

**University of Reading**  
**Equality and Diversity Information**  
**Report: 2013-2014**

**January 2015**

## Contents

p. 3	Index of data
p. 4-6	Executive Summary
p. 7-8	Summary of Recommendations
p. 9-11	Objective 1
p. 12-14	Objective 2
p. 15-18	Objective 3
p. 19-32	Objective 4
p. 33-35	Objective 5
p. 36-37	Objective 6
p. 38-39	Objective 7
p. 40-49	Objective 8

## **Index of data**

**Data and detailed commentary on staff is presented in Annex A – D**

- A – Staff demographic data
- B – Pay Gap Data
- C – Staff Appointments
- D – Diversity of decision making bodies

**Data and detailed commentary on students is presented in Annex 1 – 8b**

1. Applicant data covering applications, offers and enrolment for UG, PGT and PGR study during 2013/14
2. Application data during 2013/14 – Ethnicity
3. The profile of Reading University's student population for the year of 2012/13
4. Student population by Faculty
5. Student population by Programme Level
6. UG Progression
7. Retention data – All levels
8. UG Degree attainment
- 8b. PG Degree attainment

### **Abbreviations used in the report**

- AHSS - Arts, Humanities and Social Science
- BAME - Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
- DAS - Disability Advisory Service
- HARC - Health, Advocacy, Care and Respect advisors
- HBS - Henley Business School
- LS - Life Science
- NSS - National Student Survey
- OIA - Office of the Independent Adjudicator
- PGR - Postgraduate Research
- PGT - Postgraduate Taught
- RUSU - Reading University Student Union
- SC - Science
- UG - Undergraduate

## Executive Summary

The University is proud to have a strong history of demonstrating tolerance and promoting equality of opportunity. The University has a diverse range of students and staff and seeks to ensure that all students and employees are able to fulfil their potential and talent regardless of their background.

### Staff

The University's Equality Policy and Objectives, set out priorities for action, against which progress is measured in this document. Key achievements in the 2013/14 academic year are detailed below. There continues to be particular progress in the understanding of and support for women's career development, along with further increases in declaration rates and the introduction of new staff networks. Successes have included:

- Participation of women from across the University in both the Aurora (10) and Springboard (64) programmes, focused on career development aspiring leaders.
- Introduction of a 'Women at Reading' network
- The continued commitment to the promotion of women in science through the Athena Swan Charter Mark;
- Further increase in declaration rates for sexual orientation and religion and belief.
- Became a Stonewall Diversity Champion, making our first submission to the Stonewall Workplace Index and introduced a staff LGBT network.
- Delivery of training on unconscious bias to over 100 staff
- Some progress in the representation of elected women on Senate following direct communications urging greater representation.
- The University took steps to dismiss two members of staff as a result of conduct considered to be harassment related to protected characteristics.

### *Key challenges and future focus*

Although there are areas of continued progress, there is still much work to do. To support this, the University's Executive Board has agreed a new strategic approach to Diversity and Inclusion for staff. The approach builds on the evidence available and provides a focus on three key areas where significant progress is sought. They are:

1. **Gender:** to ensure parity in the progression, involvement in decision making and leadership, and pay arrangements for women. Key challenges include lower levels of representation by women in the more senior grades (from Grade 8), very small numbers of women on decision-making bodies, the need to continue to reduce the gender pay gap amongst the senior staff;
2. **Ethnicity:** to broaden the representation of BAME staff across all job families, improve progression rates, increase involvement in decision making and leadership roles. Key challenges include low levels of representation from BAME staff beyond the lowest grades, differences in the distribution of reward and recognition tools, and variations in success rates on application for roles at the

University. The picture is complex and there is a need to understand the variations between different ethnic groups and also in relation to nationality. The University is currently working on the Race Equality Charter Mark in an attempt to try and progress work in this area; and

3. **Sexual orientation:** to ensure that all members of staff feel comfortable in being themselves at work and are confident to be open about their sexuality if they wish to do so. Key challenges include seeking a continued increase in the disclosure rates on sexual orientation, and ensuring that the culture at the University supports open dialogue about sexual diversity. The University has become a Stonewall Diversity Champion and has recently been rated 179 out of 397 organisations in the Workplace Index. We will continue to work to ensure that we are a positive employer in this area.

The University's Executive Board had also recently appointed Diversity Champions from the Board for all protected characteristics. We look forward to working with them in driving forward our Diversity and Inclusion aspirations.

## **Students**

Key achievements in 2013/14 include:

- Completion of the BME Attainment Project leading to current implementation of recommendations. The project report has been contributed to the evidence base of the HEFCE funded national project on Differential attainment.
- The University's decision to engage with the Race Equality Charter Mark
- Instigation of a significant strategic project on undergraduate student success recognizing the increasingly diverse student population and aiming to enhance student academic attainment.
- Introduction of diversity and inclusion training (specifically in relation to teaching and learning) for both new and existing academic staff

## **Action for the Future**

As outlined above and in the text of this report there is significant work underway relating to student equality, diversity and inclusion focused in particular on enhancing the academic attainment of students with protected characteristics. The challenges in these areas are complex and this work is likely to take some time to have a significant impact of the statistics presented in this report for a number of year. However it is hoped that there will be some early impact as a result of initial awareness raising.

In addition, it will be important to draw some conclusions from work already begun exploring the apparent disparity between the proportion of offers made to mature and to BAME applicants.

Finally, the 2013/14 data on appeals and complaints along with the analysis of disability declarations prompts some consideration of how we can better support front-line staff to better identify and support students with mental health conditions.

### **Recommendations**

1. The University will need to consider how and to what level academic and other front line staff should be equipped to understand, identify and offer appropriate support for students with mental health conditions.
2. Draw conclusions from the work already begun on understanding the lower undergraduate offer rate to applicants above the age of 21.
3. Draw conclusions from the work already begun on understanding the lower offer rates to BAME applicants.

The University's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Group will continue to monitor progress against the objectives and will oversee the delivery of the recommendations made within the report.

**Caroline Bryan, Assistant Director of HR (People & Talent)**

**Dr Patricia Woodman, Director of Student Development and Access**

### Summary of Recommendations:

Number	Objective	Recommendation
1	1	Review the collection of data and effectiveness of recording cases relating to discriminatory behaviour.
2	1	Ensure that the new School records of student complaints are reviewed centrally to identify the existence, nature and frequency of any cases involving unfair discrimination.
3	1	Review the role of the Harassment and HARC Advisors and the level of contact made with them.
		Review the use and marketing of Employee Care.
4	2	University wide initiative to increase the disclosure rates, utilising the new release of 'Employee Self Service' working with HR Partners to explore the reasons for low disclosure rates on protected characteristics in their areas.
5	3	Reforms to the senior pay arrangements for both Professorial and Grade 9 staff to be taken forward.
6	3	Consideration of the distribution of rewards (contribution points, increments, lump sums) to be taken forward.
7	3	Proposals to provide decision making groups for reward with diversity information for their area to provide some context for their consideration.
8	3	Consideration to be given to the lower success rate for older staff in reward committees.
9	4	Continued use of leadership development programmes to increase the proportion of women in more senior roles.
10	4	Continued support for the attainment and retention of Athena Swan Awards to increase gender representation in science, and participation in the Gender Equality Charter Mark.
11	4	Continue to deliver unconscious bias training and embed it in core programmes that reach all decision makers.
12	4	Consider the actions needed to increase the proportion of BAME staff in higher grades and across job families, particularly Professional and Managerial and Academic and Research, with a particular focus on increasing representation from Black and Black British and Asian and Asian British staff.
13	4	Continue the efforts to support a broader range of applicants to the Personal Titles process for academic promotion.
14	4	Support the already established BAME Attainment Gap Project and review its findings in due course
15	4	Further investigate the patterns of differential male-female progression and attainment at both UG and PG levels.
16	6	Further exploration to assessing whether senior members of staff who are not office holders can sit on University level Committees to increase the diversity of committee membership.
17	6	The University's emerging approach to talent identification and management should be used to ensure that there is a diverse range of talented individuals, from a range of ages, ready to take up leadership positions in the future.
18	6	Consideration of the arrangements for appointing to Council and Senate to consider how to increase membership from

		under-represented groups.
19	7	Continued embedding of diversity training, and a review of the Diversity in the Workplace tool to ensure that it is fit for purpose and linked to individual training records.
20	7	Exploring further opportunities to enable staff and students to build up networks and attend learning events which promote equality and diversity.
21	7	Support RUSU to expand diversity training.
22	8	Undertake work to understand the lower UG offer rate for those applicants above 21.
23	8	Develop a better understanding of the lower offer rates to BAME applicants in general and specific ethnicities in particular at all levels of study.
24	8	Continue to monitor the gap between male and female representation particularly at Undergraduate level. Be mindful of this gap when planning outreach work with schools.



## **The University of Reading's Equality Objectives**

**2013-2014**

### **Objective 1**

**Oppose any form of discrimination unless it can be objectively justified as genuine, substantial, reasonable and within the law. The University will communicate and raise awareness of the role of staff and students in minimising and challenging inappropriate behaviour and practices and evidence of discriminatory behaviour (including harassment) will be treated as a potential disciplinary matter which may, in turn, result in sanction up to and including staff dismissal or student expulsion in line with our staff grievance and disciplinary procedures and student complaints and disciplinary procedures.**

#### **Summary:**

- There have been 4 reported cases of staff grievances undertaken during 2013/14 that relate to equality, diversity and harassment. They related variously to harassment, race, gender, disability and sexual orientation. Of the cases, 3 have concluded with 2 being upheld resulting in the dismissal of the staff accused, and 1 not upheld. One case remains ongoing and is being addressed through the appropriate processes.
- The University's 9 volunteer Harassment Advisors, who provide a service available to staff and students, were contacted regarding 11 separate issues during 2013/14. Two of these matters were reported to concern equality and diversity (both from members of staff). One related to marriage and civil partnership and one related to sexual orientation and race.
- Of the formal complaints which reached stage 1 or 2 of the student complaints process, two involved issues around disability. Both were partially upheld, appropriate measure were put in place and apologies issued.
- If not resolved to their satisfaction students may take their complaints to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). In 2013/14, although a number of cases were submitted against the University none were based on equality and diversity grounds.
- Of the 43 student academic appeals cases heard by the University Senate two were upheld on the basis of procedure errors in relation to their disability and 9 students had their appeal upheld either wholly or partially, due to extenuating circumstances relating to their physical or mental health.
- The University's 10 Health, Advocacy, Respect and Care (HARC) Advisors, who provide a service to staff only, were contacted regarding 2 separate issues during

2013/14. One of these issues was reported to concern equality and diversity relating to gender.

- EmployeeCare, a new Employee Assistance Programme that provides a comprehensive range of free and confidential support services to staff launched in November 2012. Between August 2013-July 2014 there were:
  - 79 calls for counselling;
  - 18 referrals for face to face counselling and over 90 sessions;
  - 22 calls for legal information;
  - 98 log-ins to the online portal and 374 page views.

As a result of confidentiality it is not possible to analyse the nature of the calls in detail, however, the telephone counselling was equally used by men and women. Face to face counselling was predominantly used by women with 61% during the period.

The use of the service during this year is lower than the first 9 months of the Programme launch. It is important that we consider how to ensure that staff are aware of this as a supportive service.

### **Analysis:**

The available data shows limited instances of complaints regarding equality and diversity issues. Although a limited number of student complaints or appeals have been recorded as relating to unfair discrimination it is noted that only the most serious and unresolved complaints are escalated to University level and therefore recorded. An unknown number of complaints are resolved at School/Departmental level but there has been no formal record of the nature of these complaints.

