

# IMPERIAL

## EDI Annual Report 2023-24

### Introduction

In Sept 2023, Prof Lesley Cohen and Dr Wayne Mitchell jointly assumed the responsibilities of Associate Provost EDI (APEDI). An initial priority has been to ensure continuity of effort and momentum in the commitments to two Advanced HE Imperial level submissions, the Race Equality Charter (REC) awarded Bronze in 2021 and the renewal of the Imperial Athena Swan Silver award in 2022 and scrutinise the feasibility of some action plan proposals with the current stakeholders.

Meetings have been held with Faculty Deans, HoDs, staff networks, student representatives and many of Faculty and departmental EDI committees within Imperial plus some members of Council. In addition, we have drawn on a number of consultation exercises to inform the EDI strategy for the College. It is noted that already there are many examples of good practice embedded across Imperial and a strong commitment in many quarters. Collating data and following up on the impact of initiatives across these many dispersed activities is an intensive effort that falls to highly dedicated members of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Centre (EDIC). The new APEDI appointees are fully embedded in their role and benefiting from their differing perspectives and strengths.

Since the beginning of 2024, we have been formulating the College's EDI Strategy 2024 'Imperial Cohesion', looking at bringing the community together, adding support to the many people-facing strategies that have been set out in recent times. In support of this, we examine in depth the statistics that inform the strategy and importantly, identify gaps that need addressing. The EDI Strategy is intentionally high-level and brings together actions from existing strategies (Access and Participation, Health and Wellbeing, the Enabling Strategy and of course the actions associated with the REC, the Stonewall Index, the Athena Swan Charter and the Disability Confidence leadership).

### Executive Summary

- The new EDI Strategy has been developed and has set the agenda for the coming year ahead.
- Existing Imperial EDI action plan commitments are being delivered through engagement with the Associate Deans for EDI, EDIC, the Education Office, Outreach, People and Organizational development, Faculties and Departments.
- Data gathering to measure progress and key performance metrics will continue to underpin and inform the strategy going forward.
- The rate of increase of female and minority ethnic (ME) academic staff over the previous two years is encouraging, although hiring Black academic staff remains a challenge. There are similar challenges in hiring, retention and support for PTO staff and student groups.

### Key areas of focus for 2024-25

- To better understand the admission, retention and performance challenges for underrepresented student groups.
- To further promote inclusive recruitment across all staff groups (thereby aiding the closure of the gender, disability and minority ethnic pay gaps).
- To address harassment and bullying and promote the Imperial Values.

Wayne Mitchell and Lesley Cohen  
October 2024

## Summary of key statistics

- Between 2021 and 2024, there has been an increase in minority ethnic (ME) staff overall from 25.8% to 29.1%. ME groups increased from 14.4% to 16.8% in academic job families. In terms of the recent academic hires 26% of hires in 2022 identified as ME and in 2023 this number increased to 32%. These are encouraging rates of change although not for permanent Black academic staff where the absolute number has remained at 3 with an additional 4 staff in this period on short term contracts (Provost Visiting Professors or Fellowship holders). A 32% to 34% increase in ME staff among researchers (although in absolute terms the number is static against a 5% decreased RA population overall). The increase from 26.2% to 29.2% in professional, technical, and operational roles is significant because there has been a 7% increased headcount in this staff group overall (amounting to of the order of 300 staff). The increase in ME staff in the L&T family from 23% to 25% in the same time period is also significant, although 25% overall within this job family are on fixed term contracts.
- Between 2017 and 2022, UG students from minority ethnic backgrounds have increased from 40% to 54%; increases have also been observed for minority ethnic PGT (54% to 62%) and PGR (39% to 46%) students. The number of UG Black heritage students has fallen in absolute and percentage terms and remains a major challenge.
- Minority Ethnic representation of external members on the College Council has increased from 20% in 2019 to 42% in 2024.
- Overall rate of change of gender balance within the academic staff group is gradual but positive with encouraging increase in the last two years. The 2021 Provost's commitment (in the Athena Swan submission) to eight new Reader/Professor level appointments targeted at female academics has been met. Since 2022 there have been 53 female appointments to Reader/Professor of which 21 are new external appointments. Overall, in 2022 30% of academic starters were female and this increased to 47% in 2024. The November 2023 snapshot of academic staff indicated 25% of all staff at Imperial are female, meaning the new appointments will significantly move the dial, if this recruitment strategy can be maintained.
- Offers to female UG for the October 2024 academic year examined by Strategic Planning showed that both UG and PGT have seen incremental progress at Imperial in the last few years although the data at departmental level is mixed and requires more detailed understanding. At UG we are on a par with the Russell Group average (in Imperial subject areas - STEM). At PGT the Russell Group have a higher representation of females in Imperial subject areas (though the RG average has been decreasing). There is no evidence of bias in the Admissions process overall, but slightly fewer undergraduate females (though the numbers are very small at this point - 1% or less) meet the conditions of their offer. To meet our commitment to increase female UG to 45% by 2029 will require a concerted effort working closely with Outreach.
- In the 2024 Staff Survey 59% of staff participated, 17% of them identified as disabled (compared to 7% recorded on ICIS). The percentage is higher in certain job families, 33% of professorial academic staff self-declared as disabled for example. On ICIS only 3% of academic staff are recorded as disabled. Importantly, responses from staff who declared themselves disabled on the survey were significantly more negative to all questions.

## Changes in EDI governance

- The People and Culture Committee (PCC), a [sub-committee of the University Management Board](#) that is chaired by the President, has executive responsibility for delivering Imperial's EDI strategy. It was set up in 2023. EDI is a cornerstone of the PCC's remit which includes the overall culture at Imperial.
- The College's EDI Strategy Group (chaired by the Provost) was reconstituted and transformed into an [EDI Advisory Group](#). It draws on EDI expertise from across Imperial where more complex EDI issues can be discussed in detail before recommendations are made to the PCC.
- Each Faculty now has an Associate-Dean EDI. The AP-EDI meet monthly with them to discuss barriers to progress at department level, highlight new initiatives and embed the strategy.
- Tony Lawrence and Richard Martin remain executive sponsors for Able. Maggie Dallman stepped down as executive sponsor of Imperial 600 and was replaced by Robert Kerse who took up the role May 2024. In April 2024 Mary Ryan accepted the role of executive sponsor for Imperial As One.

## Summary of EDI work – September 2023 to August 2024

### Development of a new EDI data dashboards/infrastructure

- EDIC and the Systems and Information team in HR have been working to develop a new [HR Insights](#) 'EDI core data' PowerBI dashboard. The intention is to nominate and train EDI data leads from each department in 2024-25 so that more ready access to data progress is available.

### EDI Strategy 2024 - Imperial Cohesion

- New 'in-conversations' style online internal event. First event held May 1 2024, attended by 150 people from across Imperial. Shared outline of the new EDI Strategy and presentation by EDIC and showcased the achievements of Surgery and Cancer Team of Gina Brown, Christopher Peter, Karen Pontifex and Rosie Shaw on their journey towards Athena Swan Gold award.
- EDI Strategy also shared at the June in Conversations with the President event.

### EDIC

- New Staff Networks development programme ([Staff network leadership programme | Administration and support services | Imperial College London](#)) is being rolled out.
- Reverse Mentoring has been reactivated, there have been 27 matches made up to 2023.
- A number of departments moved forward constructively as a result of the first Inclusive Recruitment workshop in November 2022. A second one is planned for Dec 4 2024. The I-X recruitment model has been held up as an extremely successful hiring strategy (50% female in first round, 75% minority ethnic in the second round). A new online Recruitment training package has been commissioned.
- The [IMPACT](#) development programme lead by EDIC coordinator Gabriella Kerr-Gordon continues a highly valued staff development programme with 16 graduates this year from the programme. (123 have completed IMPACT since it started in 2014).
- [Calibre](#) remains a highly valued development programme catering for the needs of our disabled staff and Imperial, it continues to help generate ideas and projects to improve disability inclusion. [15 delegates graduated](#) from the Calibre 2024 programme, 127 people have completed Calibre (since it started in 2013).

### EDI Seed Fund

- The impact of the 2023-24 funded projects highlight the continuing innovative ideas for supporting their needs within the community of Imperial. From diversifying and raising awareness of the rich contributions of different cultural literature (IAO Meet the Author series) to the empowerment of the [LGBTQ+ student voice](#) (LGBTQ+ SU Officer), these projects demonstrate the commitment to creating an more inclusive environment at Imperial.
- This year we encourage applications to support Disabled Staff and students. We received 15 applications in total. Call closed 7 June 2024 and we aim to fund seven projects to include themes focusing on Power and Privilege, 'The things I wish I knew-Disable Student Campaign', Belonging- Diversifying visual representations of successful figures in academia. As well as student-led mentoring programmes and initiatives aimed at supporting Mental Health issues faced by students at Imperial.

### Departments investment in local EDI resources

More departments have established local support for EDI this year:

- Business School created EDI and Department Coordination Manager
- Brain Sciences and Immunology & Inflammation split their new EDI Co-ordinator role.
- The Institute of Clinical Sciences, with MRC Laboratory of Medical Sciences created a new EDI Manager role.

### Race equality work and [REC](#)

- The College obtained a bronze Race Equality Charter (REC) [in Autumn 2021](#) and is now focused on delivering our [race equality action plan](#), professionally supported by Alex Dawes within EDIC.
- The Provosts Visiting Professor Programme received 78 applications in the 3<sup>rd</sup> round this year and have [recruited five professors](#) for 12 months from South Africa, Botswana, Japan as well as two from the UK, starting in October 2024.
- Unveiling of Plaque for the Nobel Prize winning Physicist Abdus Salam Library, 29 January with keynote speakers Professor Brian Cox and Prof. Atish Dabholkar (Director of the [Abdus Salam](#)

[International Centre for Theoretical Physics](#) (ICTP). Prof. Atish's main message (outside of unifying fundamental forces) was an elegant discourse on the importance of the diversity of thought.

- The [Shifting the Lens](#) project, recounting the stories of Imperial diverse community, continues to go from strength to strength, with four more profiles added this year
- The Education Office's Excellence funding call 'Tackling Racism within the Curriculum' received 21 applications with 3 being directly supported at the initial review phase. Discussion to refine and develop a further 3 collaborative projects are ongoing. This however is a good reflection of the appetite and desire to develop tools and strategies for greater inclusion and awareness within our community.
- The new anti-racist online training module, [Introduction to race equity](#), tailored to Imperial was made accessible to all staff and students in Nov 2022 and has been completed by 54 people to date.
- The third and fourth [Imperial As One Media Academy](#) for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and postgraduate students took place in October 2023 and March-to May 2024. The fourth edition was extended to participants of from Institute of Cancer Research after securing additional funding from Research England. . The Beyond Ethnicity Career Conference for early career researchers from minority ethnic backgrounds, run annually since 2020, took place in [Sept 2023](#). The topic for the 2024 conference is AI: Friend or Foe with keynote speaker Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon, MBE.
- The [ACTIVE mentoring programme](#) for ME Postgraduate students celebrated the end of this years mentor/mentee program in June 2024, with 21 graduates from the programme.
- The Graduate School have launched a new course for PhD supervisors 'Cornerstone EDI' aimed at supporting students from diverse backgrounds.
- Twenty Black UROP project students were funded for summer 2024 projects an increase of 13 from 2023.
- A pilot study has been initiated with Strategic Planning, the Education Office, CHERS and Mechanical Engineering to understand the degree performance gap of Black students.
- Preparations are underway for the REC midterm review taking place September 24<sup>th</sup> 2024.
- Connect Africa: Working with past and current appointees on the Provost Visiting Professor program to maximize the connection for developing equitable research opportunities within the EDI between Imperial and researchers in Africa and within the African Diaspora. We have planned a series of meetings to evaluate the Equity Model implemented by [Professor Gbenga Ogedegbe](#) at NYU. The consortium aims to determine the feasibility of developing a context specific approach to enhancing 15 the equity model of research practice between Imperial and partnering universities in Africa.
- Black Networks of Imperial: Initiation of a network to understand the perspectives of studying and working at Imperial. The Black Networks of Imperial is part of a 'Theory of Change' model to evaluate and co-create the structures to provide a great sense of Belonging and enable Imperial to be seen as a place where equity of opportunity is a reality for under-represented communities. (Termly meetings)
- Black Inclusivity Catalyst spearheaded by Professor Sara Rankin supported by funding from Research England have develop a suite of activities including Black Graduates Career Conference, Imperial BE, Africa Innovates, Black to the Future focused on engaging and encouraging student progression into postgraduate studies.

#### **Gender equality work and [Athena Swan](#)**

- A swathe of departments renewed their Athena awards in the last 12 months. Most notable amongst the awards were the Department of Life Sciences upgrade to Athena Swan Silver award and the Department of Surgery and Cancer upgrade to Athena Swan Gold award. The Imperial commitment that all departments should hold an Athena Swan award will be fully met once the Dyson School of Design Engineering submits later this year. As well as the departmental enthusiasms to complete their award submissions, Rob Bell's exceptional commitment to support these efforts must be noted.
- [Women at Imperial Week](#) held 4-8 March 2024 produced a very full calendar of events across Imperial including workshops on Imposter Syndrome, Influencing and Negotiating, Menopause and Perimenopause, as the invited lecture from Uzoama Nwamarkaah, an Imperial alumni and climate change advisor at the Commonwealth institute.
- 23 April 2024 POD workshop on Women's Health in the Workplace  
<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/events/174591/womens-health-in-the-workplace-an-imperial-college-event/>

- Six Julia Higgins Awards and one Medal were [awarded to staff from across all faculties](#) who have made outstanding contributions to supporting women in academia.
- In the [2024 Athena Lecture](#), Dame Anne Glover, Special Advisor to the Principal at the University of Strathclyde and the President of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, described why evidence matters, how to obtain it and how best to present it to government.
- What Do Women Need to Progress in Academia – report commissioned by PFDC. Plus pilot workshop (commissioned by AP EDI) to trial a tool produced by Research Coach for line managers to consider the 10 facilitating factors recommended in the report.
- 2023 PRES report highlights increasing concern over the female PhD student experience. Graduate school took action: Collection and review of women PhD case studies followed by a workshop (27 PhD students attended), these informed a set of survey questions, 389 responses, resulting in a detailed report completed mid-July 2024, setting out a clear list of actions
- PEOPLE AND Organisational Development are reconfiguring the academic women’s programme to focus on women at the senior lecturer level (35% of all female staff). Programme to launch in the Autumn 2024
- Strategic Planning are reviewing feasibility of a pilot study to understand better prospective female UG decision making regarding accepting offers.
- Women’s Health Network established this year as Network of Excellence <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/womens-health-network/>
- Currently reviewing whether to form an umbrella Imperial academic research and teaching women’s network

#### **Stonewall Workplace Equality Index**

- Having steadily improved our position in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Ranking over the last several years, and achieved a [top 100](#) employer rating in 2022, the Imperial achieved a gold award in June 2024, our ranking is 33 out of 246. All credit to Cynthia So from EDIC who oversaw our submission. Note there are significantly fewer entrants than in 2022 (when we ranked 96 out of 403 organisations). We currently apply every other year to allow time for implementation of the Stonewall Action Plan.
- The 6-hour [LGBTQ+ Inclusion and Mental Health course](#) introduced for staff from the LGBTQ+ mental health charity, MindOut in 2022/23 has had 30 complete the course this year.
- The definition of Transphobia to appear on the websites and in policy documents was agreed with the community and approved at the Feb 2024 PCC

#### **Disability**

- Mental Health Awareness Week took place in 15-21 May with a total of 39 events across College. There was a record number of registrations – 971 across all the events, and over 700 attendances. The theme was anxiety. Some of the most popular events included “Anxiety and autoimmune conditions” with speakers from LUPUS UK, and “Anxiety, neurodiversity and panic attacks”, both organised by the EDI Centre.
- The Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy launched and a detailed action plan for staff and student wellbeing set out in June PCC.
- Neurodiversity Awareness training launched in 2022/23 had 30 people complete the course this year.
- A [new process for workplace adjustments](#) has been developed in the context of the Work Location Framework. Highlighted at PCC in February 2024, it will be reviewed at the end of the year.
- Disability briefings for staff and for managers were rolled out by the EDI Centre in October 2023
- [Calibre](#) remains a highly valued staff development programme and continues to help generate ideas and projects to improve disability inclusion. [14 delegates graduated](#) from the Calibre 2024 programme
- EDIC is redesigning the Disability web pages to bring them in line with the Allyship pages for other underrepresented groups

#### **Sharing Imperial experience and practices externally**

**Rob Bell, Athena Swan Coordinator:** Rob has acted as a critical friend for 4 other universities and external departments. He has also contributed to Advance HE’s guidance on how to develop action plans and took part as a panel member for an Advance HE event.

**Susan Littleson:** Share experiences of developing the Imperial Values with the BBC, the Dutch University of Radboud, the Canadian University of Waterloo, and Bradford University.

#### **APEDI**

- National EDI Academic Leads (NEDIAL) Feb 2024: Meeting senior leads from across the country to discuss the REF 2029 environment and culture, structure and governance, and a new disability action group RISE Higher
- Reinventing Higher Education – March 2024 international conference Miami USA with a focus on the impact of AI (Artificial Intelligence) in Education. WM attended. Imperial will host it in 2025.
- How Diamonds Shines - March 2024 invitation to run EDI workshops for Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford- WM attended
- Universities UK Conference - Closing Ethnicity Awarding Gaps 2024 – April 2024 Invited chair of panel session on ‘Having effective conversations about race’ at the Uni.
- How to Change the World, Times Higher Education and the Global Business School Network virtual roundtable on the topic of: Tackling the Sustainability Skills Gap – What role(s) for higher education? April 2024. Invited participant.
- All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Presentation in June to the interested in a better understanding of the collection of EDI related data, constraints and how the data informs EDI strategy. June 2024
- Universities UK Conference - Pro Vice-Chancellors for Research and Innovation Seminar Invited speaker *“The importance of a healthy culture: what steps PVCs should take to improve their institutional research culture”*. July 2024
- Jamaica High Commission invitation to talk to the Diaspora event. The Jamaica High Commission have asked for short talk on the Jamaican diaspora at Imperial. (11<sup>th</sup> July)4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Society of Black Academics (SBA) on the topic of *“Creating the space, the voice and the opportunities to demonstrate black excellence”* Invited speaker September 2024.