



**Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Annual Report 2021-22**

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## 1. Introduction

The University of Worcester is committed to creating an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation, where all members of our community are treated with respect and dignity. We aim to create a culture of dignity and inclusivity within our community, providing a working and learning environment, where all members are valued for their contribution and individuality.

We recognise that discrimination and bias have existed and continue to exist in society including in higher education and we acknowledge our own responsibilities in this regard. We seek to address these issues both within our community, and further afield, through our actions and inclusive approach which we hope will inspire others. We acknowledge that this work will never be completed, there will always be challenges for members of our community to overcome both as part of our community and within their wider lived experience, and we will endeavour to reduce, and ultimately remove, these challenges. We believe that all members of our community have a responsibility towards creating a genuinely inclusive environment for others to flourish and thrive in.

Our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) has flowed through successive Strategic Plans. It is reiterated in the most recent plan which states “our approach...is built on the principle of inclusion”. Our new EDI Framework 2022 - 2027 restates and extends our commitment to EDI.

Over the coming year we will develop Delivery Plans to implement the new Framework and therefore this Annual Report provides a baseline setting out our previous successes and also our challenges going forward.

## 2. Legislative Context

The Equality Act 2010 provides a legal framework to strengthen and advance equality, diversity and inclusion. The Act protects all individuals from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of nine protected characteristics:



## Public Sector Equality Duty

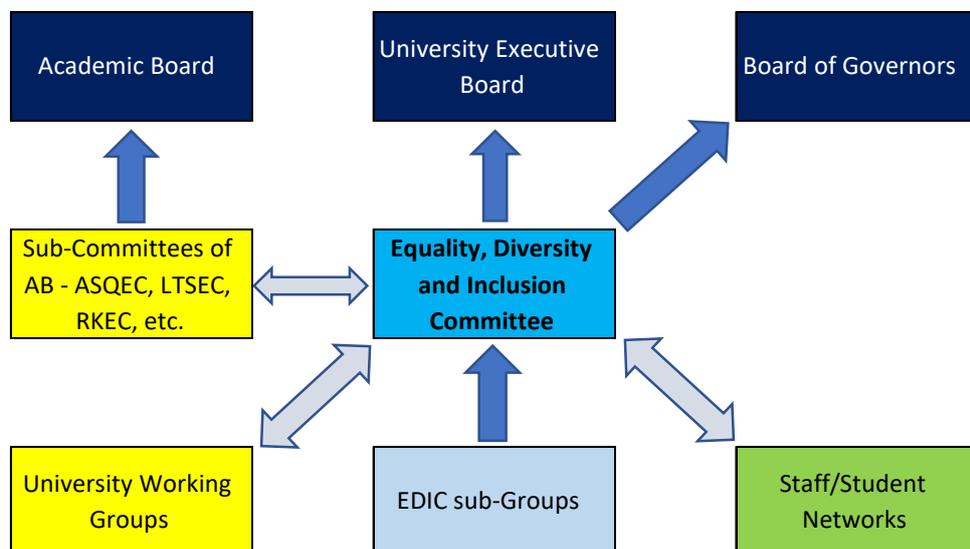
The University has additional duties under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality. The general equality duty requires the University, in the exercise of any of its functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

### 3. EDI Governance

The University's Board of Governors has ultimate responsibility for ensuring the University complies with the above legal duties.

The overarching governance of EDI falls to the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC). Its relationship with other committees and the wider University is set out in Table 1 below. EDIC reports directly to the University Executive Board and has a reporting line to the Board of Governors, via its People and Culture Committee.



The EDIC oversees the EDI Delivery Plan with specific members taking responsibility for each theme. It works closely with the sub-Committees of Academic Board, in particular: Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee; Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee; and Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, and with University Working Groups, whose area of focus closely aligns with one or more EDI theme. It also works with student and staff networks and communities to ensure that the wider University is fully engaged in the delivery of the Framework.

EDIC will establish additional working groups with appropriate cross-University membership to deliver specific objectives as and when required.

#### 4. EDI Framework

The University's Board of Governors approved a new EDI Policy Statement and EDI Framework 2022-2027 in November 2022. In these documents the University identifies six high level commitments which will enable us to achieve our vision:

1. We commit to embedding EDI in the design and delivery of all our core activities: in our educational offer, both in terms of our learning and teaching practice and our curriculum; in our research, both in how we support research but also in carrying out our research; in our public and community engagement and our wider Knowledge Exchange.
2. We commit to assuring that our strategies, policies and practices are inclusive to students and staff from all backgrounds.
3. We commit to ensuring that all members of our community and visitors to the University are treated with respect and dignity and receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of their engagement with the University.
4. We commit to ensuring that all members of our community are aware of their individual and collective responsibilities and legal duties in relation to equality and diversity through providing up-to-date training, development and guidance.
5. We commit to providing a clear framework which enables any unwanted conduct, behaviour or practice to be reported and which assures our students and staff of a robust process of investigation and appropriate action.
6. We commit to demonstrating visibility and accountability for EDI among our senior leadership.

