SOAS
University of London

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Annual Report
2024/25

Contents
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report 2024/25

Overview of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at SOAS

SOAS is committed to creating an inclusive environment where every member of our community can belong and thrive. As a distinct institution, specialising in the study of Asia, Africa and the Near and Middle East, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) are part of our core values.

This report presents demographic data on SOAS staff and students, demonstrating progress against the SOAS strategic plan 2021-2025 which focused on:

- Governance & Accountability
- Legal Compliance
- Representation
- Student Experience & Outcomes
- Belonging

Our vision for EDI is focused on sustaining an environment where all staff and students achieve their full potential through an inclusive culture and community. The institutional commitment to EDI is also integral to SOAS' new institutional strategy, as well as our current People Strategy, with the vision of creating "an inclusive culture based on respect and social justice".

EDI governance is designed to embed equity across the University. Our dedicated EDI Committee provides relevant reports to the Executive Board and Vice Chancellors Group, in addition to the Resources and Planning Committee and Board of Trustees.

Purpose of this report

This report provides relevant data and commentary on the SOAS community to highlight progress against our equality objectives and strategy. The report is scrutinised internally as per the governance structures set out above and is published on our website for transparency and accountability. In addition, the data and narrative below fulfil our responsibilities in relation to our reporting requirements under the Equality Act (2010). This 2024/25 annual report is the final report against the current Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025, and provides evaluative context and benchmarking to inform the aims and objectives of the next SOAS EDI strategy. It is also supported by core work across the institution to improve outcomes throughout the student journey, such as the Access and Participation Plan 2025/26 to 2028/29.

A note on terminology

Throughout this report, certain terms are used to describe communities in relation to the data presented:

- Throughout this report, "gender" is referred to as a binary category, based on the way data is currently collected; although greater inclusion of transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming people is an important part of our EDI strategy.

- The term 'racialised' is used to describe staff and students who are from Black, Asian, Mixed or Other ethnic groups.

- 'LGBO' is used to accurately express the data being collected under sexual orientation which refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual staff and students and those who have selected the 'Other' category.

1.Staff Data

Staff and Overall Demographics

This section includes information about staff at SOAS according to gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and religion or belief, including some intersectional analysis of gender and ethnicity.

Over the past five years, SOAS has increased the monitoring data collected on staff, as well as our analysis of that information. The SOAS Human Resources Team (HR) now actively send out annual reminders to staff to maintain their personal information. At new starter stage, HR actively encourage completion of this data via the revised New Starter form. As part of the annual HESA return this data is also reviewed for accuracy and any discrepancies clarified. This ensures that we are gathering and maintaining accurate data.

Depending on the protected characteristic being considered, data has been analysed using HESA Heidi Plus or internal databases, which use full-person equivalent (FPE)/ headcount unless otherwise stated. SOAS data from HESA has the advantage of being benchmarkable, and throughout this report has been benchmarked against London institutions and UK institutions that are available in the HESA Staff record. The latest HESA data is from the academic year 2023/24.

Since 2019/20, institutions are not obliged to return data on professional services staff to HESA. Most institutions still return this data, but it leaves an approximately 13% gap in the staff data. Therefore, some charts look as if there was a decrease when data was not reported.

Some of the protected characteristics, such as sexual orientation and religion or belief are not available in the HESA

data, therefore they have been analysed exclusively using SOAS databases.

This data is from 31 January each year, as it is a point in the year when the highest number of staff work at SOAS. Depending on the source of data, the most recent available data has been used. Where comparable data is lacking, a five-year progress snapshot has been provided through comparison to the 2020/21 SOAS EDI annual report.

1.1 Numbers

Academic and Professional Services staff

- In 2023/24, 51% of SOAS staff were academic, 49% were professional services, based on full-person equivalent (FPE)/ headcount.

- At UK institutions historically, the number of professional services staff has been slightly higher than the number of academic staff. However, since 2019/20 institutions are not obliged to return professional services staff data, therefore academic staff appear to be the majority but may not actually be.

Figure 1: Numbers of staff. Source: Heidi Plus.

Table 1: Numbers of Academic and Professional Services Staff.
Source: Heidi Plus. Note: some figures may not add up to totals, due to rounding.

SOAS	Academic	Professional Services	Academic	Professional Services	Total	Total %
2019/20	635	545	54%	46%	1,180	100%
2020/21	500	465	52%	48%	965	100%
2021/22	515	495	51%	49%	1,010	100%
2022/23	605	535	53%	47%	1,140	100%
2023/24	615	585	51%	49%	1,195	100%
London	Academic	Professional Services	Academic	Professional Services	Total	Total %
2019/20	47,295	33,255	59%	41%	80,550	100%
2020/21	48,380	33,635	59%	41%	82,015	100%
2021/22	51,285	33,945	60%	40%	85,230	100%
2022/23	52,165	34,565	60%	40%	86,730	100%
2023/24	53,425	37,070	59%	41%	90,495	100%
UK	Academic	Professional Services	Academic	Professional Services	Total	Total %
2019/20	223,455	196,205	53%	47%	419,665	100%
2020/21	224,430	191,435	54%	46%	415,860	100%
2021/22	233,875	192,260	55%	45%	426,135	100%
2022/23	240,210	198,825	55%	45%	439,035	100%
2023/24	246,690	206,755	54%	46%	453,445	100%

1. 2 Gender

Academic and professional services female and male staff numbers

- In 2023/24, there were 330 academic women and 280 academic men at SOAS. These numbers are very similar to last year 2022/23.

- There are more academic men than women at London and UK institutions, but the gap is narrowing.

Figure 2a: Academics by Gender.

Figure 2b: Professional Services by Gender. Source: Heidi Plus.

Table 2a: Numbers of Academic and Professional Services Staff by Gender. Source: Heidi Plus. Note: some figures may not add up to totals, due to rounding.

SOAS	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Academic, Female	335	265	275	320	330
Academic, Male	300	240	240	285	280
Professional Services, Female	315	270	300	330	360
Professional Services, Male	230	190	200	205	225
Total	1,180	965	1,010	1,140	1,195
London	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Academic, Female	22,565	23,280	25,125	25,665	26,360
Academic, Male	24,455	24,845	26,080	26,275	26,655
Professional Services, Female	20,080	20,425	20,875	21,145	22,780
Professional Services, Male	13,040	13,075	13,010	13,295	14,140
Total	80,145	81,625	85,090	86,380	89,935
UK	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Academic, Female	104,275	105,390	111,910	116,435	120,025
Academic, Male	118,825	118,645	121,650	123,190	125,590
Professional Services, Female	122,905	119,595	120,325	124,655	129,495
Professional Services, Male	73,065	71,550	71,645	73,775	76,470
Total	419,070	415,180	425,530	438,055	451,580

Percentage of all SOAS staff by gender

- In 2023/24, the proportion of academic males compared to the previous year had decreased, all other groups increased slightly.

