



Annual Equality Report 2015/16

**EQUALITY
AND DIVERSITY
WITH
PLYMOUTH
UNIVERSITY**

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Foreword from the Pro Chancellor and Chair of the Board of Governors



Since my appointment in October 2016, I have been struck by the commitment of our Vice-Chancellor and our whole team to provide our students with the best possible foundation for their future lives through access to the highest quality research and teaching within a diverse and inclusive environment. This has been reinforced by recent new Deputy Vice-Chancellor appointments for Research and for Education and Student Experience.

University of Plymouth is special in its ability to combine academic excellence with genuine and unwavering commitment to social inclusion – this is what defines and differentiates us. Furthermore, we acknowledge that our ambitions as set out in the refreshed University strategy, with a focus on quality, institutional sustainability and one team, can only be achieved within a culture of inclusivity.

This report looks back over 2015–16 and summarises our progress against the objectives we set ourselves in our Equality Scheme 2011–16. In particular, I am delighted to draw attention to the development of a new women’s network and dedicated academic mentoring programme, flowing from our Athena SWAN efforts, and our inclusive teaching and learning practices, as also highlighted in our Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

We recognise there is more to be done, and we have set ourselves challenging objectives for the next four years in our new Equality Scheme for 2017 to 2021. We will continue to focus particularly on gender equality for employees and students. At the same time we will devote specific attention to addressing student participation and attainment gaps more generally, including those around ethnicity, socio-economic groups and gender. I am delighted to commend and support our efforts in these vital areas.

Colin Drummond OBE, DL
Pro Chancellor and Chair of the University of Plymouth Board of Governors

Foreword from our Vice-Chancellor



I am proud to be a part of an organisation that promotes a culture of inclusion and respect. Through my leadership, I am fully committed to continuing these principles as part of our core values. Our University strategy is underpinned by our core principles of: quality, institutional sustainability and one team, and these can only be achieved if we are serious about addressing inequality and promoting a culture of diversity and inclusion within our teaching, research and employment practices.

We have made progress against our equality objectives, and in particular I would like to draw attention to the following:

- Athena SWAN submissions at a university level (Bronze) and individual level for the Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry (PU PSMD) (Silver) and the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (SoGEES) (Bronze) in November;
- examples of good practice identified through the Athena SWAN submission, including the introduction of the female academic mentoring scheme through our Women's Network; increasing maternity, paternity and adoption pay benefits; the introduction of unconscious bias training; and the opportunity to consider gender equality challenges within our review of academic promotions;
- the revision and implementation of our Anti-harassment and Anti-bullying policy and procedure, promoting a supportive and inclusive learning, working and social environment where all members of the University community are treated with dignity and respect and are able to fulfil their potential. This policy has been extended to include external suppliers, contractors and consultants. We also reaffirmed our support for ensuring the opportunity for regional hate crime incidents to be reported through a simplified process.

Reflecting on my 12 months as Vice-Chancellor, there have been significant external factors that have changed the political and social landscape for the UK, and I believe that universities have an important part to play in promoting the principles of inclusion and tolerance through our research, open debate, critical reflection and lifelong learning. As an institution we must remain alert to changing social conditions that present new equality and diversity challenges, working with our external partners as appropriate to respond effectively.

I am pleased to support our report on our past successes and look forward to our new Equality Scheme, which will further embed the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion into a University strategy that remains fresh, focused and challenging.

Professor Judith Petts CBE
Vice-Chancellor





Introduction

The University publishes its Equality Report annually in March, setting out key equality data and summarising our equality and diversity activity during the preceding year. The report enables us to:

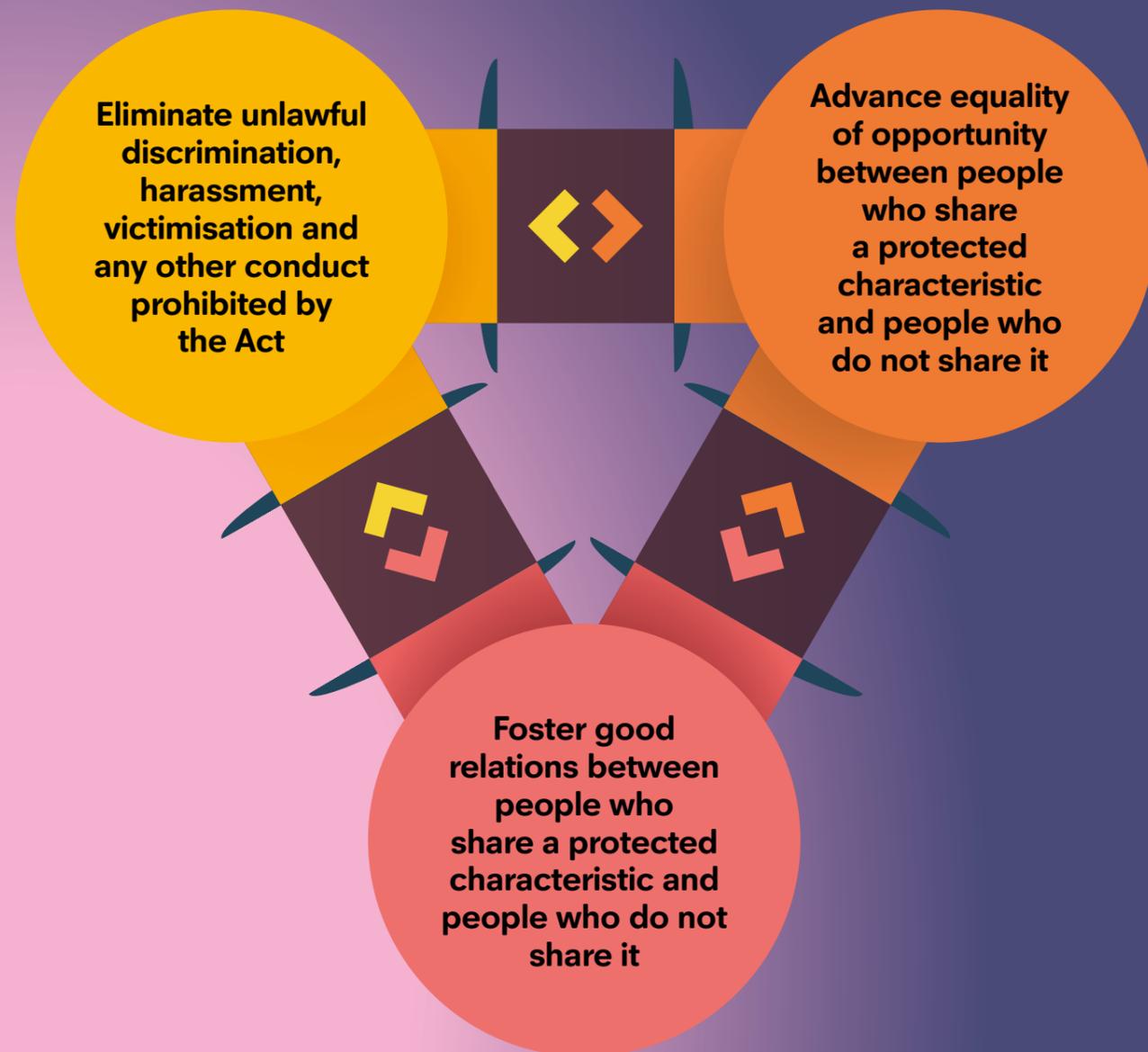
- review progress against our equality objectives outlined in the equality scheme
- share activities and actions undertaken during the preceding year
- identify areas for further improvement
- identify any additional objectives that need to be included.