The framework further identified six themes around which we will focus our work:

1. **Shaping the culture:** promoting an inclusive University-wide culture in which students, staff and other members of the University from all backgrounds have a strong sense of belonging and can work creatively and innovatively to achieve their own and the organisation's ambitions.
2. **Student success:** attracting, supporting, developing and retaining students from across all communities, providing an inclusive curriculum and enabling all our students to achieve their future study and career aspirations.
3. **Supporting our staff:** attracting, developing and retaining a talented workforce with increased diversity at all levels of the organisation.
4. **Influencing the wider community:** recognising the University is an integral part of the City of Worcester and the region and seeking to influence policy, practice and behaviours across this wider area.
5. **Developing an inclusive approach to Research and Knowledge Exchange:** ensuring EDI is embedded in the design and delivery of our Research and Knowledge Exchange and in the systems we develop to support our researchers.

6. **Enhancing our infrastructure:** developing further the physical and digital accessibility of our campus to increase opportunities and improve experiences for all.

And four main areas of focus which we wish to particularly focus on during the lifetime of the Framework

- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- LGBTQ+

The EDIC is currently developing a Delivery Plan to take this work forward and future Annual Reports will record progress against each of the six main themes.

## 5. Student EDI Profile

- 5.1 The latest trends in the total student population relating to gender, age, disability, ethnicity/race, sexual orientation and religion/belief are shown below. The data in this report is from the HESA Core File as at year end for each academic year.

National comparator data throughout this section is taken from [HESA Student Data 2021/22](#) and further analysis from [Advance HE Equality in Higher Education: Students Statistical Report 2022](#) (which provides further analysis and commentary on 2020/21 student data)

The first table shows the total student population, including postgraduate, over the last four years.

	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
<b>Total student number</b>	10076	9801	10110	9901

## 5.2 Gender

The student gender profile has remained fairly constant over recent years with a split 70-75% female and 25-30% male, with a small percentage identifying as 'Other'.

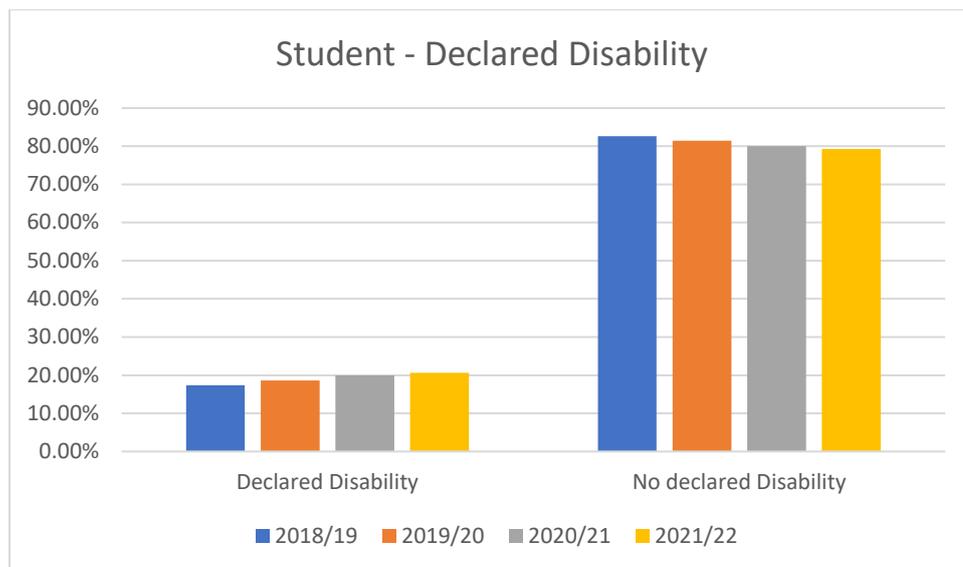
	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
<b>Female</b>	69.75%	71.02%	72.24%	73.16%
<b>Male</b>	30.25%	28.98%	27.75%	26.79%
<b>Other</b>	0%	0%	0.01%	0.05%

The University's gender split, with a significantly higher percentage of female students, is reflective of the University's academic portfolio with a high percentage of students studying in the Schools of Nursing and Midwifery, Allied Health and Education all of which tend to lead to jobs which are more attractive to females. This is reflective of the national picture with female students making up 87.9% (2020/21) of students studying undergraduate education and teaching courses and 79.5% of students studying on subjects allied to medicine across all degree levels

