

VALUING EVERYONE

2025-26 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Annual Report





Contents

Foreword by Professor Georgina Randsley de Moura, Acting Vice-Chancellor	3
Foreword by Professor Gurprit Lall, Associate PVC EDI	5
KPI highlights	6
EDI governance overview	8
Priorities for 2026/27	11
Review of 2025-26 priorities	12
Appendix 1 – Our staff and student profile	28
Appendix 2 – EDI Strategy 2025-30	50
Appendix 3 – EDI Action Plan 2025/26	54

FOREWORD BY PROFESSOR GEORGINA RANDSLEY DE MOURA, ACTING VICE-CHANCELLOR



It is my pleasure as the interim Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kent to introduce this year's Valuing Everyone (EDI) Annual Report 2025/26, which reflects both the progress we have made as a university community and the work that still lies ahead.

At the University of Kent, our commitment to building an inclusive, equitable and respectful environment for all is fundamental to who we are. This report demonstrates how equality, diversity and inclusion are being embedded across our teaching, research, student experience and professional services, and how these efforts are shaped by the voices, experiences and dedication of our staff and students.

Throughout the past year, we have seen inspiring examples of inclusive practice across the institution. From the development of a more holistic and accessible academic advising framework to the continued embedding of inclusive approaches within curriculum design, colleagues have worked thoughtfully to ensure that all students can succeed and feel a sense of belonging. Our staff and student networks have continued to create vital spaces for community, advocacy and shared learning, while work led by our Athena SWAN and Race Equality Charter agendas actively strives to improve the experience of staff and students who face structural and systemic barriers to success.

We have also strengthened our institutional foundations, with the launch of our EDI Strategy 2025-30, which places inclusion at the heart of our future direction and ensures that it is a golden thread, woven throughout all aspects of university life. This has been supported by a renewed governance structure and a deepened commitment to listening to and acting on the experiences of our diverse community.

As we look ahead, the forthcoming merger with the University of Greenwich presents a significant opportunity. It offers the potential to build on the strengths of both institutions, to share and scale effective practice, and to shape a future-facing, inclusive university that is even better equipped to serve our students, staff and wider communities. We are committed to ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion are central to this transition, with careful attention to impact, representation and the preservation of the values we hold in common.

At the same time, we are open about the challenges we face. The external social and political landscape continues to evolve, and the higher education sector is operating in a complex and often uncertain environment. Internally, structural changes and resource pressures have required difficult decisions, and we recognise that these can have uneven impacts across our community. This report does not shy away from these realities, but instead reflects our determination to respond with integrity, transparency and a continued focus on fairness and inclusion.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our staff and students for their commitment, energy and leadership in advancing equality, diversity and inclusion at Kent. The progress captured in this report is the result of collective effort, from those leading strategic initiatives, often above and beyond their role, to those contributing through everyday actions that shape our culture.

This work matters deeply, not only within our institution but also in the communities we serve locally, regionally and nationally. Universities have a vital role to play in fostering social mobility, challenging inequality and creating spaces where diverse perspectives and viewpoints are valued and can thrive. Our ongoing commitment to EDI is therefore central to our public mission and to the future we are working to build together.



FOREWORD BY PROFESSOR GURPRIT LALL, ASSOCIATE PVC EDI



As Associate PVC EDI, I am pleased to introduce the Valuing Everyone (EDI) Annual Report 2025/26, which highlights the depth and breadth of work taking place across our Academic Schools, Professional Service Directorates, and staff and student communities.

This year, the collective efforts of our Academic Schools and Staff Representative Networks have been central to advancing our EDI priorities. The establishment of School EDI Leads within academic leadership structures has strengthened local ownership and accountability, enabling tailored, discipline-specific approaches to inclusion. Across our Schools, we have seen meaningful progress, from embedding Equality Impact Assessments into decision-making processes, to innovative work in inclusive curriculum design, student success initiatives, and targeted interventions to address attainment and participation gaps.

Our Staff Representative Networks continue to play a vital role in shaping institutional culture. They provide essential spaces for peer support, advocacy and insight, ensuring that lived experiences inform policy and practice. Their contributions, whether through raising awareness, influencing institutional processes, or fostering community, are fundamental to creating an environment in which all colleagues can thrive. The formal recognition and resourcing of Network leadership this year marks an important step forward in valuing this work and embedding it more sustainably within our institutional framework.

The data presented in this report offers both encouragement and challenge. We have seen positive movement in areas such as the diversification of our staff profile and increased representation in some areas of governance, alongside strong engagement in programmes designed to support student belonging and success. At the same time, persistent gaps, such as those reflected in our gender pay gap and in aspects of representation at senior levels, remind us of the need for sustained, targeted action.

Our EDI Strategy 2025–30 and the accompanying Action Plan provide a clear framework for this work. Looking ahead, our priorities include strengthening the consistency and impact of inclusive practices across Schools, enhancing staff capability and confidence in EDI, and ensuring that our governance and data systems support robust, evidence-informed decision-making. We are also committed to deepening our focus on intersectionality, recognising that individuals' experiences are shaped by multiple, overlapping aspects of identity.

An exciting opportunity on the horizon is the exploration of a proposed EDI research centre, which has the potential to act as a catalyst for advancing EDI-informed scholarship and practice. By bringing together interdisciplinary expertise, this initiative can support critical research, inform policy and practice, and enhance our contribution to national and global conversations on equality and inclusion. It also presents opportunities to engage our students more deeply in research-led approaches to EDI, further embedding these principles within the academic experience.

As we move forward, including through the opportunities presented by the forthcoming merger with the University of Greenwich, it will be essential to build on the strong foundations we have established at Kent. By aligning local innovation with institutional strategy, and by continuing to centre the voices and experiences of our community, we can ensure that our progress is both meaningful and sustainable.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all colleagues and students who have contributed to this work over the past year. Their commitment, insight and collaboration continue to drive forward our shared ambition: to create a university where equality, diversity and inclusion are not only values we uphold, but principles that are actively embedded in all that we do.

KPI HIGHLIGHTS

Building a robust, future-ready EDI framework

Progress

- 135 hours per Staff Representative Network supported
- 13 School EDI Leads established
- 89% of EDI Action Plan targets completed or in progress
- 3 Academic Schools (School of Natural Sciences; NATS), School of Humanities, Kent and Medway Medical School; KMMS) applying for Athena SWAN (AS) Bronze Status
- 82% of institutional Athena SWAN targets completed or in progress
- 88% of institutional Race Equality Charter (REC) targets completed or in progress.

Challenges

- Reduction in female representation on University decision-making committees by -15.48%
- Despite an increase of +8.06% in racially minoritised staff representation on University decision-making committees, no committee has higher than 20% racially minoritised representation.

Empowering our staff and students to succeed

Progress

- 85 teaching staff completed the Post Graduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE) and Associate Fellowship Scheme (AFS)
- 19 modules achieved Diversity Mark (DM) status
- Diversity Mark Practitioners (DMP): 48 academics participated / registered to summer 2026, with 13 awarded DMP as of summer 2025.
- Institutional gap on Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 (IMD Q1) students has reduced considerably and is close to target (11pp against 10pp target)¹

¹ Important to note that the percentage of 1st / 2(I) has decreased across the institution, with IMD Q5 students having the lowest 'good degree' award rate for a decade (81.1%). This is a contributing factor in the closing of the gap.

- Access and Participation Plan (APP) October 2025 data demonstrates:
 - Black gap awarding gap reduced to APP² 25pp / current³ 21pp (against 2028 target of 10pp)
 - Asian awarding gap reduced to APP 11pp / Current 7pp (against 2028 target of 3pp)
 - Mixed awarding gap reduced to APP 9pp / Current 6pp (against 2028 target of 5pp)
 - Other awarding gap reduced to APP 19pp / Current 18pp (against 2028 target of 8pp)
- EDI Mandatory Training completion rate for all staff at 60.3% (April 2026)
- £4000 allocated to supporting students through the Gender Affirmation Fund, accessed by 33 students
- 687 students supported by the Empower Scheme applying to 10,000 Black Interns – the 5th highest number of applicants from a UK university

Challenges

- Expect Respect at 8.7% completion rate as of June 2025
- Gender Pay Gap not moving; impacted by Promotions freeze. EDI priorities highlighted as a significant consideration for Promotion Panels in 2026
- White academics are approximately:
 - Twice as likely to be shortlisted compared with Black academics, and four times more likely to be hired after being shortlisted
 - Twice as likely to be shortlisted compared with Asian academics, and twice as likely to be hired.
 - Twice as likely to be hired after being shortlisted compared with Mixed academics.

² APP gap includes all finishers for a given academic year, regardless of whether they have taken, for example, five years to finish a three-year course due to intermissions or repeating years.

³ Current gap includes only 'in time' finishes, i.e. those who are graduating in the same number of years from their entry year as the course length that they are graduating on

A confident EDI institution culture

Progress

- 24 institutional level Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) completed on major change processes
- 91 adaptations made to make campus more accessible
- +2.25% increase in staff declaring disability data, suggesting greater confidence in institutional ability to support staff.

Challenges

- Proportion of female professors has fallen to 34.6%
- 15.9% of professors are from racially minoritised backgrounds
- 8.3% of senior managers are from racially minoritised backgrounds

EDI as a catalyst for social change

Progress

- 75.72% of racially minoritised staff selected for Research Excellence Framework (REF) pool (white 77.43%)

Challenges

- Kent has fallen 25 places in the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) Social Mobility Index for Graduates, to 81st place in 2025 (from 56)



EDI GOVERNANCE OVERVIEW

People Committee

People Committee (a sub-Committee of Council) has overall accountability for legal compliance.

The Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor provides leadership and support, holding the Executive Group to account regarding organisational progress on equality, diversity and inclusion, and on compliance with legal obligations under the Equality Act (2010). In November 2024, the new role of Associate PVC EDI was recruited to. This role provides academic and strategic leadership on staff and student equality and diversity, leading Kent forward in ensuring a strong and inclusive culture.

The Executive Group

To ensure further progress in schools and departmental operations, the Executive Group demonstrates visible leadership on inclusive practices and ensures that responsible staff are aware of the importance of delivering against our agreed objectives. Additionally, a consideration of impacts on equality is required in all decisions before formal committees and Executive Group meetings.

EDI Culture and Strategy Committee / EDI Operations and Strategic Delivery Committee

The EDI Strategy Group and the EDI Operations Group were both reviewed in autumn 2025, following the Professional Services restructure. The new EDI Culture and Strategy Committee has overarching responsibility of University of Kent EDI governance, EDI culture, EDI strategy, and EDI resource allocation. The EDI Operations and Strategic Delivery Committee provides a mechanism through which student and staff voice can be consulted on and escalated, and where matters of scale can be assigned a clear action owner. This EDI Committee structure provides detailed, focused consideration of key issues relating to EDI. The REC Monitoring Group and the Athena SWAN institutional Self-Assessment Team (iSAT) report to the EDI Culture and Strategy Committee, which in turn reports to University Council via the People Committee. School EDI Committees report to the EDI Operations and Strategic Delivery Committee, and from there up to the EDI Culture and Strategy Committee. Staff Representative Networks report to the EDI Culture and Strategy Committee. The governance review also committed to establishing a clear route for Equality Impact Assessment consultation and approval.

School EDI Leads

In 2025, under the new School structure, new School EDI Leads were recruited. These academic roles are part of the School SMT structure and range from 0.1-0.4 allocation. They are responsible for the implementation of EDI objectives at a School level, including School level Athena SWAN applications, developing a local level EDI Action Plan that draws from the institutional EDI Strategy, and developing inclusive practices and cultural norms across the School. They Chair the relevant School EDI Committee. A network of School EDI Leads was developed to ensure cross-pollination across the Institution and meets monthly with the Associate PVC EDI and the central EDI team. The School EDI Leads attend the EDI Operations and Strategic Delivery Committee.

EDI Operational Support

As part of the PS restructures, the role of Student EDI Officer in Student Services was dissolved and a new role of EDI Manager created in Human Resources with oversight across both staff and student EDI portfolios. This role sits within the Development and Inclusion team in the new People and Culture Directorate with a dotted reporting line into the new Student Life Directorate. The Staff EDI Advisor post was reviewed and broadened to include a student portfolio as the new Staff and Student EDI Advisor role, reporting to the EDI Manager. Both these roles work closely alongside the Associate PVC EDI, School EDI Leads, Network Chairs, and Kent Students' Union as primary stakeholders. For 3 months in 2025/26, additional support for EDI Data was resourced from within Human Resources.

EDI Networks

All staff are encouraged and supported to take an active role in the Networks, where they can champion equality, diversity and inclusion through their contribution to meetings and related activity. The Networks are:

- Global Majority Staff Network (previously BAME Staff Network)
- Women's Staff Network
 - WREN (Women Researchers and Early Career Researchers)
 - WITTS (Women in IT and Technical Services)
- LGBT Staff Network
- Staff Disability Network
- Allies Network
- Harassment Contacts Network

In November 2025, a new Women in IT and Technical Services Network was approved. This Network is a sub-Network of the Women's Network and provides support to women working in IT and Technical Services roles. It seeks to address gender disparities within the Technicians and Technical Staff workforce. The establishment of the Network aligns Kent with national initiatives to address the gap.





PRIORITIES FOR 2026/27

University of Kent / University of Greenwich proposed merger

As plans for the proposed merger between the University of Kent and the University of Greenwich progress, a high priority will be to ensure that EDI processes are embedded. This will include:

- Equality Impact Assessments conducted on all stages of the merger to assess any disproportionate impact upon minoritised staff.
- Agreeing clear process and alignment for the carry-forward or reapplication of both institutions' Charter Marks and accompanying action plans and priorities, such as Athena SWAN and the Race Equality Charter, at both institutional and School level. Clarifications have been sought with Advance HE, and reassurances have been provided as to the status of existing Charter Mark's post merger. There are ongoing conversations taking place with the University of Greenwich and Advance HE in relation to future Charter Mark applications.
- Agreeing clear EDI representation structures within the proposed new super-structure, both at a PS and Academic level.
- Agreeing data structures and systems for statutory returns, such as the EDI Annual Report and Gender/Equality Pay Gap reports, as well as Charter Mark applications.
- Aligning policies and processes, particularly around EDI, Bullying and Harassment, Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression, Discrimination Reporting, Recruitment and Promotion and staff and student support.

PS EDI Structures

Following the most recent PS restructures, completed spring 2026, there is a need to develop PS EDI representational structures to ensure that EDI is embedded across all areas of the University. This work is currently on hold due to the need to embed within the upcoming merger with the University of Greenwich and aligning Professional Services structures.

REVIEW OF 2025-26 PRIORITIES

Priority 1: Building a robust, future-ready EDI framework

Leadership Support and Commitment

EDI Strategy 2025-30

Between October 2024 and November 2025, Kent undertook extensive consultation with staff, students, and key stakeholders to develop its 2025-30 EDI Strategy. The Strategy is available on the EDI Hub by following this [link](#).

2025-30 Strategy identifies Kent's EDI Vision and EDI Strategic Principles. These underpin the identified EDI Strategic Priorities of:

- Building a robust, future-ready EDI framework
- Creating a confident EDI institution culture
- Empowering staff and students to succeed
- Ensuring that EDI is a catalyst for social change

The new Strategy creates a framework for EDI workstreams at Kent, including relating to Athena SWAN and the Race Equality Charter, maximising resources, providing a clear direction of travel with scalable action plans to drive forward an inclusive agenda and systemic change, and embedding EDI as a golden thread throughout Kent.

The Strategy was developed throughout the 2024/25 academic year via extensive direct and indirect consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders across the institution. It was approved in November 2025. The accompanying Action Plan was developed for 2025/26, and local School level action plans are being developed. Progress will be reported at the EDI Culture and Strategy Committee on a termly basis.

Athena SWAN

Institutional reapplication for Athena SWAN Silver status was due in summer 2026. Due to the implications of academic and PS restructures, an extension for reapplication to summer 2027 was requested and granted. The Associate PVC (EDI) acts as the Academic Lead for Athena SWAN and Race Equality Charter. The Athena SWAN iSAT membership was reviewed and updated post Academic School and PS restructure. The iSAT is Chaired by the Associate PVC (EDI) and includes representation from PS and Academic Staff, including Technicians and members of Staff Representative Networks. Work on the Action Plan remains ongoing, with progress reported termly to the Athena SWAN iSAT. In June 2025, Kent held its Institutional Mid-Term Review with Advance HE and iSAT members, taking a deep dive into progress, and priorities.

There are 69 individual targets identified throughout the Action Plan. As of January 2026:

- 32 (46.37%) are at Green status (complete or exceeded target),
- 25 (36.23%) are at Amber status (in progress)
- 12 (17.39%) are at Red status (deadline passed and action has not been started).

Institutional Objective	Status
To establish Athena SWAN representation in new organisational and EDI Structures	50% Green 50% Amber Unable to move to 100% Green due to continuous need to review in light of restructure
To increase the proportion of female STEM researchers	Overall target of 45% female STEM researchers by 2025 achieved. 23% Green 77% Amber
To better support our researchers in developing an academic career at Kent	Overall target of proportion of internal applicants for lecturer roles across STEM and AHSSBL increase to 7.5% by 2025 achieved. 31% Green 69% Amber Impacted negatively by Academic Promotions freeze.
To better understand motivations of staff leaving or planning to leave the university to allow better workforce planning and talent retention	50% Green 50% Red. Unable to move to Green due to challenges with exit data at the volume triggered by institutional restructures.
To maintain efforts to provide sector-leading family friendly offerings and support a culture where everyone feels comfortable to talk about caring responsibilities	40% Green 40% Amber 20% Red. Red status triggered by lack of work for a parental leave returners fund.
To establish a new talent strategy to continue strengthening the career development support available to academics, professional services and technicians	50% Green 10% Amber 40% Red. Success measure has reduced by average 20% since the benchmark. Now 40% off target. Potentially triggered by promotion freezes. Significant work undertaken in this area in 2025/26.
To continue embedding EDI principles into everyday behaviours and work	69% Green 23% Amber 8% Red

A significant proportion of Red status actions are due to the fact that Kent's structures and priorities have changed significantly since 2021 when the action plan was created. It should be noted that some Green actions have achieved the spirit of the action but not necessarily via the same means identified within the plan. Focus on the Action Plan has been impacted due to staffing resource levels in the EDI team between October 2023 and August 2025 and university-wide restructures impacting local level resource.

There are concerns that Kent's gender pay gap has not seen any significant movement in recent years. The mean gender pay gap has reduced to 12.5% from 13.2% whilst the median gender pay gap has increased from 11.7% to 13.3%. Kent's Equality Pay Gap Report 2025 may be viewed here [EqualPayGapReport2025.pdf](#). It is suspected that the Academic Promotions Freeze and PS restructures have had a negative impact on reducing the Equality Pay Gap at Kent

Challenges in terms of our Athena SWAN accreditation in relation to the merger are outlined later in this document.

Race Equality Charter (REC)

The REC Monitoring Group was established in January 2025 to take over from the REC Self-Assessment Team (SAT) and ensure fulfilment and progress on the REC Action Plan. The group is chaired by the Associate PVC (EDI) and includes representatives from PS and Academic staff and Staff Representative Networks, as well as staff from racially minoritised groups who have self-selected onto the Monitoring Group. Work on the Action Plan remains ongoing, with progress reported termly to the REC Monitoring Group. In April 2025, Kent was formally awarded its REC Bronze Award at the Advance HE Conference.

There are 59 individual targets identified throughout the Action Plan. As of January 2026:

- 19 (32.2%) are at Green status (complete or exceeded target),
- 33 (55.93%) are at Amber status (in progress)
- 7 (11.86%) are at Red status (deadline passed and action has not been started).

Institutional Objective	Status
Institutional Representation and Equity	63% Green 37% Amber
Inclusive Recruitment and Staff Progression	31% Green 63% Amber 6% Red
Inclusive Culture	39% Green 39% Amber 22% Red
Student Experience and Curriculum Decolonisation	8% Green 84% Amber 8% Red

A significant proportion of Red actions are due to delays to targeted work focusing on a culture shift around confidence levels in reporting systems and disciplinary processes where work has not yet been started due to resource implications. Action Plan progress has also been delayed by the freezing of the Academic Promotions Scheme, impacting ability of racially minoritised staff to progress and impacting movement within Kent's Equality Pay Gap.

Kent mean and median ethnicity pay gaps have increased, from 7.4% to 9.4% and 8.1% to 10% respectively. It is suspected that the Academic Promotions Freeze and PS restructures have had a negative impact on reducing the Equality Pay Gap at Kent

Work is being undertaken at Kent to increase Line Manager capabilities around Cultural Intelligence. These are staff most likely to be engaged on recruitment panels, and it is anticipated that work in this area may help to shift the dial. It is recognised that Cultural Intelligence work alone will not address concerns around negative racial bias impact. EDI training for Promotions Panels members, a review of EDI Mandatory Training, and a refresh of Unconscious Bias training for recruitment panels will act as a starting point, with the REC Monitoring Group engaged in deeper culture change via the REC Action Plan. This is an area that needs careful monitoring to ensure that systemic bias is not embedded into Kent's recruitment and resourcing strategies.

EDI Showcase

The annual EDI Showcase brings together examples of good practice from across the institution and provides an opportunity for staff to explore what is happening, increase their own understanding of EDI work, and take initiatives back to their own School or Department for implementation. The aim is to help grow EDI good practice across the institution from a grass-roots level, empowering staff to learn from others and become effective EDI practitioners. The 2025 EDI Showcase took place in summer 2025 and highlighted a number of initiatives across the institution. A full list is available on the EDI Hub by following this [link](#).

Memberships

Kent is a member of the following organisations:

- Advance HE (Athena SWAN and Race Equality Charter Marks)
- Inclusive Employers
- Disability Confident
- Stonewall

Spotlights

Spotlight: Academic Advising

During 2024/25, significant changes were made to the design and implementation of a new institution-wide Academic Advising framework, informed by equality, diversity and inclusion considerations for students and staff. The framework aims to improve student experience, support and outcomes, particularly for students from underrepresented and widening participation backgrounds. A structured, inclusive advising framework was developed to support students holistically across academic, pastoral, and personal development domains.

It provides staged guidance for academic advisers and is underpinned by sector-informed (UKAT) and in-house training, supporting advisers to engage confidently in inclusive academic and pastoral conversations, whilst recognising adviser wellbeing.

Advisers are supported to proactively monitor student engagement, attendance, and wellbeing indicators, enabling timely interventions and referrals for students at greater risk of differential outcomes. Accessibility and consistency of support have been strengthened through clearer pathways for direct support or signposting to Professional Services, including Student Support and Wellbeing (SSW), Skills for Academic Success (SAS), and the Careers and Employability Service (CES). Clear, inclusive descriptions and signposting of services aim to help reduce stigma and confusion for students.

The framework embeds protected advising time within the student journey. Each student is offered three structured advising meetings across the academic year, with flexibility for additional meetings where required, supporting equitable access to timely support. The framework development has been informed by data analysis, student feedback, school-level practice, and sector best practice (UKAT), ensuring EDI considerations shape both strategy and delivery.

