

St Catherine's College

Equality Report 2023–2024



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FOREWORD BY THE MASTER

On behalf of St Catherine's Governing Body, I am delighted to present our Equality Report for 2023-4.

At St Catherine's we are fully committed to promoting equality and diversity for all who work or study here. Our aim is to be a truly inclusive environment in which individual differences are respected and valued, and in which all staff and students have a fair and equal opportunity to fulfil their potential. We want to ensure we remove any barriers that may prevent us from attracting students or staff of the highest ability and provide an environment in which they can flourish. Discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief (including none), sex, or sexual orientation will not be tolerated. Our equality policy applies to all members and visitors to the College, including visiting students, guests, conference clients and contractors carrying out work on behalf of the College.

It is thirteen years since we produced our first Equality Report. Each time we produce a report we use it as an opportunity to review its findings against previous reports, enabling us to evaluate our current position with regards to equality and diversity, to show us where we have made progress, and to identify areas we need to investigate further. In producing this year's report, we have reviewed our existing equality objectives to ensure that we continue to take a proactive approach to the promotion of equality of opportunity and that we continue to create an inclusive and fair learning and work environment for everyone.

Pro-Master, Naomi Freud

INTRODUCTION

The College

St Catherine's College is one of the University of Oxford's newest colleges. We are one of 36 independent, self-governing colleges of the University. We started life as a Society in 1868, with the aim of encouraging students from less privileged backgrounds to study at Oxford. We became a college in 1962 and since then have grown to become one of the largest Oxford colleges. We have a student body of approximately 1000 students which is a mixture of undergraduate students, graduate students and visiting students. Some of our visiting students stay for a term whilst others study here for an entire academic year.

Our responsibilities

For the purposes of this report, we are concentrating on three areas, our roles as:

- an education provider,
- an employer, and
- a provider of conference services.

As an education provider we have a responsibility to our students, a responsibility that is at the forefront of everything we do. We work hard to ensure that people of the highest ability can study here and that our students receive the highest quality education, regardless of their background. We strive to create a learning and social environment governed by equality of opportunity, where diversity is valued.

As an employer we are responsible for 205 staff (as at November 2024). In all aspects of the employment relationship we endeavour to ensure equal opportunities. We also recognise the benefits having a diverse workforce bring to the College. St Catherine's aims to recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre. We believe it is essential that everyone is valued and able to work to their full potential, regardless of their background.

As a provider of conference services, we offer a range of residential and non-residential facilities. It is important to us that every conference organiser and delegate is treated fairly, with consideration and respect.

The law

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination in employment or in the provision of training and education on the grounds of any of the following protected characteristics:

Age – the legislation applies to people of all ages; this means the young as well as the old are protected from discrimination on the basis of their age. Service-related pay

and benefits are permitted for periods of up to 5 years and these may be specifically justified thereafter.

Disability – disability is defined by the Equality Act as ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-lasting effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. A ‘long-lasting effect’ is one that is likely to last 12 months or more, or is likely to recur. ‘Normal day-to-day activities’ might include physical activities such as mobility, physical coordination, memory or ability to learn, manual dexterity, or speech, hearing or eyesight. Discrimination by association is also prohibited, meaning the legislation extends the protection to people who are not themselves disabled but are associated with a disabled person. For example, it is illegal to discriminate against someone who is not themselves disabled but who is the carer of a disabled person.

Service providers are required to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to any aspect of the physical nature of their premises or to any ‘provision, criterion or practice’ that places a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with a non-disabled person. What count as a ‘reasonable adjustments’ are a matter of context and will depend on a range of factors. The duty to make reasonable adjustments only applies to those who are disabled.

Schedule 13 of the Equality Act prohibits discrimination in relation to school admissions, exclusions, and the education or associated services provided to pupils. Higher education establishments must also provide auxiliary aids or services, and have a duty to make adjustments to physical features.

Gender reassignment – gender reassignment is a personal, social, and sometimes medical process by which a person's gender presentation (the way they appear to others) is changed. Anyone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change their gender is protected from discrimination. An individual does not need to be undergoing medical supervision to be protected.

Marriage or civil partnership – individuals are protected against discrimination relating to their marital status.

Pregnancy and maternity – a woman is protected from discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period she is pregnant and the 26 weeks after the birth of a child (the statutory maternity period).

Race – under the term ‘race’ a wide definition of race is provided, which includes race, colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin. As a general rule, a group may be identified as a race or of the same ethnic origin where the group views itself, and is viewed by others, as ‘a distinct community by virtue of certain characteristics’.

Religion or belief – discrimination on grounds of ‘any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief’ is prohibited. Neither religion nor belief is defined by the law, but it does include the lack of a religion or belief. Political beliefs, however, are excluded from the legislation, albeit that the dividing line may be blurred in some cases. Factors considered when deciding whether there is a religion or belief may include whether there is collective worship, a clear belief system, or a profound belief affecting their way of life or view of the world. People are protected from discrimination on the grounds of their perceived religion or belief as well as their actual religion or belief.

