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UK Pay Gap Information

Including Equal Pay Statement

April 2025

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Heriot-Watt University Pay Gap Information including Equal Pay statement 2025 – 2029

Summary

At our UK campuses we have a persistent gender pay gap; 17% mean and 16% median. While this has reduced from 24% and 23% respectively since 2017, we still have a long way to go to close the gap to nil. We continue to have poor information relating to disability disclosure with a consequence of hampering a meaningful diagnosis of any underlying issues.

We are required to publish mean and median pay gap information, and the figures tell us slightly different things about the pay gaps, as explained by Close the Gap in *Figure 1*.

What is the difference between the mean and median pay gaps? ▲

The **median pay gap** is calculated by finding the midpoint in all employees' hourly pay and discarding the lowest and highest rates of pay or 'outliers.' Therefore, half of the employees' earnings will be above the midpoint and half will be below the midpoint. Often, a median pay gap will be lower than its corresponding mean pay gap.

The **mean pay gap** is calculated by adding all employees' rates of pay together and dividing by the total number of employees. The mean includes all of the lowest and highest rates of pay, and therefore reflects the impact of the higher proportion of women working in lower paid roles, and the higher proportion of men in higher paid roles. International measures also use the mean when calculating the pay gap, which enables comparisons to be made with other countries.

Figure 1: Close the Gap explaining mean and median pay gaps¹

We recognise our gender pay gap is a result of both vertical occupational segregation (distribution across salary grades, with less women in higher grades) and horizontal occupational segregation (role type, with less women in professorial/senior leadership roles). To date we have not significantly addressed occupational segregation, resulting in slow progress in reducing the gender pay gap.

We believe that significant change to the distribution and representation of women across grades and addressing underrepresentation in professorial/senior management roles will support reducing the gender pay gap. This requires a range of stretching interventions targeted at recruitment, promotion and progression.

¹ www.closesthegap.org.uk/content/faq/#rlslider_9

Context

This document is part of our UK and Scottish specific duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty² bringing together publication of our gender, disability and ethnicity pay gap information and our equal pay statement.

We know that the areas addressed will be of benefit across Heriot-Watt and all our campuses. We are 'one university', offering the same academic standards and operating policies³ across the world at campuses in Scotland (Edinburgh, Scottish Borders, Orkney), Dubai and Malaysia, and we are committed to progressing EDI outcomes across our jurisdictions.

Our Heriot-Watt University Equal Pay Statement outlines Heriot-Watt's commitment to equal pay. We know that the national pay framework minimises the likelihood of unequal pay. We also know that our University has major challenges resulting in significant gender pay gaps across grades and poor disclosure data across protected groups.

Our structures to oversee pay gap activities have been refreshed. For a number of years, pay gap activities had been overseen by an Equal Pay Working Group (EPWG). This group included representation from academics, professional services, and trade unions. However, the speed of progress on pay gaps was slower than hoped for and the EPWG was not able to provide the necessary impetus to support more focused activity. In 2023, it was agreed that the EPWG be replaced with:

- A structured Programme approach across the HR Directorate
- And an Annual Pay Gap Forum.

The purpose of the Annual Pay Gap Forum is to:

- Provide an annual round up of activity and impact
- Support open and transparent discussion
- Provide the basis of Pay Gap reporting requirements
- And report to the Global Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (GEDI) Committee.

We are publishing data covering 2017/18-2023/24. **The data uses a census date of 31st March to align with the rest of the UK and for clarity the data named 2023 throughout this report was taken from reporting run on 31st March 2024 (i.e. within academic year 2023/24).** We continue to use the pay gap standard where a pay gap of 5% or a pattern of 3% is significant enough to warrant attention.

² This document should be seen as part of a suite of equality related publications that support our aims of Advancing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). All relevant information can be found on our website at www.hw.ac.uk/equality

³ Unless there are legal or cultural reasons for variation.

The various pay gap calculations are based on two statistics for the average salary, namely the Mean and the Median.

The Mean salary for a group is the total of all of the salaries of the people in the group divided by the number of people in the group. The Median salary for a group is the salary of the middle person in the group when all the people in the group are sorted by their salary. An outline of the mean and median is shown in *Figure 2: The Mean and The Median*.

