

Annual Equality Objectives Report December 2023

Jo Milsom, Deputy Principal

1. Introduction

This report sets out progress made to date against the Equality Objectives (EOs), identifies further areas for action and next steps. The current set of EOs were set and approved in March 2021, and progress is reported annually in December. EOs are set separately for staff and students, with three strands for each group. Since 2021 progress has been made against all EOs, however none have been achieved completely – at each reporting period we have reviewed the EOs and some small adjustments have been made to focus on specific groups of people or issues. Student data in the report is compared against other students in the college, rather than national cohort data, as we are seeking to ensure that all groups of students experience similar outcomes from their education with us, rather than comparing ourselves against other FE institutions. Therefore, in most cases this report refers to ‘gaps’ in outcomes for students in different groups, rather than absolute data. It is also important to note that this work represents a journey in which the positive outcomes we seek will not usually materialise quickly but will result from consistent and sustained actions over a long period of time.

2. Context

Demographic data in the local community remains difficult to find as our students may fall into many age categories, may travel widely to attend our courses, and may also attend at sites outside of their immediate community. As a result, there is no easy comparison between college demographics and the local community, and furthermore in many categories that we may wish to reflect on, such as the Protected Characteristics categories, data is not collected from young people in other stages of education so we cannot compare. However, despite this we strive to represent our communities as far as we can from both a staff and student perspective, and the following data is intended to demonstrate something of the local context and provide assurance that all members of our community have equal experiences and opportunities, regardless of any protected characteristic.

In terms of ethnicity, the 2021 census data for Oxfordshire indicates that in the districts of Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire 15% and 19% of secondary school aged pupils are from ethnic minorities, although some other districts, notably the city centre and Cherwell, have much higher rates at 55% and 29% respectively. For 2022-23 college data for students on Study Programmes (therefore aged 16-19, or up to 24 with an EHCP) was around 17.4%, an increase of around 1pp on the previous year and broadly in line with the immediate communities around our main campuses. Data for all college students during this time suggests around 30% are from ethnic minorities and given the wider geographical spread and focus on ESOL and basic skills, this seems more in line with the wider demographic. Appendix A includes student the student data set.

Census data from 2021 indicates that across the whole county 18% of the population is from an ethnic minority (an increase of 1.4pp since 2011), and more widely the South East region is slightly higher at 21.2%. At the end of the 2022-23 academic year the staff body was made up of around 13% of people who defined their ethnicity as something other than White British (the same as 2022) – however when including all ‘white’ categories this reduces to 6.1%, which is 0.6pp more than the previous year. The proportion of staff who are not declaring their data on this subject is similar to last year at just over 7%.

In relation to other protected characteristics, it is not possible to find suitable data to demonstrate the local context in the same way as this data is simply not recorded or made available currently. However, the 2021 census did include an optional question on sexual orientation for those over 16

and this suggests that around 3.25% of the adult population identify with an LGBT+ orientation. College data shows 3.7% of college staff identifying in this category and 15.2% of staff choosing not to declare this information. Census data around disabilities indicates 17.8% of people identify with a disability in the UK – this compares with 6.9% of college staff, although it is not known what proportion of disabled people in the country are able to work, so this is not a direct comparison.

2021 UK Census data about religion (an optional census question which around 94% of residents answered) indicates that the proportion of college staff identifying as 'Christian' is around the same as the national average, however we have much lower rates than nationally for other religions such as Muslim, Hindu. Furthermore, around one quarter of staff have not shared their religion data with us and this is one area where we continue to drive open discussions with staff.

Appendix B shows the current data held for all staff based on declared data of Protected Characteristics. We have made some progress in reducing the number of staff electing not to share this information with us, but data remains incomplete with the information least likely to be shared relating to sex identifier and gender reassignment.

(Source: [Census - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk))

3. Our Equality Objectives

The current EOs for students are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Strand 1: That all students achieve equally, regardless of ethnicity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Study Programme students of minority ethnic heritage are supported to remain and achieve at college - increase retention and achievement across all minority heritage groups, but particularly WB Caribbean, Irish and Gypsy/Irish Traveller to within 3pp of overall college average for their age group and learning aim. • Ensure that all adult learners (including subcontracted) of minority ethnic heritage achieve in line with the college average for their age group and learning aim, increasing retention and achievement to within 3pp of overall. |
| Strand 2: That all students achieve equally, regardless of disability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Study Programme students with dyslexia and dyscalculia are supported to achieve qualifications in maths and English to ensure their future progression in education and employment - increase achievement to within 3pp of the average for their age group and learning aim • Ensure that students with Autism are supported to re-engage with their education post pandemic, attend college and achieve their qualifications at the same rate as their peers. • Ensure that adult learners with Mental Health needs are supported to remain and achieve on their course, increasing achievement to within 3pp of the college average for their age group and learning aim. |
| Strand 3: That students from other disadvantaged Groups achieve at least as well as their peers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Study Programme students who are Looked After Children, Young Adult Carers or are receiving Free Meals are supported to achieve as well as their peers - improve retention and achievement to within 3pp of college average for age group and learning aim. |

The current EOs for staff are:

| | |
|---|--|
| Strand 1 - That the workforce is reflective of the community and the student population | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that staff data is as complete as is possible and that staff feel comfortable to disclose their Protected Characteristics before comparisons are made to community and student profiles. • Aim to reduce the number of staff who have not completed their PC data by 10pp by 2023. • Aim to decrease the number of staff who have selected 'Prefer Not To Say' by 3pp by 2023 across all PCs, with particular emphasis on religion/belief and sexual orientation as these are the largest areas where staff select this option. |
| Strand 2 - That all staff have equality of opportunity to fulfil their potential | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the College attracts and appoints a diverse workforce and that staff are able to fulfil their potential by removing barriers to productivity and ensure this is monitored and reported on. Increase the number of applications from men, those with a disability and those from minority ethnic backgrounds by 3pp. • Increase appointments of those from Asian, Black, Mixed and 'other' ethnic backgrounds to be proportionally in line with those from 'White' backgrounds compared to applications.. |
| Strand 3 - That all staff have job satisfaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report annually on the Staff Satisfaction survey by each of the Protected Characteristics to gauge satisfaction levels and identify trends. • Increase completion of staff survey to at least 50% of all staff • Increase the satisfaction of staff in minority groups to within 3pp of all other staff across at least 75% of questions. • Increase satisfaction levels of male staff to within 3pp of all other staff on the subjects of feeling valued and staff development. |

