

IMPERIAL

Cohesion: Enhancing our sense of community



EDI Strategy 2024–26

Real positive change must be an agreed collective effort. Our aim is to foster cohesion through activities that develop an even greater sense of trust and collegiality within our community, celebrate the diversity of our thoughts, and respect for our individuality. We will identify gaps in our processes and procedures and initiate actions that will allow Imperial to meet its equality, diversity and inclusivity ambitions.

Front cover images (clockwise from top): staff at the 2024 Staff Recognition Awards; staff on the Dangoor Plaza at Imperial's annual summer staff celebration; an attendee at Imperial's annual Beyond Ethnicity Career Conference; a networking event for the 2022 cohort of the Imperial As One Media Academy.

Introduction

The opportunity to set out a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategic vision for Imperial is timely, particularly with the launch of the new **Imperial strategy**, the corresponding **enabling roadmap** and the setting out of the **Imperial Values**.

Our EDI foundations were laid in 2005 as a founding member of the Athena Swan Charter, and this 20-year focus of effort provides the backbone for the Imperial culture we see today (see appendix 1 for a timeline of key achievements). The 2018–2023 EDI Strategy broadened our horizons and began the journey to embed EDI thought and action more fully into management and organisational practices. We took the first steps to embrace the needs of our diverse community in terms of ethnicity, disability, LGBTQ+ identity, religious tolerance and gender as well as a desire to reduce incidents of harassment and bullying.

There is much still to be done in terms of bedding in the many new people-facing strategies (appendix 2 summarises key points from these) and redoubling our efforts to meet our diversity and inclusion aims. It is also the right time to reunite the many facets of our community, particularly in a post-COVID work environment and in the context of the new **Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy**.

Here we set out our vision and objectives, supported by seven pillars of activity. Having consulted widely, we believe Imperial’s long-term EDI objectives are best delivered with a dynamic strategy that is monitored, reviewed, and updated every two years. A snapshot of key baseline data and our ambitious targets relating to staff and students at Imperial is provided in tables 1, 2 and 3, and the trajectories within the data over recent years are given in appendix 3 for staff and in the **Imperial Access and Participation Plans (APP)** for students. Combining the already agreed ambitions as outlined in our institutional Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter submissions and the APP, each with their own detailed SMART action plans, allows us to set out key measurable ambitions.



Imperial's LGBTQ+ networks are comprised of IQ for students and Imperial 600 for staff.

Objectives

- Strengthen and amplify the Imperial strategies that are people-facing, spanning all staff and student communities and embed the Imperial Values to create an enabling environment.
- Quantify the gaps in current practices and spaces that limit the diversity of our staff and student communities, as well as equity of the education and research experience.
- Consult widely, monitor, measure and then action the steps that will serve as a catalyst for further positive change, measured against a set of 2026 benchmarks (set out in tables 1, 2 and 3).
- Reinforce inclusivity frameworks for behaviour that establishes conditions so that all members of our community can excel in all areas of our endeavours.

Pillars of activity supporting the EDI vision

In this strategy, we set out seven pillars of activity, each with a short descriptor, designed to support the EDI vision.

It is our intention to work alongside academic, teaching, and professional, technical and operational (PTO) staff and the student bodies who are mandated to make change to deliver these actions over the next two years. The Associate Provost for EDI (AP-EDI) will advocate for this change and progress will be monitored through the EDI Advisory Group. Success will be measured by achieving the performance ambitions detailed on the following pages.

Imperial staff training and monitoring

Tools to deliver shared goals

Imperial inclusive recruitment

The people we appoint define our culture

Imperial staff research and teaching culture

Enhancing collaboration, innovation, respect and integrity

Imperial student experience, community and culture

Improving support, equity and understanding

Imperial community cohesion

Creating a sense of belonging

Support, empower and celebrate

Integration and recognition

Visibility beyond Imperial

Communication

1. Imperial staff training and monitoring

- Explore the purpose and impact of training beyond our legal requirements.
- Identify gaps in training that could help facilitate inclusive recruitment.
- Examine barriers to engagement with training for different staff groups and set out mechanisms to improve engagement.

2. Imperial inclusive recruitment

- Identify academic and PTO departments where inclusive recruitment efforts have shown positive results.
- Better understand the mechanisms that produce positive inclusive recruitment outcomes for STEMB disciplines.
- Hold an annual recruitment workshop highlighting beacon activities.
- Identify the bottlenecks (such as **Know Your Pool**) and develop an inclusive recruitment toolkit that synthesises these.

