

# Equality and Diversity Annual Report and Objectives 2017-18



## Summary

Staffordshire University is committed to transforming people and communities by delivering accessible, high quality, higher education through partnership working with our students, our customers and our staff. We are committed to fostering an inclusive community which encourages students and staff to fulfil their potential and which values every individual for their unique contribution to the success of the University.

This report highlights some of our activities over the last year and our revised Strategic Equality Objectives that support and inform our new Policy Framework for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

The following pages provide an overhead snapshot of the diversity metrics for the University. All national benchmarks have been taken from the Equality Challenge Unit's *Equality in Higher Education Students Statistical Reports 2017*.

## Who We Are: Staff

At Staffordshire University we currently monitor the age, disability, gender and ethnicity of all staff and publish the results annually in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. We also monitor the sexual orientation and religious affiliation of job applicants. Work is ongoing to collect this information for all current staff.

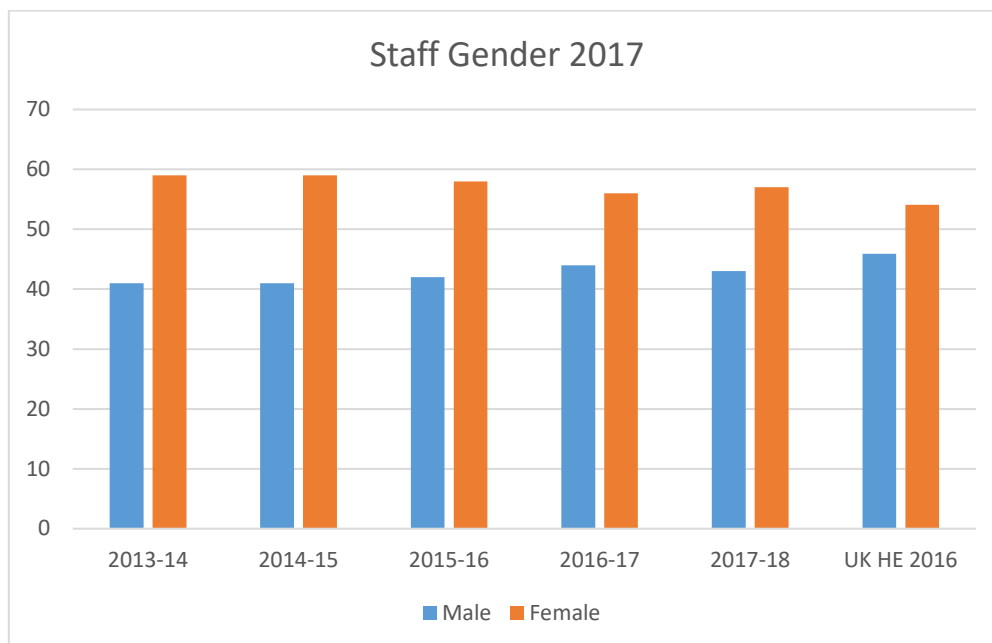
Our aim is to have a workforce that is representative of the community we serve and wider society.

Equality monitoring data provides an overview of the diversity found within our workforce. This data together with information gained through our Equal Pay Audit and Gender Pay Audit is used to identify and address potential inequality and ensure that the structure of our organisation and our policies and procedures are fair and work positively to promote equality of opportunity for everyone who works here.

The University is evaluating its collection and use of equality monitoring data during 2017-18. This will better inform our equality work at both a University and a School level.

## Gender

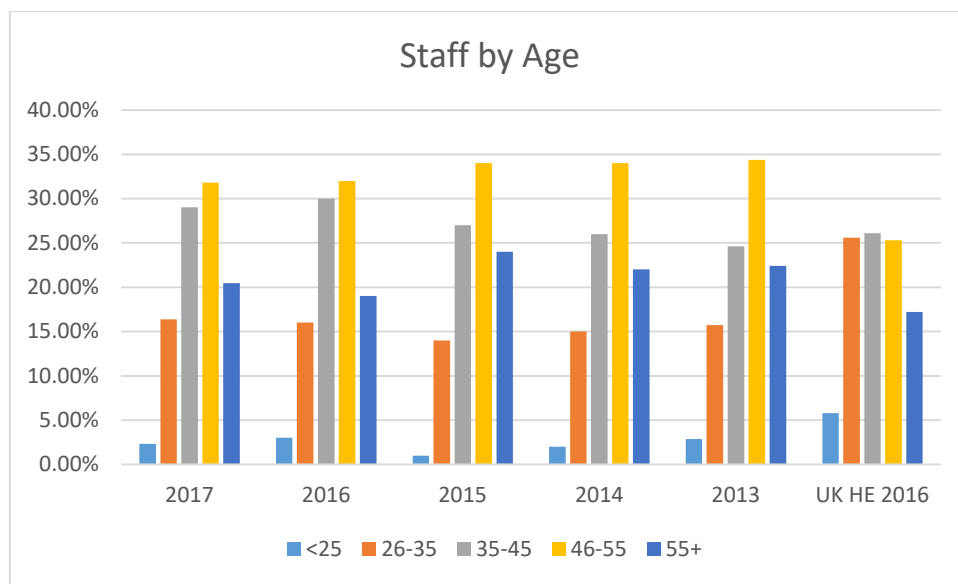
There is an over-representation of women in the staffing profile, however this does not signify gender equality. National research by the Athena SWAN gender equality project confirmed that women employees tend to be centred in lower banded jobs and become clustered in middle management, with under-representation at the highest levels of management. Staffordshire University will be repeating its Athena SWAN work in 2017/18 to return to these issues.