4. Students

In terms of student demographics, there has been an increase in ethnic diversity of our student body on study programme provision, with 17.4% of students from minority ethnic backgrounds in 2022-23, compared to 13.1% in 2020-21. There has been a similar increase in diversity of adult provision, although this has slowed in recent years and seems to have settled at around 30%. There has been a significant increase in the number of study programme students declaring an additional learning need and these now account for 53% of learners, compared to 35% two years ago. The number of students with EHCPs has increased by about 20pp in the same period – however as the total number of study programme learners has also increased across this period, those with EHCPs represent 18% of the total now, compared to just under 20% in 2021-22. Adult learner data indicates a small decrease in the number declaring additional needs from 30% in 2020 to 28% in 2022.

Ethnicity

Overall retention and achievement rates were higher for learners from minority ethnic backgrounds than for those from White British background, with retention at 95.9% (vs 93.6% for WB) and achievement at 87.5% compared to 87.1% for WB. However, this obscures the differences between age groups; study programme students from ethnic minority backgrounds had higher retention (92.4% vs 90.8%) and higher achievement rates (84.5% vs 83.6%) than those who identified as White British. For adult learners (aged 19+ on any course) there is an achievement gap for those from minority backgrounds of 4.1pp.

However, data across the levels for 16–18-year-olds gives a mixed picture – at entry level and level 2 students from ethnic minorities outperform their peers – 88.3% vs 86.2% at Entry level and 82.2% vs 77.7% at level 2. Whereas at levels 1 and 3 there is an achievement gap for these groups – 64.5% vs 68.4% at level 1 and 92.0% vs 92.6% at level 3. This amounts to a widening of the achievement gap at levels 1 & 3, which were very similar last year, especially when considering that students at level 1 performed less well than last year overall anyway. For adults the gap is broadly consistent at entry to level 2 at around 5.5pp, but adult students from minority backgrounds outperform their peers at level 3 by 4.2pp.

There are also some differences between ethnic groups which are detailed further below in the commentary on progress against the EOs, including that outcomes for adult learners from Pakistani

backgrounds continue to improve, those from Chinese backgrounds have outperformed peers by around 3pp and those from Indian groups who have this year outperformed their peer group by 13pp and improved on last year's achievement by almost 20pp. On study programmes, Pakistani (100%) learners have continued to improve, although a small cohort, likewise Bangladeshi (94.1%) and those identifying as White Asian (89.6%).

Learning Difficulty/Disabilities

Overall achievement for students with declared Learning Difficulty or Disability (LDD) is broadly the same as that for those without with no significant differences at whole cohort level. However, when comparing by level there is again an issue on study programmes at level 1, with those students with a declared learning need with an achievement rate 5.3pp below their peers. Achievement gaps for different category of need are closing, except for Dyslexia, although the gap has reduced here compared to the previous year.

However, those learners with Education, Health & Care Plans, and those for whom we access additional funding to provide for their support needs do well compared to their peers – EHCP students achieved 3.6pp higher than their peers and those with High Needs Funding (a subset of those with EHCPs) 5pp higher.

For adults there is a 2pp achievement gap for those with Autism, however other categories have performed well against their peers. In terms of disabilities there persists a challenge with those with diagnosed mental health conditions who have an achievement rate 10.6pp lower than their peer group, and 2.9pp lower than last year.

Disadvantaged Groups

The picture for study programme learners in other disadvantaged groups is mixed; some categories are difficult to track as information may not be shared and the status of a young person or their family may change, and some groups have very small numbers of students. We broadly look at those who are Looked After by the local authority – ie in the care system in some way - known as LAC, those who we know are carers for a member of their family (YAC), those in receipt of free meals in college and those who have an allocated social worker due to safeguarding concerns or other statutory processes (not including disability as they are accounted for above).

Overall achievement for LAC learners was 3.3pp below their peers, which is a significant improvement in recent years, as this group have had a particularly long-term impact from the pandemic and are also impacted by changes to their care or support which is completely outside of their control.

Students with caring responsibilities, those in receipt of free meals and those with social workers all performed far worse than their peers, however this is more of an issue at level 1, with them achieving broadly the same as peers at most other levels. It is also likely that these groups were more impacted by the cost-of-living crisis in 2022-23 than other groups.

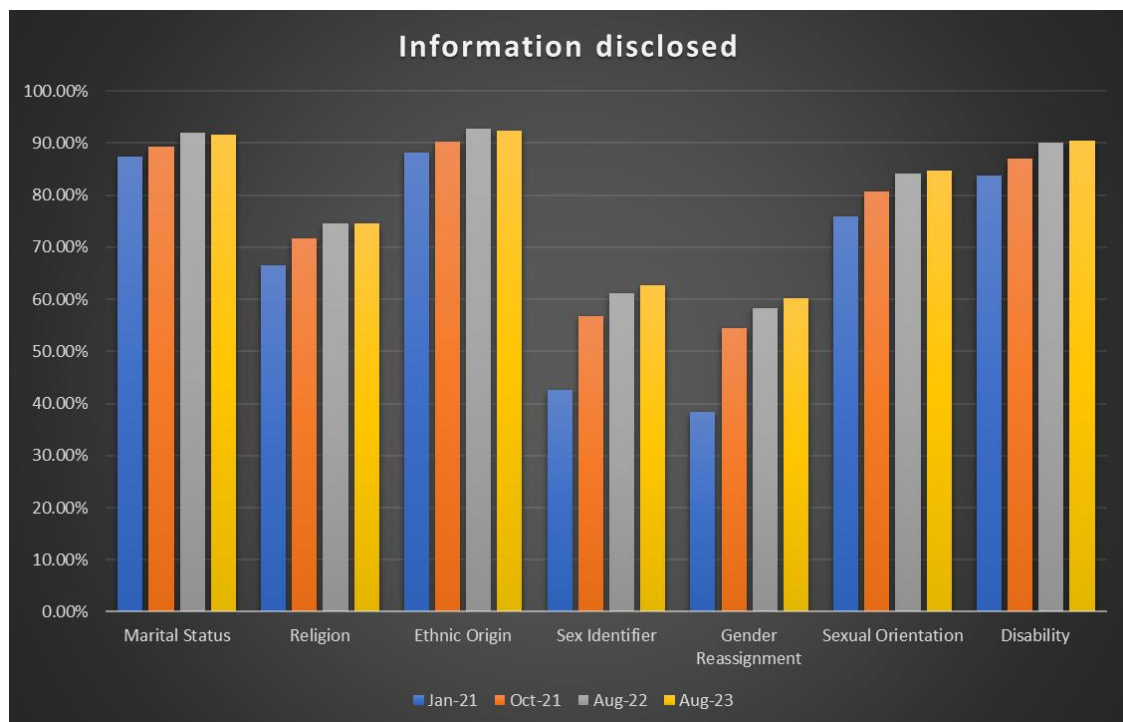
Progress against Equality Objectives - Students

| | Objective | Where were we? (2020) | Where are we now? (2023) | New emerging concerns & comments |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Strand 1: That all students achieve equally, regardless of ethnicity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that Study Programme students of minority ethnic heritage are supported to remain and achieve at college - increase retention and achievement across all minority heritage groups, but particularly WB Caribbean, Irish and Gypsy/Irish Traveller to within 3pp of overall college average for their age group and learning aim. | <p>WB Caribbean 20.5pp below (40 enrolments)</p> <p>Added for 2023: Gypsy/Irish Traveller 8pp below in 2022 (16 enrolments)</p> | <p>WB Caribbean 3.9pp below (56 enrolments)</p> <p>Gypsy/Irish Traveller 34pp below (14 enrolments)</p> <p><i>Overall achievement for Study Programmes in 2023 was 84.3%.</i></p> <p>Objective partially achieved</p> | <p>Students identifying as WB Caribbean, Caribbean and WB African are a concern; across these categories achievement is lower than last year and lower than their peers:</p> <p>Caribbean 77.8% achievement WB African 80% achievement WB Caribbean 80.4% achievement</p> <p>Other ethnic minorities such as Pakistani, Bangladeshi and other Asian ethnic groups have continued to perform well against their peers.</p> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all adult learners (including subcontracted) of minority ethnic heritage achieve in line with the college average for their age group and learning aim, increasing retention and achievement to within 3pp. | <p>19+ ESOL 5.5pp below 19+ Basic Skills 18.5pp below</p> | <p>19+ ESOL achievement 98.2%, 2pp above peers 19+ Basic Skills improved by 10pp and now 8pp above peers.</p> <p>Objective partially achieved</p> | <p>Overall achievement for most ethnic groups has improved and is in line with peers or has at least made a significant improvement on last year. However, there is an achievement gap of 16.3pp for those from Arab backgrounds, which is 13.8pp down on last year as well.</p> |
| Strand 2: That all students achieve equally, regardless of disability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that Study Programme students with dyslexia and dyscalculia are supported to achieve qualifications in maths and English to ensure their future progression in education and employment - increase achievement to within 3pp of the | <p>GCSE and Functional Skills 16-18s: Dyslexia 14.4pp below</p> <p>Dyscalculia 32.4pp below (2020)</p> | <p>GCSE English Dyslexia 11pp below whole college on same aim GCSE Maths 6.5pp below whole college same aim Functional Skills Maths: E3 – 13.9pp below L1- 16.3pp above L2 – 18.6 pp below</p> | <p>In addition to ongoing concerns about attainment of learners with dyslexia on E&M qualifications there are a number of vocational programmes where achievement is significantly worse than their peer group including: Motor Vehicle Entry 3 Beauty Therapy Massage Level 3</p> |

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| | average for their age group and learning aim. | | Functional Skills English: E3 – 10.1pp above L1 – 0.6pp below L2 – 37.8pp below No achievement gap for dyscalculia Objective not yet achieved | Health & Social Care Level 3 Technical Certificate Animal Management Level 3 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that students with Autism are supported to re-engage with their education post pandemic, attend college and achieve their qualifications to within 2pp of their peers | 16-18 Autism 2.9pp decline on previous year and 1.8pp below college average (328 enrolments) | 16- 18 Autism achievement gap reduced to 1pp (424 enrolments) Objective achieved | Overall, the achievement rate for students with Autism has dropped, however as overall achievement across the college has also dropped, the gap has still reduced. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that adult learners with Mental Health needs are supported to remain and achieve on their course, increasing achievement to within 3pp of the college average for their age group and learning aim. | 19+ all learning aims - 6.7pp below | 19+ learners across all aims 10.6pp below peers, and a 2.9pp drop from last year. Objective not yet achieved | For 19+ learners with Autism the achievement gap has reduced to 2pp (152 enrolments) and achievement has increased by 2.7pp for this group. Similarly, the achievement gap for students with Dyslexia in 2022 of 13.2pp has been eliminated and this group have performed better than their peers by 1.9pp. |
| Strand 3: That students from other disadvantaged Groups achieve at least as well as their peers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that Study Programme students who are Looked After Children or Young Adult Carers are supported to achieve as well as their peers - improve retention and achievement to within 3pp of college average for age group and learning aim. | LAC achievement 17pp below YAC 15.2pp below | LAC retention 2.9pp below peers, achievement 2.6pp below overall YAC retention, 10.6pp below (100%), achievement 12.5pp below Objective not yet achieved | Retention and achievement for both Looked After and Young Adult Carers varies significantly from year to year, although there have been some improvements across the period monitored from 2020. Across the board students in disadvantaged groups (receiving financial support, known to social care services etc) have achieved less well than their peers. |

5. Staff

Efforts made in recent years to increase the number of staff willing to share personal information about protected characteristics has had an impact but appears to now be plateauing; across most categories there has been an increase in information disclosed over time although some categories remain very difficult and there staff are reluctant to disclose personal data – notably religion (around 25%), sex identifier (c.37%) and gender reassignment (39%). Informal discussions with staff about the reluctance reveal that many staff do not feel this information is relevant to their employer and elect not to share for this reason. As an employer the college has worked to bring protected characteristics into open forums for discussion and runs staff support groups on a range of topics as part of this, celebrates related global events each month as well as ensuring that adequate time is allocated during staff development to awareness and training on these topics.



Progress against Equality Objectives - Staff

| | | Where were we? | Where are we now? | New emerging concerns & comments |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Strand 1 - That the workforce is reflective of the community and the student population | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that staff data is as complete as is possible and that staff feel comfortable to disclose their Protected Characteristics before comparisons are made to community and student profiles. | Significant gaps in completion of staff data which varies depending on the PC, but was between 37% and 88% completion. | <p>This has improved -there are still variations depending on the PC but the range of completion is now between 60% and 92%.</p> <p>Objective not yet achieved</p> | Gender reassignment (60.2%), sex identifier (62.7%) and religion (75%) have the lowest completion rate and still seem difficult for staff to disclose. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim to reduce the number of staff who have not completed their PC data by 10pp by 2023. | Marital Status 87.46% Religion 66.45% Ethnic Origin 88.11% Sex Identifier 42.51% Gender Reassignment 38.44% Sexual Orientation 75.90% Disabled 83.71% | Marital Status 91.7% Religion 74.6% Ethnic Origin 92.4% Sex Identifier 62.7% Gender Reassignment 60.2% Sexual Orientation 84.8% Disabled 90.4% <p>Objective not yet achieved</p> | A 10% reduction has been achieved in, sex identifier, gender reassignment, with 8.9% improvement in Sexual orientation and 8.15% in Religion. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim to decrease the number of staff who have selected 'Prefer Not To Say' by 3pp by 2023 across all PCs, with particular emphasis on religion/belief and sexual orientation as these are the largest areas where staff select this option. | Marital Status 2.44% Religion 7.98% Ethnic Origin 3.09% Sex Identifier 1.14% Gender Reassignment 0.98% Sexual Orientation 4.72% Disabled 0.00% | Marital Status 5.1% Religion 12.0% Ethnic Origin 4.6% Sex Identifier 1.7% Gender Reassignment 2.0% Sexual Orientation 6.1% Disabled 3.9% <p>Objective not yet achieved</p> | Increase for Marital Status, ethnic origin. |
| Strand 2 - That all staff have equality of opportunity to fulfil their potential | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the College attracts and appoints a diverse workforce and that staff are able to fulfil their potential by removing barriers to productivity and ensure this is monitored and reported on. Increase the number of applications from men, those with a disability and those from | % applications from minority groups 19/20: Men 6% Disability 5% Minority Ethnic 19% | % applications from minority groups 22/23: Men 6% (was 7% in 21/22 and 11% in 20/21) Disability 5% (was 4% in both 21/22 and 20/21) Minority Ethnic 26% (was 23% in 21/22) | A large number of applicants have not stated their gender on their application. |

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|--|---|---|--|--|
| | minority ethnic backgrounds by 3pp. | | Objective not yet fully achieved | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase appointments of those from Asian, Black, Mixed and 'other' ethnic backgrounds to be proportionally in line with those from 'white' backgrounds compared to applications. | <p>Appointments in 21/22:</p> <p>Asian 4.35%</p> <p>Black 7.69%</p> <p>Mixed 4.76%</p> <p>Other 0%</p> <p>Overall appoints:98</p> <p>White 93 (95%)</p> <p>Ethnic Minority 5 (5%)</p> | <p>Appointments in 2022/23:</p> <p>Asian 5%</p> <p>Black 0%</p> <p>Mixed 18%</p> <p>Other 0%</p> <p>Overall appoints: 71</p> <p>White 59 (83%)</p> <p>Ethnic Minority 12 (17%)</p> <p>Objective not met</p> | <p>17% of posts went to applicants from ethnic minorities, yet 25% of applications were from ethnic minorities.</p> <p>0 appointments in Black categories despite c.20 applicants and 50% being shortlisted for interview.</p> |
| Strand 3 - That all staff have job satisfaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase completion of staff survey to at least 50% of all staff | 2022 – 20% staff completed the survey | <p>32% of staff completed the survey</p> <p>Progress made but objective not yet achieved.</p> | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the satisfaction of staff in minority groups to within 3 pp of all other staff across at least 75% of questions | | Data not yet available | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase satisfaction of male staff to within 3pp on 'feeling valued' and 'staff development' | | <p>74% of male staff completing the survey agreed that they felt valued, and that they had access to sufficient professional development. 80.72% of all staff completing the survey felt valued, and 84.2% had sufficient access to development.</p> <p>Objective not met</p> | |

6. Conclusion

It is clear that many of the issues the Equalities work seeks to address are challenging and will gradually change over a longer period of time than we can reflect in these annual updates, however it remains useful and important to reflect on the data at regular intervals in order to ensure we are focused on delivering relevant and useful interventions, training and awareness raising.

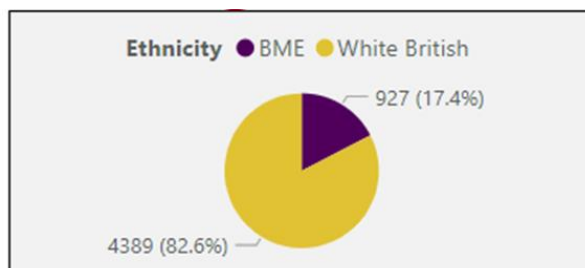
In relation to staff, the key issue that we need to reaffirm our commitment to is around recruiting a diverse workforce – there has been very little progress on this front, and it should be a priority moving forwards.

For students there remain some groups who experience disadvantage across several fronts which is already a key focus of both our strategic plan and our Quality Improvement Plan for this year - success in this area will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the data presented in this report in future years and must be prioritised.

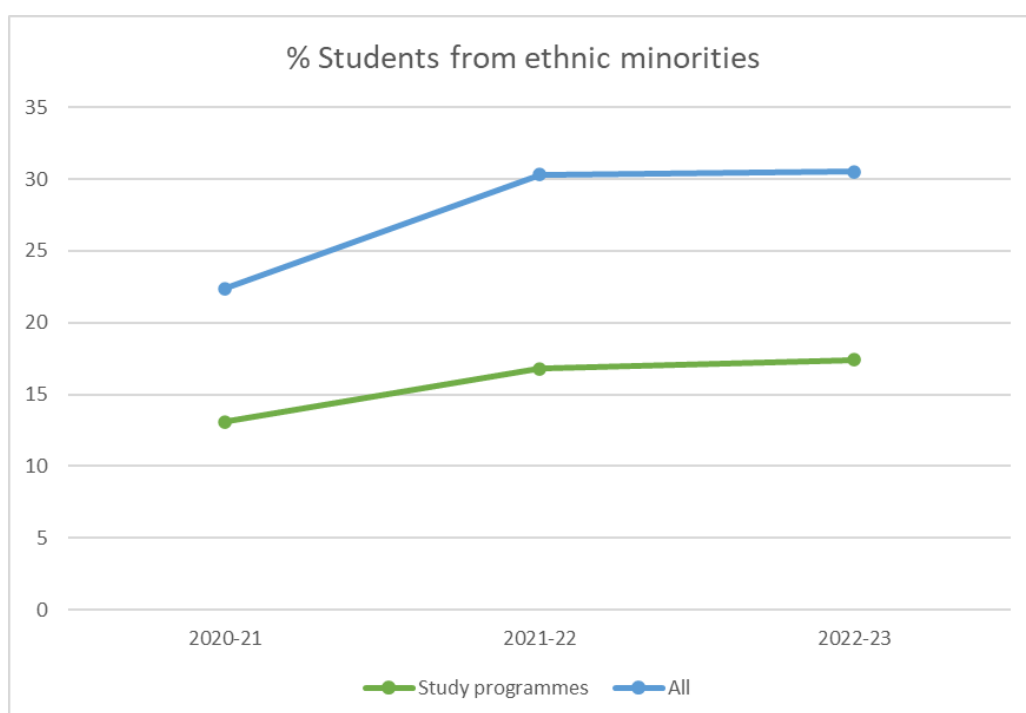
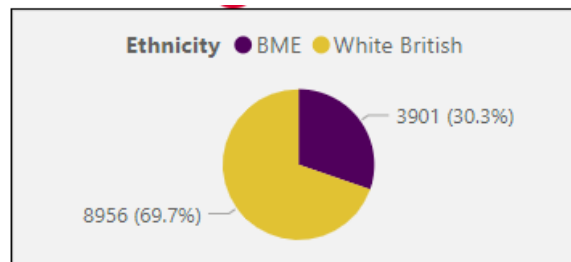
Appendix A – Student Data

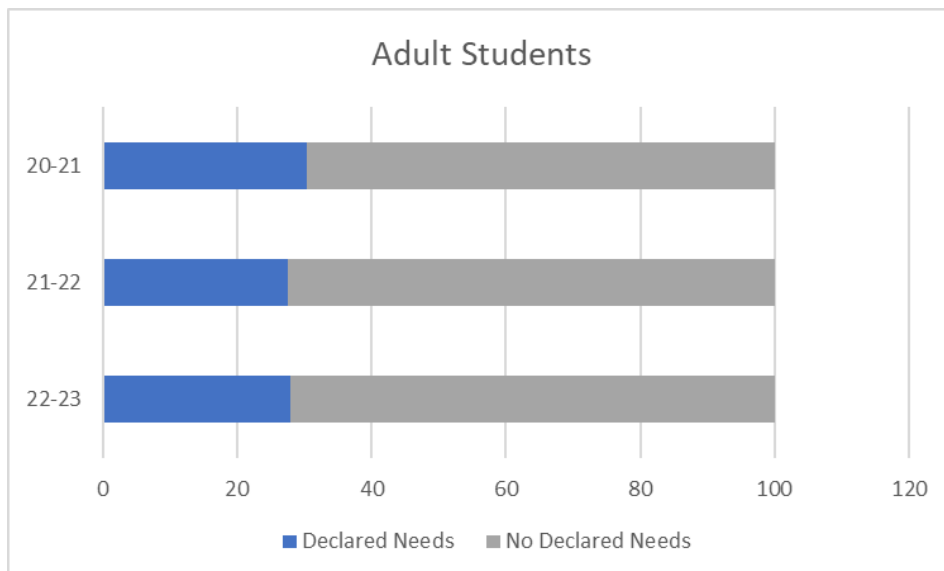
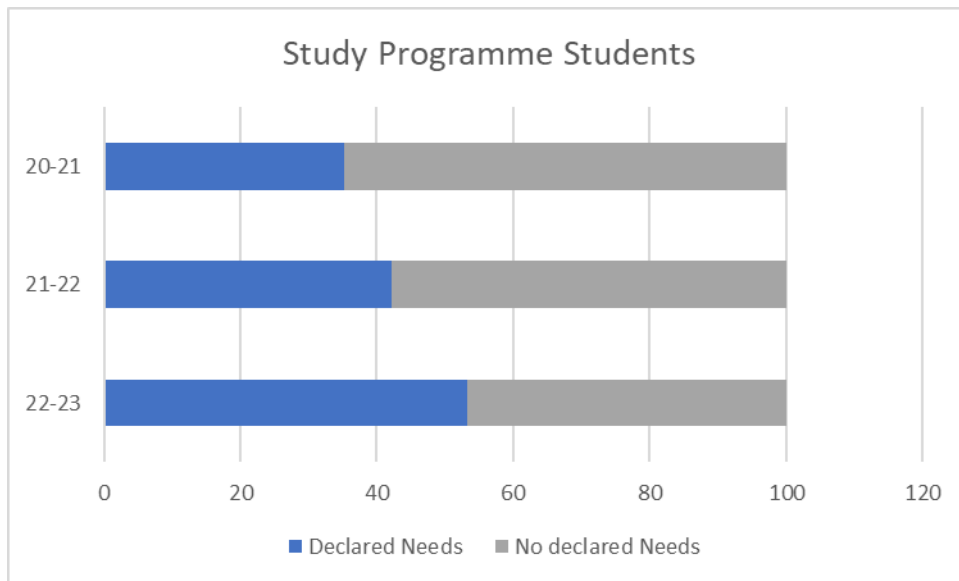
Ethnic Minorities in 2023

Study programmes:



All learners:





Declared additional learning needs 3 year trends

Oxfordshire Schools Pupil Ethnicity 2021

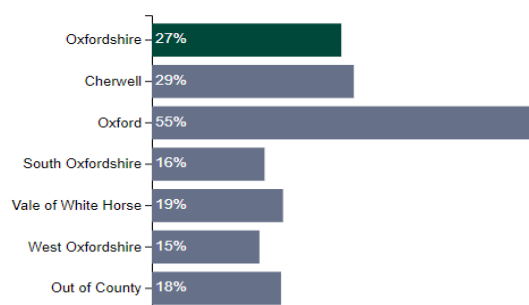
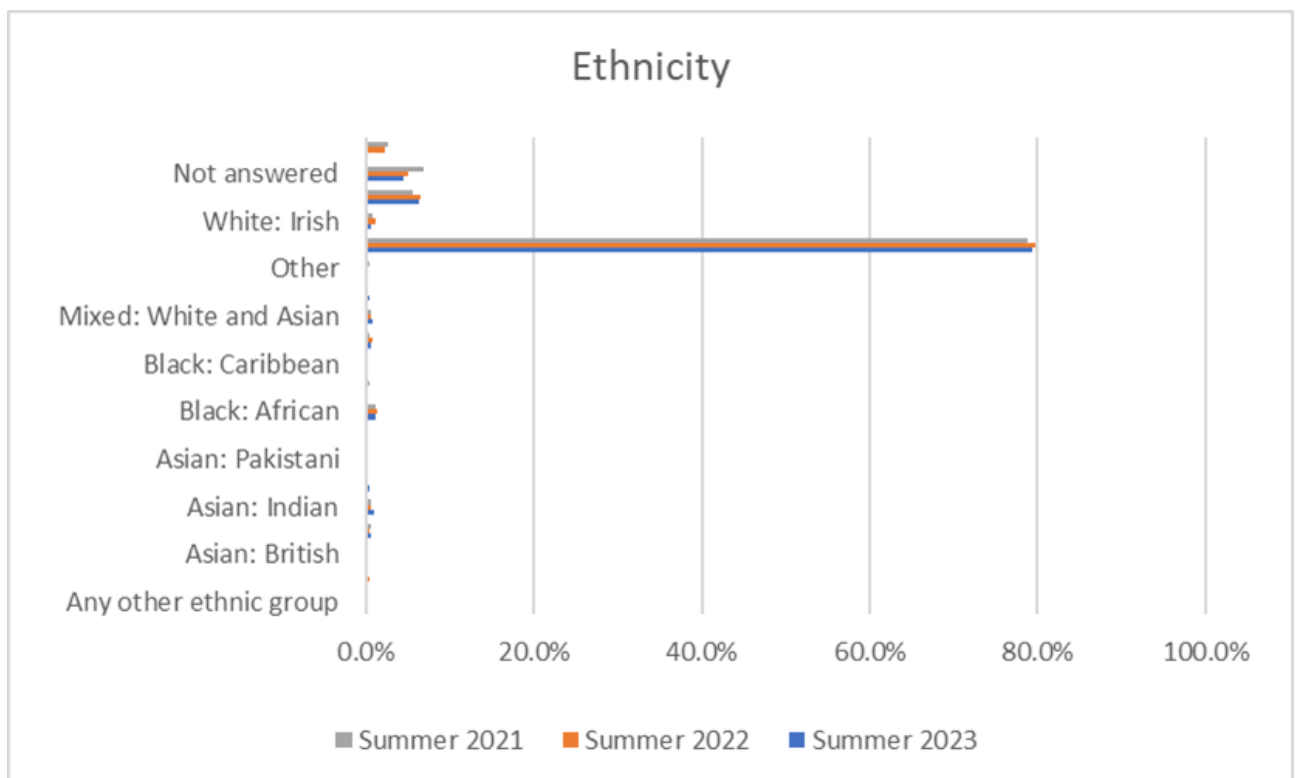


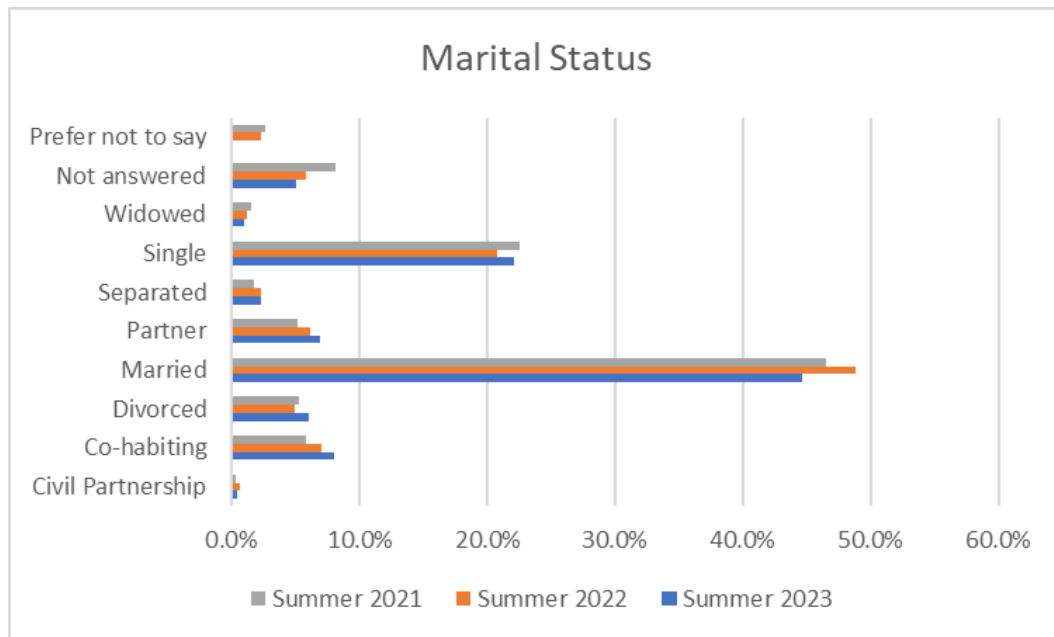
Figure 1 : Oxfordshire Districts, Ethnic Minorities in Secondary Education

[Oxfordshire schools - pupil ethnicity and first language 2021 | Oxfordshire Insight](#)

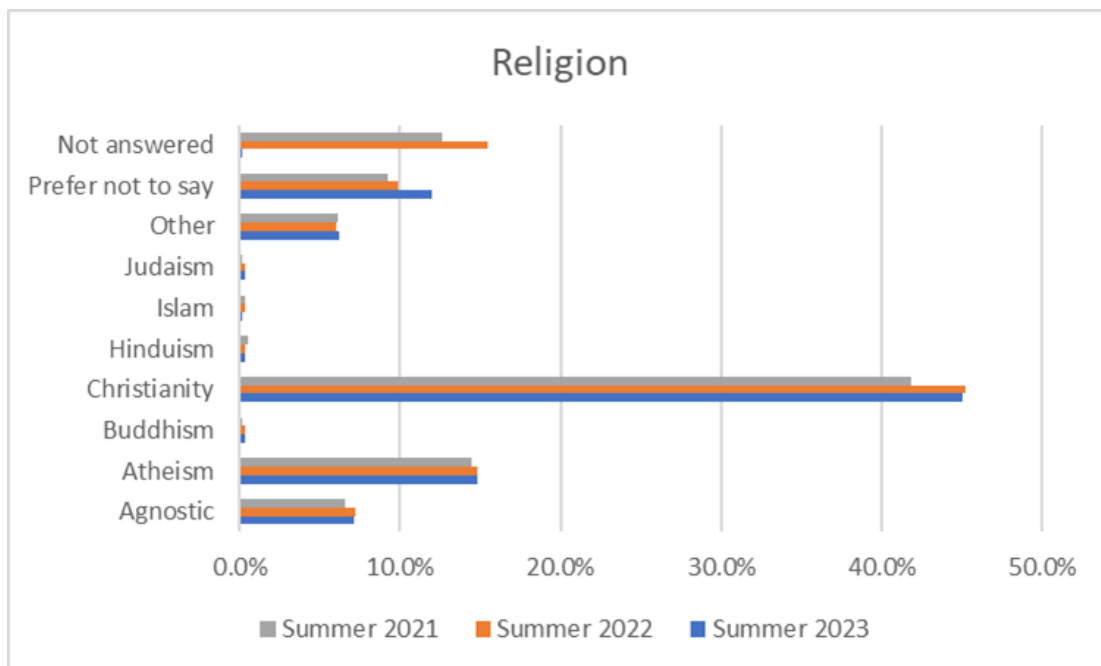
7. Appendix B – Staff Data



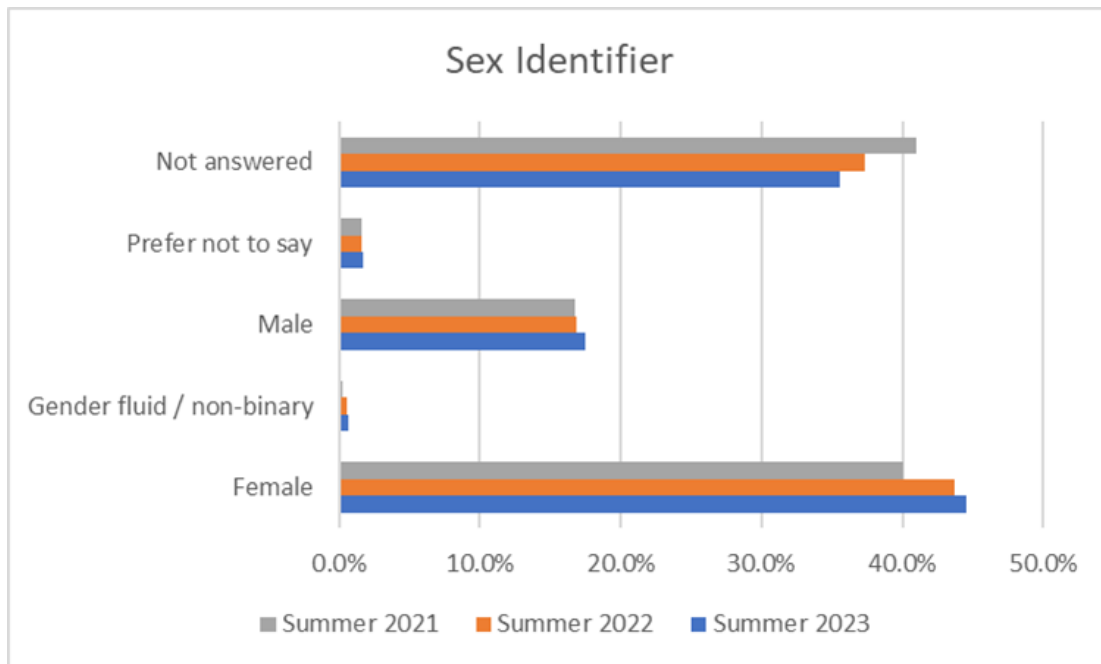
College Staff Ethnicity 3-year trend



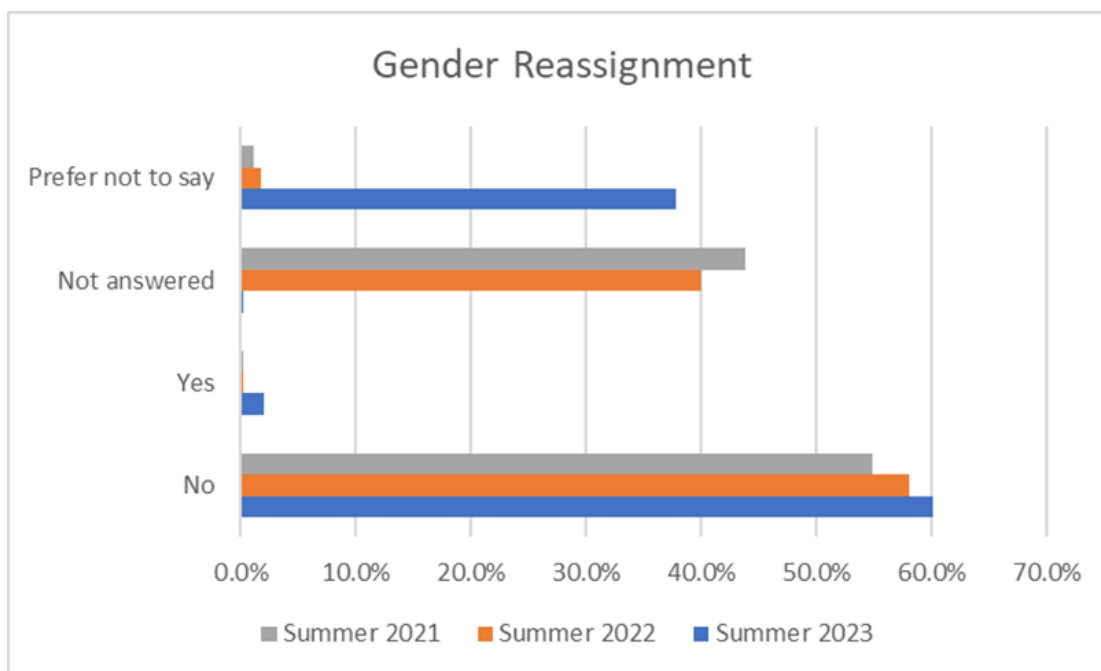
