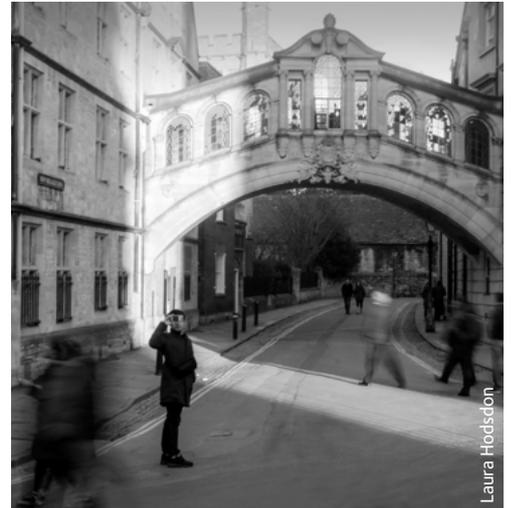


What we really mean by ‘advancing race equality’, or why being “colourblind” is not enough

As we work on our [Race Equality Charter](#) application, we are seeking to articulate what we mean by ‘working to advance race equality’. Especially if we are white, it can be difficult to understand why race equality needs to be advanced, other than in a wider socio-economic sense. If we do not hear overtly racist remarks, we see fair recruitment, and we see international and UK Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) colleagues, the reasons for talking about race may seem obscure. Some see Oxford as a meritocracy where everyone is treated equally; others consider that real equality is not ‘seeing’ colour. But to truly advance race equality we need to take a different approach and tackle issues originating in the structures of society and its discourse. And while they are harder to identify and challenge, doing so is key to ensuring that the University is genuinely an equal environment for all.



Implicit bias and stereotype threat

Knowledge of the potential for implicit (also known as unconscious) bias has become more widespread (a good place to start is *Blind Spot: Hidden Biases of Good People* or Project Implicit: implicit.harvard.edu). One example of implicit bias playing out and being countered is described in a study which showed that when the major symphony orchestras in the US used blind auditions – where the identity of the performer was hidden by a screen – the likelihood of a woman being hired increased by between 25% and 50%. In another study, fictitious identical CVs were assigned White-sounding or African American-sounding names and sent in reply to job adverts: White-sounding CVs received 50% more calls to interview than African American ones. The EDU and OLI have recently launched a project to provide Implicit Bias training in departments, and the OLI has overhauled its online course. For more information on both see www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/race/whatsgoingon.

Everyday racism

Sometimes called “micro-aggressions”, subtle, everyday racism can appear trivial. But repeated micro-aggressions can be tiring and alienating (and can lead to mental ill-health). Racial micro-aggressions might include:

- Not making eye contact or speaking directly to people
- Not believing someone is British (‘Where are you from? No, I mean *originally*...’)
- ‘Jokes’ drawing attention to someone’s difference, their accent, or nationality.

Some people who do these things may be entirely well-meaning, and would be mortified to realise that they had caused offence. But this is of little consequence if a possible effect of their words or actions is to suggest to people that they may fulfil a negative stereotype, or do not belong. Again, we are working to address this by raising awareness of this type of subtle racism in our training.

Feelings of exclusion

Informal networks are an important part of navigating Oxford and indeed the world and employment generally. But where people tend to congregate with and get informal information from others ‘like them’ (“affinity bias”), there is a potential barrier to progression. Or there may be cultural norms that mean certain people are excluded: for example, Friday drinks can be uncomfortable for some. All of these potentially exclusive networks or feelings could lead to some people missing out on team bonding, networking, and even future job opportunities.

Our race equality work addresses all these issues. These examples start to show why we may not truly be in a meritocracy, no matter how strong our belief in equality and no matter how far we assume racism does not affect the people around us. Rather, the best route to equality may be to notice and to address our differences, not to be ‘colourblind’ and pretend they do not exist. Listening to our colleagues and students, actively working to achieve a supportive culture, and ensuring our environment works for all is how we can make sure that everyone’s experience at Oxford is a positive one.

More than 20 new portraits commissioned to reflect Oxford University's diversity and inclusivity



Oxford University has announced the full list of sitters and artists taking part in its Diversifying Portraiture initiative, which aims to broaden the range of people represented around the University.

Film and television director Ken Loach, BBC journalist Reeta Chakrabarti, eminent astrophysicist Professor Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, award-winning author Jeanette Winterson, and human rights activist Kumi Naidoo are among those sitting for portraits as Oxford seeks to reflect and promote its increasing diversity and inclusivity.

The portraits – mostly paintings and photographs – will include a mixture of men and women and will feature people with disabilities, people from minority ethnic backgrounds, and people from LGBT+ communities.

The project, funded by the Vice-Chancellor's Diversity Fund, has already catalogued existing paintings from around the University that highlight the range of pioneering figures whose achievements over the centuries have challenged the stereotypes of their time.