It is important to emphasise the extent to which we are committed to ensuring equality and promoting diversity, and that our ambitions are greater than achieving a level of legislative compliance at a technical level, looking to raising awareness at all levels.

As an intensely people focused organisation, our values are reflected through the way each person who works, studies and visits, or otherwise engages with us, experiences and influences our culture. We aim to provide an environment where individuals feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities, within an organisation that values and respects the contributions and achievements of all members of the community.

The Equality Act (2010)

Our Equality Scheme 2011–16 was based on the three aims of the Equality Act 2010 (illustrated below), informed by data analysis relating to our employees and students, and developed through consultation with a range of stakeholders, including students, employees and the Board of Governors.



Aims of the Equality Act 2010

Sharing our data

We publish our annual equality data on the University's website, accessible by students, employees and members of the public. The data can be viewed through the links in this document, and also through our equality, diversity and inclusion webpages, at: www.plymouth.ac.uk/equality

Progress at a glance

The table below summarises progress against our Equality Scheme objectives for 2015–16.

Focus area	Objective	Progress to date*
All	Equality Objective 1: The three aims of the Equality Duty will be considered as part of the process of decision-making	Ongoing
Age	Equality Objective 2: To keep under review HR policies and practices in relation to the removal of a Default Retirement Age (DRA)	Complete
Disability	Equality Objective 3: To provide campus access information online for disabled students, staff and visitors	Complete
Disability	Equality Objective 4: The percentage of staff with an unknown disability status to reduce	Complete
Gender	Equality Objective 5: Monitor the student gender attainment gap	Ongoing
Gender	Equality Objective 6: Increase the representation of women in senior academic and academic managerial roles	Ongoing
Gender	Equality Objective 7: Undertake regular equal pay audits for all staff	Complete
LGBT	Equality Objective 8: Continue to gather and review anonymous data on staff sexual orientation through the staff survey, reviewing the availability and suitability of question options	Complete
LGBT	Equality Objective 9: Make the support we offer to LGBT students more visible	Complete
Race	Equality Objective 10: Continue to increase the ethnic diversity of the UG and PG student body	Ongoing
Race	Equality Objective 11: Annually monitor and review the attainment gap for UK BME students	Ongoing
Race	Equality Objective 12: Increase the representation of BME groups in under-represented staff grades	Ongoing
Religion & Belief	Equality Objective 13: Continue to gather and review anonymous data on religion and belief through the staff survey, reviewing the availability of question options	Complete
Religion & Belief	Equality Objective 14: Make the support which we offer to students of diverse faiths more visible	Complete

* Progress to date key

Complete: Original objectives met. Regularly reviewed and maintained.

Ongoing: Improvements initiated in this area and work ongoing, as detailed in this report.

Further Information

Equality Objective 1: The three aims of the Equality Duty will be considered as part of the process of decision-making

In last year's Equality Report (2014–15) we identified the following actions to further embed our equality and diversity objectives:

- to actively increase awareness of unconscious bias in teaching and learning and general decision-making
- to commence a planned review of our bullying and harassment advice and support
- to continue to develop our networks for staff engagement.

Progress against these three actions is described below.

a. To actively increase awareness of unconscious bias in teaching and learning and general decision-making

Unconscious bias training has been rolled out on a mandatory basis for managers in key decision-making roles, for example chairs of recruitment and selection, together with members of academic promotions panels. In addition, completion of unconscious bias training has been monitored, and regular reports are provided to our senior leaders.

At 31 December 2016, 84% of all employees had completed the mandatory e-learning training module 'Diversity in the Workplace', and 59% of all employees had completed the "Unconscious Bias" e-learning module.

Following on from a PedRIO-funded project on unconscious bias, a workshop titled 'Unconscious Bias in Teaching and Learning' was developed, and now forms part of the Teaching and Learning support workshop programme. A '7 Steps' guide to mitigating unconscious bias in teaching and learning has also been developed, and is available in hard copy and online at: <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/teaching-and-learning/guidance-and-resources/7-step-series>

Very positive feedback has been received for both developments both from within the University and across the sector.

b. To commence a planned review of our bullying and harassment advice and support

In 2016, we commissioned an external review of our Harassment and Bullying policy. Feedback was discussed with a range of employees, students and stakeholders, including with our trades unions and through our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC). Following this, a revised Anti-harassment and Anti-bullying policy and procedure was approved by our Board of Governors and implemented in August 2016.