The focus during the 2026/27 academic year is on inclusive advising and coaching training, evaluation of outcomes by protected characteristics, targeted support for APP groups, and enhanced Stage 0 transition support using the Student Success Snakes and Ladders intervention.

Spotlight: Embedding EDI into curriculum development

Through 2024/25, the Centre for the Study of Higher Education (now the [Curriculum and Education Development Team](#)) led several academic development programmes promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in teaching and learning at Kent. This includes:

- The [Student Success Snakes and Ladders game](#), based on Student Success [Academic Excellence Scholarships longitudinal research data](#), was designed to support staff to understand the barriers to student success and identify relevant solutions. Over 200 Kent staff played the game through 2024/25 and suggested it be played by students to support transition and retention. As a result, the game is being piloted as an intervention with foundation level students through 2025/26 as part of the Academic Advising programme.
- The [Leadership in Education and Academic Practice](#) (LEAP) programme supported 14 academics in module convening and educational leadership roles to develop essential leadership skills in fostering a student-centric and inclusive learning environment. This programme included dedicated workshops on Kent's Access and Participation Plan (APP) and on managing difficult EDI discussions.
- The [Postgraduate Certificate of Higher Education](#) (PGCHE) and [Associate Fellowship Programme](#) (AFS) continued to embed and model principles of diversity, equity and inclusion throughout its modules, with 85 teaching staff through 2024/25. Inclusive and equitable practices have been further integrated into revised and reaccredited PGCHE and AFS programmes due to roll out at Kent in 2026/27, in which the Inclusive Curricula and Teaching module will be mandatory rather than optional.



Diverse Representation

Network Chairs buy out and framework

In May 2025, Executive Group approved a formal structure for Work Allocation Model (WAM) allocation for academic staff Network Chairs and Co-Chairs of 135 hours per Network per year from September 2025. EG approved formal terms of reference for Networks, a role description for Network Chairs and Co-Chairs, a commitment to the support of any new Networks created in the future, and a formal process for the approval of new Networks. This milestone represents University recognition of the value and importance of Staff Representative Networks in ensuring that Kent is an inclusive organisation where minoritised voices can be heard, can influence the decision-making process, and can work to create inclusive and safe spaces for staff. Staff Network Co-Chairs report on a termly basis to the EDI Culture and Strategy Committee.

A formal process for Professional Services staff was identified via the Volunteering Scheme in November 2025. This does present some challenges, including a limit of 25 hours per academic year for FT PS staff (significantly under the amount contributed on average by Co-Chairs), and the risk for the LGBT Staff Network Co-Chairs in particular of 'outing' themselves to their line manager to gain approval for this time. Co-Chairs do not have to declare which Network they are volunteering with to their Line Managers to prevent the risk of 'outing', and guidance around supporting staff volunteering requests will be added to the Line Managers' Tool Kit. Work is underway to assess if the principles of the WAM allocation can be applied to PS co-Chairs via Staff Facility Time as a more equitable alternative to supporting PS Co-Chair activity.

Staff Network Activity Reports

All Networks were invited to provide summaries of their activities for the reporting period, and to identify any areas of risk, barrier or challenge that they would like to draw institutional attention to. Networks regularly report to the EDI Culture and Strategy Group to allow for timely action to be taken.

Global Majority Staff Network (GMSN)

"The GMSN delivered a learning event for 11 March 2026 to mark the International Day Against Racial Discrimination (21 March). The event was designed to focus on inequalities in Health and Social Care services, as experienced by the global majority communities, as well as the current UK landscape, including the Kent and Medway regions".

LGBT+ Staff Network

"The LGBT+ Staff Network underwent work in belonging and inclusion through network socials, community building events and activities (e.g. working in collaboration with other Networks and School EDI Leads, hosting conferences/events, etc.), and awareness months and days such as Pride. Events included monthly lunchtime and after work socials, the Trans Day of Remembrance social and information, and Trans and non-binary lunches. The Network ensured LGBT+ representation within EIA contributions, formal and informal meetings, external engagement or external organisation activity, and university projects.

There was LGBT+ representation in the Kent & Medway Network of Networks, the EIAs of the academic workforce (RPD, Probation, ACM, WAM), Network Chairs meetings, and the EDI Strategy Group. The Network focused on learning and development through staff inductions, attending training and development sessions, and ensuring Network representation at new starter events. Communication and awareness raising by the LGBT+ Staff Network included blog posts, newsletters, communications and news distribution to members or other University members, signposting to support, website development, and social media posts through Facebook and Instagram.

The LGBT+ Network highlighted areas of concern / good practice that the EDI Culture and Strategy Committee should pay particular attention to, including adding a section on the RPD form to record EDI activities that benefit the University, in addition to the day job, which could include acting as a chair for one of the Staff Representative Networks. The LGBT+ Network also highlighted the lack of mechanism for PS staff to be rewarded for contributing to Staff Representative Networks, such as through a promotions process for 'citizenship' activity, where facility time for PS and academic staff is inequitable. Their concerns included PS staff needing to claim time for Staff Representative Networks via the Volunteering Scheme and the lack of recognition here regarding the contribution made to the broader university community. Another issue highlighted was the process running the risk of members of PS staff 'outing' themselves to their line manager, potentially acting as a disincentive to engage."

Kent acknowledges the concerns expressed by the LGBT+ Network and has addressed or is working on the following areas of action:

- The Academic Promotions and Academic Career Map process both explicitly provide room for EDI as opportunities to provide evidence for progression. Examples across all Grades of suitable EDI activity is provided. The Academic RPD Form directly maps to the Academic Career Map, with 'building inclusive culture' listed explicitly under Citizenship and Leadership.
- The current solution for PS Network Chairs is to log their hours via the Kent Volunteering Scheme. Co-Chairs do not have to declare which Network they are volunteering with to their Line Managers to prevent the risk of 'outing', and guidance around supporting staff volunteering requests will be added to the Line Managers' Tool Kit. Work is underway to assess if the principles of the WAM allocation can be applied to PS co-Chairs via Staff Facility Time as a more equitable alternative to supporting PS Co-Chair activity.

Staff Disability Network (SDN)

"SDN engagement demonstrated that the Network was good for peer support for disabled staff and raising accessibility and equality issues within the University. The Network added two new channels on Teams: 'Events and Training Opportunities' (a place to share disability/accessibility related events, workshops, training or resources) and 'Films, Books and TV' (a place to share recommendations for disability-media which may be of interest to other members of the Network). These were in addition to the Workplace Reasonable Adjustments channel and the General channel, used for announcements, questions, and advice, as well as celebrating the recent achievements of Co-Chairs Hannah Greer and Amanda Bates in the Staff Recognition awards. There were several achievements for members during 2025, including acting as speakers for international panels and gaining national awards for inclusion and diversity.

The 2025 Kent restructure impacted the capacity of the SDN representatives and meetings reduced from termly to once a year. The Network felt there were many unintended and inequitable consequences of institutional changes which disproportionately impacted disabled staff and students, highlighting the systemic issue of disabled staff being overlooked due to the absence of proper inclusion and representation in decision-making processes. Regarding recruitment and redeployment, a lack of awareness around disability impacts Kent's commitment to be a disability confident employer. Disabled staff face systemic discrimination at Kent, undermining institutional values and exposing Kent to reputational and legal risks from breaching duty of care and legal obligations under the Equality Act.⁴

Recommendations for taking responsibility for the impact of change include:

- Ensuring EDIA is a key and defining feature of Continuous Improvement.
- Embedding representation of disabled staff and/or students in all Task & Finish groups.
- Conducting meaningful, thorough and holistic EIAs with input from relevant networks, acting on their findings.
- Establishing feedback and evaluation mechanisms to monitor the effects of changes and making necessary adjustments.
- Normalising inclusive processes across timetabling, academic advising, workload, and performance management systems.”

Kent acknowledges the concerns expressed by the Staff Disability Network and has addressed or is working on the following areas of action:

- EDI is embedded via Equality Impact Assessment development, consultation and implementation throughout all major change projects that have a people impact. See Priority 3 for further information. Recent EIA's include Timetabling, Academic Advising, Work Allocation Models and RPD / Academic Career Map / Academic Promotions. There is an ongoing need for an effective governance and review process for Equality Impact Assessments to ensure that appropriate expertise is engaged in the assessment process and that mitigations are reviewed, implemented and monitored. An EIA Governance and Approval Route is being developed for the 2026/27 academic year.
- There is commitment, where appropriate, to include staff or students with disabilities on relevant Task and Finish Groups, such as the Reasonable Adjustment Working Group. However, Task and Finish Groups and other Committees have membership determined by expertise, not by protected characteristic. EIA consultation is designed to ensure that appropriate representative voices are included within the decision-making process where this sits outside of committee membership.

Women's Research Network (WReN)

“During the Autumn 2025 term, WReN held productive meetings for Co-Chairs to plan activities and strategies for re-launching the network. This included ‘A Cuppa with WReN’, which took place in November 2025, offering an informal opportunity for colleagues and research students who identify as women to meet, share experiences, and celebrate their research. The event featured an interactive discussion where participants were invited to bring an image, object, or idea that represented their research or why it mattered. This led to a writing retreat, held in December 2025, for researchers to have protected time and space to undertake writing. Looking ahead, WReN is planning to continue to support collaboration, mentorship, and visibility of women's research across disciplines, with further networking, guest speakers, and themed discussion sessions planned for the rest of the academic year.”

Highlighted work in academic schools

Kent & Medway Medical School (KMMS)

KMMS have worked hard this year to develop EDI within the medical school community. The EDI Committee has been reinvigorated (also known as the Advisory Forum) and the School has aligned all existing EDI workstreams with EDI goals for the last academic year. Work has been undertaken reviewing all policies, training (staff and students) and processes with an EDI focus. As a result, KMMS have identified the need for a collaborative Student Success / KMMS student training programme, which is currently being designed and will be piloted in the academic year 2026/27. The School has integrated EIAs into all change processes, updated the Inclusion policy, and worked to better promote good EDI work happening through newsletters and event communications. KMMS have worked to develop the EDI relationships across both Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU), and the School EDI Lead is now on all appropriate EDI committees across both institutions, which is fostering effective collaborative relationships. KMMS have successfully put one module through the Diversity Mark award process and have three further Y1 modules going through the process for this academic year. KMMS have agreement to apply for both the departmental Bronze Athena SWAN award and the Neurodiversity Employers Index (NDEI). A self-assessment team (SAT) for Athena SWAN has been established and data collection started in January 2026.

Kent Business School (KBS)

KBS conducted a study on Whose Menopause Matters? Addressing Menopausal Inequalities at Work, exploring how occupational and social class differences shape women's experiences of menopause in the workplace, and addressing the middle-class bias in existing research that focuses largely on managerial and professional women. Using qualitative interviews and focus groups with employees across diverse occupational roles at a UK university, the project examined how organisational culture, job type, and socioeconomic factors influence how menopause is experienced, disclosed, and supported at work.

⁴ The UCU (University and Colleges Union) express concern that that the progress on reasonable adjustments being embedded seamlessly is too slow and resources are lacking to make Equality Impact Assessments meaningful.

Preliminary findings highlight that menopause is a highly individual experience, but workplace context strongly affects how symptoms are managed. Flexible working arrangements, supportive colleagues, and understanding line managers were crucial for coping, while inflexible or high-pressure environments exacerbated symptoms. Contrary to assumptions, manual work was not always more difficult, with some women reporting that they found physical activity to be beneficial in managing their menopause symptoms. The gender of line managers mattered less than age and empathy. Financial and domestic responsibilities intensified challenges for lower-paid women, revealing the intersection of class, work, and wellbeing. Some participants also reported positive outcomes such as renewed confidence and resilience. Overall, the study underscores the need for more inclusive, class-sensitive workplace policies on menopause.

This project culminated in a workshop on 4 December 2025, which was designed to share findings on the impact of occupational differences on women's menopausal experiences at work, with academic and practitioner audiences. The workshop aimed to facilitate discussion and reflection, generate ideas for practical impact and future collaboration, and build networks across sectors.

School of Arts and Architecture (SAA)

On 10 December 2025, during the UK Disability History Month, SAA hosted an event with Chris Laing, the founder of the Deaf Architecture Front (DAF). The event discussed how the DAF aims to bridge the gap between the architecture industry and the Deaf community and strengthen connections between Deaf culture and architectural design. Chris also discussed Silent Buttons, presenting a short film of the same name. He explained the creative process behind the film and the importance of the campaign in raising awareness of the everyday barriers faced by the Deaf community. The event introduced Deaf Space and the Deaf Space Lab, with its focus on developing resources and Signstrokes, a collection of BSL architectural terms.

In addition, SAA achieved its first Diversity Mark via the practitioner route (Dr Lavinia Brydon), with other applications in the pipeline. Nicola Shaughnessy ran an important workshop for doctoral supervisors titled 'Understanding Neurodiversity', an area of great importance for the School.

School of Computing (SoC)

The School established a local EDI Committee, meeting once per term (usually in week 8) and chaired by the SoC EDI Lead. The Committee includes the Head of School (HoS), one Deputy HoS, the Director of Education, Directors of Studies, Director of Research and Innovation, Director of Graduate Research Studies, the Recruitment, Admissions and Outreach Lead, the Senior Tutor, the Student Engagement / Student Success Lead, and representatives from the Research Associates/Fellows, PGR community, Teaching Fellows, Assistant Lecturers, and PS staff. Ahead of the Summer 2025 exam period, in partnership with Student Success, SoC ran a revision session for UG Stage 1 students, to prepare them for their first university exams, as part of efforts to reduce the attainment gap. SoC successfully applied for the Silver Athena SWAN award to be transferred to the School of Computing, as it was previously awarded to the whole Division of Computing, Engineering and Mathematical Sciences.

This process was completed in August 2025. SoC contributed to the Belonging and Beyond programme during Welcome Week with an inspirational talk delivered by the Director of Education (a Black female lecturer). During the upcoming cycle of RPDs, SoC will continue to allow female members of staff the opportunity to request to be appraised by a female appraiser if the designated one is a male colleague. This is a specific SoC policy introduced by the EDI Lead in 2022. To increase the number of female applicants to UG and PGT programmes, SoC continue to 'lobby' for female student ambassadors being allocated to the School of Computing during Open Days and Offer Holders Days. In addition, as part of the outreach activities, during the Summer 2026 teaching term a number of UG female students will go and teach Computer Science in girls' schools in Canterbury.

School of Economics, Politics and International Relations (EPIR)

EPIR arranged a presentation on Diversity Mark during a school meeting in May 2025, which was highly appreciated by colleagues. Two colleagues had been planning to incorporate Diversity Mark into their modules and others had already incorporated some elements into their modules, in terms of diversity in reading list, etc. The School EDI Lead participated in the Student Success Belonging and Beyond initiative, which began in September 2025.

Having identified specific issues for some staff and students with the allocation of Academic Advisor meetings, meetings were rescheduled to ensure those staff with flexible working contracts and students who had difficulty attending due to commuting requirements could engage in a fair and equitable manner.

School of Engineering, Mathematics and Physics (EMP)

EMP received a Silver Athena SWAN award. During welcome week 2025, the School introduced a new Women in STEM event, where new students heard about the achievements of women in STEM and the challenges they face. Engineering and Digital Design held outreach activities (along with Computing). These included speaking to girls at Highworth Grammar School for Girls about STEM pathways at a careers fair in October. In April 2025 Digital Design held an event "Championing Boys: Supporting educational outcomes and progression of boys from low socio-economic backgrounds in Kent and Medway". EMP ended the 2025 Autumn term with an event for staff which included an EDI and Christmas themed quiz.

School of Humanities (SoH)

The People Of Colour (POC) Humanities Club group has been set up by Dr Claire Hurley, Student Experience Lead in the School of Humanities, and has been created in partnership with racially minoritised students in the school. £2,000 has been allocated to this intervention by the Student Success team to cover 3 paid student co-ordinator roles, catering, and events. The group meets twice per term for a structured workshop on a particular theme chosen in collaboration with students.

The aims of the group are to:

- Help foster community and belonging for racially minoritised students
- Create academic and peer-support for students in a structured environment

- Facilitate broad skills-based learning for students in areas such as referencing, writing, understanding feedback, and improving grades
- Collectively understand and tackle common academic issues, such as imposter syndrome, perfectionism, procrastination, and how best to ask for support and guidance
- Assist with helping to close racial attainment gaps in the School of Humanities

School of Natural Sciences (SNS)

SNS are over halfway through producing a School Athena Swan Bronze submission, with 17 staff engaged in the process of gathering qualitative and quantitative data to support this. SNS also ran a Ramadan awareness session for all staff in February 2026, with an external speaker upskilling staff on ideas of how best to support students observing Ramadan, and considerations for cultural support and potential learning adjustments.

School of Psychology (SoP)

EDI events and engagement include celebrating Neurodiversity Week, raising awareness and engagement across the school. SoP also delivered a Black History Month event in collaboration with students from the Psychology Society. External speaker, Dr Nkasi Stoll, was invited to share findings from her work on Black and Ethnic Minority student success and experiences, giving advice on how to move forward. The event included an interactive workshop with students and staff members encouraging discussion and reflection.

Culture and leadership engagement included the school culture being established as a standing agenda item in Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meetings. Regular culture-related drop-in sessions are held with the Deputy Head of School, Prof. Cichocka, and additional EDI-focused meetings are held directly with the EDI Lead, Dr Pina. The School's Workload Allocation Model (WAM) is reviewed and monitored regularly by the other Deputy Head of School, Prof. Bindemann, with a specific focus on identifying and addressing potential systemic biases in workload allocation.

Recruitment practices, including job advertisements and interviewing processes, are under ongoing review by Prof. Cichocka, Dr Alleyne and Dr Pina (School EDI Lead), to ensure fairness, inclusivity and equity. The School EDI Lead serves as a representative in the recruitment and allocation processes for Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) and SEDarc scholarships for PGR students.

SoP have consistently implemented reduced duties following maternity leave. EDI-related communications, including reminders to maintain and update role-relevant training, have been shared regularly with staff through the Head of School's (Prof. Hopthrow) Friday Update email communications. SoP have regularly engaged with LASR training and candidates have been consistently put forward for leadership training. A Sexual Harassment and Bullying training session was delivered during one of the School Forums in the beginning of the 2025 academic year, led by the EDI representative (Dr Pina). During the session, institutional processes and behavioural expectations were signposted and communicated to staff. Upcoming developments include line management and RPD processes being implemented to further support staff development, transparency and accountability. All the above efforts aim to foster an inclusive, supportive and equitable environment for staff and students.

School of Social Sciences (SSS)

SSS held an Inclusive Teaching event on 2 July 2025. This was co-organised with Student Success and the SSS Director of Education & Student Experience, and it aimed to introduce/update new learning technologies and tools that staff could use to improve the inclusivity/accessibility of their teaching.

Challenges

University of Kent / University of Greenwich merger implications on Charter Marks

The proposed merger with the University of Greenwich has triggered a number of challenges in relation to both REC and, more pressingly, the summer 2027 Athena SWAN Silver institutional reapplication. There are a number of queries that require resolution prior to reapplication work beginning, including:

- Implications of changes to University of Kent legal status on existing REC and Athena SWAN institutional and School-level awards. Advance HE confirmed in spring 2026 that changes to Kent's legal status will not impact existing Charter Marks.
- Data mining and reporting
- Action plan mergers and development of priorities post-September 2026.
- What reapplications will involve (i.e. London And South East (LASE) University Group as an entity, Kent and/or Greenwich on separate application programmes or another solution).

Reapplication work is scheduled to take place over the 2026/27 academic year. Delays to this risk any reapplication not being completed in time for the summer 2027 Athena SWAN deadline. Kent and Greenwich are both in contact with Advance HE to explore pathways to approaching this. An agreed pathway is expected by summer 2025.

External political and social environment

2024/25 was a turbulent year for EDI across the wider global-political landscape, with multiple global conflicts, political movements and challenges to the rights and protections of minoritised groups, including for gender norms, women's rights and LGBTQI inclusion, particularly in relation to the politicisation of trans rights. Key barriers included USAID cuts in January which marked a turning point in the Global North's funding towards development spend and a number of US based organisations announcing the rolling back of EDI programmes and funding, the lack of clarity on the practical implications of the UK Supreme Court Ruling of the legal definition of Women under the Equality Act 2010, the impact of politicised religion, increases in gender-based violence and the rise of far-right and far-left politics.

There has been an increased focus on masculinity, and toxic masculinity, with more support demanded for boys and young men particularly in relation to positive relationships, sex education and support for navigating social media in a healthy way.

This external landscape has greatly increased the need for Kent to provide structure, stability and reassurance to its staff and students in relation to its commitment to EDI, removing barriers for progression and achievement, and creating an environment that fosters respectful discussion and debate.

Much of the work highlighted in this report has been in response to this need. Further work will be undertaken in ensuring that staff and students are equipped with appropriate skills and abilities to navigate this landscape with confidence, including the development of new EDI related training programmes.

Professional Services restructures

The University was confronted with a substantial budget deficit for 2024/25 and beyond, driven by multiple factors such as escalating operational expenses, increased national insurance contributions, declining tuition fee income, and broader external financial pressures. In response, the Kent 2030 Plan, launched in 2023, outlined a series of income-generating and cost-saving measures to restore financial sustainability. Despite these efforts, student recruitment targets for 2024/25 were not met, exacerbating the baseline financial position, a trend mirrored across the UK higher education sector due to a challenging operating environment and intensified competition, particularly from a reduction in international student numbers.

To address the projected budgetary gap and safeguard the delivery of high-quality education and services, the University identified the need for a recurrent reduction in pay costs by August 2025. A Voluntary Severance (VS) scheme was introduced for both academic and professional services staff as a key strategy to achieve these savings. However, uptake was insufficient, resulting in the need to consider redundancies.

To operate effectively within these financial constraints, the University consolidated 17 professional service organisational units into 9. Each new Directorate was given a pay savings target and tasked with reviewing its structure, processes, and resources to deliver essential services within their revised budgets, while maintaining the quality and safety of provision for students and staff. It was essential to ensure that this process was fair, transparent and did not disproportionately impact staff who shared a protected characteristic. To monitor and assess this impact, Equality Impact Assessments were embedded into the process and conducted across all Professional Service restructures. The results of these were reviewed by JSNCC. No significant impact upon any group of staff members who shared a protected characteristic was identified.

Resources

Recent restructuring of School and Professional Service Directorates has resulted in more pressure on EDI resources. This is not only reflected in terms of direct staffing resource to focus on EDI priorities and actions at an institutional level, and within Schools and Directorates, but also secondary EDI related impacts, for example in the amount of staff time available to support individuals with additional needs or from minoritised backgrounds who need tailored support, access to development opportunities, mentoring / coaching or tailored guidance for career or academic development and growth. Resource restrictions have also impacted how Staff Representative Networks prioritise their work. Work to ensure that EDI is embedded within culture, at point of design of systems and processes and increasing staff confidence to support individuals is more crucial than ever to maintain focus and momentum on developing Kent's inclusive culture.