3. Imperial staff research and teaching culture

- Contribute to the wider university initiative of enriching our research culture.
- Support the development of the new Early Career Researcher Institute (ECRI), and the four cross-cutting Schools of Convergence Science.
- Ensure that underrepresented groups and the learning and teaching (L&T) community are fully supported.
- Address issues raised in recent targeted reports from the **Postdoctoral Fellows Development Centre (now ECRI)** such as ‘What do women need to progress in academia?’ and ‘Enhancing academic culture: the role of Teaching Fellows and Learning Technologists’.

4. Imperial student experience, community and culture

- Work with Strategic Planning and the Education Office, student-facing committees and Imperial College Union to deliver an improved student experience of teaching and the wider environment.
- Support actions that broaden undergraduate and postgraduate admissions and reduce degree awarding gaps present in underrepresented groups.
- Set out support structures that do not intimidate or alienate those they seek to engage, with a view to improving retention.
- Extend the ‘diversification of the curriculum’ project activities and identify ways to roll these out across Imperial. Review student EDI training and support packages to better ensure overall awareness and engagement with Imperial Values.

5. Imperial community cohesion

- Establish the ‘Imperial Cohesion’ online seminar series as a regular EDIC (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Centre) event with a view to unite the wider EDI community. Use it to showcase our beacon activities and learn about wider best practice nationally and internationally.
- Bring the work of staff networks and departmental activities closer and align with the annual events organised at university level, which are detailed in the **EDI Calendar** and discussed at the **EDI Forum**.

6. Support, empower and celebrate

- Review staff workload allocation associated with the delivery of metrics-based actions (Athena Swan, Race Equality Charter, Disability Confidence Leader, Stonewall Workplace Equality Index) across Imperial, and improve uniformity.
- AP-EDI to initiate annual roadshow events into all departments and work closely with departments to support and empower the people-facing and EDI activities taking place within their communities.
- Recognise and value EDI contributions and collate and improve uniformity of effort and level of recognition for those working on people and culture, EDI committees and staff networks.

7. Visibility beyond Imperial

- Communicate our efforts and views externally through media articles, social media and in-person and online presentations to other universities within the UK and elsewhere. Increase the recognition of the impactful efforts made by so many at Imperial as beacon activities in this field.

The data

Imperial's inclusivity and diversity landscape has progressed greatly over the last two decades, however, the data is difficult to capture in a single document or within a single set of statistics.

The information set out on the following pages provides a snapshot of the current position, although this is only one component of the many useful datasets highlighting the staff and student makeup at Imperial. The intention here is to illustrate our initial priorities to meet the objectives set out in this strategy.

Our most recent Advance HE submissions for the Athena Swan Charter (awarded Silver in 2022) and the Race Equality Charter (awarded Bronze in 2021) share stated ambitions for the future hire of women and minority ethnic staff. The projected data presented in tables 2 and 3 are consistent with these commitments, although a more holistic approach from Advance HE inclusive of age, disability, gender, religious belief and intersectionality, would be greatly welcomed. Appendix 3 sets out the data timelines in terms of staff appointments from the preceding years and provides a sense of the rate of change in these areas. Directions towards shrinking the gender and ethnicity pay gap originate from the action plans submitted by the Imperial Deans in 2023 and the resulting data analysis that informs the most impactful next steps needed to close those gaps. In 2024, Imperial reported the disability pay gap for the first time, and although this requires detailed scrutiny before targets can be set, shrinking the disability pay gap will be included in our efforts.

The undergraduate Access and Participation Plan (APP), overseen by Strategic Planning, has a wealth of initiatives to support the stated APP targets. We have included statistics that go beyond the APP, which are endorsed by the Education Office. Ambitions for postgraduate student diversity and support is not included directly as it is currently undergoing policy development. Nevertheless, similar aspirations apply equally to the makeup and experience of our postgraduate community.

It is important to emphasise that the AP-EDI has no mandate that allows us to make direct change to either staff or student data. Our role can only be to advocate passionately and consistently for positive change in a stewardship capacity. The ambitions listed can only be achieved if those with the authority to do so work alongside us at every step and the community as a whole works together with a cohesive sense of purpose.

A particular mention must go to the ongoing programmes and support that champion our underrepresented groups. These include the work delivered by Imperial's staff networks and the positive action programmes run through EDIC including the **IMPACT development programme** and the Calibre leadership programme. They also include mentoring programmes for PhD students from underrepresented groups including the **Activate Student Mentoring Programme** run through the Graduate School and the **ENHANCE mentoring scheme** run by the Faculty of Natural Sciences.