As table 3b shows, there were 28% female academics, 23% male academics, 30% female professional services and 19% male professional services.
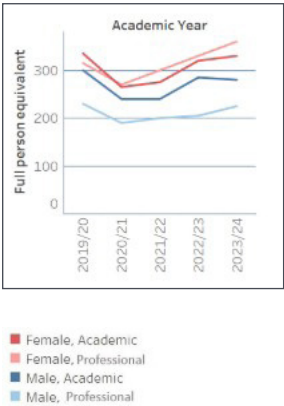

Female, Academic
Female, Professional
Male, Academic
Male, Professional

Figure 3: Gender at SOAS in percent. Source: Heidi Plus.

Table 2b: Percentages of Academic and Professional Services Staff by Gender. Source: Heidi Plus.
Note: Some figures may not add up to 100%, due to rounding.

SOAS	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Academic, Female	28%	27%	27%	28%	28%
Academic, Male	26%	25%	24%	25%	23%
Professional Services, Female	27%	28%	29%	29%	30%
Professional Services, Male	19%	20%	20%	18%	19%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
London	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Academic, Female	28%	29%	30%	30%	29%
Academic, Male	31%	30%	31%	30%	30%
Professional Services, Female	25%	25%	25%	24%	25%
Professional Services, Male	16%	16%	15%	15%	16%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
UK	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Academic, Female	25%	25%	26%	27%	27%
Academic, Male	28%	29%	29%	28%	28%
Professional Services, Female	29%	29%	28%	28%	29%
Professional Services, Male	17%	17%	17%	17%	17%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Academic staff only

- In 2023/24 the split between female and male academics was 54.1% versus 45.9% respectively, which was slightly higher than the previous year.
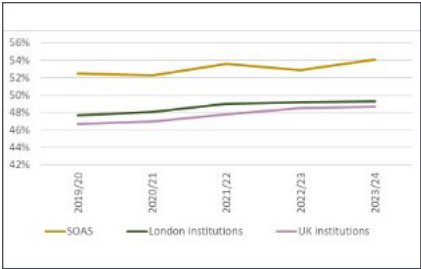
Figure 4: Percentage of Academic Women.

Table 3: Percentages of Academic Women. Source: Heidi Plus.

|	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
SOAS, Academic, Female	52.5%	52.3%	53.6%	52.9%	54.1%
London, Academic, Female	47.7%	48.1%	49.0%	49.2%	49.3%
UK, Academic, Female	46.7%	47.0%	47.8%	48.5%	48.7%

1.3 Age

Academic staff by age groups

- At UK institutions, the proportion of male academics to female academics has been higher in every age group in previous years but from 2022/23 females are higher in the under 50 age groups. At SOAS, more women than men are in the age groups up to 66 years. In the 66 years & over age group the number of female academics is slightly less than the number of male academics.

- At SOAS, the number of female academics in the age groups 35 and under has decreased since last year but has increased over the five-year period. The age group 36-50 years has increased in recent years after previously decreasing. The number of male academics in these age groups has followed a similar pattern between these years. Due to low turnover in Academic staff at Lecturer level and above, the numbers remain fairly constant over 50 years of age.

- The majority of Academic staff below 50 will be in Research roles or Fractional posts / early career roles. These posts tend to be fixed term.

- Since 2019/20 the number of full-time female academics had been more than the number of part-time female academics but from 2022/23 the split changed and became more even. In 2023/24 the proportion was 49% full-time and 51% part-time.
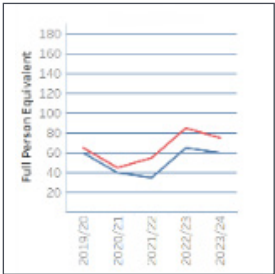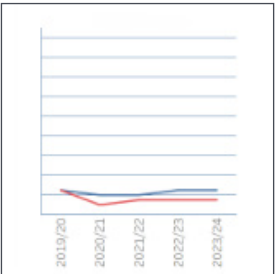

Under 35 years
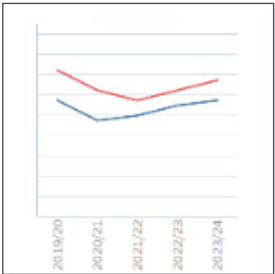
36-50 years
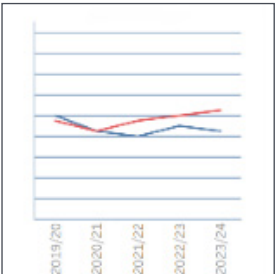
51-65 years

66+ years

Figure 5a: Academic staff by age group at SOAS.
Source: Heidi Plus.

At UK institutions, the number of female academics in the age group 66 years & over has risen the fastest, by around 27%.

Under 35 years
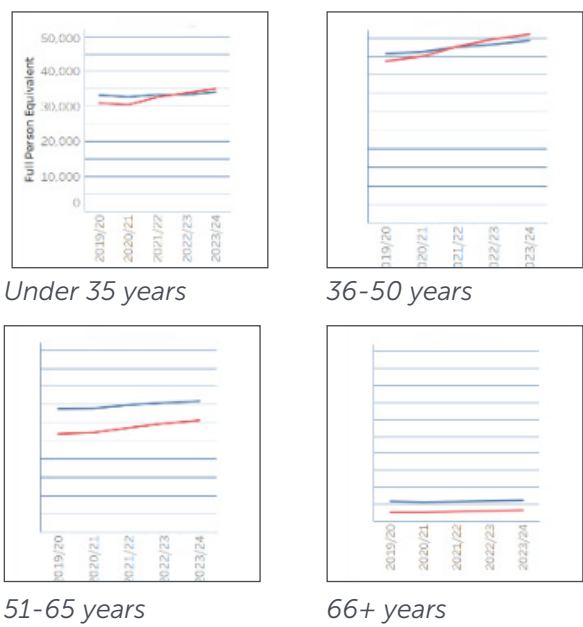

36-50 years

51-65 years

66+ years

Figure 5b: Academic staff by age group at UK institutions. Source: Heidi Plus.

Table 4: Number of Academic Staff by Age group and Gender at SOAS, 2019/20 to 2023/24. Source: Heidi Plus.

		35 years and under	36-50 years	51-65 years	66 years & over
Female	2019/20	65	145	95	25
	2020/21	45	125	85	10
	2021/22	55	115	95	15
	2022/23	85	125	100	15
	2023/24	75	135	105	15
Male	2019/20	60	115	100	25
	2020/21	40	95	85	20
	2021/22	35	100	80	20
	2022/23	65	110	90	25
	2023/24	60	115	85	25

Professional Services staff by age groups

- The number of professional services female staff in the age group 35 years and younger and 51-65 years has increased between 2020/21 and 2023/24.

Table 5: Number of Professional Services Staff by Age group and Gender at SOAS, 2019/20 to 2023/24, Source: Heidi Plus.

		35 years and under	36-50 years	51-65 years	66 years & over
Female	2019/20	95	125	85	5
	2020/21	85	110	75	5
	2021/22	95	120	80	5
	2022/23	120	120	90	0
	2023/24	135	115	105	5
Male	2019/20	60	95	70	5
	2020/21	55	75	60	0
	2021/22	55	75	70	0
	2022/23	55	80	70	0
	2023/24	55	95	70	5

1.4 Ethnicity

Detailed Ethnicity

- SOAS has an ethnically more diverse workforce than UK institutions, with 52% of academic staff being from Black (excl. Mixed Black), Asian, Mixed and Other backgrounds. This compares to 22% at UK institutions overall.