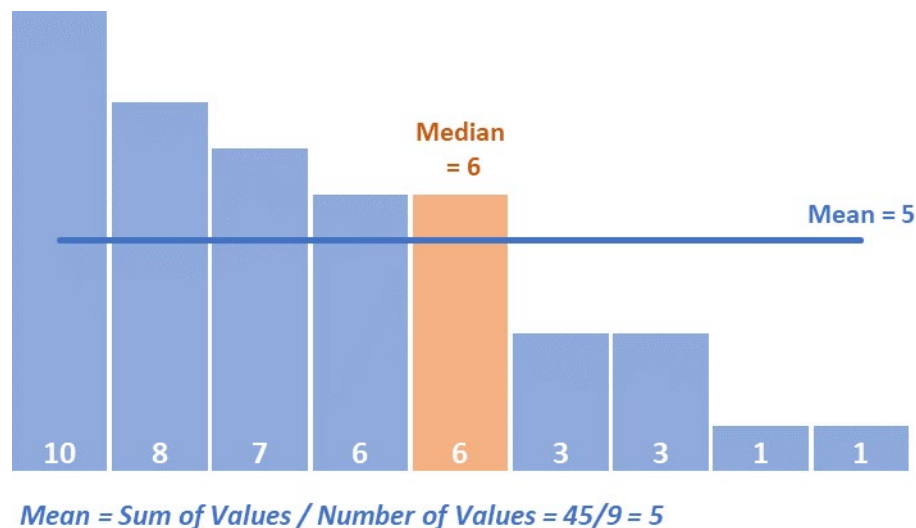


Figure 2: The Mean and The Median

The Pay Gap is calculated by comparing the average salary for one group against the other, with one version based on using the Mean salary and the other using the Median salary. The Pay Gap comparisons use the formulae outlined in *Figure 3: Calculating the pay gap*

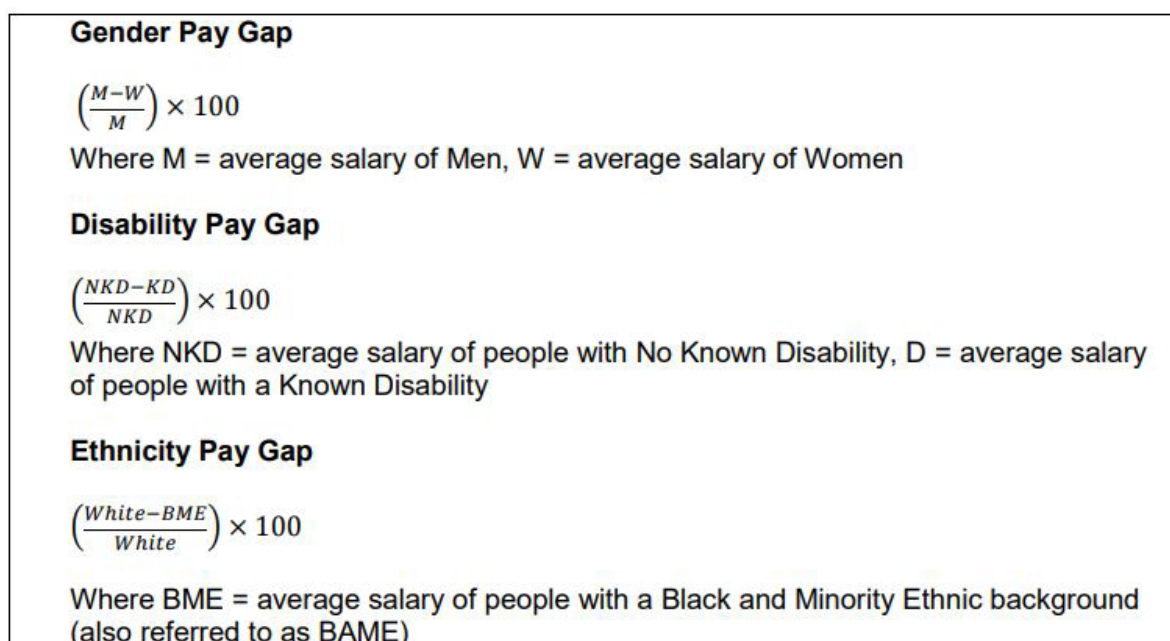


Figure 3: Calculating the pay gap

Heriot-Watt University Equal Pay Statement

- Our Equal Pay Statement is based on an underpinning belief that staff should receive equal pay for like work.
- We recognise that there can be an impact on equal pay linked to gender, disability and ethnicity. Indeed, any protected characteristic may impact on equal pay and we are committed to understanding how those characteristics affect individuals and groups.
- We are committed to undertaking equal pay audits and taking remedial action where necessary.

Gender Pay Gap

Our mean and median gender pay gaps over 2017-2023 are shown in *Table 1* and a seven-year trend over 2017-2023 is illustrated in *Figure 4*. We can see a narrowing of the gender pay gap with good progress in the past 7 years with the median pay gap narrowing by 7%.

	Mean hourly rate				Median Hourly Rate		
	F	M-F%	M		F	M-F%	M
2017	£18.29	24%	£24.01		£16.53	23%	£21.55
2018	£18.89	22%	£24.13		£16.82	21%	£21.28
2019	£19.63	20%	£24.54		£17.66	19%	£21.70
2020	£20.09	19%	£24.95		£17.98	21%	£22.75
2021	£17.89	21%	£22.74		£16.20	26%	£22.09
2022	£20.20	17%	£24.41		£18.25	19%	£22.43
2023	£22.46	17%	£27.16		£20.33	16%	£24.25

