Council Diversity Monitoring Annual Report 2023-24

1.   Introduction

1.1   In November 2021, Council committed to an annual collection of some diversity data regarding its board member composition (aligned to the Higher Education Statistics Agency Governor information). The aim of this reporting is to align Council with then emergent good practice, support the enhancement of a board development framework for Council and to demonstrate inclusive leadership, with an annual report being received by it and a summary published.

1.2   The following data was collected via a short paper and online survey in December 2023. All members were invited to engage with 17 of the 19 Council members participating. Figures 1-5 therefore display characteristics for 89.5% of Council's membership in terms of age, disability status, ethnicity, nationality and sex. As data sets are small, potential sensitivities around the data reporting exist.

1.3   Council does not have explicit diversity targets relating to its composition but moreover has charged its Nominations Committee with placing diversity in its broadest sense, at the heart of search activity and ensuring inclusive practices were followed. Data for the previous year (census point December 2022 with 19 respondents) is shown alongside national board diversity statistics as benchmark data where available.

2.   Council Composition as of December 2023

Figure 1: Council Age Profile

| Age Range	Number of Council Members	
	2022-3	**2023-4**
25 and under	2	2
26-35	0	0
36-45	1	1
46-55	3	2
56-65	6	5
66 and over	7	7
None Respondents	1	2
Total No. of Council Members	20	19

2.1   Figure One shows that, while the majority of respondents are in the 25 and under to sixty-five age range, the single largest age band range remains those over 66. The data shows that Council has broadly maintained its age profile through recent appointments, and this age distribution is not atypical for such bodies. Research has shown that age diversity can reduce group think and lead to more critical judgement of management decisions and actions.

Figure 2: Disability Status

Number of Council Members

■ 2022 ■ 2023
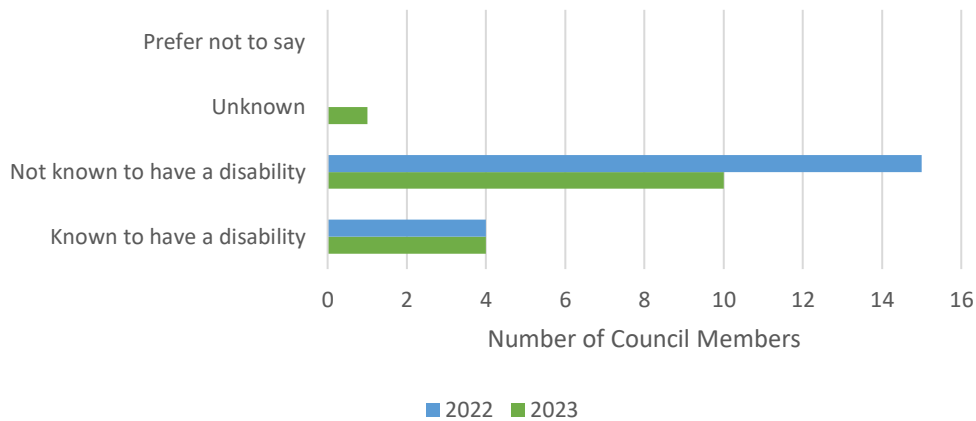
2.2   Members were not asked to disclose any information other than whether they were known to have a disability (including hidden disability). In terms of the Council composition's reflection of the University population, 9% of the University's staff have a declared disability.[1] Not all respondents to the survey answered this question (2).

Figure 3: Ethnicity

■ White ■ Black ■ Asian ■ Mixed ■ Other ■ Not known ■ Prefer not to say

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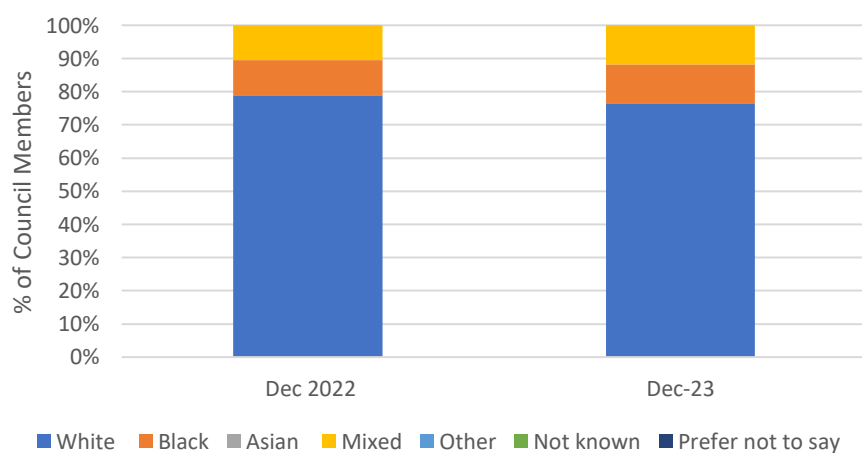
[1]   Lancaster Workforce Profile as of 19 December 2023.

2.3 Regarding ethnicity, Council has maintained the strong progress made in this area and currently there is a greater number of lay Council members from minority ethnic backgrounds (previously student membership has also contributed to diversity in this category). As of December 2023, 83% of the University staff profile identified as white. This is the result of a continued emphasis on diversity in lay member search. By comparison, the Parker Review 2021 considered how the ethnic and cultural diversity of FTSE companies could be improved. This included a target that all FTSE 250 Boards should have appointed one director from a minority ethnic background by December 2024, of whom 55% have already met this target. In addition, in relation to nationality, Council now includes members with status outside of the United Kingdom.

Figure 4: Nationality

	Number of Council Members	
Nationality	**2022-3**	**2023-4**
United Kingdom	19	15
European Union	0	1
Other	0	0
Dual	0	1
None Respondents	1	2
Total No. of Council Members	20	19

Figure 5: Sex

	Number of Council Members	
Sex	**2022-3**	**2023-4**
Male	11	9
Female	8	8
Other	0	0
None Respondents	1	2
Total No. of Council Members	20	19

2.4   When benchmarked with national statistics the Council's current reported composition performs well. From the Hampton Alexander Review February 2022, nationally within the FTSE 100 in 2021, women comprised 39.1% of board members. The University's Council has a stronger representation of females and exceeds the voluntary 40% target adopted by FTSE 350 companies by 2025 since many achieved the initial target of 30% established by the 30percentclub.org and 33%. However, a number of female members hold roles by virtue of election from constituent bodies (Senate and the Students' Union) over which it has limited influence.

January 2024