and staff.

“ The report highlights some excellent work undertaken in the last academic year to proactively eliminate disadvantage and potential discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, celebrate our diverse community and foster community cohesion. ”

Our annual report is an important document not to only monitor progress against our EDI objectives and priorities across the University, but an opportunity to highlight achievements and celebrate individual and team successes. The report highlights some excellent work undertaken in the last academic year to proactively eliminate disadvantage and potential discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, celebrate our diverse

community and foster community cohesion. However, we must not be complacent. We understand that to be truly inclusive requires sustained action, and we are aware that more needs to be done. We have a long way to go to improve the diversity across our staff population (including within senior management), to further improve our gender and ethnicity pay gaps and reduce the BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) awarding gap for students. We know that we must work together and maintain our commitment to address these disparities.

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



# Introduction

The last (2019-20) academic year, has been an unprecedented and challenging time for everyone. It has therefore been even more important to ensure EDI is at the heart of strategic discussions and decision making processes.

Although it has been a challenging time, we have made important progress in advancing equality of opportunity, celebrating diversity, and fostering community cohesion. We have also made progress against our strategic EDI objectives for both students and staff. We measure progress against these in our annual EDI report, which is published alongside the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports each year. Our central Equality Office works with the University's newly established Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board, the University's Chief Executive's Group, Hertfordshire Students' Union, Board of Governors, Human Resources team and the Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre to monitor progress against our strategic equality objectives and implement initiatives to achieve these.

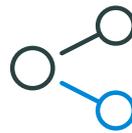
The University publishes an overview of key equality and diversity statistics on an annual basis (as of 31 July) relating to the protected characteristics of its staff and student body. The latest detailed statistics have been published separately (Appendix 1), with the statistics used within this report providing a snapshot from this.

The following pages provide an update against our equality objectives as well as other EDI related projects and initiatives.



# Our key achievements in 2019-20

In the last academic year, we have made a significant amount of progress in terms of embedding and mainstreaming EDI across the University. Some of the highlights include:



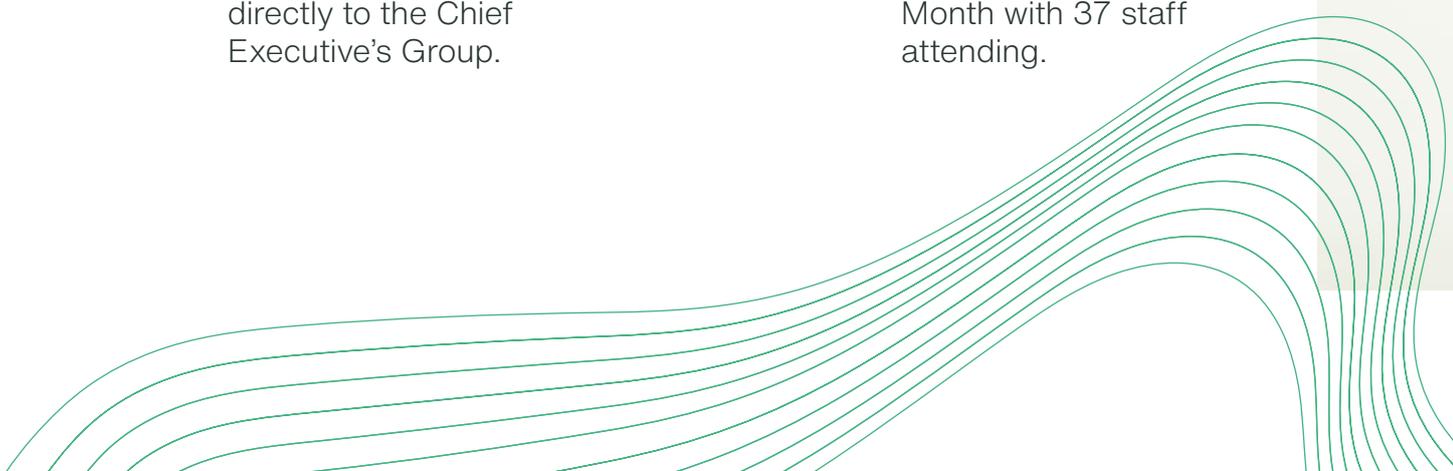
**Completing the roll-out of EDI teams across all academic and professional departments**, where there are Race Equality Champions working alongside Athena SWAN Champions and others to promote and enhance a broader and more intersectional focus and discussion of EDI issues.



**Establishing a strategic EDI Board**, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Secretary and Registrar, which reports directly to the Chief Executive's Group.



**Collaboration with the charity MIND to deliver two workshops** focusing on LGBT and Mental Health for LGBT History Month with 37 staff attending.





**Enrolment of six BAME colleagues (our third cohort) onto Advance HE Diversifying Leadership programme,** which was moved to an online format and is due to finish in January 2021.



Production of a video on Covid-19 and the implication on different communities as part of the **University's Changed World project.**



Provision of a **Covid-19 Relief Fund** benefitting 402 students.



**Launching our BAME Institutional Action Plan,** which includes actions for individuals, schools, professional strategic business units and members of the Chief Executive's Group and Board of Governors.



**Launch of an online 'Report and Support' system,** which enables students and staff to anonymously report or seek advice from an adviser if they have witnessed or experienced an incident they feel uncomfortable with.



**Organising and hosting several diversity events** to mark Black History Month, LGBT History Month, International Women's Day, Time to Talk day to mention a few.

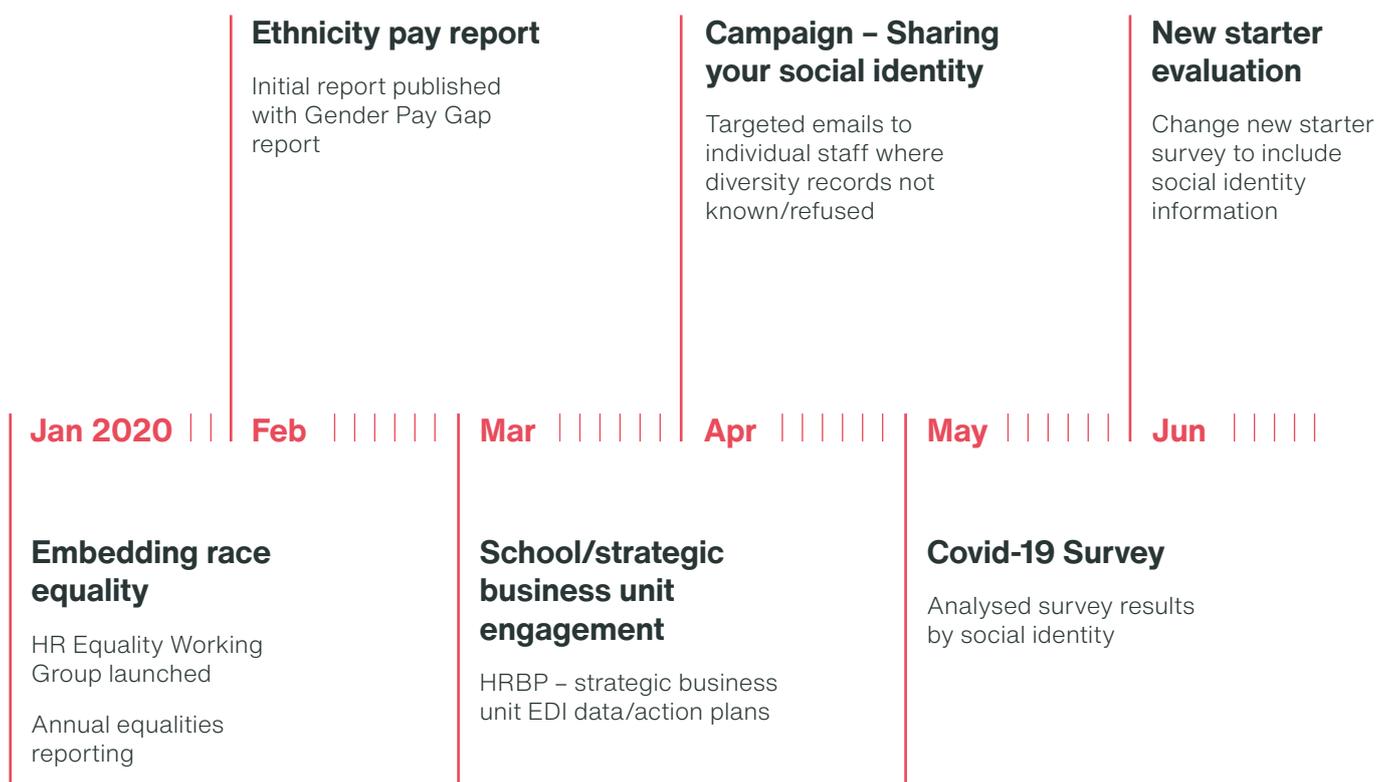
In addition to the above we have also made progress in:

- Setting up a Staff Networks forum consisting of Chairs of the networks to share best practice and collaborate.
- Voluntarily producing and publishing an Ethnicity Pay Gap Report.
- Our recommitment to Stonewalls Diversity Champions programme to advance LGBTQ equality at the University.
- Recruiting additional staff Dignity and Respect Advisor roles, providing refresher training and continuous support to the volunteers.
- The production of a set of comprehensive toolkits and resources for both staff and students on Covid-19 and the implications for different protected characteristics.
- The initiation of an LGBT Mentors Programme for Education students during placements.
- Producing a Ramadhan guidance for staff and managers and hosting of a Q&A with the Muslim Chaplain for staff to learn more about the month of Ramadhan.