## Staff Age

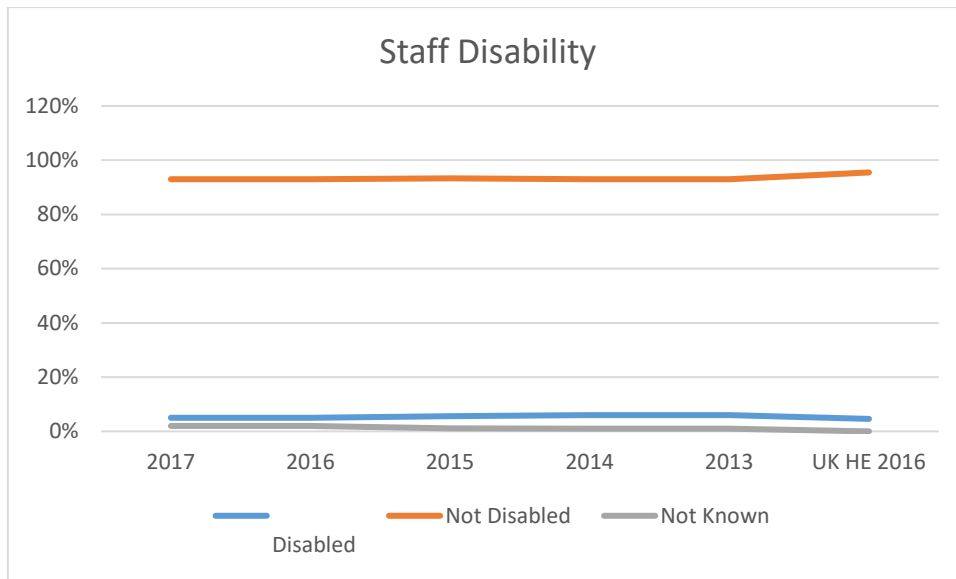
The data indicates that the University staff age profile is older than the average for UK Higher Education. There is under-representation up to the age of 35 and an over-representation at age 46 and above. This may be a reflection the University's teaching / research ratio.

Nationally there is a growing interest in the impact of intersectionality on equality of opportunity. Intersectionality means recognising that people's identities and social positions are shaped by multiple factors i.e. all the many personal characteristics that make up an individual. Planned improvements to the University's equality monitoring and analysis processes will provide a greater understanding of the effects of intersectionality.



