

CHAIR'S REPORT

Associate Provosts Lesley Cohen and Wayne Mitchell

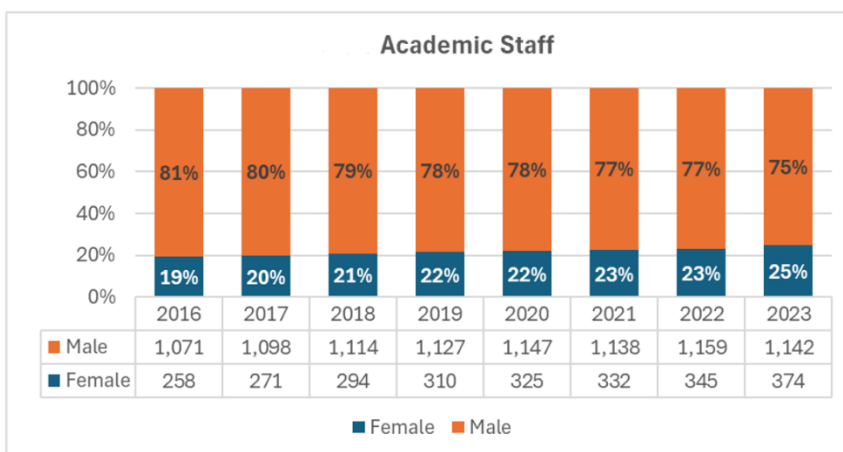
Female Staff

1. In advance of the Athena midterm review (May or July 2025) we have started to review the statistics.

The long-term trend regarding the hiring of Academic women staff is positive, accelerating but still slow to change.

In the last two years we have:

- had a higher female percentage of new starters than our current population.
- recruited more female staff than left.
- recruited fewer male staff than left.
- the historic demographic means more male staff than female staff are retiring so the rate of increase of female academics should increase more steeply over the next years



Statistics produced by Rob Bell.

2. 2025 is the 20-year anniversary of the launch of Athena Swan and we are in discussion with the Provost regarding holding a '20 years on' event with internal and external speakers to celebrate and showcase and bring the focus to Imperial where much of the initial efforts began.
3. Planning has begun for the Women at Imperial week events 10-14 March 2025⁵⁴. The Communications design team have proposed a number of striking new design options afforded by the rebranding. The tagline is under discussion, but several events for the week are in progress.

LGBTQ+

4. An outstanding item is the review our membership of Stonewall. There is an action on Imperial to review membership every few years. Last review 2019. Outline draft was presented at the Stonewall committee in November 2024. The plan is for the next version to come to the 22 May EDIAG then be presented at a People and Culture committee later in the year.

Disability

5. Disability pay gap reported for the first time this year. This statistic, along with the gender and ethnicity pay gaps (which both appear to have increased this year) will be reviewed.
6. *Imperial Cohesion* the EDI online event open to all staff interested in EDI issues was held on November 13. The meeting title '*Creating a neuroinclusive workplace and why it matters*' included presentations from Prof. Sara Rankin who is a neurodiversity champion for Imperial, Dez Mendoza (co-chair of ABLE the staff network supporting disabled staff), Lillie Pakzad-Shahibi (ABLE member), and Kani Kamara (head of EDIC) and Gabriella Kerr-Gordon. Over 150 staff registered and 110 attended the event. The main focus of the event was to introduce the topic and set out some of the relatively small changes in work culture and management that make a huge positive impact on staff satisfaction and productivity. Although 15% of the general population are considered neurodiverse, that statistic is likely to rise to 25% or higher within some job families at Imperial, although declaration rates are of the order of 3%.

Ethnicity

7. At the Education and Student Experience committee (ESEC) November 11 meeting, Strategic Planning presented a differential outcomes report detailing a statistical analysis of gaps observed in continuation and degree attainment over five years. Pertinent here is the statistic that Black students had the lowest continuation, first class degree, and good degree rates, significantly lower than White students in all metrics. As a result of the rigor of this analysis and results, it has been agreed (at ESEC), to widen the Induction week and other support currently in place for widening participation students (as described in the 2024 Access and Participation plan) to this demographic. Although further analysis is required (to better understand the home verses overseas student data), this is a major step forward.
8. At the Access and Participation strategy group (APSG) 31 October meeting a detailed report was presented by the ICU deputy-president Welfare Nico Henry and Eleanor McCarthy – Policy and Research Coordinator in response to the Imperial 2024 bursary scheme. A key finding showed that Black students were more likely than their White counterparts to be taking up paid work for longer hours overall, and the aggregate data over the last 3 years shows them to be more likely to be undertaking part time work in general, compared to White students. Although this report analysed the subset of students seeking bursary support, it is likely there is a link between this and the continuation and awarding data although financial support is likely not to be the only factor overall. We support the ICU recommendation that the University and ICU to look further into the gap between Black and White students working and evaluate whether Black WP students are receiving appropriate financial support.
9. The guidelines for the maximum hours that undergraduates should work during full time study was discussed at the January Student Experience Forum. The point relates to that above and we expressed concern that the guideline does not prevent potential students from certain socioeconomic groups from applying to Imperial.
10. Inaugural meeting of the Provosts Visiting Professor Alumni Network (PVPAN). Providing an opportunity for past and current PVPs to meeting and discuss their experiences of scheme, to evaluate and determine how we can best utilise their time at Imperial and establish lasting collaborations. Arising from the meeting the suggestion to establish an Annual Lecture Series for the PVP to showcase their research to wide Imperial College community and beyond. In addition, PVP have been invited to sit of the REC-SAT to share their perspectives and insights. Under discussion is whether it would be helpful for host departments to have a light touch set of guidelines regarding hosting PVPs.