- HESA uses 12 categories for Ethnicity; Black or Black British – African, Black or Black British – Caribbean, Other Black background, Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi, Asian or Asian British – Indian, Asian or Asian British – Pakistani, Other Asian background, Chinese, Mixed, Other (which

includes Arab and anyone not included in the HESA coding frame), Unknown and White.

- Black Mixed heritage is included in the Mixed category by HESA and so for Benchmarking it is in the figures below. However, at SOAS we have started to add Mixed Black heritage to our Black category in other reports.

- SOAS has been actively recruiting Academic staff from the Global South to support a more ethnically diverse talent. USAWA posts have also supported this aim within Research roles. SOAS has also extended lengths of job adverts for Lecturer and above and Grade 8 and above Professional Services roles to support this aim.

- Looking at the intersectionality of SOAS academic staff, 4.4% are female and Black (incl. Mixed Black), 4.7% are male and Black (incl. Mixed Black), while 16.9% are Asian and female, 9.6% are Asian and male. Both White female and male staff make up 21% of academic staff each.

Table 6a: Numbers and Percentages of Academic Staff by Ethnicity.

| Academic 2023-24	SOAS	UK	SOAS	UK
Black or Black British – African	40	6,430	6.7%	2.6%
Black or Black British – Caribbean	5	1,360	0.8%	0.6%
Other Black background	5	565	1.0%	0.2%
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	10	1,310	1.5%	0.5%
Asian or Asian British – Indian	50	9,320	8.0%	3.8%
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	10	3,300	1.3%	1.3%
Other Asian background	55	6,870	9.3%	2.8%
Chinese	40	10,805	6.4%	4.4%
Mixed	30	7,010	5.2%	2.8%
Other	75	6,665	11.9%	2.7%
Unknown/not applicable	40	25,080	6.5%	10.2%
White	255	167,975	41.4%	68.1%
Total	615	246,690	100.0%	100.0%
Academic 2023-24	**SOAS**	**UK**	**SOAS**	**UK**
Black (excl. Mixed Black)	50	8,360	8.5%	3.4%
Asian	160	31,605	26.5%	12.8%
Mixed and Other	105	13,675	17.1%	5.6%
Unknown	40	25,080	6.5%	10.2%
White	255	167,975	41.4%	68.1%

Table 6b: Numbers and Percentages of Professional Services Staff by Ethnicity, Source: Heidi Plus. Note: Some figures may not add up to 100%, due to rounding.

Professional Services 2023-24	SOAS	UK	SOAS	UK
Black or Black British – African	50	4,755	8.9%	2.3%
Black or Black British – Caribbean	20	2,465	3.3%	1.2%
Other Black background	5	485	1.0%	0.2%
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	15	1,505	2.6%	0.7%
Asian or Asian British – Indian	30	6,355	5.5%	3.1%
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	20	2,370	3.0%	1.2%
Other Asian background	20	3,265	3.4%	1.6%
Chinese	20	3,300	3.1%	1.6%
Mixed	40	5,240	7.2%	2.5%
Other	60	2,335	10.1%	1.1%
Unknown/not applicable	30	15,130	5.3%	7.3%
White	275	159,550	46.6%	77.2%
Total	585	206,755	100.0%	100.0%
Professional Services 2023-24	SOAS	UK	SOAS	UK
Black (excl. Mixed Black)	75	7,700	13.2%	3.7%
Asian	105	16,795	17.6%	8.1%
Mixed and Other	100	7,575	17.3%	3.7%
Unknown	30	15,130	5.3%	7.3%
White	275	159,550	46.6%	77.2%

8.5% of SOAS academic staff are Black (excl. Mixed Black), while 13.2% of SOAS professional services staff are Black (excl. Mixed Black). If we include the Mixed Black heritage, 9.1% of SOAS academic staff are Black (incl. Mixed Black) and 16.1% of SOAS professional services staff are Black (incl. Mixed Black).

- 26.5% of academic staff are Asian, compared to 17.6% of professional services staff.

- Less than half of both academic and professional services staff are White (41% and 47% respectively).

- The largest minority groups among academics are Other (incl. Arab: 11.9%), Other Asian background (9.3%), Asian or Asian British – Indian (8.0%), Black or Black British – African (6.7%) and Chinese (6.4%).

- Among professional services staff, the largest minority groups are Other (incl. Arab: 10.1%), Black or Black British – African (8.9%), Mixed (7.2%), Asian or Asian British – Indian (5.5%) and Other Asian background (3.4%).

SOAS Academic Staff by Ethnicity
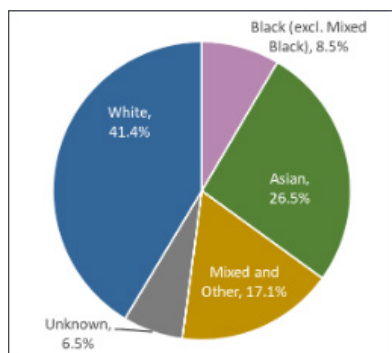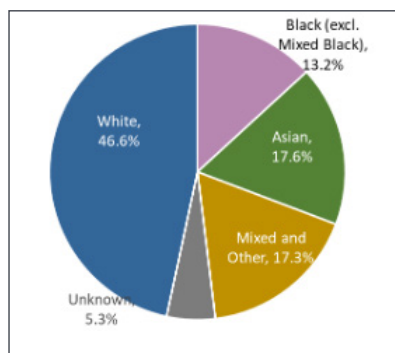
SOAS Professional Services Staff by Ethnicity

Figure 6: Ethnicity for Academic and Professional Services Staff, Source: Heidi Plus. Note: Some figures may not add up to 100%, due to rounding.

Ethnicity and Grade

SOAS' recent Race Equality Charter submission provided insights into relationships between ethnicity and grade that would be useful to include in this report:

Professional Services

There is an increase in the number of staff members across all grades over the five years, due to an increased number of staff overall. However, what remains consistent is that as the grade increases, the proportion of racialised staff decreases. Across the five years, staff on Grades nine and ten are mostly white, whilst staff on grades six and seven are disproportionately racialised. It is notable that most Asian colleagues working in Professional Services across the five years are on Grade six, and that Black and Other staff are disproportionately represented on Grade 3. By 2024, we see an increase of Black and Asian staff on Grades six, seven and eight.
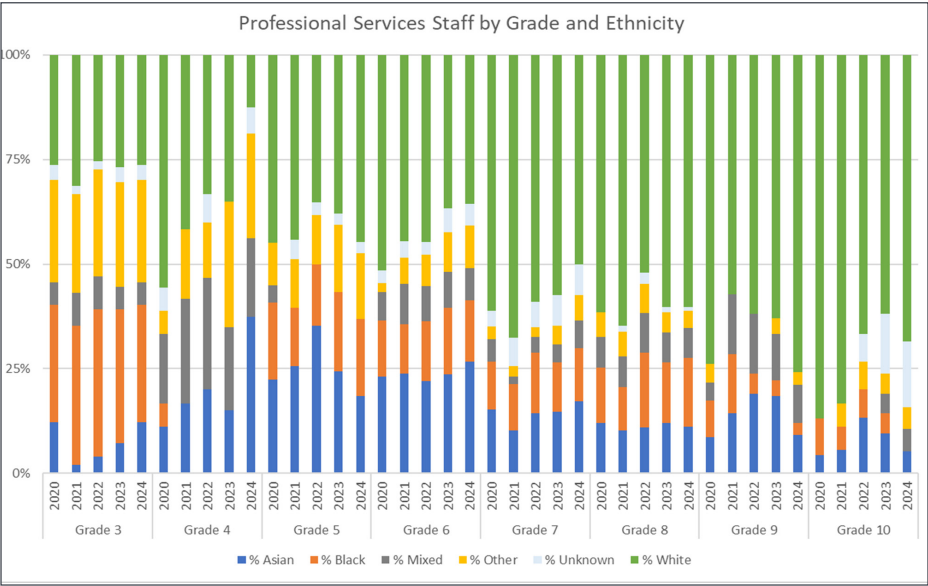

Figure 7: Professional Service staff by grade and ethnicity.

Table 7: Percentage of professional services staff by grade and ethnicity.

Percentage of Professional Services Staff by Grade		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Grade 3	Asian	8%	2%	4%	7%	12%
	Black	19%	33%	35%	32%	28%
	Mixed	4%	8%	8%	5%	5%
	Other	17%	24%	25%	25%	25%
	Unknown	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%
	White	18%	31%	25%	27%	26%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade 4	Asian	11%	17%	20%	15%	38%
	Black	6%				
	Mixed	17%	25%	27%	20%	19%
	Other	6%	17%	13%	30%	25%
	Unknown	6%	0%	7%	0%	6%
	White	56%	42%	33%	35%	13%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade 5	Asian	22%	26%	35%	24%	18%
	Black	18%	14%	15%	19%	18%
	Mixed	4%				
	Other	10%	12%	12%	16%	16%
	Unknown		5%	3%	3%	3%
	White	45%	44%	35%	38%	45%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade 6	Asian	23%	24%	22%	24%	27%
	Black	13%	12%	14%	16%	15%
	Mixed	7%	10%	8%	9%	8%
	Other	2%	6%	8%	9%	10%
	Unknown	3%	4%	3%	6%	5%
	White	51%	44%	45%	37%	36%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade 7	Asian	15%	10%	14%	15%	17%
	Black	11%	11%	14%	12%	13%
	Mixed	5%	2%	4%	4%	7%
	Other	3%	3%	2%	4%	6%
	Unknown	4%	7%	6%	7%	7%
	White	61%	68%	59%	57%	50%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Percentage of Professional Services Staff by Grade		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Grade 8	Asian	12%	10%	11%	12%	11%
	Black	13%	10%	18%	14%	16%
	Mixed	7%	7%	10%	7%	7%
	Other	6%	6%	7%	5%	4%
	Unknown		1%	3%	1%	1%
	White	61%	65%	52%	60%	60%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade 9	Asian	9%	14%	19%	19%	9%
	Black	9%	14%	5%	4%	3%
	Mixed	4%	14%	14%	11%	9%
	Other	4%			4%	3%
	Unknown					
	White	74%	57%	62%	63%	76%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade 10	Asian	4%	6%	13%	10%	5%
	Black	9%	6%	7%	5%	
	Mixed				5%	5%
	Other		6%	7%	5%	5%
	Unknown			7%	14%	16%
	White	87%	83%	67%	62%	68%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
All	Asian	14%	15%	17%	17%	18%
	Black	15%	14%	16%	15%	14%
	Mixed	7%	6%	7%	7%	7%
	Other	7%	8%	8%	10%	10%
	Unknown	2%	4%	4%	5%	5%
	White	54%	54%	48%	47%	46%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Academic

Between 2020 and 2024, the proportion of Black Professors increased by three percentage points, however there is still less ethnic diversity in higher grades. Across the sector, racialised academics continue to be underrepresented in professorial and senior decision-making roles, this is seen particularly for racialised women.

Table 8: Academic & Research Staff by Grade (%).

Grade %	Ethnicity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Grade 6 and 7	Asian	21%	28%	34%	25%	28%
	Black	7%	0%	4%	18%	19%
	Mixed	9%	5%	9%	13%	12%
	Other	19%	19%	15%	11%	11%
	Unknown	7%	7%	9%	15%	14%
	White	37%	42%	30%	18%	16%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade 8	Asian	27%	22%	20%	21%	23%
	Black	9%	11%	13%	15%	14%
	Mixed	5%	3%	4%	3%	5%
	Other	3%	3%	11%	17%	17%
	Unknown	3%	3%	3%	5%	7%
	White	53%	58%	47%	40%	33%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade 9	Asian	17%	24%	23%	24%	21%
	Black	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	Mixed	2%	2%	3%	5%	5%
	Other	10%	9%	11%	10%	12%
	Unknown	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%
	White	66%	60%	60%	57%	59%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Professor	Asian	16%	12%	11%	14%	15%
	Black	7%	8%	7%	9%	10%
	Mixed	4%	3%	1%	1%	2%
	Other	5%	6%	6%	7%	8%
	Unknown	7%	6%	6%	6%	8%
	White	60%	65%	69%	63%	57%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
All	Asian	20%	21%	21%	21%	21%
	Black	5%	5%	6%	10%	10%

Grade %	Ethnicity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Mixed	4%	3%	4%	4%	5%
	Other	8%	8%	10%	12%	12%
	Unknown	4%	4%	4%	5%	6%
	White	58%	58%	54%	48%	45%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Intersectionality of ethnicity and gender for academic and professional services staff

Comparing female academic staff by ethnicity with male staff in brackets, the percentage of female Black academic staff from all academic staff is 4.4% (4.7% male), 16.9% are female Asian academic staff (9.6% male), and 20.6% are female White academic staff (20.8% male). As this data is focused on SOAS we have included Mixed Black heritage in Black.

SOAS Gender-Ethnicity   UK Gender-Ethnicity
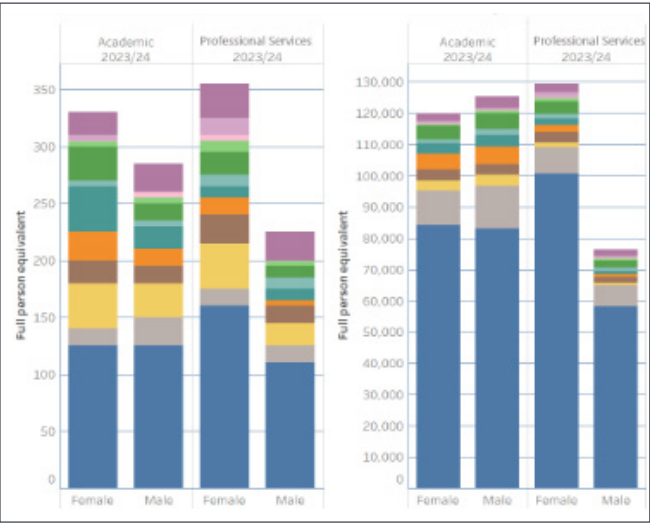
Figure 8: Ethnicity and Gender of Academic and Professional Services at SOAS and UK institutions, 2023/24. Source: Heidi Plus.