Table 1: Gender Pay Gap All Staff including SMT

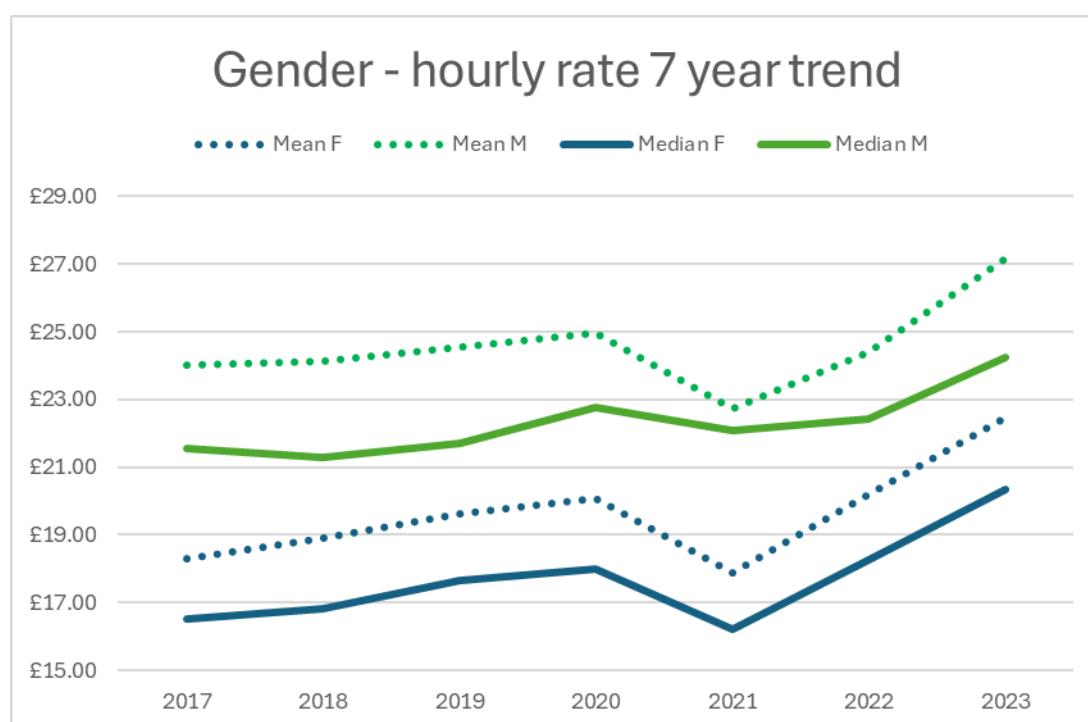


Figure 4: Gender Pay Gap 2017 – 2023

The data shows that we have a persistent gender pay gap. When we look in more detail at the contributing factors, we find that gender composition of our employees, including the split between academic and professional service staff has remained largely static since 2017.

Table 2 shows the gender composition of our UK staff over 2017 – 2023, showing very little change in composition of percentage of men and women. *Table 3* and *4* show the distribution broken down into academic and professional service grades. Each of these tables illustrates that, regardless of organisational changes our staff population is largely unchanged.

	F	F%	M%	M
2017	905	48%	52%	992
2018	833	47%	53%	949
2019	846	47%	53%	962
2020	945	47%	53%	1066
2021	930	46%	54%	1088
2022	970	47%	53%	1093
2023	1136	50%	50%	1149

Table 2: Number and percentage of UK staff by gender 2017 – 2023

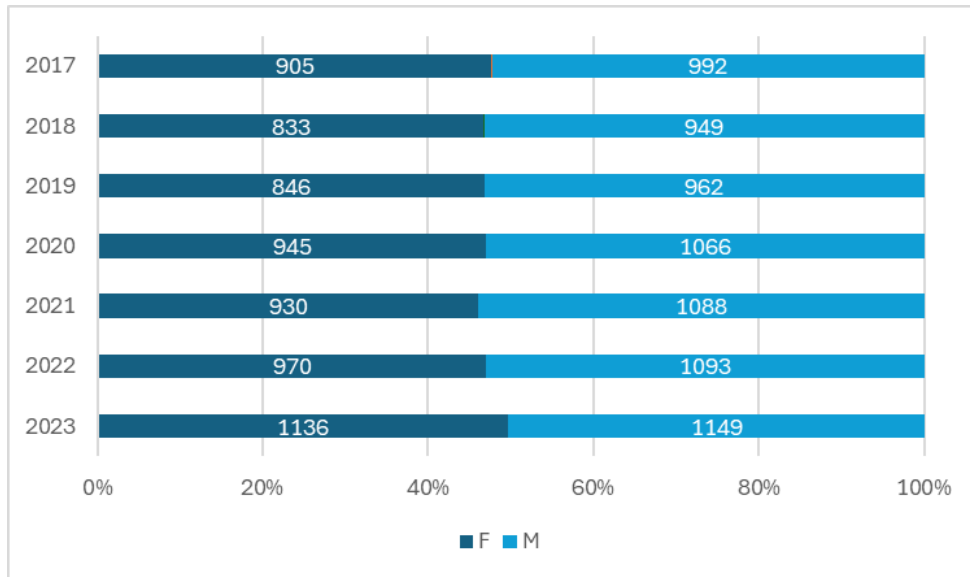


Figure 5: Number and percentage of UK staff by gender

	F	F%	M%	M
2017	251	31%	69%	562
2018	238	31%	69%	538
2019	240	31%	69%	527
2020	258	31%	69%	573
2021	261	49%	51%	270
2022	275	32%	68%	575
2023	343	35%	65%	624