The revised policy and procedure has been strengthened to underpin our commitment to provide a supportive and inclusive learning, working and social environment where everyone can realise their potential and is treated with dignity and respect. It was extended to cover all staff and students as well as clarify our expectations of external suppliers, contractors and consultants. The revised policies also reaffirm our support in addressing regional hate crime through improved incident reporting, with clearer links to existing formal procedures.

Our relevant specialists, such as Harassment Advisors and Employee Relations Specialists, have been trained to provide improved advice, guidance and support in cases of bullying and harassment.

Through our Harassment Advisor network annual report and staff survey, we will monitor and review the effectiveness of this revised policy in providing a safe place for employees or students to raise concerns.

c) To continue to develop our networks for staff engagement.

The LGBT and Women's networks are established with webpages to provide access through a virtual as well as a physical network, with information, advice and guidance together with details about social events and activities.

A review was commissioned of staff networks relating to other protected characteristic groups, following low levels of participation. The findings of this review will inform further action in 2017–18.

Equality Objective 2: To keep under review HR policies and practices in relation to the removal of a Default Retirement Age

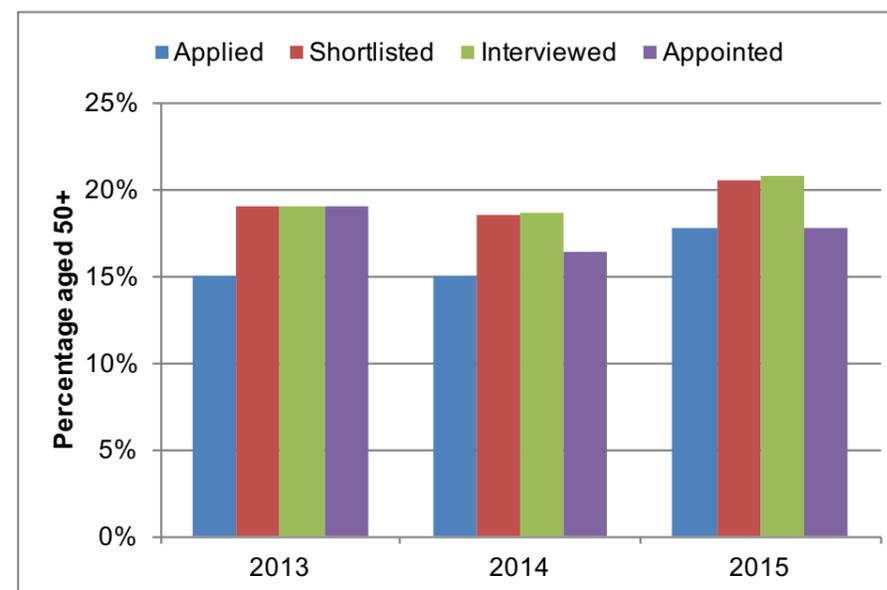
The retirement age was removed from employment policies when the Default Retirement Age (DRA) was abolished in September 2011 and employees were no longer required to retire at age 65. Managers were advised and the change was reflected within the Performance Development Review (PDR) training in relation to career and development discussions.

Monitoring of the effect of the removal of the DRA on our staff profile has revealed that the percentage of staff in the 65+ age group remained at 2% between 2014 and 2016.

As an external benchmark, DLA Piper data in 2015 shows the percentage of staff aged 65+ at participating HEIs was 3% (see [Staff Baseline Data 2013-15: Age 65+](#)), suggesting Plymouth is in line with other HEIs.

In 2015, the representation of applicants aged 50+ rose from 18% at application to 21% at the shortlisting stage. Representation of the 50+ age group also rose at shortlisting in the two previous years, which therefore did not disadvantage applicants in this age group.

The representation of applicants aged 50+ fell from 21% at interview to 18% at appointment in 2015. Representation of the 50+ age group fell at appointment in two of the three years studied.



Equality Objective 3: To provide campus access information for disabled students, staff and visitors online

The [DisabledGo](#) website provides information relating to access to buildings for employees, students and visitors.

All structural changes are visited and assessed by a DisabledGo surveyor annually, with the website updated accordingly.

In 2016–17, the Equality and Diversity team will continue to update online information to assist disabled staff and students. Meetings with disabled student representatives will continue to further our understanding of how disabled staff/students experience campus access and navigation between buildings.

The Academic Support, Technology and Innovation (ASTI) team have developed a mobile phone version of the DisabledGo website, so access to building information is available around campus.

As part of our estate development, liaison with the Estates team will ensure that due consideration is given to disabled access while building works and temporary provisions are ongoing.



A kitchen designed for disabled students living in the University of Plymouth student accommodation

Equality Objective 4: The percentage of staff with an unknown disability status to reduce

We have succeeded in reducing the percentage of employees with an unknown disability status from 22% in 2006, to 5% in 2014, with a continuing reduction down to 2% in 2016. (see [Staff Baseline Data 2013-15: Disability Status](#)).

This compares favourably against our HEI national benchmarks of 4%, and equals the south-west HEIs, also at 2% (HESA 2014–15).

This success was achieved through reviewing data collection during induction, and raising the positive profile of occupational health and other channels to further support employees with a disability. Communications were also reviewed to raise awareness of why such information is required.

