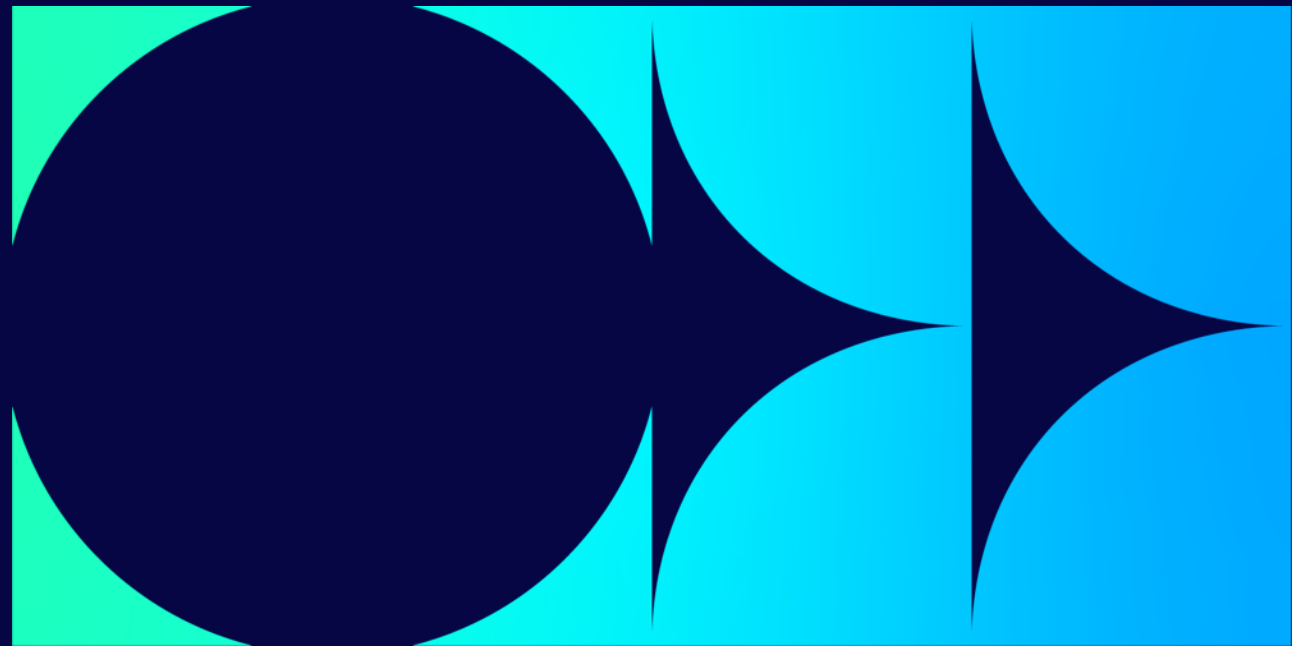


OU Staff Monitoring Report – 2024/25

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Vice Chancellor's Office

March 2026



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Information

This report has been prepared by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team as part of the University’s publication requirements under the Equality Act 2010 and Northern Ireland Act 1998, Section 75. An accessible version of the data from this report has been prepared on an Excel spreadsheet and is available to download from our website.

About	Information
Data covered in this report	1. Headcount data (the diversity of our staffing population; information on which staff groups are captured in the data can be found below) 2. Recruitment data (numbers and proportions of candidates from application, shortlisting to appointment)
Reporting Period (see slide footnotes)	1. Headcount data is a snapshot taken as at 31st July 2025 (presented as current year, 2024/25) 2. Previous year refers to a snapshot taken as at 31st July 2024 (presented as 2023/24) 3. Recruitment data reporting period runs from 1st August 2024 to 31st July 2025 (presented as academic year 2024/25)
Included in the data	Academic Staff: Associate Lecturers, Central Academic Staff, Regional Academic Staff (also known as Staff Tutors), and Research staff Professional & Support Staff: Academic-related (AR7-AR9), Support staff (GR3-GR6)
Not included in the data	1. Open University subsidiaries: OU Worldwide (grade Z95), Open University Student Association (OUSA), Mulberry Bear 2. Contingency staff: temp/ agency workers, contractors/consultants, visitors etc
Counting method	All data looks at the unique count of individual employees.

Please note that the EDI team only provide data for annual compliance monitoring and do not provide ad-hoc data requests. All staff data requests must be submitted through People Services. If you have a question about this report, please contact us at edi-team@open.ac.uk

Information (continued)

About	Information
Employee groups	Employee Group: in this report, 'Employee Group' refers to two types of employee groups: Academic Staff and Professional & Support Staff Employee Subgroup: this is a breakdown of the Employee Group, displaying the different types of academic, Professional and Support Staff – e.g. Associate Lecturers, Central Academic staff, Regional Academic staff (also known as Staff Tutors); Academic-related and support staff
Senior Staff / Senior Level	Senior Staff refers to employees in senior grade roles (SS0–SS5) or professor bands (PB1–PB3).
Disclosure Rate	Disclosure rate refers to the number of people who have reported information about a protected characteristic. For example, the number of people who have disclosed information about their ethnicity, religion or whether or not they have one or more disabilities. 'Prefer not to say' is not included in the disclosure rate because when we refer to disclosure rate in EDI, we mean the revealing of an identity of a protected characteristic.
Equality Scheme Targets	The full Equality Scheme can be found in The Open University Equality Scheme 2022–2026 . The Equality Scheme Staff KPIs are presented in the next page of this report.
Higher Education Sector comparison benchmarks	Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data published by HESA in February 2026, in the 'Who's working in HE?: Personal characteristics' data release, relating to data from the 2024/25 academic year. Who's working in HE?: Personal characteristics HESA Where updated data on Sexual Orientation and Religion, and more detailed intersectional data by age could not be sourced, the last available data from 2022/23 has been referenced: Higher Education Statistics Agency data published by Advance HE in the 'Equality in Higher Education: Statistical Reports' 2024 report, relating to data from the 2022/23 academic year. Equality in higher education: statistical reports Advance HE

Executive Summary – 2024/25

This report presents staff equality monitoring data for the University as at **31 July 2025**, in line with the University's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Section 75).

Workforce profile and age

- The University continues to have an **older workforce profile** compared to the HESA sector average, especially within **academic** roles.
- More than **three-quarters of Academic Staff are aged over 45**, and nearly **half are over 55**. This contrasts with a younger and more evenly distributed age profile for Professional and Support Staff.
- **Associate Lecturers are the largest and oldest staff group**, (average age 55.9), while Support Staff and Research Staff are the youngest groups (average ages 43.4 and 43.5 respectively).
- Candidates aged 35 to 64 make up a higher proportion of appointments relative to their share of applications, while **younger candidates** (especially 25 and under) **are less represented at appointment stage**.
- Lower representation of younger age groups, which have the greatest diversity in 2022/23 HESA benchmark data for disability, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, may impact overall workforce diversity.

Ethnicity

- Representation of racially minoritised staff has **increased for a fifth consecutive year** (to 12.6%). However, this remains significantly below the HESA benchmark (20.2%).
- **Representation varies significantly**, with the higher representation among the younger employee groups and lower representation among the older groups. Nearly 1 in 5 Research Staff and Support Staff (19–20%) are racially minoritised, compared to 7.8% of Associate Lecturers, the University's largest employee group.
- **Senior racially minoritised representation has seen a large increase** (up 0.9 to 13.1%). This has been driven by an increase in representation within Professor grades (16.8%), while representation in senior professional services staff roles reduced slightly (8.6%).

Executive Summary – 2024/25

Ethnicity (continued)

- **Black colleagues remain the least represented group at senior level**, and despite an increase (from 1.0% to 1.3%), there remains a significant gap against the Equality Scheme 2026 target (2.7%).
- Recruitment data shows **over 40% of applications are from racially minoritised candidates**, but this reduces to around 20% of appointments, with an increased success rate through the recruitment pipeline for white candidates.
- **All of the Equality scheme 2026 targets related to racially minoritised recruitment have been met** or exceeded.

Disability(ies)

- The proportion of staff declaring they have disability(ies) has risen to its **highest level in five years (9.5%)**, above the HESA sector total of 8.5%.
- Representation is highest within **Regional Academic, Support Staff, and Associate Lecturer roles** (all above 10%). The lowest representation is among Academic Related Staff (7.0%).
- Representation of staff with Disability(ies) at **senior level has increased (4.6%)**, driven by increased representation within Professor grades (4.8%), though numbers remain small and below the Equality Scheme target (7.2%).
- Recruitment outcomes have improved significantly. **12.7% of shortlisted candidates declared Disability(ies)**, exceeding the Equality Scheme target. 11.9% of appointed candidates declared Disability(ies).

Sex

- The majority of the University's workforce is female (63.1%) with the **highest representation in Professional and Support roles** (67.4%), compared to Academic roles (59.7%).
- **Senior female representation continues to grow**, increasing to 53.9%, the highest in five years. This is driven by increases in senior academic female representation, and continues to exceed the Equality Scheme target of 45%.
- In recruitment, female representation grows from **around 6 in 10 applications, to 7 in 10 appointments**.

Executive Summary – 2024/25

Sexual Orientation

- Among staff who have disclosed, **LGBQA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Asexual) representation varies by age group and employee group**. Representation is **highest among younger staff**. In 2024/25, 15.7% of academic staff aged 30 and under identified as LGBQA. Representation decreases with increasing age, falling to 2.2% among those aged 61 and over.
- Our data for **Academic staff** includes a **76.2% disclosure rate** for sexual orientation, compared to the 2022/23 HESA benchmark of 64.5%. LGBTQA representation of Academic staff is. **5.5%, slightly higher than the HESA benchmark of 5.2%** (for all staff).
- Despite continued progress in disclosure rates, **we do not have sexual orientation data for around half of the workforce**, partly because of legacy data migration issues affecting Professional and Support Staff. This limits the extent to which conclusions can be drawn about the overall population. Steps are being taken to collect this data from Professional Services and Support staff.

Religion or Belief

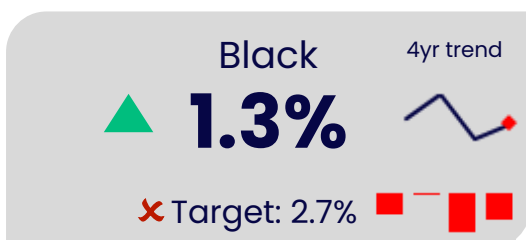
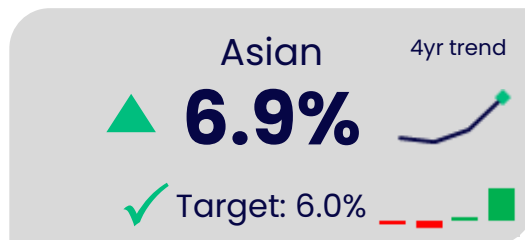
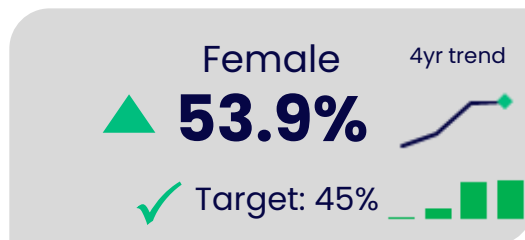
- Around **two-fifths of staff identify as having a religion or belief**, while just under half report having no religion or belief.
- **Christianity remains the most common religion**, followed by smaller proportions identifying as Muslim (2.3%), Hindu (1.7%), Jewish (0.5%), Buddhist (0.7%), Sikh (0.4%) or other beliefs (1.6%).
- Differences between academic and Professional and Support Staff are modest.

Gender

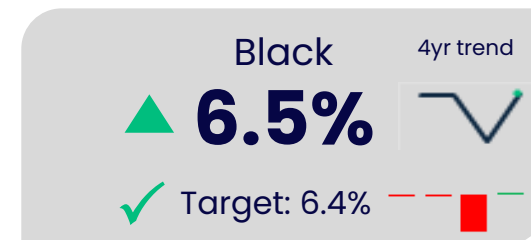
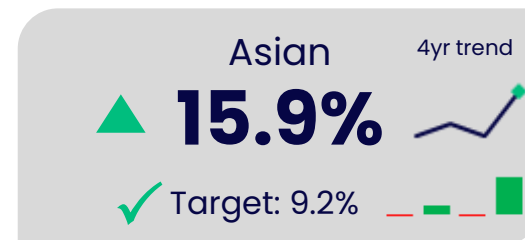
- The proportion of staff who have provided gender data remains too low to be able to draw meaningful insights. The Open University is committed to being an inclusive employer and we are working to improve disclosure rates.
- The Open University recognises that not all colleagues feel included with certain definitions of sex and gender. We provide staff with the option to share gender as well as sex. Staff can record information confidentially as part of their personal information form on the HR system, including the option to self-describe in their own words.

2022–26 Equality Scheme Staff KPIs – at a glance

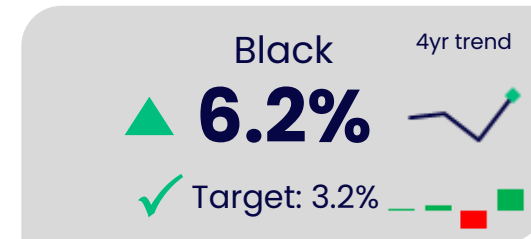
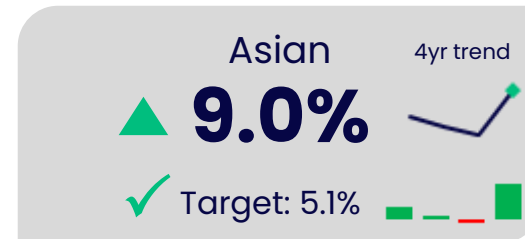
Senior Staff Diversity



Shortlisted Candidates



Appointed Candidates



8 out of 11 KPIs (72.7%) are on or above target.

The largest gaps relate to staff declaring Disability(ies) in senior roles, and Black staff in senior roles.

Recruitment outcomes for Asian and Black candidates show substantial improvement.

2022–26 Equality Scheme Staff KPIs

The Equality Scheme set out 11 staff KPIs to increase the representation of disabled and racially minoritised staff in senior roles and in recruitment stages. **All but one measure has increased year-on-year, and 8 of the 11 (72.7%) staff KPIs have met or exceeded targets.** Three are below target, with the largest gap from targets relating to senior level representation of staff declaring Disability(ies), and senior Black staff – currently at **less than half of the target percentage**, and senior disabled representation **over a third below target**. Further data and context can be found in the following pages.

Equality Scheme Staff KPIs	Baseline	Target	Previous year (2023/24)	Current year (2024/25)	Year on Year difference (ppt)	Difference from target (%)
Maintain an overall female staff representation in senior roles	47.7%	Minimum of 45%	53.6%	53.9%	+0.3 ppts	▲ 19.8%
An increased proportion of staff with declared Disability(ies) in senior roles	4.2%	7.2%	4.4%	4.6%	+0.2 ppts	▼ 36.1%
An increased proportion of Asian staff in senior roles	5.6%	6.0%	6.1%	6.9%	+0.8 ppts	▲ 15.0%
An increased proportion of Black staff in senior roles	1.7%	2.7%	1.0%	1.3%	+0.3 ppts	▼ 51.9%
An increased proportion of Mixed staff in senior roles	2.1%	2.5%	2.7%	2.3%	-0.4 ppts	▼ 8.0%
An increased proportion of Other minority ethnic staff in senior roles	1.7%	2.1%	2.4%	2.6%	+0.2 ppts	▲ 3.8%
% of candidates shortlisted of disclosed Disability(ies)	7.6%	10.8%	9.2%	12.6%	+3.4 ppts	▲ 16.7%
% of candidates shortlisted of Asian ethnicity	8.8%	9.2%	9.0%	15.9%	+6.9 ppts	▲ 72.8%
% of candidates shortlisted of Black ethnicity	5.6%	6.4%	2.6%	6.5%	+3.9 ppts	▲ 1.6%
% of candidates appointed of Asian ethnicity	4.9%	5.1%	4.6%	9.0%	+4.4 ppts	▲ 76.5%
% of candidates appointed of Black ethnicity	2.8%	3.2%	0.6%	6.2%	+5.6 ppts	▲ 93.8%

Age

2024/25

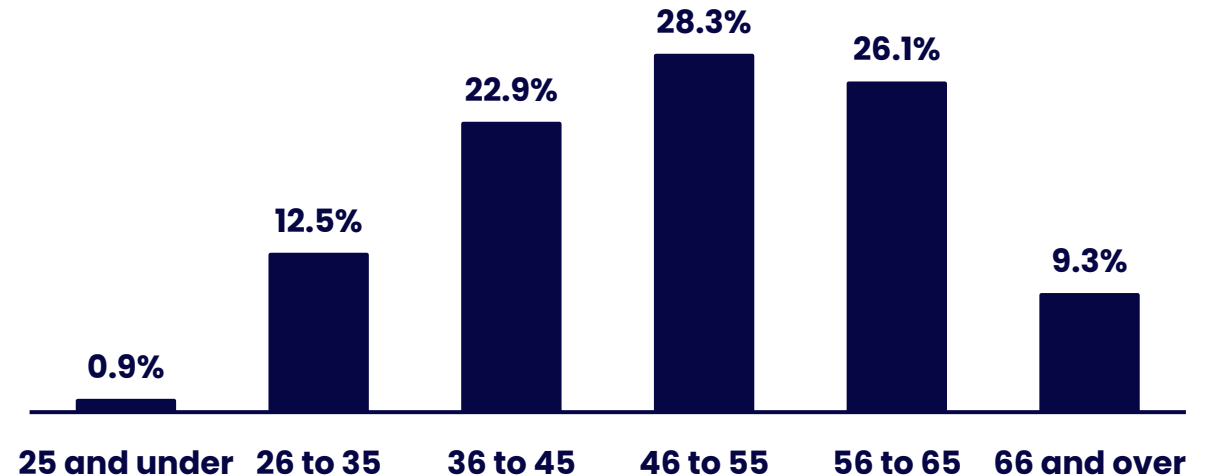
The **age profile of University staff is older than the HESA sector benchmark** – driven primarily by the older age profile of Academic Staff, compared to Professional and Support Staff.