The newly commissioned works will feature in the University's central public

spaces and will add to Oxford's rich collection of college and University portraits. Sitters were selected from over a hundred nominations of people with a connection to Oxford.

The new portraits will be shown at an exhibition later this year. For information, follow us on twitter.com/DivOxPortraits or visit: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/inpractice/portraiture

Photos from left: Patricia Daley by Binny Mathews; Marie Tidball by Clementine Webster and Diran Adebayo by Rory Carnegie

Equality Networks



The LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and plus to encompass all the identities that make up the community and ensure everyone feels welcomed) Staff Network is for all LGBT+ Oxford University staff, academic and non-academic (including OUP and the colleges). Postgraduate students are also welcome to join. The group has an email list that acts as a confidential discussion forum, and also holds various meetings throughout the year, both social and work-related. Membership of the list will be kept confidential. **To join** send a blank email to: oxu-lgbt-staff-subscribe@maillist.ox.ac.uk



The Disabled Staff Network is for staff with a disability or long-term health condition who work for the University, colleges or Oxford University Press. People sometimes feel a bit isolated in their workplace, so the Disabled Staff Network is a place where you can talk to people who are likely to understand. Since it is often difficult to meet in person, a lot of our 'talk' is likely to be through online forums on our closed WebLearn site. **To join** please email caroline.moughton@admin.ox.ac.uk.

BME Staff Network



The BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) Staff Network is open to all University of Oxford staff who identify as BME. We have an email list that acts as a confidential discussion forum, and we also have various meetings throughout the year, both social and work-related. Membership of the list is kept confidential. **To join** please email daphne.cunningham@eng.ox.ac.uk

Stonewall Role Models and Allies

As part of the University's continuing commitment to LGBT+ inclusion, Stonewall were invited back last month by MPLS to deliver their Allies Programme to members of staff from across the University. Last year they delivered the Role Models programme for LGBT+ staff. The Allies session provided participants with an understanding of what it means for LGBT+ people to be themselves in the workplace, why that is important, and how they can be an inclusive and active ally to their colleagues. The Allies were brimming with ideas and initiatives, including an email signature *I am proud to be a Stonewall Ally*

designed by one of the Allies. We will keep you updated on their progress in coming issues.

Last year's cohort of Role Models also met this month to discuss the legacy of the programme and what they personally had been inspired to achieve since the session. It was truly inspiring to see all that had been achieved since September, including: giving talks internally and externally in schools; volunteering with the Out in Oxford museums project; mentoring others; raising LGBT+ awareness with colleagues, in committees and with student ambassadors; and finally,

appearing on TV and radio! Hannah Boschen, one of the Role Models, has also developed a condensed Role Models session inspired by her experience. The first session will be on Tuesday 27 June, 9.30am–1.30pm. If you are LGBT+ and would like to take part please email: caroline.kennedy@admin.ox.ac.uk



Equality data: sexual orientation

Since 2012 we have invited all applicants for jobs at the University to identify their sexual orientation so that we can monitor the representation and success rates of different groups during the recruitment process. We are pleased that 86% of applicants for non-academic posts in 2015/16 felt able to tell us their sexuality, and we would encourage everyone who applies for a job here to do so. This is a vital step in helping us measure the fairness of our procedures and identify any barriers for specific groups.

In 2015/16, 6% of applicants identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other non-heterosexual orientation compared with 5% of those appointed. In the 2015 Annual Population Survey, 2.1% of the UK population identified as LGB or Other (4.1% declined to specify), though other estimates are slightly higher.

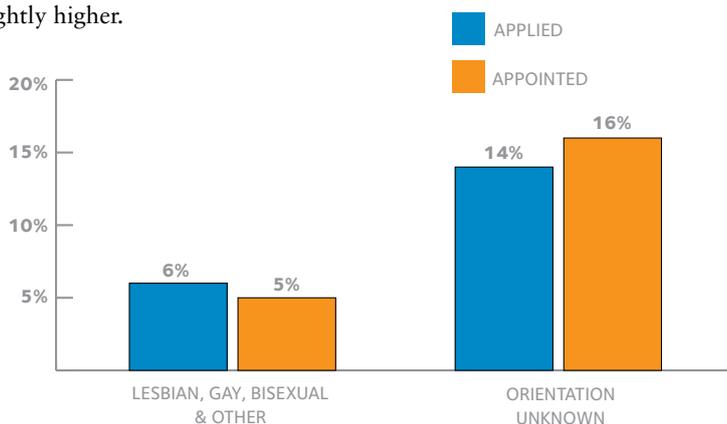
If you are LGBT+ and new to the University, why not join the LGBT+ Staff Network for 1st Thursday post-work drinks at the University Club? 1st Thursday provides an informal opportunity to meet new people and find out more about working at Oxford.