Priority 2: Empowering our staff and students to succeed

Affirmative Action and Support Programmes

Awareness and Celebration events

The University of Kent and KSU, working in collaboration together have maintained a robust programme of EDI events, including dedicated celebrations for Black, Disability, LGBTQIA+, and Women's History months. A new Pride Month programme was successfully delivered, featuring a materials-making workshop and clothes swap alongside the annual parade. Furthermore, 8 welcome week coffee mornings allowed over 120 students to connect with peers sharing similar lived experiences. The Library Events Group also delivered a sustained programme of EDI-focused campaigns combining physical displays, curated digital collections, and interactive engagement. Black History Month highlighted the theme Standing Firm in Power and Pride, through reading lists and displays in partnership with KSU. Disability History Month celebrated disability resources with a 67-title display and strong engagement. Other activities continued with Women's History Month, themed Women in Education and Inspiring Future Generations, featuring Kent authors and complementary Libby collections. LGBTQ+ History Month and Pride Month promoted inclusion through affirmation walls, themed book swaps, and curated collections, alongside plans to reclassify historical queer materials for safer, more inclusive spaces.

EDI Cafés

The EDI Café programme is designed to create safe, supportive and confidential environments for staff to come together and share experiences around a specific topic that impacts staff from minoritised backgrounds disproportionately. The cafés are attended by members of staff from the EDI team to ensure that any key concerns or areas of good practice are addressed centrally. Cafés run monthly with dates available on the EDI Hub and are themed around the following topics:

- Menopause
- Neurodiversity
- Caring Responsibilities

ResLife

During 2025, ResLife (Residential Life team, building support and communities for students in on-campus residential accommodation) aimed to celebrate the wide diversity of cultures and nationalities at Kent, targeting specific cultural holidays and festivals, and running showcase events to combine traditional food, drink, music and crafts. These events were free and funded by ResLife. The first event celebrated Diwali and was a huge success, with 250 students attending when 80-100 attendees were predicted. ResLife teamed up with the Hindu Society who helped decorate the Sports Pavilion and provided music, whilst ResLife provided food including samosas, pakoras, sweet treats and drinks, crafts, and decorations. Craft stations were set up for henna tattooing and diya painting. The team received lots of positive feedback, which included students commenting on how much they enjoyed the food and atmosphere and how happy they were that their holiday was being recognised and effort had gone in to hosting the event.

Students who were not part of the Hindu community also attended. ResLife later held an event to celebrate Nigerian Independence Day with traditional food and music. Other events included pronoun badge making, Black History Month craft night, Disability History Month poster making and Samhain crafts,

In February 2026, ResLife celebrated Lunar New Year with traditional food and music. Having decorated receptions for Diwali, they did the same for Lunar New Year and Ramadan. ResLife have also been instrumental in advocating for Kent to offer LGBTQ+ specific accommodation, which will be an option for all students in September 2026. The team researched other universities and put forward their proposal to all relevant stakeholders at Kent, which has been accepted. ResLife has begun administering and overseeing this since January 2026, during which time students have started to apply for accommodation for 2026/2027.

LGBTQIA Student Accommodation

ResLife have been instrumental in advocating for Kent to offer LGBTQ+ inclusive specific accommodation, which will be launched as an option for all students in September 2026 and aligns with the institution's EDI values. It will support the wellbeing and belonging of LGBTQ+ students, helping them feel more comfortable, included and valued during their time at Kent. Students will be able to find a LGBTQ+ community, as there are currently no LGBTQ+ clubs or bars in Canterbury. Furthermore, whilst other groups (e.g. cultural/religious) already have physical spaces on campus (e.g. Mosque, Chaplaincy, etc.), LGBTQ+ students lack visible safe spaces.

LGBTQ+ accommodation has been developed in response to the needs identified by the Kent LGBTQIA+ Student Voice Project, and in line with best practices from peer institutions. ResLife researched other universities and put forward a proposal to all relevant stakeholders which has been accepted. Data from the LGBTQIA+ Student Voice Project reveals that LGBTQ+ students experience anxiety about unknown attitudes of future housemates, particularly concerning gender expression. Many of our competitors also already offer similar accommodation and Kent must remain competitive in attracting students. A survey by Edge Hill University found students in LGBTQ+ specialist accommodation reported higher overall satisfaction than those in non-specialist housing. Feedback from universities already offering this type of accommodation has been overwhelmingly positive, with very few reported issues.

In terms of how LGBTQ+ accommodation will be managed at Kent, the following procedures will take place. Students will initially be offered two locations: Parkwood 5-Bed Houses (most affordable option) and Parkwood Flats with en-suites. It should be noted that studies show students prioritise LGBTQ+ accommodation over specific accommodation types or locations, and Campus Security have confirmed that Parkwood has excellent 360-degree CCTV coverage and the vehicle response time is 3–6 minutes. Accommodation will be discreetly distributed across Parkwood (rather than grouped). If demand exceeds supply, a waiting list will be created. LGBTQ+ accommodation will be open to all students (excluding KMMS students due to different accommodation processes) and if enough PG applications are received, Kent will aim to assign Darwin House or Woolf Flats.

When applying for LGBTQ+ accommodation, students will not be asked to disclose how they identify, and therefore, flats/houses may include any gender demographics. Returning and first-year students may be housed together if needed. Moderate Living LGBTQ+ accommodation will not be officially offered, but, where possible, students requesting both may be grouped together informally. This is a voluntary, opt-in scheme and only students who self-identify as LGBTQ+ will be considered (not allies), to prioritise availability for those who need it. To avoid unintentional outing, communication preferences will be confirmed before contact, and no mention of LGBTQ+ accommodation will appear in official documentation or contracts. To ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the new LGBTQ+ accommodation, key performance indicators (KPIs) will include occupancy and application rates, student satisfaction surveys, retention and continuation data, and incident reports (or lack thereof). An annual review will assess impact and inform decisions about future expansion.

ResLife will be administering and overseeing the LGBTQ+ accommodation from January 2026 when students start to apply for accommodation for 2026/2027. They will be supported by the Accommodation Office, Student Support and Wellbeing (SSW), and Kent Students' Union (KSU).

Living Black at University (LBU) Working Group

Throughout the year, The Living Black at University Working Group has collaborated with consultant Sam Kingsley to review progress and develop a comprehensive three-year Action Plan between 2026 and 2029, which will guide the Group's work, focusing on key areas including Welcome and Integration activities, data collection and consistent feedback loops, and communication, engagement, and training. Highlights over the past year include hosting a student focus group to refresh the [Black Students Guide to Kent](#) webpage, which has gained organic traction on [TikTok](#).

Careers and Employability Service (CES)

CES moved into [Rutherford College Extension](#) in September 2025, increasing accessibility through being more centrally-located, as well as having multiple routes in and out of the building, an accessible toilet, more wheelchair-accessible consultation rooms, flexible-use spaces, and better signage. The team also transformed and upgraded their [Moodle](#), ensuring digital accessibility was at the forefront of the project. Alternate text was added to pictures, slides and information were reviewed for accessibility and clarity, and an 'equality at work' section was established, with useful information on finding inclusive employers and asking for reasonable adjustments. Additionally, an accessibility review of workshop slides and activities was completed.

The [Empower](#) team continued to support demographic-specific schemes such as the [Freshfields Stephen Lawrence Scholarship](#), which tackles the underrepresentation of Black males from less privileged backgrounds, within the legal sector and City careers. The team put forward 11 candidates, with one student being awarded a scholarship. This prestigious scheme only awards around 12 scholarships per year, and at the Kent, we have had a student recipient for the last two years. The team also supported 687 students in applying to 10,000 Black Interns – the 5th highest number of applicants from a UK university – and supported applicants to Change 100, Bright Network, SEO London and Blueprint for All, to name a few.

Kent Students' Union (KSU)

KSU maintained a robust programme of EDI events, including dedicated celebrations for Black, Disability, LGBTQIA+, and Women's History months. KSU also supported 12 student networks, creating vital representation and community spaces for over 380 students. A new Pride Month programme was successfully delivered, featuring a materials-making workshop and clothes swap alongside the annual parade. Furthermore, 8 welcome week coffee mornings allowed over 120 students to connect with peers sharing similar lived experiences.

The LGBTQIA+ Student Voices and International Student Voices projects concluded, resulting in panel meetings with university departments. These discussions, which also included findings from the previous Black Student Voices project, led to tangible improvements in three areas: Living at Kent, Staff Knowledge, and specific International Student Issues. A key win from this work was the development of LGBTQIA+ specific accommodation in partnership with ResLife.

Building on this success, KSU is committed to ongoing Student Voices research, with the next focus being the effect of socio-economic background on student experiences, with future research planned on neurodivergence and women in academia. The other major initiative for the 2025/26 academic year, is a complete review and rebuilding of KSU's representation and democracy structure. Following an initial review of challenges in Term 1, Term 2 is dedicated to designing a new structure that better reflects the current student body, their representation needs, and engagement styles. Term 3 will focus on implementing and promoting this new system to ensure effective representation and responsiveness to changes in the student experience.

Student Support and Wellbeing (SSW)

SSW relocated to a new, centrally located campus facility in Eliot College Extension in September 2025. This move brought together all core SSW services within a single, accessible location, enhancing visibility, coordination, and ease of access for students. The co-located services include Mental Health and Counselling, Disability Support, Financial Hardship Assistance, Specialist Wellbeing, and Welfare Services. In addition, the Chaplaincy service has been fully integrated into SSW, strengthening holistic and inclusive support provision.

The building has been fully refurbished to create a welcoming and supportive environment. Consultation rooms have been designed using calming colour schemes to promote comfort and emotional safety. A dedicated group room is available for therapeutic group work during the day and is also made available to student societies during evenings, supporting community engagement and inclusive participation. A Neurodiversity Sensory Room has been introduced. This space is equipped with multi-purpose lighting and specialist furniture to provide a safe, adaptable environment for neurodivergent students, supporting regulation, wellbeing, and accessibility.

Equality / Gender Pay Gap Report 2025

Kent published its [Equality Pay Gap Report 2025](#), an audit of pay gaps by protected characteristic, including gender, disability and ethnicity. Kent's Gender Pay Gap remains stubbornly unmoving, highlighting the need for further targeted work as part of the Promotions and REF processes which provide opportunities for female career progression. It is suspected that the Academic Promotions Freeze and PS restructures have had a negative impact on reducing the Equality Pay Gap at Kent.

Spotlights

Spotlight: Student Success: Changes to Diversity Mark

The award-winning [Diversity Mark programme](#) was established by the Student Success Team to support the co-development of diverse and inclusive modules across Kent courses through collaboration between module convenors, student Diversity Mark Officers and academic librarians. From its inception to 2024, it has supported 19 modules through to the award of Diversity Mark.

In 2025, Kent's Education Modernisation strategy (EM25) called for the diversity of our student populations to be represented and celebrated across all university modules, requiring all module convenors to develop more inclusive curriculum design practices. In response, the Curriculum and Educational Development Team (CEDT) prepared the [EM25 Module Development Toolkit](#) (1108 views to date) which includes guidance on Inclusive Practices (311 views to date).

EM25 also prompted the development of a new route for academics to engage with Diversity Mark, alongside the traditional, module-focused route. The new Diversity Mark Practitioner (DMP) Route supports academics to develop inclusive teaching and curriculum design practices across all modules they convene. This is through participation in a [Designing Inclusive Modules](#) retreat in which they learn about inclusive practices outlined in the Module Development Toolkit.

21 academics participated in the July 2025 pilot retreat and 7 of these have so far achieved the DMP Award, following the submission of a workbook evidencing the development of their practice. Academics who participated in the retreat said they valued the opportunity to immerse themselves in inclusivity with experts and other convenors, and that it helped increase their confidence as practitioners. The next retreats are due to take place in the 2026 spring and summer breaks. This new route was case studied in '[Agents for change: Libraries and the UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)' (SCONUL, 2025, p.59).

Spotlight: Student Success: Belonging and Beyond

Belonging and Beyond is a new programme which began in September 2025. It is a sustained positive action initiative welcoming ethnic minority students to Kent and supporting their transition to Higher Education; doing this in full acknowledgement that the sector is not as diverse as it needs to be, and our staff base reflects this. The programme aims to create opportunities for students to network with staff from similar backgrounds, build academic capital (term coined by Dr Alex Hensby and Dr Barbara Adewumi in their book 'Race, Capital and Equity in Higher Education'), and develop a greater sense of belonging in their first term at Kent. It aims to achieve this by leveraging the vital moment of arrival and transition, and through networking, informational, developmental, and academic initiatives.

This year, the Student Success team have run two panel events, involving staff and students, who have shared their experiences in transitioning to higher education and 'what they wish they knew' before starting university. In addition to the panel events, we have hosted two inspirational speakers that have delivered sessions on 'authenticity' in higher education, as well as building confidence in communicating.

Both sessions spoke to the wider theme of this programme, which is 'belonging', and encouraged students to proudly bring themselves to their studies. Feedback from the programme has shown it has had a positive impact so far on students' belonging, with 75% of students that have attended a session strongly agreeing they feel more confident that they will find their community and feel like they belong at Kent.

Spotlight: Student Success: Research and Scholarships

A major contribution during the year was an interactive session delivered at the Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS) and Primary Care Training Hub Educators' Conference (3 April 2025, in-person), engaging [200+ GP educators](#) in critical reflection on inclusive medical education, student success, equity, cultural sensitivity, and compassionate teaching. Another interactive session delivered was with NERUPI's [Knowledge, Attainment and Pedagogy](#) (KAP) working group (16 June 2025, online), titled Pathways, Pedagogy, and Progression: Learning to Thrive through Higher Education Access and Attainment. This sector-facing engagement positioned EDI not only as a matter of admissions or "widening access", but as a pedagogical and organisational responsibility enacted through curriculum, assessment, and relational support across the student lifecycle.

A flagship strand was a [student-led](#) inquiry undertaken by four Stage 2 physics undergraduates, supervised through Student Success in collaboration with disciplinary leadership within Physics (PHYS5300: Research Skills in Physics). This explored decolonising and diversifying undergraduate physics through highlighting diverse voices who have built the foundation of physics, despite being overlooked in the Western scientific tradition. EDI research capability-building also extended into medical education through supervision of two KMMS students (Year 3 Scientific Basis of Medicine; Year 4 Individual Research Project) investigating racial bias in healthcare.

Student Success facilitated two reflective teaching workshops for staff in Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS), designed to strengthen inclusive teaching practice. The sessions were tailored to local KMMS priorities while directly advancing the University's EDI commitments in teaching, learning, and curriculum design. Student Success also facilitated a workshop session as part of the [KMMS](#) Compassionate Hackathon with Stage 2 medical students earlier in 2025, supporting compassionate, inclusive learning cultures and reinforcing EDI-informed approaches to student experience and engagement. In 2026, Student Success plan to have representation in chemistry lecture slides on Students' Perceptions, Reflections, and Engagement with Subject Content, extending representation-focused EDI work into another STEM discipline and into everyday teaching artefacts as sites of identity, belonging, and engagement. The TEF Black: Critical Evaluations of TEF Gold Institutions in the context of Black Awarding Gaps is planned for 2026, a critical policy-facing strand interrogating "excellence" narratives alongside persistent racialised inequities in outcomes, strengthening the bridge between sector metrics and lived student experience.

Continuous Learning and Growth

EHRC Consultation

From the 20 May -30 June 2025, the EHRC ran an [open consultation](#) on the [changes made to the Services, Public Functions and Associations Code of Practice](#) following the UK Supreme Court ruling on the legal definition of Sex as relevant to the Equality Act 2010. Due to the impact on our staff and student communities, the need for effective representation, and the current lack of clarity around the legal implications for organisations, it was important for Kent to contribute to this consultation process as an independent organisation, although the opportunity was provided to contribute to a sector response led by Universities UK.

The EDI team ran a consultation process throughout this time to ascertain views and assess impact in relation to our staff and student communities and our areas of operation. This feedback was collated and used to inform the response and to ensure that the feedback from Kent was reflected of the wider views and opinions of staff and students most impacted by the updates to the Services Code of Practice, as well as areas of operation with the greatest responsibility for any change implementation. Whilst student views and opinions are taken into account in terms of institutional policy, business and operation, Kent Students' Union responded independently on behalf of student engagement with their own areas of business (such as sports clubs and societies).

Spotlight: AI and EDI

In the last 12 months, as Artificial Intelligence chatbot use has exploded in popularity in the wider public and in Higher Education, Kent have developed guidance for students and staff to ensure appropriate, responsible, and ethical use of AI tools. Kent has also launched three AI Working Groups (on Education, Research, and Professional Services) featuring relevant stakeholders to support the development of AI guidance. These groups have solicited support from EDI and Student Support & Wellbeing colleagues.

For many purposes, AI tools can best be thought of as a catalyst: it will accelerate whatever we put in. The risks for EDI initiatives, therefore, could be in deepening the divides which EDI initiatives aim to close. As such, guidance and development of AI working groups aims to support a patient and considered approach to a rapidly developing and disruptive technology by building EDI practices into guidance and the foundations of policy⁵.

⁵ UCU members have expressed frustration at the lack of effective response around risks of ChatGPT.edu for equalities. UCU feel there is not sufficient inclusion of staff concerns in the AI Working Group, not sufficient reaching out to minoritised staff to hear concerns. These concerns have been fed back to the AI Working Group by the EDI team for consideration.

Guidance and training sessions for students and staff have focused heavily on EDI concerns, chiefly:

- Bias in AI outputs
- Equity of use for students and staff (digital poverty, digital literacy)
- Political and ethical implications of AI use
- Environmental concerns
- Safeguarding concerns and monitoring

As of December 2025, Kent's "Developing AI Literacy" student module on Moodle (staff are also enrolled) has been engaged with by over 1,400 users and has received a 90% accessibility score via Moodle Ally. Whilst these represent opportunities for improvement, they also represent a strong start to making training accessible for the widest range of users. The working groups will support the development of a culture at Kent where EDI and accessibility concerns are central to the improvement of this training and the guidance to follow.

Challenges

Staff EDI Knowledge and Skills

The suite of mandatory EDI staff training modules has been reviewed. Identified barriers included the content being out of date and not relevant to the Kent context, the number of mandatory modules being overwhelming for new starters, and low completion rates. The mandatory EDI training will be compliant with all new legislation, including Academic Freedom, relevant to the Kent context and accessible and effective in terms of learning outcomes. The new module went live in January 2026, with beta testing undertaken with Network representatives and School EDI Leads.

In addition, the need for Line Managers to have greater EDI awareness, including a greater understanding of reasonable adjustments and how to implement, and an understanding of what effective cultural competency looks like in practice, was identified. Multiple mitigations identified across the Academic Work Force Equality Impact Assessments around the new RPD, Probation, Promotion and Academic Career Map were focused on the need for Line Manager understanding around these areas to ensure effective and tailored workplace and career support that meets the needs of individuals. The aim is for Line Manager EDI Sensitivity sessions to go live, in person, in spring 2026.

Priority 3: A confident EDI institution culture

Inclusive policies and practices

Embedding Equality Impact Assessments

2024/25 represented a shift change in Kent's approach to strategic change and assessing and mitigating the potential equality impact upon staff from minoritised backgrounds, both positive and negative. EIAs were embedded into multiple large-scale projects that aimed to redesign and modernise Kent's structure and systems. They provided an opportunity to ensure that changes proposed did not have a negative impact upon staff, and where potential negative impacts were identified, that these were mitigated against.

All EIAs were consulted on with Staff Representative Networks (some consultations were restricted to Network Chairs for confidentiality reasons), School EDI Leads and some included all-staff and / or all-student consultation. Mitigations were reflected through process or policy review, built into action plans (such as review of process e.g. Reasonable Adjustments) or development opportunities (such as new Line Manager Sensitivity Training sessions). Consultations were run for a minimum of 2 working weeks with most open for at least a month. EIA clinics have been run fortnightly to support staff conducting EIAs with problem solving or process clarification; the EIA template was reviewed and redesigned to support this process and ensure accessibility.

EIAs were approved by the owning Committee of the change process, and a large proportion were reviewed by JSNCC. Institutional-level EIAs were reviewed and approved by EDI Operations Group. UCU have expressed concerns about the need for sufficient resource to implement and monitor mitigations identified.

EIA's conducted between 2024 and 2025 can be found on the [EIA repository](#) on the EDI Hub and include:

- Academic Work Force processes
 - Review, Plan, Develop (RPD)
 - Promotion
 - Probation
- Academic Career Map (ACM)
- Workload Allocation Model (WAM)
- Advanced Fix Timetabling Approach (EIA's conducted on staff and student impact)
- Teaching Constraints
- Academic Advising Framework
- Academic Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Expression Code of Practice
- Education Modernisation for Training
- All PS Restructures
- Size and Shape
 - Redeployment approach
 - Size and Shape Consultation
 - Selection Criteria
- Nimbus (institution-wide device upgrade and replacement in line with cyber security requirements)

There remains a challenge around the approval process for EIAs to ensure that every EIA has been conducted in a timely and robust manner, and that there is institutional confidence that due diligence has been undertaken appropriately. Addressing this challenge will be a priority for 2026/27. An additional challenge identified has been a lack of knowledge and confidence in conducting and reviewing an effective EIA; EIA training will be reviewed in 2026/27 and there is a commitment to identify a robust and appropriate approval route for EIAs to ensure institutional confidence in them.

Library Events Group

The Library Events Group delivered a sustained programme of EDI-focused campaigns combining physical displays, curated digital collections, and interactive engagement. Black History Month highlighted the theme Standing Firm in Power and Pride, through reading lists and displays in partnership with KSU. Disability History Month celebrated disability resources with a 67-title display and strong engagement. Other activities continued with Women's History Month, themed Women in Education and Inspiring Future Generations, featuring Kent authors and complementary Libby collections. LGBTQ+ History Month and Pride Month promoted inclusion through affirmation walls, themed book swaps, and curated collections, alongside plans to reclassify historical queer materials for safer, more inclusive spaces.

Cross-cutting initiatives such as WorldFest (Feb–Mar 2025) showcased global perspectives via community-nominated reading lists, whilst Exam Ready combined wellbeing and study-support resources with book swaps and free fruit giveaways. Ongoing engagement includes Pause for Paws therapy dog sessions, Right to Food pop-ups, and regular book giveaways, reinforcing wellbeing and community. Future plans aim to expand intersectional collections, craft-based wellbeing activities, and themed campaigns like Go Abroad with a Book. These initiatives demonstrate a holistic approach to embedding EDI principles across library services, celebrating diverse identities, fostering belonging, and supporting wellbeing through inclusive collections and interactive experiences.

Kent Sport

Kent Sport and SSW provide a weekly social and relaxed walk and talk session for all neurodivergent students and students who feel they might be neurodivergent. Gym quiet hours are available to support Kent's community who prefer to exercise in a quiet space. During these hours, music and TVs in the gym are switched off and gym users are asked to keep noise to a minimum. Women and non-binary members only gym hours are available each week to support anyone who identifies as a woman or non-binary, so that they can exercise in a safe, non-judgemental space.

Cardiac Rehabilitation Phase 3 classes are for anyone that has suffered a cardiac event in the past. These low-impact, social sessions help support a safe return to exercise with a qualified and experienced team. [Wheelchair Tennis Group Coaching](#) sessions take place weekly in the Kent Indoor Tennis and Events Arena at the Pavilion. These sessions are open to everyone, with all equipment provided including sports wheelchairs. The [ALL Active programme](#) for all students, staff, and alumni offer a range of fun, social sports and activities for all ability levels.

The weekly timetable includes Paralympic sport Boccia. Kent Sport provide a structured 12-week [Exercise Referral programme](#) for anyone with an existing health condition that is physically inactive. Their [Menopause Fitness course](#) is a structured 6-week programme designed to support women through the physical and emotional changes associated with menopause.

A culture of respect and collaboration

Student Accessibility Working Group

The Student Accessibility Working Group aims to ensure that student accessibility needs are met during their studies at Kent. The Group comprises representatives from a range of departments who work to improve and enhance the student experience for those with accessibility needs. The focus during the 2024/25 academic year was to develop a strategy to improve the accessibility of our campuses over the next 3 years, as well as looking at ways of communicating what is available to students with accessibility needs and how we respond to issues with DDA equipment. The University work with [AccessAble](#) to provide an accessible guide to our Campuses. The Working Group proposed a strategic approach to adaptations as follows:

- Use the AccessAble audit as a framework to guide decision making on prioritising adaptations
- Focus on high-use, central buildings in the first instance, which can be prioritised for timetabling or are frequently used by external guests (Gulbenkian, Kennedy, Keynes, Sibson, Woolf)
- Set out a 3-year plan for adaptations, prioritising either quick-wins or high necessity adaptations in the first instance.
- Build requests from staff / students for physical adaptations to the Campuses into this planning document.

In 2024/25, 91 adaptations were made as part of 'Year 1' priority planning to make our campus more accessible. In 2025, work to link all Emergency Assistance Alarms in accessible accommodation back to Campus Security was completed. Work is in progress to ensure that all Emergency Assistance Alarms in accessible WCs across the Canterbury and Medway campuses link back to Campus Security. The Working Group has been developing a guide for students with accessibility needs to let them know what services are available to them. This pulls together information regarding SSW, Accommodation, KSU, H&S and more. This guide is fully accessible and can be printed as a physical booklet, downloaded as a PDF or viewed on Kent webpages. The content will be reviewed every year for accuracy / updates.

KSU raised concerns around DDA equipment such as lifts and power assisted doors not working, making 3 specific requests:

- A robust reporting tool with transparent timeframes for repair work, ensuring students know when to expect fixes.
- Implementation of QR codes at accessibility points (doors, lifts) to enable easy, real-time reporting by students or allies.
- Development of alternative accessible maps for use when usual accessible routes are unavailable, so students have clear guidance on navigating the campus.

The Group have been developing plans to improve the reporting, visibility, communication and rectification of issues with DDA equipment:

- DDA equipment reported to Estates Customer Services (ECS) is flagged as a high priority and ECS should continue to be the correct reporting route to ensure this is flagged and prioritised. Plans will be explored to install additional QR codes near DDA equipment for reporting to ECS.
- Plentiful spares for high-failure DDA items will be kept in stores (possible for push-pad power doors but less likely for lifts which vary).
- If a maintenance operative is unable to fix an item of DDA equipment, a sign will be placed on the item to ensure everyone knows it has been reported, and work is underway to fix it.
- Students and staff can join an 'opt-in' open Teams channel. SSW can ensure any student registered with the disability team is made aware of this. Longer term plans would be a webpage that is automatically updated when an issue is reported for DDA equipment.
- Maps of areas will show alternative routes, should a lift become out of order.

The focus for 2025/26 includes:

- Reviewing the 'door knocking procedure' for Accommodation to ensure students with varying medical and accessibility needs are considered.
- Piloting a scheme to introduce a tactile map outside toilets to assist anyone who is visually impaired to navigate the space.
- Updating the webpages of campus maps so that teaching rooms illustrate the accessibility of that space.

Challenges

Reasonable Adjustments and Inclusion Passports

Reasonable Adjustment pathways, including both physical and digital adjustments, funding support, and line manager confidence in identifying, implementing and approving adjustments, has been identified as a barrier to staff progression, particularly for staff with disabilities but also for staff who are aging, have caring responsibilities, or who are experiencing peri / post menopause symptoms. Inclusion Passports are also reported as having inconsistent application, a lack of knowledge and confidence around how to use them, and a lack of awareness of their existence. A full review of Reasonable Adjustments and Inclusion Passports, including staff training and development around their use, is planned to begin in spring 2026, led by the Staff Wellbeing Committee.



Priority 4: EDI as a catalyst for social change

Accessible spaces

Over summer 2025, a series of strategic initiatives were delivered to place student support and services at the heart of campus life, ensuring they are visible, accessible, and easy to navigate. A key development was the relocation of SSW from an under-exposed location to the Eliot Extension, directly opposite the Templeman Library and adjacent to the central plaza, significantly increasing footfall and awareness.

During the mapping and feasibility phase, opportunities were identified to strengthen inclusivity. These included the creation of a dedicated sensory space to support neurodivergent students, alongside a bookable society space designed to meet the needs of protected and sensitive student societies, such as the Sanctuary. In addition, PS staff supporting the University's two Nexus' (the one-stop support services for all queries to be triaged at), were co-located within the same buildings as their Nexus hubs (Templeman and Sibson), ensuring staff are readily available to provide timely, face-to-face support. The Careers and Employability Service (CES) were enhanced via consolidation into Rutherford Extension, bringing the team into the heart of the campus in a prominent, accessible location, improving visibility and student engagement and further building on support services being centrally located.

Student participation in projects has continued to flourish via the Student Shapers programme, an initiative enabling students to work alongside Campus Services and ITS in their projects. Some key projects during the 2025 autumn term which have strengthened EDI values, include designing inclusive campus lounges, which promote belonging, and refreshing Living Black at Kent webpages. Further improvements being worked on include clearer information about lift locations on campus for those with accessibility requirements, with the aim of incorporating service status information via the online campus maps. Campus Services are also working on a programme of standardising PGR office spaces across schools, so experience is as uniform as possible. This work, alongside a new pilot PGR study hub in the Templeman Library, will continue through to September 2026, to ensure consistent, inclusive and high-quality provision.

Spotlights

Spotlight: Technical Staff Conference June 2025

Kent hosted a collaborative network event in their Sibson building for the Kent Technician Network (Universities of Kent, Greenwich and Canterbury Christ Church) and the Eastern ARC Technicians' Network (Universities of Kent, Essex, East Anglia and Sussex) on Friday 27 June 2025. Invitations were extended to the London and South-East Technician Commitment Leads Network and Norwich Research Park. The day offered insight, support, networking and opportunities for IT, technical services, and library staff across all levels and disciplines, highlighting their leadership in research, innovation, and education.

Accessibility and inclusivity were central: the programme was designed with accessibility in mind; advance information covered spaces, facilities, and amenities (with photos and links); quiet spaces were available; attendees could indicate pronoun preferences for name badges; onsite parking and accommodation information were provided; programme printouts and digital content were available; microphones were provided for clear sound; and Kent Technical Services and the Technician Commitment Working Group offered on-site support.

The feedback form for this event focused on accessibility and EDI to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The day included a mental wellbeing workshop and a Technical Voice session to gather insights on engagement and Technician Commitment activities. A [report](#) has been produced with [10 key recommendations](#) from on-the-day and post-event feedback.

Spotlight: Technician Commitment Activities

A priority within the Technician Commitment Action Plan has been ensuring that all technical staff have equitable access to opportunities. The EDI framework has made this possible by increasing the representation of women in leadership programmes, embedding the previously piloted confidential supplement provision into the T-PIKE Knowledge Exchange Fund to support technical staff facing access barriers like disabilities or caring responsibilities, making sure training and development opportunities are accessible to all technical staff, and incorporating the Technician Commitment Action Plan into the Athena SWAN Action Plan. Kent has technical representatives on the University's Athena SWAN Institutional Self-Assessment Team, EDI Operations Group and local school level EDI committees. The Technical Manager is also co-chair of MI TALENT's National EDI Committee for Technical Staff and related activities (e.g. national talks on working and networking with neurodiversity and advocacy of as well as on-going involvement in the Herschel Programme), and chair of the newly formed [ITSS UK Technical EDI Network Committee](#) which replaces the National EDI Committee for Technical Staff.

APPENDIX 1 – OUR STAFF AND STUDENT PROFILE

Staff overview

This section presents equality and diversity information for the academic year 2024/25 for staff at the University of Kent.

Table 1: Staff headcount

For the Academic year 2024/25 the University had a staff headcount of 3875.
(PS = Professional and Support Services) (Data collected on the 1 December 2025)

Staff Group	Number of employees 24/25	Percentage of employees 24/25	Percentage of employees 23/24
Academic	1450	40.2	37%
PS	2425	59.8	63%
Total	3875		

The impact of professional services restructures is not truly reflected in changes to overall numbers of PS staff at Kent. September – December 2025 saw a net decrease in employee headcount, predominantly as a result of the PS restructure and the introduction of Chartwells as the hospitality provider. This has been partially offset by the transfer of Job Shop from Kent Students' Union to Student Life. The School of Computing also recruits students to act as Peer Support Tutors, and External Engagement have recruited a significant number of Student Ambassadors. Salaried staff net numbers in PS have reduced, largely through restructuring.

Diversity of Leadership

Within the University of Kent, decision-making is centred in the University's main committees. Committees are comprised of appointed and elected members, and individuals often sit on more than one committee. Female staff made up 33% of the University Council, which is the principal executive and policy-making body of the University. Members who disclosed their ethnicity as Racially Minoritised comprised at most 20% of committee members; however, three committees have no declared Racially Minoritised members. Student representation data was not available to the EDI team.

Overall change on previous year across all major decision-making Committee is -15.48% female staff representation and +8.06% racially minoritised staff representation.

Table 2: Diversity of members sitting on university governance committees.

Committee	% of Female	% change on previous year	% of Racially Minoritised	% change on previous year
University Council	33%	-1.78%	20%	+2.61
University Senate	50%	+22%	18%	-4
Council Sub Committees				
Audit	25%	-41.67	0%	0
Ethics	33%	-27	0%	0
Finance and Resources	58%	+21.64	18%	-0.18
Honorary Degrees Committee	42%	-1.48	15%	+6.3
Lay Nominations Committee	29%	-16.86	0%	0
Remuneration Committee	60%	+26.67	20%	+3.33
Joint Standing Committee on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression	56%	N/A	11%	N/A

Staff balance by sex

For the purposes of this report, data for the sex field will be labelled as Sex, which differs from how this was labelled at Kent and in Advance HE reports prior to 2022 where this section was labelled as Gender. This labelling has been updated to align with Advance HE's guidance on equality data monitoring.

Chart 1 shows the percentages and proportions of female and male staff in each of the University's two staff groups. Females comprised 49.45% (47.4% in 2024) of academic staff and 63.25% (62.8% in 2024) of Professional Services Staff. There has been little difference in the proportion of female to male staff between 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years, suggesting that recent PS restructures impacted male and female staff equally.

Significant work on the Academic Pipeline has been undertaken in the 2025-25 academic year, across the AWF workstreams (Academic Probation, Promotion, RPD, Academic Career Map and WAM). Impact of these changes will not yet be evident in the data but will be monitored moving forward. Equality Impact Assessments were conducted across all workstreams to identify and mitigate against potential barriers for female, racially minoritised and disabled staff in particular. Academic career development is highlighted as a priority within the Race Equality Charter Mark, Athena SWAN and EDI Action Plans.

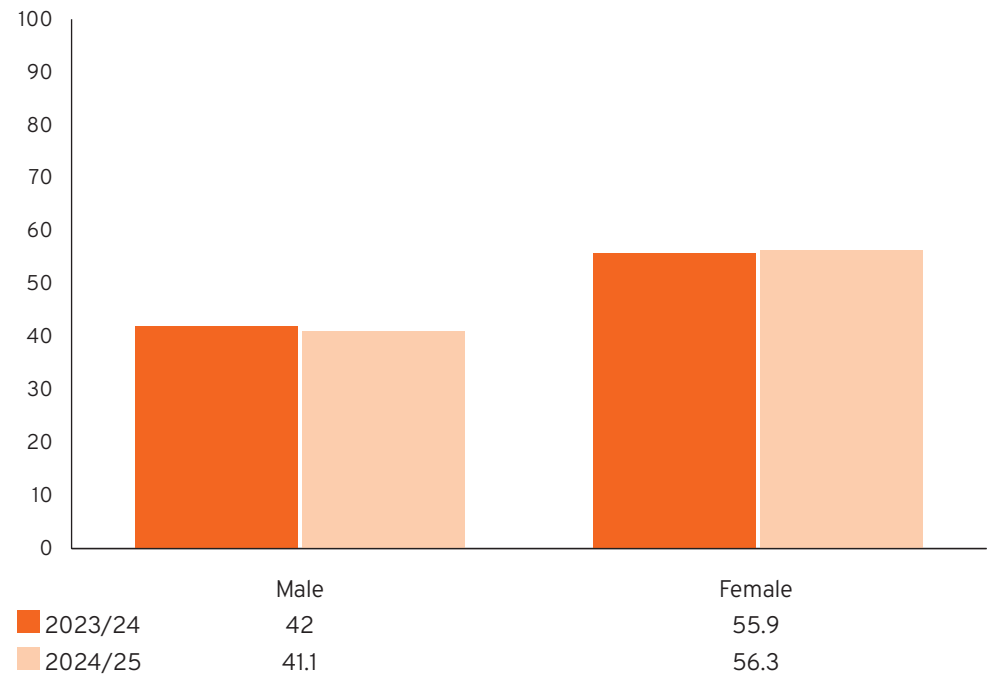
Chart 1: All staff by sex

Chart 2: Sex by staff group

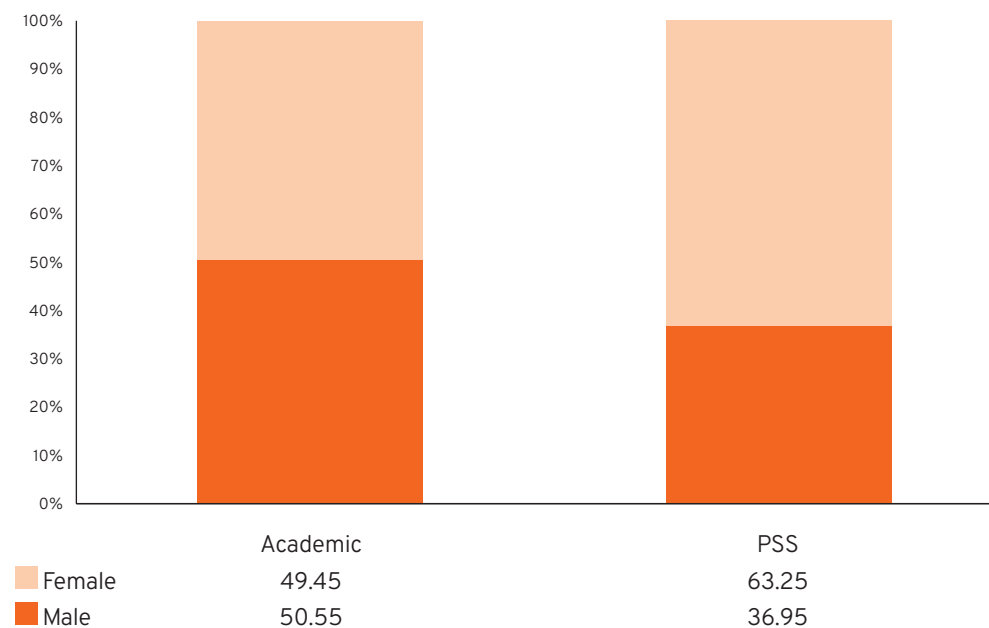


Chart 3: Staff number in academic pipeline (M/F)

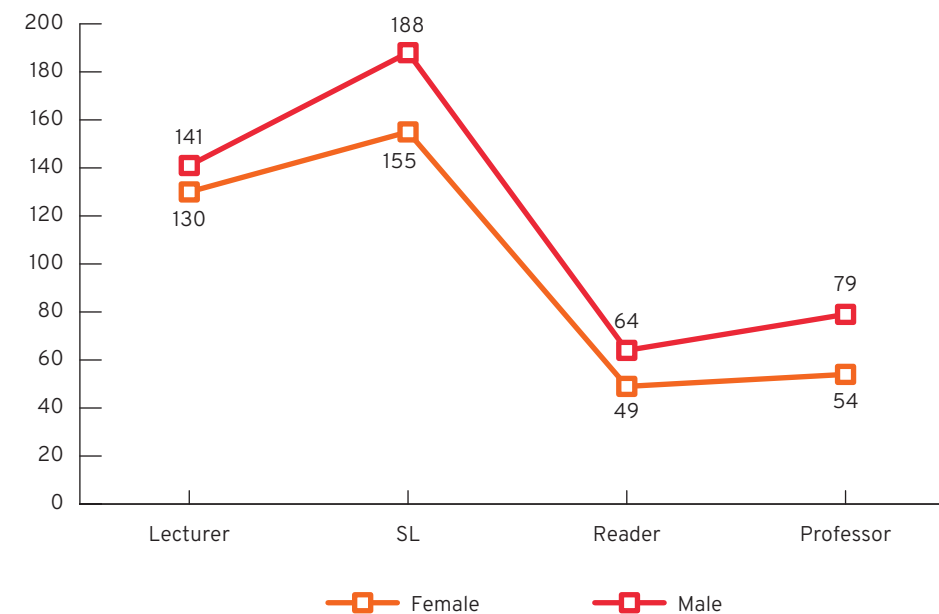


Table 3: Academic staff job categories by sex

	Female 2024	Female 2025	Male 2024	Male 2025
Lecturer	131	130	144	141
Professor	51	54	76	79
Reader	5	49	63	64
64	153	155	190	188

Staff balance by ethnicity

There has been a drop overall in the proportion of White staff at Kent (-5.64%), with the greatest impact on staff who identify as 'Other White Background' (-11.3%), offset by an increase in the proportion of White (British) staff (+5.66%). Representation across all BAME staff data has remained broadly consistent, with a small increase in the proportion of Asian staff identified, particularly across staff from Chinese (+2%) or Other Asian Background (+1%). Black, or Black British African staff proportions have also seen a small increase (+1.9%). As part of the academic School restructures, concerns were raised that staff from racially minoritised backgrounds were perceived to be disproportionately impacted. The proportion of racially minoritised professors decreased by 0.6% whilst the proportion of white professors increased by 0.5%. This does not indicate any concerning bias at a Professor level within academic restructures. The data initially does indicate a negative impact on staff from ethnically minoritised cohorts. However, there has been an overall reduction on staff who have declared ethnicity and a proportional decrease in White staff. The reduction is staff willing to declare ethnicity will be an area to monitor moving forward.

Chart 4: All staff by ethnicity

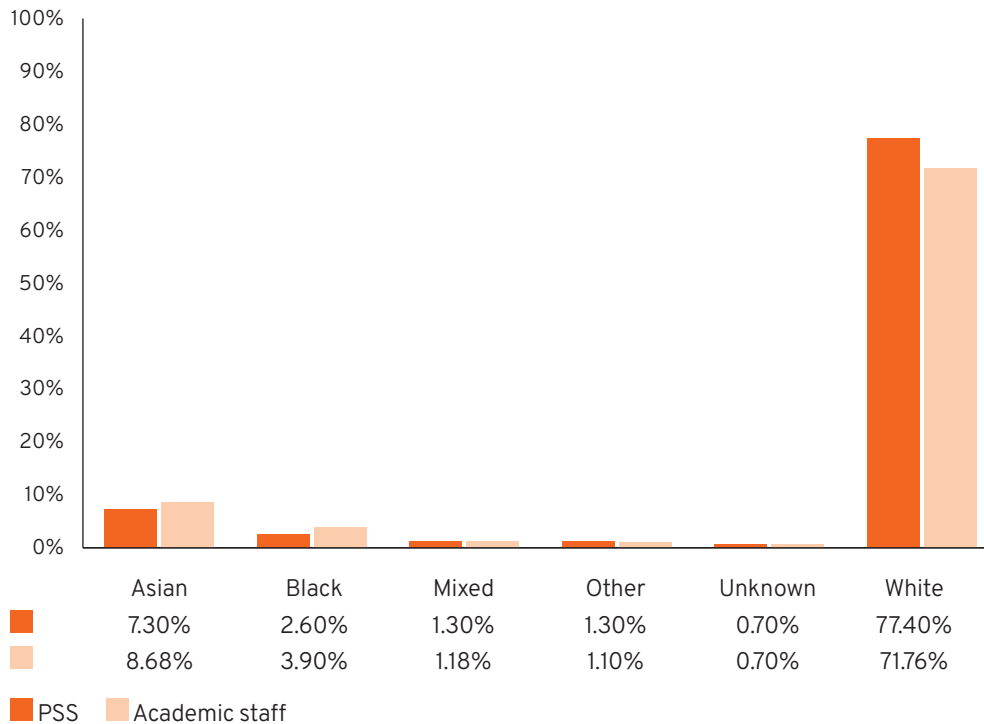


Chart 5: Staff ethnicity by job category

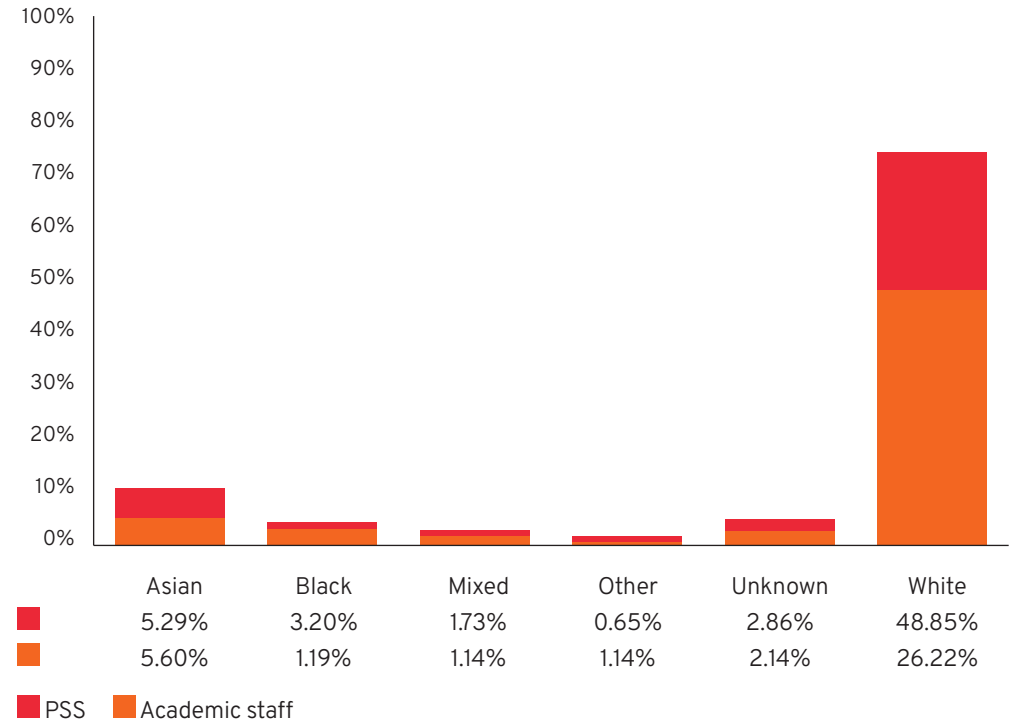


Table 5: Staff data by ethnicity

	2023/24	2024/25		2023/24	2024/25
Arab	2%	1%	Mixed – White and Black African	0%	0%
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0.6%	0.7%	Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0%	0%
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2.7%	2.7%	Other Asian background	2%	3%
Black or Black British – Pakistani	0.00%	0%	Other Black background	0%	0%
Black or Black British – African	1.3%	3.2%	Other ethnic background	1.30%	1.1%
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1.3%	0.7%	Other mixed background	1.30%	1.18%
Chinese	0%	2%	Other White background	22.60%	11.3%
Gypsy or Traveller	0%	0%	White (British)	54.80%	60.46%
Mixed – White and Asian	1.3%	0.8%	Unknown	0.70%	0.7%

Table 6: Staff ethnicity and nationality %

	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other	Unknown	White
EU	0.20%	0.20%	0.31%	0.26%	0.72%	8.66%
Non-EU	5.92%	1.87%	0.54%	0.90%	0.72%	2.31%
UK	4.64%	2.28%	2.00%	0.61%	3.43%	63.49%
Unknown	0.05%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.05%	0.03%

Table 7: Professors by ethnicity 2023/24 vs 2024/25

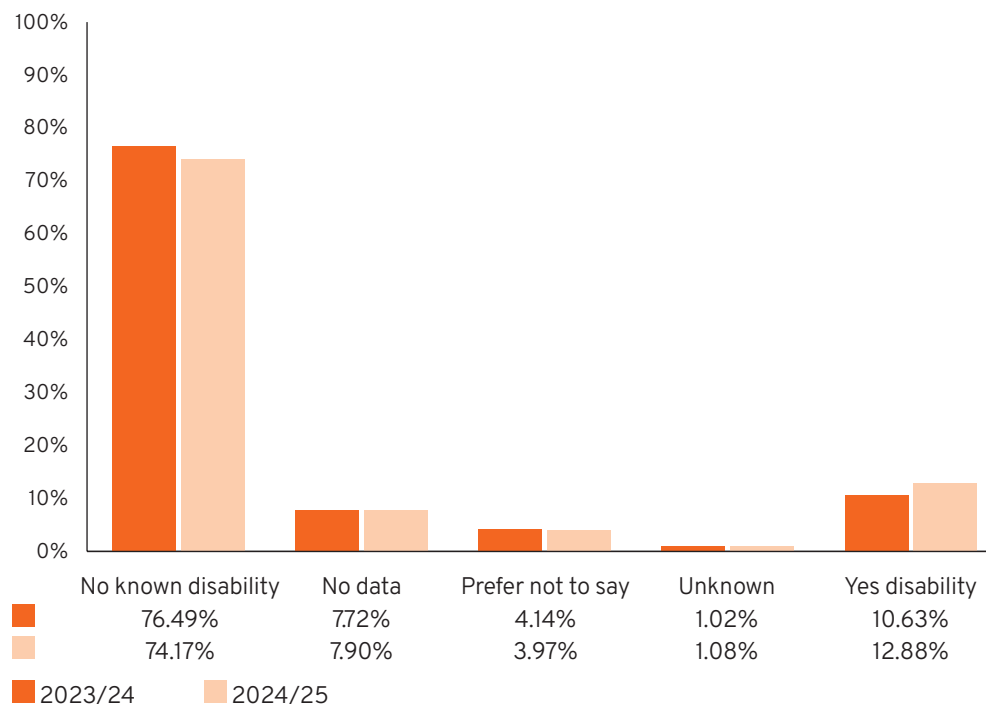
Professors by ethnicity	2023/24%	2024/25%
Asian	9.6	9.7
Black	0.7	0.7
Mixed	1.5	1.5
Other	3.7	3
Unknown	6.6	6
White	77.7	78.2
% Racially minoritised professors	15.50	14.9

Staff balance by disability⁶

The proportion of staff declaring a disability has increased by 2.25%, which is positive. This could be an indication of greater confidence in Kent's culture and ability to support staff with disabilities. Work on increasing line manager capabilities to support staff with disabilities, simpler and clearer processes for accessing reasonable adjustments, and developing an open and supportive environment to discuss disabilities (including neurodiverse conditions) is ongoing and a priority area for action in 2025-26.

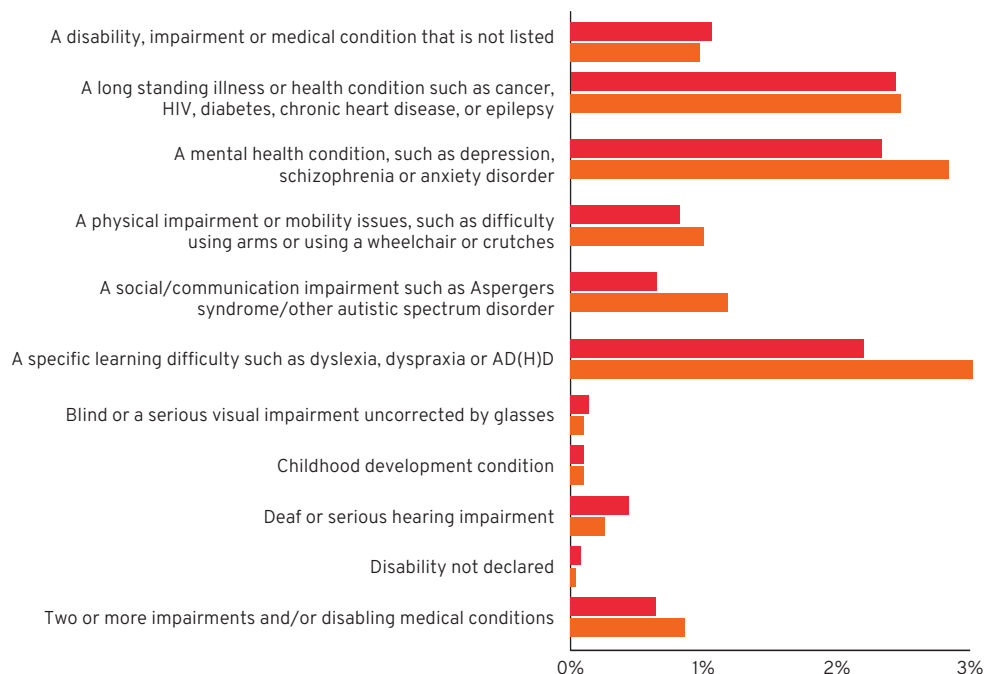
The greatest proportion of increases in declared disabilities was for neurodiverse conditions (+1.35%) and mental health conditions (+0.5%). The increase in declared mental health conditions could be attributed to stress or anxiety triggered by restructuring and associated risks to job security. Signposting to support, including the EAP, is included in all communications relating to restructures, and targeted work to upskill line managers to support staff with mental health conditions is ongoing, including as part of the Line Manager's Toolkit. Wellbeing conversations are included as part of RPD's.

Chart 6: All staff by disclosed disability 2023/24 vs 2024/25



⁶ Categories are in line with those used by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to allow for national benchmarking



Chart 7: All staff by disclosed disability 2024/25

■ 2023 ■ 2024

	2023	2024
A disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed	1.06%	0.97%
A long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy	2.44%	2.48%
A mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder	2.34%	2.84%
A physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using arms or using a wheelchair or crutches	0.82%	1.00%
A social/communication impairment such as Aspergers syndrome/ other autistic spectrum disorder	0.65%	1.18%
A specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D	2.20%	3.02%
Blind or a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses	0.14%	0.10%
Childhood development condition	0.14%	0.15%
Deaf or serious hearing impairment	0.36%	0.43%
Disability not declared	0.05%	0.08%
Two or more impairments and/or disabling medical conditions	0.87%	0.66%
Deaf or serious hearing impairment	0.36%	0.43%
Disability not declared	0.05%	0.08%
Two or more impairments and/or disabling medical conditions	0.87%	0.66%

Staff balance by religion and belief

There has been little change in the disclosed religion or belief status for staff. Identified areas of work required include increasing staff confidence in identifying instances of antisemitism. Kent is working with the Union of Jewish Students to run workshops in this area, with a particular focus on upskilling staff in employee relations and student-facing areas. Kent launched its Academic Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Expression Code of Practice in 2025-26, with work ongoing to ensure that a culture of respectful and robust debate is encouraged that does not encroach on the individual freedoms and right to psychological safety of staff and students.

Chart 8: All staff religion or belief status 2023/24 vs 2024/25

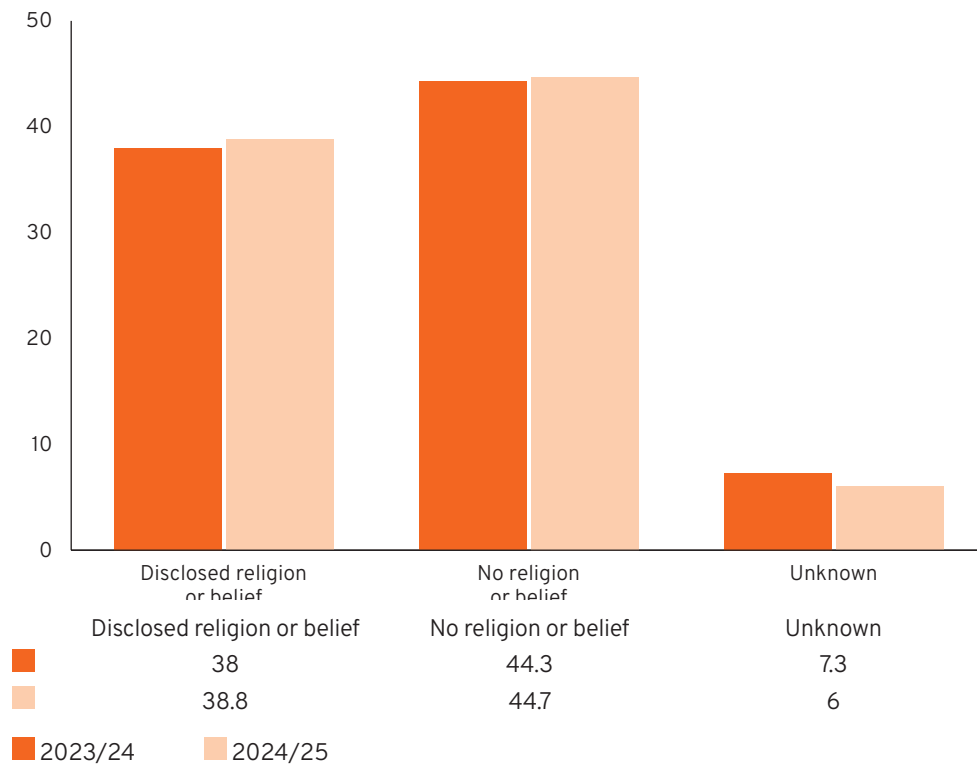
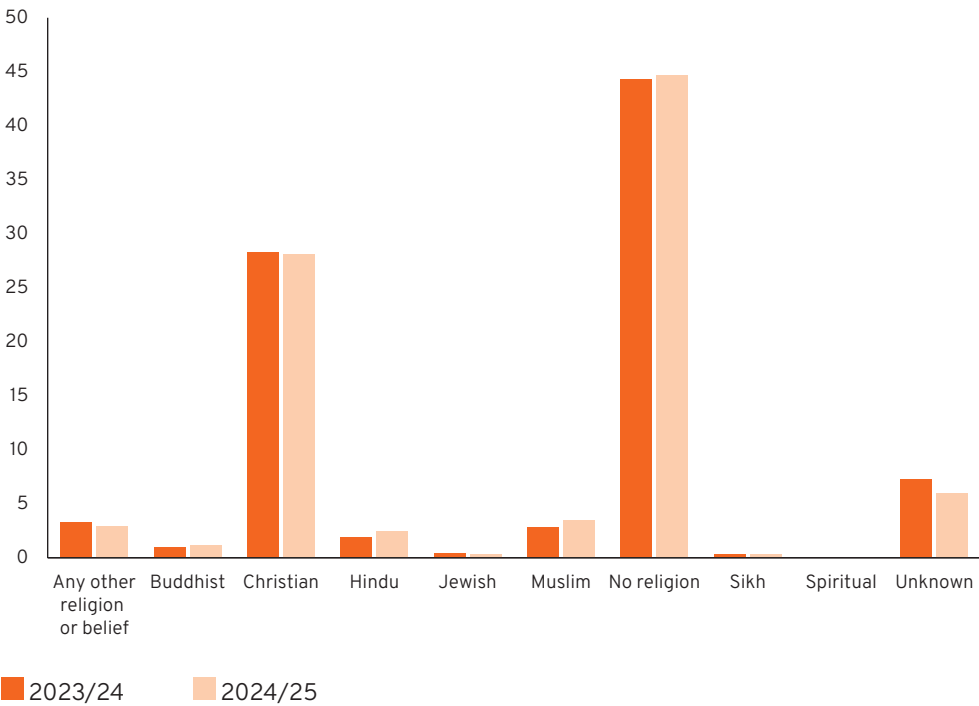


Chart 9: All staff by disclosed religion or belief 2023/24 vs 2024/25



	2022-23	2023-24
Any other religion or belief	3.3	2.9
Buddhist	1	1.2
Christian	28.3	28.1
Hindu	1.9	2.5
Jewish	0.4	0.3
Muslim	2.8	3.5
No religion	44.3	44.7
Sikh	0.3	0.3
Spiritual	0	0
Unknown	7.3	6

Staff balance by age

There has been little change in the overall staff age demographic, with a small increase in the proportion of staff aged 25 and under (+1.58%). This is likely to be triggered by the transfer of Job Shop from Kent Students' Union to Student Life and Student Ambassadors recruited by External Engagement and is supported by the higher proportion of PS staff in the 25 and under age category compared to academic staff. There is a significant reduction in academic staff between the 46-55 and 56 and over age brackets.

Chart 10: All staff by age group

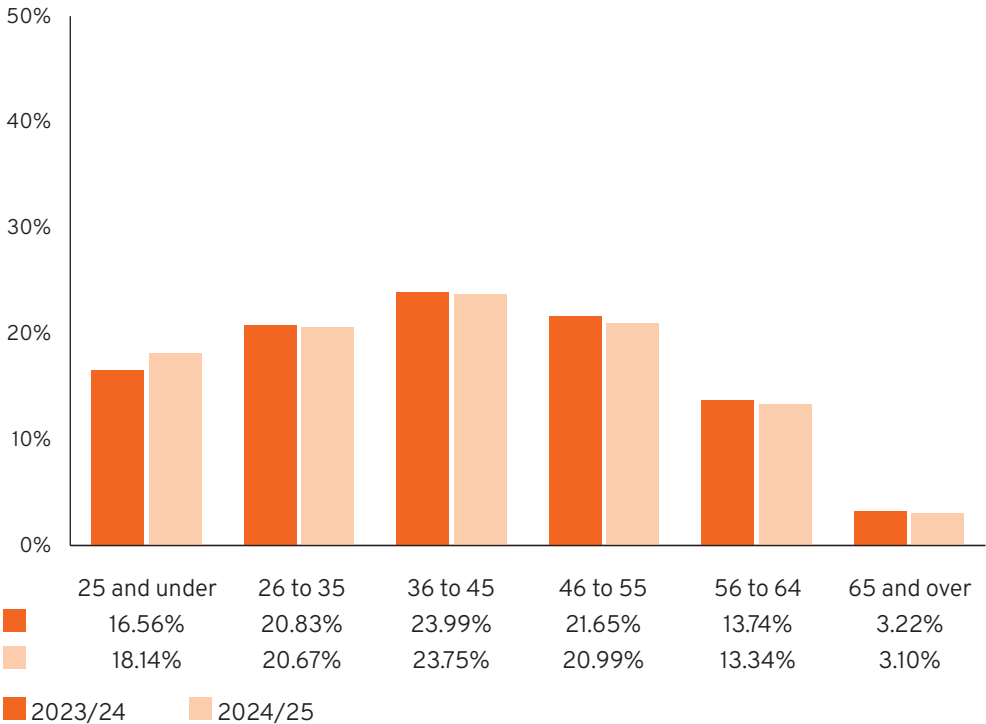
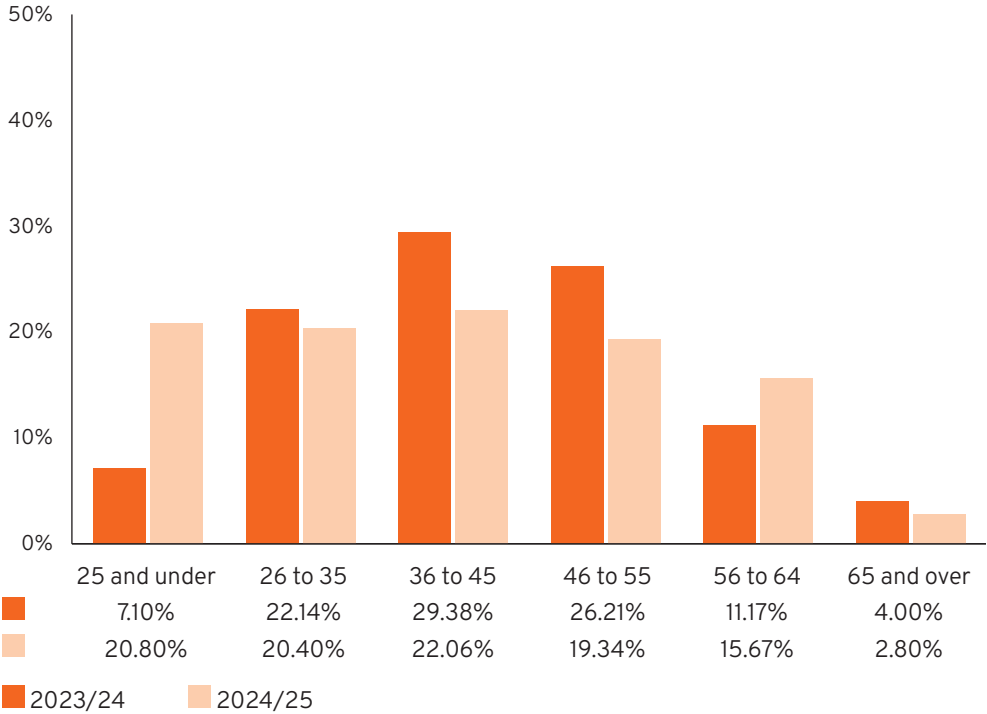


Chart 11: Academic vs PS staff by age group 2024/25



Staff balance by sexual orientation and gender identity

There has been no significant change in the proportion of staff declaring their sexual orientation or gender identity. This is reassuring as it could indicate that, despite the external political environment that has been particularly negative for transgender and non-binary individuals, including the implications of the UK Supreme Court Ruling on the legal definition of a woman, transgender and non-binary colleagues still feel that Kent is a safe and supportive enough environment to continue to declare their gender identity in increasing numbers. However, there is still a significant proportion of staff not declaring their gender identity, although this has reduced by -4.25%, so any conclusions must be considered cautiously.

Chart 12: All staff by sexual orientation 2023/24 vs 2024/25

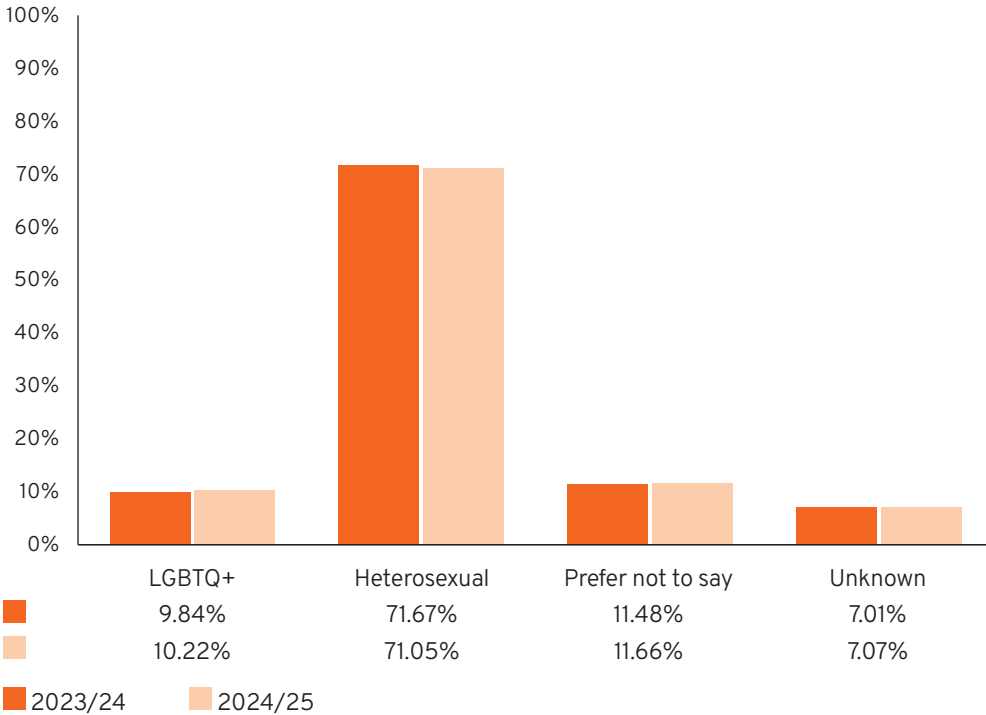
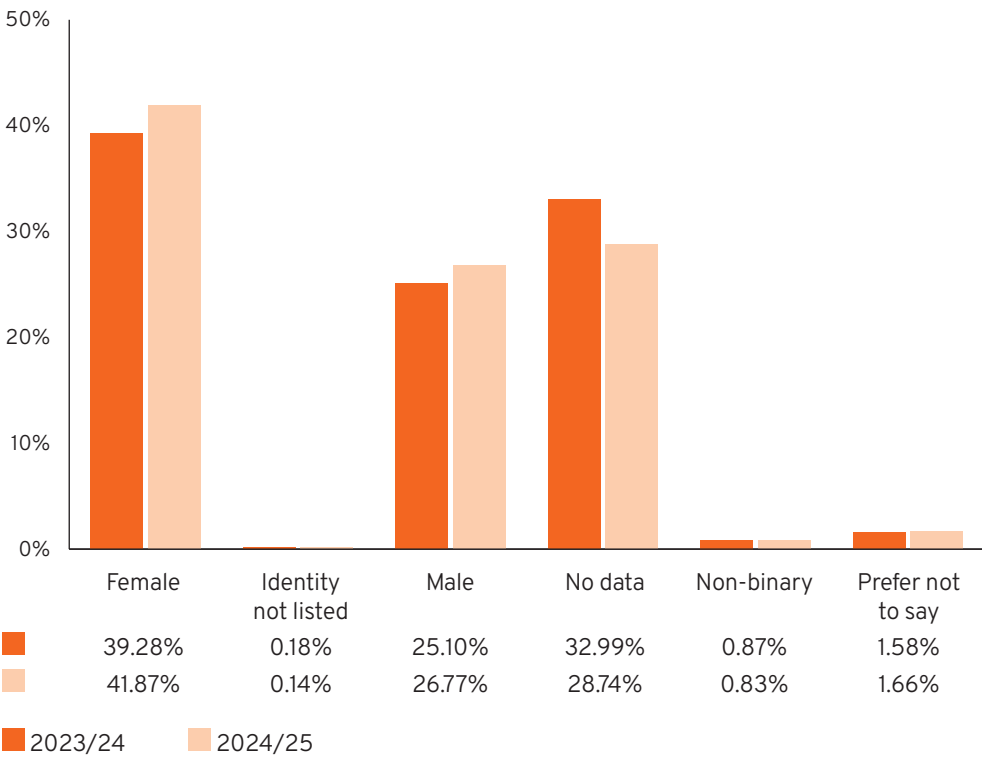


Chart 13: All staff by gender identity 2023/24 vs 2024/25



Staff recruitment

Recruitment by sex

There is parity between males and females applying for roles and moving onto being shortlisted, with females then being more likely to being hired. This is consistent between both Academic and PS roles. This suggests that Kent's recruitment process post-application is not introducing bias, but that more work could be done to encourage females to apply for roles in the first instance. Non-binary individuals however appear to face challenges post shortlisting, particularly in academic roles. Work in this area may help to address concerns raised that Kent's gender pay gap has not seen any significant movement in recent years. The mean gender pay gap has reduced to 12.5% from 13.2% whilst the median gender pay gap has increased from 11.7% to 13.3%. Kent's Equality Pay Gap Report 2025 may be viewed here [EqualPayGapReport2025.pdf](#)

Chart 14: All staff recruitment by sex

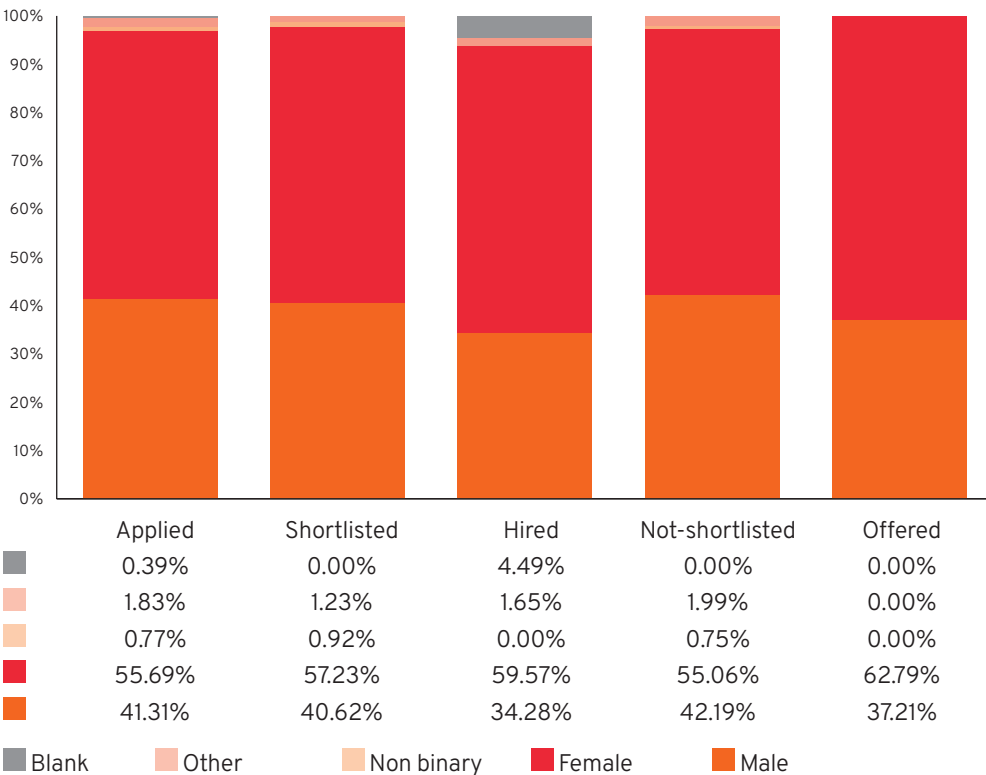


Chart 15: Academic staff recruitment by sex

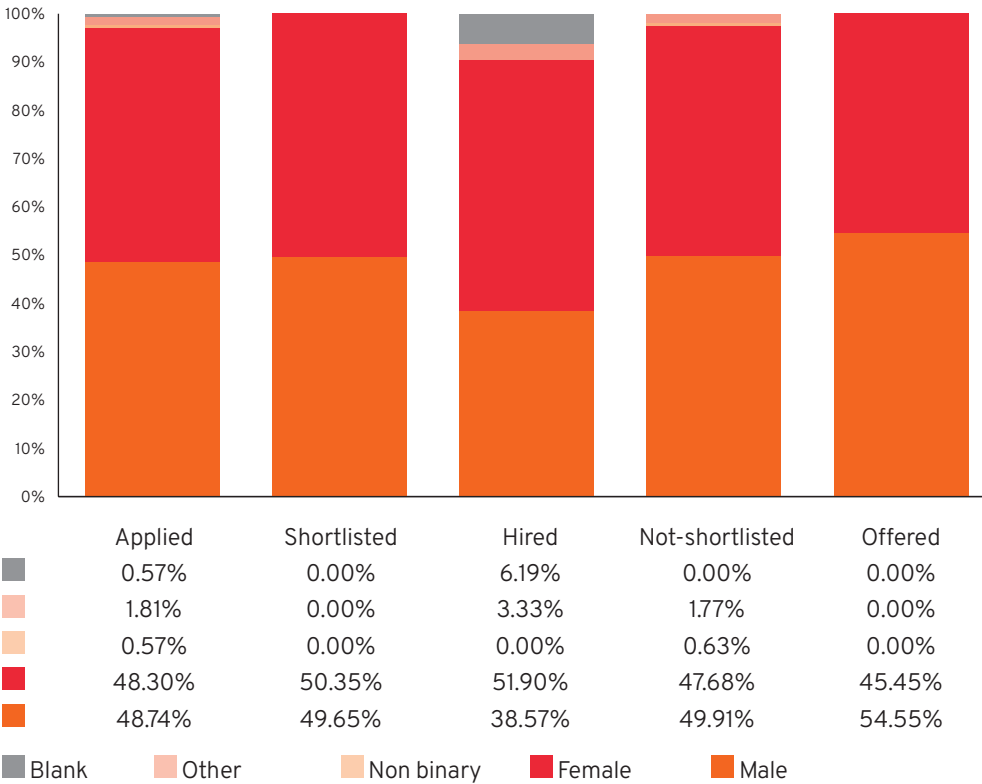
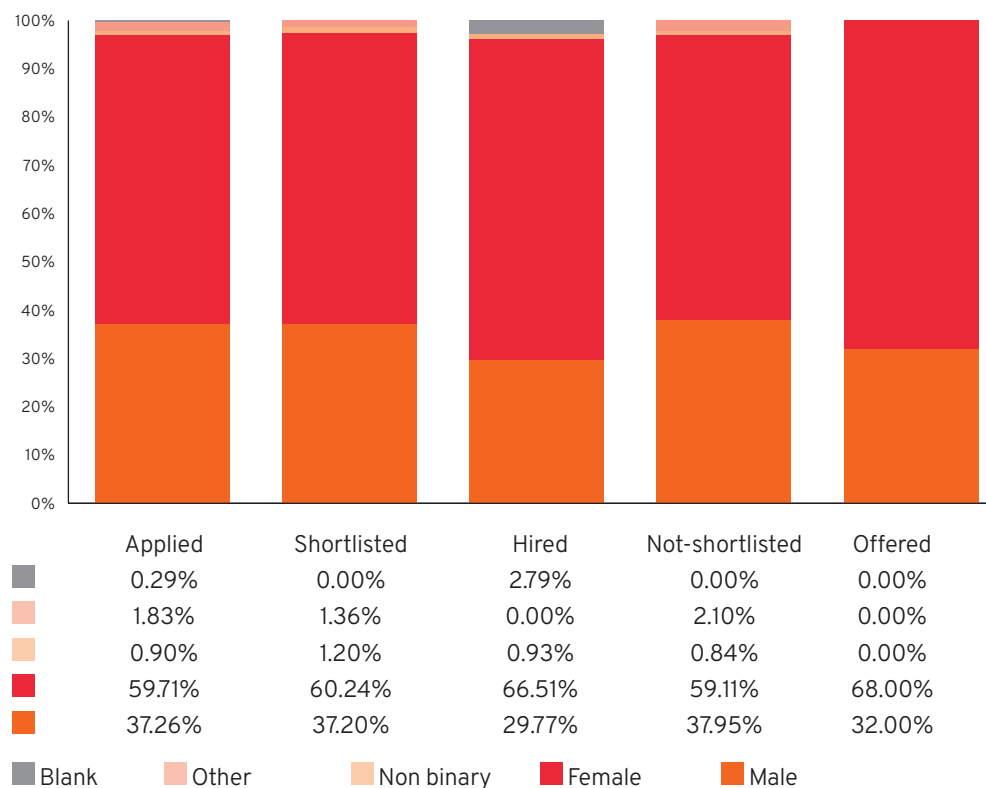


Chart 16: PS staff recruitment by sex



Staff recruitment by ethnicity

Kent's data demonstrates that there are barriers for BAME staff, particularly those from Asian backgrounds in moving to Hired status post shortlisting. Of particular note are barriers faced by Academic Staff of Asian and Black background's moving from Applied to Shortlisted and then to Hired status. White academics are approximately:

- Twice as likely to be shortlisted compared with Black academics, and four times more likely to be hired after being shortlisted, White
- Twice as likely to be shortlisted compared with Asian academics, and twice as likely to be hired.
- Twice as likely to be hired after being shortlisted compared with Mixed academics.
- PS Staff of Asian backgrounds moving from Shortlisted to Hired status also face barriers. There are specified measures and targets within the Race Equality Charter Action Plan that focus on staff recruitment and career progression. See Priority 1: Building a robust, future-ready EDI framework; Race Equality Charter for more information.

Chart 17: All staff recruitment by ethnicity 2024/25

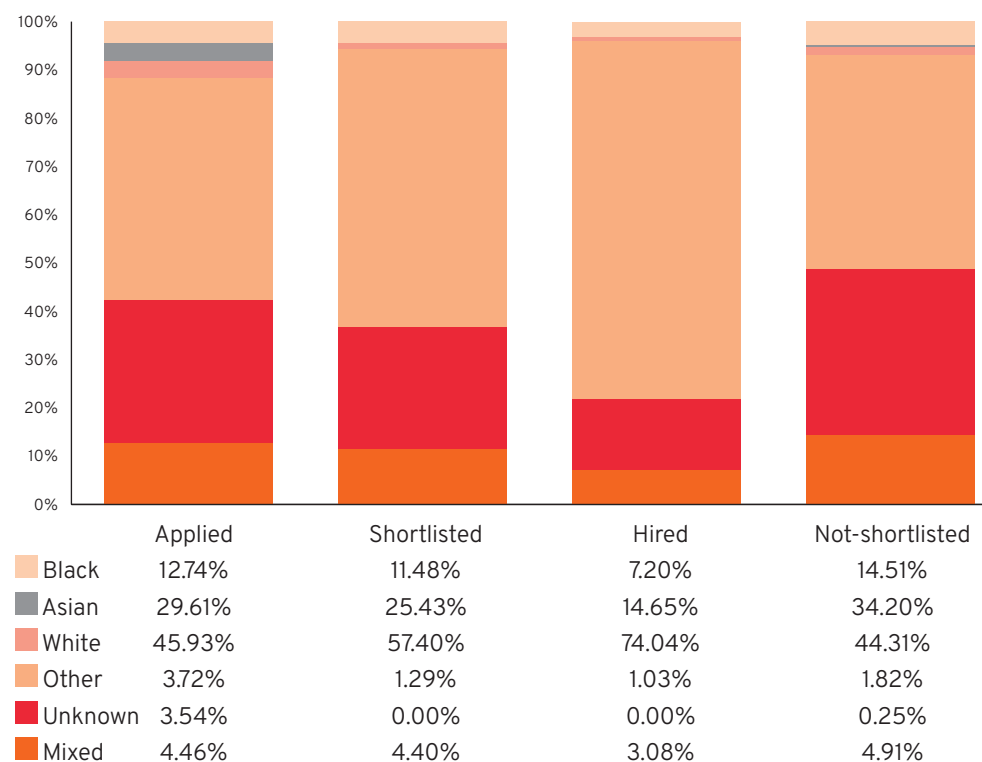


Chart 18: Academic recruitment by ethnicity

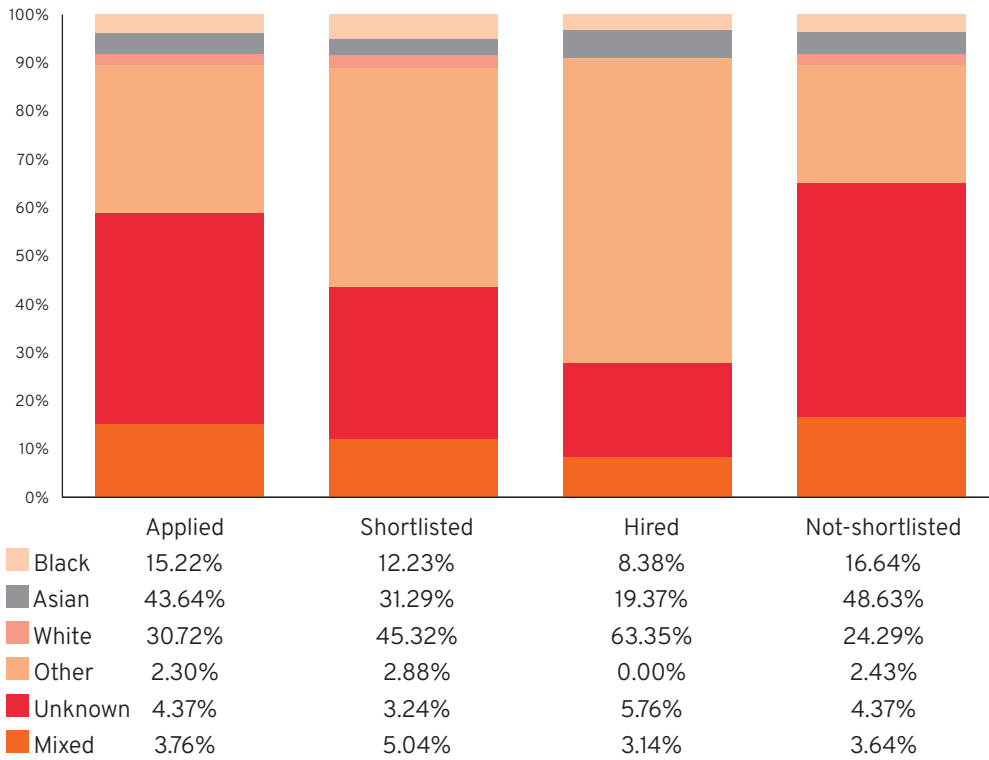
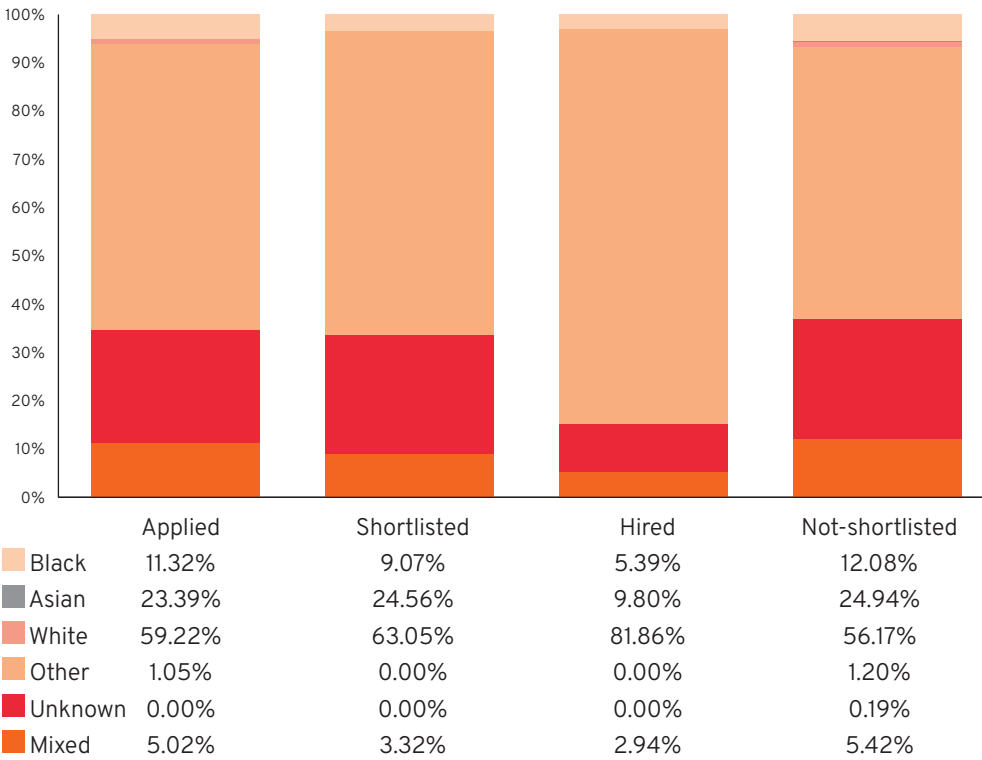


Chart 19: PS recruitment by ethnicity



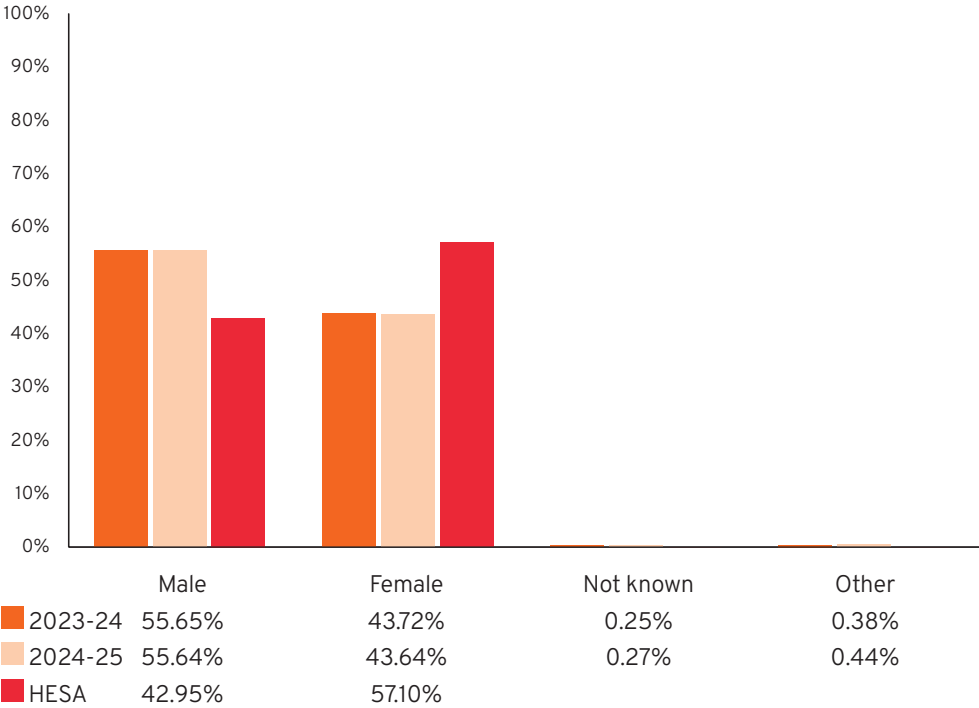
Student overview

This section presents equality and diversity information for the academic year 2024/25 for students at the University of Kent. For the academic year 2024/25 the University had a student headcount of 17,157 at year end. This represents a decrease of 1,121 on the previous year's headcount. There are changes to groupings that impact Age on Entry, Disability Type, Ethnic Group and Sexual Orientation Group. The groupings used now match the Office for Student categorisations used in the institutional performance metrics for the B3 student outcomes and APP metrics, however, are not aligned with Advance HE groupings which mirror HESA categories. This will make like-for-like comparison against the sector challenging, although overall trends can be identified. The most recent national benchmark data is for the 2022/23 academic year.

Student balance by sex

The proportion of male and female students remains consistent, with female students being underrepresented compared to the sector.

Chart 20: Student balance by sex



Student balance by ethnicity

The overall student balance by Ethnicity remains broadly consistent. Kent continues to be significantly more likely to attract BAME students than the sector average (+19.11%). Asian and Black continue to be the most represented groups within the BAME category, consisting of 38.46% of the overall student population. Home students are most likely to be from White (53.13%), Black (21.39%) and Mixed (6.10%) backgrounds. White and BAME students are the most represented in APP categories, with White students being as likely to have an APP flag (51.29%) as not to have one (45.87%), whilst Black students are more likely to have an APP flag (23.39%) than not to have one (17.75%). The proportion of BAME care leavers has reduced slightly from 60.91% to 57.28%, compared to White care leavers (24.69% reduced to 21.84%). The overall number of care leavers at Kent has reduced by 16.48%.