Sex – both men and women are protected against discrimination by the Equality Act. This includes perceived, actual or associated discrimination.

Sexual orientation – sexual orientation relates to an individual's orientation towards: persons of the same gender (gay or lesbian); persons of the opposite gender (heterosexual); or persons of both the same gender and opposite gender (bisexual). Under the Equality Act, people are also protected from discrimination on the grounds of their perceived sexuality as well as their actual sexuality. In addition, it is unlawful to discriminate against people on the grounds of their association with those of a particular sexual orientation (e.g. friends and/or family). Although people are protected from discrimination on the grounds of their religion or belief, it is still illegal for them to discriminate against someone else on the grounds of sexual orientation (even if, for example, their faith teaches that homosexuality is unacceptable).

The Equality Act does allow for some cases where indirect discrimination is legal, but only where the indirect discrimination can be objectively justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

Rather than simply seeking to avoid discrimination, public bodies must consider how they could make a more positive contribution to the advancement of equality.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) consists of two parts, the General Equality Duty and specific duties governing how public bodies demonstrate that they are meeting the aims of the Equality Duty.

The General Equality Duty

The Equality Act introduced the concept of the general equality duty, which came into force in April 2011. This general equality duty covers all the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act.

The general equality duty has three main aims:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Specific equality duties

The Equality Act also introduced a number of specific duties, which mean the College has to:

- Fulfil its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which are to have due regard to the aims of the general equality duty in the exercise of our functions.
- Analyse the impact on equality of all our policies and practices.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who do not.
- Annually publish information to demonstrate our compliance with the general equality duty. This should include information on employees and people affected by the College's services users who share a protected characteristic.
- Publish objectives setting out how we will meet the requirements of the Equality Act, at least every four years.
- Ensure the published information and objectives are made available to the public.
- Publish gender pay gap data by 30 March each year.

In terms of disseminating the obligations of PSED throughout the College, it has been agreed that The Chair / Secretary of each committee will be responsible for making their respective committees aware of its responsibilities under PSED formally on a termly basis.

Work undertaken by the Equality Committee in 2023/24

The Equality Committee has addressed the following range of topics in the last year:

- Vacation residence for international students
- Diversity of menus in the Dining Hall

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- Organisation of events for ethnic minority groups in collaboration with other colleges
 - Reporting system for racist incidents
 - Increased engagement with ethnic minority groups
 - Training for ethnic minorities reps
 - Increased awareness of the student support fund
 - Student equality and diversity data

OUR APPROACH TO EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

St Catherine's is committed to implementing a comprehensive policy of equal opportunities for our staff and students, in order to provide an inclusive learning, working and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all our members are respected.

Here we provide an overview of our approach and policies relating to equality and diversity. More information can be found on the Equal Opportunities pages of our [website](#).

Our aim

As part of the wider University of Oxford, at St Catherine's we work to remove any barriers that might deter people of the highest ability from applying to Oxford, either as staff or students. We aim to provide an inclusive environment that values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all our staff and students are respected to assist them in reaching their full potential.

Our commitment

No applicant, student or member of staff will be treated less favourably than any other, whether before, during or after their study or employment at St Catherine's on the basis of one or more of the following grounds, except when such treatment is within the law and determined by lawful requirements:

- age
- colour
- disability
- ethnic origin
- marital status
- nationality
- national origin
- parental status
- race
- religion or belief
- gender
- gender reassignment
- sexual orientation
- length/type of contract

Our commitment to our students is to provide education of excellent quality at undergraduate and postgraduate level for academically able students, whatever their background. In pursuit of this aim, we are committed to using our best endeavours to ensure that all of our activities are governed by principles of equality of opportunity, and that all students are helped to achieve their full academic potential. This policy applies to (but is not limited to) admissions, teaching, learning and research provision, scholarships, grants and other awards under the College's control, student support, College accommodation and other facilities, personal conduct and student complaints and disciplinary procedures.

With regard to staff, the policy and practice of the College require that all staff are afforded equal opportunities within employment. Entry into (and progression within) employment is determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of the post. In all cases, ability to perform the job is the primary consideration. This policy applies to recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay, facilities, conduct at work, grievance and disciplinary procedures, termination of employment, and a number of other areas.

We are committed to ensuring all our conference delegates and organisers have the same excellent experience, regardless of their background. This approach applies to all the services and facilities we offer, including meeting and technical facilities, catering and accommodation.

Information in this report

The data in this report, along with the data collected in future, will inform future decision-making, equality and diversity policy development and equality and diversity objectives throughout the College – in relation to student matters, staff matters and conference services. It will also be used as a basis for comparison for future equal opportunity monitoring data.

Student data

Student data relating to admissions, academic performance and equal opportunity monitoring is collected at the University-wide level and supplied to individual colleges. We do not undertake to collect additional equality-related data from our students.

The student data in this report has been provided by the University's Student Data Management and Analysis section, and is a snapshot from student data that was correct on 1 December 2023.

Where possible, in this report we have compared our data against the data for the University of Oxford as a whole to provide some context.

Staff data

Staff data in this report comes from two sources: (i) standard information held in staff personnel records and (ii) the responses to a staff equal opportunity monitoring form (circulated every two years). To encourage completion of at least some of the monitoring form, each question contains a 'prefer not to say' answer option, meaning that staff can choose to provide us with information for each protected characteristic the form asks about. All staff are asked to complete a form to assist us in gaining an accurate picture of our workforce in relation to protected characteristic categories, but completion of the form is not compulsory.

Equal opportunity monitoring forms were most recently sent to all staff on 27 November 2023. In 2023, the return rate of the equal opportunity monitoring form was 38%, a decrease in the 49% return rate in 2021. The combination of forms not returned and forms returned but with individuals opting not to give information means there was an 'unknown' element of 67% for some protected characteristics.

We collect data on the majority of protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act but limit the information we publish in this report to sex, age, disability and ethnicity. This is because we are a relatively small and close-knit community and as such, there is a high risk that individuals may be identified if additional data was published.

In producing this report, the staff data were compared to staff data in the equality reports available online of other public sector employers based in Oxford. The employers we chose to look at were those who face similar challenges and have a comparable breadth of job types.

Also included in this report are equal opportunities monitoring data for all job vacancies advertised in 2024. Applicants are asked to complete the equal opportunities monitoring form as part of the application process; return of the form is on a voluntary basis. Some academic appointments are joint appointments with the University, and the College is not the lead employer. Equal opportunities monitoring data collected for these vacancies are not available to us and therefore have not been included in the figures reported here.

In the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024, we advertised 34 non-academic posts and received a total of 536 applications. 39% of applicants for non-academic posts returned our equal opportunities monitoring form, a significant increase in the return rate we had in the previous year. We advertised 5 academic vacancies in the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024 and received a total of 78 applications for these posts. 64% of applicants for

academic posts returned our equal opportunities monitoring form; a decrease in the return rate from the previous year.

How we will deliver our duties

The College has an Equality Committee, which meets once a term (three times per year). It is currently chaired by a Fellow of the College, and Committee members include College Officers, staff, and representatives from the undergraduate and graduate student bodies. It is important to us that people from different areas of the College are involved in the Equality Committee and that the views of both staff and students (undergraduate and graduate) are represented at Committee meetings. Since the publication of our first Equality Report, we have widened the membership of the Equality Committee and we remain committed to further extending the membership of the Committee to other members of the College who feel they can contribute to the analysis of what we do and help formulate our developing policies.

It is the responsibility of the Equality Committee to oversee the development of Equal Opportunities policy frameworks and objectives and their application in the College, working as appropriate with the relevant colleagues and bodies. The Committee is also responsible for reviewing equal opportunity data collected by the College and for ensuring that there is a forum at which student views on any matters relating to equality and equal opportunities can be raised.

Representatives from St Catherine's also attend the College Equality and Diversity Forum organised by the Conference of Colleges, which enables good practice to be shared between colleges.

The College works continuously to identify and address any areas of concern, to ensure that our existing policies, procedures and practices are reviewed, and to identify further areas that can be improved as part of this ongoing process. Through the Equality Committee and other mechanisms, we aim to review and report on our progress in ensuring that students and staff experience a consistently inclusive and supportive environment to assist them in reaching their full potential. We always welcome feedback and suggestions – from students, staff, potential students and visitors – as we endeavour to ensure that what we do is meaningful, focussed on the right priorities and will have a real impact on the experience of members of the College, visitors and other interested parties.

Decision making

Committee Chairs and Secretaries are asked to pre-screen the agenda routinely for any items that might have implications under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The PSED requires the College to have 'due regard' to the potential and actual impact on equality of all their policies, procedures, decisions, informal practices, etc. (See

<https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/policies-and-governance>.) Where an item has potential implications under the PSED this should be indicated on the agenda, and an equality analysis may be enclosed with the agenda and papers (see Checklist for recording steps and outcomes under <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/equality-analysis#collapse1199376>

The committee may request these issues to be considered in relation to any item. The discussion of any item identified as having PSED implications should include consideration of the following: Is the decision likely to affect people with protected characteristics differently? Which protected group(s) might be affected? Are there any means of remedying or mitigating a potential negative impact? If there are no remedies, can the negative impact be justified? Could the decision have a positive impact on equality? If it is not self-evident that the PSED is irrelevant to a particular item then the reasons why it is not considered relevant should be recorded in the minutes.

OUR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY DATA

As an educator

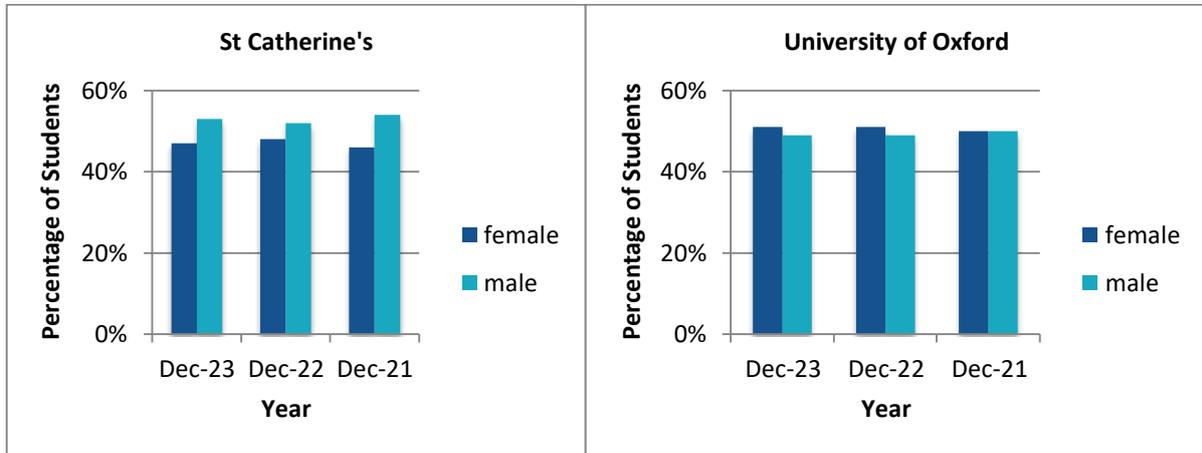
Where we are

As at 1 December 2023, we had 979 students based at St Catherine's, of which 50 were visiting students. Unless otherwise specified, the data below relate to all on-course students.

Sex

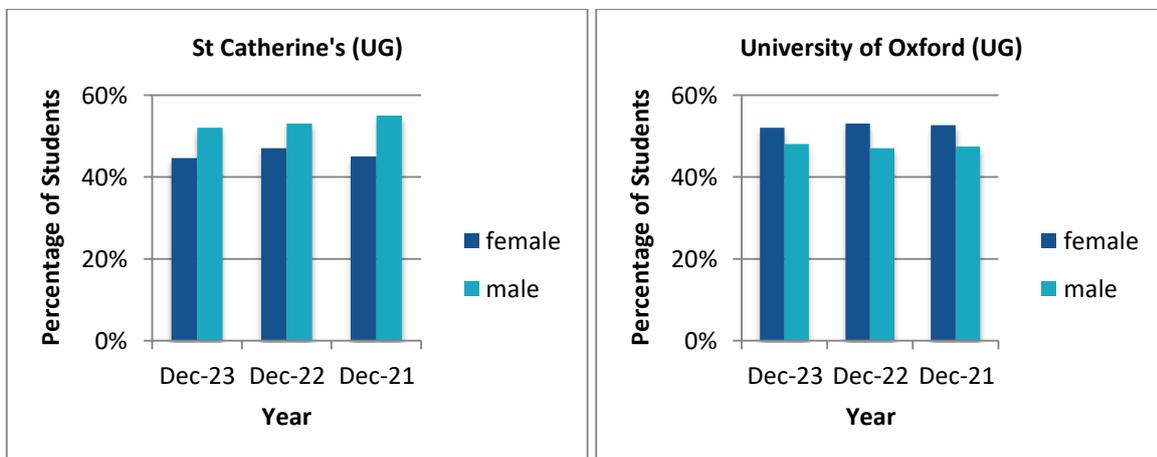
The term 'Sex' in this section refers to binary sex (male or female). This is due to the fact that the student data used is provided in this format by the University. If possible, in future reports, we will change this section to make it more inclusive to transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming people.

The female/male split in the student body was 47% female (463) to 53% male (516). This is similar to the split within the student body of the University as a whole, which is 51% (13,708) female to 49% male (13,237). It is also similar to the split for the previous three years in both the College and the University.

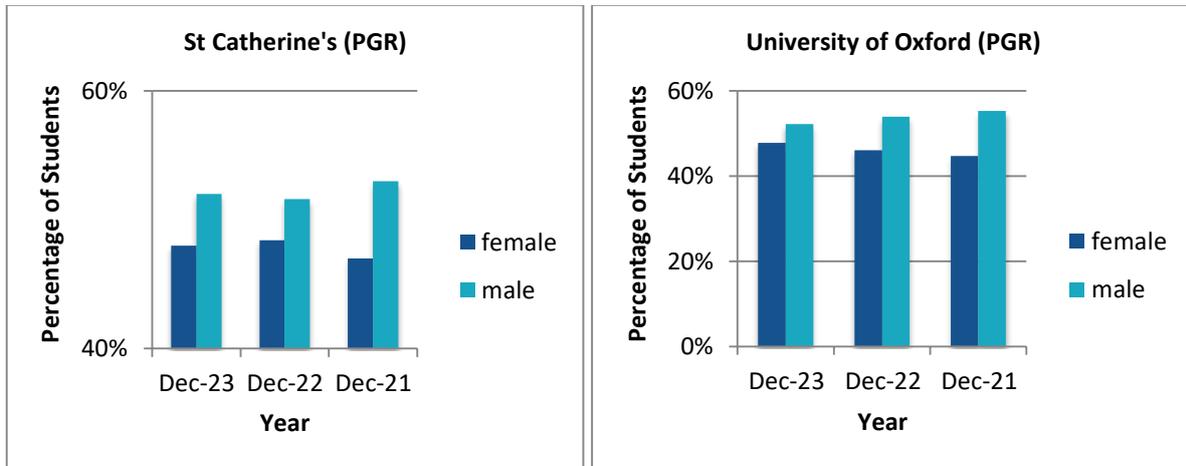


Sex: Programme type

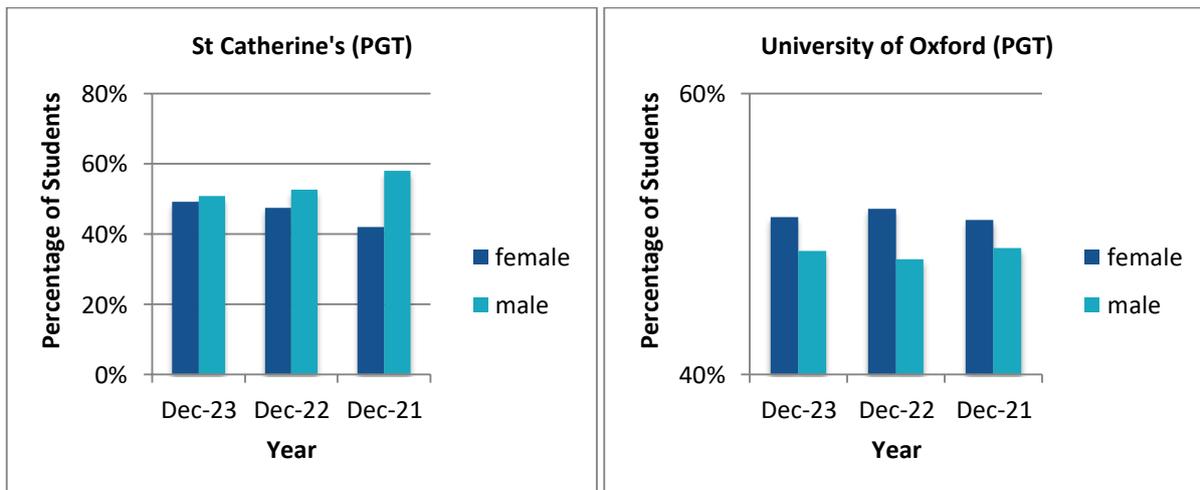
The female/male split in the College's undergraduate student population has remained roughly the same over the last three years. It was 45% female (233) to 55% male (289) in 2023.



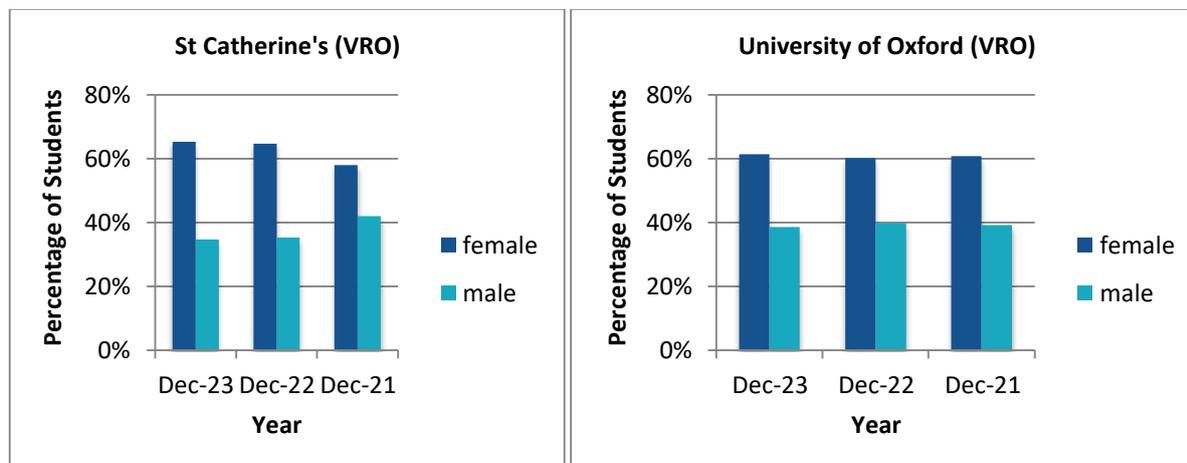
The female/male split in the College's graduate research student population has shown little fluctuation over the last three years. It was 48% female (107) to 52% male (116) in 2023.