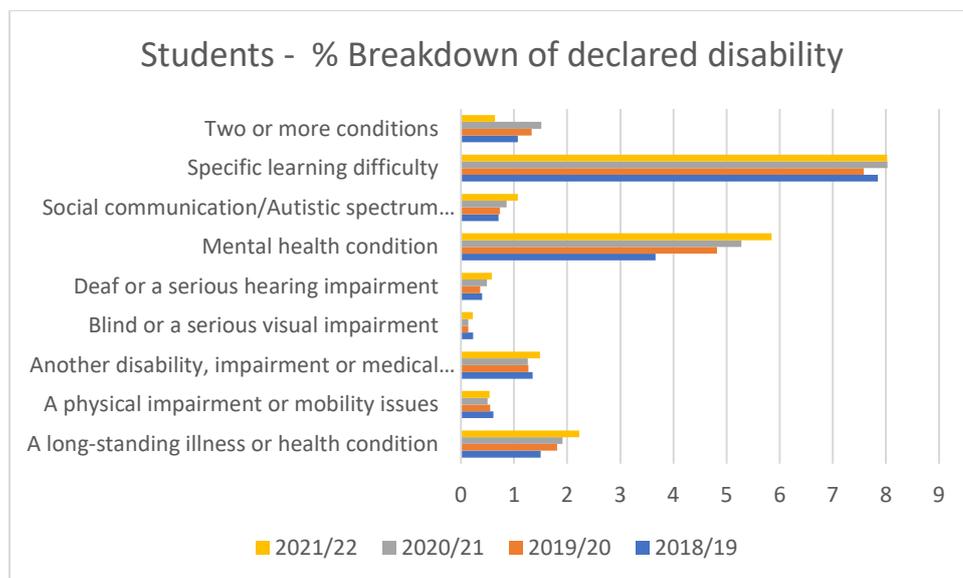
When looking at the University's student population against the wider UK student population it is not dissimilar to that of the UK GuildHE student population which in 2020/21 was: 61.7% female, 37.9% male and 0.4% other reflective of similar course provision offered in this group of HEIs. Nationally, 57% of all HE students in 2021/22 were female, this has been the case since 2016/17.

### 5.3 Disability

The number of students declaring a disability at the University during the period 2018/19 to 2021/22 has increased slightly from 17.38% in 2018/19 to 20.63% in 2021/22.



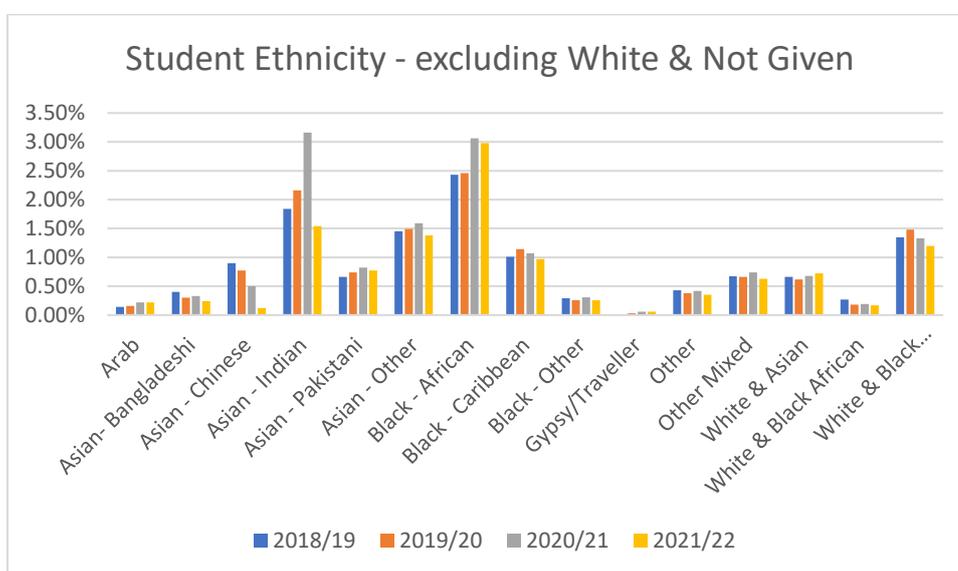
Across the UK HE Sector disability disclosure rates since 2003/04 have nearly tripled rising from 5.4% to 16% in 2021/22 (20.6% at the University of Worcester). The AdvanceHE report identifies that there has been a rise in students disclosing a mental health condition since 2016/17 and this is reflective in the University's own data which shows an increase from 3.66% (369 students ) in 2018/19 to 5.85% (579 ) declaring a mental health condition.



## 5.4 Ethnicity

The University's student population has slowly become more diverse with the percentage of White students decreasing from 85.25% in 2018/19 to 77.95% in 2021/22. HESA reports on UK domiciled enrolments, where the student normally lived for non-educational purposes before starting their course. Whilst not 100% comparable to the University's data which includes all students, White UK domiciled students have for the past 4 years made up c 70% of the student population: 76% in 2017/18 reducing slightly to 73% in 2021/22.