The University believes that it has clear policies and procedures in place, setting out the seriousness with which it views discriminatory treatment. The University continues to communicate and raise awareness of the role of staff and students in minimising and challenging inappropriate behaviour or practices, including the launch of Values for Working Together and Professional Behaviours in October 2012 which provide a framework within which the University can work effectively towards the achievement of excellence. The documentation was sent to all existing members of staff, is a core element of New Staff Induction training, and is linked explicitly to reward and recognition arrangements.

More work is also happening on helping all staff to be more aware of the impact of their behaviour towards other people. This is being embedded in a number of learning and development activities.

Although there has been a drop in the number of contacts with HARC and in the use of EmployeeCare, there has been a slight increase in the use of Harassment Advisors. The University is confident that it has put in place a range of mechanisms to support staff and students should they need peer or expert support. This support is also provided by the part-time student officers that continue to operate within the Reading University

Students' Union (RUSU) to campaign for, represent, support and celebrate their members. They are:

- Disabled Students' Officer;
- Women's Officer;
- Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Officer;
- Postgraduate Students' Officer;
- International Students' Officer;
- Environment and Ethics Officer;
- LGBT+ Officer; and
- International Students' Officer.

2013/14 saw the first year of formal recording of student complaints at stage 1 (i.e. at the School level). This revealed no evidence of unfair discrimination. However analysis of student academic appeal cases does indicate a possible lack of awareness with regard to disability (including mental health).

Increasing number of students are presenting at Universities across the UK with mental health conditions. Student Wellbeing Services are adjusting to cope with this phenomenon. However, staff in senior pastoral care roles have expressed concern about how well equipped other academic and front-line staff are to identify and offer appropriate support for such students, including the ability to recognise where reasonable adjustments should be made.

### **Recommendations and conclusions:**

The evidence suggests that there is no significant evidence of discriminatory behaviour or practices across the University by either members of staff or the student population. However, there is a need to review the way in which data is collected. From Spring 2014 Heads of Schools are required to record any student complaints that reach stage 1 (for the attention of the Head of School). It will be important to put in place mechanisms that bring School records together for review across the University to ascertain the full picture, and for equality and diversity purposes, to identify the existence, nature and frequency of any cases involving unfair discrimination.

The University will also review the reduced contact made with HARC Advisors and Employee Care and work with those involved to ensure they have the support they need.

The University will continue to monitor the situation carefully and continue to develop its strategy for all staff, students and other stakeholders to ensure that this objective remains central to the University ethos.

The University will need to consider how and to what level academic and other front line staff should be equipped to understand, identify and offer appropriate support for students with mental health conditions.

## Objective 2

Build on existing work to increase the disclosure of equality related information from both staff and students to allow for better planning, delivery, monitoring and assessment of the outcome of programmes designed to address areas of inequality.

### Summary:

The University collects data on a range of protected characteristics, as required by HESA.

The University's declaration rates are as follows:

### Staff

Protected characteristic	Percentage Declaring (%) 2013-14	Percentage Declaring (%) 2012-13	Percentage Declaring (%) 2011-12
Gender	100%	100.00%	99.95%
Ethnicity	92.59%	94.67%	93.3%
Disability	89.65%	90.00%	88.8%
Sexual orientation	32.57%	27.45%	9.1%
Age	100%	100.00%	100%
Religion or belief	33.5%	29.88%	Not reported

### Students

2013/14	UG	PGT	PGR	IFP/Foundation	TOTAL
Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Ethnicity	96.3%	95.2%	93.8%	81.1%	95.5%
Religious belief (new entrants only)	88.6%	79.3%	86.8%	63.2%	84.0%
Sexual orientation (new entrants only)	89.1%	71.3%	73.8%	53.2%	79.8%
Disability*	11.9%	5.8%	6.5%	3.3%	9.8%

\*This figure must be treated with care. Students are only asked to declare whether they have a disability. It is assumed that those who have not declared a disability are not disabled.

## **Analysis:**

### ***Staff***

Data for staff on protected characteristics are collected on appointment or subsequently through the University's Employee Self Service system. The data shows an improvement in the collection of data across all but two protected characteristics. There has been a small reduction in the disclosure on disability (although an increase in some Faculties), and Ethnicity, which we hope the work on the Race Equality Charter Mark will seek to improve.

Sexual orientation and religion and belief, have again shown improvements with an additional 450 staff disclosing.

This follows requests to staff to update their protected characteristics when updating their information for HESA returns in the Autumn of 2013. It also follows active discussion of the need for individuals to ensure that their personal circumstances information is up to date as part of the New Staff Induction programme.

More detailed analysis shows that there are some areas of the University where declaration rates are notably lower. This is the case in the Henley Business School, the Faculty for Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, and amongst sessional staff. However there has been an increase in declaration rates for disability in particular in the Faculties, which may be as a result of an encouragement to disclose personal circumstances as part of promotion and research activities.

The University is mindful that data on disability is not static, and that to a large extent it relies on students and employees correctly identifying that they have a disability in accordance with the definition set out in the Equality Act 2010. To this end there is likely to be both over and under-reporting of disabilities that fall within the statutory definition. As such, it will never be possible to have a totally accurate picture in relation to this characteristic, but information should be such as to enable the identification of trends.

The focus is therefore on ensuring where a declaration is made, we work closely with the individual to ensure they are supported through appropriate measures and reasonable adjustments.

### ***Students***

Data for students is obtained on entry from either the UCAS form for Home/EU undergraduates, or from the University's application form for other students. The applications data in **Annex 2** shows almost 100% declaration for gender and age but 18.2% of applicants did not declare their ethnicity at application stage. This is a significant drop from 2012/13 where 33.5% did not declare. These gains have been made in PG applications where non-declaration has fallen from around 50% in 2012/13 to 11.1% and 9.6% for PGT and PGR applications respectively. This significant change coincides with the first full year of online applications for PG programmes.

On commencement of study each year students are required to formally enrol or re-enrol and during this process have the opportunity to alter (or input) their ethnic origin (and

for the first time in 2013/14 their religion/belief and sexual orientation). The Table above shows that declaration rates for ethnicity (on enrolment) are strong and these are stable at round 95% to 96% over recent years. It is also encouraging to see such high declaration rates for religion/belief and sexual orientation.

Changes to disability status cannot be made by the student but they are invited to contact the Disability Advisory Service (DAS) who will make changes on their behalf.

As noted above declaration rates for student disability must be treated carefully. Students are not invited to declare that they have no disability, only that they have a disability. Where no declaration is made there is an assumption the student is not disabled. Additionally, the University has noted that as the year progresses the number of students with a declared disability increases. This is likely to be as a result of specific learning difficulties, especially dyslexia being identified and diagnosed in order to access additional support and also related to the ability to claim Disabled Student Allowance.

### **Recommendations and conclusions:**

Whilst there are improvements to the declaration rates on sexual orientation and religion and belief for staff, the University will continue to take steps to increase the level of declarations. HR Partners will work with their Deans and Heads of Schools to explore the reasons for lower rates of disclosure in areas where disclosure rates are lower. It is also hoped that by becoming a Stonewall Diversity Champion this will encourage more employees to declare their sexual orientation.

During 2014/15 we intend to launch a campaign to increase the levels of disclosure which we hope will make a significant step forward.

### Objective 3

**Work continuously towards identifying and addressing any unjustifiable inequality in pay and/or reward amongst different groups of staff.**

#### Summary:

- Data on the gender pay gap is provided in **Annex B**. It shows that:
  - As at 1 January 2014 there has been a very slight increase in the size of the overall University gender pay gap from 20.85% in 2013 to 20.92%;
  - An analysis of gender pay gap by grade continues to demonstrate no significant gender pay gaps in Grades 1-8; and
  - A pay gap persists for senior staff and has increased from 10.12 in 2012/13 to 25.38 in 2013/14.
- Data on the ethnicity pay gap is also provided at **Annex B**. It shows that there are no significant ethnicity pay gaps in Grades 1-8. There is a pay gap of 4.94% amongst senior staff (a decrease from 9.05% in 2012/13), largely as a result of a small increase in the continuing low number of BAME staff in senior roles.
- There was a further increase in the amount of awards for additional incremental progression and contribution points awarded following changes to the Rewarding Staff arrangements in 2012/13. This resulted in:
  - 52 cases being made for additional increments of which 41 were successful; and
  - 56 cases made for a contribution point of which 48 were successful.
- Slightly fewer lump sum awards were made in 2013/14 457, following 482 lump sum awards made in 2012-13. The value of the awards range from £50-£1500 with the average value of an award increasing in 2013/14 to £512 from £493.33 the previous year. Nearly double the amount of awards were made to women, than men.
- During 2013/14 600 awards were made through the Celebrating Success Scheme (620 nominations, 600 approved, 18 rejected and 2 awaiting approval), representing 19.21% of staff. This is an increase of nearly 100 on the previous year. The majority (65%) were awarded to women, largely as a result of them being awarded to staff in more junior, or in academic and administrative support roles.

#### Analysis:

##### *Pay gap*

There has been an increase this year in the size of the overall gender pay gap at the University. However, the problem persists because of the distribution of women across University grades, with clustering in the lower grades. Whilst women represent 56.53 %

of the total population, **Annex A** demonstrates that women account for a greater proportion staff working in academic and administrative, casual, sessional, and professional and managerial roles. Indeed women are in the majority at every grade (with the exception of Grade 2) until the more senior grades of Grade 8 and above.

Two key drivers that continue to influence senior staff pay are faculty and spot salary (salary above the range for the assigned zone), with the Henley Business School having the greatest impact from a faculty perspective as a result of the high proportion of senior men in the faculty and market forces. There was also a gender imbalance with spot salaries where more men than women were on them.

Although there are now more female professors in Zone 2, than last year, there are a lot of male professors on spot salaries above the maximum for Zone 2. The average salaries for men and women are much closer to each other and the average salary is much closer to the minimum salary for the zone than the maximum. This means that the majority of both men and women are being paid towards the lower end of the zone. However, no professorial zone favours women in terms of the gender pay gap.

There has been a slight decrease in the ethnicity pay gap from 23.92% to 22.18%. **Annex A** demonstrates that there are no Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Grade 9 staff and as a result, the gap relates solely to the Professoriate. The gap is driven by the distribution of BAME professors in the professorial pay zones as the 17 (compared to 229 white professors) are predominantly in the lower professorial zones.

### ***Rewarding Staff***

The University encourages, recognises and rewards excellence in its staff and for their contributions to the University with arrangements including Celebrating Success Vouchers, Lump Sum Awards, accelerated incremental progression, contribution points, and merit based promotion (see information under Objective 4). In 2012/13 significant changes were made to the arrangements for rewarding staff via the Promoting Excellence Project. This included introducing Reward Committees at Faculty and Service level ensuring that those making the decisions about reward were closer to the activity being rewarded. The changes were well-received and led to twice as many University employees receiving recognition for their contribution to, and demonstration of the Values and Behaviours for Working Together, compared with the previous year.

In addition, for the first time a 'Personal Circumstances' declaration form was included in the application for accelerated incremental progression; contribution points and merit based promotions. Amongst the cases made to the Reward Committees for incremental progression or contribution points:

- 78 cases were from women compared to 43 cases from men.
- 111 cases were from those who had declared themselves as white, compared to 7 from BAME backgrounds and 3 where the ethnicity was unknown. There was no distinction between the success rates for white and BAME staff, mirroring the overall high rate of success. However, there were very few cases from BAME staff reflecting the low number of individuals from BAME backgrounds in those job families.
- The majority of awards went to staff between the age of 30-40



### ***Lump sum***

Nearly twice as many women as men received Lump Sum Awards. However, men received on average £90 more than women. The average award for women was £482.20, whereas the average award for men was £571.45. The minimum award for men was £150, three times higher than the minimum award for women. The maximum award for men was £2,000, whereas the maximum given to women was £1,500.