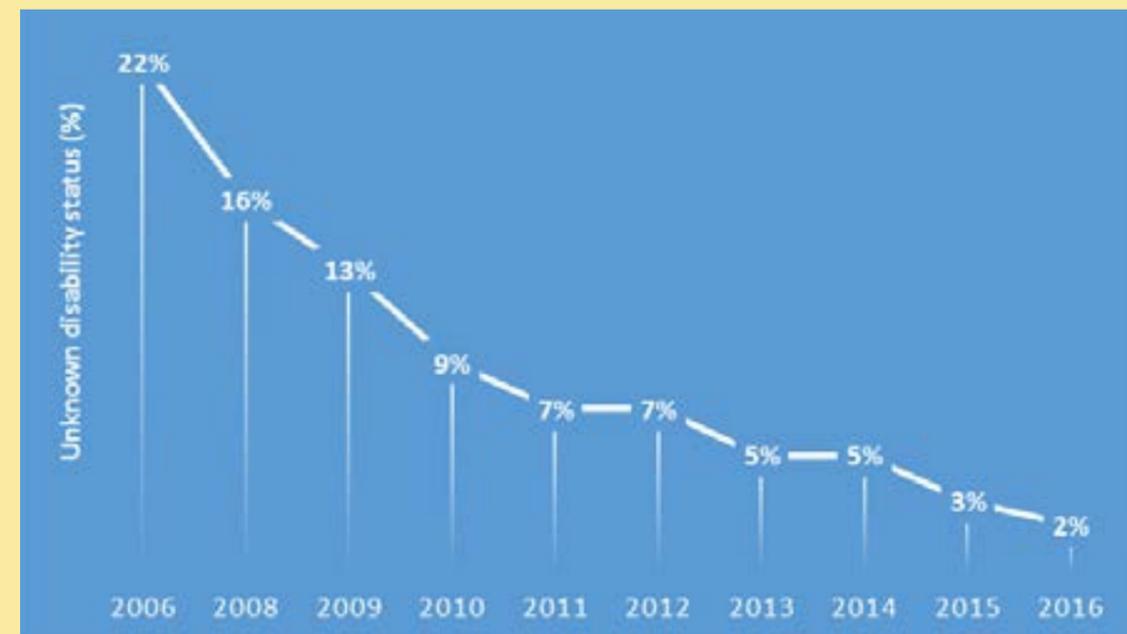
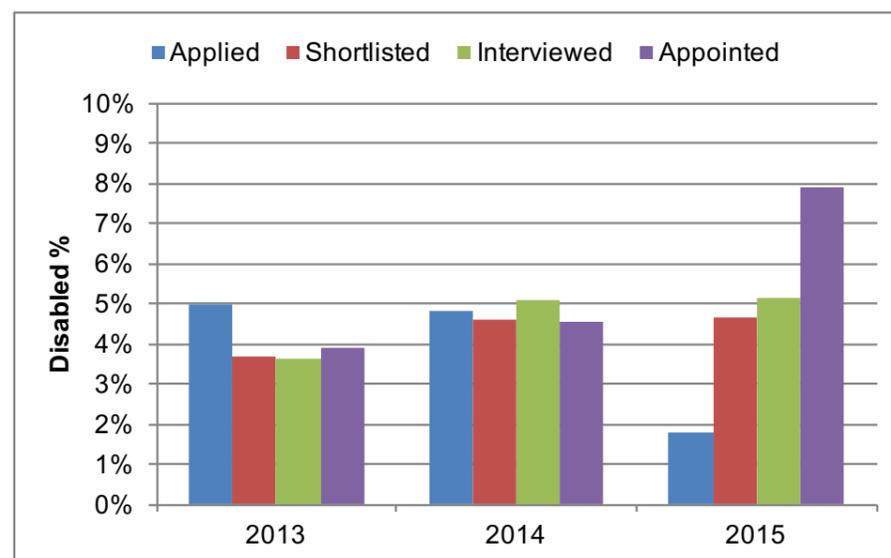
In 2015, the representation of disabled applicants rose from 2% at application to 5% at shortlisting. In this year, the representation of disabled applicants rose from 5% at interview to 8% at appointment. There was no change in the percentage of disabled applicants between interview and appointment in the two previous years studied. The overall pattern of results over three years shows that shortlisting and

appointment stages did not disadvantage disabled applicants.

Following low participation in disabled and black and minority ethnic (BME) employee networks, in January 2016 we commissioned the Diversity Trust to identify how policy and practices could be better informed by the voices of these groups.

Despite a low response rate, we received helpful feedback from employees with a disability in terms of levels of awareness regarding hidden/unseen disabilities, including autism, ME, dyslexia and mental health conditions. This perception is in line with national concern about the rising incidence of mental health conditions, and the associated challenges for the NHS.

In response to these findings, we plan to offer workshops for our managers and employees in 2017, alongside an update of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion webpages, with information and support for disabled employees and students.



Equality Objective 5: Monitor the student gender attainment gap

Student attainment is defined as the percentage of 'good degrees' achieved, i.e. either a first or upper second class award. Gender attainment gaps remain an ongoing issue across universities in the UK.

At the University of Plymouth, the gender attainment gap for 2015–16 graduates remains at the 2014–15 level of 8% in favour of women, a slight increase on the 7% reported for 2013–14. The national gender gap was 4% in favour of women reported by HESA for 2014–15 (see [Student Data 2014-15: Gender Attainment Gap](#)).

The revised Equality Scheme has highlighted that priority should be given to a continued focus on reducing the gender attainment gap.

Actions included – in September 2015 – an international seminar held by the Pedagogic Research Institute and Observatory (PedRIO), engaging issues of diversity, inclusion and effective pedagogies in higher education. The Teaching and Learning Support team also provide an online web resource for inclusivity in teaching and learning – one of only three university websites mentioned in the HEA Scotland guidance on 'Embedding Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum' – together with workshops on 'Facilitating inclusive teaching and learning'.

Other changes to teaching and learning policies and practice may contribute to addressing the gender attainment gap. These include the increasing use of attendance monitoring to encourage students to attend scheduled classes; use of anonymous marking to reduce the possibility of bias in assessment; and an increase in interactive pedagogic approaches.

Equality Objective 6: Increase the representation of women in senior academic and academic managerial roles



Women in STEM conference 2016, celebrating excellent research carried out by women

Throughout higher education, the proportion of women in senior and managerial academic roles remains relatively low, with a long underlying history, and this has been a national area of focus for some years. At the University of Plymouth, we have been actively working to increase the proportion of women in senior academic roles.

Our results for 2016 targets are as follows:

- 22% of our senior academic managers are women, against our target of 25%. Between 2014 and 2016, the percentage of females in this role has remained static; however, it should be noted that the overall population has fallen, with a reduction to 6 female senior academic managers compared to a reduction to 19 male senior academic managers in the same period;

- 19% of our professors are women, exceeding our target of 18%. In developing the Equality Scheme 2017–21, the HESA definition has been adopted for benchmark purposes. Going forward, the definition will focus on the role rather than the individual, and therefore excludes deans and heads of school. Consequently, the percentage of female professors will decrease by 1% to 18% under the revised definition (despite the fact that senior academic staff will have substantive academic posts);
- The percentage of female associate professors has increased from 32% in 2014 to 35% in 2016.