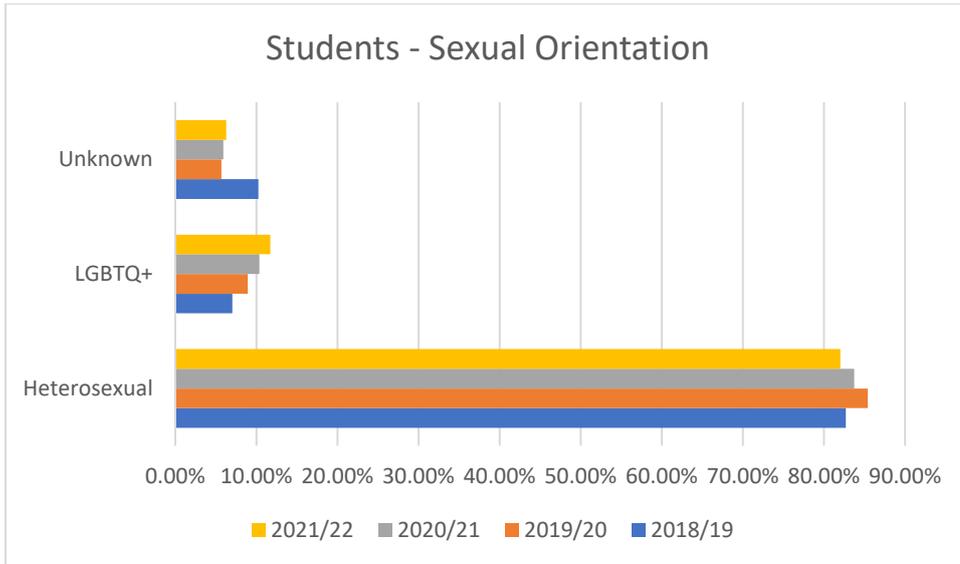
The percentage of students not disclosing their ethnicity has been relatively low for the period 2018/19 to 2020/21 (2.24% - 4.46%); in 2021/22 it rose to 10.41%. There is no national comparator in the HESA reporting on ethnicity against 'not known'.



The ethnic split of the University's student population (excluding White and Not Given) has not significantly changed during the past four years although there is a fall from 0.90% (91 students) to 0.12% (51 students) of students of Asian-Chinese ethnicity which is reflective of the decrease in the number of Chinese students due to the impact of the Covid pandemic.

## 5.5 Sexual Orientation

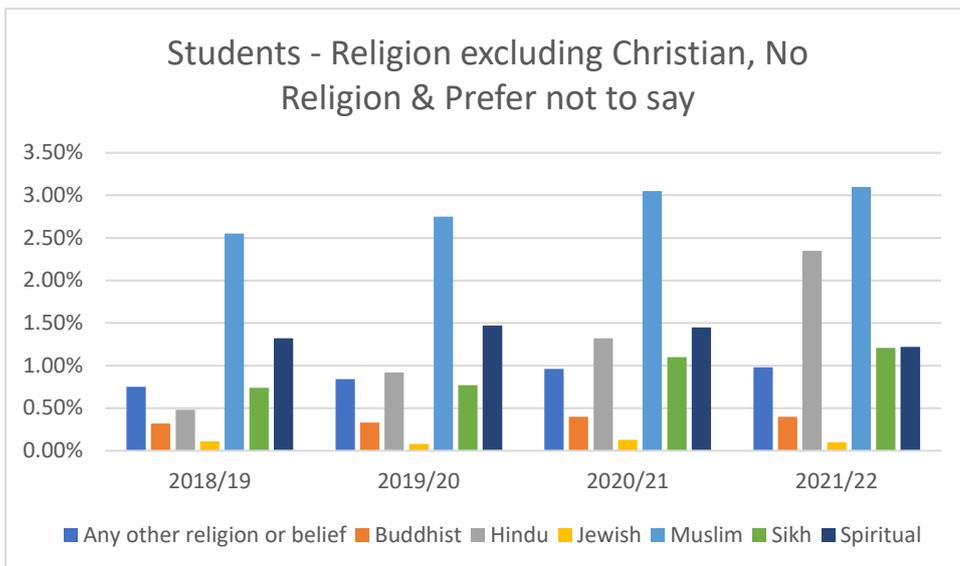
Since 2019/20 it has been compulsory for Universities, in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, to return sexual orientation data as part of the HESA return. This change was reflected, at the University, in a decrease of 'unknown' returns in 2018/19 from 10.25% (1033 students) to 5.68% (557) in 2019/20. In 2020/21 the 'unknown' figure for students in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, was 9.05% compared to 5.93% at the University of Worcester.



In 2021/22 11.71% of students at the University identified as LGBTQ+ compared to a national figure of 3.2% returned in the 2021 census<sup>1</sup>, with 7.5% not responding to the question.

## 5.6 Student Religion/Belief

Religion/belief has been a mandatory HESA field since 2017/18. The University’s data for 2018/19 to 2021/22 shows a generally consistent picture with between 34%-32% identifying as Christian and 51% -56% identifying as having ‘no religion’ and 8% - 3% ‘preferring not to say’. Nationally in 2021/22 47% of students reported as having ‘no religion’ with 31% identifying as Christian.