Table 9: Ethnicity and Gender of Academic and Professional Services Staff at SOAS, 2023/24, Source: SOAS internal HESA data, note: Some figures may not add up to 100%, due to rounding.

Academic 2023-24	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Asian	105	60	160	16.9%	9.6%	26.5%
Black	25	30	55	4.4%	4.7%	9.1%
Mixed	15	10	30	2.6%	2.0%	4.6%
Other	40	30	75	6.9%	5.1%	11.9%
Unknown/not applicable	15	25	40	2.8%	3.8%	6.5%
White	125	125	255	20.6%	20.8%	41.4%
Total	330	280	615	54.1%	45.9%	100.0%
Professional Services 2023-24	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Asian	65	40	105	10.9%	6.7%	17.6%
Black	65	30	95	10.8%	5.3%	16.1%
Mixed	15	10	25	2.2%	2.1%	4.3%
Other	40	20	60	7.0%	3.1%	10.1%
Unknown/not applicable	15	15	30	2.7%	2.6%	5.3%
White	160	110	275	27.7%	19.0%	46.6%
Total	360	225	585	61.3%	38.7%	100.0%

1.5 Disability

Staff who have shared disability information
- 7.9% of staff at SOAS have shared that they have a disability in 2023/24, which is an increase by 1.5 percentage points compared to 2019/20, and equal to the sector, which is also 7.9%.

- This increase may be in part because more staff fill in the information when they receive an annual reminder, and

partly because some staff are leaving, and new staff are more likely to provide equality and diversity information when they start.

- This may also be due to increased trust and sense of security, as employees feel more able to share, and be confident they will receive appropriate support. At SOAS we have revised our new starter form where we gather this information and ask employees to update this on annual basis. We also plan to undertake an organisation-wide review of disability equality in 2025/26, to ensure we are advancing equity and inclusion for our disabled staff (and students).
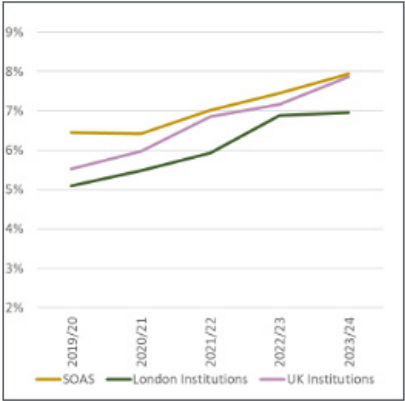
Figure 9: Percentages of Staff who have disclosed a disability. Source: Heidi Plus.

The number of staff with a disclosed disability is 95 at SOAS in 2023/24. SOAS internal data shows that the disclosure rate for this indicator is very high, as this information is only unavailable for 116 employees.

Figure 10: Disability in numbers of staff and percentages.
Source: Heidi Plus.

Table 10: SOAS Numbers and Percentages of Staff with a Disability.
Source: Heidi Plus.

Disability (basic), SOAS	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Known to have a disability	75	60	70	85	95
No known disability/unknown	1,105	905	940	1,055	1,100
Total	1,180	965	1,010	1,140	1,195
Known to have a disability (%)	6.4%	6.4%	7.0%	7.4%	7.9%

1.6 Sexual Orientation

• 9.3% of SOAS staff identify as LGBO, compared to 5.9% at UK institutions.

• LGBO contains the current available categories: gay man, gay woman/lesbian, bisexual and Other.

Table 11: Numbers and Percentage of Staff by Sexual Orientation.
Source: SOAS Data from ResourceLink, excludes casuals and atypicals, includes fractional teachers, UK data from AdvanceHE. Note: Some figures may not add up to 100%, due to rounding.
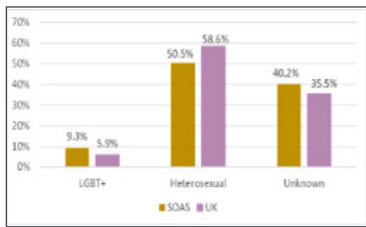
Figure 11: Percentages of Staff by Sexual Orientation.

	Numbers		In percent	
	SOAS	UK	SOAS	UK
LGBT+	9	11 855	25,8 9.3%	5.9%
Heterosexual	49	6 257,170	50.5%	58.6%
Unknown	7	51 155,990	40.2%	35.5%
Total	5	1,28 439,015	100%	100%

• The number of staff who have shared their sexual orientation as LGBO has increased from 62 in 2021 to 119 in 2025.

• The percentage of staff who have answered the question regarding their sexual orientation has increased from 43% in 2021 to 60% in 2025. This includes all Post Classes, including fractional teachers.
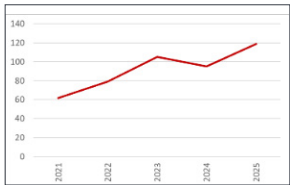
Figure 12: Number of SOAS Staff identifying as LGBT+ over time.
Source: SOAS Data from ResourceLink, excludes casuals and atypicals, includes fractional teachers.

1.7. Religion and Belief

- At SOAS the percentage of staff who have answered the question regarding their religion or belief has increased from 52% in 2021 to 65% in 2025. This may have been due to employees filling in the annual reminder or new staff providing this information.

- 65% of SOAS staff now share their religion, compared to 65% in the HE sector. The HE sector has increased because religious belief is now compulsory in the HESA staff return so more HEIs will be recording it in their systems.

- 38% of SOAS staff have disclosed affiliation with a particular religion, which is higher than the UK sector (31%).

- At SOAS, 27% share that they have no religion, 20% opt for Christianity, 9% are Muslim, 3% are Hindu.

Table 12: Percentage of SOAS Staff by Religion.
Source: SOAS Data from ResourceLink, excludes casuals and atypicals, includes fractional teachers, UK data from AdvanceHE.