The **Professional and Support Staff cohort shows a similar age profile to the HESA** benchmark distribution, whereas academic staff are more heavily weighted towards the **46 and over** age groups compared with the sector average.

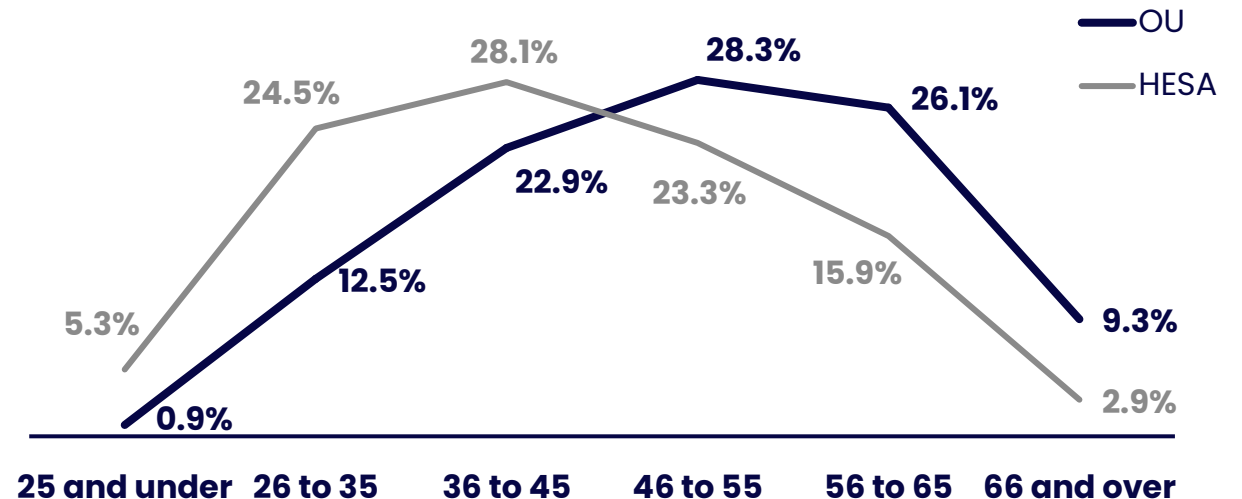
University staff are **under-represented in age groups in which HESA data show the greatest diversity** of ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation. Employee groups with lower average ages reflect these greater diversity profiles but represent a relatively small proportion of total staff. Our largest employee group (Associate Lecturers) is also our oldest, and this is reflected in its reduced diversity profile, and its impact on our overall workforce diversity.



Population by Age Group



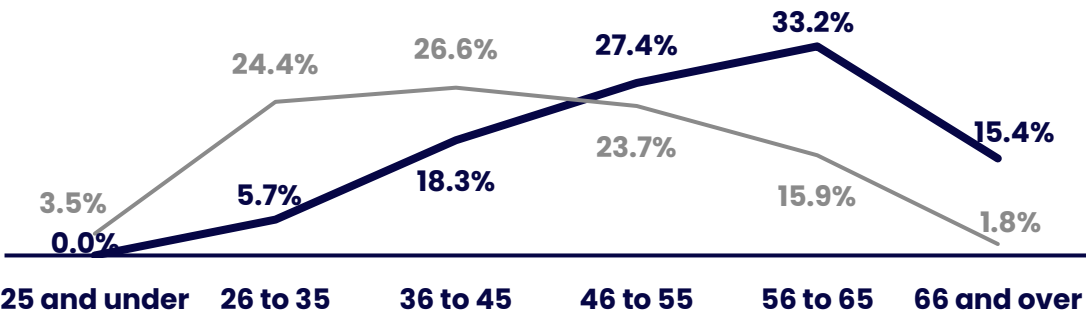
Population by Age Group vs HESA



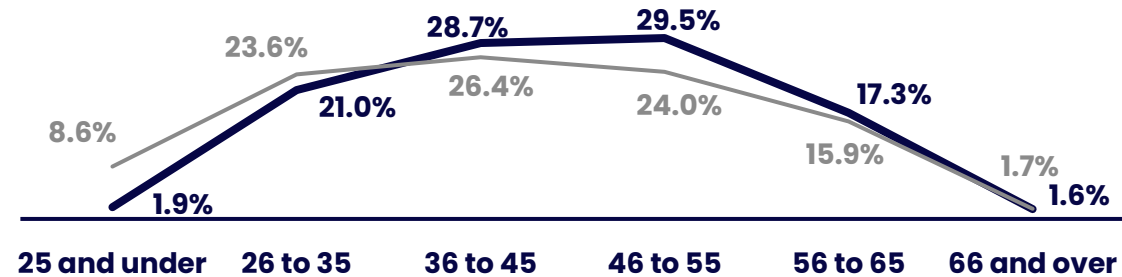
Age Group by Employee Group

Academic Staff have an older age profile than Professional and Support Staff. The Professional and Support Staff cohort shows a similar age distribution to the HESA benchmark, whereas Academic Staff are more heavily weighted towards the **46 and over** age groups compared with the sector average.

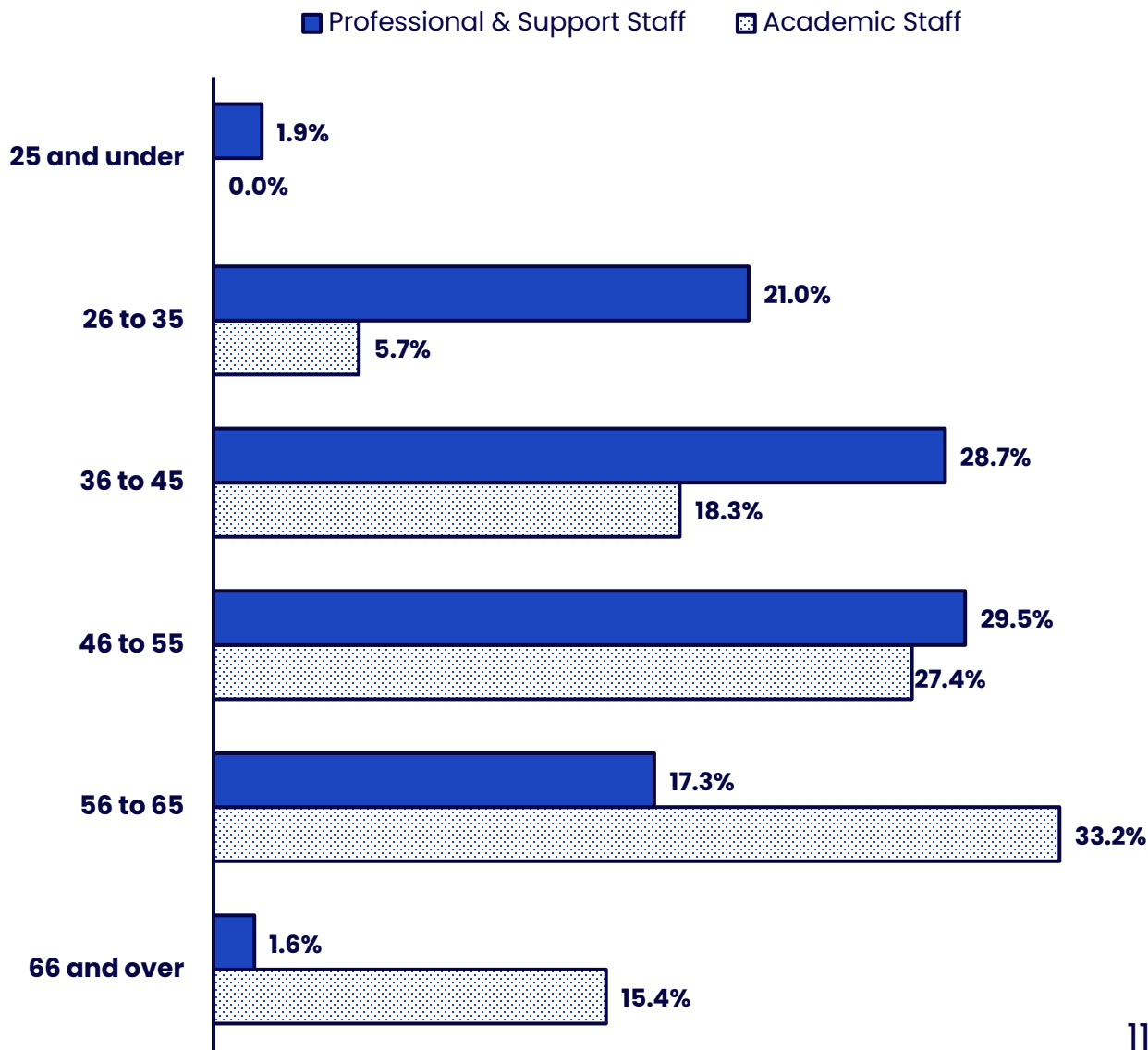
Academic Staff Age group vs HESA



Professional & Support Staff Age group vs HESA



Age group by Employee Group



HESA Sector data taken from 2026 report on 2024/25 statistics

Average Age by Employee Subgroup

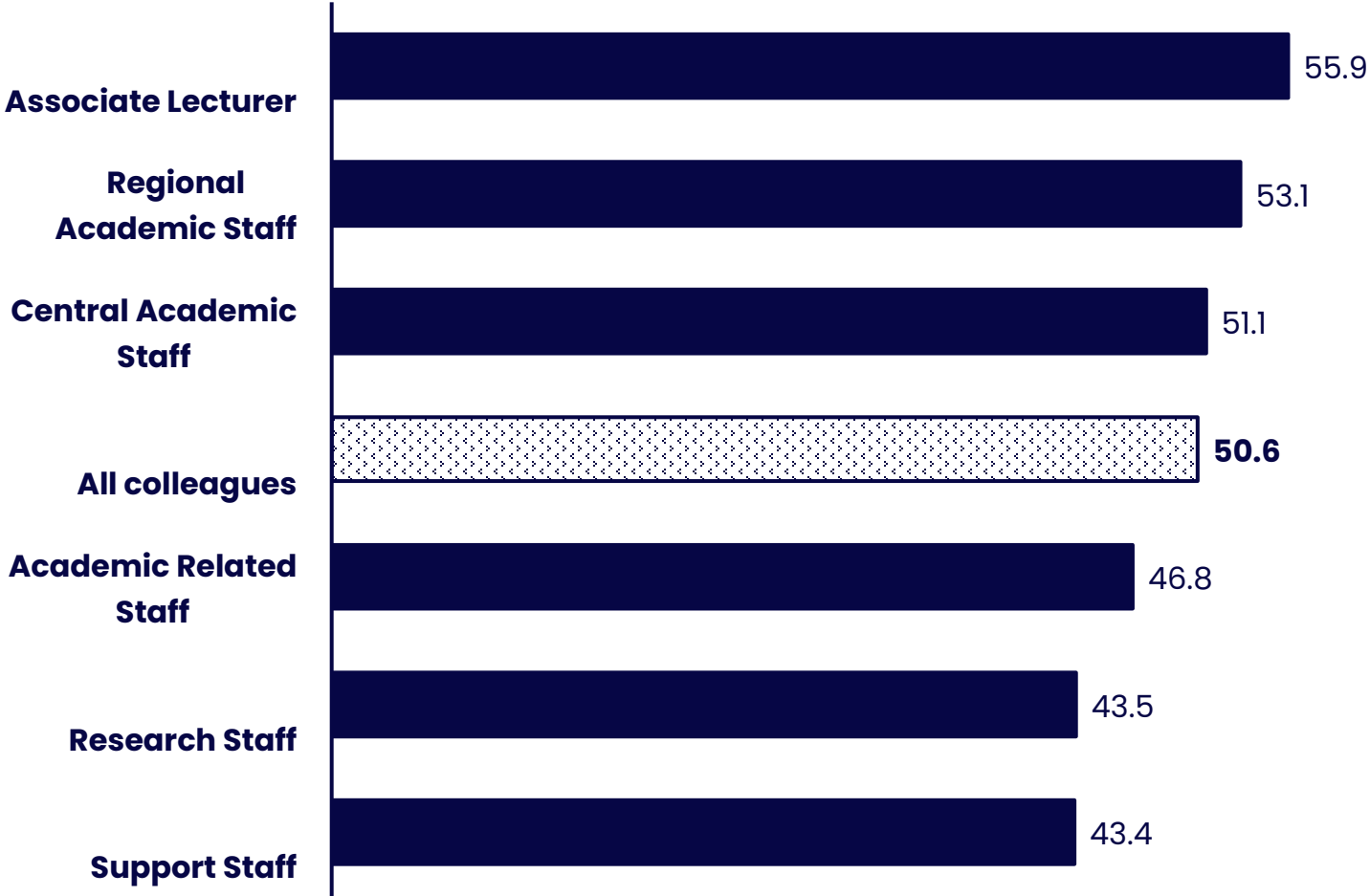
Among Academic Staff, Associate Lecturers have the highest average age, at 55.9 years, which is more than five years above the average age of the workforce overall.

Support Staff and Research Staff have considerably lower average ages, at 43.4 and 43.5 years respectively.

Regional Academic Staff have a slightly lower average age than Associate Lecturers, at 53.1 years.

Given that many Regional Academic Staff also hold Associate Lecturer contracts, this pattern may reflect differences in age profiles between Associate Lecturers with multiple roles and those holding a single post.

Average Age (in years) by Employee Subgroup



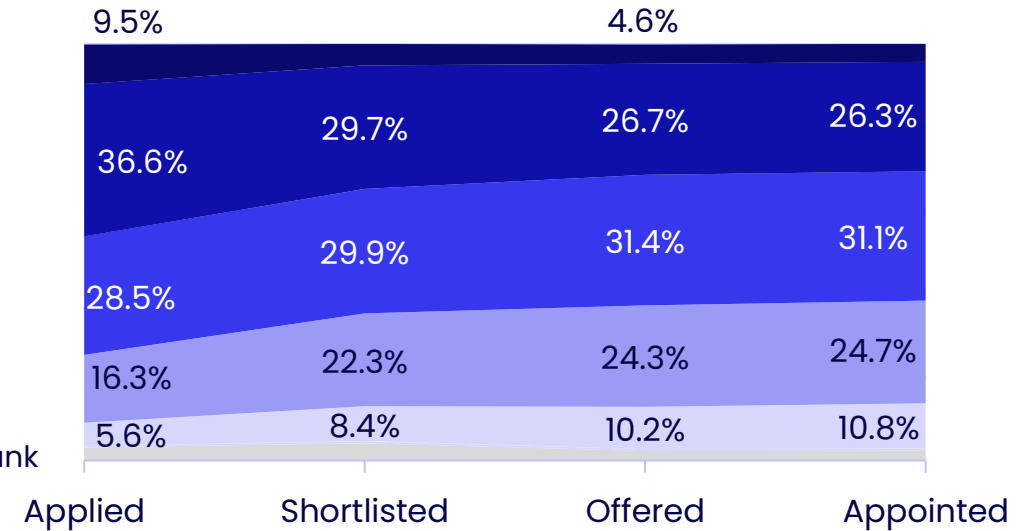
Age – Recruitment

Candidates aged 35 to 64 make up a higher proportion of appointments than of applicants, while younger candidates are less represented at appointment stage.