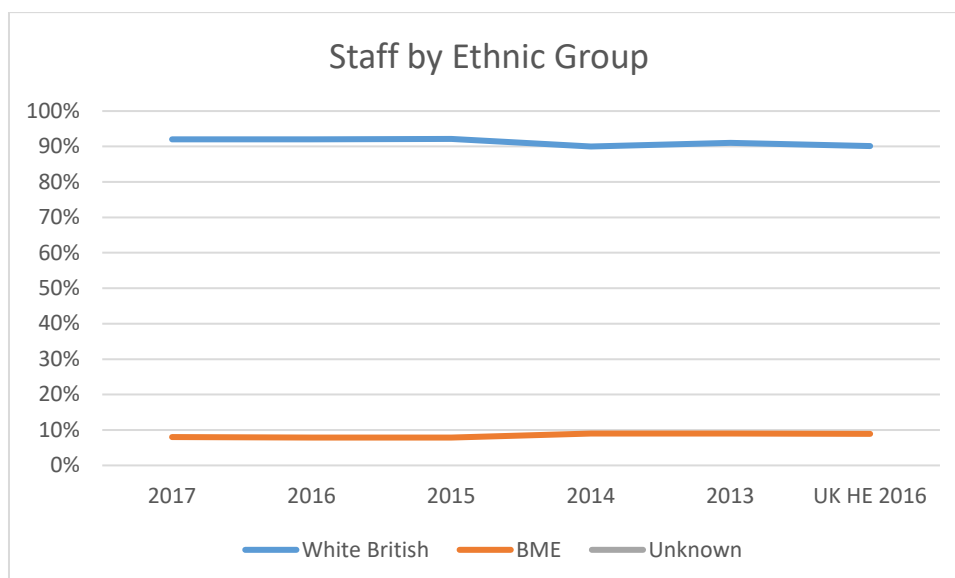
## Staff Disability

Staff rates of disability declaration are consistent with the UK national picture in Higher Education. However, less is known about the types of disabilities and their prevalence due to staff confidentiality. Monitoring of staff disability is undertaken through recruitment stages but more work will be undertaken in 2017/18 to encourage existing staff to disclose disabilities.



### Staff Ethnicity

While the percentage of BME staff is broadly in line with the national picture, the University has undertaken considerable steps to look beyond simple headline data. In 2015 Staffordshire University won a Race Equality Charter Mark Bronze Award, just one of eight institutions in the UK to do so, for its commitment and work towards identifying and tackling racial inequalities for staff and students. While we provide basic level information here for statutory purposes, for the more detailed analysis of the institutional data benchmarked against local area, domiciled status, academic and professional staff, contract type, grade, working hours, turnover and more, see the full report on the Race Equality Charter Mark work on the University intranet and via the Equality Challenge Unit.



## Who We Are: Students

Equality monitoring data provides an overview of the diversity of our students. This data is used to identify and address potential inequality and ensure that the structure of our organisation and our policies and procedures are fair and work positively to promote equality of opportunity for everyone who studies here.

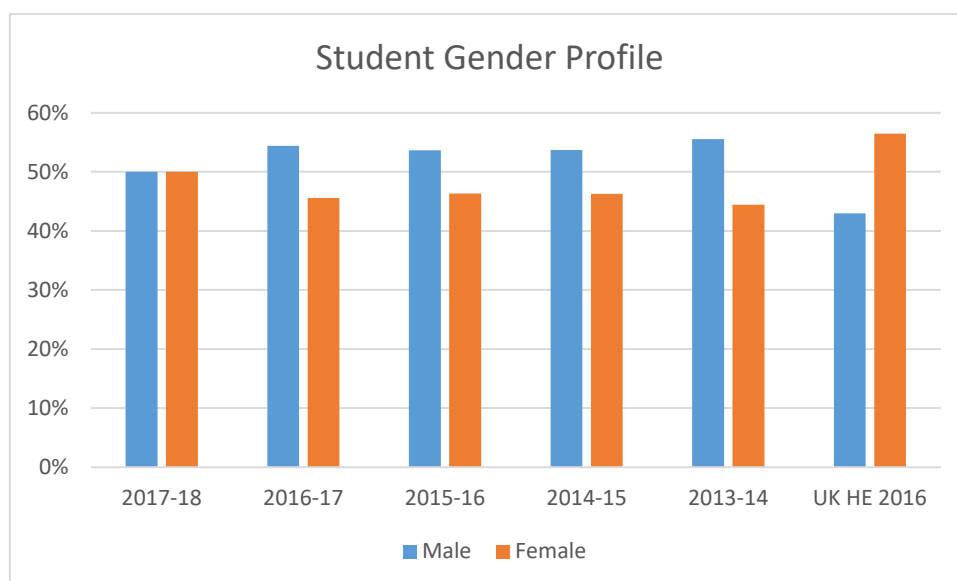
The University has made a significant investment in developing its capability to monitor admission, progress and interactions with students, including by the categories of 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010. It has a new centralised Corporate Information Team who have lead the implementation of SITS, a student records management system used to store, administer and manage all aspects of student information from initial enquiry and application through to Degree Congregation.

The University has also upgraded its data analysis capability. This will significantly enhance the University's capacity to evaluate trends in student population and interaction at all stages of the student journey by protected characteristics. In future this will allow more detailed equality impact analysis and enable a greater understanding of intersectional inequality by cross-referencing protected group status', such as ethnicity and age, gender and disability.

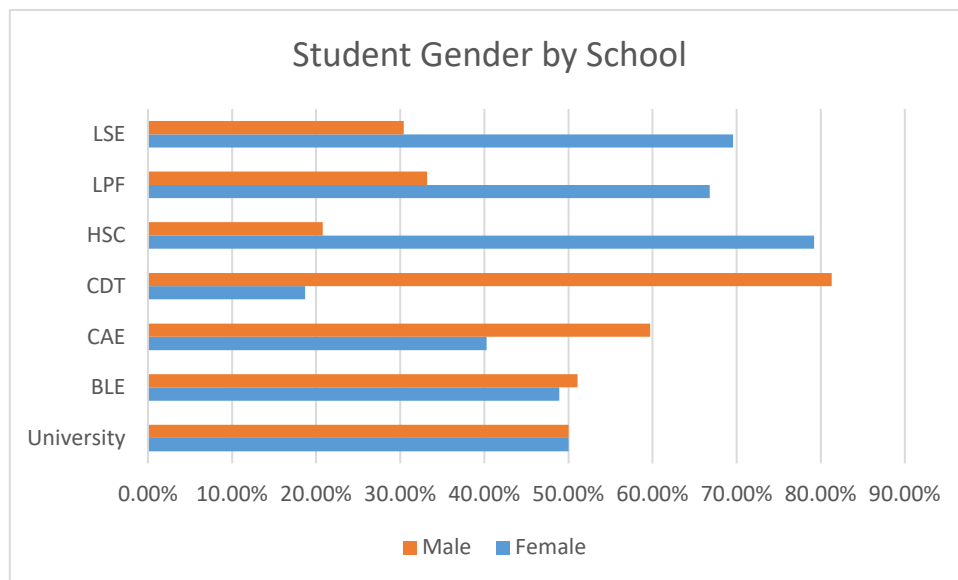
## Student Gender

Data on students' sex is returned with the possible options of male, female and other. For the purposes of this report, data from the sex field will be referred to as gender. Due to small numbers, students who have indicated their sex as 'other' have been excluded from any gender analysis in this report.

The gender profile of the University shows a slightly higher percentage of female to male students (50.41% : 49.59%).



Nationally, there are clear gender imbalances at the subject level, with men comprising a large majority of students studying computer science and engineering and technology, but only a small proportion of those in education. Similarly, the majority of health and social care students are women. These gender imbalances are also reflected at the University and will continue to be considered in depth via the Athena SWAN programme, to which the University has committed. A full repeat Athena SWAN project will be commencing in 2017 for 2018 submission. This will also include a clear focus on Transgender issues.

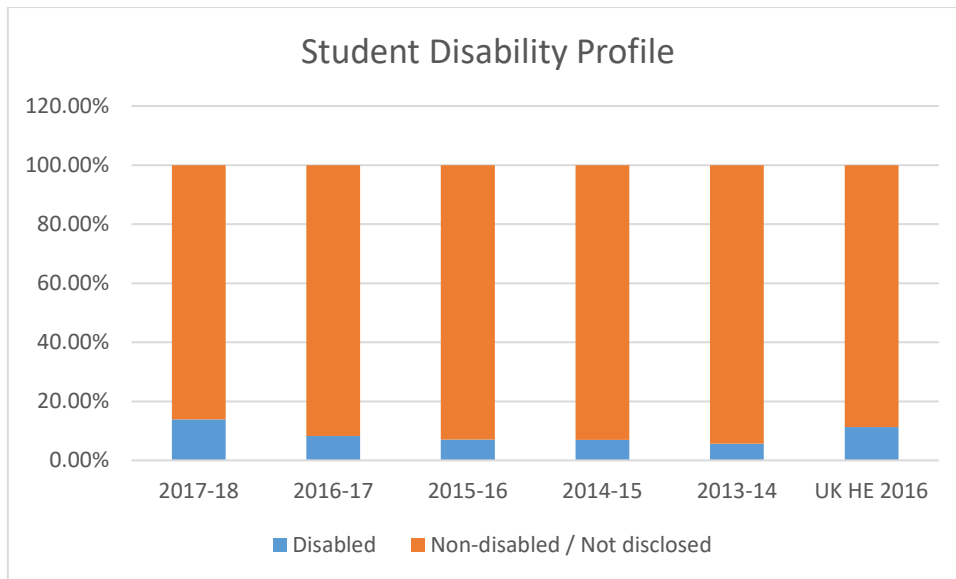


### Students and Disability Status

Students with disabilities have been a significant concern across the HE sector due to the changes to DSA funding. Disability disclosure rates have steadily increased among students in UK higher education, rising from one in twenty in 2003/04 to one in ten in 2014/15.