When analysed by job family, 166 awards were made to Professional & Managerial Staff, 151 awards were made to Academic & Research Staff, 136 awards were made to Academic & Administrative Support Staff (116 Clerical, 20 Technical) and only 4 awards were made to Ancillary & Operational Support Staff.

Of the 457 Lump Sum Awards made, 412 awards were made to staff whose ethnicity is recorded as “white”, 30 were made to staff whose ethnicity is recorded as “black and minority ethnic” (BAME), and 15 were made to staff whose ethnicity is recorded as “not known” or “information refused”. The average value of awards made to white staff was £513.83, whereas the average value of awards made to BAME staff was £482.67, a difference of £32.16.

Understanding the distribution of lump sum awards amongst the job families helps to explain the distribution of awards, as the largest proportions went to staff in academic and administrative support, and professional and managerial job families, both areas dominated by female members of staff, with low levels of representation from BAME staff.

### ***Celebrating Success Vouchers***

The Celebrating Success scheme was launched in November 2012 to provide an immediate and tangible reward to staff for a job well done. The budgets were devolved to managers and the scheme is on-line to make it quick and easy to use. The scheme has proved to be very popular. In the first year of running the scheme 508 awards were made, representing 15.65% of staff. During 2013/14 600 awards were made (620 nominations, 600 approved, 18 rejected and 2 awaiting approval), representing 19.21% of staff.

The scheme continues to reinforce the understanding of the Professional Behaviours, which were introduced in 2012.

Celebrating Success vouchers were introduced in 2012-13 to increase the range of ways in which staff could receive reward and recognition of their work. They continue to grow in popularity. During the year:

- 600 vouchers were issued in total, with the largest proportion (42%) going to those in Academic and Administrative Support roles (clerical and technical roles);
- Managerial staff received awards as male Professional and Managerial staff;
- 86% of awards were made to staff whose ethnicity is recorded as “white”. Only 10% of recipients have an ethnicity recorded as “Black or Minority Ethnic”,

however this was an increase on last year by 2.5%. Where there are greater proportions of BAME staff receiving an award it is in the lower grades, but even there the proportion of awards made is not representative of the BAME staff population;

- There is a reasonably even distribution of awards by age, with the only notably low proportions of awards to those under the age of 25 and over the age of 65, where there are fewer staff.

### **Recommendations and conclusions:**

Whilst a gender pay gap in the senior grades remains persistent, the thorough review of Professorial and Senior Staff pay arrangements by the Working Group has helped to identify mechanisms to address this for 2014/15. These efforts include reforms to the pay arrangements for both Professorial and Grade 9 staff.

The reward committees are having a positive impact in increasing numbers of awards, but the applications for reward for incremental progression and contribution points, and the distribution of lump sum awards is focused on staff in the Academic and Administrative Support and Professional and Managerial grades. This influences the distribution of awards and means that fewer men and BAME staff are receiving awards. Consideration will be given as to how to broaden this distribution.

There should also be consideration given to the action that could be taken to address the lower average value of lump sum awards made to women and BAME staff.

Consideration will also be given to why those over the age of 55 are less successful in obtaining an award.

## Objective 4

**Take action to ensure that individuals were selected, developed, appraised, rewarded, promoted and otherwise treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities and were provided with equality of opportunity within the University.**

This objective relates to:

- i. **Staff** in terms of appointment and promotion (reward data for staff is set out and analysed under Objective 3), and
- ii. **Students** in terms of progression, retention and attainment (application and admission data for students is set out and analysed under objective 8)

### i) Staff

#### Summary:

Full demographic data for University staff is provided at **Annex A**. It shows little change from 2012/13 in relation to gender, ethnicity or disability. The main difference is that increasing data is now available on religion and belief and sexual orientation following another significant increase in disclosure rates. Key findings are that:

- The majority of staff are women, and women are in the majority in almost every grade (except Grade 2) until Grade 8, where after there is a steady decline in their representation;
- Whilst almost 11.54% of the total University population is Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic there are significant variations across the University with the greatest proportion of BAME staff working in the lower grades and in Ancillary and Operational or Casual roles;
- 57% of applicants were women with a success rate of 8.5%, marginally higher than the success rate of 6.98% for men and but a decrease from 15% and 11% respectively in 2011/12. The lower success rate is due to a reduction in new staff appointments by one third;
- The highest proportion of applicants were white at 68%, followed by 27% from BAME applicants. White candidates were more likely to be successful, at 9%, compared to 4% BAME;
- 94% of applicants were listed as non-disabled, with just 3% declaring a disability. The success rates were marginally higher for non-disabled applicants, at 7.58% compared to 7.47%;
- There was a broad mix of applicants across different religions and beliefs, with varying success rates, largely determined by the size of the pool;
- Nearly twice as many men than women applied for promotion in 2013-14.
- Success rates for promotions for the Personal Titles process favoured men at 85% compared to women at 78% with the success rate for women being slightly lower than last year at 79%;
- Applications for promotion for the Personal Titles process were predominantly from white staff, largely as a result of the small numbers of BAME staff working as academic and research staff;

- The majority of applications for promotion through Personal Titles are from those aged 35-44 and success rates are broadly comparable regardless of age; and
- There were 13 successful cases for merit based promotion made and one unsuccessful case, 7 cases were from women, and all of the cases were made by those who identify themselves as white. Success cases were predominantly from staff aged between 30-39.

## **Analysis:**

The **demographic data** shows that:

### *Gender*

Women are predominant in the Academic and Administrative Support, Professional and Managerial, and casual and sessional job families. The only area of the University where women are in the minority is the Faculty of Science. The University hopes that the ongoing commitment to the Athena Swan Awards (with 6 of 8 science schools now holding an award) will help to address this challenge. Women continue to be underrepresented at senior levels of the University, however we are progressing with a number of initiatives to try and address this, including the Aurora and Springboard Programmes, as well as a Women@Reading network.

### *Ethnicity*

Whilst 11.54% of the total University population is Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic there are significant variations across the University, with the greatest proportions being found in the Chief Operating Officers Group and the Henley Business School. Student and Academic Services has the lowest proportion of BAME staff amongst the faculties, significantly lower than the 11.54% for the whole University at just 7.54%.

When viewed by job family it becomes apparent that the greatest proportion of BAME staff are working in Ancillary and Operational roles (34%), followed by Casual roles (15.28%). The proportion working in Professional and Managerial roles is far lower at 5.74%. This correlates to grade where there is a peak of BAME staff in Grade 1 (42.63%) which steadily declines until a further peak in Grade 6 (10.57%) to a cliff edge at Grade 9 where there are no BAME staff and only 6% of Professors. Within the job families the variation of ethnicity suggests that Black and Black British and Asian and Asian British staff are represented less amongst the Academic and Research, Professional and Managerial staff and in the higher grades at the University, with just 11 Black or Black British members of academic and research staff.

### *Age*

The Chief Operating Officer's Group has the youngest age profile with 23% of its staff under the age of 24, and 40% of the staff under the age of 34. Closely followed by Henley Business School with 11.87% of staff under the age of 24 and 35% of staff under the age of 34. Student and Academic Services has the next youngest age profile with 8.5% of staff under the age of 24 and 35% of staff under the age of 34. Conversely, the Faculty of Arts

Humanities and Social Sciences has the oldest age profile with 57% of the staff over the age of 45.

*Disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief*

On the remaining protected characteristics the numbers are too low to draw meaningful conclusions. There are no notable variations by job family.

### ***Staff Appointments***

Full information on staff appointments is provided in **Annex C**. In relation to recruitment, whilst the gap in success rates for men and women has narrowed, the gap in success rates between white and BAME applicants remains. There may be a link to nationality as the University's recruitment portal is available internationally but immigration restrictions limit the availability of some roles to international applicants. The correlation of nationality to ethnicity should be undertaken to determine whether this is the cause.

Unconscious bias training is now embedded into the Recruitment and Selection training, which is a mandatory course for those involved in this activity.

### ***Personal Titles***

Amendments were made to the Personal Titles process for the 2012-13 session to ensure that diversity of contribution is better reflected, enabling those individuals with a less traditional academic portfolio were recognised for the quality of their contribution.

In 2013-14 we introduced the opportunity for applicants to declare personal circumstances as part of their application. This was to encourage the relevant committee's to take account of this information when considering the evidence for promotion.

Men overall were more successful at 85% success rate and women at 78%. For applications to Professor the success rates were men 76% and women 71% and at Associate Professor men at 95% and women at 81%.

Interestingly, at the Faculty stage of the Personal Titles process, for application to Associate Professor women were more successful at 80% and men at 76%. For Professorial applications at Faculty stage the success rates were men at 91% and women at 87.5%.

- 12% of female lecturers applied for promotion to Associate Professor (same rate as last year), compared to 16% of male lecturers, which is an increase from 14.7% last year;
- 8% of female Associate Professors applied for promotion to Professor, compared to 17% of male Associate Professors. This is a turnaround from the previous year where 11% of female Associate Professors applied for promotion to Professor, compared to 7.7% of male Associate Professors; and

On ethnicity, applications predominantly came from white members of staff, who constitute the majority of that population.

- 13.5% of the eligible white population applied for the title of Professor compared to 8% of those in 'other ethnic groups' - but the numbers are incredibly small distorting the percentages;
- 15% of white staff applied for Associate Professor broadly comparable with the 9.5% of BME staff; and

In 2013-14 we received applications from 6 BAME staff, which is an increase on last year where we had no applications.

In terms of success, 70% of white applications were successful comparable with the 75% of those from 'other ethnic groups'. Caution must be taken however due to the low number of applications from that ethnic group.

The majority of applications across all academic grades are from those aged 35-44, which is unsurprising given the need to demonstrate academic distinction over a period of time and the greater density of individuals being from that age group.

Information is not available on the other protected characteristics as the levels of declaration are too low.

### ***Merit based promotions***

This was the first year that merit based promotion was open to all staff at the University. Previously it had been restricted to staff in Grades 6-8.

In total there were 13 successful cases for merit based promotion and one unsuccessful case. Of those cases, 7 were from women, all of which were successful. 6 cases were from men. 12 of the cases for merit based promotion were made by individuals who identify themselves as white and one where ethnicity was unknown. There was a spread of applicants from across the age brackets, but predominantly between 30-39 with 6 cases.

### **Recommendations**

- Further increase the proportion of women in more senior roles through the use of leadership development programmes;
- Continued support of the Athena Swan Awards to increase representation of women in STEM;
- Continue the roll-out a programme of unconscious bias training to all decision makers;
- Consider the actions needed to increase the proportion of BAME staff in higher grades and across job families, particularly Professional and Managerial and Academic and Research, with a particular focus on increasing representation from Black and Black British and Asian and Asian British staff;
- Continue the efforts to support a broader range of applicants to the Personal Titles process for academic promotion.

- Introduce equality and diversity profiling for the Personal Titles process to raise the awareness and influence thoughts around potential unconscious bias.
- University to review the criteria for promotion with a view to increasing the equality of opportunity.

## **ii) Students**

### **Student Progression, Retention and Attainment**

As in previous years student progression retention and attainment continues to be strong. In 2013/14 Only 2.5% of all students withdraw/suspended from their studies, 87% progressed to the next level of their UG studies on the first attempt with only a 0.5% (UG) and 5.8% (PG) of those who remained on course failing to gain a degree qualification.