This pattern is most pronounced among those aged **24 and under**, who account for **9.4% of applicants** but only **4.3% of appointments**.

In contrast, candidates aged **45–54** represent **16.3% of applicants** but **24.3% of appointments**, and those aged **55–64** account for **5.6% of applicants** and **10.8% of appointments**.

- 24 and under
- 25–34
- 35–44
- 45–54
- 55–64
- 65 and over
- Prefer not to say or Blank



Age Group	Applied		Shortlisted		Offered		Appointed		Proportion (of) Applicants shortlisted	Proportion (of) Applicants offered	Proportion (%) of shortlisted appointed after interview
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%			
24 and under	1148	9.4%	101	5.1%	29	4.6%	25	4.3%	8.8%	2.5%	24.8%
25–34	4464	36.6%	596	29.7%	168	26.7%	154	26.3%	13.4%	3.8%	25.8%
35–44	3480	28.5%	600	29.9%	198	31.4%	182	31.1%	17.2%	5.7%	30.3%
45–54	1993	16.3%	447	22.3%	153	24.3%	145	24.7%	22.4%	7.7%	32.4%
55–64	680	5.6%	168	8.4%	64	10.2%	63	10.8%	24.7%	9.3%	37.5%
65 and over	42	0.3%	11	0.5%	3	0.5%	3	0.5%	26.2%	7.1%	27.3%
Prefer not to say or Blank	386	3.2%	82	4.1%	15	2.3%	14	2.3%	21.2%	3.6%	17.1%
Grand Total	12,193	100.0%	2,005	100.0%	630	100.0%	586	100.0%	16.4%	5.2%	29.2%

Ethnicity

2024/25

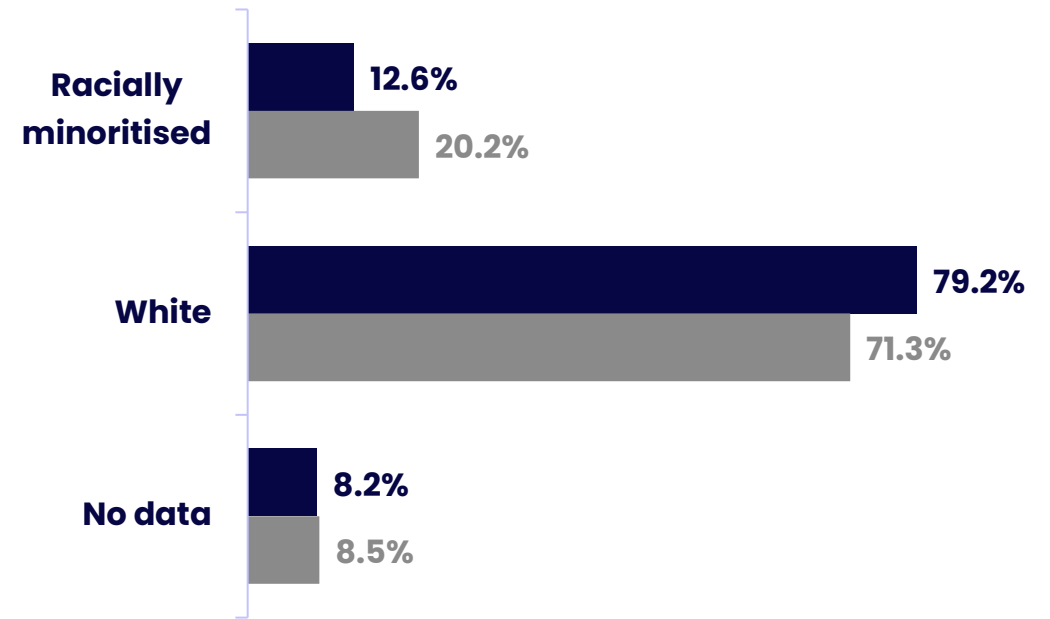
One in eight University staff (12.6%) are from racially minoritised backgrounds, which has continued to rise for a fifth year, to our highest level yet. Though this remains over a third lower than the HESA sector benchmark of 20.2%.

1 in 12 staff chose not to disclose their ethnicity – 8.2%, slightly lower than the 8.5% seen in HESA data. Disclosure rates increased with age in both data sets.

A key driver of Ethnic diversity is the **University's older age profile**, particularly in Academic roles. Those with **lower average age have higher racially minoritised representation**. Associate Lecturers are the largest employee group, with the highest average age, and have the lowest racially minoritised representation.

Despite this, our **senior representation (13.1%) has exceeded overall representation**, driven largely by professorial representation of Asian, and Other ethnic backgrounds

Proportion of staff by ethnicity group vs HESA



HESA Sector data taken from 2026 report on 2024/25 statistics

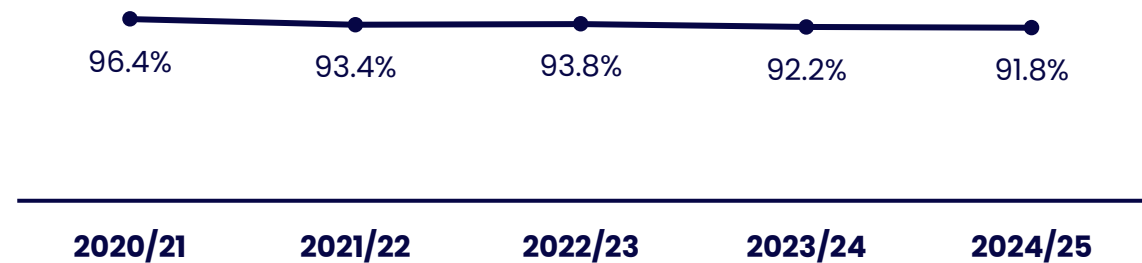
Ethnicity – Population and Disclosure Rate over 5 years

The proportion of staff from racially minoritised backgrounds at the OU has **increased steadily over the last five years**, rising from **10.5% in 2020/21** to **12.6% in 2024/25**, the highest level recorded during this period. Year-on-year growth has been gradual but consistent, with increases observed in each reporting year.

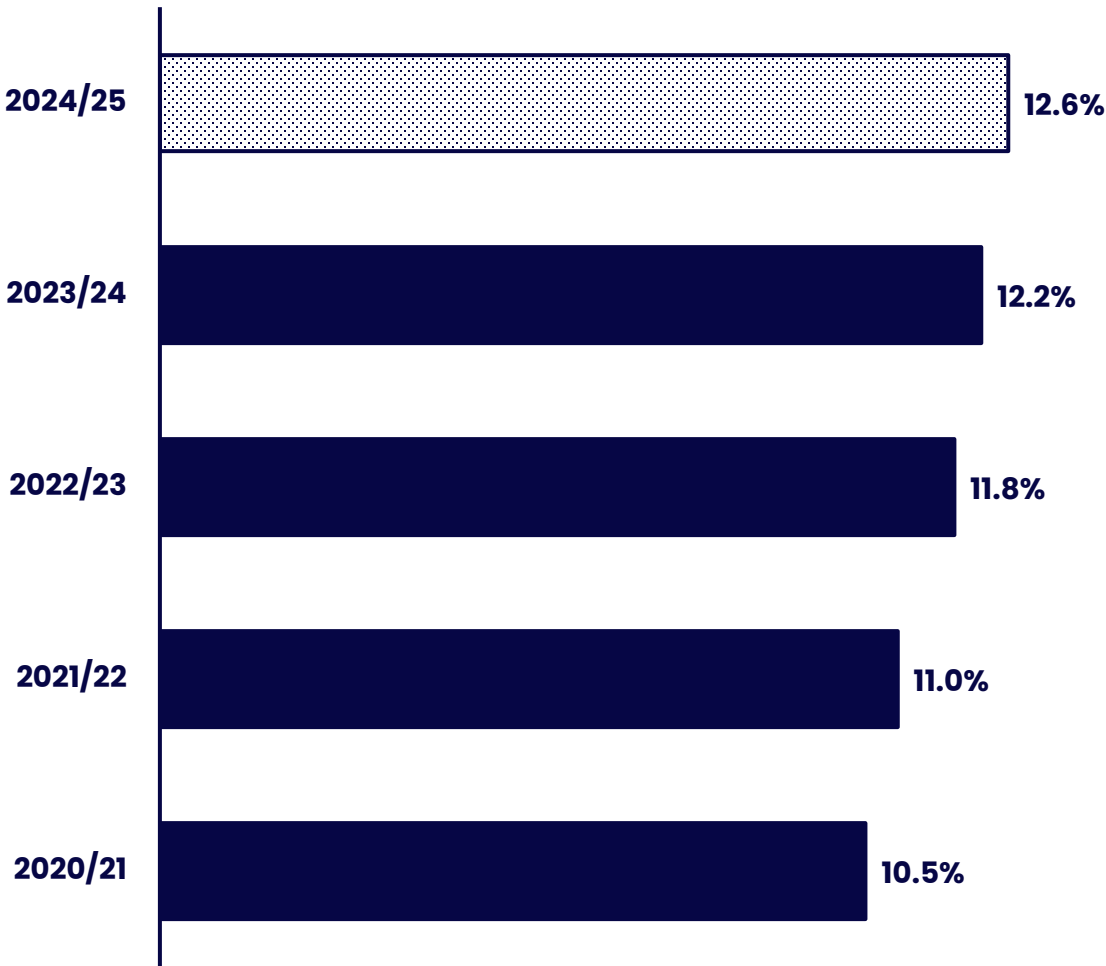
Over the same period, although **ethnicity disclosure rates have remained high**, they have declined from **96.4% in 2020/21** to **91.8% in 2024/25**, with the most **recent year on year reduction slowing** from 1.6 to 0.4 percentage points. This reflects reductions in disclosure seen in HESA data.

Despite this reduction in disclosure, the continued increase in reported representation suggests that the upward trend in racially minoritised staff is **not solely attributable to changes in disclosure behaviour**, but reflects a genuine change in workforce composition.

Disclosure Rate: Proportion of staff declaring their ethnicity



Representation of racially minoritised staff at the OU across a 5-year period



Ethnicity – Employee Group and Subgroup

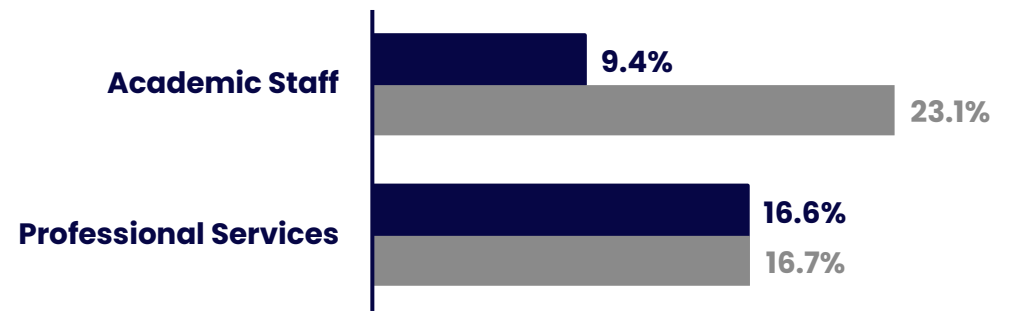
Racially minoritised representation is not evenly distributed between role types. Academic Staff representation is much lower, and furthest below the HESA benchmark (9.4% vs 23% HESA).

Nearly 1 in 5 staff in Support and Research roles are racially minoritised, compared to fewer than 1 in 10 Regional Academic and Associate Lecturer roles.

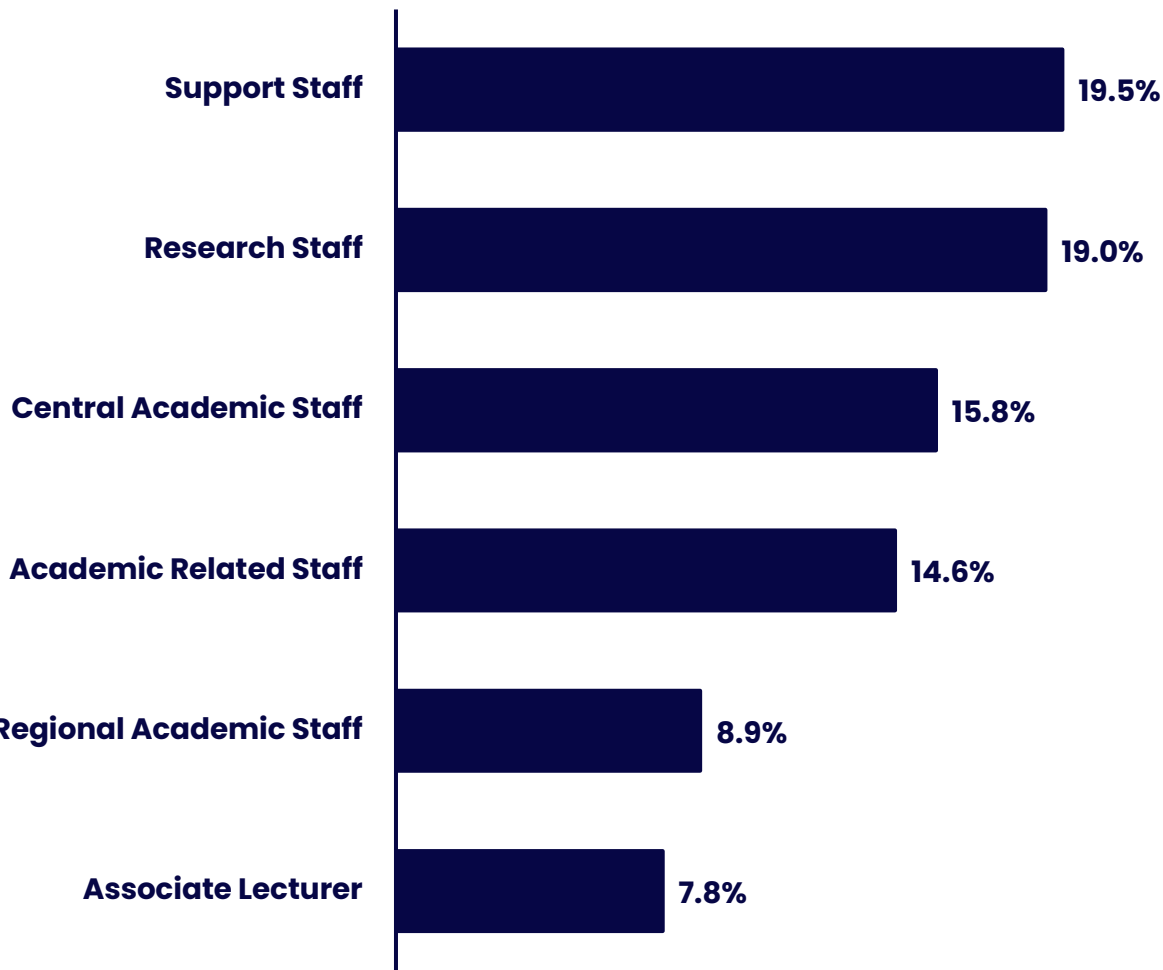
Support Staff and Research roles have the youngest average age (~43), and Regional Academic and Associate Lecturer roles have the highest (53 and 56 respectively), which reflects expected diversity levels.

Associate Lecturers make up the largest employee subgroup, and have the lowest racially minoritised representation.