When: 6pm on the first Thursday of every month

Where: University Club, Mansfield Road

More info: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/sexualorientation

For more equality data and a progress report on equality and diversity at Oxford during 2015/16, see the University's annual Equality Report, published by the EDU: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/policy/data/report.



Equality lectures

If you have missed any of the recent lectures you can still catch them on podcast:

- Women of Achievement: podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/women-achievement
- Race and the Curriculum: www.ox.ac.uk/news-and-events/race-and-curriculum
- LGBT History Month Lectures: podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/oxford-lgbt-lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-history-month-lectures
- TORCH – What Does Diversity Mean to Me? torch.ox.ac.uk/what-does-diversity-mean-to-me

Oxford Pride

The University will be taking part in Oxford Pride again this year with an evening of Micro Talks on Tuesday 30 May, 6pm start at Wadham College. For more information and to book: microtalks2017.eventbrite.co.uk

The LGBT+ Staff Network will also be walking in the parade through Oxford and will have a stall at the festival. Come along and say hello, Saturday 3 June, Oxford Castle Quarter & Paradise Street.



Bullying and harassment: VSAG survey results

A report on the outcomes of the last Virtual Staff Advisory Group survey is available to download from: tinyurl.com/oxfordvsag

The survey asked VSAG members who had experienced or witnessed harassment and bullying at work to tell us how they dealt with it; what were the barriers to taking action; and what could be done to make it easier to act in future.

Responses focused on four key themes of communications, training, leadership and timescales for complaints. The report summarises current University activity in these areas, including:

- Awareness raising;
- Pilot workshops in MSD and MPLS;
- New online training materials; and
- A review of the Harassment Policy and Procedure.

If you would like to join the VSAG and provide feedback on issues affecting equality and diversity at Oxford, please contact Sara Smith. The next survey is due out early in Trinity term.

To join, email: sara.smith@admin.ox.ac.uk

Spotlight on Religion

Ramadan 27 May–25 June 2017

Ramadan is a significant and holy time for Muslims across the world. It falls in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, and is a period when Muslims fast between sunrise and sunset every day. During this time of devotion, most Muslims may dedicate more of their time to praying or reading the Qur'an.

Those fasting will wake early to take a meal before dawn, and have another meal after sunset. The daily breaking of fast in the evening takes place communally with family or friends. Muslim students and staff have regularly broken fast together in our University community, gathering in colleges or at the University Muslim Prayer Room in the Robert Hooke Building on Parks Road.

The end of Ramadan is marked by the celebration Eid-ul-Fitr, with special festivities, celebratory meals, and quality time spent with family, friends and others in the community. This is also the time a set amount of money gathered during Ramadan may be given towards charitable causes.

This year, Ramadan overlaps with our exam period impacting students who will be fasting. Muslim students may be fasting on average for 19 hours without water, and this may have an impact on concentration and lead to increased fatigue. Many students will have applied for alternative arrangements for the sitting of their exams to mitigate the effects of fasting.

Any Muslim staff fasting may wish to make changes to work patterns during this period. This may include arriving and leaving earlier or arriving and leaving later. Any adaptations to work patterns should be made with the approval of a line manager or supervisor.

For more information on Ramadan, visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/religionandbelief

Getting to work

Getting to work is something we take for granted, and we may not realise the difficulties that disabled colleagues have overcome before their arrival, even without taking into account any additional caring responsibilities for other family members.

People living with chronic pain or insomnia may find it hard to get up in the morning, and some medicines increase their difficulties. People with physical impairments may take longer to get moving, and may need to do mobility exercises. Sometimes painkillers are needed before someone can even get out of bed.

Anyone living with depression or anxiety may find that it takes a huge effort to get up in the morning, especially when work seems overwhelming. People with autism may have particular routines they need to follow. People with OCD may carry out repeated checks that the door is locked or the gas turned off. Blood sugar is often low in the morning, but getting organised and eating a healthy breakfast may be difficult.

Using public transport requires a certain stamina, both physical and mental, which may be a challenge for some members of staff. Coping with high light levels, or crowded environments may be difficult. High pollen levels may be problematic for people with hay fever.

Some people drive to work, facing traffic delays and then the challenge of finding a parking space. (Where both of these options are very difficult for disability reasons, funding may be available for taxis through the Access to Work scheme.) There may then be a long walk from the car before the person gets to their office. People living with fatigue may have already used up a significant part of their limited energy.

Now it is time for work!

To discuss support contact Caroline Moughton, Staff Disability Advisor, caroline.moughton@admin.ox.ac.uk

COMING SOON

This year's Disability Lecture and the launch of our Disability Narratives website!



www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop