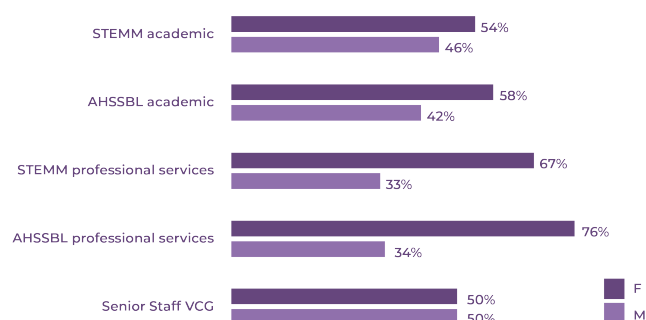


FACTSHEET ON OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY'S (OBU) GENDER ASSESSMENT REPORT

Short Presentation of the Institution

Oxford Brookes University was set up over 150 years ago, and is composed of four academic faculties: Oxford Brookes Business School, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Faculty of Technology, Design and Environment. The culture of OBU is guided by a commitment to see its students achieve their potential and prepare its graduates for fulfilling and valuable lives. OBU has adopted equality, diversity and inclusion as core values. It places all policy developments in the context of three objectives: treating all in contact with the university with dignity and respect; providing learning, personal-development and employment on a non-discriminatory basis; and providing a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for students, staff and visitors. OBU was one of the first UK universities to receive an Athena SWAN award under the new Charter in 2016, and has held a Bronze Award since 2013 under the old Charter.



Graph 1: Proportion of women and men staff by type of role and subject area 2018

National Context

Policy framework on gender equality in research and higher education institutions

Country	Policy strategies and documents	Scope of policy strategies and documents	Policy support to GEPs	Gender equality policy in research funding
EE	Yes	Gender balance in decision-making positions; equal opportunities in allocating grants	No	Yes (access to grants)
ES	Yes	Career development; parity in decision-making positions; training; work-life balance; fighting gender-based violence	No	Yes (funding of research on gender in social sciences and humanities)
PT	Yes	Production of sex-disaggregated data; partnership between equality body and research governance body	Yes (limited: potential use of European Structural Funds for funding GEPs)	Yes (funding of research on gender)





UK	Yes	Implementation of the 'equality duty' by public institutions, including research and higher education institutions, derives from a legal obligation; scope determined at institutional level (broader than gender equality)	Yes (public organisations are compelled to have equality objectives and equality schemes)	Yes (United Kingdom Research Council integrated the assessment of gender equality policies in its research excellence framework to accede funding; National Institute for Health Research included scores in the Athena SWAN scheme as eligibility criteria for funding)
SI	Yes (low intensive)	Access to decision-making positions; enrolment of women in research; feminist knowledge transfer	No	Yes (rules for (co)financing and monitoring of research consider gender balance in decisionmaking positions)
TR	—	—	—	—

Source: EIGE; information collected through the study's fieldwork

In the UK, the Equality Act 2010 aims to protect people from being discriminated against due to key characteristics including sex, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership and being pregnant or on maternity leave. A range of structures are in place to support gender equality including a Minister for Women and Equalities, Government Equalities Office and Equality and Human Rights Commission. There is also a legal requirement for employers with more than 250 staff (universities fall in this category) to publish figures annually on their gender pay gap (mean and median), gender bonus gap (mean and median) and the proportion of women and men receiving bonuses. There is growing political interest in addressing disparities in participation and outcomes, as well as improving social mobility illustrated by the metrics introduced to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), as well as the expectations set out for Access and Participation plans by the Office for Students, and a stronger approach to inclusion in the Research Excellence Framework 2021. The UK has played a pioneering role in terms of certification systems for gender equality since it is where Athena SWAN was developed and first rolled-out. Other diversity related certification systems have also been influential in the UK – in particular, the Race Equality Charter and the Stonewall Index (focusing on LGBT employees).

Methodological aspects

For the development of the Institutional Assessment, quantitative and qualitative methodology were used, as prescribed by WP3 Guidelines of the project. The report relies on a mixed methods approach, combining three research strategies: a secondary analysis of publicly available material (e.g. national data, policy documents, etc) and institutional documents; interviews with 12 key stakeholders including staff with responsibility for Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and members of the senior management team; three workshops to examine work-life balance and flexible work; progression and leadership; and data capability more in-depth were conducted September/October 2019.





Main findings of the Assessment

The quantitative analysis identified that women are over-represented in lower grades (particularly in administrative positions), but at higher levels there is an inversion and men become over-represented. In an institution where women make up slightly above half of all staff, this suggests issues related to women’s access to leadership and decision-making positions remain. These figures mask how the representation of women and men, across different levels, is related to either STEMM or AHSSBL subjects. Professors are scarcer in STEMM areas with just 44% of women. While this compares favourably to the wider context of higher education – both nationally and in Europe – it is nevertheless a potential area for action.

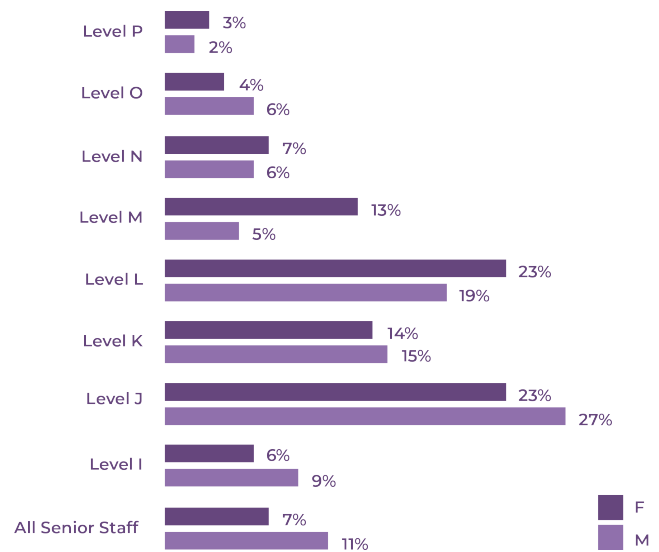
For the roles of Professor, Principal Lecturer or Reader – unlike in the other less senior roles – women are less likely to be shortlisted and less likely to be offered the position. The difference between the proportion of women and men that are offered a senior position (9% and 25% respectively) out of those short-listed suggests that women fare less well during the interview process. This calls for understanding whether that might stem from different expectations and/or unconscious biases.

There is a significant incidence of hourly-paid contracts at OBU for both women and men – which may be interpreted as zero-hours. The majority of such contracts relate to Associate Lecturers. Women are less likely to be on an hourly-paid contract in STEMM compared with men, while also more likely to be working on a fixed-term contract. While hourly-paid contracts can provide flexibility to organisations for meeting their ad-hoc and short-term needs, the insecurity of these contracts can be detrimental for career progression and mental health of staff. More research is required to understand this.

Finally, an analysis of the gender pay gap identified that part-time contracts (predominantly held by women) are less common in senior grades. Work is planned within Athena SWAN to investigate barriers that prevent part-time work at higher grades as this is likely to disproportionately affect women..

Main Challenges coming out from the Assessment

The analysis relied on collated data and information from different sources, and it was challenging to ensure comparison across different sources. A more unified system of data collection and monitoring is planned to address this. Another challenge is how to ensure that the work done as part of the GEARING-Roles project dovetails into the institutional work on Athena SWAN and other equality charters, particularly in relation to timing and the implementation of actions. Generally, the response of the institution to the GEARING-Roles project has been positive, with no over resistances. However, as work progresses and actions are implemented, it might become necessary to pay closer attention to how to negotiate potential resistances.



Graph 2: Grade profile by sex 2018 (academic and professional services staff)

Source: EDI report 2017-18, (as of July 2018)