At the University 13.83% of students have declared a disability (2017-18). This is an increase on previous years. Further work is needed to establish whether this is due to increased disclosure or a higher incidence of disability. Improvements to our data analysis processes during 2017-18 will help us to understand whether national trends such as lower disclosure rates among postgraduate students, higher concentration within part-time courses, continuation rates, graduate destinations and degree outcome attainment gaps also apply at the University.

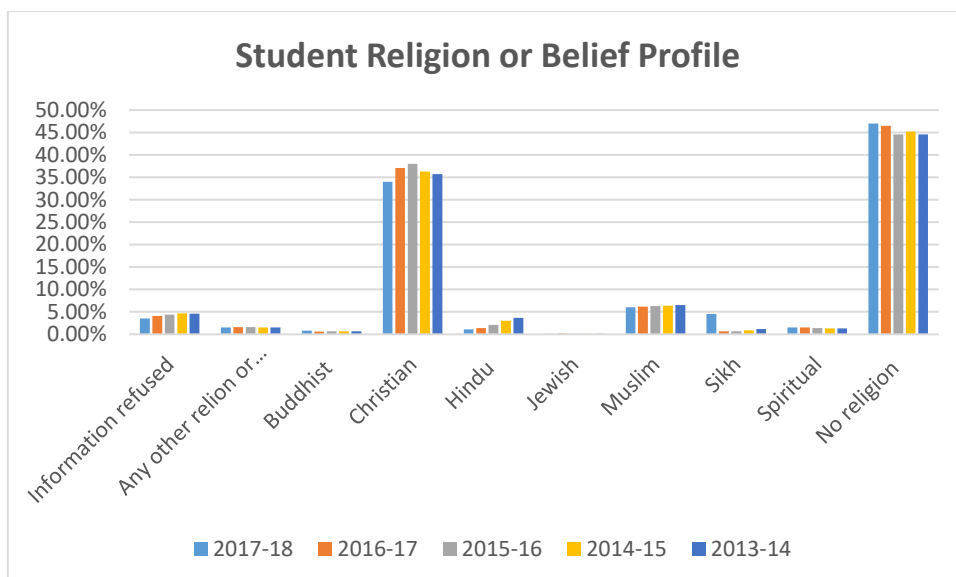
Through staff training and professional support we will continue to embed the social model of disability and seek to provide an inclusive learning environment for all our students.