<sup>1</sup> National census 2021 data – sexual orientation  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualorientationenglandandwales/census2021>

The next largest groups represented at the University of Worcester in 2021/22 are Muslim (3.10%) and Hindu (2.35%). The latter has increased over the past four years from 0.48% and is likely to reflect the growth in international students at the University from Asia during this period. Nationally in 2021/22 the percentage of Muslim students has increased to 12% (3.10% at the University of Worcester) as did the percentage of Hindu students to 5% (2.35% at the University of Worcester).

## 6. Access and Participation Plan (APP)

- 6.1 The University's APP sets out how we continue to improve equal opportunities in higher education and is approved by the Office for Students. It outlines the commitment we make in relation to outreach, student success and progression.
- 6.2 Our current APP 2020/21 – 2024/25 sets out an overarching strategy and identifies a number of key student groups where we wish to make greater and faster progress. Based on our analysis of our performance over a number of years we have identified the following areas on which to focus our work.
- **Support attainment at school and access to higher education** – we are working with schools to raise pupil attainment and expectations to study for a higher education qualification.
  - **All students regardless of entry qualification, family experience of higher education, household income or protected characteristics** – by 2023-24 we will have made significant progress towards eliminating any gaps in: access continuation; attainment of a good degree; and progression to highly skilled employment or further study.
- 6.3 The University's reporting on its progress against its APP goals can be access via this [webpage](#)

## 7. Staff EDI

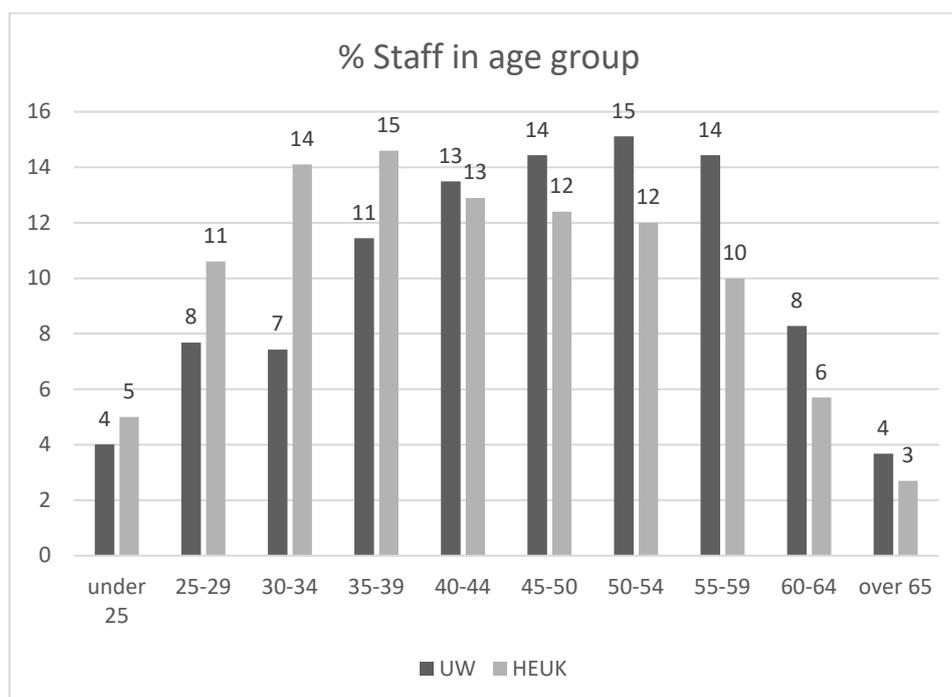
- 7.1 The data on which the report is based is taken from the HR system records for September 2022. It includes the core\* staff of the University, total headcount 1,171.

All staff are prompted to update their personal details and protected characteristic profile at various times during the year and especially when the Staff HESA census date of 31 July is approaching.

Until August 2019 it was possible to compare the data for the University with the data for the higher education sector as whole collected through the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). As from 1 August 2019 it was not mandatory to report data to HESA relating to 'non-academic' staff. At this university we continued to report 'non-academic'/professional services staff, however some HEIs have not reported and this makes comparison with the national situation less meaningful.

\*Associate Lecturers and Students working part time within the University while they study are not included. The contractual situation for these two groups fluctuates during the year. Some who currently appear in the HR record might not undertake any work in the current year for a variety of reasons. Some Associate Lecturers might not be offered a contract and/or may decide to decline a contract for a period and return the following semester or year. Similarly, students may well work in their first and third years and decline a contract in their second year. When offered contracts, these colleagues receive written terms and conditions with hours specified, they are not given 'zero hours' contracts.

## 7.2 Age



The age profile for the University is shown below as % in each age group, it's similar to previous years. The age profile in this university is older when compared with data from HE UK. This is because many of the academic staff who join the University of Worcester have already had a career within the sector in which they teach i.e health and education.