Table 3: Number and percentage of UK academic staff by gender 2017 – 2023

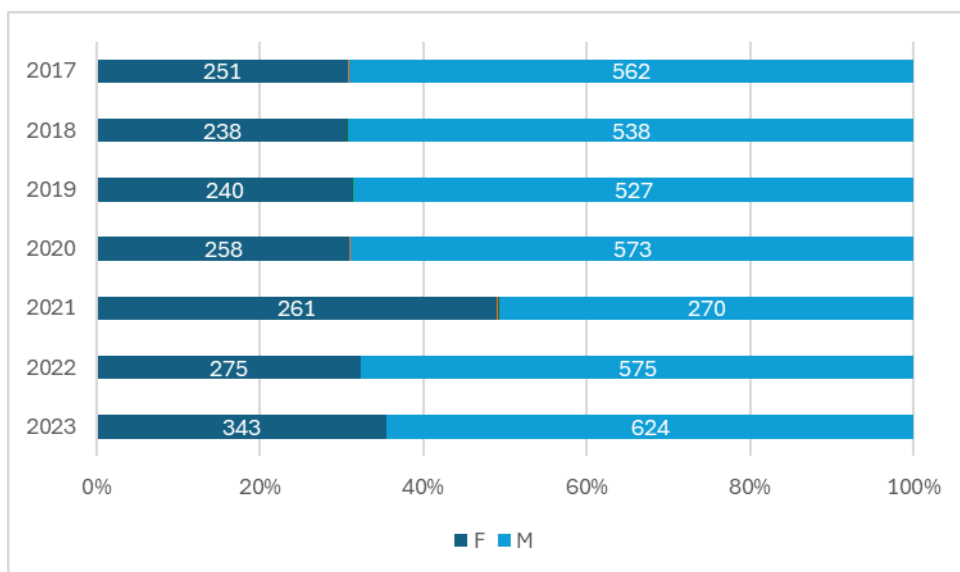


Figure 6: Number and percentage of UK academic staff by gender

	F	F%	M%	M
2017	654	60%	40%	430
2018	595	59%	41%	411
2019	606	58%	42%	435
2020	687	58%	42%	493
2021	669	56%	44%	518
2022	695	57%	43%	518
2023	793	60%	40%	525

Table 4: Number and percentage of UK professional service staff by gender 2017 – 2023

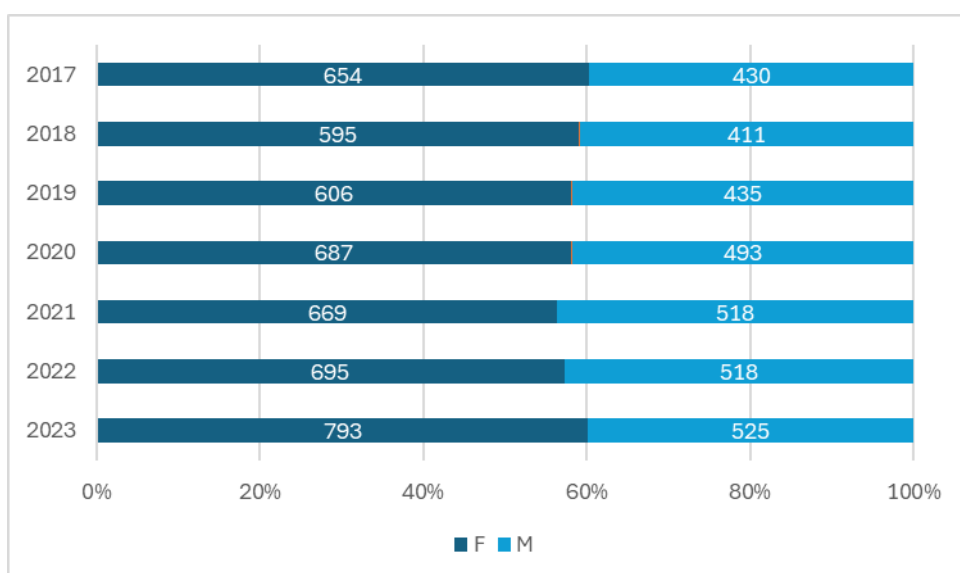


Figure 7: Number and percentage of UK professional staff by gender

	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
Grade	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
1	33%	67%	35%	67%	44%	56%	55%	45%	0%	100%	33%	67%	0%	0%
2	83%	17%	67%	33%	75%	25%	67%	33%	50%	50%	25%	75%	0%	100%
3	73%	27%	73%	27%	69%	31%	66%	34%	57%	43%	57%	43%	63%	37%
4	63%	37%	57%	43%	56%	44%	55%	45%	53%	47%	59%	41%	57%	43%
5	72%	28%	73%	27%	70%	30%	67%	33%	64%	36%	66%	34%	67%	33%
6	69%	31%	65%	35%	68%	32%	66%	34%	62%	38%	51%	49%	59%	41%
7	42%	58%	41%	59%	42%	58%	44%	56%	44%	56%	43%	57%	49%	51%
8	40%	60%	40%	60%	42%	58%	39%	61%	40%	60%	42%	58%	45%	55%
9	33%	67%	34%	66%	33%	67%	34%	66%	36%	64%	34%	66%	36%	64%
10	20%	80%	22%	78%	23%	77%	24%	76%	25%	75%	26%	74%	29%	71%

Table 5: % of UK overall staff across grades 2017 – 2023



Figure 8: % Female population across grades, 2017 vs 2023

Table 5 shows the percentage of staff by grade and gender, with academic grades coming onto the salary scale at grade 6. Grade 1 is the lowest paid grade and has not been in use since 2022; Grade 10 is the highest paid grade. Grade 2 is not used often but is still part of our pay structure.