Chart 21: Student balance by ethnic BAME group

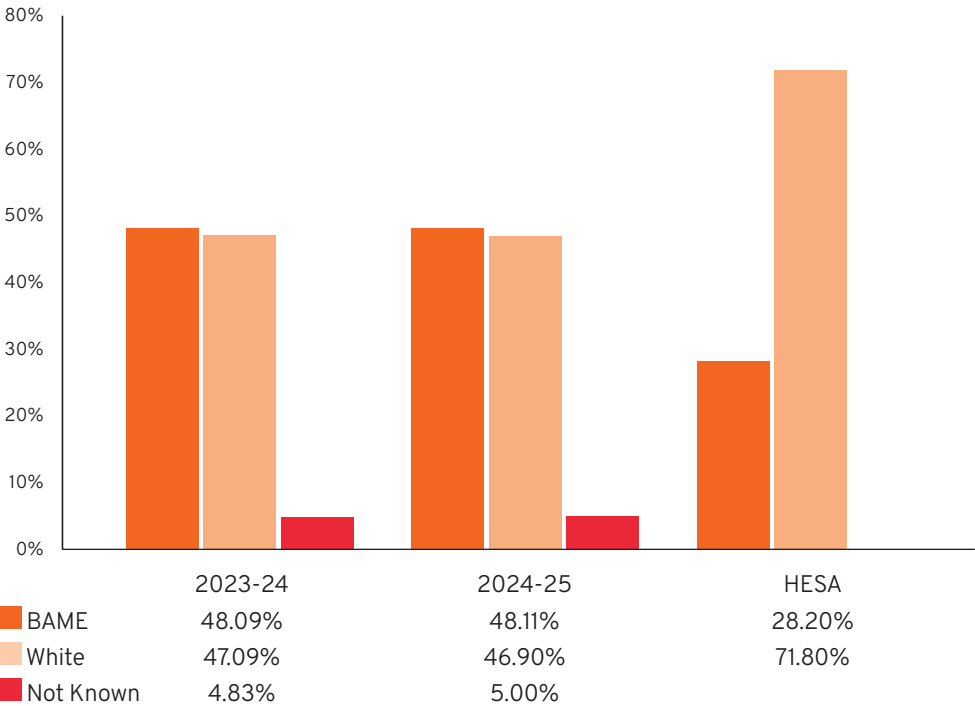


Chart 22: All students by ethnic group

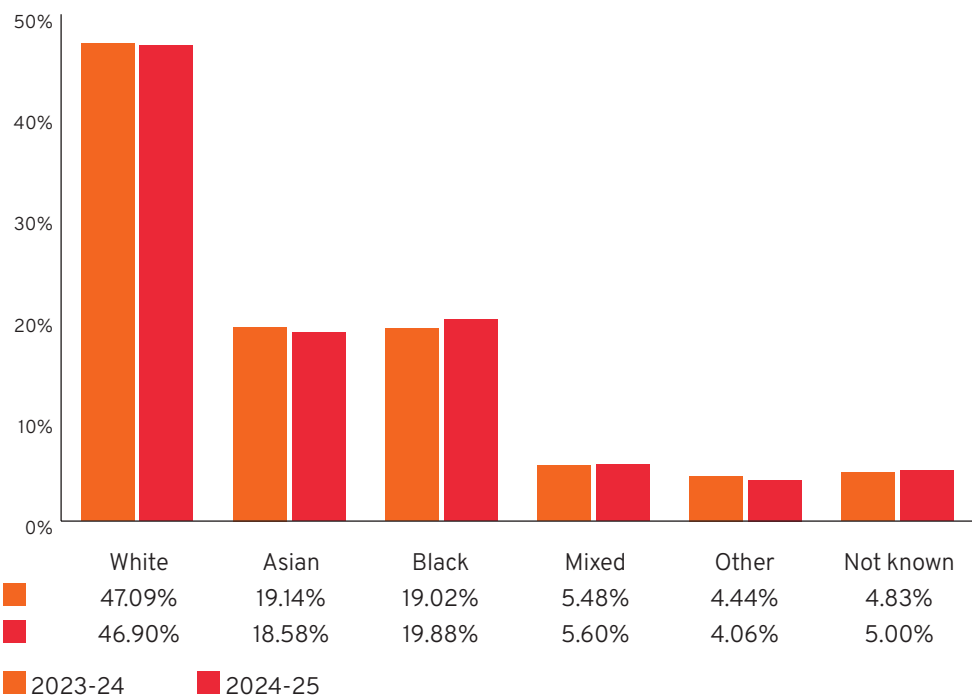


Chart 23: Student ethnic group (UK/non-UK 2024/25)

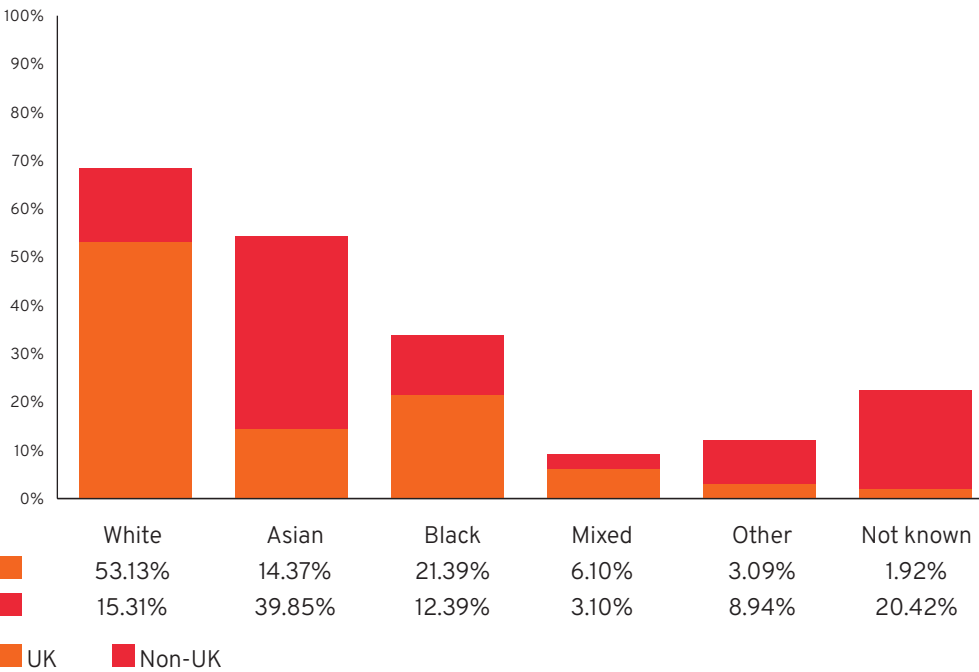


Chart 24: BAME group by access and participation plan status

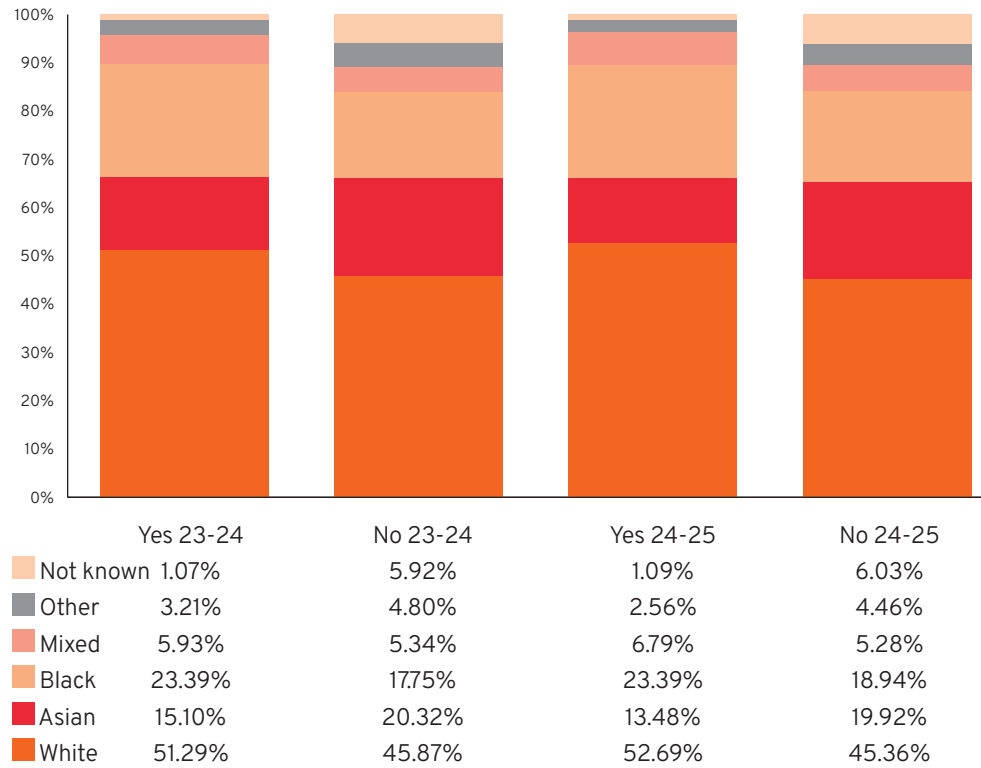
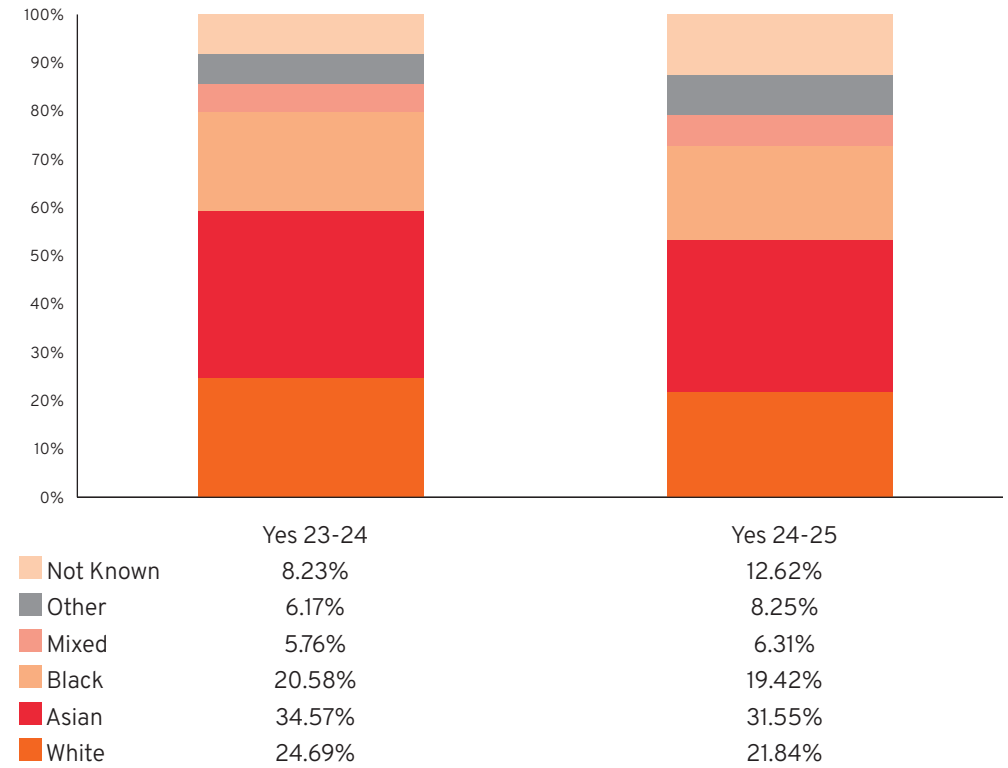


Chart 25: Care leaver by ethnicity



Student balance by disability⁷

The proportion of students declaring a disability continues to rise year on year and is significantly higher than the national average. The proportion of students with specific learning difficulties and mental health conditions remains high, and there are increases in the proportion of students with multiple disabilities, indicating increases in students with complex support needs. Significant work has been undertaken to restructure the academic year, develop academic advisor systems and introduce practical support opportunities, including the new neurodiversity space, to support students.

Chart 26: Student balance by disability

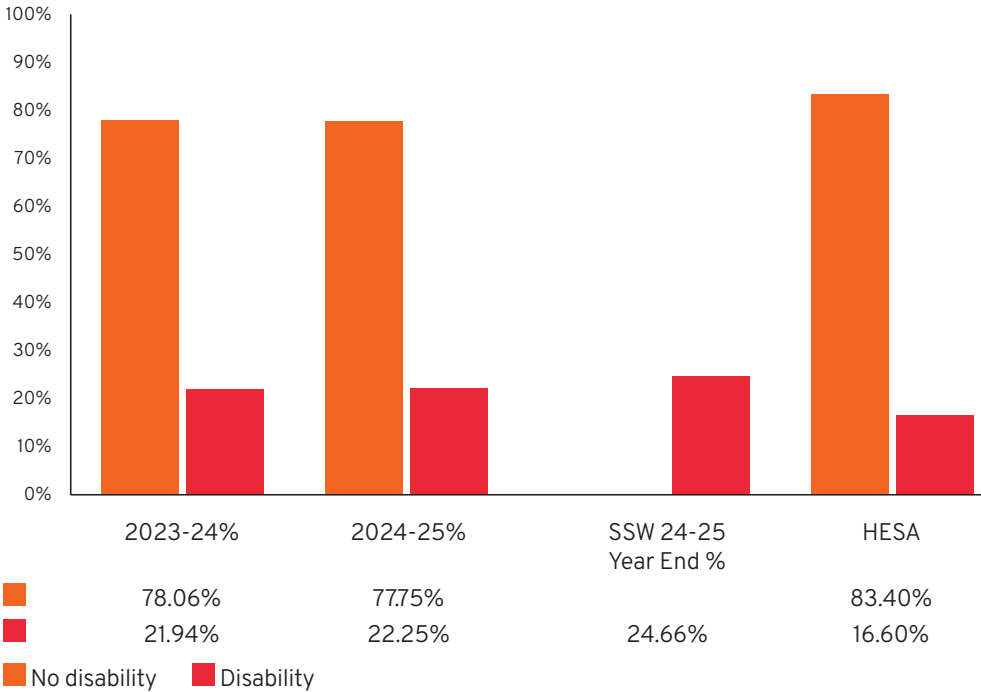
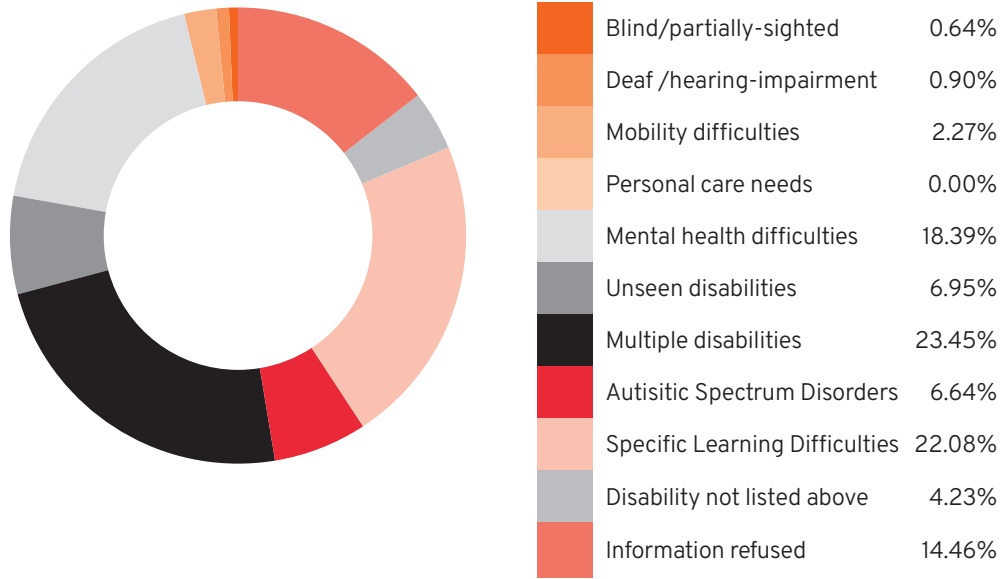


Chart 27: Student Support and Wellbeing year end 2025 disability type



⁷ Categories are in line with those used by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to allow for national benchmarking

Student balance by age

There have been no significant changes to Kent's student age profile. Kent's age profile remains significantly younger than the national average.

Chart 28: Student age

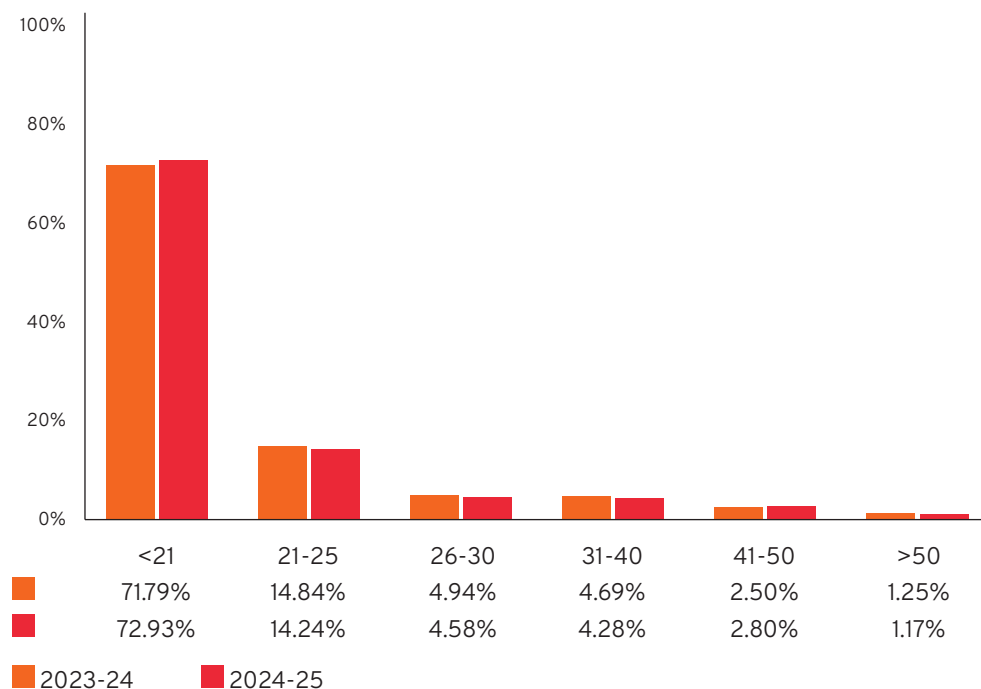
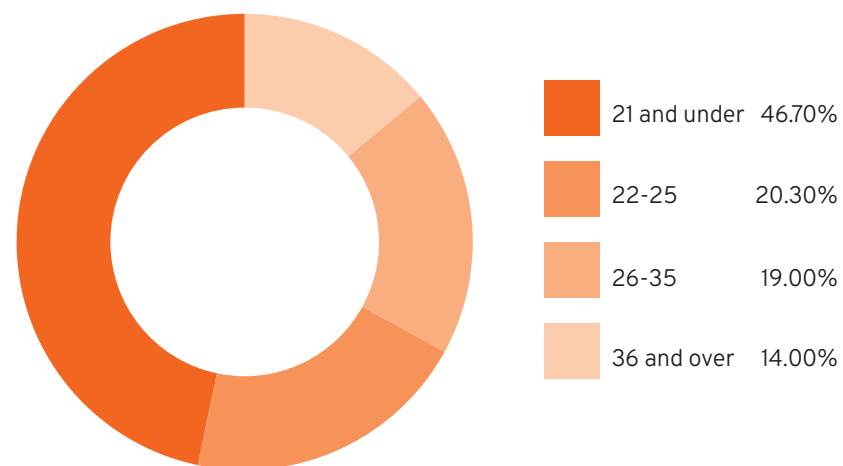


Chart 29: National student age



Student balance by religion and belief

There has been a marginal increase in the proportion of students declaring a religion or belief (+1.15%), although this cannot be attributed to any particular increase in an identified religion or belief. Kent is on par with the national average. Work to create a centralised, flexible space to support students of faith is in discussion.

Chart 30: Student religion

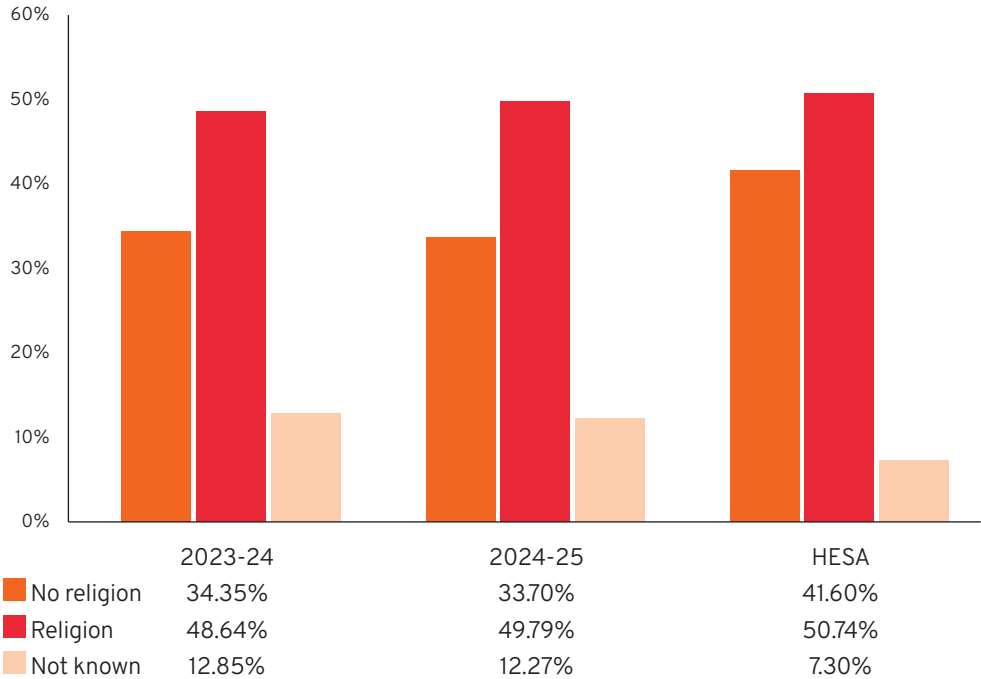
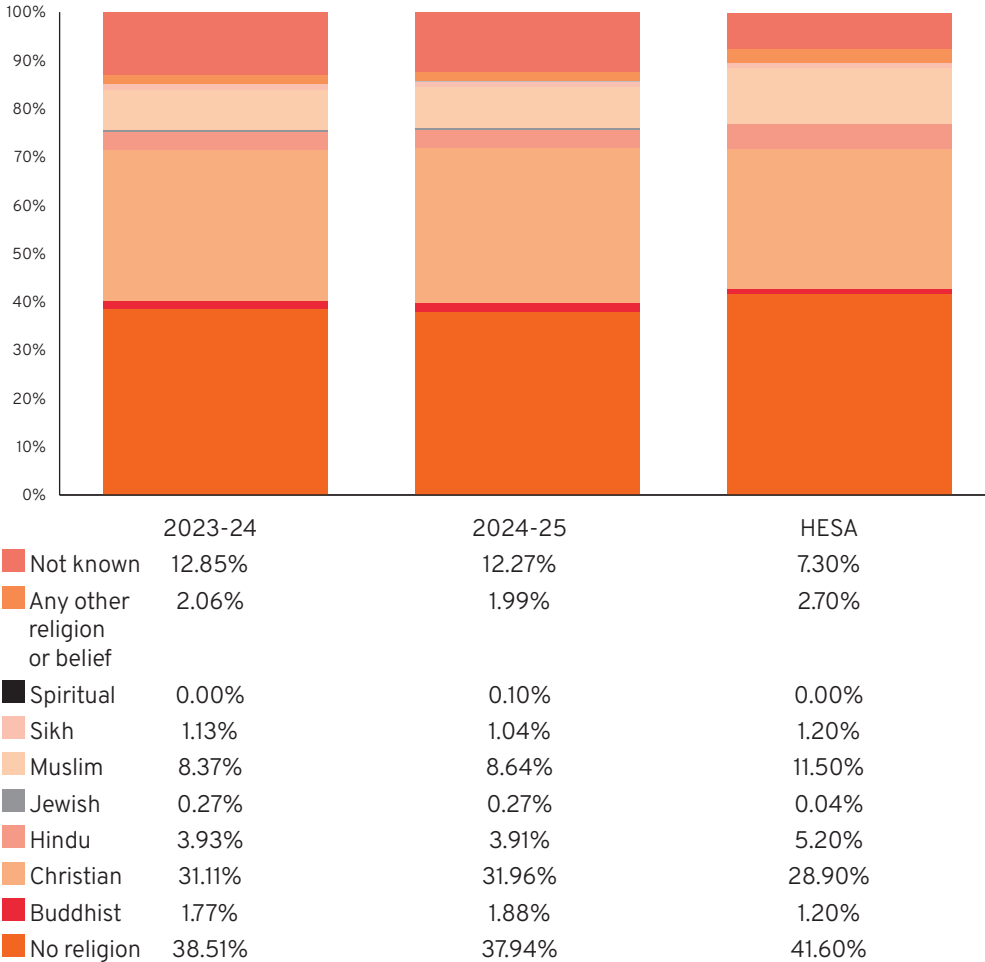


Chart 31: Student religion by type





Student balance by sexual orientation and gender identity

There has been no significant increase in the proportion of students who identify as LGB+, although Kent continues to attract proportionally more students than the sector average. Despite decreases in student numbers, the proportion of students identifying as a different gender to the gender they were identified as birth has increased by 0.29%. This could be a reflection of the level of support that Kent provides to transgender and non-binary students, including hosting a support group, providing the Gender Affirmation Fund, and providing targeted information as part of our recruitment materials for LGBTQIA students.