As previously, we have exceeded our targets on two measures (see [Staff Baseline Data 2014-16: Gender Targets](#) for more information.) The increasing trend for the percentage of female associate professors (senior lecturers) is encouraging, but there is more work to do to improve female representation in senior academic roles in 2016–17.

Work that has supported this undertaking during 2015–16 includes strengthening our commitment to Athena SWAN as a framework for understanding and addressing gender inequality. In November 2016, PU PSMD submitted at Silver level, and the University and SoGEES submitted at Bronze level.

Examples of our Athena SWAN work include:

- the introduction of a female academic mentoring scheme through our Women's Network
- increasing maternity, paternity and adoption pay benefits
- the introduction of unconscious bias training
- the opportunity to consider gender equality challenges within our review of academic promotions, providing specific training for reviewers, unconscious bias training for panel members, and guidance for employees who have interrupted their careers.

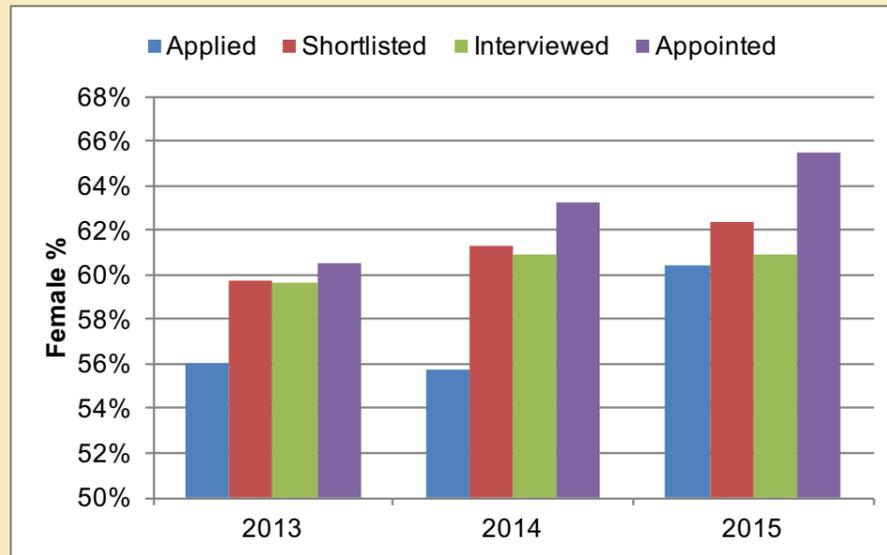


The University celebrates its women in science

In 2016, we have also introduced head of school roles on a fixed term basis, affording staff the opportunity to develop their career without moving away from an academic career. Feedback has suggested that this has previously been a barrier to academic promotion through the research route.

The Women's Network also held an event on International Women's Day in March 2016 (see photo on page 19).

Analysis of recruitment data by gender



The data shows that the representation of women at application, shortlisting and appointment stages does not disadvantage women.

Other Athena SWAN activities include:

Plymouth University Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry (PU PSMD):

- Women in Science – an International Women's Day event
- Academic Development for Women by Women (ADWW) group events
- Equality of Assessment conference

The fields of science and engineering:

- 'Girls into Geoscience' (an annual event)
- Women in STEM conference
- an interactive workshop held as part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science called 'The Real Game of Thrones - Challenging gender stereotypes in career choices' – aimed at the sixth-form girls of the Marine Academy Plymouth
- the Sprint programme (a development programme for UG women organised by the Careers & Employability Service)
- talks in schools as part of an outreach initiative.



Girls into Geoscience Conference 2015

Equality Objective 7: Undertake regular equal pay audits for all staff

Equal pay reviews have been undertaken every two years, and an equal pay review was carried out in 2016, based on data for December 2015.

Findings show that no significant equal pay variances were found within grades 1–9, based on gender or other protected characteristics for professional services or for research and academic employees.

For other roles above grade 9, we noted the following:

- In the pay band of professor (including clinical professors), the equal pay variance was –2.5%, which was not considered to be significant. However, the gender balance within this group – 22 women out of 128 employees – needed to be addressed, and this has been captured as part of the University’s Equality Scheme and Athena SWAN action plan.
- Equal pay variances in relation to gender were identified, within the pay group executive, senior manager, spot salary and clinical groups, of –6.8% when including allowances, and –3.3% without allowances.
- Equal pay variances in relation to gender were identified, within professional services Head of Service roles across the various specialisms, of –12.6% when including allowances, and –9.2% without allowances. This was based on 15 men and 17 women in these roles. This may, in part, reflect market adjustments for the various specialisms.
- The gender pay gap was impacted by the proportions of men and women in roles at different grades in the University, known as occupational segregation. The University median gender pay gap in 2015 was 19% compared with a national pay gap of 18% and a median HE sector pay gap of 15% (national and HE comparators, based on 2016 results).

The findings in the gender pay gap for academic staff were used to inform the Athena SWAN action plan. Similarly, findings in the University’s overall gender pay gap and pay gaps relating to other protected characteristics were used to help inform the Equality Scheme objectives.

Legislation due in April 2017 will require organisations to calculate and publish an overall gender pay gap, comparing the mean and median pay of all employees by gender across the organisation, with and without allowances. We will develop analytical techniques to enable us to measure progress against benchmark data.

Specific actions include:

- future consideration of how to reduce occupational segregation across the University, reviewing both the use of flexible or part-time options at all grades that support women with caring responsibilities, and options for targeted recruitment for under-represented occupational groups
- a review of allowances to ensure that they are allocated fairly and reasonably, with no direct or indirect bias
- continuing and extending equality analysis on processes relating to reward and career progression – for example, academic promotions, allocation of allowances, annual salary reviews, and recruitment policy – to determine the impact on gender and other protected characteristics.