Figure 8 demonstrates where the biggest shift of population has occurred:

- Grade 10: in 2017 we saw females making up only 20% of that population and in 2023 29% of that population was female – a rise of 9%.

- Grade 3: in 2017 we saw females making up 73% of that population and in 2023 63% of that population was female – a fall of 10%

The decrease of female percentage of population working at the lower grades of 3 to 5 versus the increase in population of females across grades 7 to 10 has contributed to closing the Pay Gap. The activity undertaken to reduce the pay gap in areas of promotion, retention and recruitment of females at the higher grades is working. The recruitment of males into the lower grade roles could be attributed to our ongoing work on gender equality such as using non gendered language in our recruitment drives plus our progress on implementing actions through the Athena Swan Charter.

Disability Pay Gap

Our disability pay gap information is largely meaningless due to very low disclosure rates. *Table 6* and *Figure 5* outlines the pay gap information based on data we hold, however as outlined in *Table 7* our disclosure rates over 2017-23 are between 3-6%.

	Mean hourly rate				Median Hourly Rate		
	Y	N-Y%	N		Y	N-Y%	N
2017	£16.25	25%	£21.60		£ 11.63	44%	£ 20.92
2018	£17.34	21%	£21.84		£ 13.69	32%	£ 20.06
2019	£18.37	19%	£22.80		£ 14.17	35%	£ 21.70
2020	£20.16	14%	£23.36		£ 14.64	34%	£ 22.09
2021	£21.44	1%	£21.73		£ 17.46	16%	£ 20.83
2022	£22.66	2%	£22.03		£ 18.52	17%	£ 22.43
2023	£24.58	1%	£24.84		£ 22.87	0%	£ 22.87

Table 6 :Disability Pay Gap All UK Staff including SMT 2014 - 2020

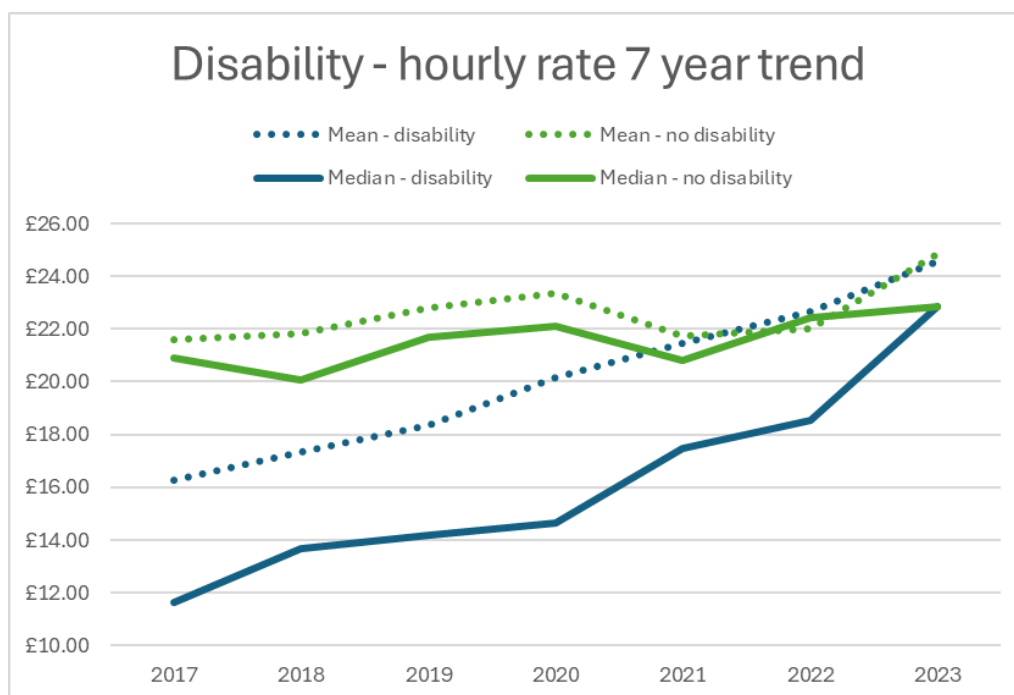


Figure 9: Disability Pay Gap 2017 – 2023

	Disability declared	% declared	No Disability declared
2017	54	3%	1694
2018	54	3%	1721
2019	46	3%	1561
2020	49	3%	1742
2021	81	6%	1353
2022	86	5%	1631
2023	147	6%	2135

Table 7: Disability Disclosure 2017 - 2023

We know that employees are still reluctant to disclose disability due to the perceived stigma. As a University we regularly encourage employees to disclose disability status on our People Management System (PMS) via news items. Our PMS does not share disability information that an employee updates with their manager and any disclosure is followed up in a confidential supportive way from Human Resources.