Representation of Racially minoritised staff by Employee group



Representation of Racially minoritised staff in each Employee subgroup



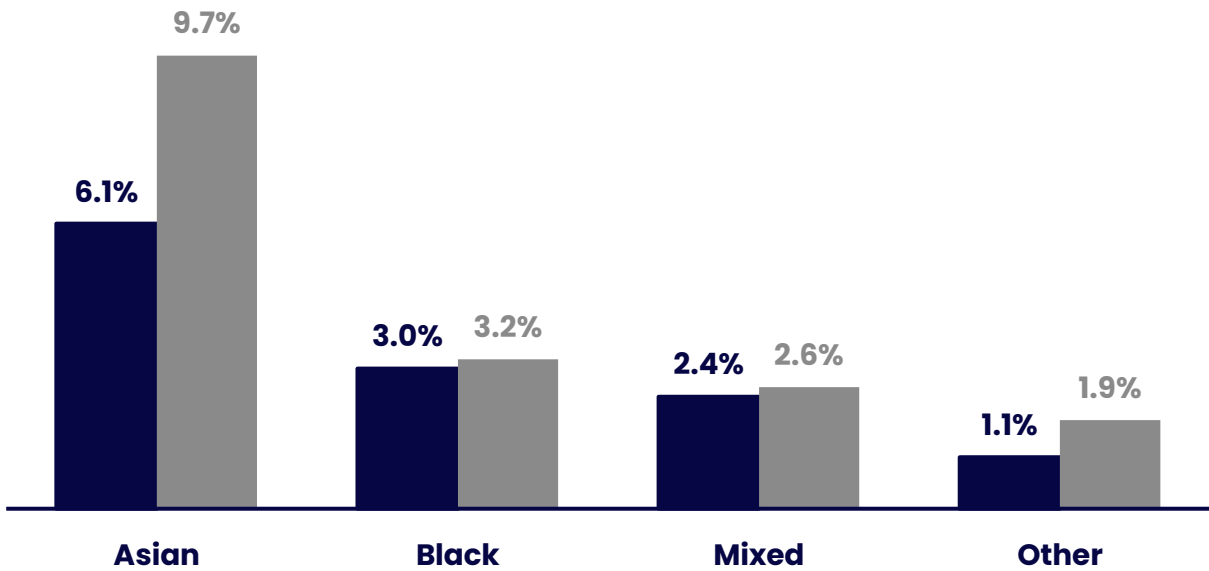
Ethnicity – Ethnicity Subgroup and by Sex

Asian staff have the highest minority representation at 6.1%, but a third below the HESA sector total of 9.7%.

Black staff make up almost a quarter of racially minoritised staff, and 3% of total staff – closely matched against HESA data (3.2%), along with Mixed staff.

The widest percentage gap against HESA relates to representation from Other racially minoritised backgrounds (1.1% vs HESA’s 1.9%).

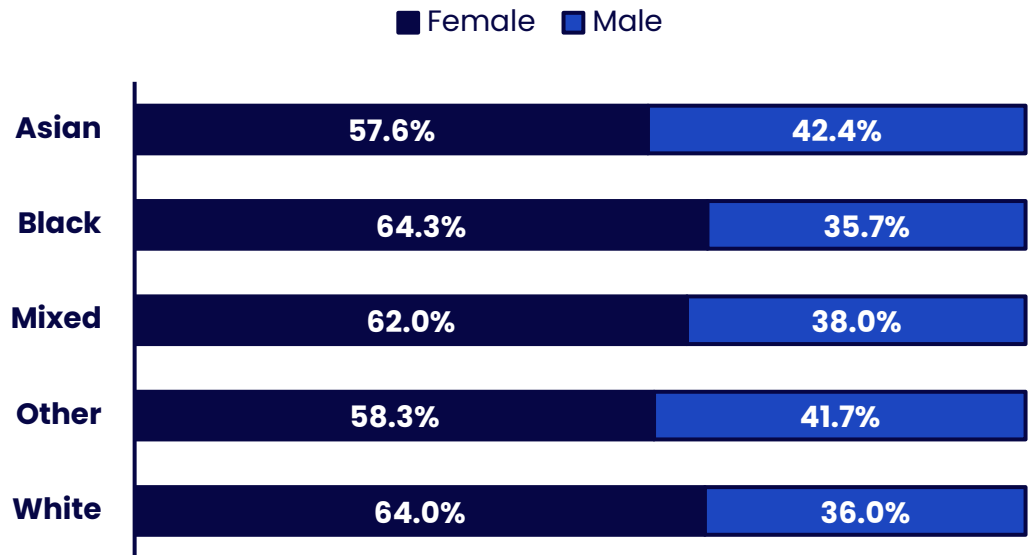
Representation of minority ethnic subgroups vs HESA



As with our overall workforce, **females make up almost two thirds of our racially minoritised staff**. The largest sex gaps are among Black, and white staff (over 64% female).

Males have the highest representation among Asian staff, and those from other minoritised backgrounds.

Ethnicity subgroup by Sex



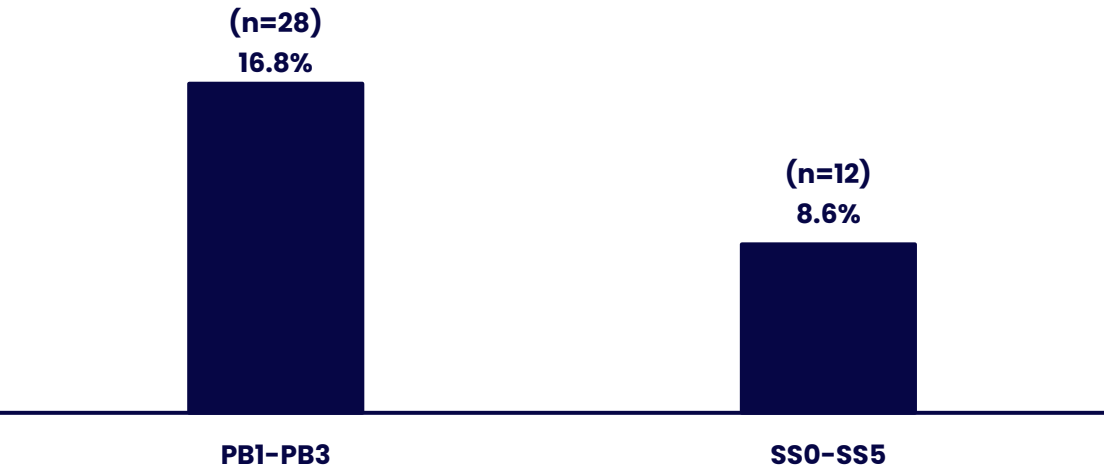
HESA Sector data taken from 2026 report on 2024/25 statistics

Ethnicity – representation at senior level

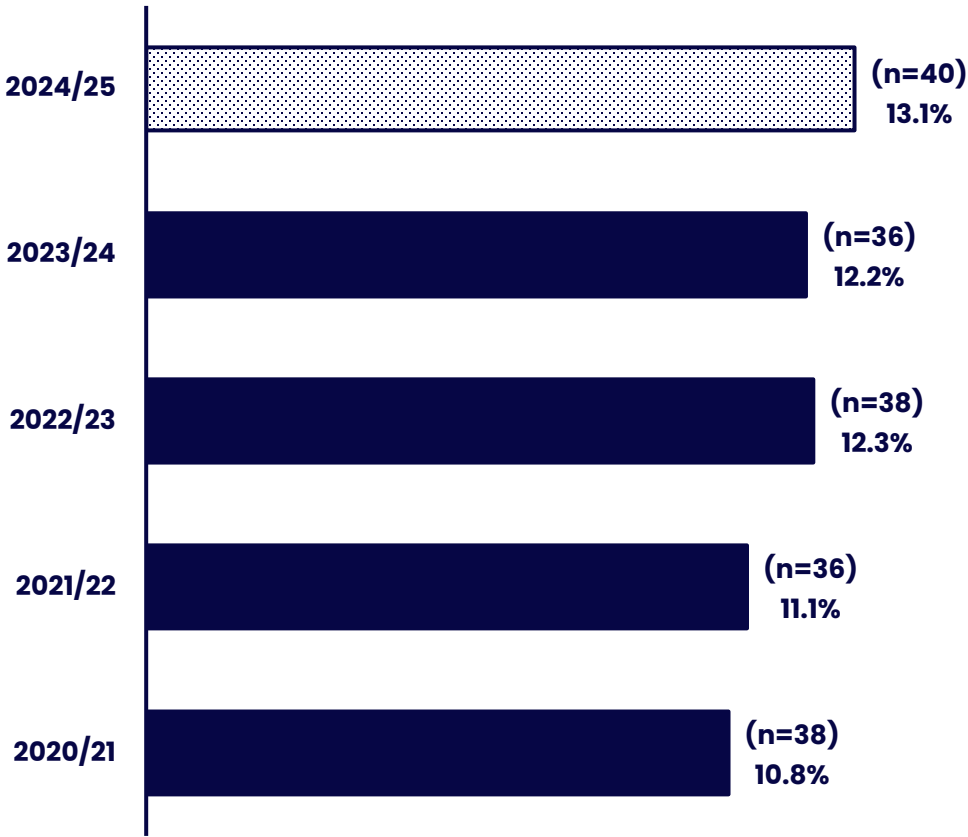
As at 31st July 2025, Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff represented **13.1%** (40 out of 306) of the senior staff population, a **0.9 percentage point increase** from 2023/24, and now **above overall representation (12.6%)**.

The racially minoritised population is underrepresented within the SS bands (**8.6%**, 12 out of 139) and account for **16.8%** of professor grades. **Black colleagues are least represented at senior level**, accounting for less than 1.5% of the senior leadership population.

Representation of racially minoritised staff at senior level by grade group – 2022/23



Proportion of racially minoritised staff at senior level over 5 years

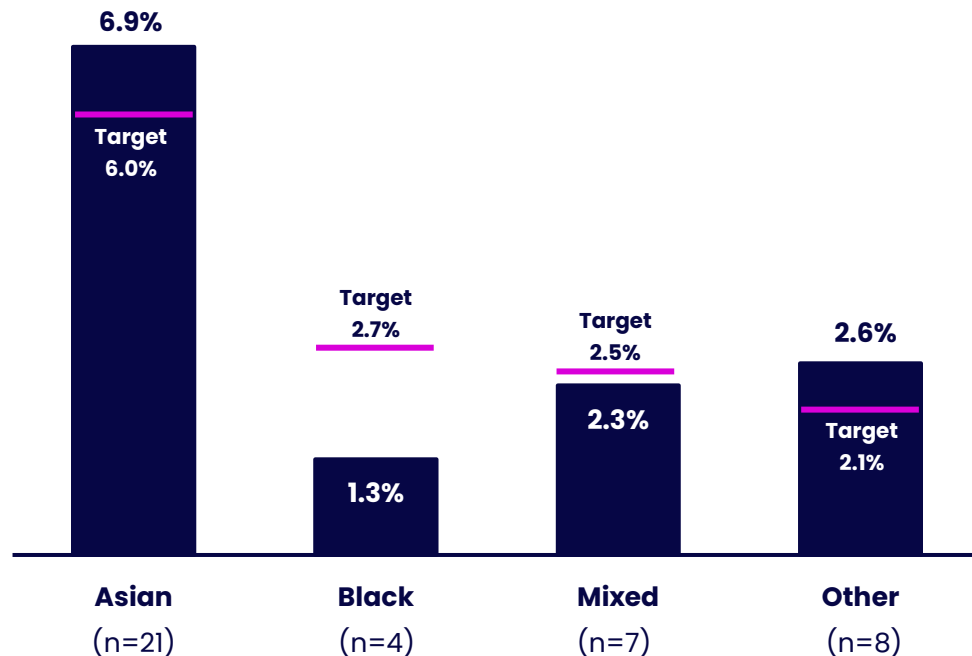


Ethnicity – representation at senior level

Asian staff have the highest senior representation at 6.9%, above our 6% target, and making up over half of our racially minoritised senior staff.

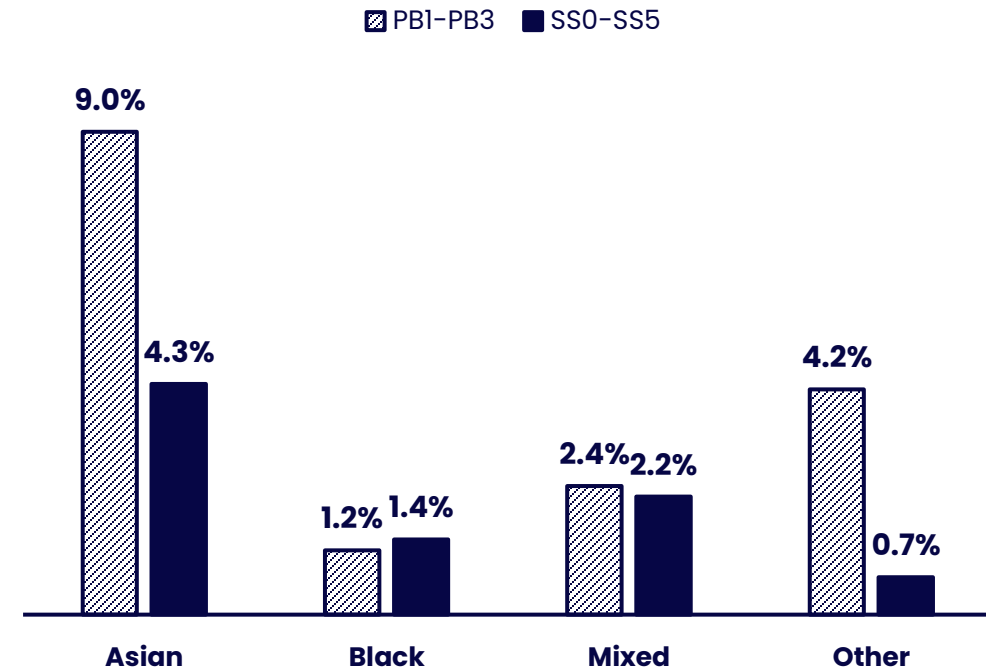
The **widest gap from target is Black senior representation at 1.3%** vs 2.7% target. This is also the widest negative gap from overall representation (3%).

Representation of racially minoritised subgroups at Senior Level vs Equality Scheme 2026 targets



Asian representation in professorial roles is the main driver of total RM senior representation, and more than double Asian representation in Senior Professional Services roles. **Other racially minoritised groups also have higher representation in professorial roles**, except among **Black staff** (1.2% of Professors vs 1.4% of senior Professional Services roles).

Breakdown of Senior Staff Representation



Ethnicity – representation by Age group

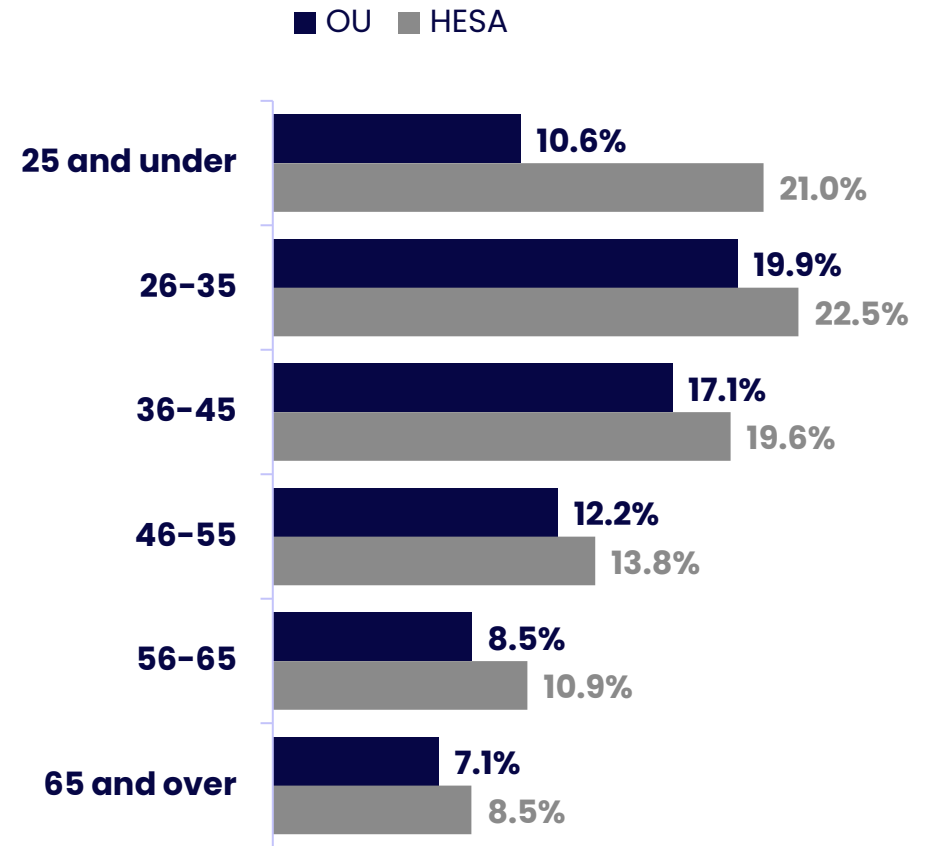
Representation of staff from racially minoritised backgrounds is **highest among younger staff and reduces into older age** groups, as shown in **HESA benchmark data**, as well as in wider comparisons (such as ONS Census and Labour Market data).