The strong retention record is the result of an extensive network of both general and specific support. This includes:

- All UG students have personal tutors who support their academic and personal development. They are there to support students with difficulties and direct them to sources of more specialist support in the university. The majority of academic staff are personal tutors which creates a culture of support and pastoral care across the Schools in the University. Personal tutors are themselves supported by the Senior Tutor in each School who also offer a higher level of support to students in particularly challenging situations. PGT students are to have personal tutors also from 2014/15 and PGR students have both primary and secondary supervisors to support them on an individual basis.
- The University Counselling and Wellbeing Service provides professional counselling support to students with mental health conditions as well as to other students who are experiencing significant challenges with life at University. The mental health adviser works closely with students and the counselling service to further support students in their lives and studies.
- As further described under objective 5 the Disability Advisers provide advice for disabled students and applicants. This advice and preparatory work is essential to ensure that students with disabilities are equipped appropriately for their time at University. In addition the University provides a network of social and academic mentors who are essential to keeping some students on course and ensuring that others can work to the best of their ability.
- The University has a complement of 50 trained student peer supporters, who offer confidential informal support to other students.
- The University Study Advisors provide one-to-one support and guidance, as well as workshops to enhance all students' academic skills. They also work closely with Schools and provide study skills guidance embedded in the academic curriculum.
- The In-sessional English Support programme provides language and study support to all International students whose first language is not English. One-to-one support for writing and speaking as well as a termly programme of workshops is provided. As with the University Study Advisors, curriculum embedded support is

also provided to a large number of Schools where there are significant numbers of international students.

- The Graduate School works in partnership with academic schools and departments to provide PGR students with the training and support that they need to carry out their research and to be successful in their future careers. There is an extensive Researcher Development Programme, It also provides advice and pastoral support for students to complement that provided by academic schools and departments.
- University policies on suspension of studies, extenuating circumstances and 'Deemed Not to have Sat' are important for supporting students who find themselves in difficulty. These processes provide solutions for students to take time to recover, develop better coping strategies or to put additional support in place in order to return to their studies or their assessment commitments, without incurring the normal penalties.
- The University's policy on 'Academic engagement and fitness to study' introduced in 2012/13, has converted the punitive 'neglect of work' policy into one that is much more focussed on action planning in order to keep, or get students back on track before they damage their academic record or they find they have to suspend in order to rectify the situation. The policy requires Schools to identify when students are not actively engaging with their studies and to begin talking with them to identify what the issues are. It is an opportunity to address mis-aligned expectations of what is required of the student, or to direct him/her to the appropriate professional services for additional support.

**Annex 6, 7 and 8** contain the 2013/14 data on student progression, retention and attainment at UG and PGT level.

### **Summary of key observations that merge from the 2013/14 progression<sup>1</sup> and retention data:**

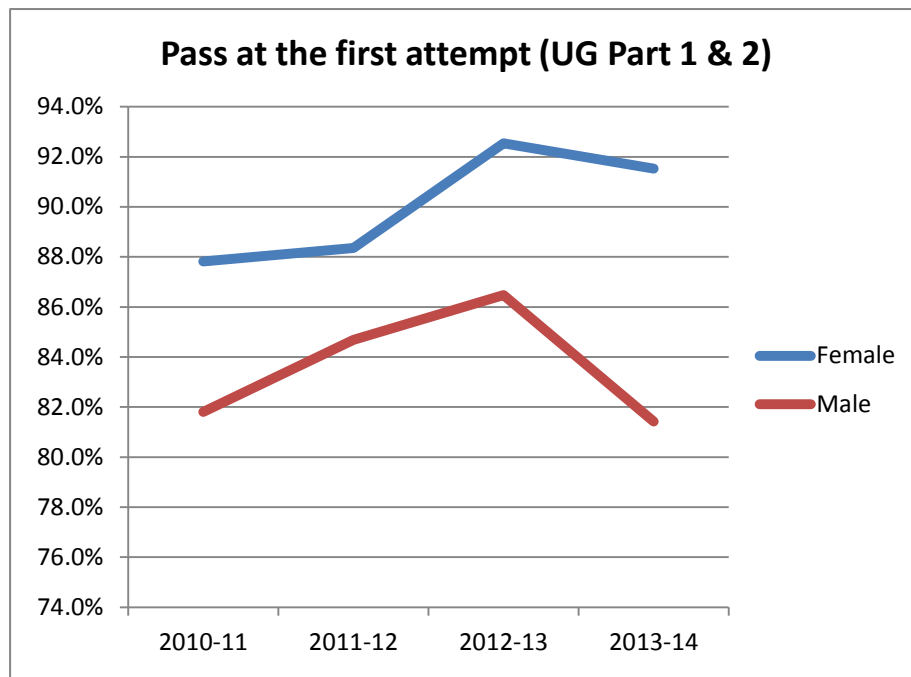
#### ***Gender***

- There was a 10 percentage point difference in the 'pass at the first attempt' rate of UG male students compared to UG female students (91.5% of female students passed this hurdle in 2013/14 whereas only 81.5% of male students did so). This is the widest gap yet seen over the past four years.
- Male UG students were more likely to fail at the second attempt (4% of males in comparison to 1.5% of females).
- The proportion of male and female students who suspended or withdrew from their studies was comparable across all levels of study.

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<sup>1</sup> Progression data is only available for UG students as there are two (or three) formal points for progression in their three (or four) year programme of study





### ***Disability***

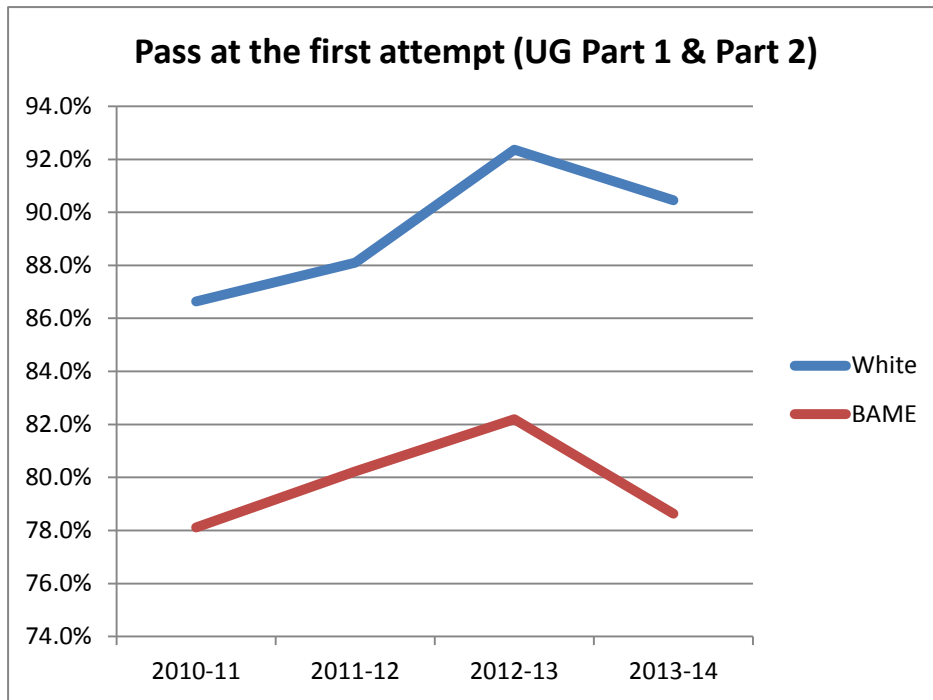
- The proportion of UG Disabled students who pass at the first attempt has fluctuates annually. Sometimes it is slightly higher and sometimes slightly lower than the proportion for non-disabled students. 84.3% of disabled students and 87.4% of non-disabled student passed at the first attempt in 2013/14.
- The proportion of UG disabled students to fail at the second attempt was on a par with non-disabled students.
- As in previous years a higher proportion of disabled students suspended/withdrew. 1.6% and 2.2% respectively in comparison to the 1.0% and 1.6% of students as a whole.

### ***Age***

- There was no consistent and significant difference in UG progression rates when considering age bands.
- As in previous years a higher proportion of UG and PG students over the age of 35 withdrew/suspended during their studies.

### ***Ethnicity***

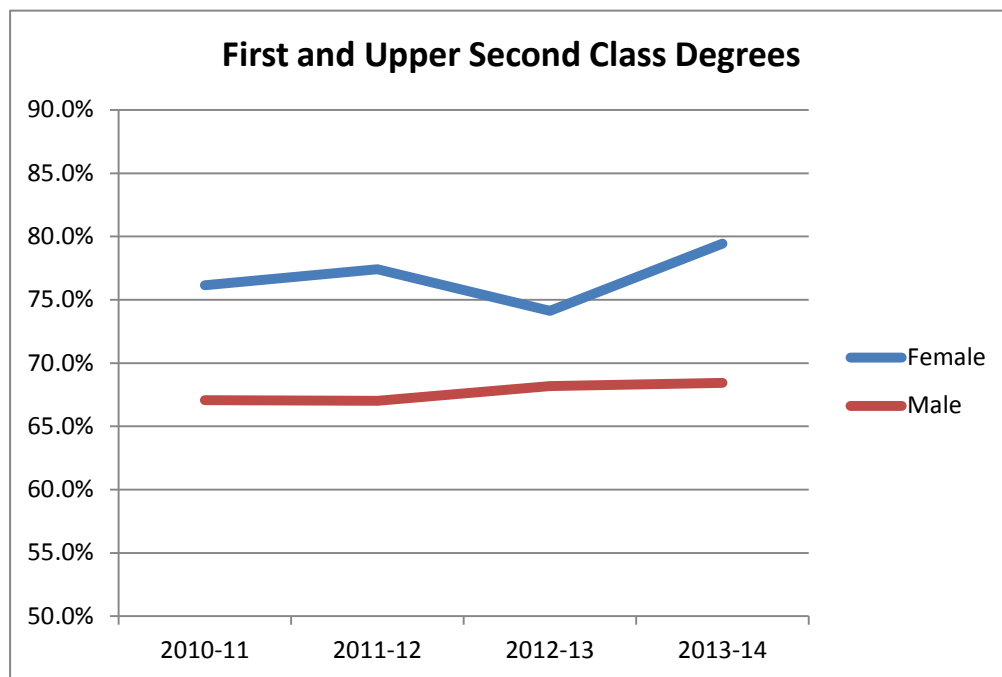
- The gap between UG 'pass at the first attempt' rate for BAME students and that for white students widened to 11.8 percentage points (a further increase of 1.6 percentage point on the 2012/13 gap).
- 2013/14 saw a marked increase in the UG BAME rate of failure at the second attempt (4.2% as opposed to 2.1% in 2012/13 and 2.6% in 2011/12).
- There were no indications of retention issues corresponding to ethnicity at any level of study.



**Summary of key observations that merge from the 2013/14 attainment data include (Annex 8):**

#### *Gender*

- There was a 4.6 percentage point gap between the proportion of males and females achieving a first class degree (20.9% of females and 16.3% of male). There was an 11 percentage point gap between males and females achieving first class and upper second class degrees (79.4% of females and 68.4% of males)
- The proportion of male student achieving a UG third class degree continued to be double that of female students (4.6% in comparison to 1.9%).
- At PG level there is a consistent pattern of higher proportions of male students achieving distinction and merit grades, while a higher proportion of female students achieve pass grades. In 2013/14 the statistics were that 72.6% of male PGT students achieved distinction or merit, compared to only 64.3% of female students. 21.3% of male students achieved pass grades, compared to 30.1% of female students. However the disparity is less than in 2012/13.
- A slightly higher proportion of male over female students achieved PG distinction grades in 2013/14 (23% of males and 21.7% of females). This is a significant narrowing of the gap of roughly 4 percentage points that has been consistent over 2010/11, 2011/12, and 2012/13.



### *Disability*

- There is a consistent pattern of UG disabled students achieving slightly fewer first class degree awards than non-disabled students (16.5% as opposed to 19.2% in 2013/14 and 12.3% as opposed to 17.7% in 2012/13), but similar or higher proportions of Upper second class degrees (56.2% as opposed to 55.5% in 2013/14 and 56.5% as opposed to 54.0%).