The University supports a Staff Disability Network which meets monthly for the purpose of providing peer support and to help to build and sustain an inclusive culture. We want to find ways to better support staff and create a sustainable approach to planning and responding to matters arising for the Disability Network.

Ethnicity Pay Gap

Our ethnicity pay gap data does not show significant pay issues for our BAME staff on the whole for period 2017 – 2021, however there was a jump in median pay gap during 2021 which settled to 0% again in 2022 (*Table 8*). In 2023 we saw a rise in the pay gap to 3%. Disclosure for ethnicity is improving with 89% employees doing so in 2023, up from 85% in 2022.

	Mean				Median		
	B	W-B%	W		B	W-B%	W
2017	£22.10	-5%	£20.95		£19.15	3%	£19.73
2018	£22.75	-7%	£21.32		£19.48	3%	£20.06
2019	£22.98	-5%	£21.96		£20.46	0%	£20.46
2020	£22.90	-2%	£22.40		£20.83	0%	£20.83
2021	£21.12	-2%	£20.62		£20.23	8%	£18.76
2022	£22.80	-1%	£22.69		£21.14	0%	£21.14
2023	£24.04	4%	£24.96		£22.20	3%	£22.87

Table 8: Ethnicity Pay Gap All UK Staff including SMT 2017 – 2023

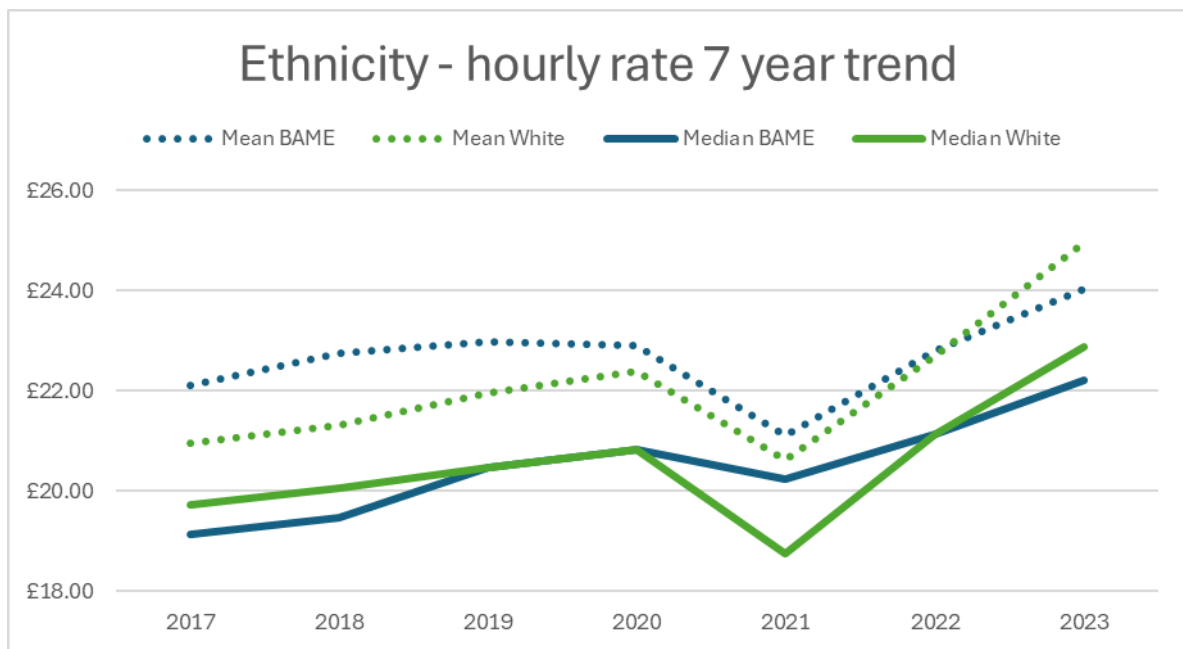


Figure 10: Ethnicity Pay Gap 2014 - 2023 including SMT

	B	BAME	White	W
2017	165	10%	90%	1487
2018	166	11%	89%	1379
2019	183	12%	88%	1393
2020	231	13%	87%	1574
2021	233	13%	87%	1550
2022	241	14%	86%	1516
2023	352	17%	83%	1693

Table 9: Ethnicity Disclosure 2017 - 2023

Next steps and outline actions 2025 – 2029

Progress has been made towards closing the Pay Gap and many of the actions that have been put in place to tackle the Gap have been embedded in business as usual and we will continue to undertake the good practice.

The original pay gap action plan published in April 2021 identified challenges in recruitment, promotion and progression. The University committed to tackling the challenges around the topics and set out objectives as follows:

Recruitment – diversify appointments.

Promotion – diversify promotion applicants and successful cases.

Progression - pay is driven by size of the role and performance not personal characteristics.

When the midpoint report was published in April 2023, the original action plan had been expanded upon after EPWG analysed and discussed the data set. Over the past five years measures, activity and policy have been put in place to elevate issues to tackle challenges around promotion, progression and recruitment.