In early 2020, the University’s Human Resources (HR) department created the HR Equality Working Group with the aim to advance EDI and support the implementation of EDI objectives and priorities.

Figure 1 outlines a significant number of HR equality staffing initiatives during 2020.

Fig 1 HR activity to advance EDI





### Anonymous shortlisting

Launched new HR System driven anonymous shortlisting

### Mandatory training/ Programme leader

Launched:  
BAME mentoring  
Mandatory training gap analysis  
New Programme Leader role descriptor with EIA  
Revised R&S process for Programme Leader role

### Equal pay review

Consulted on Equal Pay Review findings

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

Nov

Dec

### Positive action statements

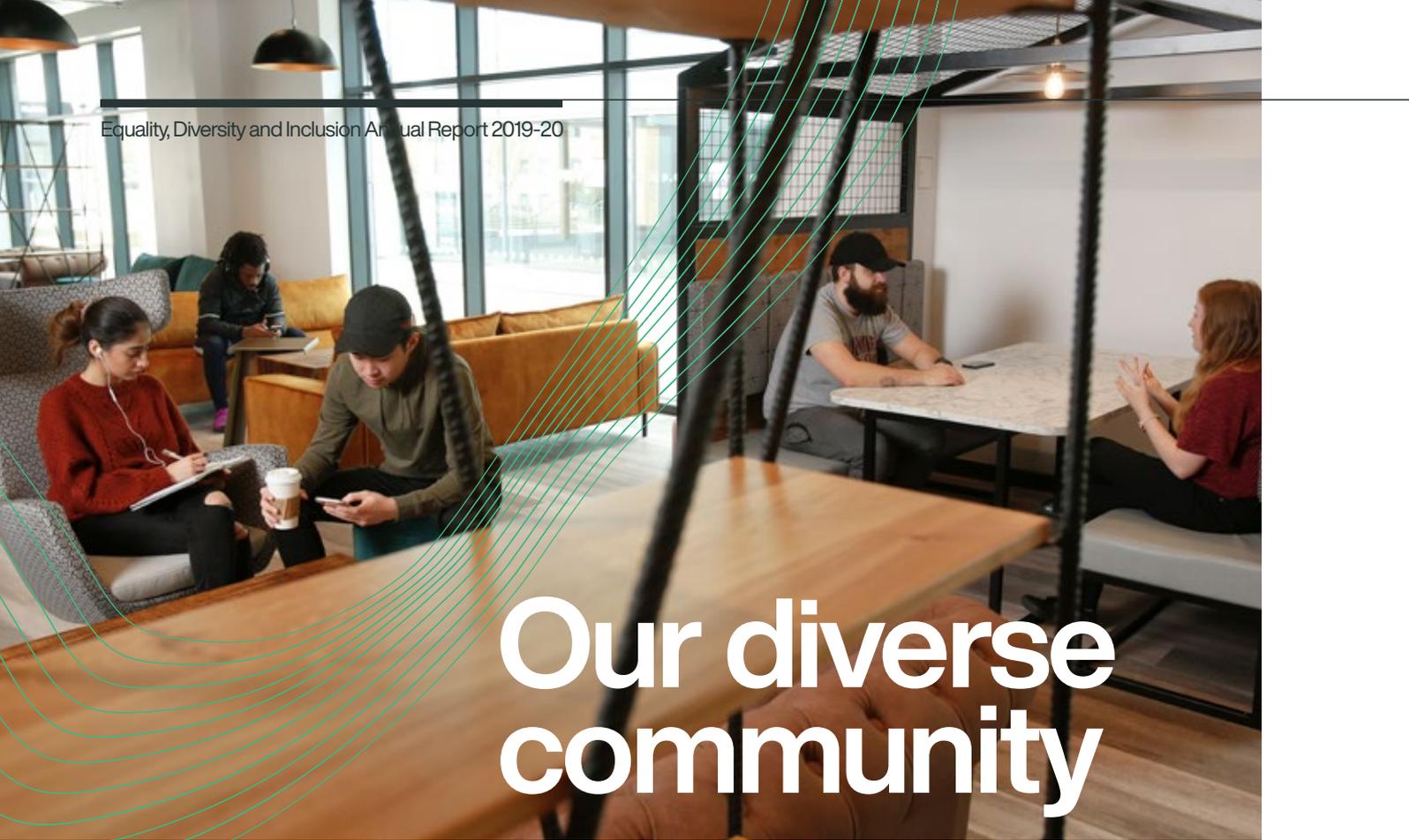
Increased use of positive action statements

### Visiting lecturer review

Commenced review of Visiting Lecturer posts

### Questionnaire/ Survey/Web pages

Launched:  
New Exit Questionnaire  
Staff Pulse Survey with results by social identity  
New recruitment web pages



# Our diverse community

The University will strengthen and value the diversity and inclusivity of its community.

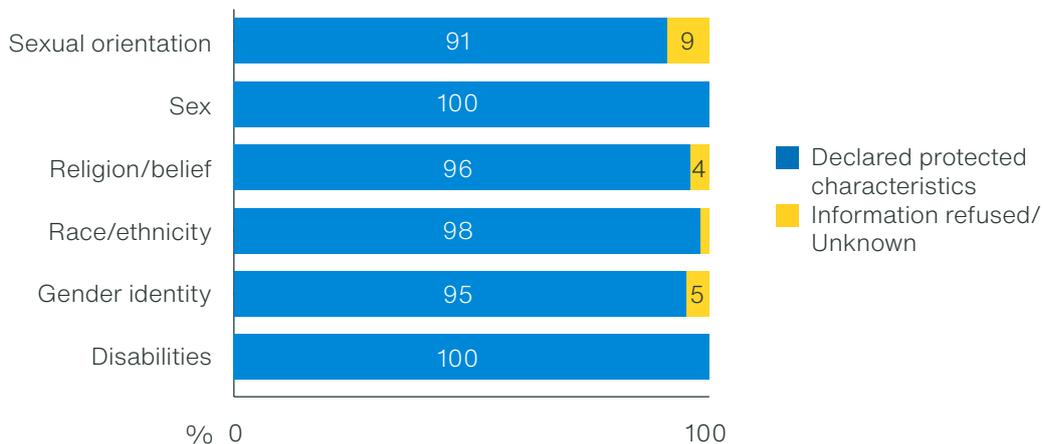
In order to properly understand the potential disadvantages and inequality for staff and students it is important to collate and hold good quality data. Figure 2 shows that we have an excellent declaration rate for disability, race and sex, however, we can improve the percentage for gender identity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. Although we do not currently monitor non-binary, the potential benefits of doing so will be explored next year.

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



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

Fig 3 **Student declaration against protected characteristics (including prefer not to say)**

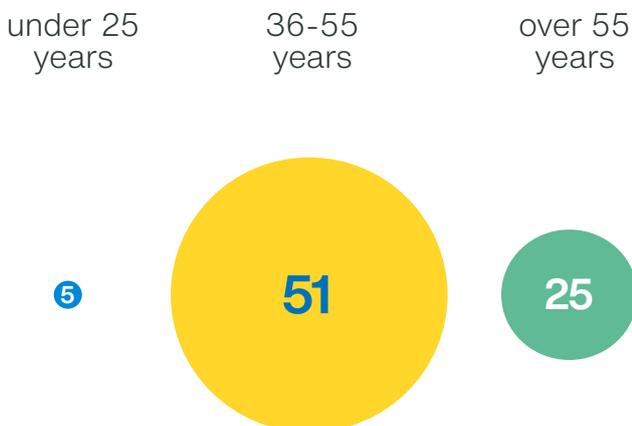


## Age

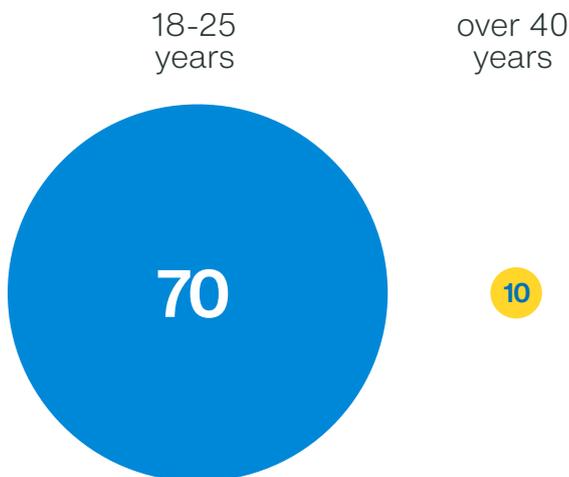
The University continues to have a mature staff profile with 51% of staff aged 36-55 years, and only 5% staff under the age of 25. 54% of our academic staff and 47% of our professional staff fall within the same age (36-55).

The majority (69.83%) of our students are aged between 18-25, and 9.56% aged over 40.

### % staff by age



### % students by age



## Disability

9% of our staff have declared a disability, with 7% of academic staff declaring a disability and 10% of professional staff. Only 2.4% of both academic and professional staff who have declared a disability are at UH9 and above.

11.75% of our students have declared a disability, this includes 3.5% who have declared a mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder and 3.88% with a learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or an anxiety disorder AD(H)D.

**% staff with disability**

9%



**% students with disability**

11.75%

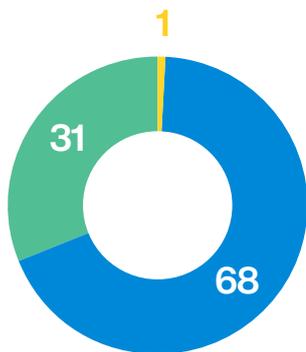


## Gender reassignment

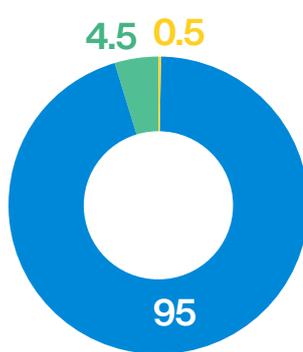
Just under 1% of staff have recorded their gender different to that assigned at birth. However, we do have a significant number (31%) of unknowns, therefore further work will need to be undertaken to understand the reasons for this and encourage staff to provide this information and reduce the percentage of unknowns.

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

**% staff by gender reassignment**



**% students by gender reassignment**

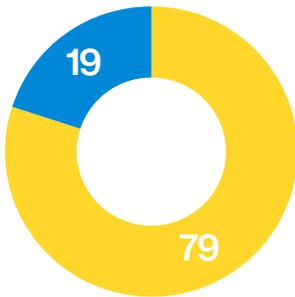


- No change
- Gender reassigned
- Unknown

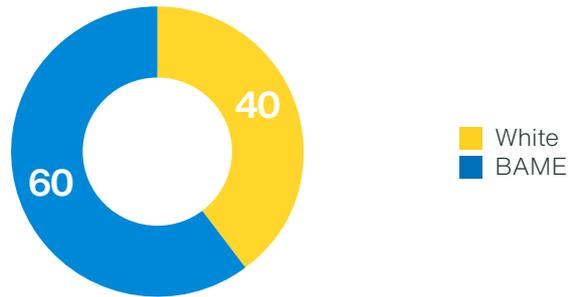
## Race (ethnicity)

The majority (78.6%) of our staff are white and 19.4% identify as BAME. From the BAME total, 39% are Asian, 26% Black, 14% Chinese, 12% Mixed and 8% other. However, we are pleased to note that the BAME staff percentage is higher than the sector average of 14.5%. 60.18% of our students identify as BAME. This includes 28.46% Asian/Asian British, 17.30% Black/Black British, 4.71% mixed and 3.12% Chinese. There is a significant difference in terms of the representation of BAME staff in comparison to our student community.

% staff by ethnicity



% students by ethnicity

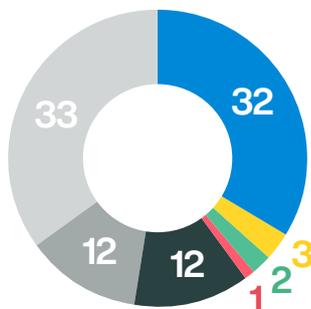


## Religion or belief

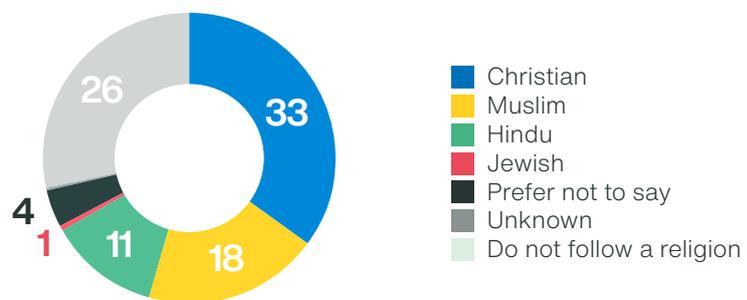
A high percentage of our staff (33% of all staff) do not follow a religion (an increase of 3% from last year), 32% are Christian, 3% Muslim, 2% Hindu and 1% Jewish. We also have 12% who prefer not to say, and 12% unknown compared to a sector average of 53.8% unknown or refused.

26.26% of our students do not follow a religion, 32.84% are Christian, 18.09% Muslim, 11.42% Hindu and 0.38% Jewish. There is a big difference in the percentage of our Muslim and Hindu staff in comparison to our student body.

% staff by religion



% students by religion

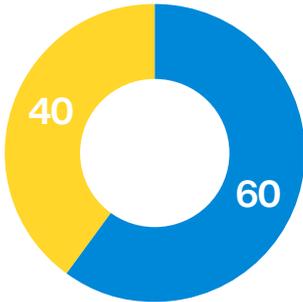


## Sex

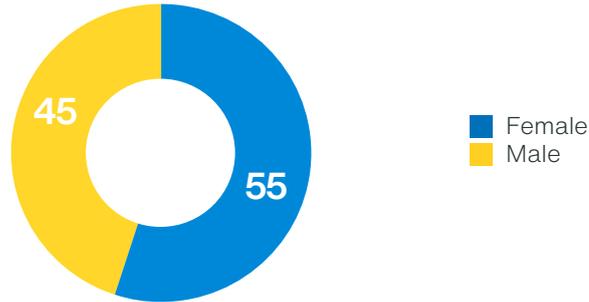
More than half (60%) of all our staff are female, an even higher number (66%) of professional staff are female and 54% of academic staff.

Our student community is similar in female/male proportional split to the staff community, with 55.12% female and 44.88% male students.

% staff by sex



% students by sex

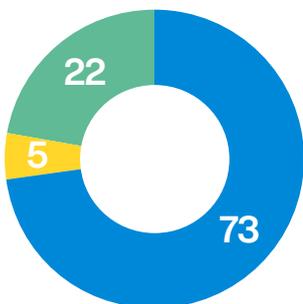


## Sexual orientation

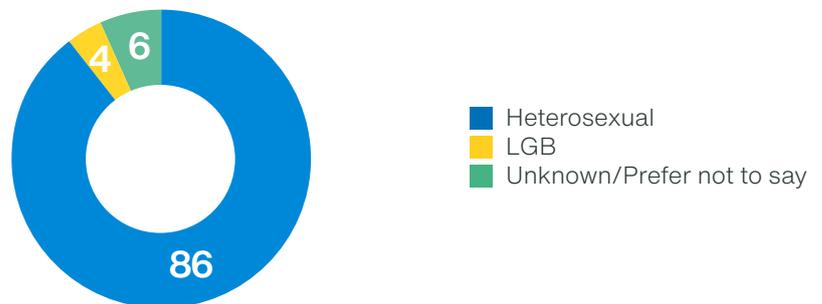
77% of all staff have declared their sexual orientation compared to a sector average of 44.9% (89% of those who 'prefer not to say' are included). The majority (73%) are heterosexual, 2% bisexual, 2% gay men and 1% gay woman/lesbian (5% LGB compared to a sector average of 2.6%). There are 2% of LGB academic staff at grades UH9+, and the same percentage of professional staff.

The majority (86.02%) of our students identify as heterosexual, 3.75% as LGB with 6.22% students who declined to provide the information.