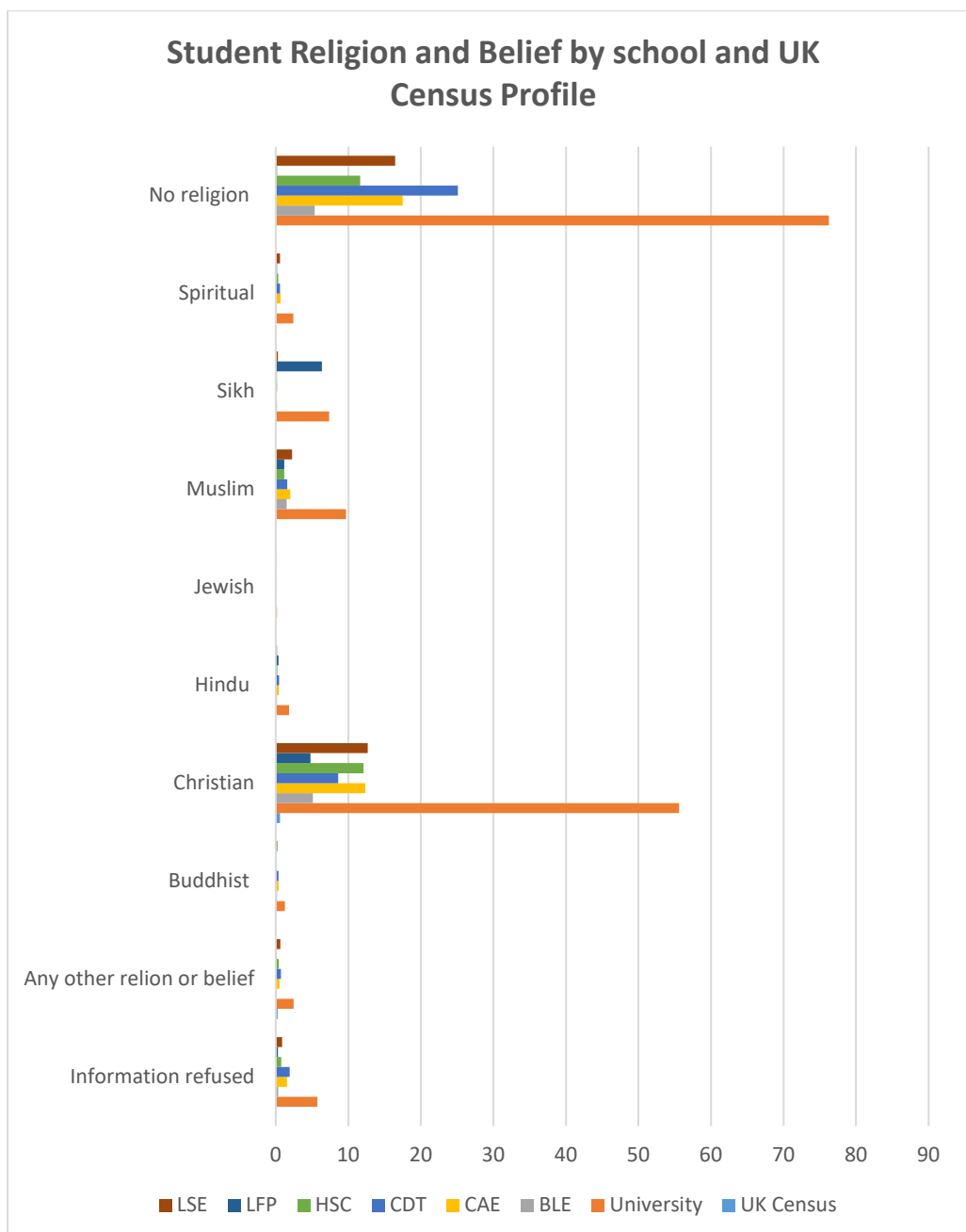
## Student Religion or Belief

Data on religion and belief is currently a voluntary HESA return, meaning we do not yet have a national picture of the student population in relation to these characteristics. Our student data shows the largest group declared is No Religion at 47%, followed by Christian at 34%. Together with non-disclosures at 3.5% (the lowest in six years), this means 15.5% of students identify as belonging to a minority religion or belief.

While there is relative consistency in the overhead return rates over the past five years, there is notable variance in where students of different religion are clustered within the Faculties. Moreover, student declarations of religion or belief show substantial variance from the national population benchmarks. This may be due to the age demographic and other factors that will be developed in time as the benchmark national picture becomes clearer. What we can determine is that decisions relating to religion and belief should be based on the data provided by our students, and national all-population figures should be treated with caution if we are to deliver appropriate services.







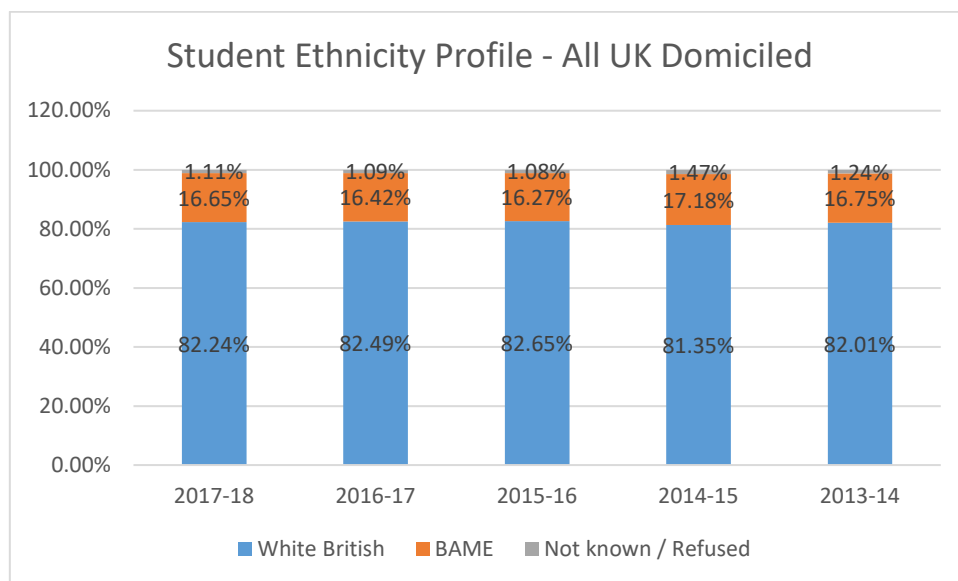
## Student Ethnicity

Staffordshire University has reported ethnicity as White British or Black and Minority Ethnic (BME). This definition is widely recognised and used to identify patterns of marginalisation and segregation caused by attitudes toward an individual's ethnicity. The University recognises the limitations of this definition, particularly the assumption that minority ethnic students are a homogenous group. The University holds data in more detail internally and uses it for the critical evaluation of its work, such as through the Race Equality Charter Mark. Further work is ongoing to improve our Black and Asian Ethnic Minority (BAME) student data analysis and to provide HESA benchmarking data.