Recruitment

A gender decoder is used as routine on job advertisements to ensure language being used is not gendered. All agencies used for recruitment provide data in order to address EDI aspects of process to support a more diverse pool of candidates. The job boards used for recruitment have been expanded to attract a more diverse pool of candidates (e.g. Women's Engineering Society). We are a Disability Confident and Armed Forces Covenant Schemes employer.

We launched a Recruitment Pledge in 2023 where we ask hiring managers to use an EDI lens throughout the hiring process. An enhanced area has been created on our internal intranet which includes interviewing and recruitment skills with an EDI dimension. We have mandatory hiring manager training which has been created as an e-learning module which must be undertaken before a vacancy is created. This training includes a comprehensive cover of unconscious bias.

At appointment stage, a salary guidance document has been implemented and starting salaries are being monitored.

Promotion

A rigorous process has been put in place to ensure equality for all during academic promotion processes. On the run up to the annual academic promotion rounds, roadshows are run in person and online with BSL interpreters being used to ensure these are accessible to all colleagues. During the promotion selection board,

circumstances are taken into account of FTE, caring responsibilities, disability and career breaks; maternity, paternity etc.

There has been guidance put in place for senior remuneration with senior salary procedures reviewed in 2023. Further to this, talent reviews are in place at G10 level and a roadmap for rolling talent reviews to other grades are being worked upon.

A review of career pathways has been implemented which will give all academic colleagues more flexibility and clearer criteria when applying for promotion.

Progression

Progression for professional services staff remains a difficult area to address as it is the role that is graded, not the person doing the work. Opportunities for career development which may lead to progression are provided by learning, mentoring, career coaching and time to pursue development activities. We also encourage managers to look at paying individuals to “act up” during periods of extended leave of others – this gives the individual on-the-job experience with working at a higher level for relatively short period of 3 to 6 months. Secondments are also being utilised for gaps in the workforce which gives opportunity for career progression for longer periods of time.

Giving professional services employees opportunities to have on-the-job experience in a different role is a very useful tool for continuing personal development. This upskills the individual to prepare them for career progression.

Reporting and Analysis

On a regular basis, analysis is undertaken on data relating to recruitment, promotion, progression and pay gap. The University is utilising Power BI and use of Dashboards to provide meaningful year on year data to understand trends across different activity.

Equality Outcomes Action Plan: Indirect/Direct associated actions

As part of the University's statutory reporting, a suite of new disability, gender and race actions associated with pay gaps (including indirectly), are published in the Equality Outcomes Action Plan (May 2025 - April 2029) in the format of timelines and action leads. Refer to Appendix 1.

Appendix 1

Equality Outcomes Action Plan: Indirect/Direct associated actions

Ref no.	Action	Progressed by	Output	Tracking updates
1.2	Apply to become a signatory of the UK-wide Business in the Community (BitC) Race at Work Charter, as an initiative through consultation with BAME/BME staff, checking of good practice by current public and private sector signatory employers (e.g. Scottish Government, SQA, over 20 colleges/HEIs).	GEDIC Chair, HR, EDI	Anti-Racism Group input by Sep 2025 Evidence plan completed in 2026 Charter applied in 2026-2027	
1.5	Utilise the Scottish Government Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit and the BitC Race at Work Charter guidance as appropriate for making the recruitment process more ethnically inclusive.	HR Recruitment, EDI	Mapping of activity against Toolkit completed in 2027-2029 Review of recruitment processes in 2027-2029	
2.1	Address promotion and practical use of the Access to Work Scheme at the point of recruitment, to better support and increase disabled applicant declaration rates.	HR Recruitment, HR Wellbeing, EDI	Declaration rates of UK HEIs from Advance HE benchmarked against HWU in 2025-2026 Variety of initiatives providing encouragement in place at the applying stage in 2027-2029	

2.4	Conduct review of disability declaration categories in place, informed by external disclosure reporting requirements (e.g. PSED, HESA) compared to good sector practice, utilising recruitment recommendations provided by the Disability Confident Employer Scheme.	HR Recruitment, HR Wellbeing, EDI	HE sector categories utilised mapped to HWU in 2026-2027 Staff Disability Network consulted on categories in 2026 Recommendations presented to HR Director by Oct 2027 Data systems updated in 2028-2029	
2.9	Establish a phased programme of upskilling line managers and recruiters on disability, neurodiversity and long-term health workplace impact, in consultation with stakeholders and key contacts (e.g. EDI Caucus), with focused business outcomes sessions outlined.	HR POD, HR Recruitment, EDI	Training type and provider identified in 2027-2028 First session delivered to managers in 2027-2029	
2.10	Utilise recruitment and workplace management recommendations provided by the Disability Confident Employer Scheme at Level 2, to form actions for a successful Marc 2028 accreditation renewal.	HR Recruitment, EDI	Renewal evidence template completed for GEDIC Chair sign-off in Mar 2028-2029	
3.2	Roll-out new EDI for Managers Training sessions, to better equip staff with line management responsibilities on understanding of team-focused discrimination, bias, harassment, hate crime and the EHRC Equality Act Employer Statutory Code of Practice.	Facilitated by HR POD, designed/ delivered by EDI	Content finalised taking into account HR staff pilot (Jan 2025) in 2026-2027 First session delivered in 2026-2027	