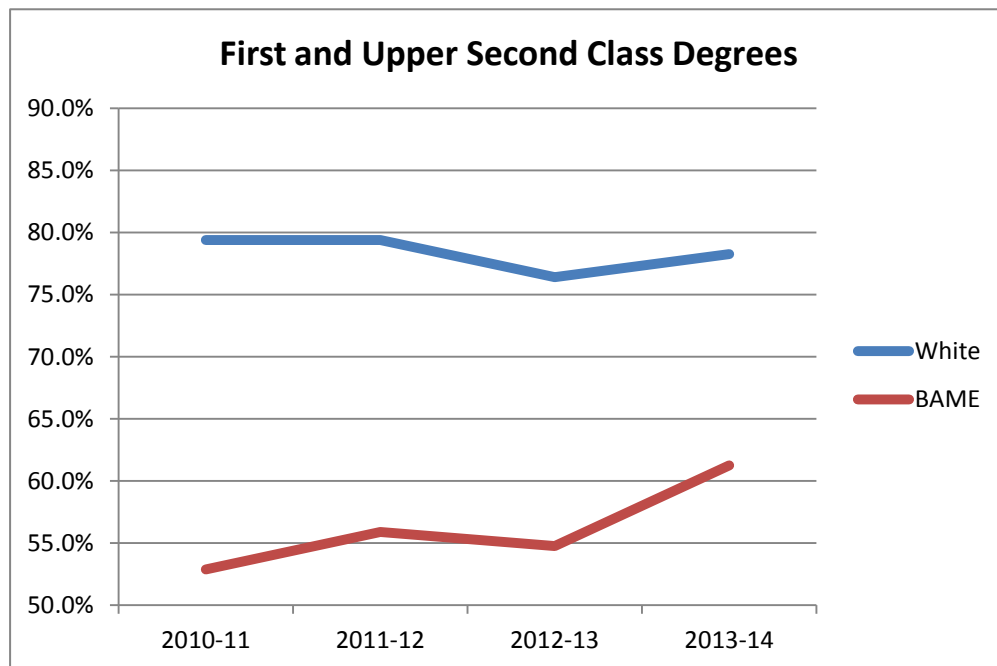
### *Age*

- UG students over the age of 25 were more likely to gain a first class degree classification. 25% of UG completors over the age of 25 achieved a first class classification as opposed to 18.8% of students covering all age groups.
- There is a fairly consistent pattern of PG students over the age of 35 being less likely to achieve a distinction grade but more likely to receive a pass grade degree. In 2013/14 only 17.8% of students in this age bracket achieved a distinction whereas 30.3% achieved a pass in comparison to 22.3% and 26.2% (respectively) for students in all age groups.

### *Ethnicity*

- There was an increase in the overall proportion of UG student achieving first class or upper second class degree classification (71.3% in 2012/13, 74.4% in 2013/14)
- There remains a significant difference (17 percentage points) in the proportion of UG BAME students who achieved a 1st or 2.1 degree classification in comparison to the proportion of white students. 78.3% of white students in comparison to only 61.3% of BAME students. This is however a narrower gap than in 2012/13 (21.6 percentage points).

- At PG level fewer BAME students achieved distinction (15.5% in comparison to 30.1%). This is a much bigger gap than seen in any of the previous four years
- More BAME students failed their PG degrees (5.9% in comparison to 2.5%).



## Analysis

The overall picture is one of strong retention, progression and attainment across all students. However there are five areas that warrant further comment.

- Disparity between male and female students' levels of academic attainment (UG and PGT)
- Disparity between the academic attainment of BAME students and white students
- Disparity in PG attainment amongst students aged 35+
- Higher rates of suspension amongst students declaring a disability
- Higher withdrawal rates amongst older age groups

### Disparity between male and female students' levels of academic attainment (UG and PGT)

There is clear evidence for attainment disparity between male and female UG students, this is seen in the gap between 'pass at the first attempt' rates and in the fact that a significantly higher proportion of female students achieved a first or upper second class degree classification. There is evidence that this is a pattern on a national scale <sup>2</sup> and

<sup>2</sup> Equality in Higher Education: Statistical Report 2013 (Equality Challenge Unit) p48-49. In 2011/12 more (UK domiciled) male students achieved a third class degrees than female students. Female

there is also both qualitative and quantitative research identifying trends in male social and study behavior that help us to, at least partially, understand this pattern. It has been suggested that male students are more likely to spend less time studying than their female counterparts, that they can be less self-aware and reflective, more likely to become isolated and generally less aware and less likely to seek out support in a timely fashion <sup>3</sup>.

As a consequence of similar trends noted in the 2012/13 Equality Report the University has established a major strategic project to enhance the academic attainment (Student Success) of all UG students (see below).

At PG level there is a reverse pattern where although a slightly higher proportion of male students fail their PG degree a significantly higher proportion of male students achieve distinction and merit grades and in turn a higher proportion of female students achieve pass grades.

### **Disparity between the academic attainment of BAME students and white students**

The disparity is evident in the 2013/14 statistics:

- Lower (block 1& 2) progression rates (10.1 percentage point gap) for BAME students
- Higher rate of failure at the second attempt (2.1 percentage points higher).
- 17 percentage point difference between the proportion of white and BAME students who achieve a 2.1 or first class degree classification
- Greater proportion of BAME and white students achieving a third class degree (2.9 percentage points difference).
- At PG level slightly fewer BAME students achieved distinction (15.5% in comparison to 30.3%).
- Significantly more BAME students failed their PG degrees (5.9% in comparison to 2.5%).

This pattern is consistent with national trends<sup>4</sup> and can be seen in the Reading data covering the last four years (**Annex 6 and 8**). There has been much research into this phenomenon at UG level revealing that the reasons are complex, and involve multiple factors – structural, organisational, attitudinal, cultural and financial, but that the curriculum and in particular learning, teaching and assessment practices are also important factors<sup>5</sup>.

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students were more likely to gain a 1<sup>st</sup> or a 2.1 degree classification and 8.6% of new male UG entrants left HE as opposed to 6.5% of female entrants.

<sup>3</sup> ECU (2012) *Male Students: Engagement with academic and pastoral support services* (July 2012)

<sup>4</sup> Equality in Higher Education: Statistical Report 2013 (Equality Challenge Unit) p78-87. In 2011/12 there was an 18.5 percentage point difference between the degree attainment levels of (UK domiciled) BAME students and white students in England.

<sup>5</sup> Back and Minority Ethnic Student Degree Retention and Attainment (Higher Education Academy) 2012

[http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/retention/Summit/bme\\_summit\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/retention/Summit/bme_summit_final_report.pdf)

As a consequent of similar observations made in previous Equality Reports a project was undertaken in 2013/14 to research the attainment gap between UG BAME and white students at Reading. This project has now completed and has made a large number of recommendations for the University to take forward. They focus at achieving the following:

- Raising the awareness of the attainment gap, both generally at an institutional level but also to ensure its visibility in regular monitoring and review processes at School and service level.
- Effecting change in a number of targeted areas likely to have impact on the largest numbers BME students.
- Developing staff confidence and skills in supporting an ethnically and culturally diverse student community.
- Strengthening ethnic minority student voice/representation.
- Informing the work of the UoR Race Equality Charter Mark team.

A very significant outcome of this project and the awareness it raised even during the research phase was the University's decision to enter the Equality Challenge Unit trial of a national Race Equality Charter Mark. This will ensure that work on race equality will be ongoing at the University of Reading.

### **Disparity in PG attainment amongst students aged 35+**

The pattern of lower attainment of PG students above the age of 35 is present across all four years worth of data presented although it varies in its manifestation. In 2013/14 there was significant gap between the proportions of distinctions awarded, whereas in 2012/13 the gap was in the proportion of Merit grades awarded. 66.8% of all students over the age of 35 are studying part-time, the vast majority of these are likely to be PG students. They will therefore be juggling the additional demands on their time of family, employment and other commitments.

### **Higher rates of suspension amongst students declaring a disability**

UG Disabled students are more likely to suspend than non-disabled students (**Annex 7**). There may be a similar pattern amongst PG students but the small numbers of disabled PG students makes it difficult to ascertain any significant pattern. Although the University would prefer to be able to support students through their studies without the need for suspension, it is important to recognise that adjusting to university life and study can be more challenging for some disabled students. Some disabilities are only identified at University and it is not always possible to adequately identify the necessary support prior to the beginning of the students' studies. This is particularly significant at

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UG level and in such circumstances suspension of studies is an effective mechanism to ensure that students are not unfairly disadvantaged. Suspension is also an essential mechanism that allows students suffering from long-term conditions and particularly a mental health condition to take some time away from their studies to recover their health without being disadvantaged. Therefore although a higher suspension rate for disabled students is significant, it is inline with patterns that should be expected.

### **Higher withdrawal rates amongst older age groups**

The age group most likely to withdraw/suspend from their studies were the 35+ group (**Annex 7**). This is predominantly a feature of UG studies although may well be evident in the PG data also, small datasets make this difficult to determine securely. These age groups are the most likely to have other commitments such as families and employment. It is well known that students in this age group are more likely to find that family or employment commitments conflict with their studies and they therefore are more likely to withdraw/suspend<sup>6</sup>.

As a result of patterns of differential attainment identified in the 2012/13 Equality Report, the outcomes of the BME Attainment Project, consideration of how to more effectively support students from underrepresented groups in Higher Education as well as our growing population of international students, the University has established a major strategic project on **Student Success** which aims to build on substantial research in the HE sector in recent years in order to develop better mechanism to support the diversity of need displayed by students of the University. This project is taking an inclusive approach and is evolving a number of strands but includes developing:

- more effective transition into HE
- more effective integration and greater sense of belonging amongst minority groups
- enhanced engagement in learning
- better monitoring and following up of engagement
- greater focus on inclusive practice

### **Recommendations and conclusions**

Substantial action is already underway to address the key issues identified here. The three main mechanisms through which this action is taking place are the:

- the implementation of the recommendations from the UoR BME Attainment Project (2014) and work towards achieving and maintaining the Race Equality Charter Mark
- the Student Success Project launched in 2014
- a renewed focus on inclusive practice in teaching and learning as a direct response to reductions in the Disabled Student Allowance funding

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<sup>6</sup> Equality in Higher Education: Statistical Report 2013 (Equality Challenge Unit) p164. A higher proportion of UK domiciled older age groups 'no longer in HE'.

These are long-term projects, but the mere raising of awareness will be an important start and is likely to have some shorter term impact.



## Objective 5

Ensure that the University environment is welcoming and accessible to all, in particular:

- i. Ensuring all stakeholder groups were aware of, and practice, our commitment on mutual respect for everyone;
- ii. Maintaining an environment that is free from offensive material and suggestion;
- iii. Make reasonable adjustments and modifications for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (where reasonably practicable); and
- iv. Providing alternative catering options for those with specific requirements.

### Summary and analysis:

The University takes full and appropriate steps to ensure that the University environment is welcoming and accessible to all. Under Objective 1, we have set out data relating to staff and student complaints which are low in number, and suggest that stakeholder groups are aware of and to a large extent comply with our published commitment of mutual respect.

The University has a raft of policies and procedures, including HR policies, Codes of Conduct, Values for Working Together and Professional Behaviours, the Student Charter and the Regulations for Conduct, which embed the University's approach to equality and make clear our commitment to mutual respect and ensuring an environment free from offensive material and suggestion. This is communicated to staff and students as they join the University and throughout their time with us.