The University's **under-representation of younger staff** could be a key driver of reduced racially minoritised representation overall. Although representation levels are just over a tenth lower in almost all age groups compared to HESA (except 25 and under, and 56-65). This shows that **there is still work to do to increase diversity in our older age groups**, which make up the majority of University staff.

The proportion of staff who did not answer or selected 'prefer not to say' was highest among younger staff, reducing with age, consistent with HESA data.

Associate Lecturers make up the largest employee subgroup, have the highest average age (56), and the **lowest racially minoritised representation (7.8% or 1 in 13)** – acting as a significant driver of the university's reduced ethnic diversity compared to HESA sector data (12.6% RM vs 20.2% in HESA data).

%Racially minoritised staff by age vs HESA

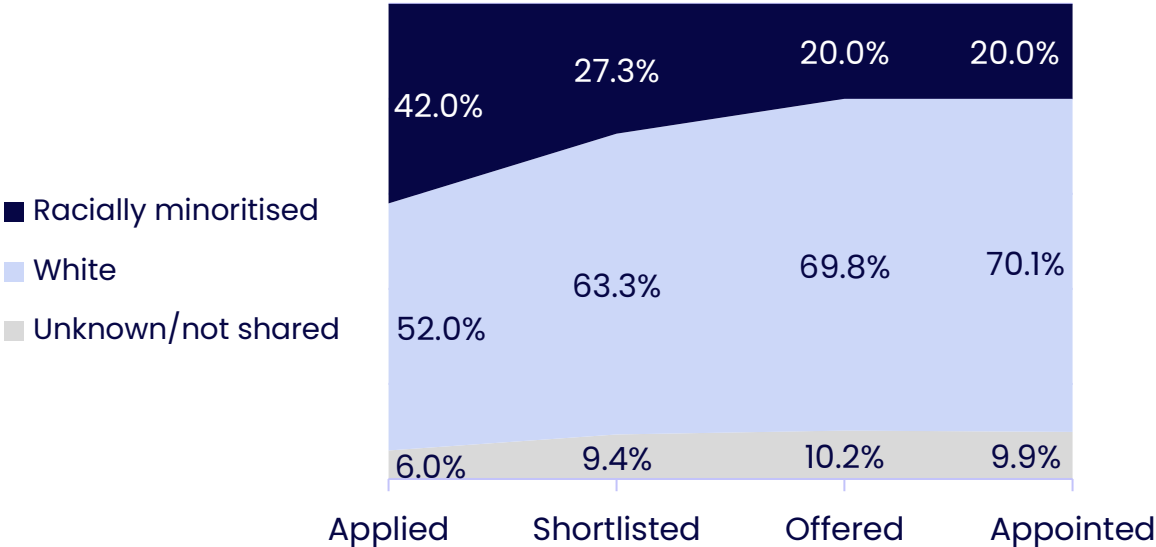


HESA Sector data taken from Advance HR statistical report 2024

Ethnicity Group – Recruitment

In 2024/25, **over 40% of applicants were from racially minoritised communities**, but **representation decreases through the recruitment pipeline** - reducing to just over a quarter of shortlisted applicants, and a fifth of successful applicants. In contrast, representation of white applicants grows through the pipeline.

20% of appointed applicants were from racially minoritised backgrounds, exceeding our current workforce representation of 12.6%, indicating that we should expect workforce representation to continue growing.



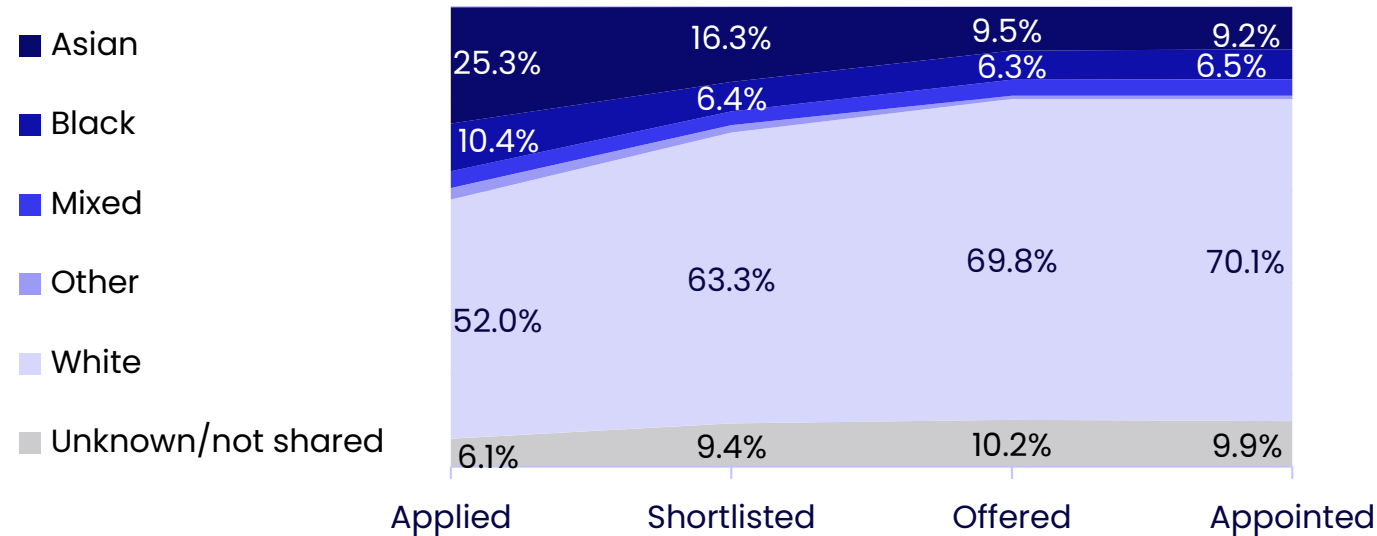
Ethnicity Group	Applicants		Shortlisted		Offered		Appointed		Proportion (of) Applicants shortlisted	Proportion (of) Applicants offered	Proportion (%) of shortlisted appointed after Interview
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%			
Racially Minoritised	5,118	42.0%	548	27.3%	126	20.0%	117	20.0%	10.7%	2.5%	21.4%
White	6,342	52.0%	1,269	63.3%	440	69.8%	411	70.1%	20.0%	6.9%	32.4%
Unknown/not shared	733	6.0%	188	9.4%	64	10.2%	58	9.9%	25.6%	8.7%	30.9%
Grand Total	12,193	100.0%	2,005	100.0%	630	100.0%	586	100.0%	16.4%	5.2%	29.2%

Ethnicity Subgroup – Recruitment

Representation of all racially minoritised groups reduces through the recruitment process, compared to white candidates.

The biggest reduction from application to appointment stage is among **Asian candidates – down by two thirds** in proportion (25% to 9%) – one third at shortlist stage, and another at offer stage. Representation of Black candidates reduces by a third (10% to 6.5%) at shortlist stage.

Candidates from **mixed ethnicity backgrounds have the most consistent representation** through the process, and the highest proportion appointed after shortlisting.



Ethnicity Subgroup	Applied		Shortlisted		Offered		Appointed		Proportion (of) Applicants shortlisted	Proportion (of) Applicants offered	Proportion (%) of shortlisted appointed after Interview
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%			
Asian	3090	25.3%	326	16.3%	60	9.5%	54	9.2%	10.6%	1.9%	16.6%
Black	1265	10.4%	128	6.4%	40	6.3%	38	6.5%	10.1%	3.2%	29.7%
Mixed	446	3.7%	61	3.0%	22	3.5%	21	3.6%	13.7%	4.9%	34.4%
Other	304	2.5%	33	1.6%	4	0.7%	4	0.7%	10.9%	1.3%	12.1%
White	6342	52.0%	1269	63.3%	440	69.8%	411	70.1%	20.0%	6.5%	32.4%
Unknown/not shared	746	6.1%	188	9.4%	64	10.2%	58	9.9%	25.2%	7.8%	30.9%
Grand Total	12193	100.0%	2005	100.0%	630	100.0%	586	100.0%	16.4%	5.2%	29.2%

Disability

2024/25

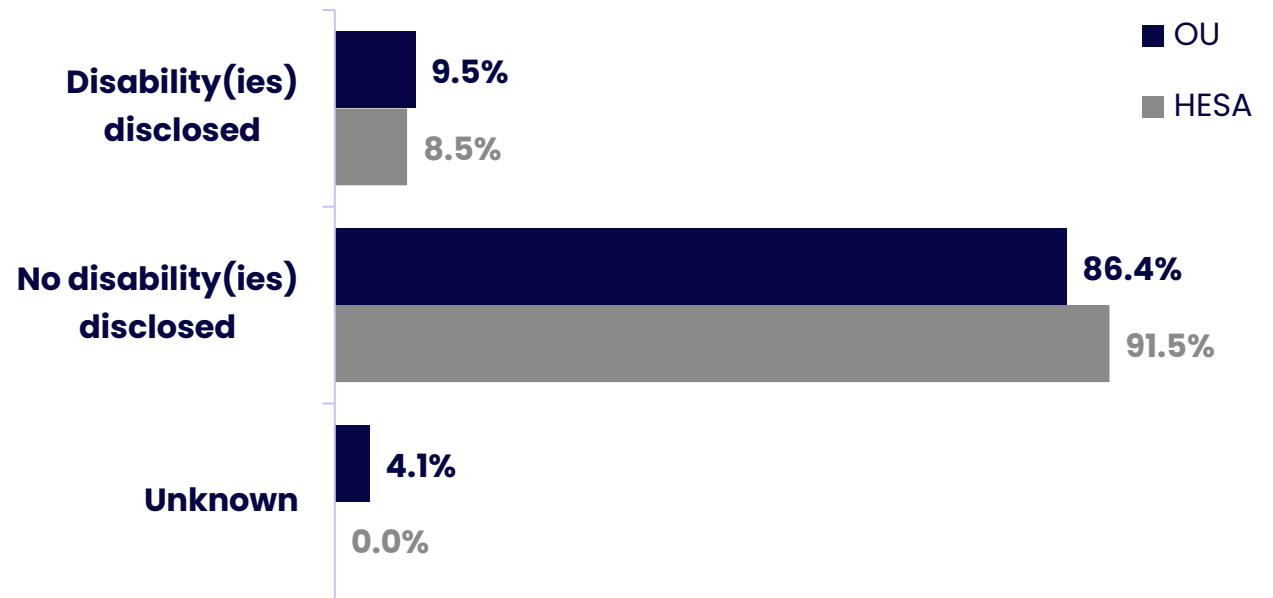
Almost 1 in 10 university staff have disclosed disability(ies), higher than the 8.5% HESA sector benchmark. Although just over 4% chose not to provide data, highest among staff aged 25-44, and lowest among over 45s.

After steadily increasing from 7.4% in 2020/21, this is the **highest proportion the University has reported.**

There is **even representation broadly between Academic (9.6%) and Professional Services (9.4%) roles**, but wider differences between individual role types, ranging between **1 in 9 Regional Academics** and **1 in 14 Academic Related staff.**

Despite a recent increase, **senior representation remains comparably low (4.6%)** - less than half of the overall representation level, with the lowest representation among Professional Services staff (4.3% vs 4.8% of Professor roles).

Proportion of staff by Disability Declaration vs HESA



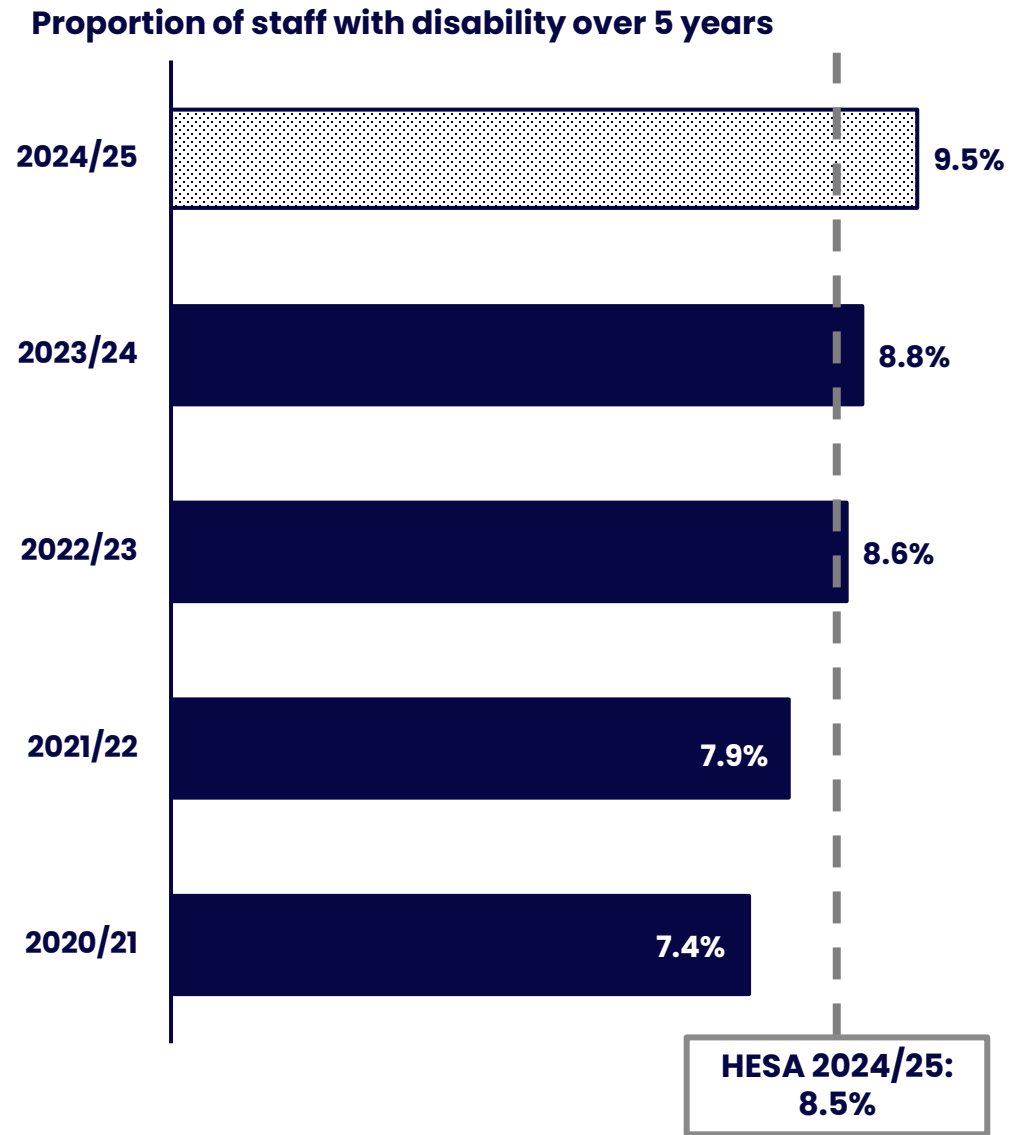
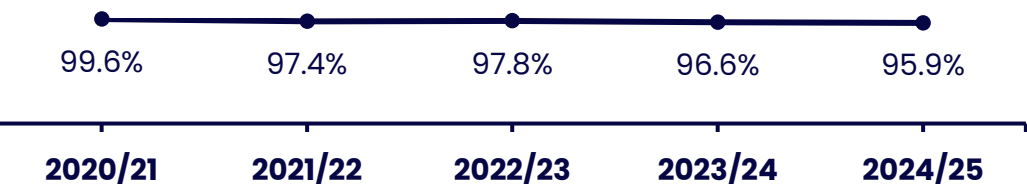
HESA Sector data taken from 2024/25 data, published in 2026

Disability – Population and Disclosure Rate over 5 years

The proportion of staff declaring a disability has **increased steadily over the last five years**, rising from **7.4% in 2020/21** to **9.5% in 2024/25**, the highest level observed during this period. The most notable increases occurred between **2021/22 and 2022/23**, with more gradual year-on-year growth thereafter.

Disclosure rates have fallen year on year from **99% to 96%**, indicating that the increase in reported disability is unlikely to be driven by changes in disclosure behaviour alone. Instead, this trend suggests a **genuine increase in the number of staff identifying as disabled**, alongside sustained engagement with equality monitoring.