The college's female graduate taught student population has increased over the last three years. It was 49% female (91) to 51% male (94) in 2023, 47% female (82) to 53% male (91) in 2022, and 42% female (73) to 58% male (101) in 2021.



The female/male split in the College's visiting student population in 2023 was similar to 2022, with 65% female (32) and 35% male (17).



Sex: Subject division

If the female/male split is broken down by subject, the area where there is the largest imbalance is in the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS), with 27% female students (88) compared to 73% male students (238). The figures are similar at the wider University level, with MPLS having 33% female students and 67% male students in 2023.

The split for Social Sciences students was more equal, with 52% female students (128) and 48% male students (119). This has been similar for the last three years both within the College and at the University level.

The proportion of female Humanities students decreased slightly in 2023, with 61% female (105) to 39% male (66). This is consistent with the University as a whole, with 60% female to 40% male students in 2023.

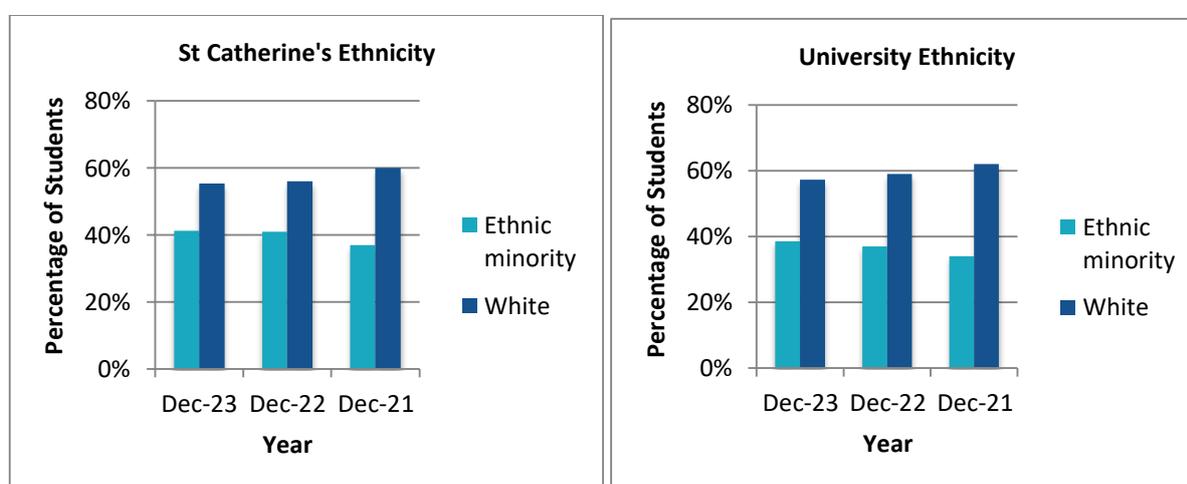
The proportion of female students studying Medical Sciences has remained the same, with 61% female students (95) and 39% male students (62) in 2023. At the University level, the proportion of female students has remained relatively consistent, with 61% female and 39% male in 2023.

The proportion of female Oxford University Department for Continuing Education (OUDCE) students has fluctuated over the past three years. In 2023, there were 52% female students to 48% male students, in 2022, there were 33% female students to 67% male students and in 2021, there were 47% female students to 53% male students. At the University level, there were 56% female students in 2023.

Ethnicity

55% (541) of our students were from a White ethnic background (British, Irish or any other White background), whilst 41% (403) of our students were from an Ethnic Minority background. The information on ethnicity is unknown or undeclared for 3% (35) of our students.

For the University of Oxford as a whole, 57% of its student population declared themselves to be from a White ethnic background and 39% declared themselves to be from an Ethnic Minority background. The information on ethnicity is unknown or undeclared for 4% of students.



We are part of a world-renowned university and therefore we attract a large number of overseas students. If international students are excluded from the ethnicity figures: In 2023, the ethnic background of UK students in College was 73% (393) White, 25% (147) Ethnic Minority and 2% (13) unknown. For the University, the figures were 72% White, 25% Ethnic Minority and 3% unknown.

Disability

17% (163) of our student population declared themselves to have a disability, which included 5% (47) who identified themselves as specifically having a learning disability.

Our overall figure is slightly lower than that of the University as a whole, where 18% of students declared a disability. The figure for those who defined their disability as being a learning disability is 5%.