Participants in a workshop as part of the Imperial As One Media Academy, which provides expert media training for minority ethnic staff and PhD students.



Associate Provosts for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Dr Wayne Mitchell and Professor Lesley Cohen

Measurable ambitions

Overall, the aim is to accelerate the rate of change and eliminate gaps in the data within the next two decades.

In many areas the rate of change, although gradual, is positive due to the work already achieved. The targets reflect these trajectories with some ambition built in. There are areas where the statistics have plateaued or where progress has slowed and we intend to apply focused effort in order to better understand the reasons for this and the mechanisms that will help reverse the trends.

Table 1: Community engagement – EDI responses in Staff Survey

Continuing to improve the responses in the Staff Survey requires embedding Imperial Values more widely across Imperial and the actions described in pillars 3, 5 and 6.

Measure	2024 baseline (captured in the 2024 Staff Survey: 57% response rate)	2026 ambition (to be captured in the 2026 Staff Survey: aim 65% response rate)
I am treated with dignity and respect	82% affirmative	90% affirmative
I am confident about expressing views without negative consequences	51% affirmative	65% affirmative
Have you experienced any form of bullying and/or harassment (excluding sexual harassment) at Imperial?	83% negative	90% negative <small>(Greater than 90% negative by 2029 following Athena Swan Action Plan 3.1, REC Action Plan 1.4, and the People Strategy)</small>
I can talk to my line manager about anything that concerns me about my work	81% affirmative	90% affirmative

Table 2: Recruitment, retention and progression

The 2026 ambitions are extrapolated from the timeline trends in the data (in appendix 3), and the commitments made in the Imperial Athena Swan (2022) and Race Equality Charter (2021) submissions.

Measure	2023 baseline	2026 ambition (unless stated otherwise)
% of women academics	25%	28% by 2027 (Imperial Athena Swan Action Plan 1.1)
% of women professors	20%	24% by 2027 (Imperial Athena Swan Action Plan 1.1)
Minority ethnic academic staff	16.8%	19% (2021 REC Action Plan 2.2, 2.5, 2.6)
Black academic staff	0.4%	0.8% (2021 REC Action Plan 2.2, 2.5, 2.6)
Minority ethnic PTO staff	29%	31% (REC Action 2.7)
Black PTO staff	7.8%	10%
Gender pay gap	14.1% mean, 6% median	12% mean, 5% median (2022 Athena Swan Action 1.1)
Ethnicity pay gap	15.7% mean, 9.5% median	14% mean, 8% median (2021 REC action 1.1)

Celebration event for the 2024 cohort of the Imperial As One Media Academy, which provides expert media training for minority ethnic staff and PhD students, to help tackle underrepresentation of minority ethnic researchers in the media and wider public sphere.



Table 3: Student admission and performance

Measure	2023–23 baseline (unless otherwise stated)	2029 ambition (unless otherwise stated)
Total percentage of female UG	40% (2023–24)	42% by 2027 (45% by 2029) (Imperial Athena Swan 2022 Action Plan 5.1)
Entrance rate of Black home UG	5.9% (2021–22)	8.2% (APP 2024)
Entrance rate of home FSM* eligible UG	11.5% (2021–22)	11.7% (APP 2024)
Continuation gap of Black home UG**	5.2 percentage points (2020–21)	4 percentage points (APP 2024)
First class degree attainment gap by gender – all UG students	3% across Imperial: -3% FoM (Medicine Intercalated and Biomedical sciences), 3% FoE, 6% FoNS)	0%
First class degree attainment gap – Black all UG students	36%	25% 2021 (REC 2021 Action Plan 3.4)
First class degree attainment gap by disability for all UG students	3% other disability, -2% Specific Learning Disability	0%
Completion rate gap for students declaring a disability	2% (for students starting 2018–19)	0%
Progression into highly skilled employment/ further study for IMDQ1*** home UG students	10.8% (2020–21)	9.7% (APP 2024)

* FSM – free school meals.

** For further clarification and action plans to support the Admission and Performance for UG see the published [Access and Participation Plan \(APP\)](#). We aim to extend the APP activity to include all minority ethnic students and students with disabilities.

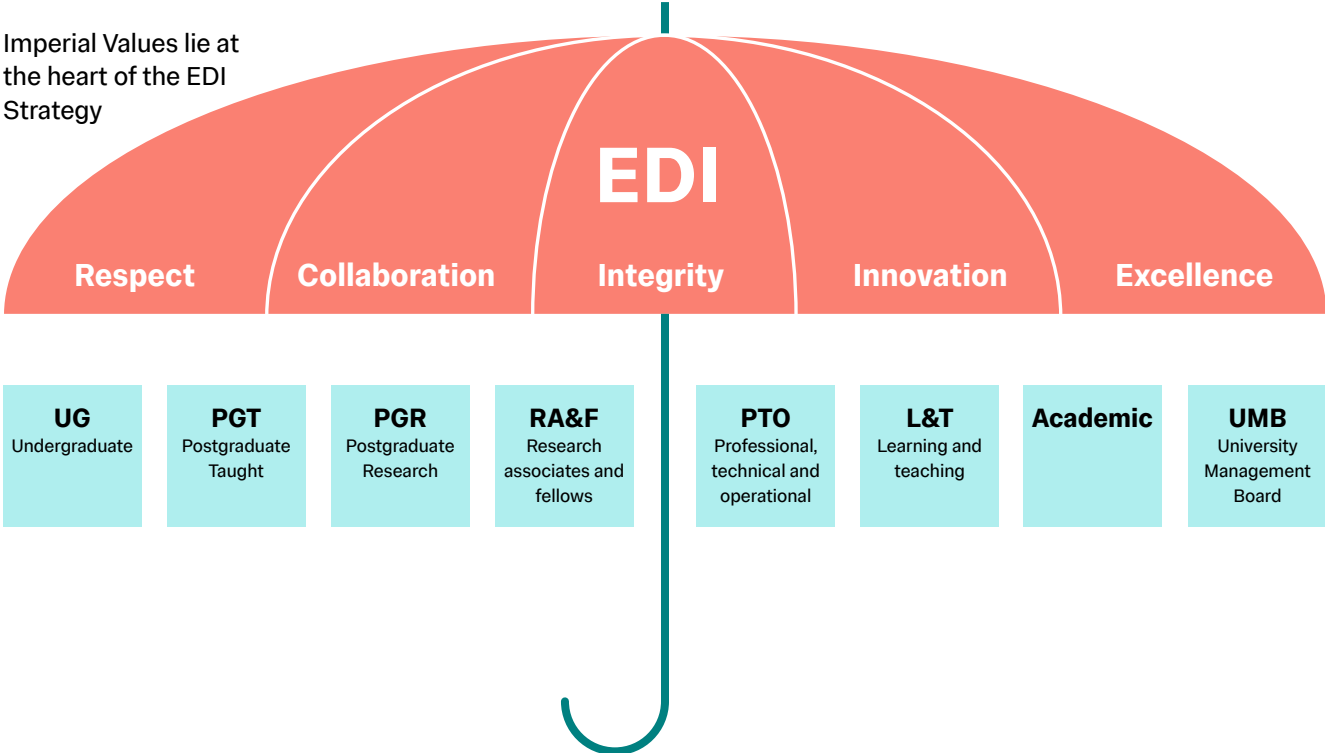
*** IMDQ1 refers to the [Indices of Multiple Deprivation](#)

Note: Equivalent data for PGT and PGR are currently under review.

The Associate Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion role: Assess, monitor, guide and influence

Figure 1: The EDI umbrella

Imperial Values lie at the heart of the EDI Strategy



Appendix 1

Key EDI achievements at Imperial over the last 20 years

- 2005** Imperial is a founding member of the Athena Swan Charter
- 2006** **Institutional Athena Swan** charter published
- 2007** **Stonewall Workplace Equality Index submission**
- 2012** Awarded **Two Ticks accreditation** (now Disability Confident)
- 2016** Awarded an institutional Athena Swan Charter Silver Award
- 2016** Obtained a Disability Confident Employer Award, **nursing rooms provided** across campuses, preferred gender identity added to Imperial College Information Systems (ICIS)
- 2017** Creation of the **Associate Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** role
- 2017** **Elsie Widdowson Fellowship** opened to all genders, **Carers' Support Fund** launched to support carers to attend work events
- 2018** Publication of the 2018–2023 EDI Strategy
- 2018** Imperial signs the **Charter for Employers who are Positive about Mental Health**
- 2018** Launch of the **Technicians' Portal**, increase in the **EDI training offer** (such as courses on unconscious bias and active bystander), You Make Imperial campaign, **Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gaps** published
- 2019** **Reverse mentoring** for senior leaders launched, **EDI Seed Fund** created, upgrade of the **Imperial South Kensington nursery**, Textio used for ensuring **gender-neutral language is used** in job adverts, publication of a new **conference policy**
- 2019** Imperial rises significantly in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, launch of the **Lara and Biodun Olanrewaju Scholarship for undergraduates of Black heritage**
- 2020** Development of the **Academic Recruitment toolkit** (now Inclusive Recruitment), **Sexual Harassment, misconduct and violence support** (now Sexual Violence and Harassment Support), **Report and Support** platform, **Trans Staff Policy** and the **research environment toolkit**
- 2020** Establishment of the **Imperial History Dialogue** and **Imperial Artworks Group**
- 2021** Launch of the **Presidential Scholarship for students of Black heritage**, first cohort of **Provost's Visiting Professors**
- 2021** Institutional **Race Equality Charter** Bronze Award
- 2021** Launch of **Imperial Together** and **Imperial Values**, **Old Oak Early Years Education Centre** serving White City and Hammersmith Campuses, **Workload Principles**, **Parental portal**, guidance on **eliminating gender bias in reference letters**, **free period products** on all Imperial campuses

- 2022** Institutional Athena Swan Charter Silver Award, publication of the **HR People Strategy 2022+** aiming to deliver the academic mission by finding and developing diverse talent, creating an inclusive culture, and building a resilient workplace
- 2023** Update to the annual appraisal process and launch of the **Annual Review Conversation** to replace the PRDP, launch of the **Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy** and **Student Experience** project (now The Imperial Experience)
- 2024** Imperial ranked 30th in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index

For more information about key initiatives started since 2016, see [page 27 of the 2022 Athena Swan renewal document](#).

Table 1.1: Imperial’s engagement with EDI and wellbeing accreditations and benchmarks

Name	Key dates
Athena Swan Charter	Founder member in 2005 First university award in 2006 Silver university award in 2012 University Silver renewed in 2016
Disability Confident (previously Two Ticks)	Two Ticks accreditation in 2012 Disability Confident Employer in 2016 Disability Confident Leader in 2019
Race Equality Charter	Became member in 2018 Successful Bronze application in 2021
Stonewall Workplace Equality Index	Submissions since 2007 Recent ranks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 2019: 266 ■ 2020: 142 ■ 2022: 96
Charter for Employers who are Positive about Mental Health	Signed in 2018

Appendix 2

Imperial's people-focused strategies

Many of the strategies listed here influence, and are inter-related to, the EDI direction of travel. Together, they will help us to move forward towards a more cohesive, resilient and inclusive Imperial community.

The Imperial Experience

To monitor, measure and manage:

- transition from school to Higher Education
- parity of experience between home and international students
- parity of experience between Widening Participation (WP) and non-WP students
- postgraduate research student experience
- alumni experience
- parity of experience across campuses
- extracurricular activities

Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

By working together, we can create a mentally healthy environment where everyone can reach their full potential. Our priorities are to:

- build and maintain an inclusive and compassionate Imperial community that enables everyone's voice and needs to be heard and respected
- build and maintain a supportive community where colleagues, supervisors and managers are knowledgeable and have the relevant training to promote mental wellness and prevent factors in the workplace that can trigger mental ill health
- promote a safe environment that boosts wellbeing, innovation, creativity and productivity

Concordat to support the career development of researchers

Imperial is dedicated to creating a positive research culture and to providing sector-leading support and professional development to all our researchers. Following our ambition to equip and empower all researchers at Imperial to succeed in their chosen careers, the university became a signatory of the new Concordat to support the career development of researchers in March 2020.

Enabling roadmap

The enabling roadmap sets out the ways that Professional Services will support Imperial to deliver the **Imperial strategy, Science for Humanity**. The plan has four overall goals:

- attract, select and recruit world-class talent
- improve the employee experience through wellbeing, growth and belonging
- enable inclusive leadership and management culture
- improve the HR service experience

Technician Commitment Action Plan

The Technician Commitment Action Plan aims to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technical staff across higher education and research.

Other relevant strategies include:

- Imperial strategy, Science for Humanity
- Academic Strategy
- Learning and Teaching Strategy
- Access and Participation Plan
- Physical Activity and Sport Strategy
- Imperial Values

Appendix 3

Staff data trends

Table 3.1: Staff Survey trends

Year	2022	2019	2017	2014	2011
Total respondents	4940	4494	4923	4589	3891
% of total staff	61%	57%	61%	60%	59%
I am treated with dignity and respect – yes neither no (%)	83 12 5	76 15 9	77 15 8	66 13 21	66 13 21
I feel able to challenge inappropriate behaviour – yes neither no (%)	59 25 16	- - -	- - -	- - -	- - -
Experience harassment or bullying (excluding sexual harassment) – yes prefer not to say no (%)	16 - 84	7 12 81	10 9 81	14 - 86	15 - 85
I can talk to my line manager about anything that concerns me about my work – yes neither no (%)	81 11 8	78 14 8	79 12 9	- - -	- - -
Confident about expressing views without negative consequences – yes neither no (%)	55 27 18	52 28 20	57 22 21	66 14 20	66 14 20

Table 3.2: Female academic staff at Imperial (2023)

Faculty	Female	Male	Total	% Female
Administration	8	10	18	44
Business School	30	77	107	39
Medicine	183	361	544	34
Engineering	93	391	484	19
Natural Sciences	66	309	375	18
Total	380	1148	1528	25

Table 3.3: Female academic staff at Imperial

Year	Academics in post			Academic leavers		
	Female (%)	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male	Total
2019	310 (21.6%)	1127	1437	20 (21%)	76	96
2020	325 (22.1%)	1147	1472	9 (18.4%)	40	49
2021	332 (22.5%)	1138	1470	13 (18.8%)	56	69
2022	345 (22.9%)	1159	1504	19 (23.8%)	61	80
2023	375 (24.7%)	1142	1516	15 (16.3%)	77	92

The data in the tables above has been captured in different ways, resulting in some slight differences in statistics.

Table 3.4: Academic pipeline

Year	UG	PGT	PGR	RA	Lecturers	Professors	PTO
2016–17	35.6%	46.4%	36%	34.4%	27.6%	15.1%	45.3%
2021–22	40.4%	49.4%	39%	41.0%	36.1%	18.3%	48.6%

Table 3.5: Professional, technical and operational staff ethnicity

Year	Asian	Black	ME *	ME%	White	%	Unknown	Total
2021	533	306	1073	26.2	2662	65.0	356	4090
2022	556	314	1125	27.5	2644	64.6	323	4092
2023	593	324	1184	28.2	2688	64.1	322	4192
2024	646	345	1280	29.3	2744	62.6	358	4382
% staff group variation 2021–24	23.8%	12.7%	19.2%	-	3%	-	-	7%

* ME - Minority ethnic.

Trend observed shows a significant increase in Asian and Black PTO staff

Table 3.6: Academic staff ethnicity

Year	Asian	Black	ME *	ME%	White	%	Unknown	Total
2021	166	-	217	14.4	1181	78.7	103	1501
2022	170	-	222	-	1175	-	-	-
2023	182	5	238	-	1179	-	-	-
2024	201	7	266	16.8	1175	74.5	136	1577
% staff group variation 2021–24	21%	75%	22.5%	-	-0.5%	-	-	5%

* ME - Minority ethnic.

Trend observed shows significant increase in Asian academic staff

Table 3.7: Learning and teaching staff ethnicity

Year	Asian	Black	ME *	ME%	White	%	Unknown	Total
2021	54	7	87	23	269	70.4	-	382
2024	77	16	127	25	328	5.1	-	504
% staff group variation 2021–24	-	-	46%	-	21.9%	-	-	32%

* ME - Minority ethnic.

Trend observed shows a significant increase in Asian and Black PTO staff

Table 3.8: Disabled staff

Year	Report on ICIS (% of total staff number)	Disclosed on staff survey – Disability (% of staff responding to survey)		
		Yes	No	Prefer not to say
2011	161 (2.3%)	53 (1.7%)	3050 (98.3%)	-
2017	334 (4.0%)	216 (4.7%)	4069 (87.4%)	353 (7.6%)
2019	400 (4.61%)	305 (6.9%)	3658 (82.2%)	295 (6.6%)
2022	545 (6.31%)	818 (16.5%)	3599 (72.8%)	339 (6.8%)

50% more people declared a disability anonymously on the 2022 staff survey (545) than recorded on ICIS (273), whereas in previous surveys (given only ~ 60% of staff respond), the numbers are approximately representative.

Table 3.9: Contracts in learning and teaching job family across university (2023)

	Administration	Business School	Engineering	Natural Sciences	Medicine	Support Services	Total
Open ended	141	25	76	42	78	18	380
Fixed term	1	2	18	22	85	3	131

By grade total (short term contract): grade 3b: 174 (76), grade 4: 137 (31), grade 5: 51 (3)