Disclosure Rate: Proportion of staff declaring 'Yes' or 'No' to Disability Question



Disability by Employee Group and Subgroup

In **2024/25**, the proportion of staff disclosing a disability(ies) is **similar across Academic and Professional & Support staff**, at **9.6%** and **9.4%** respectively. **Academic staff are above, with the widest gap from the HESA Benchmark**. However, Academic Staff have a notably higher proportion of 'Unknown' disability status (6.7%) compared with Professional & Support Staff (0.8%).

By employee subgroup, **Regional Academic Staff** have the highest proportion of staff declaring a disability (**11.3%**), followed by **Support Staff** (**10.6%**) and **Associate Lecturers** (**10.0%**). **Research Staff** report a lower proportion (**8.8%**), with the lowest levels observed among **Central Academic Staff** (**7.6%**) and **Academic-related Staff** (**7.0%**).

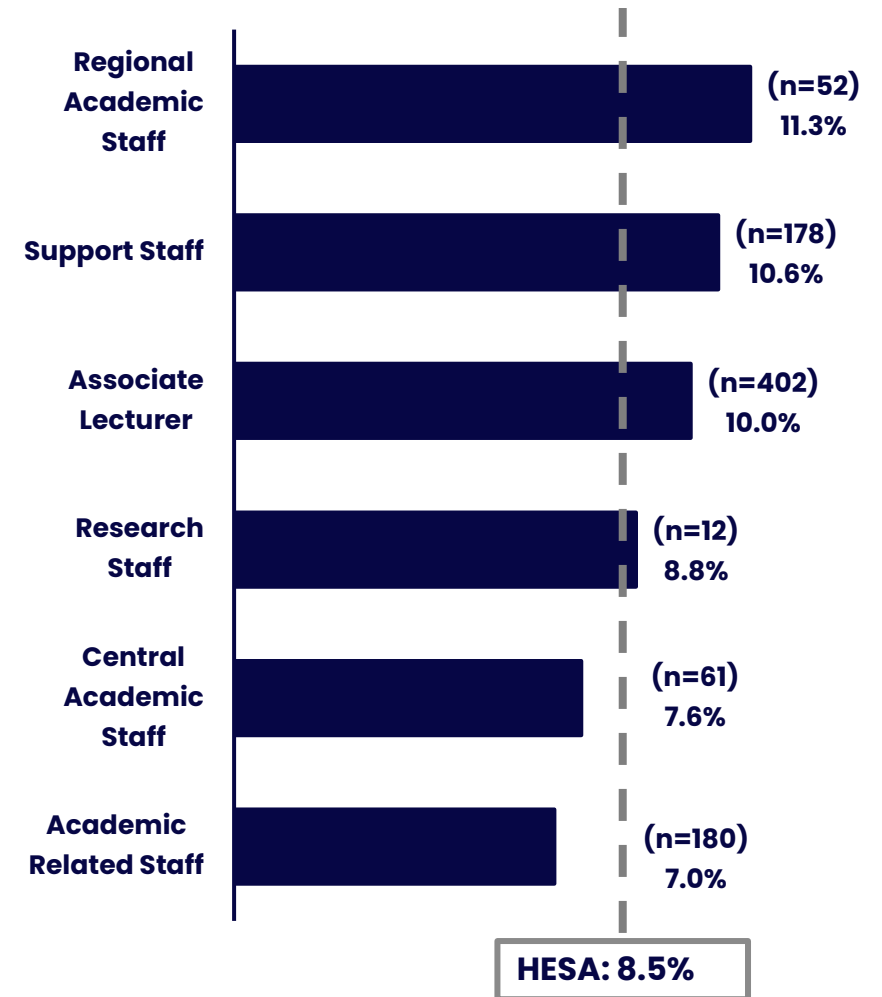
Overall, while disability declaration rates are broadly comparable between Academic and Professional & Support staff, **variation across subgroups is evident**, and differences in disclosure—particularly within academic roles—remain an important consideration when interpreting these figures.

Disabled representation by group vs HESA



HESA Sector data taken from 2026 report on 2024/25 statistics

Proportion of staff with disability(ies) by employee subgroup



Disability – representation at senior level

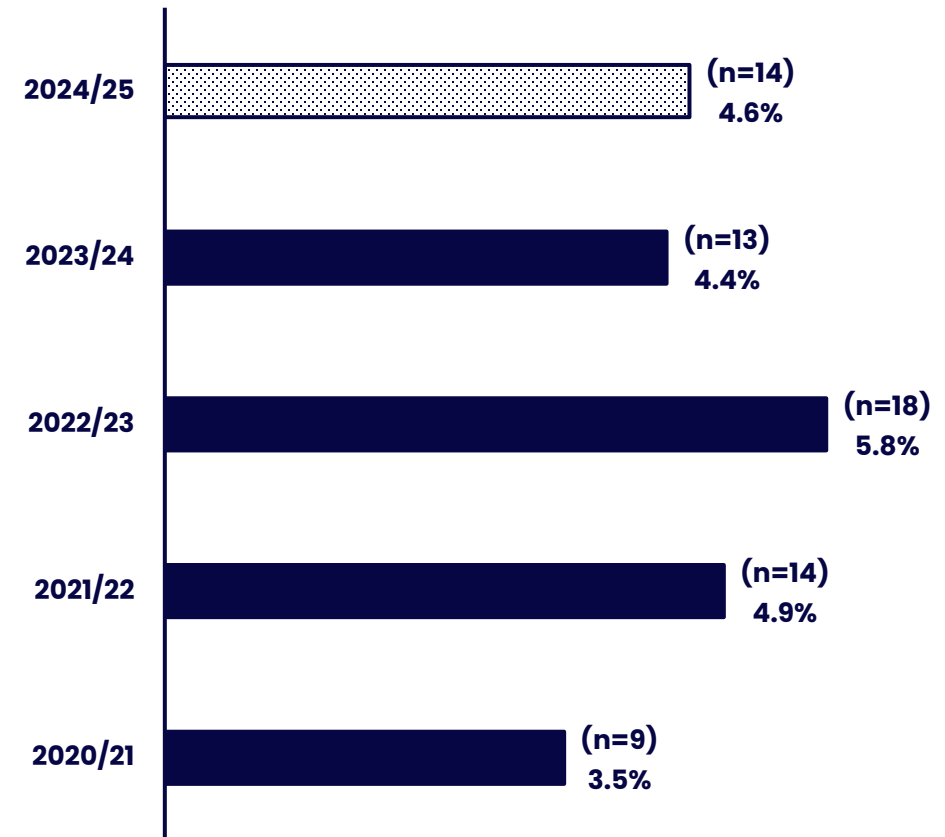
The proportion of staff declaring a disability at senior level has **increased over the last five years**, rising from **3.5% in 2020/21** to **4.6% in 2024/25**. Although there was a higher point in **2022/23 (5.8%)**, representation declined in 2023/24 before increasing again in the most recent year.

In **2024/25**, disabled staff representation is **slightly higher within professorial grades (PB1–PB3)** at **4.8%** than within **Senior Staff grades (SS0–SS5)** at **4.3%**. While numbers remain small across both grade groups, this suggests that recent increases at senior level have been driven more by representation within professor grades than within senior staff roles.

Representation of disabled staff at senior level by grade group



Proportion (%) of staff with a disability at senior level across 5 years



Disability – representation by Age group

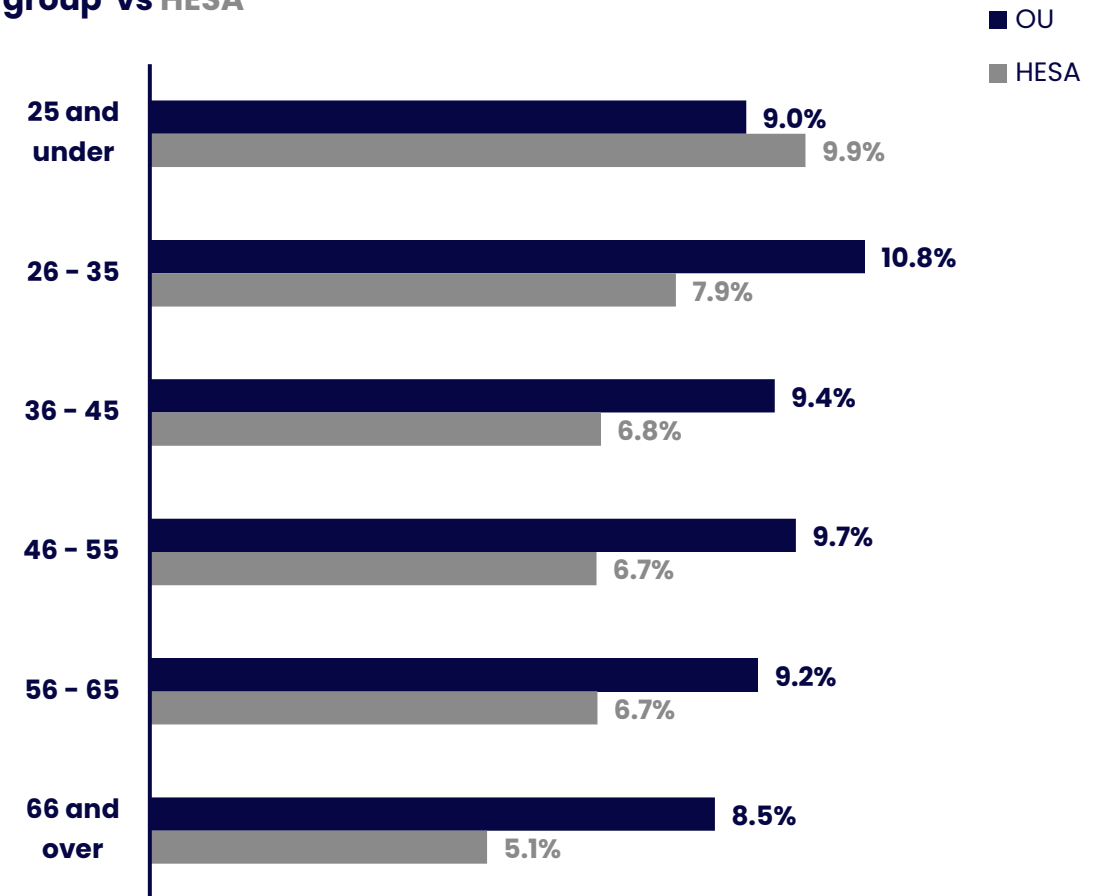
The proportion of staff disclosing disability(ies) is **reasonably consistent across all age groups**, with the **highest representation is in the 26-35 age group**, which then **reduces into older age groups**.

HESA comparison shows the university has higher representation of staff disclosing disability(ies) overall, and in almost all individual age groups, with more consistent representation throughout age groups. The same downward trend in representation into older age groups is also evident, although the **university staff's representation reduces less into older age groups**.

The proportion who did not answer or selected 'prefer not to say' was higher among younger staff. It was highest among staff aged 25-44, and lowest among under 45s.

The main consideration in relation to **HESA data is that the highest representation seen in HESA's youngest category** (9.9% of 25 and under) is the only age group where the university's representation is lower. Less than 1% of University staff are under 25, compared to a 5.8% HESA comparison, indicating that the **university is under-represented in the age group HESA data shows is most likely to experience disability(ies)**.

Proportion (%) of people with a disability by Age group vs HESA

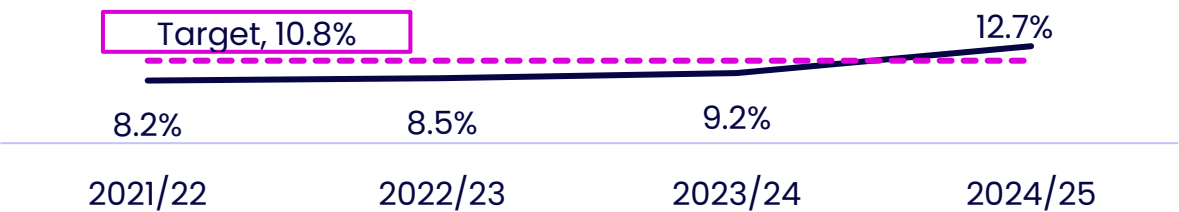


HESA Sector data taken from Advance HE statistical report 2024

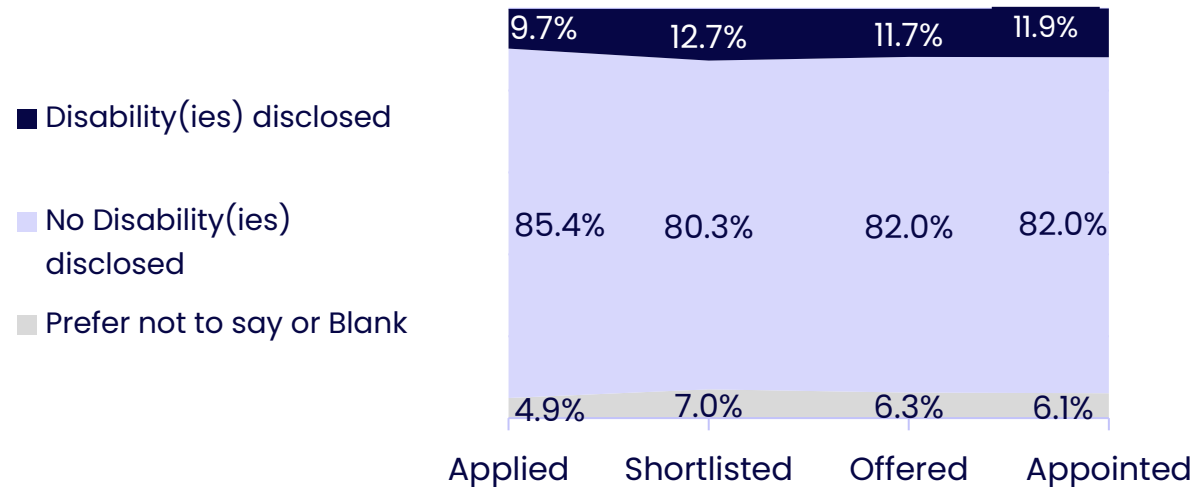
Disability – Recruitment

In 2024/25, candidates declaring a disability were increasingly represented at later stages of recruitment, rising from **9.7% of applicants** to **12.7% of shortlisted candidates** and **11.9% of appointments**, exceeding the Equality Scheme shortlisting 2026 target of 10.8%. **Disabled candidates were more likely to be shortlisted** than those not declaring a disability, while **appointment rates following interview were broadly comparable across groups**.

% of Shortlisted vs Equality Scheme 2026 target



Recruitment pipeline representation



Disability(ies)	Applied		Shortlisted		Offered		Appointed		Proportion (of) applicants shortlisted	Proportion (of) applicants offered	Proportion (%) of shortlisted appointed after Interview
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total			
Disability(ies) disclosed	1,184	9.7%	253	12.7%	74	11.7%	70	11.9%	21.4%	6.3%	27.7%
No disability(ies) disclosed	10,406	85.4%	1,611	80.3%	516	82.0%	482	82.0%	15.5%	5.0%	29.9%
Prefer not to say or Blank	603	4.9%	141	7.0%	40	6.3%	36	6.1%	23.4%	6.6%	25.5%
Grand Total	12,193	100.0%	2,005	100.0%	630	100.0%	586	100.0%	16.4%	5.2%	29.2%

Sex

2024/25

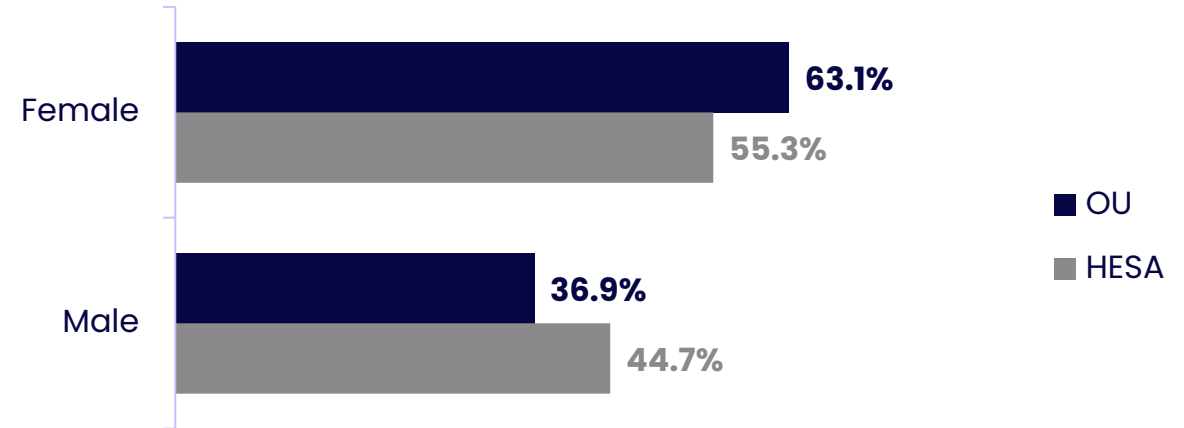
Females continue to make up the majority of the university's workforce, at 63.1% – significantly higher than the HESA Sector benchmark of 55%.