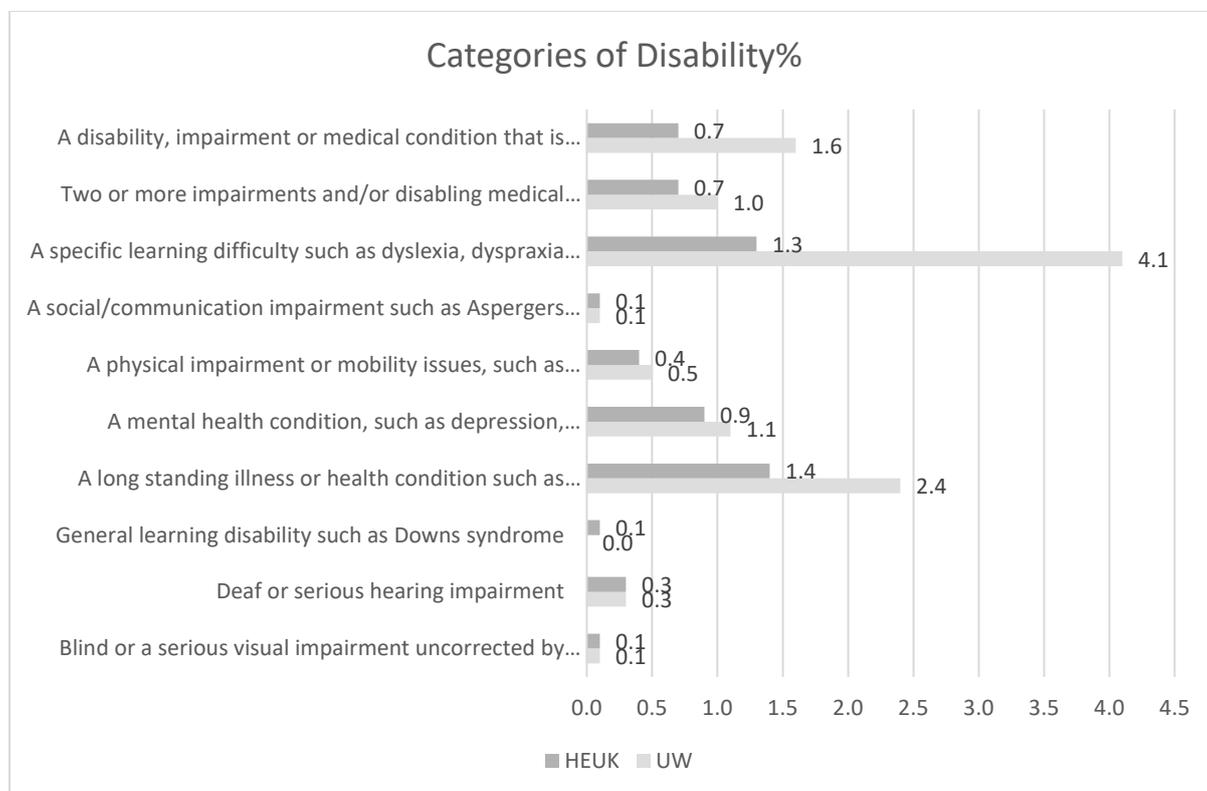
## 7.3 Disability

In the University of Worcester 11.2% of staff disclose a disability. In UK HE the current disclosure is 6% (5.5%). This higher % of disability disclosure at the University of Worcester may well be due to the reputation for supporting students who are disabled.

The % across each category of disability is similar for University of Worcester and UKHE. The types of disability for staff are similar to those disclosed by students.

The work done in supporting students with Specific learning difficulties has been a specialism at Worcester for many years and this appears to be reflected in the staff disclosures.

The only significant change in the types of disability disclosed during the last 12 months at University of Worcester is an increase in the % disclosing 'A Specific Learning difficulty'. This now accounts for 37% of all those who make a disclosure, an increase from 2021 when it was 31%. The other groups remain similar to 2021.



#### 7.4 Ethnic origin

At the University of Worcester, the data set relating to ethnic background is relatively robust with only 1% of colleagues who 'refuse to disclose' or 'not known'.

The % of colleagues who identify as being from a Minority Ethnic background in the University of Worcester is unchanged from 2021 at 6%. The national data for HE UK shows that 11.4% of individuals disclose their ethnic origin as being from a minority group. When non-UK nationals are included this increases to 19%.

