BALLIOL COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Equality and Diversity Report 2020–21

1. Introduction

This is Balliol College's Equality and Diversity Report for the academic year 2020–21. The report helps to fulfil the College's reporting requirements under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). To fulfil the PSED, bodies exercising public functions must have due regard for the need to:

(1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimization;
(2) advance equality of opportunity between those who do and do not share a protected characteristic; and
(3) foster good relations between those who do and do not share a protected characteristic.

The characteristics protected under the Act and covered by the Duty are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity, religion and belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

2. Progress on Equality Objectives in the academic year 2020–21

The Equality Report for 2017–18 listed a new set of four Equality Objectives (EO), for four years with effect from April 2018 (nb. they will need to be updated this year):

(1) to reduce the gap between male and female students in successful admissions to Balliol;
(2) to increase the number of students from ethnic groups which are currently under-represented in the University;
(3) to improve the College's collection of academic and non-academic staff recruitment data;
(4) To improve the College's support for students, staff, and visitors with disabilities.

The 2017-18 Report noted that, from 2018-19 onwards, progress on **EO1** and **EO2** with regard to our undergraduates would be benchmarked against data in the University's Annual Admissions Statistical Report, though this always lags behind this report's date by one year, and gathers data over a three-year period. Below is the relevant data on gender and ethnicity from the 2020 report (covering undergraduate students admitted to Balliol in 2018, 2019, and 2020), and it shows that progress has been made with regard to the our first two objectives at undergraduate admissions.[1]

[1] The data on ethnicity at graduate admissions is proving difficult to extract from the central university, something which needs to be brought up at the next Equality and Diversity group meeting. For gender data at graduate admissions, though with the same caveat, see under **EO1** below.

• **EO1**: the proportion of female **undergraduates** has continued to improve to 49% (from 45% in 2019 and 38.7% [!] in 2018), though we must note that this figure is still well under the University average of 53.3% (from 51.9% in 2019). At **graduate** admissions, we are moving back towards parity in the female/male ratio (49%/51%; in 2019-20, the figure was 48%/52%, in 2018-19 it was 45%/55%, and in 2017-18 it was 47%/53%), but it is difficult to obtain university-wide statistics for the same period (in 2019-20 it was 49%/51%).

• **EO2**: the proportion of **undergraduates** from diverse ethnic backgrounds has generally increased, with regard to

(a) *UK-domiciled BME students*, with an increase to 22.8% (22.2% in 2019 and 20.2% in 2018);

(b) *UK-domiciled Black students*, with an increase to 3.6% (2.9% in 2019 and 1.7% in 2018); and

(c) *UK-domiciled Mixed-heritage students*, with an increase to 9.2% (8.4% in 2019 and 8.0% in 2018).

These figures compare favourably with the University averages for each group: (a) 21.4% (19.4% in 2019); (b) 3.2% (2.6% in 2019); (c) 7.9% (7.1% in 2019). There is, however, a slight decrease in UK-domiciled Asian students to 8.4% (down from 9.6% in 2019 and 8.8% in 2018), and this is below the university average (9.2% up from 8.7% in 2019). The numbers involved are small, with 24 offers and 21 admissions reported for students with this profile in this cycle as compared to 29 offers and 23 admissions reported last year.

The complete figures, taken from the UAO's Annual Admissions Statistical Report of May 2021, are below:

Table 5.3: UK applications to Oxford, offers made and students admitted by gender and college, three-year total 2018–2020

	FEMALE			MALE			FEMALE PROPORTION OF TOTAL UK STUDENTS ADMITTED
	APPLICATIONS	OFFERS	ADMITTED	APPLICATIONS	OFFERS	ADMITTED	
Balliol College	715	136	126	842	141	131	49.0%

Table 6.10: UK-domiciled BME students: applications to Oxford, offers made and students admitted by college, three-year total 2018–2020

	BME STUDENTS			WHITE STUDENTS			BME PROPORTION OF TOTAL UK STUDENTS ADMITTED[11]
	APPLICATIONS	OFFERS	ADMITTED	APPLICATIONS	OFFERS	ADMITTED	
Balliol College	411	64	57	1,062	204	193	22.8%

Table 6.11: UK-domiciled Asian students: applications to Oxford, offers made and students admitted by college, three-year total 2018–2020

	APPLICATIONS	OFFERS	ADMITTED	PROPORTION OF TOTAL UK STUDENTS ADMITTED[11]
Balliol College	237	24	21	8.4%

Table 6.12: UK-domiciled Black students: applications to Oxford, offers made and students admitted by college, three-year total 2018–2020

	APPLICATIONS	OFFERS	ADMITTED	PROPORTION OF TOTAL UK STUDENTS ADMITTED[11]
Balliol College	48	13	9	3.6%

Table 6.13: UK-domiciled Mixed Heritage students: applications to Oxford, offers made and students admitted by college, three-year total 2018–2020

	APPLICATIONS	OFFERS	ADMITTED	PROPORTION OF TOTAL UK STUDENTS ADMITTED[11]
Balliol College	101	23	23	9.2%

In addition, though it is not currently one of our four equality objectives, we can also see where Balliol can be plotted according to socio-economic disadvantage (viz, ACORN data), since our average for students from these backgrounds precisely matches the university's (13.3%). This is a slight rise on last year's figures, where our average (12.6%) was a little higher than the university's (11.4%):

Table 3.5: Socio-economic disadvantage: UK applications to Oxford, offers made and students admitted from ACORN categories 4 and 5[6] by college, three-year total 2018–2020

	ACORN 4 and 5			Other			ACORN 4 & 5 PROPORTION OF TOTAL UK STUDENTS ADMITTED[7]
	APPLICATIONS	OFFERS	ADMITTED	APPLICATIONS	OFFERS	ADMITTED	
Balliol College	239	37	34	1,311	239	222	13.3%

Moreover, we admit significantly more students from backgrounds with traditionally low progression rates (viz, POLAR data) than the university average (17.3% v. 14.9%: last year 14.2% v. 13.3%). In fact, we come in at fourth overall (after Mansfield, Univ, and Merton):

Table 3.6: Areas of low progression to higher education: UK applications to Oxford, offers made and students admitted from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 by college, three-year total 2018–2020

	POLAR 1 AND 2			OTHER			POLAR 1 AND 2 PROPORTION OF TOTAL UK STUDENTS ADMITTED[7]
	APPLICATIONS	OFFERS	ADMITTED	APPLICATIONS	OFFERS	ADMITTED	
Balliol College	224	47	44	1,304	228	211	17.3%

All this information reveals noticeable progress across (almost) the (whole) board, matching our response to the need for greater diversity of all types in the undergraduate student body, in part at least due to our (and the university's) commitment to the Opportunity Oxford scheme. I think we can say that our admissions strategies are producing a more diverse undergraduate profile, but again one needs to note that the numbers required to shift these percentages are not large, and in some cases the figures are not without concern.[2]

• **EO3**: alas, this year has seen some difficulties in the college's collection of staff recruitment data. A storage error means that we cannot provide this information for academic staff in 2020–21, whilst the adoption of a new system in 2020 means that the data for non-academic staff is not wholly reliable. I am currently working with the Domestic Bursar's office to resolve this latter issue, and hope to be able to present a summary of the data next term in something approaching the tables familiar from previous reports (though there will now be more granular detail available as the result of the new system).

• **EO4**: improvements to the college infrastructure continued apace this year. Firstly, the finishing touches were put to the splendid ramp outside the Porter's Lodge, which facilitates wheelchair access to the main site. Several other projects foreshadowed or just begun in last year's report have been brought to fruition, including the two accessible teaching rooms / fellows offices on Staircase 22, which also have an accessible toilet and

[2] Outreach activities are of course an important part of this narrative, but they are not included in this year's report, unlike its predecessors; that document is now to be found in the Undergraduate Admissions report (AP 22-17).

shower room (soon to be fully automated). Staircase 12 now has two fully-accessible rooms with bathrooms, whilst the provision for accessible stock in the D1 block at the Master's Field has more than doubled, to five rooms in that block alone. Fellows will also have seen the addition of low-level lighting along the main path to the Hall in the back quad, which will be appreciated (not only but also) by all those with impaired vision.

3. Progress on wider PSED in the academic year 2020–21

Beyond the objectives listed in section two of this report, the college has also been undertaking extensive action within the framework of our PSED more widely, with the several objectives and projects begun in 2020 being brought forward in 2021, despite the challenges presented by the pandemic.

a. Equality and Diversity activities

As part of undertakings given in 2020 to the student body in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement (detailed in last year's report), the college established an Equality and Diversity Committee, involving Fellows and students, and chaired by the Master, which met every term in 2020–21 (but has yet to have a regular slot); and it expanded the mandatory training in unconscious bias and race bias material to include all academic staff, whilst continuing to facilitate and support such training among the students: this material is housed under the 'Training' section on the main Balliol Weblearn page, together with links to the university's EDI material. After further consultation with the students, who expressed reservations over the role, the college decided to postpone plans to appoint a fellow with responsibility for BAME issues (heralded in last year's report), though we remain open to the possibility for a change in this policy should the Balliol community feel it necessary.

In addition, Balliol has agreed to contribute to the university's Black Academic Futures program, offering a doctoral scholarship for Black British researchers to be held in 2021–22; it established a confidential mailbox for reports on discrimination and other complaints (feedback@balliol.ox.ac.uk), and circulated a simplified "how to" guide on making a complaint. These last two measures were particularly important, given the stress laid by students in their original letter to college in 2020 on their concerns about the effectiveness of the college's reporting structures.

To help keep the conversation moving in a progressive direction as well, the college also organised several facilitated conversations and workshops on anti-racism for BAME students, Freshers and staff (including the Race Equity Discussion with BAME students [25/02/21], Anti-racism workshops with Freshers [01/11/21]), which were led by Balliol alumna Laura Durrant, managing director at Equitura, a leading consultancy firm on EDI.

To mark the centenary of university admission of women in October 2020, Balliol flew the Oxford Women's Suffrage Flag and widely advertised to its community the range of celebratory events being held by the university. Balliol's Women Network held a panel discussion about the pandemic's effects on international development (08/03/21), a women's only Taster Day was held for PPE (05/06/20), and the International Women's Day dinner, postponed from 2019, was held in hall in March 2020.

b. *Balliol and Empire*

After its auspicious start in 2020, the *Balliol and Empire* project continued to flourish in 2021, with publications, presentations, exhibitions, and other events held throughout the year.

The first of these is the report on the proceeds of slavery in the Balliol endowment, written by Dr Sebastian Raj Pender (Research Associate on the *Balliol and Empire* project), which focused on benefactions received by the college between 1600 and 1919. Seminars were held to discuss the findings, both with our students and those across the university interested in the study. Conversations will continue across the college about the projects findings, viz that Balliol received about £300,000 from individuals with substantive links to the proceeds of slavery, which amounts to about £2m in today's money (c. 1.6% of the college's endowment).

In September of 2021, the Balliol Archive Centre (see AP 22-12 for more details) also hosted an exhibition, *Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, with the involvement of visiting and permanent fellows Marisa Fuentes, Sudhir Hazareesingh, and Seamus Perry. *Teaching the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, a project for US and UK schools based on the exhibition, was conducted in September 2021 (just outside the scope of this year's report, but it will be reported in next year's).

As one can see, the Balliol and Empire project works very well as a means of prompting a more critical reflection among the different constituencies of the college – notably undergraduate and graduate students, staff, and alumni – about the legacies of Balliol's past. It also serves as an excellent means of stimulating the engagement of the college with a series of educational and civic constituencies in the UK and elsewhere involved in fostering contemporary discussions of diversity.

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