Female staff are particularly highly represented in Professional and Support roles (67.4%), compared to Academic roles (59.7%) – and as with age, Academic staff are the furthest from the HESA Benchmark.

Senior female representation continues to increase, with females making up **over half (53.9%)** of the senior level population for the last 2 years – with **more even representation** in Professional services and Academic roles (55.4% and 52.7%) than in the total population.

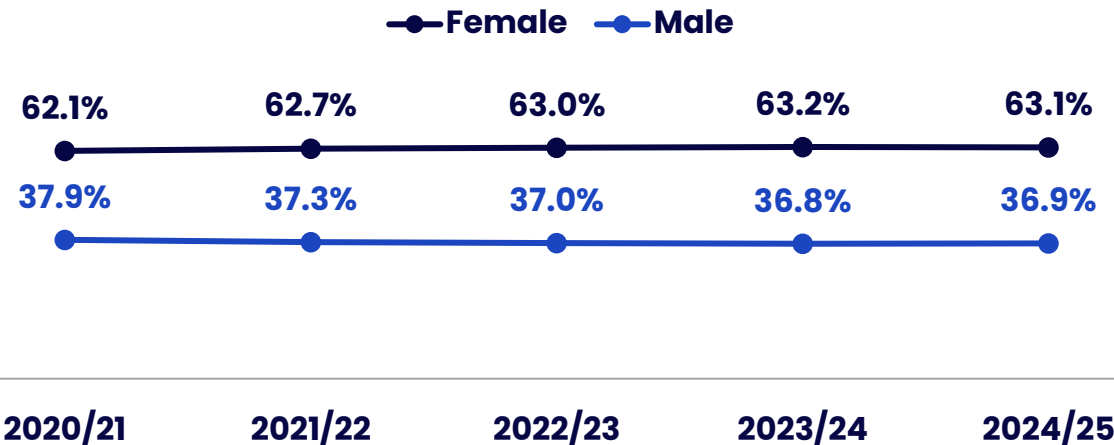
Senior Academic female representation has increased over the last 5 years, reducing the gap between senior and non-senior representation.

Proportion of the population by Sex vs HESA



HESA Sector data taken from 2026 report on 2024/25 statistics

Proportion of the population by Sex – 5 year trend



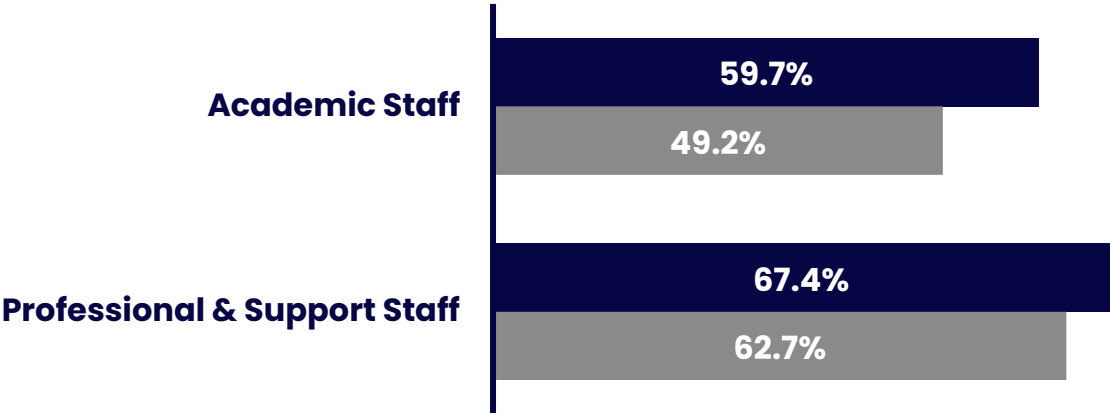
Sex by Employee Group and Subgroup

Although females make up 63% all university staff, representation is not evenly distributed between employee groups and role types.

Female staff are particularly highly represented in Professional and Support roles (67.4%), compared to Academic roles (59.7%), with the exception of Regional Academic Staff (73% female).

As with age and ethnicity, Academic Staff are the furthest from HESA benchmark of 49% at nearly 60%.

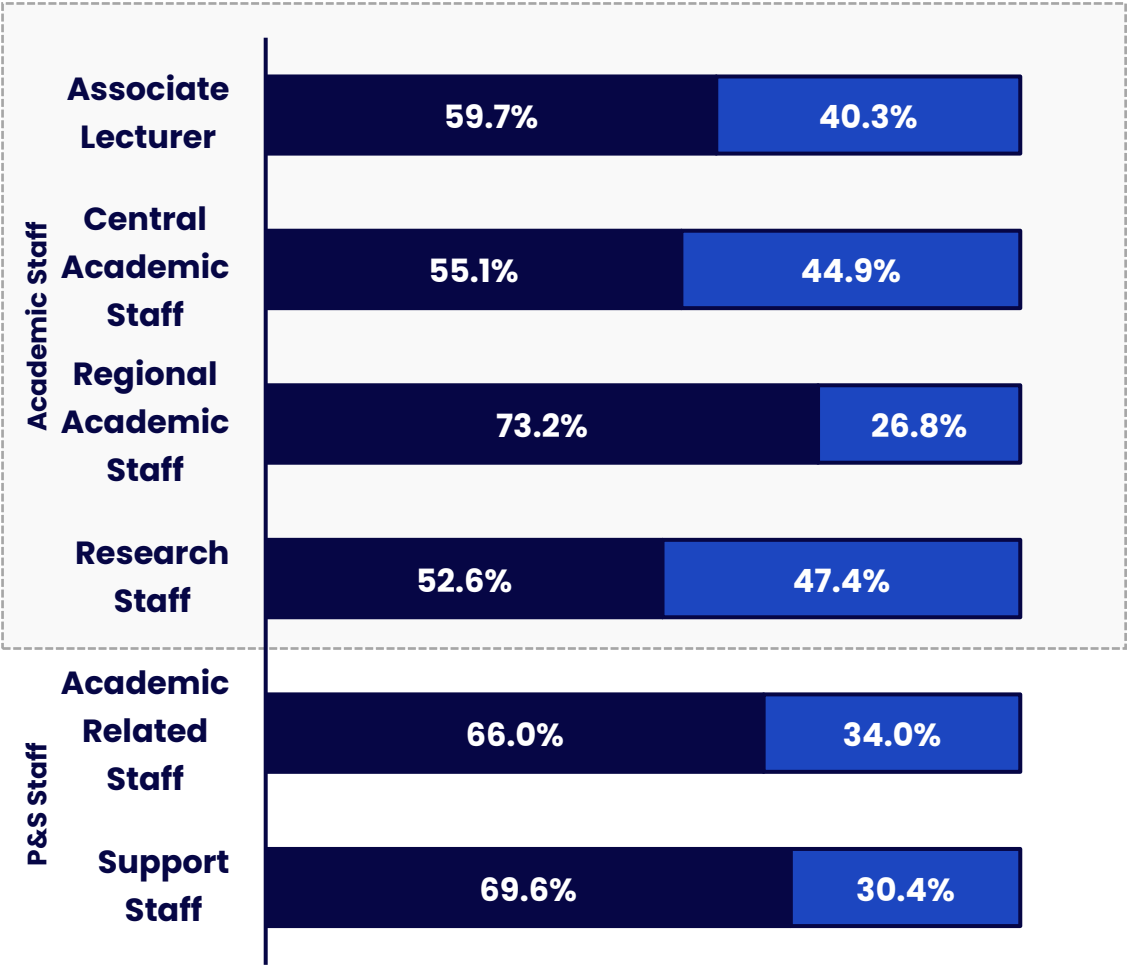
%Female by Employee group vs HESA



HESA Sector data taken from 2026 report on 2024/25 statistics

Employee Subgroup by Sex

■ Female ■ Male

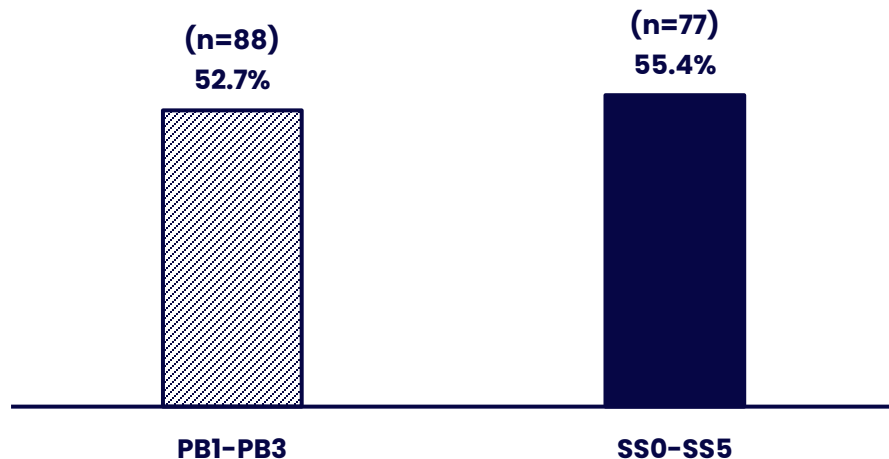


Sex – representation at senior level

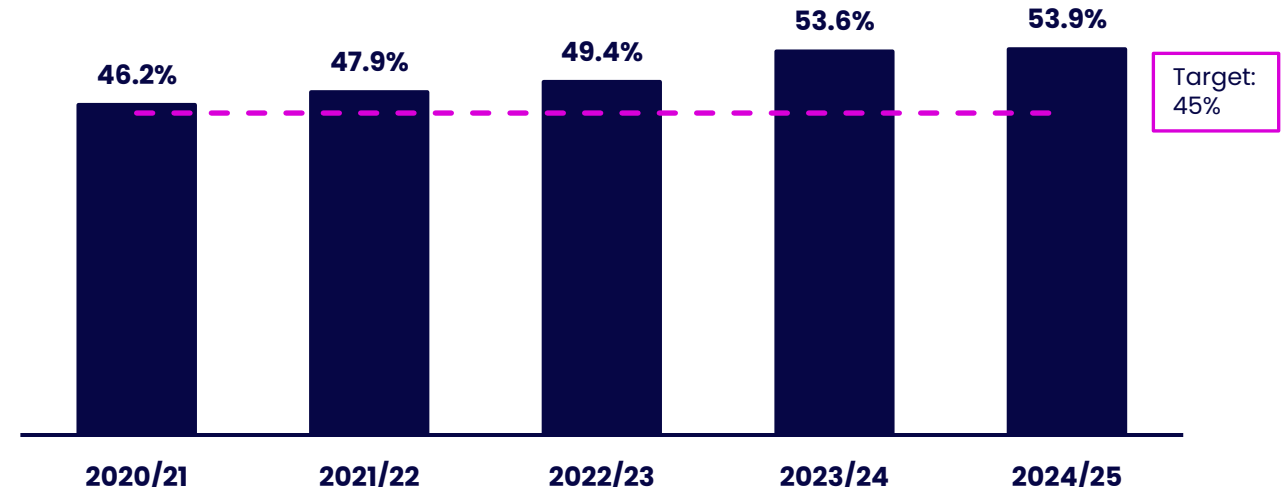
Senior female representation has exceeded the 45% target for the last 5 years, and **continues to increase**, with females making up **over half (53.9%)** of the senior level population for the last 2 years.

Although **Senior female representation remains higher in SS grades** (55.4% vs 52.7% in PB grades), our sustained **5-year overall increase is driven by PB grades** – **increasing by over a third from 39.3% to 52.7%**, narrowing the gap from 59.7% total female Academic representation. SS grades now have a wider gap at 52.7% senior %female against 67.4% total female PSS representation.

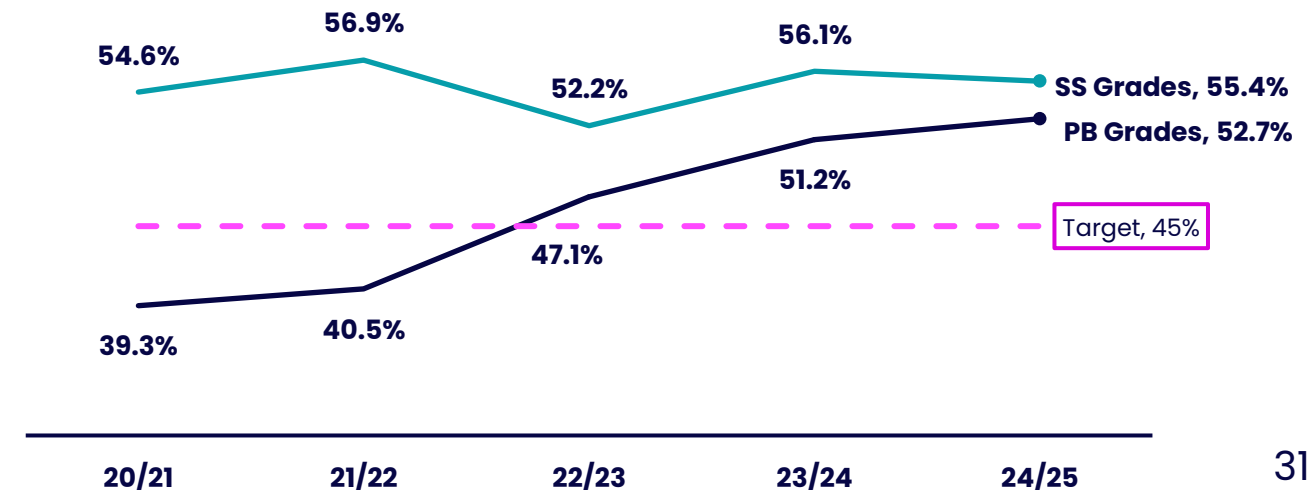
Representation of females at senior level by grade group



Representation of females at senior level 5yr trend vs 2026 target



Representation of females at senior level 5yr trend vs 2026 target

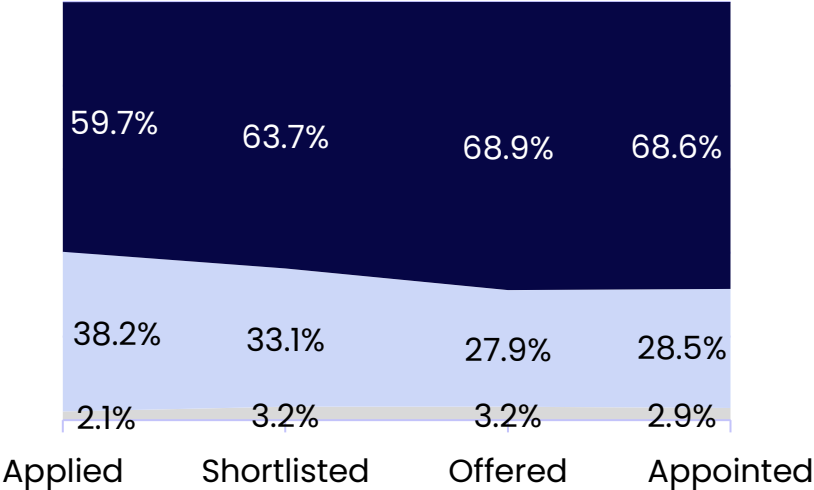


Sex – Recruitment

6 out of every 10 applications are from female candidates, which then grows throughout the recruitment pipeline, to almost 7 of every 10 successful applicants.

Male representation starts low at just 38.2% of applicants, reducing by around 5 percentage points at shortlisting and a further 5 percentage points at offer stage – with fewer than 1 in 3 candidates being appointed.