% staff by sexual orientation



% students by sexual orientation





# Progress against our equality objectives

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

Since 2017, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of BAME staff at UH9 and above. Progress against the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 target of 16% has been very positive (15% in 2019-20). The target will be reviewed to ensure it remains challenging and is relevant to our commitment in the Race Equality Charter.

Fig 4 **BAME vs White with unknown records hidden**



**Case Study**  
**Diversifying leadership**

The University has sponsored a cohort onto the Advance Higher Education Diversifying Leadership programme for the third year. The aim of the programme is to develop BAME colleagues to help them progress their careers at the University.

We had 29 applications for four places, which is the maximum number available to each institution; however, we did manage to negotiate six places.

Each of the six participants were matched with a senior sponsor of their choice, one of the sponsors being the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. They attended the first orientation session online in April and then the programme was paused due to Covid-19 lockdown.

The programme has restarted in an online format and will finish in January 2021. It will then be important that we engage with the participants to help embed the learning from the programme, this could be as an action learning set coordinated by HR.

The unsuccessful applicants have been offered opportunities such as: sitting on recruitment presentation panels for some of the HR roles, enabling more diversity to the panels, and to join the BAME mentoring scheme. As all the applications were of such a high standard, we are keen to offer development to this group and plan to explore the feasibility of developing a BAME leadership programme to sit alongside the external Advance Higher Education one.

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

There has been an increase of 3% since 2017, we are pleased to say we are now just 3% off our target which we anticipate by the target date of 2025. The Equality Office is working closely with academic School EDI teams to review data and agree actions to reduce the gap.

**Fig 5 Includes academic contracts UH7 and above (BAME vs White with unknown records hidden)**



**Case Study**  
**Anonymous shortlisting**

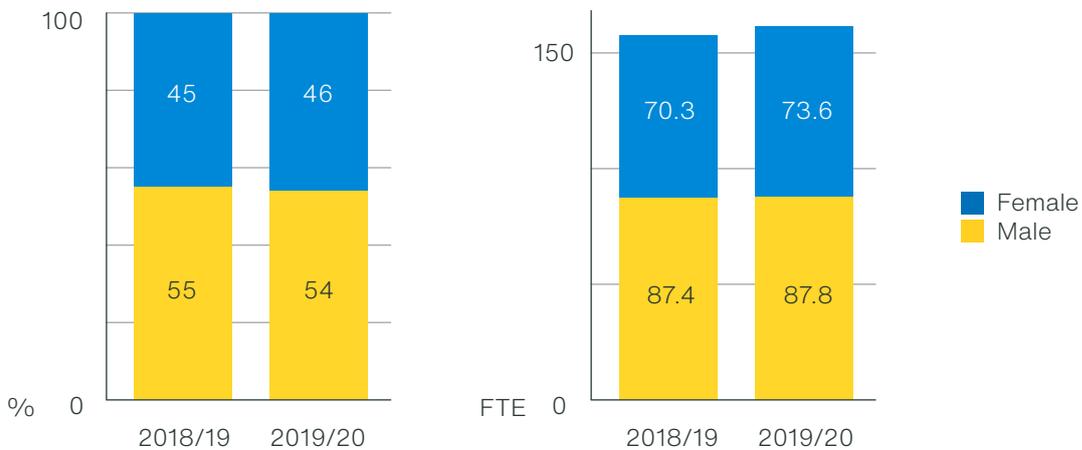
Research shows that job applicants with ethnic minority sounding names are less likely to be called for interview. One of our 2015 Race Equality Charter actions to help reduce Unconscious Bias led to the development and implementation of anonymous shortlisting for job applications, which was launched in August 2020. Anonymous shortlisting has been introduced for all vacancies going through the HR system. As a result, no name or address details are shared with recruiting managers. We have guidance recommending that attachments are anonymised, which is a developing practice more likely to be taken up by professional rather than academic applicants. More work needs to be done alongside considering what findings there are from the shortlisting data following the initial implementation phase. This will be monitored moving forward and we will review whether it has a positive impact on the number of BAME staff in particular being shortlisted for posts.

**Objective**  
**Increase senior academic women (AM1 and above) by 10% (from 70.3 to 77.3 FTE) by 2025**

Good progress has been made against this target (from 70.3 FTE) with 3.3 FTE increase since 2018. We are positive that we will meet this target by 2025.

This objective is supported by the institutional Athena SWAN action plan and targeted work within each academic School. Each academic School also has actions to address this gap in their EDI team action plans, which will be monitored by the newly established strategic EDI Board.

**Fig 6 Percentage and full time equivalent (FTE) of senior academic women AM1 and above**



**Case Study**  
**Job evaluation engagement series**

In the Hertfordshire Law School (HLS), the Athena SWAN Champion and Dean began running an Equate Engagement Series (EES) to ensure transparency and clarify understanding of the academic promotion process at the University. This involves workshops at grade-specific levels, covering topics such as Caring Commitments and Your Career, and The Road to UH09. All staff wishing to progress, with particular emphasis on women and BAME staff, are encouraged to attend. One of the main aims of the EES is to advise colleagues on how to align Continuing Professional Development choices to their applications for promotion. Considering HLS is one of the smaller Schools, attendance at workshops has been high (2019: 14 females and 1 male; 2020: 9 females and 7 males). In 2018-19 the School saw two women promoted to AM1, increasing the senior management team to 4 females at AM1+.

## Objective

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

The University has several plans, which include actions to reduce the BAME awarding gap for students. These include the:

- Access and Participation Plan
- Race Equality Charter Mark
- Annual School Student Educational Experience action plans
- Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Reports at programme level.

Everyone has a part to play in reducing the BAME awarding gap and helping us to achieve this target. The BAME Student Success working group developed and launched an Institutional Action Plan with actions for individuals, Schools, professional strategic business units and members of the Chief Executive Group and our Board of Governors. The BAME Institutional Action Plan was approved by the University's Academic Board. As part of this plan, it was also agreed that every individual will have a personal equality objective in their appraisal to help understand, and advance, race equality at the University.

For the University overall and for all Schools (Table 1 below), there continues to be an awarding gap between BAME students and White students. However, the gap has been markedly reduced for the University overall and for all Schools except for Life and Medical Sciences where the gap has increased. The Access and Participation Plan (APP) includes a 2020-21 target of reducing the 'good degree' attainment gap between White and BAME Home/EU students to 17%. The University and all Schools have achieved this target apart from Health and Social Work. (It should be noted that the APP 2020-2025 target is to reduce the attainment gap between White and BAME students from 18% to 9%).

Table 1 The percentage of 'good degrees' 2017-18 and 2019-20 for BAME and White students compared

School	Ethnicity split (Home/EU only)	% of Good Degrees 2017-18	% of Good Degrees 2018-19	Gap 2018-19	% of Good Degrees 2019-20	Gap 2019-20
Creative Arts	BAME	62%	57%	25%	71%	15%
	White	79%	82%		86%	
Education	BAME	41%	51%	19%	67%	12%
	White	71%	70%		79%	
Engineering and Computer Science	BAME	-	54%	20%	73%	14%
	White	-	74%		87%	
Hertfordshire Business School	BAME	58%	61%	27%	78%	14%
	White	84%	88%		92%	
Health and Social Work	BAME	34%	37%	30%	51%	25%
	White	63%	67%		76%	
Humanities	BAME	67%	65%	17%	73%	14%
	White	84%	82%		87%	
Law	BAME	58%	53%	25%	71%	11%
	White	80%	78%		82%	
Life and Medical Sciences	BAME	60%	67%	10%	70%	16%
	White	78%	77%		86%	
Physics, Astronomy Maths	BAME	60%	64%	19%	-	-
	White	61%	83%		-	
University of Hertfordshire	<b>BAME</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>15%</b>
	<b>White</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>77%</b>		<b>84%</b>	

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## Access and Participation Plan

At the University of Hertfordshire, we have a strong record in terms of access and participation, which is evident in our student population and the proportion of students from under-represented backgrounds. Our 2020-25 Access and Participation Plan (APP) sets out clear targets for reducing inequalities for under-represented and disadvantaged students, which account for just under 70% of our undergraduate UK/EU student population. This includes students who identify as BAME, students from parts of the country with the lowest progression to higher education, students who come from households with incomes below £25,000 and care experienced students.

The APP identifies 16 targets to address inequalities across a range of groups for undergraduate, Home/EU students. Progress against these targets is reported annually to the Office for Students (OfS) as a condition of our registration as an approved Higher Education provider. We have made good progress in areas such as continuation and attainment for both disadvantaged (measured by low participation and low income) and disabled students. In addition, the overall awarding gap between BAME and White students has been markedly reduced in the last academic year (as cited previously). Graduate data reveals high overall progression for all students, including into highly skilled employment and higher further study. The next progress report will be submitted to the OfS in April 2021.



# Advancing equality of opportunity

## Charter marks

The University holds a number of charter mark awards ensuring significant staff commitments to advancing EDI objectives.

The **Athena SWAN charter** 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.

The University holds an Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze award and is 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**.



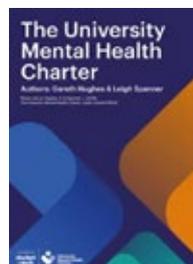
The School of Health and Social Work and Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics hold a **Silver award**.



The University is committed to making a difference for our disabled staff and students. We are currently at Level 1: Disability Confident Committed, of the **Disability Confident Scheme** and are working to progress to Level 2: Disability Confident Employer 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 include 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 student and staff with their mental health.



The University is one of only 17 universities in the UK to hold a **Race Equality Charter Mark Bronze award**. By engaging with this process, we are showing our commitment to improving the representation, progression, and success of minority ethnic staff and students here and within Higher Education in general. We are currently working towards a submission to retain our Bronze award.



We are one of only 17 UK institutions to partner with **Stammerers Through University Consultancy** and there are ongoing efforts to improve the experiences of staff and students who stammer.



**Stonewall's Diversity Champions** programme ensures that all LGBT staff are accepted without exception in the workplace. In July 2020, the University re-committed to the programme to further embed LGBT+ inclusion for our staff and students. We are hoping to participate in the Workplace Equality Index in 2022.

## Pay gap reports

### Gender pay

The 2020 Gender Pay Gap Report (published in January 2021) confirms the median pay gap for females has decreased over 12 months from 16.19% to 14.33% and from 19.08% in 2017.

To tackle the pay gap effectively, we are focused on driving improvements within our individual strategic business units taking forward several initiatives.

### Ethnicity pay

Our first voluntarily produced Ethnicity Pay Gap report was published in March 2020. Our latest report highlights a reduction in the median pay gap from 11.49% to 11.11%.

Whilst recruiting more senior BAME staff will help to reduce the pay gap, this alone will not achieve the real change we want to see and, therefore, have identified a number of initiatives to reduce this gap.

#### % Pay gender gap



#### % Pay ethnicity gap



## Projects and initiatives

### Covid-19 and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion implications

Covid-19 has had a huge impact on the way we live, work and socialise. It does not discriminate, but it does impact people differently. The University recognises that the pandemic is also likely to have an impact on our mental and physical health, as well as having a practical impact on our ability to work and study.

We have been at the forefront with a 'people first' approach supporting staff and students through providing guidance and support for all. Several guidance documents and toolkits have been produced to assist managers in supporting their staff, ensuring their needs are being met. The Equality Office produced a comprehensive spreadsheet highlighting the impact of the pandemic on different protected characteristics which informed strategic decision making. HR also undertook a staff survey to understand the impact of working from home and has been liaising with the Equality Office, Staff Networks and various other departments to collate a programme of support for staff. One such initiative included collaborating with Herts Sports Village to develop and promote an online Active Staff programme to help staff fitness, health and wellbeing.

### Student Support

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.

Following the first national lockdown, there was a real need for support and safeguarding provision to retain face to face and online mental health support/ counselling across borders. This is something that many Higher Education providers struggled with. However, we recognised the importance of this and there was no break in provision, with staff offering support to students 24/7.

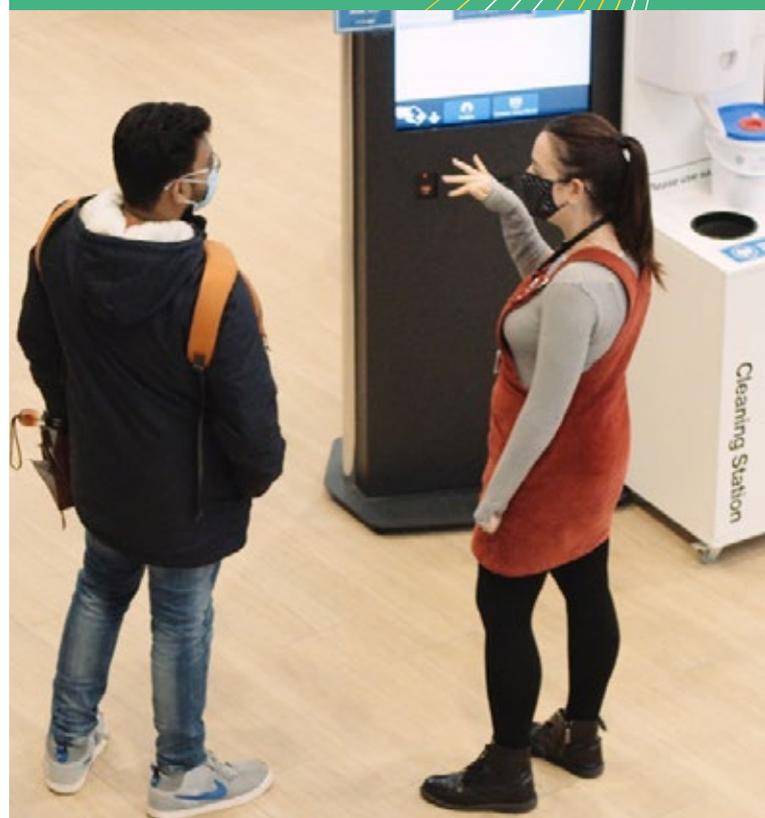
### Other services included:

- An online referral service for students to access emotional support and talk things through with a counsellor.
- Continued face to face emotional support for counselling and mental health where safe.
- Over 4,000 calls made via Zoom, Teams, mobile, or face to face to students in isolation or quarantine every day throughout the pandemic.
- Delivery of care packages, food, vouchers and access to food banks, including the community fridge scheme to students on campus and in the local area, and by post to commuter students.

The University made a total of £122,874 available to the Covid Relief Fund, which was launched on 23 March 2020 to support with the hardship students faced following the spread of Covid-19 and during lockdown conditions.

In total, 628 students applied to phase 1 of the Covid-19 Relief Fund (March-May 2020). 402 students received the bursary in this first phase of applications (64% acceptance rate). Overseas students made up 44% of students who were awarded a bursary, which is an over-representation of a cohort that in 2018-19 made up 15% of the student body (source: tableau dashboard University School and profile).

Students from BAME backgrounds were also over-represented (74% vs 55.5% in the student population), highlighting potential similar difficulties that these students faced at the University in alignment with the reported increased impact of Covid-19 on BAME communities nationally. The full report is available on our website.



## Changed world project

Coronavirus has changed the way we live, work, and communicate. It has impacted the global economy, politics, the environment, and the societies and communities in which we establish and sustain relationships with each other. It has prompted fundamental questions about human vulnerability and our place within the planet's wider ecosystem. When, or indeed if, the immediate physical health risks diminish or become more manageable, the effects of the virus will endure.

As part of the University's response to the current global pandemic, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor sponsored and launched a University-wide project called A Changed World. The objectives of this project were four-fold:

- 1 to provide an online platform and portfolio where staff, departments, and Schools, could showcase their academic and intellectual response and achievements during the lockdown period and beyond
- 2 to engage the entire University community in an ongoing debate and discussion about the current changes happening all around us
- 3 to provide a platform for students to engage in global awareness and an outlet for them to express their experiences and views
- 4 to gather materials to later develop into a University-wide module.

The Equality Office saw this as an opportunity to provide an awareness to staff and students about the social hardships and inequalities, which have been exacerbated during this tumultuous time. We produced a high-quality video that sought to teach and inform our community about the work in the Equality Office. The video has had over 1,000 views. We educated on issues such as protected characteristics, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the impact of the pandemic on different ethnic minority communities. We invited critical discussion by way of posing questions for viewers to reflect on, while also providing further avenues of information.

Our contribution aimed to raise the public profile of the Equality Office, and inform others about the work we do, and the work that still needs to be undertaken to make our institution and the world a fairer, more equal place.

## Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre

In a year like no other, our Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre has responded exceptionally and continued to deliver on its commitments: to support staff in their learning and teaching practice, to innovate our institutional use of educational technology, to work on equitable outcomes for students, to promote the University as a destination for young people from low participation neighbourhoods, and lead on institutional commitments related to the Access and Participation Plan.

A lot of work was undertaken to ensure our blended learning approach was as inclusive as possible, taking into consideration the diverse needs of our students. For example, an Equality Impact Assessment was completed to understand the impact of moving our teaching, learning and assessment online, identifying actions taken to mitigate any possible disadvantage.

### Response to Covid-19

The Learning, Teaching and Assessment operational group was established to manage staff training, development of guidance materials, access to online resources, usability issues, Canvas and Talis developments and problem solving.

Through consultation, the group produced guidance to convert examinations into online assessments; developed the safetynet policy; informed the serious adverse circumstances process and produced an assessment timeline.

### Enhancement and refocus of the Guided Learner Journey module to support staff development (25,000 page views since June 2020)

- Staff enrolments on the Guided Learner Journey module increased from 440 to 1,328 during the lockdown period
- LTIC/LCS ran 182 online training sessions with 445 participants including 130 one-to-one sessions, before May 2020
- 220 Canvas quizzes were set in May 2020, this compares to 14 in May 2019
- Between March and May there were 1,808 new Panopto recordings and 13,000 views and downloads from Panopto
- We provided expert support for remote exams
- We provided support for schools on assessment redesign, and module redevelopment for enhanced blended delivery.



## Widening Access and Student Success (WASS)

The widening access team within WASS aims to increase progression to university from under-represented groups by working in partnership with 28 schools from across the county, particularly those from economically disadvantaged areas. WASS actively recruits University student ambassadors and student mentors from a range of ethnic and widening participation backgrounds who work as role models in outreach activities and in local schools to raise motivation, aspiration, and attainment for all learners, including BAME pupils.

Our student success team recognises that students from widening participation groups often require additional support to ensure retention, employability and success. We work with students to help them to develop a clear sense of identity and engagement with their programme of study. In 2019-20 over 680 students were supported directly by the team, and of these, 68% of students were from BAME backgrounds and 38% were mature students.



### Case Study

Our Widening Access and Student Success work also includes the funding of the BAME Student Advocates whose main aim is to help the University reduce the BAME awarding gap. They carry out a number of roles including reviewing teaching materials and reading lists to enhance inclusivity, facilitating focus groups with BAME students and representing BAME student voices, promoting race equality and challenging assumptions. They are also key members of our BAME Student Success Working Group and support the work associated with the Race Equality Charter Mark. They have been nominated and shortlisted for various honours, including the Vice-Chancellor's Award for 'team of the year'.

For two years, the WASS team and Careers and Employment teams have supported the BAME Advocates in running a student-led BAME Career Conference. In 2019, the event brought together 129 BAME students with 11 speakers and employers with strong track records in diversity to support BAME progression to graduate employment. In 2020 the event was moved online in response to the pandemic into a series of workshops. 128 BAME students attended the event across four virtual workshops run by BAME alumni and professionals. They focused on personal branding, motivational coaching, and celebrating diversity and success.

## Diversifying the curriculum

Discussions of decolonising the curriculum have been prominent within certain disciplines (humanities and creative arts) since 2018. Within the humanities programme MA Literature and Culture, a specific optional module focusing on race has been developed, which is the first of its kind in the UK. Within the Black Lives Matter module, students engage with various cultural texts on topics such as identity, violence, politics and love. They examine contemporary culture including music by Beyoncé and Kendrick Lamar and the recent films *Get Out*, *13th* and *Moonlight*, alongside prize winning authors Colson Whitehead and Jesmyn Ward.

To expand the discussions of decolonising the curriculum, a sub group of the BAME Student Success Working Group was established in September 2019 and has developed materials and resources available on the Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre website to support staff in all disciplines in decolonising and diversifying their curriculum.

“ This module is significant because learning about black culture, rights and social justice is vital to our understanding of the contemporary world. The University is committed to both international perspective and addressing BAME attainment gap in higher education. We see this module as part of that longer project. ”

Christopher Lloyd, Lecturer in English Literature



## Staff health and wellbeing support

In 2019-20 the occupational health and health, safety and sustainability team has provided a variety of services to staff and managers:

- Over 500 staff engaged with the Stress Awareness online course
- 222 occupational health appointments by staff for a variety of reasons – referrals, health, MOT and other services
- 69 staff engaged with the Employee Assistance Programme
- Continued to expand Workplace Wellbeing Champion Network across the University
- Provided resources to Workplace Wellbeing Champions across the University throughout the year
- An operational working group provided virtual wellbeing programme during lockdown. This included over 85 coffee morning sessions



### Case Study

The Staff Wellbeing Champions Network was established to further support and improve the wellbeing of our employees. The network consists of a group appointed by their Deans and Heads of strategic business units (SBU), at least one from each SBU, who are committed to improving wellbeing for themselves and others, working as informal ambassadors for workplace wellbeing throughout their local Schools and SBUs. They often organise events and initiatives for staff and offer everyday signposting and support. In organisations that have these networks, 92% of employees believe their local champions play a key role in supporting a culture of wellbeing. In 2019-20 the Wellbeing Champion Network expanded to include 38 staff members across the University. Their contributions include raising money for charities, creating online social spaces and extra-curricular activities for staff during the pandemic, supporting the development of mental health training for line managers and escalating wellbeing concerns. Alongside the Health, Safety and Sustainability team they also led over 16 Active Staff sessions with over 150 total attendees, and from April-October they generated over 930 link clicks from the promotion of support for staff.

## Student disability and wellbeing support

In 2019-20 The Disability Team supported 533 students with a range of difficulties and disabilities. These students are a mix of years of study and are studying across all programmes within the University.

Specific Learning Difficulties and/or Dyslexia are the most commonly disclosed disability with long term health conditions being the next highest disclosure.

Our students have reported that the support they receive through the University and through the Disabled Students Allowance means that they are able to fully access their studies and achieve their potential.

Our students who have a stammer or stutter have worked with us within the team to develop a charter for the University in collaboration with Stammerers Through University Consultancy. Visually impaired students and those with physical difficulties have worked with us to inform accessibility projects and improve the campus facilities for disabled students.

We are extremely proud to have been able to continue to offer professional and well-attended support sessions throughout these very difficult Covid-19 times.



### Case Study

The Student Autism/Asperger's Group was established 10 years ago to be a support for our students where they could come and share their experiences of life at the University and gain friendships. Typical activities throughout the year include a monthly daytime meeting and evening activities like having a meal out at the Harvester Restaurant in the Galleria.

The group works closely with Active Students, who put on activities exclusively for the group, which have been very popular. It also has a hidden Facebook group so only invited people can join.

During the pandemic, the usual face to face monthly daytime meetings have been replaced with a Wednesday afternoon Zoom meeting that takes place every three weeks.

“ Like lots of students starting university I didn't know what to expect. I was nervous, excited, a whole lot of emotions. But for me having Autism Spectrum Disorder made these feelings seem more intense, I felt scared, anxious about fitting in and not having anyone who would understand me. That's where having the Autism Spectrum Disorder group made a huge difference to me. It allowed me to socialise with a group of people in different settings and go on activities that I may not have been able to do by myself. Speaking and listening to other people in the group who had similar experiences to me, made me feel part of the University. It gave me confidence to talk to other people at the University. ”

## Staff training and development

We are committed to ensuring our 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. The Human Resources (HR) team offer a range of training and development opportunities.

All new starters are required to complete essential and mandatory training. This includes Central Induction with an introduction to the Equality Office, the Unconscious Bias E-Learning module, and attending a half day EDI Essentials workshop during their probation period. We also have a requirement for all staff to refresh the mandatory EDI training every three years. This is monitored via the strategic business units (SBUs). HR are leading a project to increase completion rates of mandatory training for existing staff. This will involve using attendance data to raise awareness in SBUs of completion rates, highlighting where increased engagement is required and putting in place the necessary additional courses and other arrangements. The range of essential and mandatory training is also to be reviewed. In 2019-20 there were 15 EDI Essentials workshops delivered with a total of 285 colleagues attending.

The Equality Office frequently run bespoke sessions for Schools and professional SBUs on equality subjects. Unconscious Bias is a very popular request for these. The team are also invited to present at department meetings and away days on a range of equality topics.

Going forward, the Equality Office is developing a bespoke EDI Essentials workshop for managers, providing them with the required knowledge, skills and tools to manage and support diverse teams. These workshops were rolled out in November 2020. It has also been agreed that completion of Unconscious Bias training in the last three years will be mandatory for managers attending the full Recruitment and Selection workshop as they will be able to chair a recruitment panel. Guidance for panels includes ensuring diversity in representation.

A workshop for managers to understand and produce Equality Impact Assessments is also being developed, which will be rolled out in the next academic year. Cultural Awareness workshops will recommence in 2021.

Training gap analysis reports have been run for all Schools and SBUs, which will show staff who have attended mandatory training and those who have not. Each SBU will be provided with their training gap analysis report, and with the support of HR will put in place strategies to ensure the completion of refresher training.



Some feedback from the EDI Essentials training:

**“ Just drawing upon other people’s experiences makes me more aware of my own behaviour. ”**

**“ Aamani did a really great job presenting online. She was patient with those who had technical issues and went at a pace everyone could engage and not be left out. At no point did I think this would have been better in person and I didn’t feel disengaged once, which is amazing for an afternoon focussed on the computer. ”**

**“ It was really informative and raised my awareness of EDI. ”**

**“ The quizzes and interactive sessions were amazing and informative. I think all aspects of this training work very well. ”**

**“ Mohammed is a very open and engaging member of staff. I really enjoyed his delivery and would happily attend more training provided by him. ”**



## Introduction to the Equality Office video

In collaboration with the Students' Union, the Equality Office produced an introduction to the Equality Office video for all students. The video was a way of engaging with students and advising them of the support and services available from the Equality Office, but also highlighting the University's commitment to EDI, what they can expect from the University, and what was expected from students in terms of respecting diversity.



## Dignity and respect advisors

Our advisors are volunteer members of staff from across the University who are trained to undertake the role. They are supported by the Equality Office and provide impartial and confidential guidance and signposting to anyone involved in cases of harassment or bullying (including those facing allegations about their behaviour). They are there to listen to what has happened and to help and support individuals to make informed choices to deal with issues appropriately and as quickly as possible.

Some new advisors were recruited in early 2020 and refresher training provided. Processes and procedures have also been clarified with HR.



## Gender identity

Trans equality is an evolving equality area and the University launched its own trans guidance (including key processes, contacts and information) to support staff, managers, and students.

In addition, following a Gender-Neutral Toilet (GNT) pilot in our School of Creative Arts and our Hertfordshire Law School, and University-wide staff and student consultations, we rolled out GNTs across both our College Lane and de Havilland Campuses. All new buildings will be equipped with in-built GNTs.



## Ramadhan guidance

To support colleagues fasting, in May 2020 the Equality Office produced a Ramadhan guide for managers and staff. This guide offers helpful tips and advice to ensure staff who are fasting are supported by their managers and colleagues.



## Student Leadership Training 2019

Within the Students' Union Student Rep training, over 200 Elected Student Reps (47% BAME) were educated and informed about the University's awarding gap and encouraged to start conversations with programme staff. In addition, 23 School Community Organisers were also trained (48% BAME), which saw three of the nine academic Schools give designated responsibility to focus on BAME student experience within their School.

# Celebrating the diversity of our community

We will strengthen and value the diversity of the University and inclusivity of our community.

In 2019-20 the University organised, hosted or sponsored multiple events throughout the year to celebrate the diversity of the community, build strong community relationships and lead the way with inclusion, some of which are highlighted below. Even through the pandemic, our Students' Union did everything they could to represent, celebrate and empower our diverse student population, and delivered one of the most inclusive programmes to date.



Throughout the month of October 2019, a series of events were organised by the Widening Access and Student Success team in collaboration with the Equality Office, Hertfordshire Students' Union, the academic Schools and other departments across the University to celebrate arts, culture and provide reflection on **black history**. Recent events included film screenings, dance classes, exhibitions and seminars. It culminated with a showcase event supported by Santander Universities for students and staff at the College Lane Campus, which featured art exhibitions, guest speakers and a Q&A panel, followed by African and Caribbean street food with live music.



For **Inter Faith Week 2019** the Chaplaincy teamed up with the Students' Union to stage a 'Pick up a prayer event'. We offered printed prayers from six major faiths in this country – Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish and Sikh – along with sweets. We challenged passers-by to pick up a prayer that was not from their own tradition. This sparked interesting conversations and some surprise at how acceptable and similar the prayers from different faiths could be.

The Equality Office celebrated **International Trans Day of Visibility** by holding two Transgender Awareness quizzes to help broaden staff knowledge of issues relating to trans people.

In February 2020, an event for both staff and students to mark **Time to Talk Day** was organised by the Health, Safety and Sustainability team and supported by the Equality Office and the Dean of Students. The event also raised £70 for MIND.



An event in March 2020 was organised for **International Women's Day** by the Schools of Humanities, Business, Law and Education, and the Research Office. Topics discussed included everything from the impact of breast ironing, to arranged marriages, women and United Nation sustainability goals, and the history of misogyny in the Israeli Defence.

The Students' Union celebrated different cultures through the cultural series, which included student led events for **Diwali** and **Lunar New Year**. The events were a huge success and attended by students from all backgrounds.

The Journeys to Success saw the Students' Union team up with staff members from across the institution and organised talks from BAME staff for BAME students to empower and inspire through our **Rise Up Campaign**. These were well attended with excellent feedback from students.

In February 2020, Vice-Chancellor Professor Quintin McKellar joined colleagues from across the University to mark the beginning of **LGBT History Month** by raising the rainbow flag outside Main Reception on the College Lane Campus. There were numerous other events held across the University, including the showing of the film 'Pride' by our Hertfordshire Law School and workshops focusing on mental health within the LGBTQ community.

One of the biggest events organised by the Students' Union was **PrideFest** for LGBT+, a massive celebration for students and staff across the University. The event was also supported by the Equality Office and our Chaplaincy.



# Fostering Community Cohesion

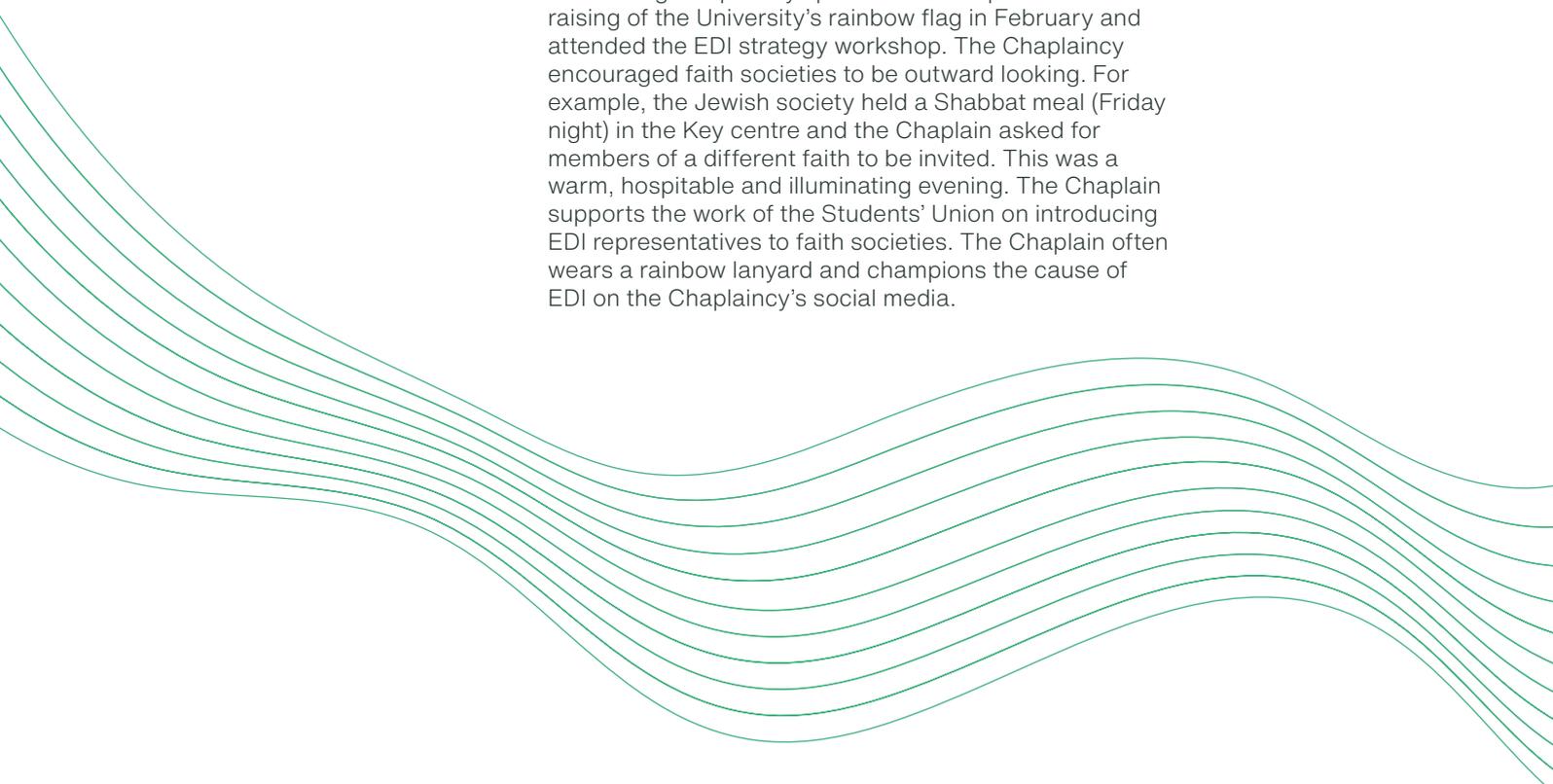
We will strengthen and value the diversity of the University and inclusivity of our community.

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## Chaplaincy Services

Our Chaplaincy services welcome those of all faiths and none. There are two multi-faith/cultural centres for the provision of spiritual, social and pastoral care of both staff and students. The spaces are used by all for a variety of purposes including but not limited to prayer, silent reflection, meditation, a variety of wellbeing workshops/networks and faith society activities. They are accessible to both groups and individuals.

The Chaplaincy has endeavoured to support and promote the ethos of equality, diversity and inclusion throughout its work in the last academic year. Chaplaincy Assistant Joseph Barnes pursued a project on LGBT+ and faith issues, producing posters with support information. The Chaplaincy had a stall at the first ever Students' Union Pride event and has worked on building links with the LGBT+ student society, who said they felt 'safe' using Chaplaincy spaces. The Chaplain attended raising of the University's rainbow flag in February and attended the EDI strategy workshop. The Chaplaincy encouraged faith societies to be outward looking. For example, the Jewish society held a Shabbat meal (Friday night) in the Key centre and the Chaplain asked for members of a different faith to be invited. This was a warm, hospitable and illuminating evening. The Chaplain supports the work of the Students' Union on introducing EDI representatives to faith societies. The Chaplain often wears a rainbow lanyard and champions the cause of EDI on the Chaplaincy's social media.



## Staff Networks

Staff Networks are integral to the University's governance to mainstream and embed EDI. They play a key role in helping the University to promote an inclusive environment and diverse community, and actively contribute to charter mark work. They also act as a platform for often disadvantaged groups to have a voice within the University. We are proud of the engagement of our staff networks and the difference they make.

**Academic Women's Action Group (AWAG)** has an active chair and 56 members. The network hosts regular meetings and events (both University-wide and School specific) and contribute towards **Athena SWAN** work.

In 2019-20 the network in partnership with the Research Office delivered a Grant Writing Away Day for both early career and senior researchers in order to network, to develop new research ideas, to learn how to write research grants and to hone existing grant applications. The workshops were attended by 40 staff.

The **Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)** network has three very active co-chairs with 105 members. The network hosted over 20 events with over 600 attendees. Some of the activities the network was involved in include extensive contribution to **Race Equality Charter** work, working in partnership with HR obtaining approval for and being actively involved in the **Diversifying Leadership Programme (Advance HE)**, actively supporting and participating with events organised by the Equality Office and the University's Black History Month Working group, monthly network meetings, weekly Minori-Teatime during lockdown to support staff working remotely and monthly Network meetings to update staff and share information. The network has also organised a number of lunch and learn sessions including a Q&A with Secretary and Registrar, Sharon Harrison-Barker, VCE Race Equality Champion, a session on the benefits of coaching and the ethnicity pay gap report with HR.

The **Carers (UHCarers)** network is chaired by the Equality Office and has 48 members. It hosts regular virtual meetings and participates in events. It also contributes towards **Athena SWAN** work.

The **Disability and Wellbeing Network (DAWN)** has two new active co-chairs and 27 members. It has hosted regular events since lockdown and is engaging staff to improve participation and grow the membership. The network contributes towards **Disability Confident** work.

The **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans + (LGBTQ+)** network has two active co-chairs and a deputy chair with 50 members. They also have several members covering representative roles to improve visibility and their work on understanding intersectionality, these include a trans rep, BAME rep, bi rep, working parent rep and straight ally rep. The network has been proactive this year and hosts monthly meetings, regular events and contribute towards **Stonewall** work.





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

The **Network of Women+ Professors (NW+P)** has an active chair and 37 members. Termly well-attended meetings contribute towards **Athena SWAN** work. During the 2019-2020 academic year, the network met termly.

In September 2019, the chair delivered a presentation about the NW+P in the panel 'Supporting Researchers in their Leadership and Career Progression in Academia and Beyond' at the 2019 Vitae International Researcher Development Conference, Birmingham NEC.

The **Working Parents Network (WPN)** has a committed chair and 98 members.

The aims of the network have been defined, however, the activity can be improved as the events and meetings have not been consistent over the past two years. The network also contributes towards **Athena SWAN** work.



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## Hertfordshire Students' Union/ Equality Office partnership overview

Rebecca Hobbs,  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Hertfordshire Students'  
Union



The Equality Office have made huge strides this year engaging with and supporting students at the University. This has been achieved through various activities and initiatives with Hertfordshire Students' Union (HSU). The students we support and the Union itself have both benefited from this engagement in a variety of ways, specifically:

### Support and development for students

HSU's vision is to help students love their lives at Herts. The work we've done in partnership with the Equality Office has been central to delivering our vision. University of Hertfordshire students represent a rich diversity of backgrounds, experiences, nationalities, ethnicities and cultures. The Equality Office has provided support and online training for our student leaders (who are involved in roles supporting societies, student reps and volunteers) to ensure they are best able to support our students. The team have also supplied equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) information for our website, and our society members now have to agree to an EDI pledge in order to join a society.

### Support and development for HSU staff/officers

HSU staff also benefited through involvement with the Equality Office. Over the summer, the team ran an interactive and in-depth training session for our entire staff and officer team, touching on various elements of EDI, unconscious bias and preconceptions, and supporting students. Our staff were universally positive about this and we are looking to repeat this as we employ new staff.

### Future projects

We've also spoken with the Equality Office about developing bespoke training for our student leaders as part of our Student Leadership Development Programme, building on learning students have undertaken as part of the online learning already supplied. We've also discussed partnership work on a programme of events aimed at celebrating our student and staff community.

Our work to date with the Equality Office has been a source of pride for the Union and we're looking forward to further developing this partnership over the years to make sure our richly diverse students and staff are supported, developed and celebrated.

# Looking ahead

In the coming year, we are keen to build on our achievements and make a real difference. Some of the key upcoming activities include:

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**Review our strategic EDI objectives** and develop a University-wide EDI Strategy

Submission to renew our **Bronze award for the Race Equality Charter**

Support the School of Life and Medical Science with the **Athena SWAN Silver** submission for November 2021

Submit our application towards **Level 2 of the Disability Confident Scheme**

**Undertake a gap analysis for Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index** and agree an action plan to advance LGBT equality and prepare for our first submission in 2022

**Implement our Institutional BAME Action Plan** and continue to reduce the BAME Awarding Gap

**Review our diversity monitoring categories and guidance** and undertake a campaign to reduce the percentage of non-declarations

Continue to support the development and operation of our **strategic business unit EDI teams**

Continue to support the **development and engagement of our Staff Networks**

**Review and roll out our Equality Impact Assessment guidance**, template and training for managers

**Implement our BAME Mentoring and Reverse Mentoring scheme**

Roll out a bespoke **EDI Essentials workshop** for our managers

Explore the design, development and delivery of **Disability, LGBT, Racial Injustice workshops**

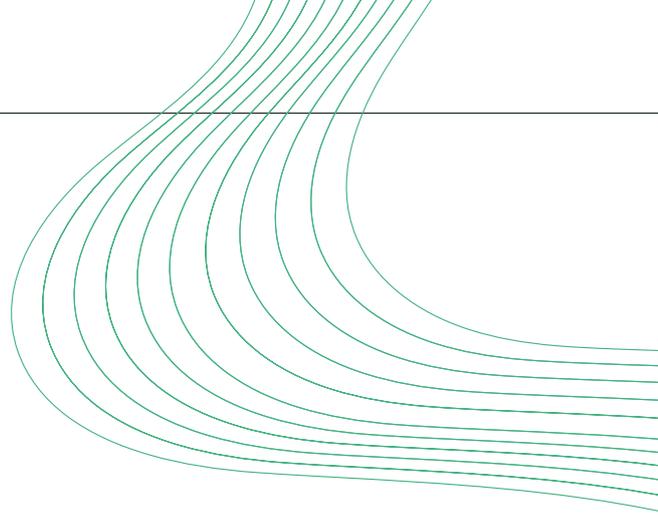
Improve the completion rates of our mandatory **EDI training refresher for existing staff**

Organise and deliver several **workshops focusing on privilege and being an ally**

Lead discussions on **Race and the terminology BAME**

**Explore how to provide safe spaces for staff** where they feel safe to speak up and raise any issues and concerns

**Continue to collaborate with Hertfordshire Students' Union** to advance EDI for our students





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