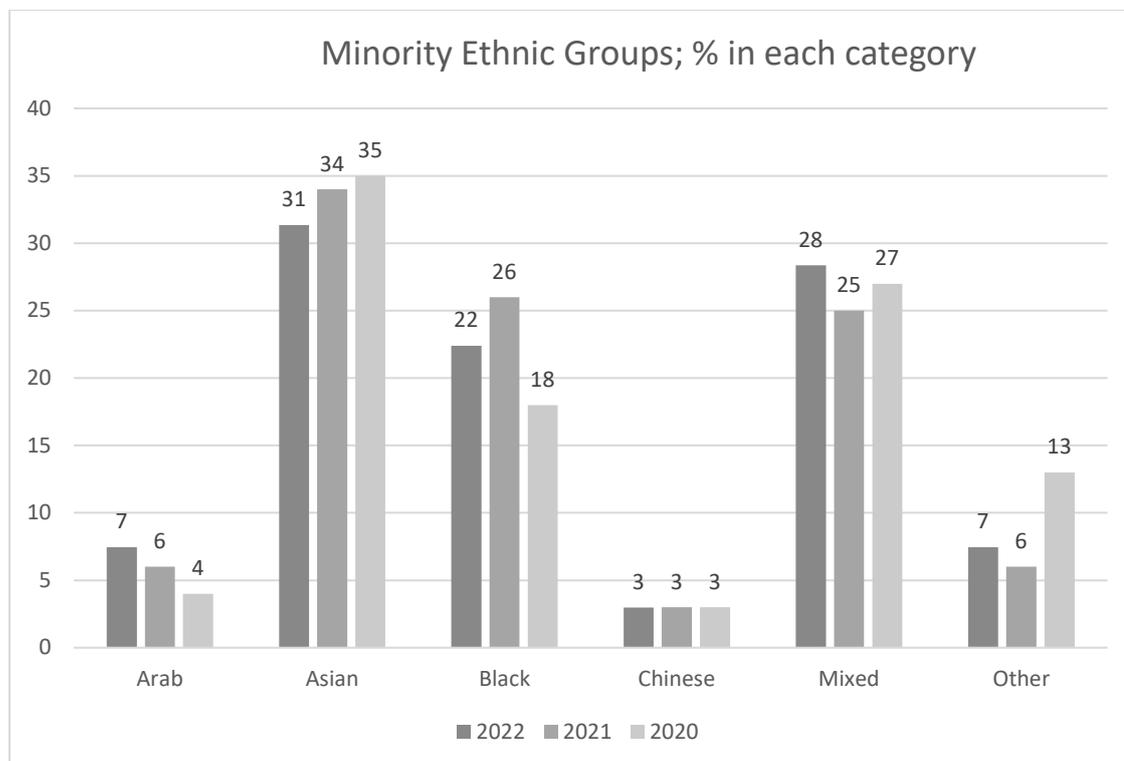
The impact of regional demographic factors may well be significant in this data set. The counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire have low % of minority ethnic minority groups in the population, however these have increased according the 2021 Census data showing Herefordshire at 2% and Worcester at 7%.

The staff and the students in the University tend to be recruited from within the region. Attracting a more diverse applicant pool is a priority for the HR strategy, ensuring that work experience placements and staff volunteering opportunities include reaching out into the communities where the population is more diverse and raising awareness of the employment and career opportunities within the HE Sector, and at this University.

Communities in areas such as Redditch are more diverse, however the regional transport links are poor, affecting the travel to work radius.

Colleagues from Minority Ethnic backgrounds are employed in all grades, and over 66% are in Band 7 or higher.

The chart below shows the % of staff from different ethnic groups in the year 2022, 2021 and 2020 in the University of Worcester.



## 7.5 Gender

Over 65% of the University core staff are women and this has not changed over recent years. In HE UK the gender balance is 54% women and 46% men.

The high % of women in academic areas at the University of Worcester reflects the curriculum strengths in subjects allied to health and education, with these occupations historically attracting a higher % of women, despite many efforts to increase the % of men. This is 'horizontal' occupational segregation where gender still appears to be a factor in career choice.

As demonstrated in our [Gender Pay Gap](#) reporting, the vertical occupational segregation in the University's workforce is less pronounced than in many other organisations. The data shows that the representation of women is over 60% in all of the salary quartiles including at the most senior levels

## 7.6 Gender identity, reassignment, or Transgender status

This a separate strand of the Equality Act, although sometimes gets reported with Sexual Orientation.

Collation of this data remains voluntary at the moment, meaning that staff are not required to collate this data as part of the HESA return.

It is encouraging to see from the table below that colleagues at Worcester are comfortable to answer the question, and 87% of them have provided this information voluntarily. . For HE UK, 53.8% have responded to the question and 42.7% of blank fields were returned.

Transgender status	2021		2022	
	% Worcester	% UK HE	% Worcester	% UK HE
Refused to say	2.0	3.5	2.6	2.1
Blank field	11.0	42.7	5.1	63.5
Gender changed since birth	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.4
Gender same as birth gender	86.8	53.1	92.2	34.0

## 7.7 Religion and belief, including no belief

The chart below shows data for the university; all staff completed the field, 12.1% selected the option to 'prefer not to say' which is a slight decrease from 2021.