Equality Objective 8: Continue to gather and review anonymous data on staff sexual orientation

In 2012–13, the University started to collect staff sexual orientation data as part of our standard equality monitoring procedures. The number of employees who have declared their sexuality in 2015–16 remains low, with 52.4% of all employees either leaving the field blank, or ticking “prefer not to say”.

These low numbers make it difficult to draw conclusions, as the data is statistically unreliable: 1.62% of all employees identify as LGB (lesbian, gay or bisexual), 0.17% as ‘other’, and 46.71% as heterosexual. An analysis of heterosexual employees against LGB and ‘other’ employees shows no significant pay gap.

During 2016, a revised (based on guidance from Stonewall) data collection form requesting an update to the sensitive information held by HR did not appear to increase the number of respondents who completed this optional field.

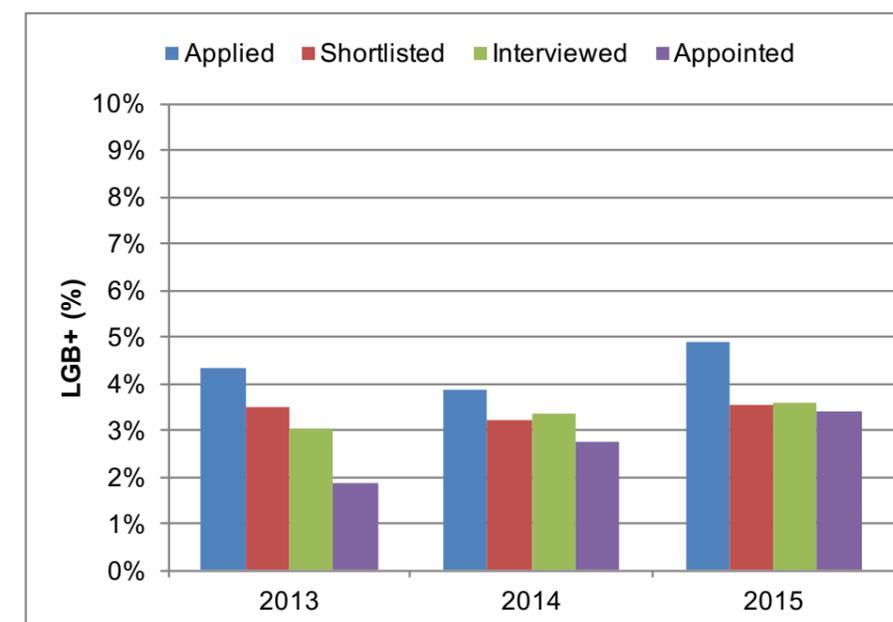
In the 2013 Staff Survey, 3% of our employees chose to self-identify as LGB, which was similar to the finding of the 2010 Staff Survey, while 13% of respondents chose the ‘prefer not to say’ option.

Information from the government and organisations such as Stonewall suggest that 5–7% of the UK population identify as LGB.

Analysis of recruitment data by sexual orientation

This is the third year in which we have included sexual orientation data in our recruitment monitoring reports. Applicants can optionally select Bisexual, Gay Man, Gay Woman/Lesbian, Heterosexual, Other, or Prefer not to say. Owing to small numbers, applicants selecting Bisexual, Gay Man, Gay Woman/Lesbian or Other are grouped as LGB+ in this report.

Unknown values: In 2015, the percentage of applicants who selected ‘Prefer not to say’ or did not answer this question was 12% – the same value as the previous year.



Shortlisting: In 2015, the representation of LGB+ applicants fell from 5% at application to 4% at shortlisting. The representation of LGB+ applicants also fell at shortlisting in the two previous years.

Appointment: In 2015, the representation of LGB+ applicants fell from 4% at interview to 3% at appointment. The representation of LGB+ applicants fell from interview to appointment in two of the three years studied. However, at appointment, the difference between LGB+ and other applicants over the three years studied was not statistically significant.

We have now made two submissions to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index identifying areas of good practice and those that would benefit from improvement.

We are in the top half of respondents, achieving 192nd place out of 432 institutions. We scored 93 points out of 200, up from 92.5 points in 2014–15. We will receive specific, detailed feedback

during February 2017 to enable ongoing action planning to support our development of an inclusive environment for LGB+ staff and students.

In August 2016, the University again sponsored 'Pride in Plymouth', with our LGB+ Staff Forum present on the day to promote their work and the University as an inclusive employer.

We have drafted a Transgender policy for employees and students, to be submitted to the University Executive Group in March 2017 for approval. Training will be available during April through the Diversity Trust, thus raising awareness among managers and employees (particularly those in student-facing roles) about supporting the implementation of this policy.

We continue to promote and raise awareness through events such as the screening of a documentary by Amanda Bluglass, Associate Lecturer in Media Arts, to promote LGBT History Month in March 2017.

Equality Objective 9: Increase visibility of the support we offer to LGBT students

The University website provides information for LGBT students, including specific careers advice (with links to Stonewall's *Starting Out Career Guide* and Stonewall's *Gay by Degree guide*), while the University itself engages with the wider LGBT community, recently hosting an exhibition of the [Plymouth LGBT Community Archive](#), and supports [Plymouth Pride](#).

Our students' union (UPSU) has an active LGBT Student Society providing a social forum, campaigns, and a route for feedback on services and experiences as an LGBT student to inform University policies and practices.

UPSU provides a more formal, democratic campaigning platform for LGBT students via a forum. The chair of this forum can only be elected by students who identify as LGBT. It meets monthly to discuss and plan local and national campaigns around topics that affect LGBT students and to inform policies and practices at the University. UPSU members participate in the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC).



Students on the English for Global Communications module taking part in a presentation

Equality Objective 10: Continue to increase the ethnic diversity of the undergraduate and postgraduate student body

In 2015–16, we made further progress towards this objective. The percentage of BME undergraduates increased to 14% from 13% in the previous year (see [Student Data 2015-16: Undergraduate Ethnicity](#)).

The HESA benchmark data for first year, first-degree students shows our BME percentage as 8% in 2014–15, the same as in the previous year. (This study treats non-UK students as having unknown ethnicity values.) This figure is slightly below the average of 10% for south-west institutions, and lower than the UK average of 20%. As more than 60% of our students come from within the region, some reflection of regional characteristics would be expected.

For postgraduate taught (PGT) students (see [Student Data 2015-16: PGT Ethnicity](#)), our BME percentage was 14% in 2015–16, compared with 13% in the previous year. Our BME benchmark figure of 4% (HESA) for first year PGT students in 2014–15 is slightly below the south-west average of 6%, and below the UK average of 11%. (This study treats non-UK students as having unknown ethnicity values.)

For postgraduate research (PGR) students (see [Student Data 2015-16: PGR Ethnicity](#)), our BME percentage has decreased slightly to 28% in 2015–16 from 30% in the previous year. However, our BME benchmark figure of 7% (HESA) for first year PGR students in 2014–15 compares favourably with the south-west average of 6%, and is close to the UK average of 8%. (This study treats non-UK students as having unknown ethnicity values.)

The University website outlines outreach activities aimed at increasing the ethnic diversity of participants and maximising engagement with local support organisations for BME groups. Activities have included the promotion of Black History Month online (national celebration and events calendar); a screening of *Divided We Fall: Americans in the Aftermath* to celebrate Interfaith Week in November 2016; and a learning event on human trafficking – through FREDa (Forum for Race Equality and Diversity Awareness).

The University has recently partnered with Plymouth’s social inclusion group, Fata He – the Black and Minority Ethnic Change Up Infrastructure lead for Devon, Cornwall, Plymouth and Torbay, which seeks to redress social and economic inequalities.

UPSU’s Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) forum, chaired by an elected student, provides a space for BAME students to discuss issues affecting their community at the University and in the city, including experiences of racism, diversity in the curricula, promotion of black historical and socio-cultural events, and the diversity of support services. This enables dialogue with the University to develop a partnership approach in promoting inclusion and resolving issues.



International students enjoying a students' union event

Equality Objective 11: Annually monitor and review the attainment gap for UK BME students

Along with gender attainment gaps, referenced in Equality Objective 5, ethnicity attainment gaps are a national issue. The attainment gap is based on good first degrees – i.e. first or upper second class degrees.

We have analysed data based on both UK BME students, and BME students domiciled outside the UK. The data shows that UK-domiciled BME students at the University have an attainment gap in line with the UK benchmark; however, BME students domiciled outside the UK have an attainment gap that exceeds this benchmark. (see [Student Data 2015-16: Ethnicity Attainment Gap](#)).

For UK-domiciled students in 2015–16, 74% of white students attained good degrees, compared with 56% for BME students. The ethnicity gap for UK-domiciled students has therefore risen slightly over the three years studied, to 18% in 2015–16, which is slightly more than the latest national benchmark gap of 14% (HESA institutions 2014–15).

For non-UK-domiciled students in 2015–16, 72% of white students attained good degrees, compared with 46% for BME students. The ethnicity gap for non-UK-domiciled students has therefore risen over the three years studied, to 27% in 2015–16. (NB: Figures shown will not always add up exactly because of rounding up of results.)

Despite this, BME students are generally positive about teaching and learning at the University, with Plymouth scoring significantly above both the benchmarks for teaching quality for BME students in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission. Further work is clearly needed, with areas of consideration including a reflection on the diversity of our curricula. However, there have been significant efforts to enhance the experience of BME students, building on a project that explores the gender and ethnicity attainment gap (PedRIO paper 2).

Other changes to teaching and learning policies and practice may contribute to addressing the ethnicity attainment gap – for example: providing timely assessment and feedback, as well as offering formative feedback opportunities to ensure that students have an accurate view of their progress; enhancing English language and study skills support; and ensuring that small group or individual tutorials provide a safe space in which under-represented groups can ask questions.

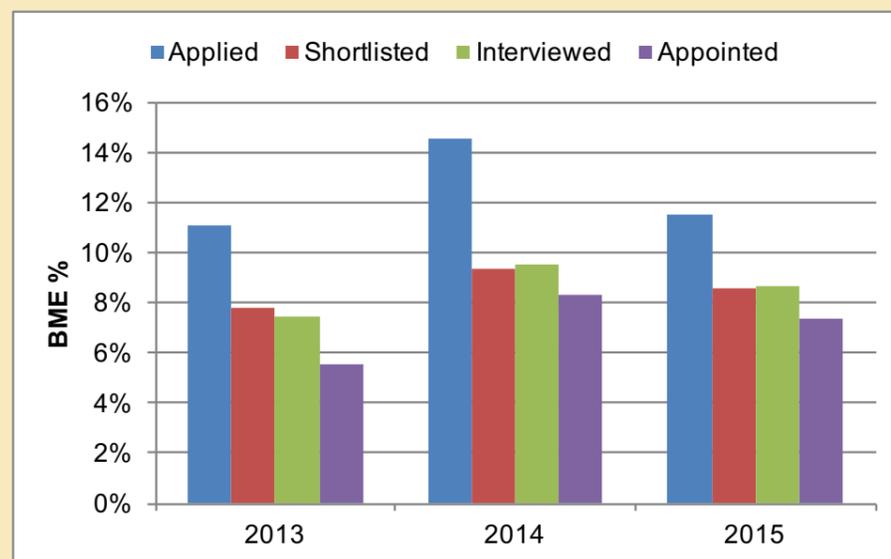
Efforts to enhance social and academic integration, as well as improve transition to university, were embedded in the Curriculum Enrichment Project and helped to provide a positive environment for BME students. Other recent initiatives targeting BME students include work with the Santander Universities programme, which facilitated opportunities for bridging gaps in student CVs, including 55 fully funded work experience opportunities that prioritised students from BME and widening participation backgrounds. In addition, the Employer Mentoring Programme links students with industry professionals so they may gain an insight into a specific area of work. The programme has 90 students enrolled in intensive, four-month modules, and has supported BME students, care leavers and disabled students.