It is worth noting that 'disability' covers a wide range of conditions, and whilst someone may have a condition that would be covered by term 'disability', they may not consider themselves to be disabled and so will not declare their disability. Students with learning

disabilities have an incentive to declare their disability, for example to ensure that they receive additional time in examinations, to which they are entitled. Students with a disability are encouraged to disclose it at application and registration. Students may also make the College aware through other channels to enable any necessary adjustments to be made or additional support to be given.

The College intends to address any concerns with regard to equality and diversity in the above data during the course of Equality Committee meetings during the coming year.

As an employer

Where we are

Equal opportunity monitoring forms were most recently sent to all staff on 27 November 2023. In November 2023, the total number of staff at St Catherine's was 213. Of the 213 staff, 39% were academic and teaching staff (including Fellows) and 61% were professional and support services staff (including administrative, catering, housekeeping, gardens, lodge and maintenance staff).

Sex

The profile of our workforce as a whole was 53% female and 47% male in 2023. The academic workforce was 31% female and 69% male. The professional and support services workforce was 62% female and 38% male. In 2021, the profile of our workforce was 49% female and 51% male. The academic workforce was 31% female and 69% male. The professional and support services workforce was 60% female and 40% male.

We have compared our overall profile to the equality profile information published by other public sector employers within of Oxford city and have found our overall profile to be more balanced than most of those employers.

We compared the profile of academic staff against the figures published by the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge, both of which had a slightly higher percentage of female academic staff.

Applications for vacancies

Of the applicants for non-academic posts who returned the equal opportunities monitoring form in 2023, 64% were female and 33% were male (3% unknown).

Of the applicants for academic vacancies who completed our equal opportunities monitoring form in 2023, 36% were female and 56% were male (8% unknown).

Gender Pay Gap

The College's gender pay gap (the difference between average pay earned by female employees and average pay earned by male employees) is based on a snapshot date of 5 April 2024 and is as follows:

Mean gender pay gap	10.6%
Median gender pay gap	0.0%

Quartile	Males	Females
Lower	40.12%	59.88%
Lower middle	55.23%	44.77%
Upper middle	58.72%	41.28%
Upper	58.72%	41.28%

It is not the case that staff of different sexes are paid different rates for the same job. The gender pay gap is mainly attributable to the larger percentage of female staff employed in lower quartile positions.

Ethnicity

In 2023, 29.5% of the workforce declared themselves to be from a White ethnic background (British, Irish or any other White background). 4% of the workforce declared themselves to be from a Black or Ethnic Minority background, which is lower than that of the University workforce (17%) and that of the population of the City of Oxford (29% in 2021)). The information on ethnicity was unknown or undeclared for 67% of staff.

It is difficult to make observations regarding the ethnicity profile of our workforce given that 67% chose not to provide us with that information. The number of staff choosing not to supply this information has increased, and it is clear that increased efforts need to be made to encourage staff to complete the equal opportunity monitoring form.

Applications for vacancies

Of the applicants for non-academic vacancies who completed our equal opportunities monitoring form in 2024, 55% declared themselves to be from a White ethnic background and 43% from an Ethnic Minority background.

Of the applicants for academic vacancies who completed our equal opportunities monitoring form in 2024, 46% declared themselves to be from a White ethnic background and 52% from an Ethnic Minority background.

Disability

2% of staff declared a disability, with 31% of staff declaring they did not have a disability. The information is unknown for the remaining 67% of staff.

Information regarding accessibility and support for individuals with disabilities is available on the College website. Staff declaring a disability are offered support such as reasonable adjustments to assist them in fulfilling their potential.

Applications for vacancies

Of the applicants for non-academic vacancies who completed our equal opportunities monitoring form in 2024, 13% declared themselves to have a disability.

Of the applicants for academic vacancies who completed our equal opportunities monitoring form in 2024, 18% declared themselves to have a disability.

Interview candidates are encouraged to declare any disability and are offered support and reasonable adjustments during the interview process if they do so.

Age

The age profile of staff is given in the table below.

Age group	16–20	21–25	26–30	31–35	36–40	41–45	46–50	51–55	56–60	61–65	66+
Percentage of staff	0.5	4	9	13	11	13	13	20	6.5	8	3

Our proportion of employees aged 40 or under is 37.5%, which is similar to that of other local public sector employers. Our proportion of employees aged over 60 is 11%, which is higher than that of other local public sector employers.

Applications for vacancies

Of the applicants for non-academic vacancies who completed our equal opportunities monitoring form in 2024, the largest number was from applicants aged 26-30 (31%). In 2023, the largest number was from applicants aged 21-25 (27%). We had a low number of applicants who identified themselves as being in the age bands 16-20 (1%), 61-65 (1%) and 66+ (0%).

Of the applicants for academic vacancies who completed our equal opportunities monitoring form in 2024, the largest number was from applicants aged 26-30 (28%) and 31-35 (26%).