The University provides information, support and guidance that ensures disabled students are effectively supported throughout their time at the University, as well as through the selection and application stages. Much of the support is provided by the Disability Advisory Service (DAS) or by staff in Schools and Departments with the guidance of the DAS. Support provided includes:

- General information available on the web ([www.reading.ac.uk/disability](http://www.reading.ac.uk/disability)) including: information on the available support and The Guide to Inclusive Practice in Teaching and Learning, Assessments and Admissions demonstrates the type and range of adjustments that may be possible.
- Tailored advice is available to disabled people from pre-applicant stage both at Open Days and Visit Days and through individual appointment. This allows applicants to explore specifically how they may be supported.
- The University recognises that disabled students are likely to require additional visits to the university in order to understand the support available and to ensure that it will meet their needs, either before making an application or in preparing to attend. We therefore offer a bursary to pre-applicants and applicants to pay for disability related costs in visiting the university. For many, this allows a more in depth interview with a Disability Adviser and an opportunity to assess (in depth) suitability of halls accommodation.
- All students who have declared a disability are offered a place at a specific

Induction Day for disabled students the September before they start.

- The DAS supports students and applicants to apply for the Disabled Student Allowance
- The DAS assists students in arranging support workers such as notetakers. We also offer a specific mentoring system for students with ASDs or mental health difficulties. This involves academic mentoring from a post-graduate mentor and/or social mentoring from a current undergraduate.
- Diagnostic Assessments for dyslexia, dyspraxia and more unusually, Autistic Spectrum Disorder are arranged on campus.
- Reasonable adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment are made in accordance with the Guide to Inclusive Practice in Teaching and Learning, Assessments and Admissions. Examples include: replacement of exams with coursework, facilitating alternatives to group work, presentations, fieldwork or dissertations for some students.
- Inclusive approaches to teaching and learning are encouraged, e.g. provision of handouts in advance, making lecture slides available through the VLE, permitting or indeed providing recording of lectures.
- Finally the University has a network of 'disability representatives' at School and Departmental level. They are responsible for liaising with disabled students personal tutors, lecturers and the DAS in order to ensure that their specific needs are met.

The data in **Annex 1** shows that 4.7% of applications are from disabled people<sup>7</sup> and there is an exceptionally high conversion rate of these applicants at all programme levels (see discussion under objective 8), such that 8.0% of those that enrol are disabled. The attainment levels of disabled students are broadly comparable to non-disabled students when measured through the conventional lens of the proportion of students achieving first and upper second degree classifications (see data in **Annex 8** and commentary related to objective 4). We therefore draw the conclusion that the environment created in the University is one which is attractive to disabled students and in which they succeed.

The University regularly works with staff to ensure that members of staff with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported and that adjustments are made where appropriate. This includes working with our Occupational Health providers and medical practitioners and through EmployeeCare, our Employee Assistance Programme, and Counselling Services, as well as with other stakeholders.

The University's Estates and Facilities Department provides catering, conference, recreational, facilities, space, project, grounds, building and estate management services to the University. They are responsible for the physical environment of the University and the fabric of its buildings. Examples of recent projects include modifications to create new disabled toilets and lowering lab benches in the Knight Building Laboratory to create a disabled workspace.

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<sup>7</sup> 4.5% of applicants declared a disability at the point of application, however we know that a proportion do not declare at this point but will do so within the first year of their studies.

The University Catering Services (CS) department caters for 900 fully catered students that live in halls of residence and operates full restaurant and café facilities on campus as well as providing the delivered hospitality for meetings, conferences and events. It has made the following improvements during the 2012/13 session:

- The number of gluten free menu items has been substantially increased in response to an increase in the number of celiac customers. Menu items are clearly labelled to allow customers to make informed decisions when purchasing goods without the need to seek assistance;
- Student customers are encouraged to talk to catering team members about any medical or religious diets that may be required to ensure that all diets are catered for and a wide range of goods and services are available. This is done on arrival, through signage, and on the Facebook and Twitter pages;
- More non-alcoholic and coffee related menu items have been included in our bars to encourage users who do not want to drink alcohol to equally utilise these areas. This has proved to be very successful. We have also introduced food offers alongside bar wet sales to increase usage and improve on social space;
- Take away items have been increased in our restaurants to allow people who are fasting or observing other religious activities to purchase food for consumption at a later stage;
- A wide and diverse menu has improved sales in line with the growing internationalisation of the University with longer serving and opening hours allowing customers to eat what they want when they want in line with wide and diverse cultural custom; and
- Our culturally diverse Chef team create their own dishes which we retail, providing familiar dishes to our international customer base. They are constantly exploring new dishes and introducing them to our portfolios.

### **Recommendations and conclusions:**

From the information above it can be seen that the University has worked hard to ensure that the University environment is welcoming and accessible. The measures set out above and elsewhere in this report are some examples of how this is being achieved, and the University continues to put in place practices and initiatives that enhance the experience of staff, students and visitors.

## Objective 6

### **Identify and put in place programmes to enhance diversity of representation on decision making bodies at the University.**

#### **Summary:**

For the second year full analysis has been undertaken on the diversity of University decision making bodies on the basis of gender, race, and age. There is still insufficient data available to undertake an analysis on sexual orientation or religion and belief. The data shows that decision making bodies are predominantly populated by white men over the age of 45 and that there has been little improvement from 2012/13. Full details are provided in **Annex D**.

#### **Analysis:**

There has been little improvement on the data for gender from 2012/13, largely because the majority of individuals involved in decision-making bodies are there because of their leadership positions at the University (with the exception of the lay members of Council and some Senate members). These roles (Pro Vice-Chancellors, Heads of Services, Deans, Heads of School, Directors of Research, and Directors of Teaching and Learning) are predominantly filled by white men over the age of 45, and there has been little change in the personnel in 2012/13.

Compounding this, is the constituency from which the most senior decision makers are drawn. Whilst women constitute 41.7% of the academic staff population, they account for only 30% of the professoriate, and just 20% of Heads of Schools. With regards to age, those aged 55-64 are most represented on decision-making bodies and there is just one representative under the age of 35. To some extent this is to be expected as a result of those on decision-making bodies being more senior and as a result having had longer careers before taking up senior management roles. Nearly all of the senior roles are filled by individuals who are white British. This reflects the fact that the majority of staff at the University in academic and professional and managerial roles are white (80.6% and 89.15% respectively). However, it does give pause for thought on whether there may be value in having different voices around the table and greater diversity in age and experiences, particularly where involvement is not related to position.

The introduction of an expression of interest process for Head of School positions continues to show signs of change. However, the women taking up these new roles came into effect in August 2014, outside this reporting period. In Modern Languages and European Studies of the applicants interviewed 4 out of 5 were female, and the successful candidate is female, as is the new Head of School for Law, who will take up post from 1 August 2014. Another positive is that the proportion of women in Grade 9 positions has increased again to 46.8% from 44% the previous year.

Senate has a balance of post holder roles and elections. The University Secretary has continued to encourage Heads of School to consider the diversity of membership. Whilst the headline figures remain similar to the previous year, a more detailed investigation of the data on Senate membership suggests that the efforts taken to increase

representation Senate have borne fruit. Where individuals are on Senate because of their posts (Ex-officio, Deans, Faculty Directors of Research, Faculty Directors of Teaching and Learning and Heads of School) the representation is 80% male. However, there is more gender balance amongst the staff who have been elected to Senate by their peers, where 50% are female.

Amongst the students for 2013-14 there was gender balance of those on Senate were female (50%), a big change from the previous year.

### **Recommendations and conclusions**

Whilst it appears that little progress has been made in this area, significant change will only be made when individuals move on from their roles. Early signs from the new approach to appointing Heads of Schools suggest that this may begin to change in the future. Further challenges relate to the broader population from which individuals are identified where women and those from ethnic minorities are underrepresented. It is recommended that:

- Further exploration should be given to assessing whether senior members of staff who are not office holders can sit on University level Committees to increase the diversity of committee membership;
- The University's emerging approach to talent identification and management be used to ensure that there is a diverse range of talented individuals, from a range of ages, ready to take up leadership positions in the future; and
- Consideration is given to the arrangements for appointing to Council and Senate to explore how to increase membership from under-represented groups.

## **Objective 7**

**Build upon existing work to embed the understanding and promotion of equality and diversity across the University through an ongoing review of learning events and arrangements for both staff and students.**

### **Summary and analysis of data:**

During the 2013-14 academic session the University has continued to build on its diversity activities in learning and development:

- The women's development programme, Springboard, continued to run, with a commitment to two cohorts, seeing 64 women completing the programme. The feedback on the programme continued to be excellent and networks along with communicates of practice continue to grow.
- In 2013-14 the Leadership Foundation launched 'Aurora' a programme to support the development of women aspiring towards leadership in HE. The University decided to support 10 women to attend this programme. In addition to attending the programme, we developed a support network including mentoring and conversations with the Vice Chancellor around key topics. The feedback was broadly positive, and we provided feedback to the Leadership Foundation with ideas for improvements for the future. The University has decided to continue this initiative in 2014/15 with a further 13 women attending the programme.
- We have also continued to develop the Unconscious bias training in 2013-14, offering sessions on the open programme, as well as specific development events for leadership teams including University Executive Board and Faculty Management Boards. Just over 100 staff have taken part in this training during 2013-14.

Formal training courses included:

- New staff induction, which has discussions around the University's Values and Behaviours, a specific session on equality and diversity including a discussion on Unconscious bias and being responsible for our behaviour towards others;
- New RUSU student officers receive diversity training on taking up their role;
- Other courses with a significant equality content include recruitment and selection training; and
- The Diversity in the Workplace on-line tool continues to be available to staff and promoted to all new staff joining the University. During 2014-15 we will be looking to update this offering in line with further developments in on-line training.

### **Recommendations and conclusions:**

The University has continued to support a range of diversity training and awareness events, drawing on academic expertise, and achieving considerable impact through the

delivery of the Springboard and Aurora programmes which has helped to raise the profile of women's career development needs.

During 2014/15 the University will continue to ensure that diversity training is embedded into all activity, with a focus on the importance of inclusion and creating an environment in which everyone has the opportunity to be the best they can be.

During 2014-15 to consider the benefits of understanding the equality profile of those staff taking part in learning and development activities.

RUSU (with the support of the University) are exploring how to extend diversity training to other student groups, e.g. to JCR and societies committee members, and to student representatives.

The University will also continue to seek further opportunities to enable staff and students to build up networks and attend learning events which promote equality and diversity.

## Objective 8

### Take steps to attract and retain quality students and staff from all backgrounds.

Staff data is largely considered elsewhere in the report. There are a number of other policies that the University has in place for encouraging staff retention beyond what has been considered elsewhere. This includes:

- A flexible approach to working, in accordance with its Health and Wellbeing policy. This means that applications for flexible working are considered locally by managers, and currently no central record is kept which could be analysed by protected characteristic;
- Broad range of Parental leave options, which continue to be used by staff appropriately and according with personal circumstances. It will be interesting to monitor in 2014/15 the interest in the new arrangements for 'Shared Parental Leave'.

### Attracting, selecting and admitting students

The University adheres to its published admissions policy and procedures for UG, PGT and PGR study (<http://www.reading.ac.uk/Study/admissions/admissions-policies.aspx>). The policy aligns with the UK Quality Assurance Agency's chapter B2 on *Recruitment, Selection and Admissions to Higher Education*<sup>8</sup> and is informed by the Schwartz Report *Fair Admissions to Higher Education: Recommendations for Good Practice* (2004<sup>9</sup>). The report's principles on ensuring: 'Equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of background, to gain admission to a course suited to their ability and aspirations' is at the core.

Data on applications, offers and enrolments is provided in **Annex 1 and 2**.