Region/belief	2022 %	2021 %	difference
No religion	46.7	41.8	4.9
Buddhist	0.6	1.1	-0.5
Christian	35.9	39.7	-3.8
Hindu	0.3	0.4	-0.1
Jewish	0.2	0.1	0.1
Muslim	0.7	1.1	-0.4
Sikh	0.5	0.4	0.1
Spiritual	1.5	1.2	0.3
Other	1.5	1.1	0.4
Prefer not to say	12.1	13.1	-1.0

This is not a required field for the HESA staff return therefore benchmark data for the HE Sector is limited. The HE UK HESA data shows that 44% of responses were 'blank' indicating that no data was collected.

## 7.8 Sexual orientation

	2022		2021	
	% UW	% HE UK	% UW	% HE UK
Bisexual	1.8	1.3	1.7	1.2
Blank field	0	43.0	0	42.1
Gay man	2.0	1.3	1.8	1.2
Gay woman	1.6	0.7	1.6	0.7
Heterosexual	83.8	45.7	81.9	44.6
Other	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4
Refuse to say	10.4	7.5	12.6	9.8

The table above provides data for the University and from HE (from the HESA return). Again, the ability to benchmark the University's data to a HE benchmark is limited. This question is currently voluntary and 43% of the UK HE respondent did not complete this field.

At Worcester all staff completed the field, and the % of those choosing the option to 'refuse to say' has decreased since 2021.

- 7.9 The staff profile helps to provide an evidence base for identifying areas of priority. One such area is the programme to support menopause, based on the age and gender profile of the staff. The intersection of age and gender shows that the % of women is higher in the older age groups where perimenopause and menopause symptoms are likely to affect a number of individuals. Guidelines for individuals and managers have been developed and promulgated through a series of staff wellbeing workshops. Other initiatives include support for staff network groups for LGBTQ+, Disability and a group for Minority Ethnic Groups is in development. The University staff development programme now includes a theme on 'Inclusion' and this has included workshops on LGBTQ+ awareness, delivered by staff from the network group, Disability awareness and Trans matters.

## 8. Examples of our EDI Activities in 2021-22

During 2021-22 the main focus of the EDI Committee was drafting the new [EDI Policy Statement](#) and [EDI Framework 2022-2027](#). These were approved by the Board of Governors in November 2022. To support the launch of the new Policy Statement and Framework a new '[Our Community](#)' webpage was published which aims to celebrate the diversity of the University's community.

Examples of our activities against each of the themes identified in the new EDI Framework:

### Theme 1: Shaping the culture

The EDI Committee established a Multi-cultural Working Group which organised celebrations for Eid al-Fitr for staff and students which were well received. The Working Group also organised, working with the Students' Union, a celebration of Diwali in October 2022 and has been tasked with developing a calendar of multi-cultural events for the University to mark each year.

### Theme 2: Student Success

Improving student retention and success is a key priority for the University Quality Enhancement Plan, and many of the key learning and teaching development projects contribute to this overall objective. Of note the work on embedding graduate attributes, the establishment of the 3Rs (Resilience, Retention and Realising Potential) Steering Group to share effective practice and monitor progress, the focus through the Annual Evaluation Process on the use of data and effective action planning at course and School level.

### Theme 3: Supporting our staff

The Board of Governors refocused its HR Committee and created a new People and Culture Committee with an increased focus on EDI matters. The new Committee contributed to the

development of the new Policy Statement and Framework and receives reports to each of its meetings on the work of the EDI Committee

#### Theme 4: Influencing the wider community

The University has been invited to join the regional Integrated Care System Equality and Diversity Group and to be involved in identifying regional priorities and an action plan. There are regional staff network groups, and the University staff network groups are invited to join these. In association with the ICS, we hosted an event for Black History month. This was screening of the film 'Exposed' which set out some of the challenges experienced by health and care staff from minority ethnic groups during the pandemic. This was followed by a discussion with the audience and some of those who appeared in the film.

#### Theme 5: Developing an inclusive approach to Research and Knowledge Exchange

Our researchers have engaged in a wide range of projects focussed on EDI matters. Of particular note, is an ongoing project funded by the NHS Race & Health Observatory looking at health inequalities in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities building on existing research in the School of Allied Health and Community which has sought to bring the voices of this marginalised community into the mainstream.

#### Theme 6: Enhancing our Infrastructure

The designs for the new Severn Campus Infrastructure Project and the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Building were informed by close engagement with the University's Disability Team, as well as specialist external advisers to ensure that the needs of people with disability were met and in particular those with visual disabilities. The new Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Building, due to open in Spring 2023, like all the University's building developments in recent years has been designed with inclusivity embedded in the design as a given. Lift access to the first floor is accessed directly as you enter the building, circulation space, the café, and even doorways are designed to allow for easy use and access for those in a wheelchair and the building provides male, female, disabled and gender-neutral toilets.

## 8. Next Steps

In 2022/23 the EDI Committee will develop the Delivery Plan for the new EDI Framework, and these will inform future Annual Reports.

The University will be developing a new Access and Participation Plan for 2024 onwards and the student EDI data on retention, achievement and graduate employment of students will inform that new plan.