	SOAS		UK	
Unknown	451	35%	154,630	35%
No religion	347	27%	146,595	33%
Christian	258	20%	97,935	22%
Muslim	117	9%	13,655	3%
Hindu	35	3%	6,490	1%
Any other religion or belief	33	3%	13,010	3%
Jewish	14	1%	1,940	0%
Buddhist	22	2%	2,970	1%
Sikh	8	1%	1,770	0%
Total	1,285	100%	439,010	100%

2. Student Data

2.1 Level of Study

Note: Figures provided are for UK-Domiciled Students and Non-UK Domiciled Students.
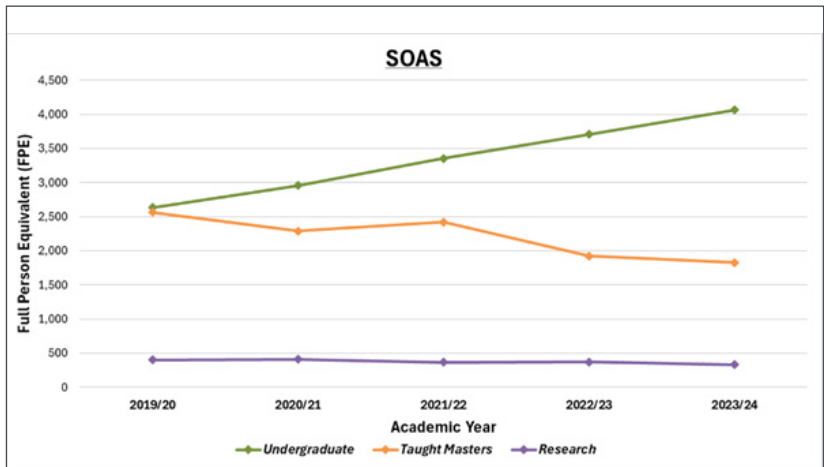
Figure 13: Proportion of student numbers by level of study over five academic years.

Over the past five years, the proportion of undergraduate students at SOAS has increased by 18%, indicating a notable shift toward undergraduate enrolment. In contrast, the proportion of taught master's students has decreased by 16.5% during the same period. Additionally, the proportion of research students has shown a consistent downward trend, albeit more modest, with a year-on-year decline totalling 2%.

Table 13: comparative student figures (%) by level of study over five academic years.

| | Level of Study | Academic Year | | | | |
		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
SOAS	Undergraduate	47%	52%	55%	62%	65%
	Taught Masters	46%	40%	39%	32%	29%
	Research	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

2.2 Gender

Note: Figures provided are for UK-Domiciled Students and Non-UK Domiciled Students. SOAS only recorded very few students in 2020/21 and 2021/22 with an Unknown sex, 20 and 25 respectively. As a result, the proportion of 'Other' students is presented as 0% within this category over the five-year period.

SOAS has a consistently female-majority student population, with female students making up 66% of the cohort in 2019/20 and settling at 63% for the last three years of the period. Although there is a slight downward shift from the initial figure, the proportion has remained stable overall, suggesting a sustained trend in female students at SOAS. As previously mentioned, it is important to consider these statistics in the context of our institution, and the fact that many Humanities subjects are female dominated (nationally, 62.5% of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies undergraduates are women, alongside 79% of Social Sciences and 62.8% of Geography undergraduates.)

Male representation, on the other hand, has gradually increased from 34% in 2019/20 to 37% in 2023/24. While the rise is modest, it reflects a slow but steady broadening of the male student demographic. Nevertheless, male students continue to represent a significantly smaller share of the total population at SOAS compared to females.

Table 14: all students (%) sex and year of study.

Sex Assigned at Birth	Academic Year				
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Female	66%	64%	63%	63%	63%
Male	34%	36%	36%	37%	37%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 15: Level of study by sex assigned at birth (%) by year.

Level of Study	Sex Assigned at Birth	Academic Year				
		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Undergraduate	Female	68%	65%	64%	64%	62%
	Male	32%	35%	36%	36%	38%
	Other	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Taught Masters	Female	65%	64%	64%	64%	65%
	Male	35%	35%	35%	36%	35%
	Other	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Research	Female	57%	56%	51%	53%	55%
	Male	43%	44%	49%	47%	45%
	Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The table presents the gender breakdown by level of study at SOAS from the academic year 2019/20 to 2023/24, based on sex assigned at birth.

Among undergraduate students, female representation has consistently been the largest share of the student cohort, although it has gradually declined from 68% in 2019/20 to 62% in 2023/24. Meanwhile, the proportion of male undergraduates has risen from 32% to 38% over the same period. At the taught master's level, gender proportions have remained stable. Female students consistently accounted for 64–65% of the cohort throughout the five-year period, while male students made up 35–36%. This consistency reflects a long-standing gender profile at the taught postgraduate level at SOAS, where

female students are in the majority but without major shifts in recent years. The gender distribution for research students is more balanced compared to the other levels of study. Female students comprised 57% of research enrolments in 2019/20, dipped to 51% in 2021/22, and rose again to 55% by 2023/24. Male participation, in turn, moved from 43% to 45%. Female students however remain the majority in research study.
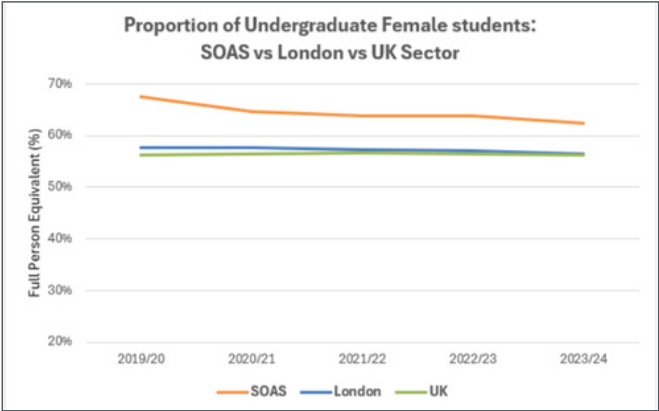

Figure 14: % UG female students across five academic years.

At the undergraduate level, SOAS consistently reports a higher proportion of female students compared to both the London and UK averages. In 2019/20, female undergraduates accounted for 68% at SOAS, while London and UK averages stood at 58% and 56%, respectively. Although there has been a gradual decline in the proportion of female students at SOAS to 62%, this still places the institution 5 percentage points above London and 6 points above the UK average.
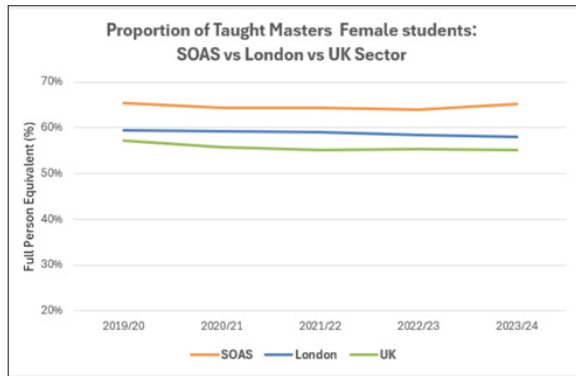
Figure 15: % taught masters female students across five academic years.

In postgraduate taught programmes, SOAS reported a higher female representation than both the London and UK averages. Female students made up 65% of the taught master's cohort in 2019/20 and 2023/24, with very little fluctuation (maintaining a range of 64–65%) across all five years.

