



Brunel
University
London

Student Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2017/18

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1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of Brunel University London student equality and diversity data from the 1st December 2017 dataset, SITS, Feb/Mar-18, WIYC entry qualifications data Nov-17; HESA/OFFA data on POLAR3 Aug-17 and HEBSS data on household income Dec-17. The University is committed to equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion for all our student population.

The Equality and Diversity Strategy supports the University's vision and is guided by its values. The Strategy sets out our proposals for not only fulfilling our legal and ethical duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, but also promoting a culture where the diversity of our students is valued. Our vision places equality and diversity at the heart of all we do and inspires us to excel by working together to maximise the benefits of our diverse community.

Our equality and diversity values are at the core of developing an innovative, creative and inclusive environment; enhancing networks to support protected and underrepresented groups and enabling positive, successful student outcomes.

This report will summarise the University student population across a range of protected characteristics¹, including; age, race, religion or belief, gender, disability, sexual orientation.

2. Our public duty

The Equality Act 2010 requires public institutions to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In addition to Public Duty under the Equality Act 2010, the University has a duty under the Human Rights Act 1998 not to act incompatibly with rights under the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (the Convention).

In line with the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Higher Education Code of Governance, Brunel University London is fully aware of our duty to promote equality and diversity in all aspects of our community life and work. We therefore commit to the achievement of equality of opportunity and diversity throughout the institution.

The Equality and Diversity Strategy (2015-20) applies to all individuals who study, work for us or visit us, and to those who are more broadly associated with Brunel

¹ A protected characteristic includes age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation.

University London. It includes staff, students, alumni, visitors, contractors, suppliers and partners, regardless of race or ethnicity, sex, age, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity status, marriage and civil partnership status, socioeconomic background and any other inappropriate distinction.

In keeping with our duties we will continue to engage and confer with our community and to monitor and act upon equality data. We will continue to assess the impact, or potential impact, of key policies, processes and practices on equality for staff and students.

3. Student data summary

The age profile of Brunel University students demonstrates that we have a significantly larger population of students in the 21 and under age range (71.52%), compared to the sector (56.1%). This has remained constant over the past three years. The majority of postgraduate students are aged between 22-29 for both postgraduate taught and research. The best performing age group achieving a 'good degree', which is defined as a first/2.1 classification, is aged 18-20 (75.49%) and students aged 21-24 are the least likely to be awarded a 'good degree' (62.01%).

The proportion of students declaring a disability has increased since the previous year from 7.8% to 9.2%, bringing the University in line with figures declared across the sector (10%). There has been a slight increase in the declaration of students reporting mental health impairments (see Figure 5, page 8). There was no difference in the level of 'good degrees' awarded to students with or without disabilities.

Black and minority ethnic (BME) is a widely used and recognised definition to identify patterns of marginalisation and segregation caused by attitudes toward an individual's ethnicity. The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) recognises the limitations of this definition, particularly the assumption that minority ethnic students are a homogenous group. Where possible, this report presents data disaggregated by more detailed ethnic groups in addition to data consolidating BME students as a group².

The University is fortunate to have an ethnically diverse student population, where 64.25% identify as being from a BME background. However, this profile is not replicated across the whole institution, where some disciplines have low levels of BME representation (see Figure 7, page 10). The attainment gap between White and BME students has reduced from 16.5% the previous year to 14.2% compared to the sector's 21.8% gap. This is an excellent result demonstrating a 7.3% decrease since 2014/15.

² <https://www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/using-data-and-evidence/statistics-report/>

The gender profile amongst students highlights that Brunel has a significantly lower percentage of females, contributing to 46.47% of our population compared to 57.4% across the sector.

Men and women are unevenly distributed across the disciplines in the same way, with significant under-representation of women in Computer Sciences and Engineering. However, the data reveals an under-representation of men in Education and Clinical Sciences.

4. Student representation and outcomes

It has been identified, that despite the University having a diverse student body, this is not reflected across each of the academic disciplines. Therefore, to reduce barriers to entry into higher education for all academic disciplines, it is necessary to review the University's admissions process to ensure it is fair and transparent in its recruitment and marketing strategies. It is also paramount that the University continues to grow and develop its Access, Outreach and Widening Participation agenda in order to attract, and retain students throughout the educational lifecycle.

The University has committed to reducing the awarding gap between White and BME students achieving a 'good degree' by 2020/21. The Student Success Project is leading Brunel's work to close attainment gaps between different groups of students, and is currently above target since the project began in 2015/16.

5. Equality monitoring

Significant progress has been achieved with activity to record and analyse student data against religion or belief and we will continue to improve the way we collect information from students. In order to meet the needs of students with these protected characteristics it is recommended that this data is analysed regularly to ensure that there are no differential outcomes.

6. Student data

The overall student profile for 2017-18 is comprised of 13,380 students representing an increase from 12,666 students in the previous year. The vast majority of students (72.4%) are studying for their first degree, where the highest proportion of undergraduate students are based within the Department of Life Sciences (18.27%), followed by Brunel Business School (13.96%).

At Postgraduate Taught (PGT) level the highest proportion of students (18.55%) are also based within Brunel Business School, closely followed by (18.35%) the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering. At Postgraduate Research (PGR) level, the highest proportions of students are based within the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering (18.69%).