Summary of key observations that emerge from this data:

#### Gender

- The university received 42,756 applications for entry to the University in 2013/14. 53.2% were from female and 46.8% from male applicants.
- At UG and PGT levels female applicants were in the majority with 53.9% and 54.8% of applicants, while only 38.3% of PGR applicants were female.
- The gap between UG applications from males and females was 7.8 percentage points (53.9% female and 46.1% male), which constitutes a narrowing of the 2012/13 gap.
- At PGR and PGT level the gender balance of applications is comparable to the national picture.
- As in previous years there is no difference between the proportion of male and female applicants receiving offers for UG and PGT places.
- Enrolment as a proportion of those who were offered UG and PGT places was also consistent.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/quality-code-B2.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.admissions-review.org.uk/downloads/finalreport.pdf>



- There was a significant increase the number of PGR application received in 2013/14. However only 29.9% of male applicants were offered a place in comparison to 41.2% of female applicants and 40.6% of male applicants in 2012/13.

### *Disability*

- The University received a total of 2029 applications with a declared disability, constituting 4.7% of all applications. The proportion was highest at UG level with 6.7% of applications declaring a disability.
- Only 2.3% of PGT applicants declared a disability.
- The enrolment rate of disabled offer holders is much higher than the overall enrolment rate, e.g. at PGT level a disabled offer holder is more than twice as likely to enrol as applicants who have not declare a disability.

### *Age*

- Just under half (49.3%) of the applications received by the University are from under 20 year olds. A further quarter (25.4%) are between 21 and 24, followed by 17.8% who are between 25 and 34 years old.
- The UG offer rate was significantly lower for those beyond the age of 21. In each of the three age categories over 21 the offer rate is between 54% and 64% whereas for those aged between 18 and 20 it is 78.4%.

### *Ethnicity*

- A much higher proportion of applicants declare their ethnicity in the 2013/14 cycle than the previous two cycles (81.8% in comparison to 66.5% and 63.3%).
- BAME applicants form the majority of applications for PGT and PGR programmes.
- The proportion of PGT and PGR BAME applicants has almost doubled. For PGT programmes 63% were from BAME applicants (as opposed to 32.2% in 2012/13) and similarly 62% of PGR applicants (as opposed to 32% in 2012/13).
- The known ethnic make up of the applicant pool has continued the trend of significant growth in Chinese and Arab applications (now constituting 30.3% and 2.9%) of all applications, also 2013/14 saw growth from applicants identifying themselves as Asian-other (8.42%).
- The ethnic make up varies substantially according to level of study:
  - for UG study the majority groups are white (56.1%) Indian (3.95%) followed by Black-African (3.47%);
  - for PGT study Chinese (30.3%), white (24.6%) and Asian - other (8.4%);
  - and for PGR study white (26.7%), Arab (17.1%), Asian – other (10.1%) followed by Black-African (9.5%).
- There are consistent trends of lower success rates on application for particular ethnicities. Only 59.1% of BAME applicants were offered a place as distinct from 76.4% of white applicants.
- Offer rates vary considerably with level of study and with ethnicity.

## Analysis:

The gender balance of UG applicants is a concern at national level with a growing gap between the proportion of applications to HE from women and men. For example, the UCAS End of Cycle report for 2013/14<sup>10</sup> shows a 13.5 percentage point gap between the male and female applicants (an increase of 3.1 percentage points on 2012/13). The UoR gap (6.4 percentage points) between applications from males and females is less than half the national gap and it did not increase in 2013/14.

Although the gender/balance of the applicant pool is not within the University's direct control, it is important that there is an awareness of this imbalance and that for UG it forms one (of several) factors that influence our outreach and recruitment strategies.

The difference between male and female PGR offer to enrolment proportion is notable, however this too is a national trend and comparable to previous recent cycles. The BIS report 'Exploring Student Demand for Postgraduate Study'<sup>11</sup> notes that in every year PGR applications submitted by women are more likely to lead to enrolment. It is possible that this a reflection of male applicants making applications to more universities than female students and therefore having a lower conversion rate relative to the number of applications made. Data in the recent BIS report reveals<sup>12</sup> a greater disparity between the number of applications made by males and females than the disparity that exists between those who actually enroll as students. This could support the hypothesis that males considering PGR study are likely to make more applications and therefore have a lower conversion rate. However the significant disparity between the proportion of male PGR applicants who were offered a place and female applicants is in line with the UoR 2011/12 pattern and will need to be monitored (29.9% of male applicants in comparison to 41.2% of female applicants),

The proportion of all applicants declaring a disability has remained stable of the last three cycles. The higher offer-to-enrolment rate for disabled students is consistent across UG, PGT and PGR. This is likely to be partly a product of the fact that we are a campus university and students with physical disabilities will find it easier to access the main facilities that are located within easy distance of each other. It is also the case that disabled student invest significant effort in researching a university's suitability for meeting their needs prior to applying (see comments under objective 5), so when they are made an offer are more likely to accept and follow through to enrolment.

Only 2.3% of PGT applicants declared a disability, however around 70% of PGT applicants are from countries outside Britain and the EU. Two factors are significant here: applicants with significant physical disabilities are less likely to travel abroad to study and fewer international students arrive at UK universities with already diagnosed

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/2014-ucas-end-of-cycle-report.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Exploring Student Demand for Postgraduate Study. BIS Research Paper no. 154 (December 2013), p117

<sup>12</sup> Exploring Student Demand for Postgraduate Study. BIS Research Paper no. 154 (December 2013), p178

learning difficulties such as dyslexia, which is the most commonly declared disability amongst our student population.

Across all three cycles UG applicants over the age of 21 were less likely to be offered a place particularly at UG level. This may well be due to these students disproportionately seeking places on degrees that are more competitive to enter e.g. pharmacy, law and management attract some of the largest mature student cohorts and tend to be heavily subscribed. This is an area of ongoing investigation.

The enrolment-to-offer rates for the age group above 21 is better than that for applicants under 21, across all three levels of study. This may well be due to the fact that those above the age of 21 are likely to be tied to the area through work and/or family and so once committed to the concept of study they are more likely to select Reading than to shop around for alternative University provision to which they would have to travel.

The disparity between the success rates of white and BAME applicants is significant and constitutes a wider gap than seen in either of the previous two cycles, although there is variability between ethnicities and level of study, it appears that Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black-African applicants have lower levels of success in the UG and PGR application process, while Arab, Chinese and Black- other applicants achieve a lower proportion of offers for PGT study. This is an area that was identified in the 2012/13 Report and is currently under consideration.

### **Profile of the University's student population**

Full demographic data for the University's 2013/14 student population is provided in **Annexes 3-5**. The overall picture is of little change, but with some slight shifts e.g. slight growth in the proportion of female students, BAME students and disabled students.

#### **Summary of key observations:**

- The HESA standard student population<sup>13</sup> was 13,594, with 55.4% female and 44.6% male students. This amounts to a 2.1% increase in the proportion of female students over the last four years (**Annex 3**).
- The balance of male and female students at different levels of study have remained largely stable. With slightly more UG and PGT female (55.7% and 56.2%) than male students (44.2% and 43.7%) and the reverse pattern at PGR (47.8% female and 52.2% male students). Although female students are in the overall majority, within Henley Business School and the Faculty of Science male students constitute 56.3% and 67.1% of student respectively. HBS has achieved a 4.5

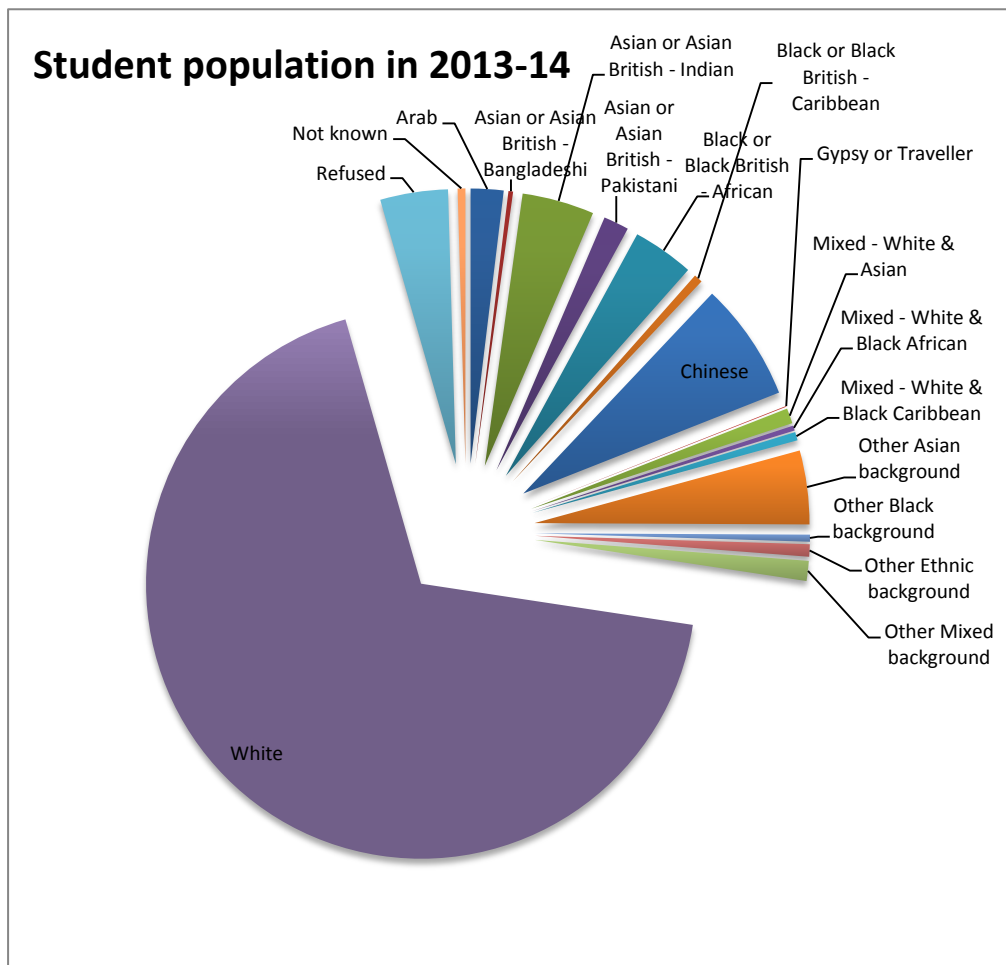
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<sup>13</sup> HESA standard population is all students returned to HESA in 2012/13, excluding the following:  
-dormant students (ie dormant for the entire academic year)  
-incoming visiting and exchange students  
-postdoctoral students  
-instances where the whole of the programme of study is outside of the UK  
-Teaching agency subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) courses  
-Writing up students (ie PGR students those writing up for the whole of the academic year)

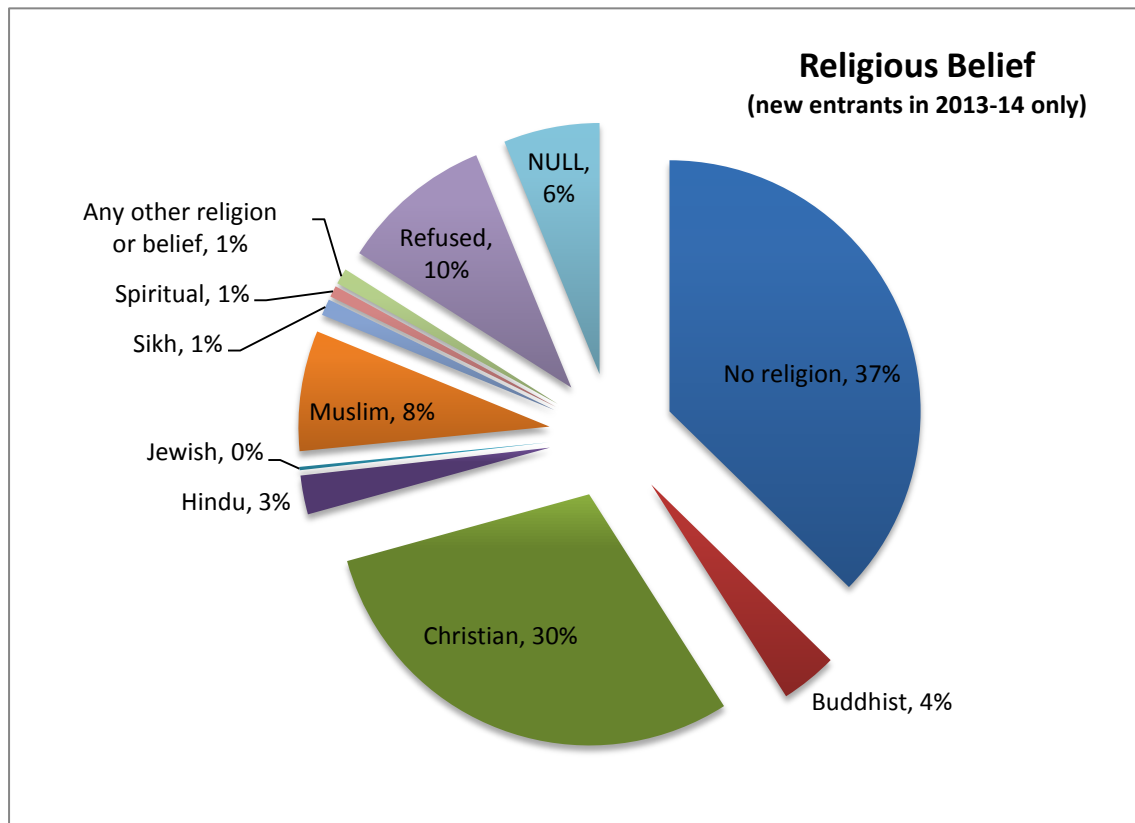
percentage point growth in female students over the past four years (**Annex 4 and 5**).