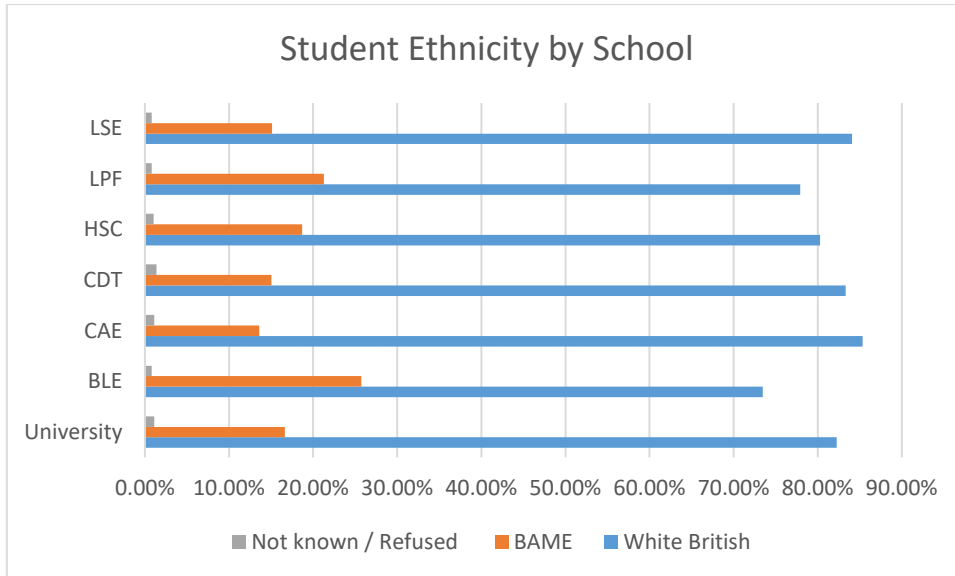
It is only compulsory to collect ethnicity data for UK domiciled students (although students can choose not to disclose) and therefore analysis of student ethnicity is restricted to UK domiciles.

As with the overall UK increase in higher education student numbers, the proportion of UK students who identified as black and minority ethnic (BME) has steadily increased since 2003/04. In 2016-17, the national proportion of students from a BME background was 21.8% with a 1.6% non-disclosure rate.

The University has had a broadly consistent BME student population over the last five years. Currently 16.65% students are from Black or Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds; with a non-disclosure rate of 1.1%. Further work is needed to clarify the distinct ethnic identities of our BAME students and any specific support needs they may have.

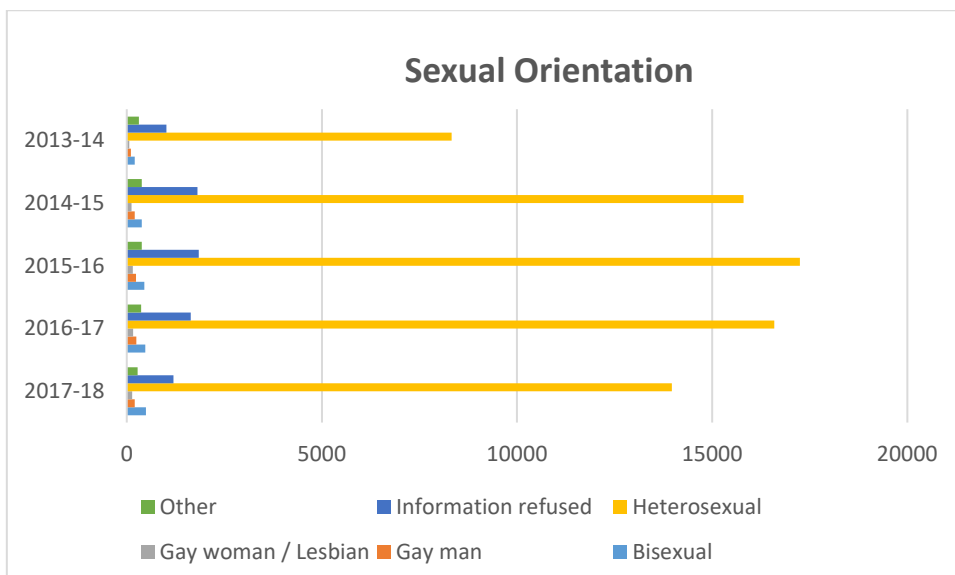


Significant variance exists when comparing the ethnicity of students across subject areas. Nationally, in 2016-17 a higher proportion of BME students studied SET subjects than white students (49.5% compared with 46.7%). Overall, 60% of our BAME students are found in three schools: Computer and Digital Technologies; Health and Social Care; Life Sciences and Education.