40.62% of all students are studying within one of the following three areas, Brunel Business School, the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and the Department of Life Sciences. This trend is also consistent in the 2015/16 and 2016/17 data.

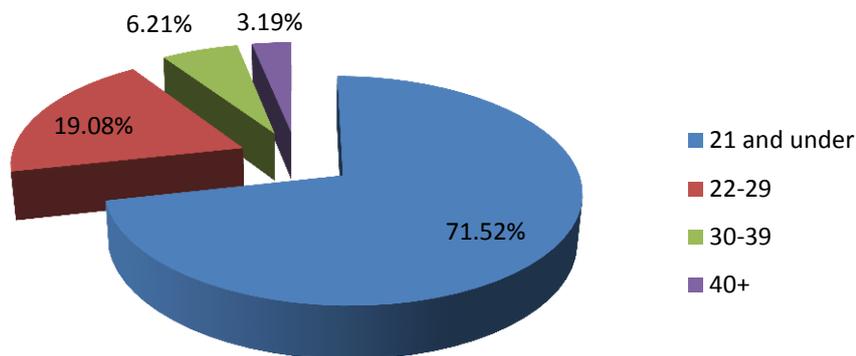
Table 1: Student population by department and level of study

Departments	UG (Non degree)		UG		PGT		PGR		Total	
Brunel Business School	4	0.97%	1353	13.96%	469	18.55%	110	14.69%	1936	14.47%
Brunel Law School	15	3.62%	668	6.89%	88	3.48%	28	3.74%	799	5.97%
Dept of Arts and Humanities	3	0.72%	699	7.21%	93	3.68%	43	5.74%	838	6.26%
Dept of Economics and Finance	0	0.00%	726	7.49%	72	2.85%	21	2.80%	819	6.12%
Dept of Education (PGCert)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	164	6.49%	0	0.00%	164	1.23%
Dept of Education	0	0.00%	134	1.38%	63	2.49%	28	3.74%	225	1.68%
Dept of Social and Political Sciences	10	2.42%	864	8.92%	194	7.67%	31	4.14%	1099	8.21%
Dept of Computer Science	0	0.00%	697	7.19%	73	2.89%	68	9.08%	838	6.26%
Dept of Design	1	0.24%	484	5.00%	103	4.07%	16	2.14%	604	4.51%
Dept of Electronic and Computer Engineering	0	0.00%	409	4.22%	92	3.64%	100	13.35%	601	4.49%
Dept of Mathematics	199	48.07%	389	4.01%	16	0.63%	16	2.14%	620	4.63%
Dept of Civil and Environmental Engineering	17	4.11%	321	3.31%	80	3.16%	26	3.47%	444	3.32%
Dept of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering	144	34.78%	687	7.09%	464	18.35%	140	18.69%	1435	10.72%
Dept of Clinical Sciences	20	4.83%	488	5.04%	432	17.09%	15	2.00%	955	7.14%
Dept of Life Sciences	1	0.24%	1770	18.27%	125	4.94%	107	14.29%	2003	14.97%
Total	414	100%	9689	100%	2528	100%	749	100%	13380	

7. Age

Students' age is calculated at the commencement date of their studies. Due to the age groups of Brunel students, this report groups: 21 and under, 22-19, 30-39 and 40 plus. The majority of students at the University are aged 18-20 years (65.39%) representing a marginal decrease from the previous year (65.66%). The 21 and under category represents 71.52% of the student population for age on entry in 2017/18. This is statistically significant at 1% level to the UK higher education sector profile of 56.1% of students aged 21 and under (ECU, 2016).

Figure 1: Student population by age



7.1 Student population by level of study

Of the students studying at undergraduate level, 92.57% are aged 21 or under, followed by 5.26% who are aged 22-29. Just 2.18% of undergraduate students are aged 30 and over. Students at postgraduate taught level aged 22-29 make up the highest proportion of students (64.38%), followed by students aged 30-39 (18.49%).

Similarly, the age profile of students at postgraduate research level shows that the majority of this cohort are aged 22-29 (51.13%), and the remaining bulk of the student body are aged 30-39 (31.51%) followed by 40 and above (15.35%).

The majority of students studying full-time are aged 21 and under (64.97%), followed by students aged 22-29 (25.47%). Conversely, the majority of students studying part-time are aged 30-39 (34.81%), closely followed by students aged 22-29 (33.46%).

Figure 2: Full-time students by age

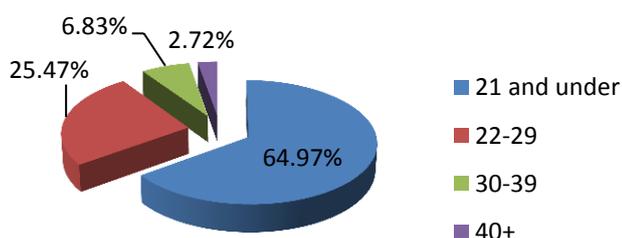
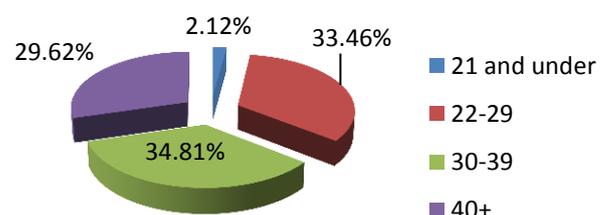


Figure 3: Part-time students by age



Attainment according to age profile

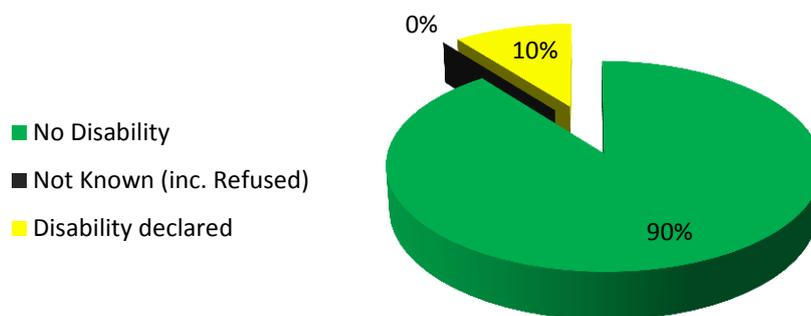
In terms of the proportion of upper pass grades or ‘good degrees’ (2:1 or above) in 2016/17 21 and under was the best performing age group (75.49%) obtaining an upper pass grade. The age group 21-24 was the second best performing cohort (69.05%), closely followed by 40 and over (68.42%) and 25-39 (67.11%). In 2015/16, students aged 40 and over, despite being a smaller cohort of 18 students, 88.26% were awarded an upper pass grade. The best performing age group by population size was students aged 21 and under (74.57%), followed by students aged 25-39 (73.40%). Students aged 21-24 were the least likely to achieve an upper pass grade in 2015/16, however this was still achieved by 62.01% and has increased in the 2016/17 attainment data.

In order to ensure that students of all age groups have equal outcomes in terms of degree classification, we will continue to monitor the success of our student cohort through the University’s Annual Monitoring cycle, and take action accordingly.

8. Disability

The disability categories indicate the type of impairment that a student has on the basis of their own self-assessment. They can choose not to disclose this information. This year (2017/18) has seen an increase in the rate of disability declared amongst the student cohort, from 7.8% last year (2016/17) to 9.2% this year. Despite the increase, this is slightly lower than student disability declared across the UK higher education sector of 10.6% (ECU, 2016).

Figure 4: Student profile by disability

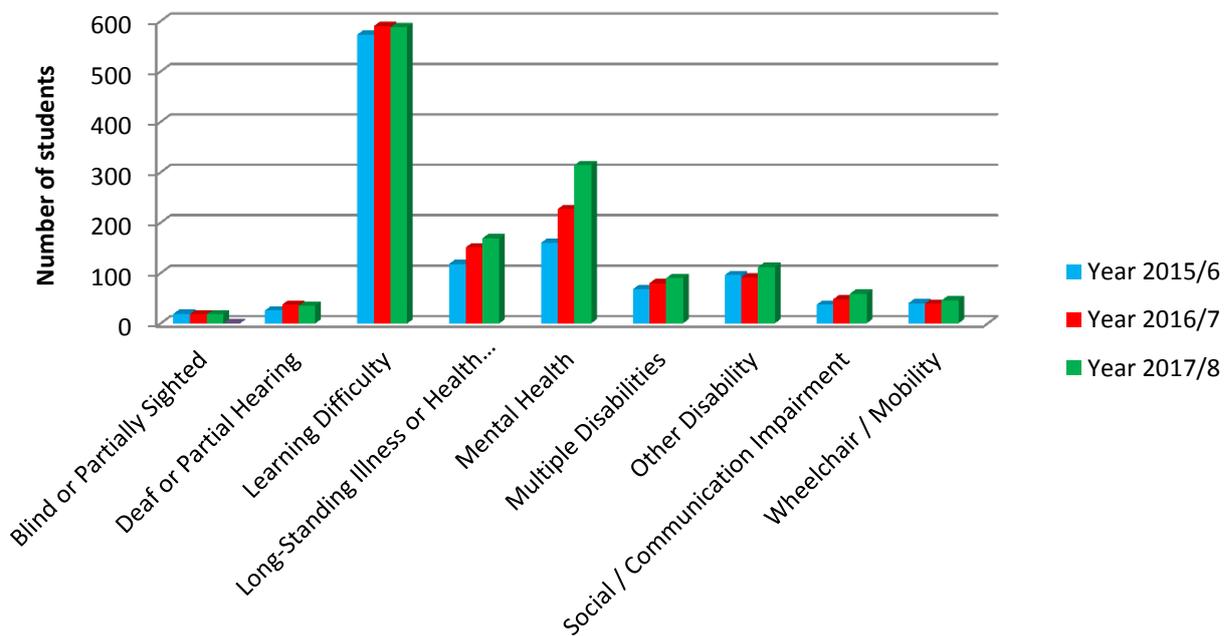


The rate of disability disclosure does not vary significantly according to level of study; at undergraduate level 9.6% of students declared a disability; at postgraduate taught level 7.2% of students declared a disability; and 10.7% of students at postgraduate research level. Similar declaration rates appeared for full-time (9.6%) and part-time (8.2%) students. Across all levels of study, specific

learning difficulties sees the highest proportion of disclosures, this makes up 41% of the total number of students who declared a disability.

This year it appears that across most disabilities listed, there has been a slight increase in the number of student declarations, compared to the previous year, except blind and partially sighted and deaf/hearing impaired students, which has remained static since 2016/17. The ECU data states that there has been a steady increase in students disclosing a disability since 2015/16, when more than 1 in 10 students disclosed as disabled (11.3%).

Figure 5: Profile of student declared disability



Attainment according to disability

A high proportion (76.7%) of students that declared a disability were awarded an upper pass grade (2:1 or above) in 2016/17, and this was virtually equal to the outcomes achieved by students that had no declared disability (75.7%). However, it is evident that despite the steady increase of students achieving an upper pass grade since 2012/13, the percentage has decreased by 1% from 2015/16 – 2016/17 for all students regardless of a declared disability. We will continue to monitor degree classification and attainment data for all students; nevertheless, the percentage decrease as it stands is not statistically significant.

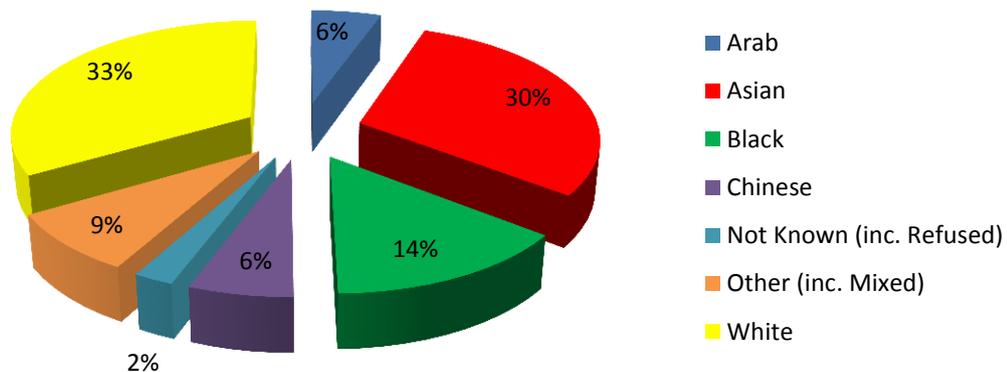
9. Ethnicity

Ethnicity within the HESA student record is based upon the 2001 census classification system. For the purposes of this report, the census categories have been aggregated into seven groups: Arab, Asian, Black, Chinese, Not known (refused), other ethnic group (mixed), White. From 2012/13 Arab was added to the coding frame for ethnicity, which is the reason it is included in this report as a separate category.

It is only compulsory to collect ethnicity data for UK domiciled students (although students can choose not to disclose) and therefore analysis of student ethnicity by attainment of good degree is restricted to UK domiciles. The University continues to attract and maintain an ethnically diverse student population, with 64.25% of students identifying as being from a BME background.

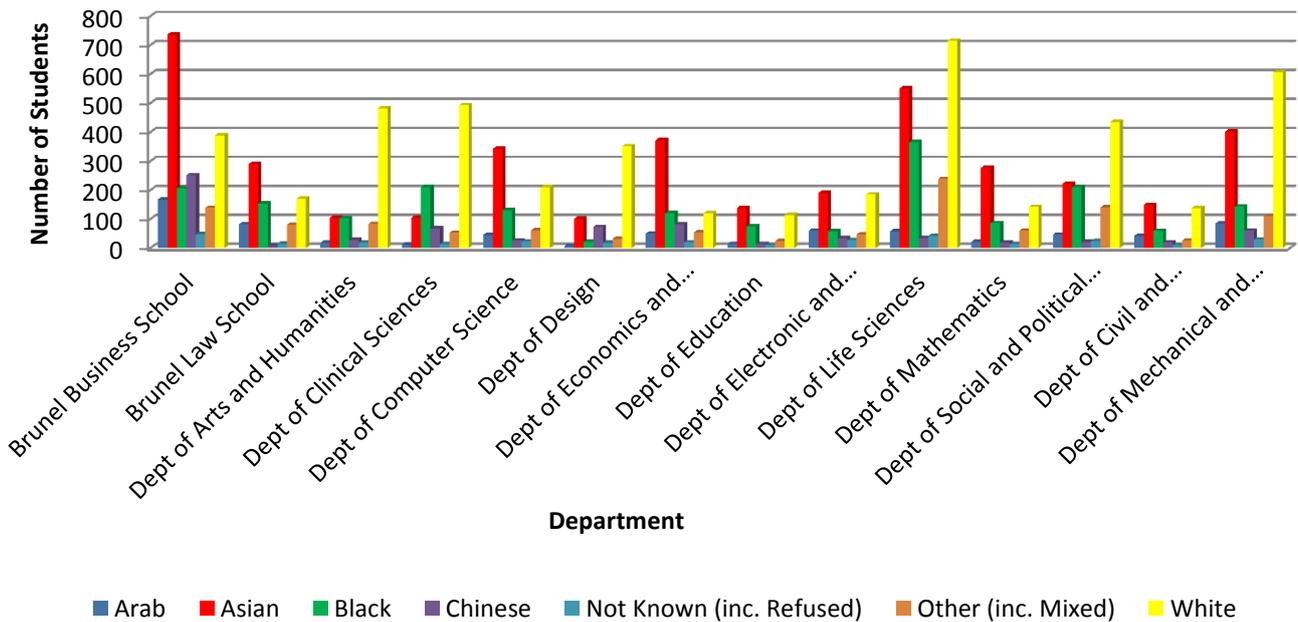
From our UK domiciled students, which makes up 76.08% of our total student population in 2017/18, 62.04% come from a BME background, representing an increase from the previous year (61.38%). The BME student profile measures well against the rest of the UK higher education sector, which has a UK-domiciled BME student profile of 21% in the UK or 24.1% in England (ECU, 2016). The University draws a number of students from the London area and the Greater London boroughs where 45.4% of UK-domiciled students are from a BME background (ECU, 2016).

Figure 6: Student population by ethnicity



Despite the University’s overall ethnically diverse student population, this is not represented across each of the academic disciplines. For example, there are significantly higher proportions of White students in the Department of Design 58.11%, Arts and Humanities 57.52%, and Clinical Sciences 51.62%.

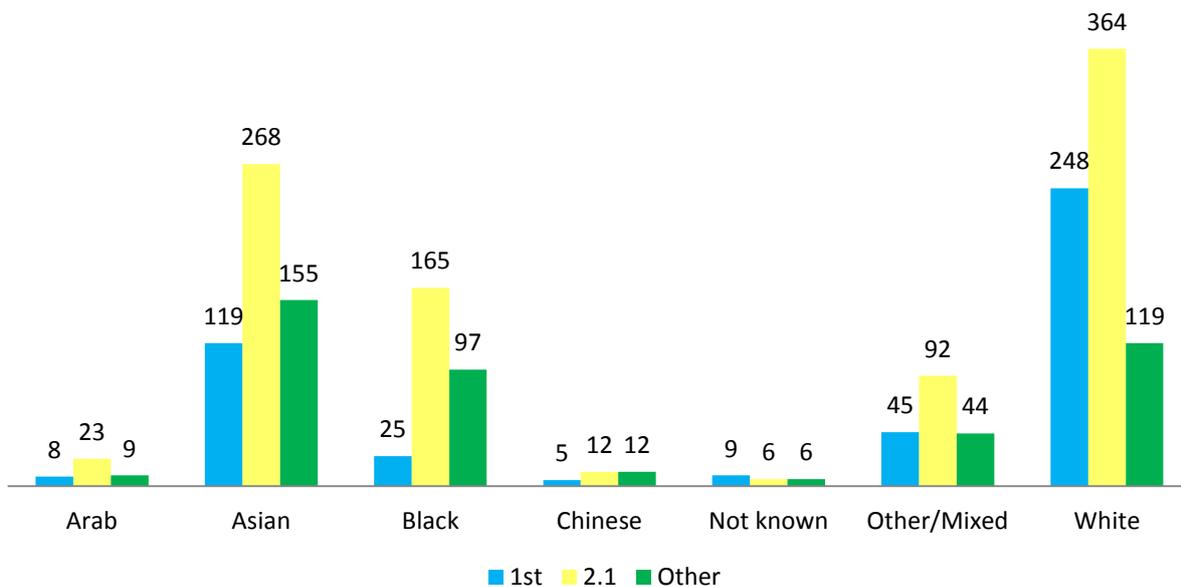
Figure 7: Student ethnic population by academic department



Attainment according to ethnicity

As in previous years, White students continued to perform markedly better than all other ethnic groups with 83.72% of UK/EU students gaining a good degree. A lesser proportion of students of Arab ethnicity (77.50%), Asian/Asian British ethnicity (71.14%) and Chinese (58.62%) achieved a good degree in the same year. Students whose ethnicity was recorded as Black/Black British were markedly below the University's overall good degree performance, at 66.20%, a drop from the previous year (67.31%).

Figure 8: Student ethnicity by attainment of good degree 2016/17



The Student Success Project is working to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed at Brunel University London. One way of measuring student success is by looking at the attainment of 'good degrees'. An attainment gap is the difference in 'good degrees' awarded to different groups of students. Research by the Higher Education Funding Council England (HEFCE) in 2015 showed that across the UK, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students are less likely to achieve top degrees compared to white students. This gap persists even once factors such as entry qualifications, socio-economic status and subject area are controlled for³.