- 9.8% of students studying at the university during 2012/13 declared a disability. This is an increase of 1.1% since 2010/11. The proportion of disability types is broadly similar to 2012/13 with the majority (50.5%) declaring a learning disability. However, there was a significant increase in the proportion of disabled students declaring physical/mobility disabilities (5.9% as opposed to 3.1%) and doubling in numbers (81 as opposed to 40). The longer term picture shows an decline in the proportion of disabled students citing a specific learning disability (50.5% in 2013/14 as opposed to 61.9% in 2010/11 (**Annex 3**). The proportions of disabled students is steadily increasing in the Faculties of Arts, Humanities and Social Science and in Life Science, however, the highest proportions remain in the Science Faculty (12.25%) (**Annex 4**).
- The proportion of the total student population aged under 24 is slowly growing and stands at 74.4% in 2013/14. (71.2% in 2010/11). However, there has been a steady decline in the number of students over 25 (25% in 2013/14, 28.1% in 2010/11 (**Annex 3**).
- 27.4% of the University's 2012/13 HESA standard population declared themselves as to have a non-white ethnicity. This constitutes a year on year increase, rising from 23.3% in 2010/11 (**Annex 3**). As with gender there is a varied picture across the faculties (**Annex 4**).
- There remains a clear pattern of higher proportions of BAME students at PGT and PGR levels making up just over one third of the PGT and PGR populations (**Annex 5**).

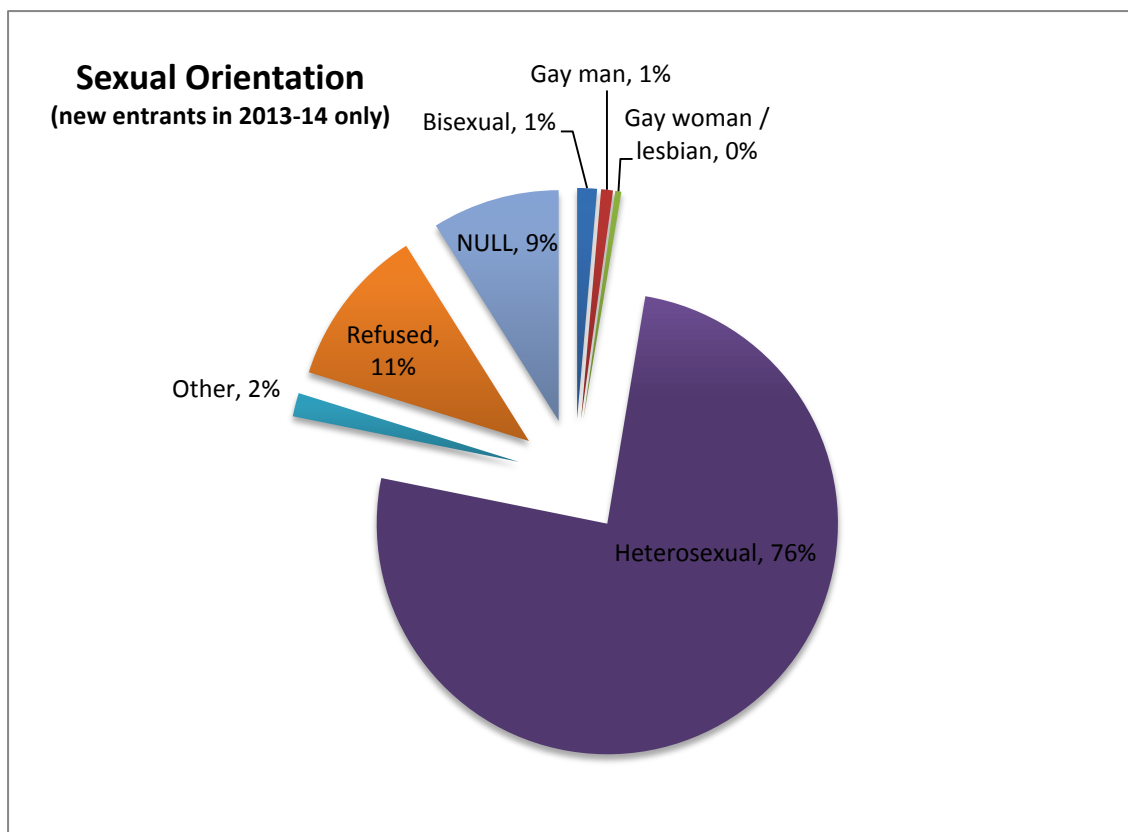
- The make up of the BAME student population is almost identical to previous years, with the largest non- white group being Chinese students (7.0%) followed by Indian – Asian or Asian British (4.2%) (**Annex 3**).



- For the first time an insight can be gained into the distribution of different religious belief amongst students at the University. The largest grouping is of students claim no religious beliefs, closely followed by Christians. 8% of new entrants declared having Muslim beliefs (Data for new entrants only). The proportion of students of no religion is highest amongst UG students, 43.6%, as opposed to 31.6% and 33.4% for PGT and PGR respectively. The proportion of Muslim students is highest amongst PGR students, i.e. 21.3% in comparison to 5.6% of UG students. Overall disclosure rates were strong at 84%.



- Similarly an insight can be gained into the distribution of sexual orientation amongst students at the University. 76% of all new entrants declared themselves to be heterosexual, 20% either refused or made no declaration. Almost twice as many new entrants declared themselves to be gay men as gay women/lesbian.



### Analysis:

The gap between male and female representation in HE is a continuing trend across the sector. In 2012/13 the gap across HE was 12.4%<sup>14</sup>. At Reading, in 2013/14 there was 10.8 percentage point gap which further widened the 2012/13 gap. Despite this over riding pattern it is important to note that there is a mixed picture of gender balance across levels of study and across faculties, with female students constituting a growing majority of the undergraduate population as a whole, but male students exceeding females in the PGR community and are in the overall majority in the Faculties of Science and in the Henley Business School (Annex 4 and 5).

The proportion of students in UK HE with a declared disability has risen steadily from 5.4% in 2003/4 to 9.5% in 2011/12. The rate of increase at Reading is broadly comparable to the national picture. The proportion of disabled students at Reading University (9.8%) compares favourably to the 2011/12 figures for both the UK (9.5%) and for England (9.6%)<sup>15</sup>. This is likely to be because we are a campus university and that significant effort and resource is invested in supporting and advising disabled applicants (See comments under objective 5).

<sup>14</sup> Equality in Higher Education Statistical Report 2014: Students (Equality Challenge unit) p30

<sup>15</sup> Equality in Higher Education Statistical Report 2014: Students (Equality Challenge unit) p70

The distribution of disabilities at Reading is broadly similar to the national picture. However at Reading a higher proportion of disabled students have a specific learning difficulty and social communication or AS disorders. Significantly more Reading students identify two or more impairments than is the case nationally (13.5% in comparison to 8.6% nationally). Conversely, at Reading a lower proportion of disabled students declare a mental health condition (5.6% as opposed to 11.1% nationally) or suffer from a long-standing illness or health condition (5.6% as opposed to 10.5%).<sup>16</sup>

The student population as a whole at Reading is skewed towards the 18-20 age bracket accounting for almost 50% of students, however, this is in large part a factor of the weight of the UG student population (66% of students are UGs). The PGT and PGR populations are much more inclusive of age with 63% of PGT students over the age of 25 and 84% of PGR students. The national trend continues to be long term growth in participation of under 21 and 21-24 year olds with a corresponding decline in participation by 25+ age groups<sup>17</sup>. This is exactly the pattern that is evident at Reading. There has been much discussion in the HE sector concerning the decline in mature students participation, particularly at UG level. It has been agreed that a number of factors have acted together to form barriers to mature student participation. Examples include the governments ELQ policy which led to the withdrawal of provision designed to support mature learners into HE, lack of understanding of the new financial support packages, as well as an unwillingness to incur a significant debt.<sup>18</sup>

The Reading student population as a whole is becoming more ethnically diverse with each year (**Annex 3**). The proportion of white students dropped from 72.2% in 2010/11 to 68.2% in 2013/14. PGR and PGT populations are the most ethnically diverse and this is likely to be a result of increased international student recruitment at all levels of study, but especially at PGT and PGR level (**Annex 5**). However, analysis of the UK domiciled new UG entrants over recent years also shows an increase in both the number and proportion of BAME students admitted (from 14% in 2010/11, to 18.6% in 2013/14)<sup>19</sup>.

The 2013/14 data provides the University with its first insight into the distribution of both religious belief and sexual orientation (**Annex 3 and 5**). Data is only presented here for new entrants and so is only partial, nevertheless it does offer interesting insights. However, it will be important to establish over the next few years how stable this picture is across the whole student population.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

There have been no substantial changes to the demographics of either applicants to the University or students in attendance. However, there have been small changes some of

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<sup>16</sup> Equality in Higher Education Statistical Report 2014: Students (Equality Challenge unit) p74-75

<sup>17</sup> Equality in Higher Education Statistical Report 2014: Students (Equality Challenge unit) p32-33

<sup>18</sup> The power of part-time: Review of part-time and mature higher education (2013) UUK Report (<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/UUKreviewofparttimeeducation.aspx#UuU0oBaQG2w>)

<sup>19</sup> 2015/16 University of Reading Access Agreement, p7 ([http://www.offa.org.uk/agreements/UniversityofReading\\_NSP\\_revised\\_merged.pdf](http://www.offa.org.uk/agreements/UniversityofReading_NSP_revised_merged.pdf))



which are part of an ongoing evolution, e.g. the growth in applicants and students with disabilities. The growth in BAME applicants and students enrolled is a national trend. In the University of Reading's case increases will be the result of international profile raising and recruitment activities, but also of widening participation outreach work, as well as expanded capacity in subjects likely to attract BAME students (e.g. Pharmacy, Business and Law).

This analysis reinforces findings of the 2012/13 Equality Report where two areas were identified for further work, i.e.

- understanding the lower undergraduate offer rate to applicants above the age of 21.
- understanding of the lower offer rates to BAME applicants in general and specific ethnicities in particular at all levels of study

This work is ongoing.

A question to be considered is whether the relatively low student declaration rates for mental health conditions is indicating anything we should be concerned about.