Staff Marital status 3-year trend



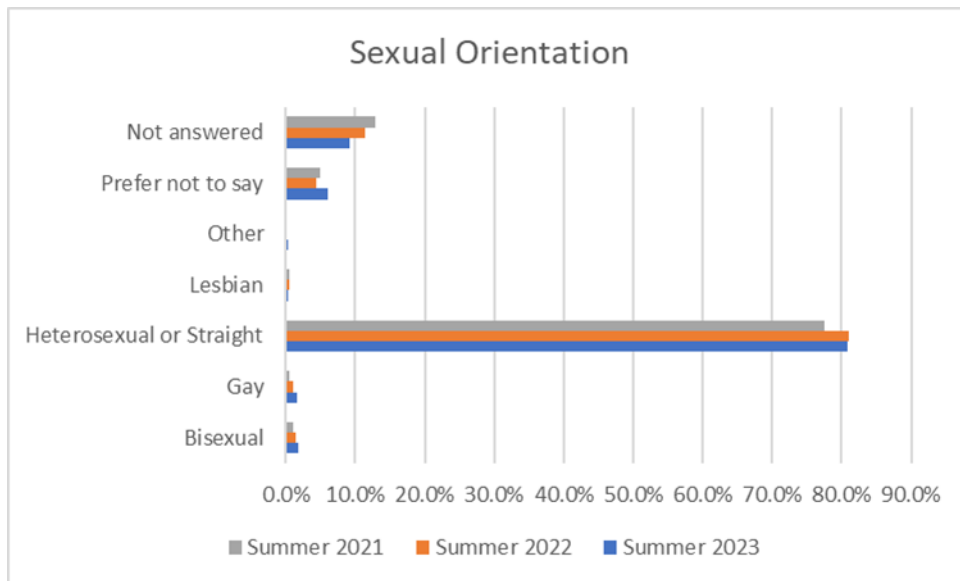
Staff Religion 3-year trend



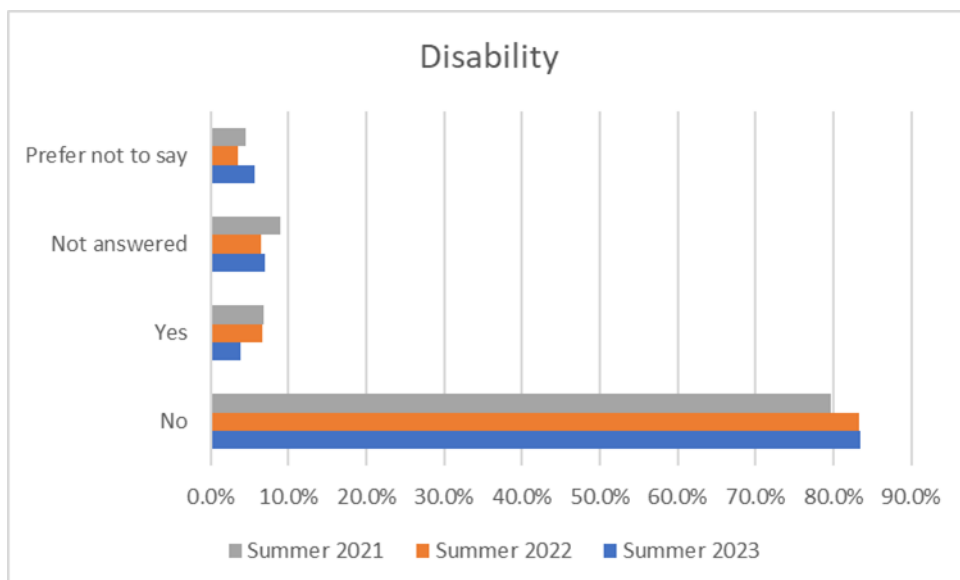
Staff Sex Identifier 3-year trend



Staff Gender Reassignment 3-year trend



Staff Sexual Orientation 3-year trend



Staff Disabilities 3-year trend