Chart 32: Student balance by sexual orientation

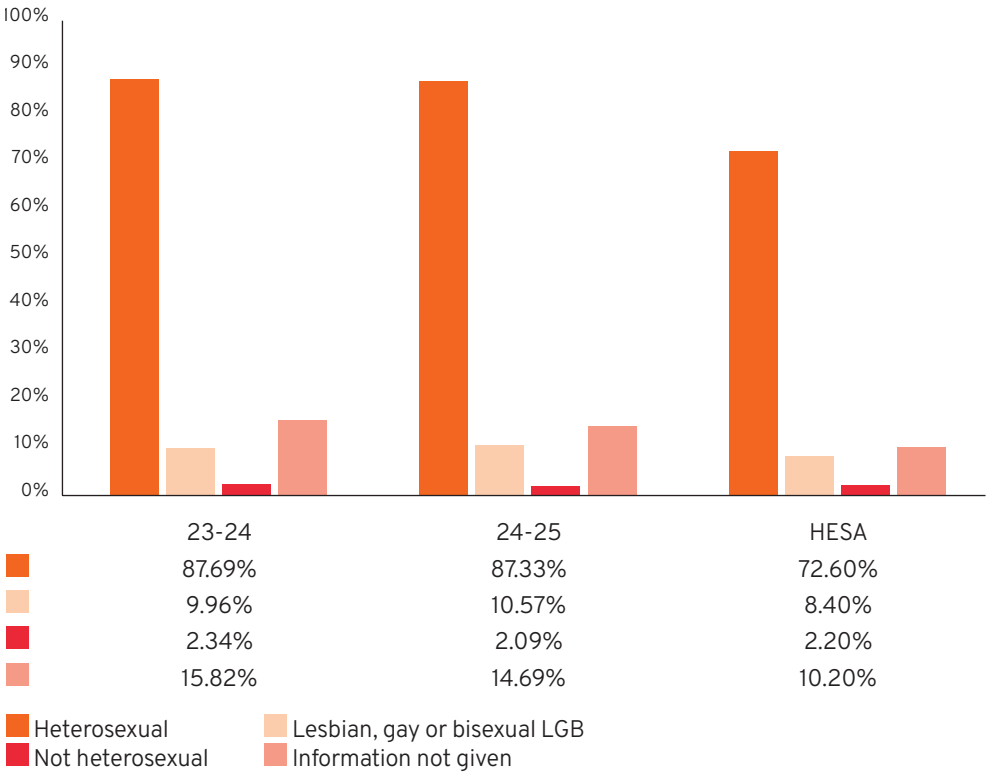
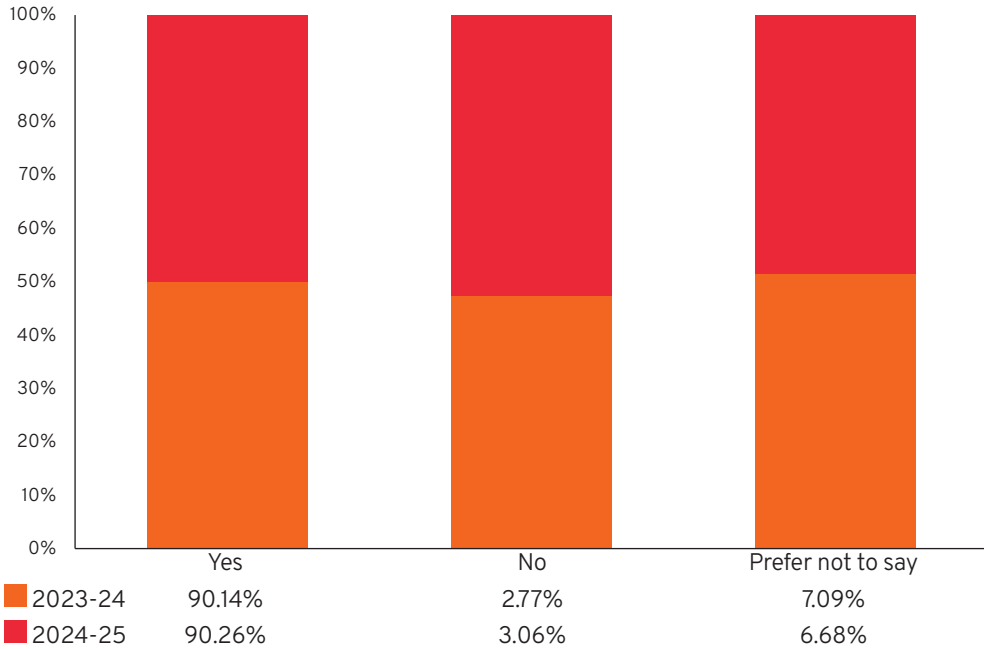


Chart 33: Student balance by gender identity. response to the question “Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth”



APPENDIX 2 – EDI STRATEGY 2025-30

EDI vision

The University of Kent is an organisation that respects people as individuals with their own unique value, expertise and experience and always puts this first and foremost at the heart of all that it does. Kent is somewhere that our staff and students feel that they belong and where they can grow, develop and succeed. Kent's ambition is to be a beacon for social change, always looking both inwardly to improve and outwardly to lead.

This is aligned to drive Our University Community goal to 'operate more as one ecosystem, harnessing different contributions and addressing different needs to drive different ways of working and thriving together'.

The EDI Strategy sets out our vision and priorities in relation to all aspects of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Kent. It incorporates activities to promote equality across the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics⁸ and other key identified vulnerable groups (including low socio-economic background (poverty), caring responsibility, international), our Athena SWAN, Race Equality Charter and Student Minds Mental Health Charter action plans, the Access and Participation Plan and actions to address our pay gaps and degree attainment gaps.

Strategic principles

These overarching principles of EDI are applied to all work and situations at Kent and are golden threads to be woven throughout all activity, designed to embed EDI at a fundamental level within the institution:

- Nothing about us, without us⁹;
- Inclusive by design;
- Data informed, experience and research led; and
- Visibly inclusive.

⁸ Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation

⁹ Credit is given to the Disabled People's Movement for the slogan 'Nothing About Us, Without Us', which originated within the disability rights community and was coined by James Charlton as the title of his 1998 book. It sums up a vision that people with mental health disabilities must be meaningfully involved in every element of mental health support and delivery. At Kent, our goal is to ensure meaningful engagement with people with lived experiences and from marginalised backgrounds in all elements of our EDI work, in regard to development and delivery.

Strategic priorities

Priority 1: Building a robust, future-ready EDI framework

Our Kent EDI Framework is one that supports and embeds EDI within the decision making process at all levels of the organisation; captures, reflects and listens to the voices of marginalised staff; is agile, adaptable, well informed and supports, reflects and meets the needs of all staff and student communities across the institution to positively influence student and staff experiences and positively impacts student recruitment in the long-term.

“The best talent is highly mobile, and institutions perceived as not being diverse, or failing to take EDI seriously, are likely to be avoided by individuals and groups who believe they might be disadvantaged. Equally, institutions viewed as accommodating EDI are more likely to attract and retain a broad base of students and staff”.¹⁰

1.1 Leadership Support and Commitment:

- We will develop local-level frameworks for EDI consultation and implementation at School and Professional Service level that focus on engagement, delivery and accountability, interfacing with institutional EDI governance structures.
- Kent leaders will display a visible commitment to the EDI agenda and role model EDI behaviours and practices, cascading from the core Senior Leadership Collective of EG, Heads of School, Associate PVCs, and Professional Services Directors.
- We will build anticipated changes to student demographic and need into future planning for academic delivery and related support services.

1.2 Diverse Representation:

- We will develop an institutional framework for EDI Networks with clearly defined roles, responsibilities, expected impact and recognition.
- We will integrate Widening Participation principles and practices with EDI delivery and outcomes for students to increase social mobility.
- We will anticipate the potential impact of global-political change on our communities, adjusting and tailoring support and communication appropriately.

Measures for success:

- Successful implementation of the annual EDI Action Plan (Reported: *EDI Annual Report*).
- Successful achievement and retention of relevant Charter and Kite Marks (Reported: *EDI Annual Report*).
- Implementation of a robust framework for EIA development, consultation, scrutiny and approval (Reported: *EDI Annual Report*).

¹⁰ Advance HE: *The importance of EDI in Higher Education*. The global higher education market size was estimated at USD 736.80 billion in 2023 and is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 12.1% from 2024 to 2030. Students are more likely to choose institutions that reflect their identities, values and beliefs whilst staff are more likely to choose to work at institutions that can support them and their careers to flourish. Kent, to attract the best and brightest talent from across the UK and the globe to study and work with us, need to prove that we are an institution where all staff and students will flourish, and commit to preparing students for their future careers and ability to work effectively in a global context after graduation.

- Launch of local level EDI data dashboards that meet School and PS business need including Charter Marks (Reported: *EDI Annual Report*).
- Kent registers for the NHS See Me First initiative, Autistica Neurodiversity Employers Index and the Stonewall Workplace Employers Index (Reported: *EDI Annual Report*).

Priority 2: Empowering our staff and students to succeed

The University is a large, complex and diverse institution. We strive for an environment in which every member of our community, of all backgrounds, identities and circumstances, feels welcomed, respected, included, valued, accepted, supported and empowered to succeed. We seek to be an aspirational institution where students and staff see themselves reflected at all levels of the University. We recognise this as a structural problem and will seek to address barriers at an institutional and systemic rather than individual level. At an organisational level, we will ensure that we have in place fair policies and practices which facilitate the progress and participation of all staff and students. Where there is group-based disadvantage as evidenced by key markers such as recruitment, progress, retention, reward and attainment, we will take action to address those barriers in a targeted and systematic way.

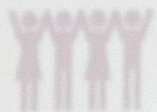
2.1 Affirmative Action and Support Programmes:

- We will create processes, including training, development, communication and guidance, that empower individuals to create inclusive working and learning environments.
- We will ensure support routes for staff and students are understood and easy to navigate.
- We will increase the visibility of people as individuals and celebrate communities through spotlights, awareness and celebration activity, cultural festivals, #365 movements, History Months and Awareness Days, EDI café's, representation networks and other awareness raising activity via an intersectional lens.
- We will identify and remove barriers in relation to all forms of accessibility for staff and students.

2.2 Continuous learning and growth:

- We will prioritise ongoing education and training on EDI topics for all members of our community, including leadership, staff, and students. This will ensure that everyone is aware of inclusive and non-inclusive behaviours, including implicit bias, microaggressions, systemic, and how to adapt accordingly.
- We will ensure that Line Managers¹¹ are equipped to support staff from diverse backgrounds to overcome barriers to progress and development.
- We will ensure we have culturally competent wellbeing and support services for staff and students, including food and catering packages that are cognisant of differences in ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, age and economic background.
- We will link EDI with Student Voice to empower students to have agency over their education and university experience.
- We will embed EDI into access, recruitment and marketing for prospective students, including those from non-traditional backgrounds or programmes.

¹¹ Line Managers includes those with supervision responsibility of PhD students



GOODNESS OF FIT-
CAN WE WORK
TOGETHER?

IF YOU CANNOT HELP
OR FEEL THAT THE
SERVICE OR TYPE OF
HELP
IS NOT RIGHT FOR
THEM



Measures for success:

- Reduction in the degree awarding, completion and continuation and Graduate Outcome gaps for disabled, mature, and students from racially minoritised backgrounds, measured by % reduction of attainment, continuation, completion and Graduate Outcome gaps at Institutional and School level in line with Kent's Access and Participation plan. (Reported: *Access and Participation Plan; HESA Graduate Outcomes*).
- Increase in the pipeline from UG to PG study for minoritised groups, measured by % reduction of gap between UG and PG study for racially minoritised, female and students with disabilities. (Reported: *Access and Participation Plan*).
- Reduction in the Staff Gender and Ethnicity related pay gaps. (Reported: *Gender/Ethnicity Pay Gap report*).
- Delivery of the Living Black Action Plan and development of a Black Student Support Framework. (Reported: *Living Black Working Group annual report*).
- Annual % increase of students and staff undertaking mandatory EDI modules and cultural competency training across all career pathways and grades, including Expect Respect. (Reported: *EDI Annual Report*).

Priority 3: A confident EDI institution culture

Kent strives to be an institution where EDI is built into the fabric of all that we do. We actively demonstrate our commitment to EDI by creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all individuals. We embody our values not just in policies, but in practices, culture and everyday interactions. We know that feelings of inclusion at an individual level are informed by day-to-day experiences and interactions with colleagues, managers, lecturers, supervisors and students. Our staff and students create inclusion by acting with empathy, treating others with dignity and respect, encouraging participation by all and by being empowered, and supported to challenge exclusionary and discriminatory behaviour.

3.1 Inclusive policies and practices:

- We will embed accessibility and inclusivity by design via strong and effective Equality Impact Assessment processes.
- We will ensure all education delivery is fully accessible.

3.2 A culture of respect and collaboration:

- We will encourage a culture where tolerance of different views and of disagreement is celebrated as an essential part of learning, ensuring that individuals remain respected and protected from discrimination and harassment whilst facilitating a culture of respectful dialogue, discussion and debate on challenging topics.
- We will increase the opportunities for staff and student communities to systemically provide direct feedback into key change and decision-making.
- We will embed EDI into all aspects of education and curriculum delivery.
- We will develop Active Allyship and Bystander skills across the institution.
- We will increase the visibility of, and communication about, EDI across the institution, including raising the profile of diverse groups of staff and students, utilising an inclusive communication good practice approach.

Measures for success:

- Annual % increase in positive responses to EDI-related Staff Survey questions and Staff Survey Inclusion Score to reach 75%. (Reported: *Staff Survey analysis*).
- Proportions of prioritised protected characteristic groups staff in senior leadership positions. (Reported: *EDI Annual Report*).
- Proportions of staff from protected characteristic backgrounds accessing mentoring and coaching opportunities. (Reported: *EDI Annual Report*).
- Implementation of the Academic Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Expression Ordinances and Code of Practice. (Reported: *SCAFFE Annual Report* and *EDI Annual Report*).
- Inclusive service principles embedded into service delivery and design measured by annual % increase in inclusive spaces across Canterbury and Medway, including building accessibility. (Reported: *EDI Annual Report*).
- Embedding Digital Accessibility and whole-institution compliance with Digital Accessibility legislation. (Reported: *EDI Annual Report*).

Priority 4: EDI as a catalyst for social change

Higher education research can be a powerful catalyst for social change. At Kent, we want to ensure that our research reflects our remarkable community; for an institution to achieve research excellence it must enable all its research staff to succeed in their careers. Kent recognises the role it must play within wider society in driving forward access to higher education.

- We will develop an EDI Research Centre which seeks to foster a culture of research co-collaboration, support and knowledge sharing.
- We will utilise the academic strengths and expertise at Kent to address institutional, sector and societal challenges, promoting new initiatives and supporting research.
- We will increase staff and student capabilities to apply for research and research grants, removing systemic inequalities and increasing competency.
- We will develop an inclusive research community for staff and students, particularly for female, neurodiverse, international, LGBTQIA and racially minoritised researchers.
- We will build network collaboration and relationships with partner institutions and local government, utilising our unique position across Kent to support schools (primary and secondary) in providing access to higher education.

Measures for success:

- Introduction of an ECR mentoring scheme to support research applications. (Reported: *EDI Annual Report*).
- % increase in successful REF applications from minoritised groups of staff. (Reported: *REF*).
- % increase in international and racially minoritised student numbers at a PG level. (Reported: *EDI Annual Report*).
- % increase in attainment and graduate outcomes of postgraduate students. (Reported: *EDI Annual Report*).
- University of Kent as a top 30 institution for Social Mobility as measured by the HEPI English Social Mobility Index⁷. (Reported: *EDI Annual Report*).

12 2024: University of Kent positioned at 56, -14 places from previous year

APPENDIX 3 – EDI ACTION PLAN 2025/26



Priority	Priority area	#	Sub theme	Macro target	Micro target
1	Building a robust, future-ready EDI framework	1.1	Leadership Support and Commitment	Develop local-level frameworks for EDI consultation and implementation at School and Professional Service level that focus on engagement, delivery and accountability, interfacing with institutional EDI governance structures	School EDI Leads framework to be established with action plans
					All Schools to have functioning EDI Committees
					All Schools identify progress on their EDI Action Plan
					PS EDI Structures to be approved and embedded
					EDI Governance Review
					Launch of EDI Dashboards for Schools and PS Directorate use
				Kent leaders will display a visible commitment to the EDI agenda and role model EDI behaviours and practices, cascading from the core Senior Leadership Collective of EG, Heads of School, Associate PVCs, and Professional Services Directors	EG and People Committee to agree pathway for Advance HE Charter Marks pre and post Greenwich merger
					Athena SWAN Action Plan has 75% of actions meeting or exceeding targets on time
					REC Action Plan has 75% of actions meeting or exceeding target on time
					EDI Culture and Strategy Group to agree target timescales for NHS See Me First initiative, Autistica Neurodiversity Employers Index and Stonewall Employers Index
				Build anticipated changes to student demographic and need into future planning for academic delivery and related support services.	Ensure EDI Governance routes allow for horizon scanning, forecasting and recommendations to EG and other appropriate planning routes (e.g. APP)

Priority	Priority area	#	Sub theme	Macro target	Micro target
		1.2	Diverse Representation	Develop an institutional framework for EDI Networks with clearly defined roles, responsibilities, expected impact and recognition	Staff Network Chairs Reward and Allocation Framework approved
					AGM of Network Chairs to provide clear information as to annual goals and targets
				Integrate Widening Participation principles and practices with EDI delivery and outcomes for students to increase social mobility	Integrate WPP awareness and knowledge with staff training and development, e.g., within Academic Advisor resources and training
				Anticipate the potential impact of global-political change on our communities, adjusting and tailoring support and communication appropriately	
2	Empowering Our Staff and Students to Succeed	2.1	Affirmative Action and Support Programmes	Create processes, including training, development, communication and guidance, that empower individuals to create inclusive working and learning environments	Review University EDI Policy and relaunch with communication and guidance
					Review and develop staff and student EDI guidance to underpin and support the EDI Policy
				Ensure support routes for staff and students are understood and easy to navigate	Review and relaunch Reasonable Adjustment pathways and implement comms, training and awareness plan
					Review Inclusion Passports and implement comms, training and awareness plan
					Review and implement new Academic Advisor programme
				Increase the visibility of people as individuals and celebrate communities through spotlights, awareness and celebration activity, cultural festivals, #365 movements, History Months and Awareness Days, EDI café's, Staff Representative Networks and other awareness raising activity via an intersectional lens	Review of celebration calendar activity and impact
				Identify and remove barriers in relation to all forms of accessibility for staff and students	Identify ownership of digital accessibility for staff and students
					Review Inclusion Passports and implement comms, training and awareness plan
					Identify barriers to implementation of ILP's for students by Academic Advisors

Priority	Priority area	#	Sub theme	Macro target	Micro target
		2.2	Continuous Learning and Growth	Ongoing education and training on EDI topics for all members of our community, including leadership, staff, and students	Review and implement mandatory EDI training for staff
					Develop EDI Sensitivity training pathways for Line Managers, Academic staff and student facing staff
					Increase proportion of students completing Expect Respect via communication and promotions
				Line Managers are equipped to support staff from diverse backgrounds to overcome barriers to progress and development.	Review RPD, Probation and Promotions, ACM processes across both Academic and PS Directorate pathways
					Develop RPD competency across the institution via training and development
					Develop coaching skills across the institution
				Culturally competent wellbeing and support services for staff and students	Review progress on the Diverse Cymru Action Plan and develop priorities for Student Life
				Link EDI with Student Voice to empower students to have agency over their education and university experience	
				Embed EDI into access, recruitment and marketing for prospective students, including those from non-traditional backgrounds or programmes	

Priority	Priority area	#	Sub theme	Macro target	Micro target
3	Confident EDI Institution Culture	3.1	Inclusive Policies and Practices	Embed accessibility and inclusivity by design via strong and effective Equality Impact Assessment processes	EIA Governance and Approval Route identified and agreed
				Ensure all education delivery is fully accessible	
		3.2	A Culture of Respect and Collaboration	Encourage a culture where tolerance of different views and of disagreement is celebrated as an essential part of learning, ensuring that individuals remain respected and protected from discrimination and harassment whilst facilitating a culture of respectful dialogue, discussion and debate on challenging topics	Embed Academic Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Expression principles into EDI training for staff and students
					Develop Critical / Challenging Conversations framework in partnership with HR, SCAFFE, Student Success and CSHE
				Increase the opportunities for staff and student communities to systemically provide direct feedback into key change and decision-making	Analyse results of pulse survey with Staff Networks and School EDI Leads to see where gaps are
				Embed EDI into all aspects of education and curriculum delivery	Review and implementation of Diversity Mark
					EIA on Academic Advisor process with mitigations addressed and embedded
					Digital Accessibility support identified and embedded for staff and students
				Develop Active Allyship and Bystander skills across the institution	Embed Active Allyship and Bystander skills within mandatory EDI training
					Promote and support the Allies Network with full training plan and opportunities
				Increase the visibility of, and communication about, EDI across the institution, including raising the profile of diverse groups of staff and students, utilising an inclusive communication good practice approach	Regular newsletter or other form of briefing to staff and students around EDI activity

Priority	Priority area	#	Sub theme	Macro target	Micro target
4	EDI as a catalyst for social change	4	EDI as a catalyst for social change	Develop an EDI Research Centre which seeks to foster a culture of research co-collaboration, support and knowledge sharing	Business case for EDI Research Centre developed
				Utilise the academic strengths and expertise at Kent to address institutional, sector and societal challenges, promoting new initiatives and supporting research	
				Increase staff and student capabilities to apply for research and research grants, removing systemic inequalities and increasing competency	
				Develop an inclusive research community for staff and students, particularly for female, neurodiverse, international, LGBTQIA and racially minoritised researchers	