## Sexual Orientation

Data on sexual orientation - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual (LGB) and Heterosexual - is currently a voluntary HESA return, meaning we do not yet have a national picture of the student population in relation to this characteristic. Our student data shows the largest group declared is Heterosexual at 86%, followed by Bisexual at 3%. LGB students make up 5.1% of the total number of students declaring their sexual orientation. Further work is needed to fully understand why 7% of students refused to provide this information and almost 2% identified as Other.



## **Activities**

The University maintains a programme of events and promotions around awareness days, supporting staff and student networks through the marketing and communications team. Events include an annual Carol Service, Holocaust Memorial Day, Computing Community Day, Big Biology Day and International Women's Day. In addition, many feedback sessions and consultations have taken place including around Trans issues, women in STEM, BME student engagement and disabled service users.

### ***BAME Strategy***

Work has continued around investigating progression and attainment of BAME (Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority) students. There is a cross-University working group and BAME advocates appointed in each School.

### ***Inclusive Practice Toolkit***

The flexible toolkit, 'IncludeAll' has continued to be promoted. Staff from the Equality and Diversity Team, ADU and the Student Enabling team are working to embed inclusive practice in the curriculum and learning, teaching and assessment.

The University recognises that its Equality and Diversity Objectives are shared across the Higher Education sector. It is essential to engage with best practice and the wider context, and so it maintains membership (and where possible accreditation) from the following external programmes.

### ***Race Equality Charter Mark (Current Bronze Award Holders)***

ECU's Race Equality Charter (REC) provides a framework through which institutions work to identify and self-reflect on institutional and cultural barriers standing in the way of minority ethnic staff and students. Member institutions develop initiatives and solutions for action,

### ***Athena SWAN Charter Mark***

The University is a member of the Athena SWAN scheme. The charter has since been expanded to recognise work undertaken in arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL), and in professional and support roles, and for Trans\* staff and students. Staffordshire University has previously engaged with this programme and will relaunch its Self-Assessment Group in spring 2018.

### ***Stonewall Diversity Champions***

Staffordshire University is a member of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme, the leading employer's programme for ensuring all LGBT staff are accepted without exception in the workplace.

### ***Disabled Go***

The University subscribes to DisabledGo, which is the leading provider of access information for disabled people in the UK. DisabledGo have previously undertaken access summaries for all of the main university buildings, which are available online a free of charge. These were

updated in 2016/17 to reflect the changes resulting from the Campus Transformation project.

### **Equality Objectives:**

The objectives for 2017-18 sit within the context of a major organisational restructure including a shift from four Faculties to six Schools, and staffing adjustments at a senior level. As such, and to allow for strategic redirection of the Equalities agenda by the incoming leadership, we have developed two key Strategic Equality Objectives and their associated strategic equality outcomes. Together these will enable us to plan, implement and monitor our progress.

**Equality Objective 1: To ensure a University environment that actively promotes social and educational inclusion and equality of opportunity for everyone who works, studies or visits here.**

#### **Strategic equality outcomes:**

- 1.1 The student journey** – there is an inclusive approach to the student experience that promotes diversity and enables all our students to flourish; leaving with the best possible outcomes and with the knowledge and skills to make choices about fulfilling careers.
- 1.2 The staff journey** – there is an inclusive approach to recruitment and progression that promotes diversity across the University and enables all our staff to have opportunities to take part in continuous professional development.
- 1.3 The academic journey** – there is an inclusive learning environment that draws on the knowledge, experience, international perspective and cultural capital of our diverse students and staff.

**Equality Objective 2: The needs, rights and contributions of people with protected characteristics are at the heart of the design and delivery of the University's Enabling and Resourcing Strategies and related operational plans.**

#### **Strategic equality outcome:**

- 2.1 Compliance** – our policies, procedures and plans enable the University to demonstrate due regard for the requirements of the Equality Act 2010:
  - Governance arrangements;
  - Statutory and management reporting;
  - Equality Impact Assessments;
  - Quality Assurance;
  - Equality Monitoring;
  - Procurement;
  - Training and Awareness Raising; and
  - Staff Performance and Development Reviews.

An annual Strategic Equality Action Plan is in place including key actions and timescales; and is available on our website. The successful implementation of this Action Plan will support and inform our University Strategy and will underpin our ongoing work towards and commitment to, the national Equality Charter Mark.