In comparison, the London average declined slightly from 60% to 58%, while the UK average showed a modest drop from 57% to 55% over the same period. SOAS consistently has a higher proportion of female students averaging around 6–10 percentage points above national norms.
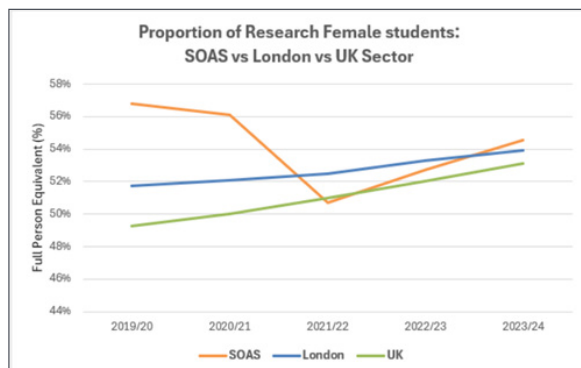
Figure 16: % PGR female students over five academic years.

At research level, the gender gap is narrower overall, however SOAS still continues to maintain a slightly higher proportion of female students compared to both London and UK institutions over the five-year period. In 2019/20 the proportion of female research students made up 57% of the research cohort compared to 52% in London and 49% across the UK sector.

SOAS did experience a dip in 2021/22 to 51%, this however rebounded to 55% by 2023/24, remaining above London (54%) and the UK Sector (53%) figures. Noticeably in both London and UK institutions, the proportion of female students has steadily increased suggesting broader sectoral improvements in gender balance within research programmes.

2.3 Age

Figures provided are for UK-Domiciled Students only.

At the institutional level, the overall trend across the undergraduate population is a steady increase in younger students and a concurrent decline in mature entrants at Undergraduate. In 2023/24, the largest age groups were 19-year-olds and those aged 18 and under, which together comprised over half of the total cohort. The 21–24 age group, which previously led in 2019/20, has seen a consistent reduction in share. The representation of students aged 25 and above has steadily declined to under 5%.
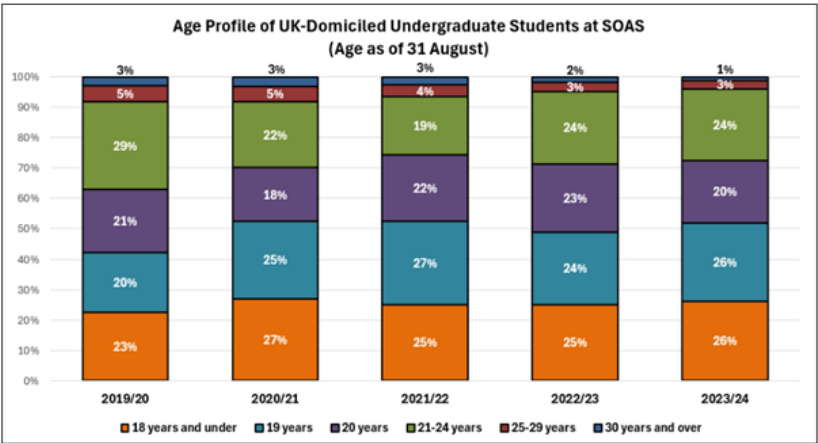
Figure 17: Age profile of UK-Domiciled Undergraduate Students at SOAS, Age as of 31st of August ('18 years and under' consists almost entirely of 18-year-olds, with a small proportion of younger students who are supported appropriately as minors).

Among female undergraduates, the largest age group in 2019/20 was 21–24-year-olds, making up 29% of the cohort. However, by 2023/24 this had declined to 24%, while the proportion of 19-year-olds increased from 21% to 27%, making it the most common age group. Similarly, those aged 18 and

36

under consistently represented around a quarter of the female cohort, indicating a growing dominance of school-leaver age students. Meanwhile, the proportions of older female students aged 25–29 and 30 and over have remained low and declined slightly, together comprising just 4% in 2023/24 compared to 6% in 2019/20. This suggests that mature entry among women is relatively limited and gradually declining.
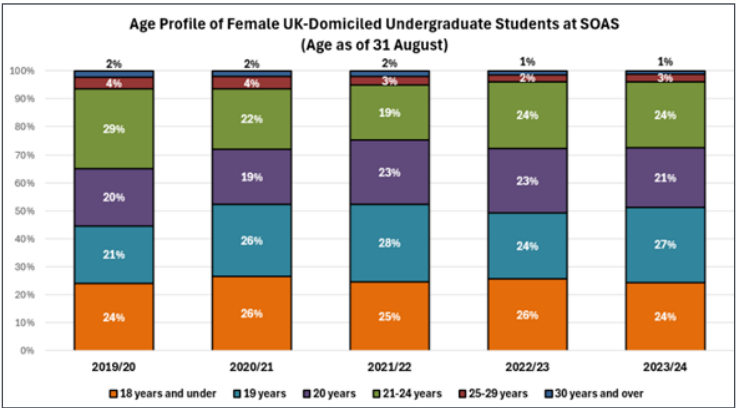

Figure 18: Age profile of Female UK-Domiciled Undergraduate Students at SOAS, Age as of 31st of August ('18 years and under' consists almost entirely of 18-year-olds, with a small proportion of younger students who are supported appropriately as minors).

For male students, the shift toward younger age groups is even more pronounced. In 2019/20, 21–24-year-olds also made up the largest share of male undergraduates at 29%, but by 2023/24 this had dropped to 23%. Meanwhile, the proportion of students aged 18 and under grew significantly, from 19% to 29%, surpassing all other age bands. The 19-year-old group also increased, from 17% to 24%. Older male students have declined more sharply than females; the combined share of those aged 25 and above fell from 13% in 2019/20 to just 5% in 2023/24. This illustrates a narrowing age range among male undergraduates, increasingly concentrated in school-leaver cohorts.
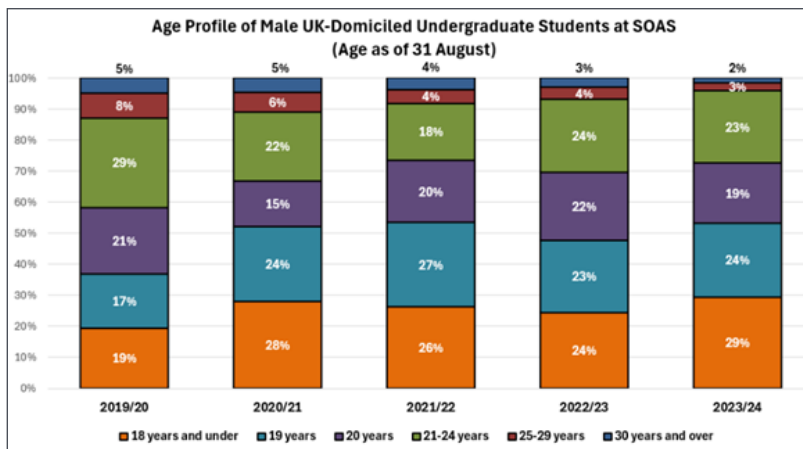
Figure 19: Age profile of Male UK-Domiciled Undergraduate Students at SOAS, Age as of 31st of August ('18 years and under' consists almost entirely of 18-year-olds, with a small proportion of younger students who are supported appropriately as minors).

Over the past five academic years, the age distribution of UK-domiciled taught master's students at SOAS has shown a gradual shift towards younger students, with notable differences between female and male cohorts.