As a provider of conference services

The services we provide as a venue for conferences include:

- Meeting/lecture spaces – Our conference facilities include a number of meeting rooms and lecture halls suitable for group discussions, presentations or lectures.
- Accommodation – We can accommodate up to 350 delegates staying with us on residential conferences. 300 of our rooms have en-suite facilities. We have 71 ground-floor bedrooms, all with en-suite shower rooms, seven of which are specially adapted for wheelchair access.
- Food – We can provide breakfast, lunch and/or dinner for our conference guests, catering for any special dietary requirements, whether they are for medical, religious or personal reasons. Individual conference organisers are able to request changes to menus in advance.
- Access and parking – We have excellent access and facilities for people with disabilities and/or special requirements. The College is mainly built on ground level, and there is easy wheelchair access to most areas, including the Lodge, the Dining Hall, the Lecture Theatre, the Library, the MCR, and the whole of the JCR area, including the bar and computer room. We have an on-site car park and parking spaces are made available to any conference delegates with mobility issues.

Public Sector Equality Duty Aims and objectives

The public sector duties set out in the Equality Act require us to set and publish objectives in relation to meeting the requirements of the Equality Act.

The aims and objectives we have set in relation to our role as an educator, employer and conference provider are listed below, together with additional objectives for 2022.

Improve the representation of under-represented groups across the College's functions.

Our data show our female student population decreased slightly in 2023; 47%, compared to the student population of the University of Oxford at (51%). The Equality Committee will continue to review and discuss the gender figures.

We will continue to aim to gather data regarding applications as well as admissions to the College in the subject area of the largest gender imbalance, MPLS, to inform strategies to improve the gender balance within these subject areas. Work to address this includes the organisation of 'Women in STEM' taster sessions, to encourage applications.

We will aim to implement strategies designed to reduce the gender pay gap in relation to all staff and achieve a more balanced gender split within the academic staff population.

Improve accessibility and support to people with disabilities.

To encourage and sustain progress, we will keep a record of improvements that have been made to the College in terms of accessibility and/or support offered to students, staff and conference guests with disabilities. Records continue to be kept in Equality Committee meeting minutes and on the College website.

We will consider periodically whether there is a need to review any of the conference services we provide with respect to equality and/or diversity.

Improve equality monitoring of the protected groups within the workforce.

The collection of equal opportunity monitoring data depends on the willingness of staff to complete the form. To get the full picture about our staff and protected characteristics, we need all staff to return equal opportunity monitoring forms when they are issued. A lower proportion of staff returned the monitoring form in 2023 (38%) than in 2021 (49%). We will aim to improve the return rate of equal opportunity monitoring forms further in future years. This will include looking at the way forms are issued and returned, as well as supporting information provided to staff, to see if changes to these processes will result in a higher return rate.

In terms of staff recruitment, as part of the application process, all applicants are asked to complete our equal opportunity recruitment monitoring form, but not all applicants return them. We would like to be in a position where we have the fullest picture of the applicants we are attracting. In 2024, the proportion of applicants for non-academic appointments

returning forms was 39%, which was a significant increase from the previous year. The return rate of equal opportunity recruitment monitoring form for academic vacancies has decreased, from 81% in 2023 to 64% in 2024. We will continue to consider ways to encourage candidates to complete the recruitment monitoring form

We will continue to review the details of job vacancies (e.g., job description, further particulars, job titles, duties) when they arise to ensure there is no unintended bias in any aspect of these. We will also review new policies and procedures before implementation to ensure that there are no unintended consequences for or bias against a particular group as a result of the policy or procedure.

For a number of our academic appointments, we are not the primary employer, and so we do not coordinate the recruitment process and do not have access to the equal opportunity recruitment monitoring information collected. This means that we do not get the complete picture in terms of applicants for academic vacancies. In past years we have contacted the 'lead' employer to ask for this data to be shared with us. So far our efforts have been unsuccessful, but we will continue to investigate ways of trying to obtain the equal opportunity recruitment monitoring information in cases where we are not the primary employer.

Develop appropriate methods of consulting effectively with the protected groups within our student population, workforce and conference service.

As well as considering new methods of consultation, we will continue to consider how the Equality Committee membership can be extended to gain a wider variety of staff and student views.

We will continue to consider whether there is a need to amend the feedback forms we use for conference guests, to include equality and diversity data.

Disclosure of protected characteristics

We will consider new ways of encouraging disclosure of protected characteristics, to assist in promoting a culture of positive awareness in relation to all protected characteristics.

Equality and Diversity awareness

We will seek to promote a deeper understanding of equality and fairness across the College through the provision of equality and diversity training for staff.

Additional Public Sector Equality Duty objectives added in 2022:

- Facilitate mentoring for Ethnic Minority students and members of the College.
- Raise awareness of the contribution of Ethnic Minority students and staff to the College throughout its history, by organising events and exhibitions.