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say or Blank



Sex	Applied		Shortlisted		Offered		Appointed		Proportion (of) Applicants shortlisted	Proportion (of) Applicants offered	Proportion (%) of shortlisted appointed after interview
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%			
Female	7277	59.7%	1277	63.7%	434	68.9%	402	68.6%	17.5%	6.0%	31.5%
Male	4660	38.2%	663	33.1%	176	27.9%	167	28.5%	14.2%	3.8%	25.2%
Prefer not to say or Blank	256	2.1%	65	3.2%	20	3.2%	17	2.9%	25.3%	7.8%	26.2%
Grand Total	12,193	100.0%	2,005	100.0%	630	100.0%	586	100.0%	16.4%	5.2%	29.2%

Sexual Orientation

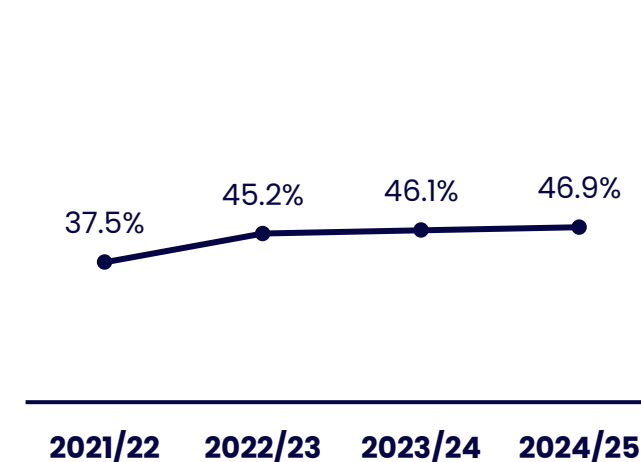
2024/25

Despite continued progress in disclosure rates, **sexual orientation data is only held for just under half of the workforce**, which limits the extent to which conclusions can be drawn about the overall population. **Disclosure from Academic Staff is high at 76.2%**. Disclosure rates of Professional Services and Support Staff were impacted by a system change in 2021 where sexual orientation data was not migrated to the new system.

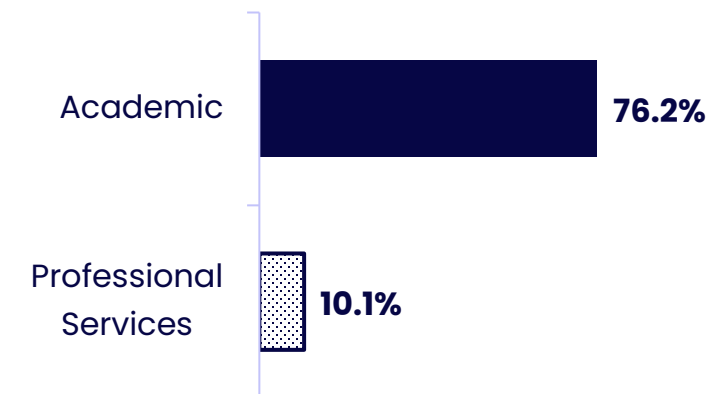
The University's LGBQA representation (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and Asexual) within Academic staff is more than 1 in 20 staff at 5.5%, higher than the HESA benchmark of 5.2%. This shows a **strong representation amongst Academic Staff**.

The **76.2% disclosure rate among Academic University staff is higher than HESA (total) benchmark of less than two thirds**. Disclosure was highest among over 45s.

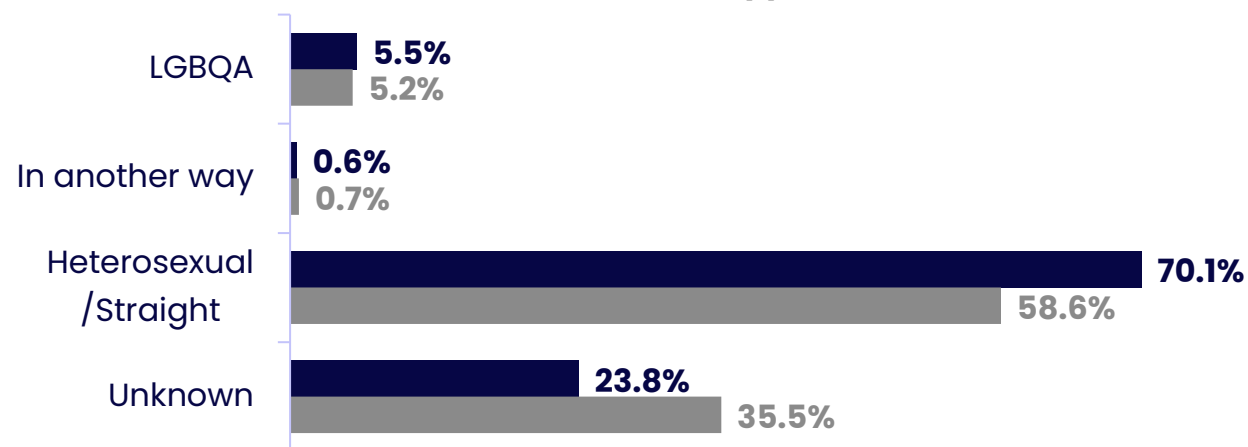
Total disclosure rate over time



Disclosure rate by Employee group



Proportion of Academic staff by Sexual orientation vs HESA
(Academic and Professional Services and Support Staff)



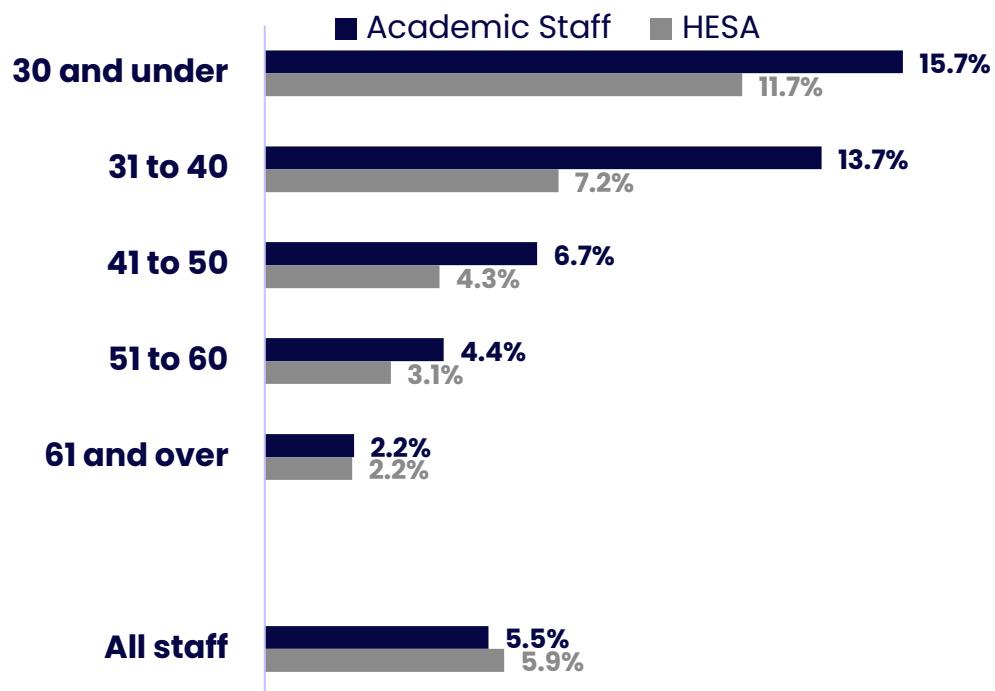
HESA Sector data taken from Advance HE statistical report 2024 for all staff

Sexual Orientation – Disclosure rate by Employee group and Age

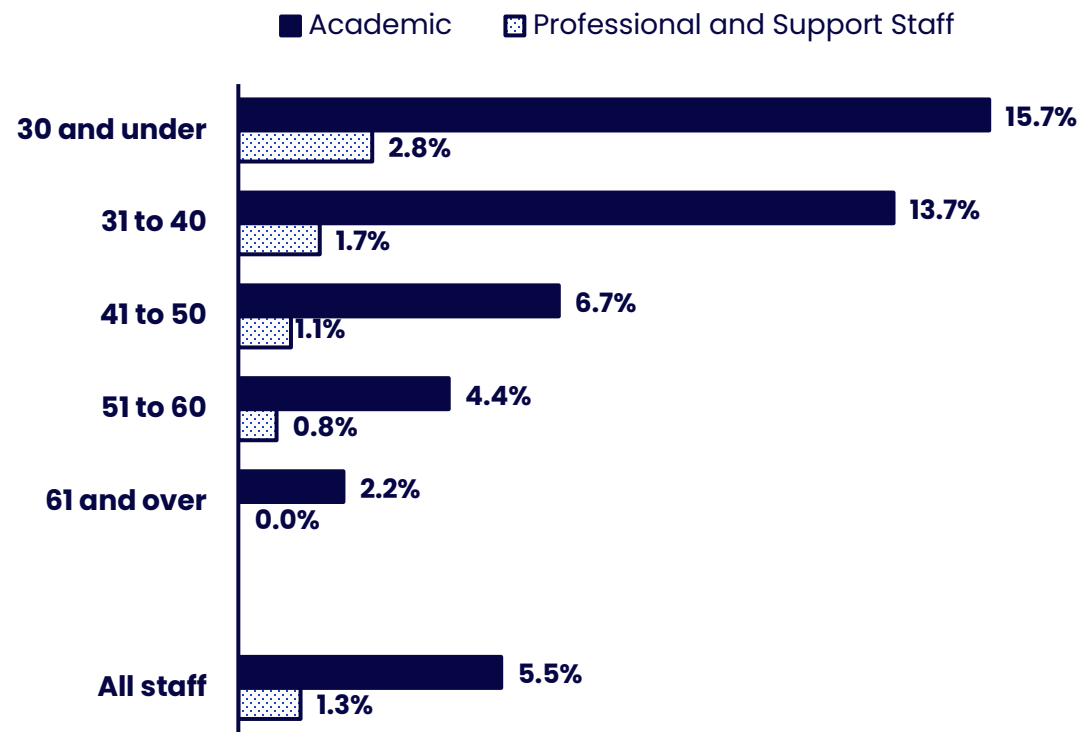
Among staff who have disclosed, **LGBQA representation varies by age group and employee group**. Disclosure is lowest, but representation is highest among **younger staff**. In **2024/25, 15.7% of Academic Staff aged 30 and under** and **13.7% of those aged 31–40** identified as LGBQA. Representation decreases with increasing age, falling to **6.7% among Academic Staff aged 41–50, 4.4% among those aged 51–60, and 2.2% among those aged 61 and over**.

Across **Professional and Support Staff**, LGBQA representation is lower in all age groups. There is no LGBQA representation recorded among Professional and Support Staff aged **61 and over**. The data quality of Professional and Support Staff has been impacted by data migration from legacy systems in 2021. Work is ongoing to address this.

Academic Staff LGBQA representation by Age group vs HESA (all staff)



LGBQA representation by Employee Group and Age



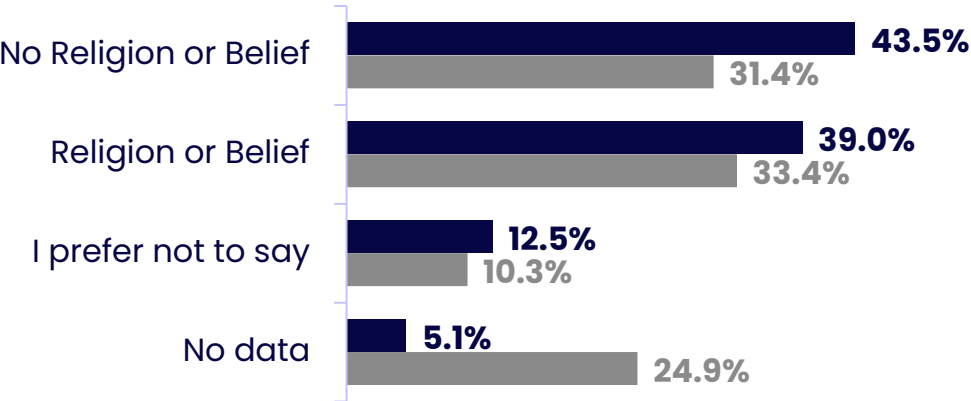
Religion

2024/25

Less than **40% of university staff declared that they held religious beliefs**, compared to a **third of HESA sector staff**. Most staff who shared their information indicated they do not hold any religious beliefs.

One in 6 staff did not share their information, compared to over a third in total HESA data.

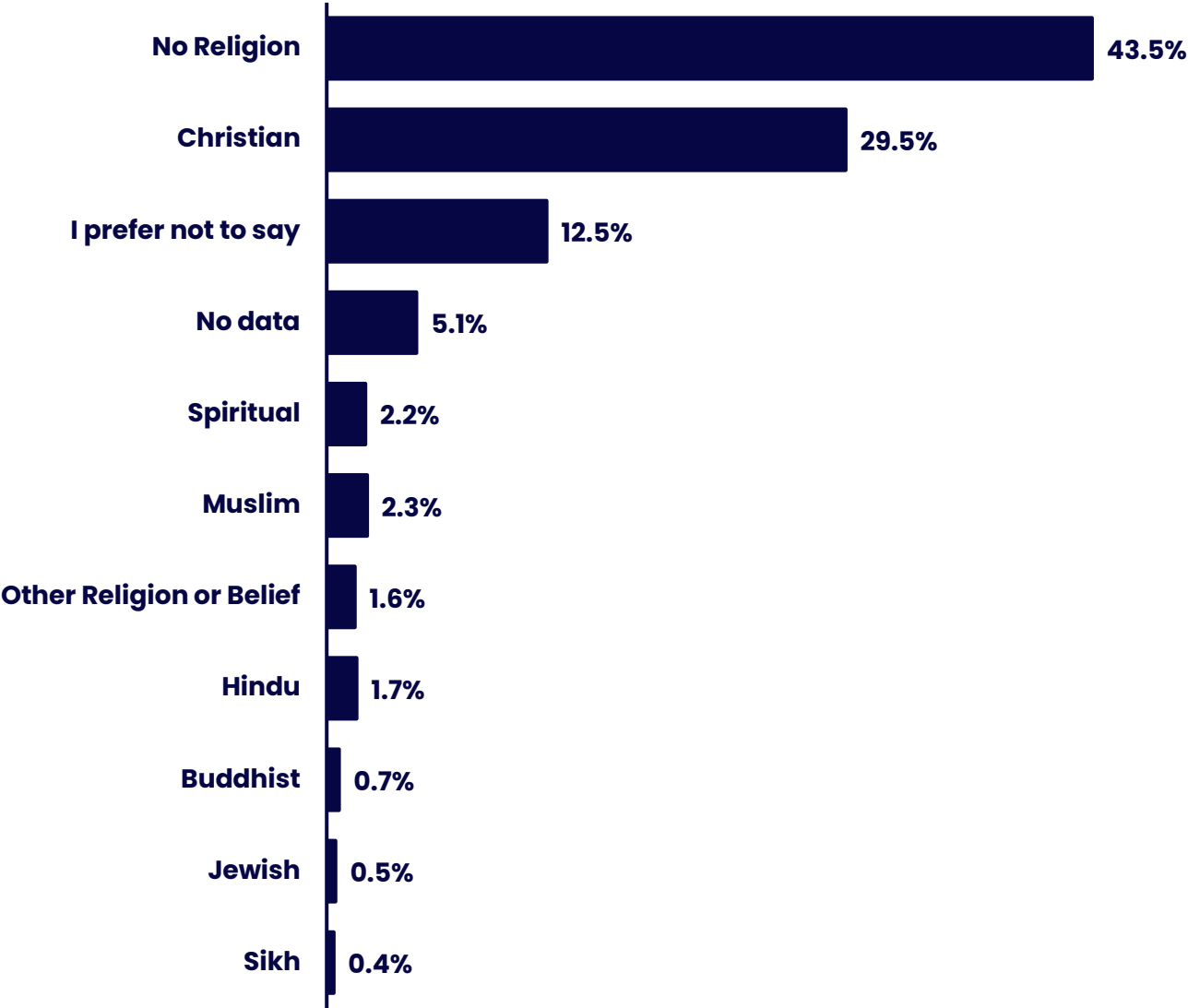
Proportion of staff by Religion or Belief vs HESA



HESA Sector data taken from
Advance HR statistical report 2024



Religion or belief
(as at 31st July 2025)



Gender

2024/25

Gender disclosure rates remain too low to be able to draw meaningful insights from the data. The Open University is committed to being an inclusive employer and as such we are working to improve disclosure rates to be able to report on gender.

Total disclosure rate over time