			5 sessions scheduled annually from 2026	
4.1	Engage with the Athena Swan process to embed and align a framework of 5-year gender equality action plans at institutional and departmental level, to address key themes in context (e.g. diversifying recruitment; reward and recognition; professional/personal development opportunities; support for research grant applications; support for staff with caring, or other responsibilities; and awareness of opportunities and entitlement).	Athena Swan SAT, EDI	Initiative continues to be part of the Institutional Athena Swan renewal process, renewal submitted in 2026-2027	
4.2	Investigate the feasibility for a new internal Women's Leadership Network (Academics & PSS) to supplement the Advance HE Aurora Leadership Programme, informed by experience from women from Aurora participation and Athena Swan SAT activity.	New working group of Assistant Executive Deans for EDI, Athena Swan Partner, HR POD, EDI	Working group launched in 2025-2026 Initiative outline and schedule presented to GEDIC Chair in 2026-2027	
4.3	Support progression of part-time staff via enhanced awareness of the Revised Workload Principles (which explicitly protect part-time hours, promotion of part-time staff and those on family leave, and part-time entitlement to career development opportunities); part-time engagement with the promotion/reward processes; part-time/shared leadership opportunities.	Athena Swan, EDI	Initiative part of the Institutional Athena Swan renewal process, progress presented to Athena Swan SAT in 2026/2027	

4.4	'Aligned with the HWU Research Culture Action Plan, enhance research culture to address challenges faced by researchers at all careers levels; to include equality of opportunity for staff of all genders in grant application and promotion processes, including part-time staff'	Athena Swan SAT, EDI	Initiative part of the Institutional Athena Swan renewal process (TBA)	
4.5	Conduct an initiative to ascertain issues of non-returners after Maternity Leave in order to develop necessary actions.	HR Consultants, Athena Swan SAT, EDI	Feedback gained as part of the Institutional Athena Swan renewal process in 2026-2027	
4.6	Utilise the UCEA Intersectional Pay Gaps in Higher Education 2022-23 Report to undertake sector benchmarking to identify key actions to implement from good sector intersectional practice aligned with similar demographic HEIs.	HR Reward, EDI	Mapping of benchmarking good practice plus new identified examples from Advance HE, compared to HWU approach presented to GEDIC Chair in 2027-2028 Schedule further actions of gaps in 2027-2029	
4.7	Renew Carer Positive Employer accreditation at the Engaged entry level (May 2025 & 2026) aiming to achieve the Established middle level (May 2027), through engagement with the Staff Parents & Carers Network, to better support	HR Consultant, EDI	Engaged level renewed in 2026-2027 Action plan for Establish level applied for in 2027-2029	

	staff who have caring responsibilities for disabled members.			
4.8	Building upon responses gained in Q4 2024, undertake Carer Positive Employer criteria actions (factoring-in national laws), supporting Dubai and Malaysia on aligning to Engaged level criteria areas.	HR Dubai, HR Malaysia, EDI	Carers support mapping considered by Dubai & Malaysia in 2026-2027 Consistent carers support in place in 2026-2028	
4.9	Promotion of Carer Positive Employer accreditation held to become visible corporate at the same level as Athena Swan.	Communications, Information Services, HR Recruitment, EDI	List of logo and information promotion in place in 2026-2027	
4.10	Deliver training to all HERA evaluators (from AY 2025/26) as a refresh to previous learning, ensuring consistency across evaluation processes, and monitor data of participants by gender and intersectional protected characteristics. Training also taking place via feedback on an ongoing basis as and when it is required.	HR R&W	Training delivered in 2026-2027 Participant intersectional gender data presented to GEDIC in 2026-2028	
4.11	Conduct mapping of equalities requirements from the UK Worker Protection law, with a focus on Sexual Harassment prevention, one-year on from its coming into force, informed by EHRC guidance, and create and undertake further actions (if any).	HR, EDI	Mapping undertaken with checks for HWU in 2026-2028	

4.12	Support progression of teaching and scholarship staff (where proportionally more women are T&S: 33% of ACS females vs 19% of ACS men in 2024), via awareness of and engagement with the T&S Grade 10 promotions trajectory (in place with current descriptors since 2006).	Athena Swan SAT	Initiative part of the Institutional Athena Swan renewal process in 2026/2027 (TBC)	
4.13	Enhance equality of opportunity provided to staff of different gender, in particular women, to participate in recruitment and selection panels, to increase the pool of interview panel members, without undue burden through implementation, by engaging with wider schools, directorates and networks.	HR Recruitment, EDI	Good sector practice identified and presented to Athena Swan SAT and School EDI Committees in 2028 Recommendations drafted for HWU dissemination in 2029	
4.14	Compare starting salaries for men and women in comparable roles, providing data monitoring to GEDIC (UK Government Pay Gap research: women are less likely to negotiate their pay than men, and when women do negotiate, they can be judged more harshly than men for doing so).	HR R&W	Annual monitoring data activity undertaken and report presented to GEDI Chair in 2027/2028/2029	