Equality Objective 12: Increase the representation of BME groups in under-represented staff grades

We have made further progress against this objective. When looking at our ethnicity data for 2016 and comparing against our targets for 2016, we noted the following:

- We have been successful in academic posts, where 10.8% of our staff are BME against our target of 9.3%. We have now exceeded our target for the second year running, and this figure of 10.8% is on a rising trend (see [Staff Baseline Data 2014-16: Academic Ethnicity Target](#));
- We have also made progress in professional services posts, where we have reached our target of 2.8% BME staff (see [Staff Baseline Data 2014-16: Prof Services Ethnicity Target](#)). This figure has risen from 1.9% in the two previous years.
- The Census (2011) results showed an increase in the local economically active BME population to 4%, compared with 13% in England and Wales. This relatively low percentage locally has a significant bearing on our ability to recruit BME staff into professional services posts. In 2016–17, we will continue our efforts to ensure that job advertising is reaching under-represented groups.

Analysis of recruitment data by BME – all applicants

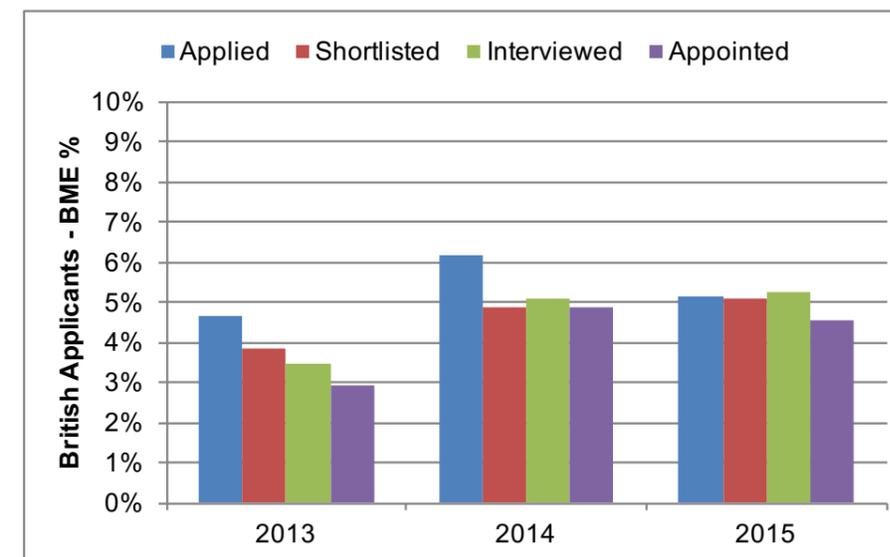


Shortlisting: In 2015, considering all applicants, including non-British, the representation of BME applicants fell from 12% at application to 9% at shortlisting. The representation of BME applicants also fell at shortlisting in the two previous years.

See [Job Application Data 2015: Ethnicity \(British Applicants\)](#) for data based on British applicants only, which excludes factors such as applying in a second language and work permit requirements.

Appointment: In 2015, considering all applicants, the representation of BME applicants fell from 9% at interview to 7% at appointment. The representation of BME applicants also fell at appointment in the two previous years.

Analysis of recruitment data for British BME applicants



Shortlisting: In 2015, considering only British applicants, BME representation was 5% in both the applied and shortlisted group. This is an improvement on the two previous years, where BME representation fell from application to shortlisting.

Appointment: In 2015, considering only British applicants, BME representation was 5% in both the interviewed group and the appointed group. Over the three years studied, the change in representation between interview and appointment showed no significant difference between BME and White applicants.

A survey of BME employees carried out by the Diversity Trust helped clarify the need for representation of such employees, and whether there was a demand for a BME network. Positive feedback was received about their experiences.

BME-led focus groups established a desire to develop a culture of inclusivity in the University in relation to communication, creating a forum to celebrate cultural events throughout the year.

Examples of events organised included:

- a celebration of the end of Ramadan at Drake's Place Gardens.
- film screening of Divided We Fall: Americans in the Aftermath to celebrate Black History Month
- activities and events to celebrate Chinese New Year

Equality Objective 13: Continue to gather and review anonymous data on religion and belief through the staff survey, reviewing the availability of question options

We collect data on religious belief. However, as with data relating to sexual orientation, there has been a high proportion of individuals who choose not to disclose their religious faith or belief, making analysis difficult.

Statistically, 42.77% of employees have declared that they are Christian, 39.24% have declared no faith, 2.67% have declared a minority faith/belief, and 13.7% have preferred not to declare a religion.

The analysis of pay between Christians and minority faith/belief groups identified a pay variance of 13.5% in favour of minority faith/belief

In the Staff Survey 2013, from those who did declare a religion, the highest two declarations were no religion (41%) or Christian (40%). The next staff survey will be held in 2017, and, as before, communications will include assurances of confidentiality. Following this survey, we will again analyse the responses.

Equality Objective 14: Make the support which we offer to students of diverse faiths more visible

In the first year of the Equality Scheme, in 2011–12, our website information on the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy was reviewed. More recently, a [Facebook](#) page has been set up.

The Chaplaincy information was refreshed to include a short video explaining the services it offers. These include regular and special events organised by the Chaplaincy and our religious societies, and lectures that address ethical and academic issues. Students can join a regular mailing list that will keep them informed of events.

The website also holds information relating to student religious groups, faith communities and places of worship in Plymouth city centre.

In 2015, the University reviewed its Religious Diversity policy to ensure that it remained current, leading to – in 2016 – the allocation of space on campus for Friday prayers. Work continues in allocating more decentralised prayer space

Looking to the future

The Equality Scheme 2017–21 has been developed with input from academics and professional services employees, and focuses on the three aims of the Equality Act. Targets have been identified that promote a culture of diversity and inclusion within our teaching, research and employment practices.

For full details of the 2017–21 Equality Scheme, please follow the link to www.plymouth.ac.uk/equality.

The scheme must remain relevant and therefore will continue to be reviewed and updated annually, as appropriate.



If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact the **Equality & Diversity Unit** on **01752 582060** or email equality@plymouth.ac.uk.

Further copies may be downloaded from: www.plymouth.ac.uk/equality