11. Following the positive feedback and advice from the Advance HE advisor at the recent REC mid-term review, our REC-SAT objectives are to collating the evidence with the aim of striving for the Silver Award in the 2026 application. We are in the process of re-evaluating the REC Action plan prioritise and identifying the key objectives required to match the criteria. The REC-SAT will be meeting with other HEI who have already received the Silver Award (De Montfort University, University of Manchester and University of East London) as well and working with other universities also on the journey towards the Silver Award submission.
12. The [4th Annual Beyond Ethnicity Career Conference entitled, 'AI: Friend or Foe'](#) was held on September 27th 2024, with keynote speaker Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon. The conference focused on understanding and demystifying the perception of AI within the wider community. It highlighted the importance of developing inclusive policies and practices that reflect the needs of the entire population thereby preventing the potential for systemic design bias in AI applications. The conference was widely supported by attendees from Imperial and wider HEI.

General Activities

13. The Inclusive Recruitment showcase held on December 11 2024, in person. It is intended that this is an annual event going forward. There were about 40 registrants, which was less than expected, but possibly due to the near end of term date. The feedback was positive, both in terms of suggestions for inclusive recruitment actions and for future events. Talks are posted to the [Inclusive Recruitment web pages](#).
14. A new e-learning recruitment training package will be launched later this year. It uses the framework from the original training package but has increased interactivity, a greater emphasis on inclusivity, and completion of the course can more easily be recorded and reviewed by HR overseeing the recruitment process. It is hoped that all members of shortlisting and appointment panels will take the training.
15. Several departments and/or Faculty initiatives have created inclusive recruitment guidelines based on their own successful campaigns. The plan is to use these to produce an Imperial wide set of guiding principles for those leading recruitment in departments.
16. Workload concerns working group has been reconfigured and split into two. One to be led by Chris Watkins for PTO staff and the other to be chaired by Richard Craster (supported by Nicola Carmen) for academic and Teaching and Research job families. WM will sit on the latter working group, working through the development of a template for a Workload Allocation Model to be used for the Academic, Teaching and Research job families, and seeking better alignment with the Wellbeing Strategy and ARC reviews help towards minimising workload concerns.
17. Road Shows – the AP-EDI are starting their visits to present at departmental staff meetings through term 1 and 2 2025. First departments are Materials (Jan 23), Aeronautics (Feb 19), Physics (Feb 19), Life Sciences (March 12), Earth Sciences (March 13), Mech. Eng. (30 April).

Beyond Imperial

18. In December 2024, 10 volunteers from Imperial College joined KPMG's [Cross-Company Allyship Programme 4.0](#) for their 12-month mentoring programme (5 mentors and mentees). The programme matched mentors and mentees from over 55 companies from the UK and Ireland. The launch event held on 16th January, with regular meeting and training sessions scheduled throughout the rest of the year.

19. Imperial College feature in the in the latest edition of Advance HE [In Partnership](#) magazine reflecting on over 20-years of institutional strategic thinking on EDI (January 2025). Also API-EDI and REC coordinator will be presenting a talk and poster presentations for Advance HE [‘Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Conference](#) being held in Newcastle from 2nd-3rd April 2025.
20. Imperial As One Media Academy (IAOMA) provides media training for under-represented groups within Imperial and beyond (partnered with Institute of Cancer Research for 2024 cohort). The project was nominated and shortlisted for the category of *Outstanding Contribution to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* for the [Times Higher Educations Award](#). The ceremony was held at the ICC in Birmingham on 28th November 2024. Although they did not win the Award, it was excellent to be recognised for the outstanding by other HEI in the sector. IAOMA are currently in discussions with The Francis Crick Institute to partner for the 2025 cohort.
21. Panellist at the Holding the Space conference hosted by University of Westminster, where we discuss the [‘Black PhD Experience: Stories of Strength, courage and Wisdom in UK Academia’](#). As part of the UW, Black History Year, a platform to was provided to black academics, students, practitioners and professional service colleagues to amplify their voices in sharing research in areas addressing the conference themes. Wayne Mitchell was joined by co-Editor [Dr William Ackah](#), and contributors, Dr [Barbara Adewumi](#) and [Dr Hanna Akalu](#) to discuss the origins and the impact of the recent publication.