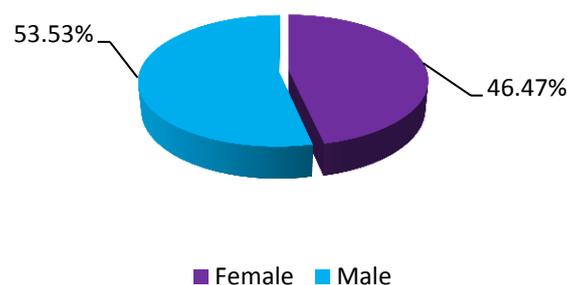
The ECU data for the sector highlights that the attainment gap between white and black students qualifying with a First/2:1 degree was 25.3% in 2015/16. At Brunel the attainment gap for black students has been a particular concern, which is currently being addressed through the Student Success Project, and as a result has seen the gap reduce to 14.2% in 2016/17. This compares extremely favourably to England overall where the Black-White attainment gap is 21.8%, the attainment gap for Asian students appears to have plateaued at around 11%, which is slightly below the figure reported for England (13.2%) (HESA data 2016/17)⁴.

10. Gender

Our student gender profile (46.47% female) is slightly lower than that recorded across the UK higher education sector where 56.2% are female and 43.8% are male (ECU, 2016). At undergraduate level, the profile remains fairly similar with a female representation of 45.78%, compared to the sector at 55.3% (ECU, 2016).

The gender profile remains consistent at postgraduate taught and postgraduate research, where women account for 46.74% (PGT) and 44.59% (PGR). In relation to mode of study, women make up 48.72% of students that study part-time. This represents a decrease from 51.82% in the previous year, and is lower than the proportion of women studying part-time at all levels across the UK higher education sector (60.3% ECU, 2016).

Figure 9: Overall student population by gender 2017/18

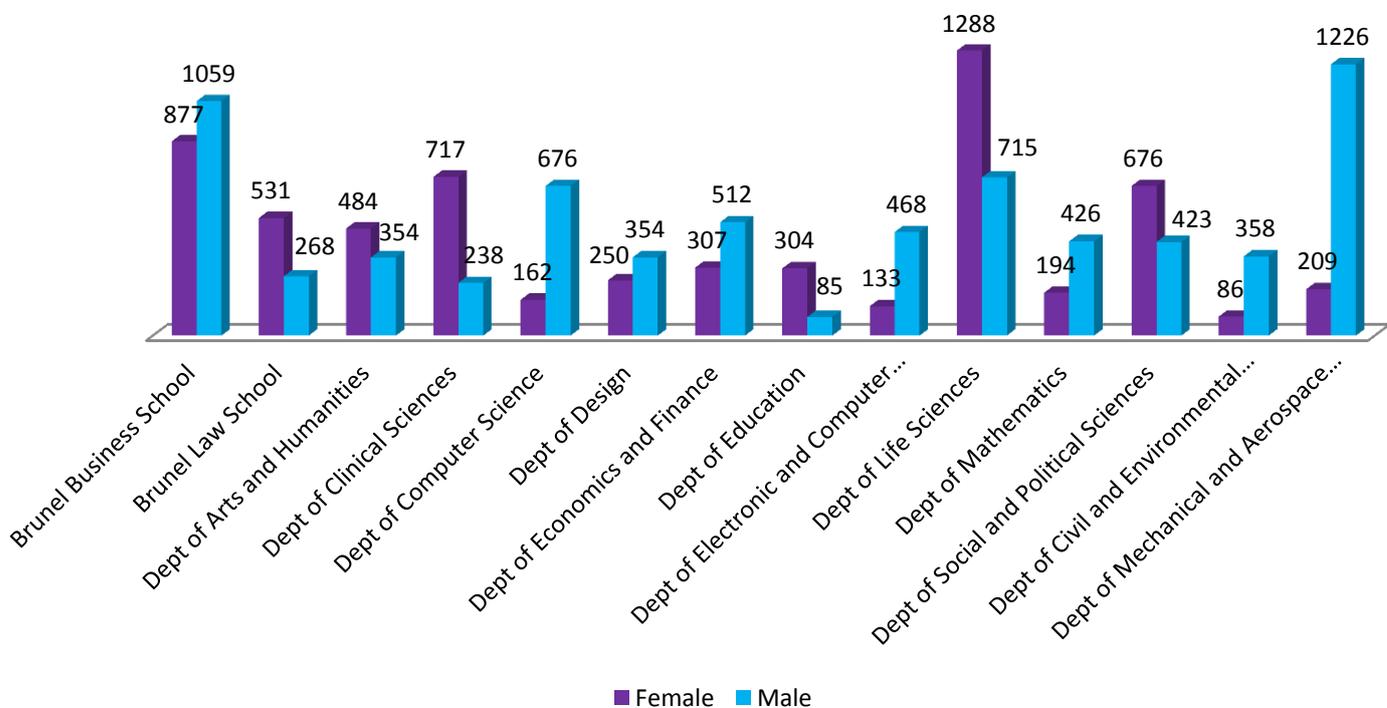


³ <http://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/student-success>

⁴ [https://intra.brunel.ac.uk/m/BIASSC/201718%20Documents/Extraordinary%20Meeting%20\(Access%20and%20Participation%20Plan\)%20of%20BIASSC%2016-4-2018/Reserved/Papers/APP_v3.docx#search=access%20and%20participation](https://intra.brunel.ac.uk/m/BIASSC/201718%20Documents/Extraordinary%20Meeting%20(Access%20and%20Participation%20Plan)%20of%20BIASSC%2016-4-2018/Reserved/Papers/APP_v3.docx#search=access%20and%20participation)

Despite the University’s overall student gender profile, it is evident that men and women are not distributed in the same way across different disciplines. There are significant under-representations of women in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering (14.57%), Civil and Environmental Engineering (19.37%) and Computer Sciences (19.33%). The representation of women in engineering remains below that in the sector (16.7%), however is slightly above (17.2%) for Computer Sciences (ECU, 2016). Conversely, there are under representations of men in Education (21.85%), Clinical Sciences (24.92%), Law (33.54%) and Life Sciences (35.70%). Comparison to the sector the data shows that men in Education is above the sector representation in this discipline (24%) and subjects allied to medicine, clinical and life sciences account for 21%, highlighting that we are above the sector average in these areas (ECU, 2016).

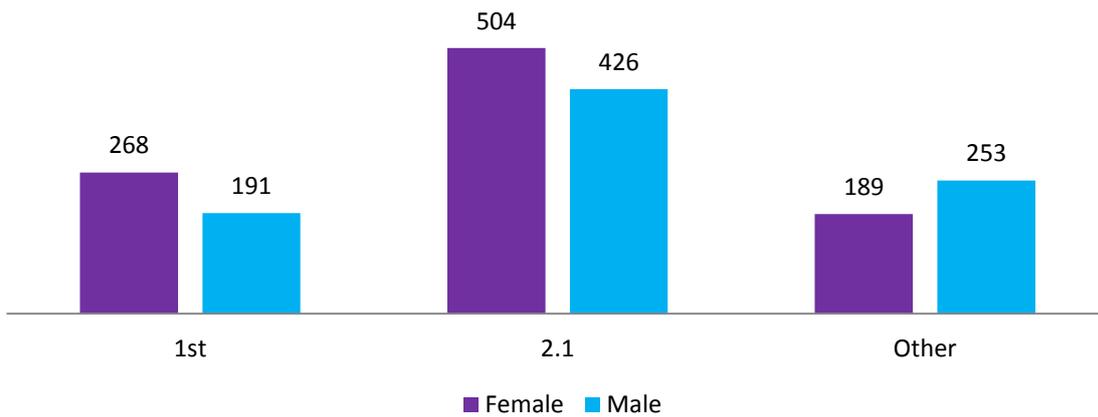
Figure 10: Student population by gender and academic department



Attainment according to gender

In terms of ‘good degrees’ in 2016/17, women marginally outperformed men (55.58% compared to 44.42%). Despite the under-representation of women in Engineering and Technology female students markedly outperformed male students, 66.67% vs 61.46% however, this is not statistically significant. Male students outperformed female students, 70.37% vs 61.90% in Computer Sciences, and despite the significantly lower number of male students in Clinical Sciences, male students outperformed female students, 79.31% vs 77.03%.

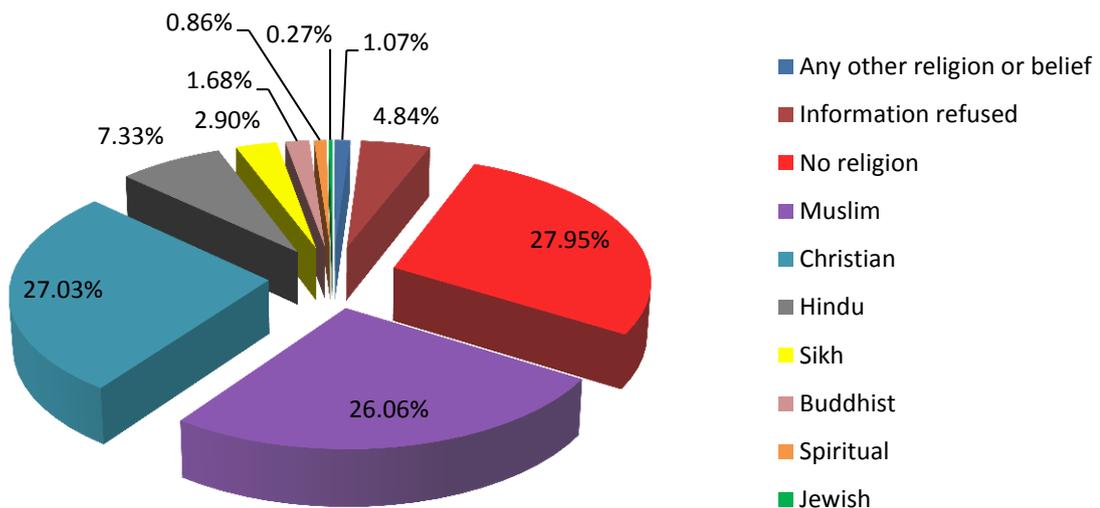
Figure 11: Student gender by attainment of good degree 2016/17



11. Religion

Religion or belief refers to the full diversity of religious and belief affiliations within the UK, including non-religious and philosophical beliefs such as atheism, agnosticism and humanism. The data highlights that there is a significant percentage of students reporting no religion, followed by Christian which for the purposes of this report, all Christian denominational options have been aggregated into a single Christian category including; Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Church of England, Ireland and Scotland. More than a quarter of our student population report a Muslim belief or religion.

Figure 12: Student population by religion or belief



This information demonstrates that compared to the sector Brunel has a significantly larger Muslim student population at 26.06% compared to the ECU data that reports 5.2% of students in institutions returning religion and belief data. 27.03% of our students identified as Christian compared to 23.1% across the sector, and 27.95% of our students reported no religion, again, this remains comparable to the sector at 31.1%.

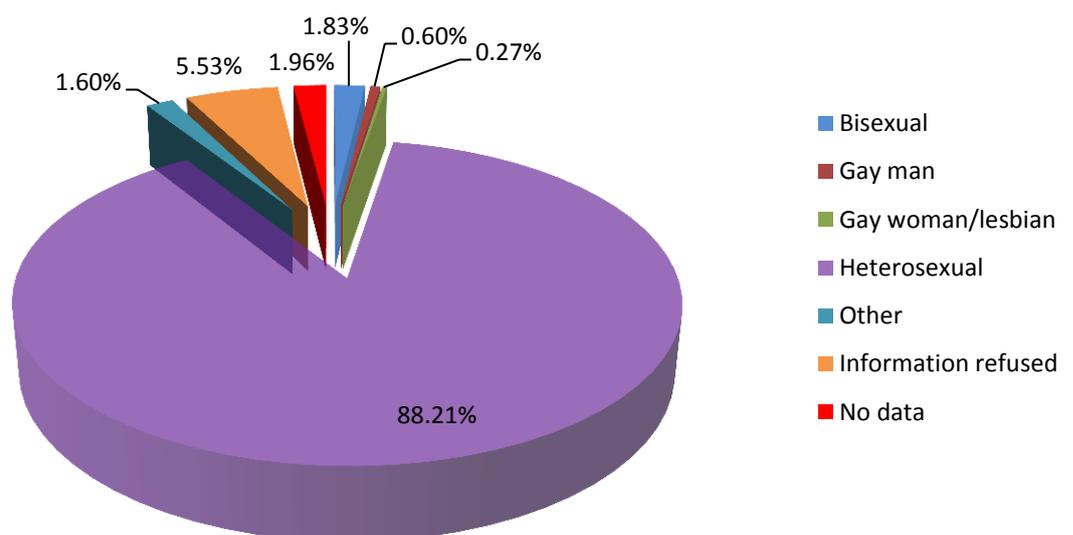
Brunel University London recognises that a significant percentage of the student population identify with a religion or belief, and has a devoted Chaplaincy to support students with their religion or belief. The Meeting House offers a dedicated space for all members of the University community to explore faith and spirituality, with a full time coordinating Anglican Chaplain and Inter Faith Advisor. Brunel Students Union also provides and supports societies and events for students to share and explore their religious beliefs.

12. Sexual Orientation

For the purpose of this report sexual orientation data has been analysed for reference, however, this data is taken from Brunel 1st March Fully-Enrolled student population data rather than Brunel 1st December. As data gathering develops, the University is expecting to report on this area in more detail in future Equality and Diversity reports.

The HESA sexual orientation field has the following possible options: bisexual, gay man, gay woman/lesbian, heterosexual, other, information refused. Brunel has included the same options as HESA. This information is recorded on the basis of the student’s own self-assessment. Sexual orientation is a person’s romantic or sexual orientation towards people of the same sex, people of opposite different sex, or to both sexes. This relates to a person’s feelings rather than their actions.

Figure 13: Student population by sexual orientation



The data demonstrates that a large proportion of our student body (88.21%) report as heterosexual. This is higher than the ECU data that reports 59% of students as heterosexual; however, 29.3% left this information blank, whereas only 1.96% of Brunel students left this information blank. All other information is comparable to the sector with double the percentage of students reporting gay man (0.60%) compared to gay woman (0.27%), and only 5.53% refusing to provide this information.

13. Conclusion

Student Equality and Diversity data analysis continues to provide invaluable insight to our student population. The aim is to ensure that our students have equal opportunity for success and that wherever possible barriers are reduced and positive outcomes are achieved. Brunel acknowledges that in order to achieve this aim it is necessary to continue to review and monitor our student community, as well as review our policies and practices to reduce any disadvantage where that may exist.

The University is continuing to embed its Equality Objectives and in doing so is taking positive steps through these objectives and additional initiatives, such as the Student Success Project; the continued roll out of Unconscious Bias, Cultural Awareness and Equality and Diversity training for all staff.

In addition to this, we are committed to improve the way the University engages with different groups of students by supporting a Carers Network; a Disability and Wellbeing Service, a dedicated Chaplaincy, as well as working closely with our Students' Union and Student Societies.

This report provides an overview of equality information and data on our student community. The data contained in this report serves to inform the Student Experience and Welfare Committee as well as staff and students across the University about our student population, to ensure an inclusive environment for study and to monitor the impact of any changes. The report is presented mindful of guidance regarding our obligations under equality law which covers the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The University must show how it has taken equality issues into account when implementing its policies and procedures and in the way it engages with its stakeholders. The elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, creation of equality of opportunities and the fostering of good relations are vital aspects of any Equality Impact Assessment process and as a result, the University must ensure it upholds its Equality duty at all times.

The University will continue to monitor and analyse information and data regarding our student population, and this report may be used as the basis for further investigation into areas that the University determines as a key concern.