

Executive Summary – 2023/24

- **Age:** The average age of our staff population is 49.7 years. The large majority (74.6%) of academic staff are within the over 45 age bracket with an average age of 53.9 years. In contrast, most professional and support staff (53.6%) are 45 years and under and 46.4% are over 45 years, with an average age of 44.4 years. The highest average age is in the Associate Lecturer population (55.2 years) and the lowest average age is Support Staff (42.5 years).
- **Disability(ies):** The proportion of colleagues disclosing Disability(ies) continues to rise for the consecutive year and now stands at 8.8%. When looking at the representation across all employee subgroups, staff disclosing Disability(ies) are most represented in the Regional Academic (10.4%) and Associate Lecturer (9.7%) employee subgroups. In contrast, the smallest representation of staff disclosing Disability(ies) is among the Central Academic (6.5%) employee subgroup. The representation of staff disclosing Disability(ies) at senior level has decreased in the last year against a trend of increasing over time, to 4.4%. This decrease has been due to a reduced representation in both academic and professional services roles. The proportion of applications from candidates disclosing Disability(ies) has remained constant at 7.3% in the most recent two years. The proportion of candidates disclosing Disability(ies) increased at the shortlisting stage, making up 9.2% of all shortlisted applicants. However, fewer candidates disclosing Disability(ies) were successful after interview, making up 3.8% of new appointments.
- **Ethnicity:** The representation of colleagues from racially minoritised communities continues to rise and is now at 12.2%, the highest representation since 2018/19. The largest representation of staff from racially minoritised communities is in the Research Staff population (23.2%) followed by Support Staff (19.3%). In contrast, the lowest representation is in the Associate Lecturer population, where racially minoritised colleagues make up 7.6% of the population. The representation at senior level has decrease slightly by 0.1 percentage points from 12.3% to 12.2%. Racially minoritised colleagues are underrepresented in senior professional and support grades and make up 8.7% of the SS0-SS5 grade band population. Black colleagues are the least represented minority community at senior level, particularly in professor grades. There is a drop (-0.9 percentage points to 1.0%) in representation of Black colleagues at the senior level compared to the previous year 2022/23. All other minority ethnic groups' representation at senior level increased and are above the targets in the Equality Scheme. With regards to recruitment, a quarter of applications (25.8%) were from candidates from racially minoritised communities. However, applicants from racially minoritised communities were less likely to be successful after interview compared to white applicants, with 15.5% successful compared to 20.4% of white applicants.

Executive Summary – 2023/24

- **Religion:** 43.5% of OU colleagues identify as having no religion or belief while 39.5% identify as being a member of a particular religion or belief community. Of people with a religion or belief, the largest group identify as being Christian (30.2%), followed by those identifying as Spiritual (2.2%) and Muslim (2.1%). Professional and support staff are more likely to disclose having no religion or belief compared to academic staff.
- **Sex:** Female representation continues to increase: 63.2% of the population is female and 36.8% male. The balance varies across the different employee subgroups with the highest female representation in the Regional Academic (75.9%), Support Staff (69.9%) and Academic-related (66.5%) employee subgroups. For professional and support staff, 32.1% of the population is male. Female representation at senior level continued to increase, at 53.6% of the senior staff population in 2023/24, above 50% for the first time in the reporting period. This is now the case for both academic (51.6% female) and professional and support staff (55.8% female) senior populations. The OU recognises that not all colleagues feel included in these sex definitions. We provide staff with the option to share their gender as well as sex. Staff can record gender information confidentially as part of their personal information form on the HR system, including the option to self-describe in their own words. We analyse this gender information in support of, for example, our Athena Swan charter work.
- **Sexual Orientation:** The OU recognises the importance of reporting on sexual orientation and gender diversity data, and staff can share this information. However, we have been unable to report on sexual orientation this year due to historic system issues that have led to gaps in the data. The challenges of resolving these issues are being investigated with an intention to increase the disclosure rate.
- **Note about 2023/24 recruitment data:** Disclosure rates in the 2023/24 data packs are lower than previous years. One of the reasons for this is expected to relate to a change made in Autumn 2023 to the equal monitoring opportunities form for applicants. This issue is expected to be addressed by a new recruitment system, which was launched in Summer 2024. The new system module will provide the basis for the 2024/25 and ongoing recruitment data sets.