Among female taught master's students, those aged 21–24 have steadily increased from 35% in 2019/20 to 42% in 2023/24. This group is now the largest age category among women and reflects a growing trend of earlier progression into postgraduate study, likely following immediately after undergraduate completion. The 25–29 age group has remained relatively stable over the five-year period, fluctuating slightly but averaging around 26%. In contrast, the proportion of female students aged 30 and over has declined consistently from 38% in 2019/20 to 32% in 2023/24. The youngest age bands (under 21) have remained marginal, with 20-year-olds accounting for just 1% by 2023/24.

Male taught master's students, by comparison, have shown

a slightly different pattern. Although younger students have increased marginally, the majority continue to be concentrated in older age bands. The share of male students aged 21–24 has risen modestly from 25% in 2019/20 to 26% in 2023/24 but remains notably lower than their female peers. The 25–29 group has grown more significantly from 27% to 32% over the same period. However, male students aged 30 and over have remained the largest group, peaking at 48% in multiple years and only declining to 41% in 2023/24.
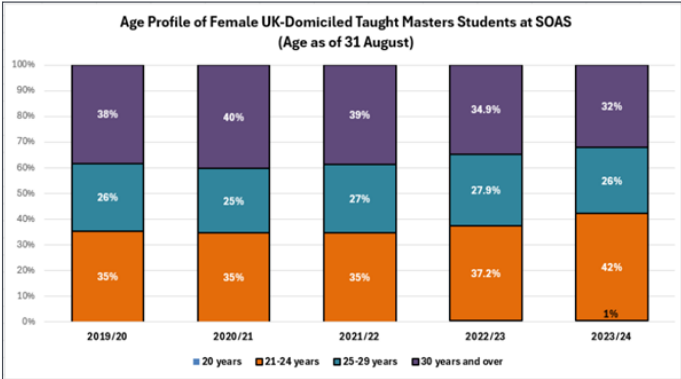
Figure 20: Age profile of Female UK-Domiciled Taught Masters Students at SOAS, Age as of 31st of August.
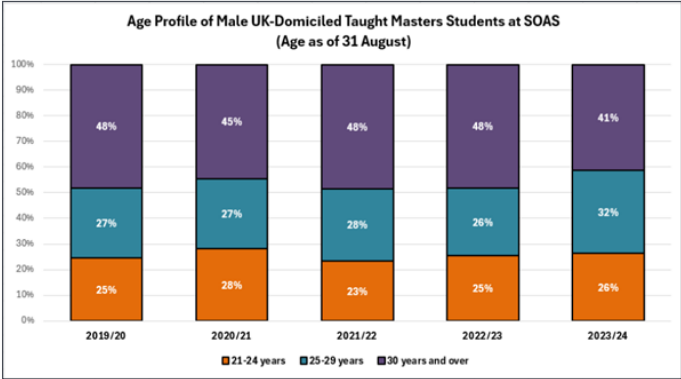

Figure 21: Age profile of Male UK-Domiciled Taught Masters Students at SOAS, Age as of 31st of August.

2.4 Ethnicity

Note: Figures provided are for UK-Domiciled Students only.

Table 16: Shows the % proportion of racialised students at SOAS, London Institutions and UK institutions; UK-Domiciled only

% of Racialised Students	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
SOAS	53%	57%	63%	64%	68%
London Institutions	49%	50%	50%	49%	51%
UK Institutions	25%	26%	27%	27%	29%

In 2023/24, the proportion of racialised students reached its highest level in the past five years, rising to 68%. This growth contrasts with trends observed across the sector and at London institutions. Nationally, the proportion of racialised students has seen a modest increase of 4 percentage points over the same period, while figures for London institutions have remained relatively stable, fluctuating only slightly around 50%.
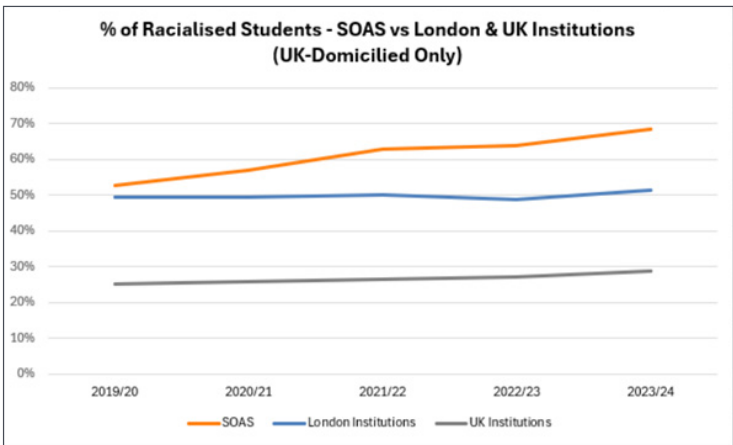

Figure 22: % of racialised students at SOAS compared to the sector.

Asian students currently represent the largest ethnic group at SOAS, comprising 34% of the UK-domiciled student population. Since 2019/20, the proportion of Asian students

has steadily increased by 12%, highlighting a notable shift in the ethnic composition of the student body. White students form the second largest group at 27% in 2023/24, however the proportion of White students has steadily declined over the same five-year period, from 44% in 2019/20, noting a 17% decline. There are similarly sized proportions of Black and Mixed ethnicity students at 14% and 13%, respectively in 2023/24. Students identifying with the 'Other' ethnic group make up 9%, while 4% of students did not disclose their ethnicity. The representation of Black, Mixed, and Other ethnic groups has remained relatively stable, with overall changes in diversity primarily driven by the growth in Asian student enrolment.

Table 17: Ethnicity of SOAS students for the years 2019/20 – 2023/24.

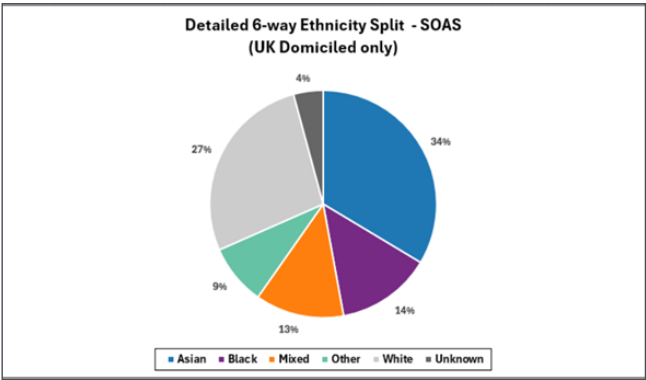| Ethnicity (detailed 6 way)	Academic Year				
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Asian	22%	26%	30%	20%	34%
Black	12%	12%	12%	12%	14%
Mixed	10%	11%	11%	13%	13%
Other	8%	8%	9%	19%	9%
White	44%	40%	34%	31%	27%
Unknown	4%	4%	3%	5%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Figure 23: 2023/24 breakdown of students by ethnic group.

2.5 Disability

Figures provided are for UK-Domiciled Students and Non-Uk Domiciled Students.

In 2019/20 the proportion of students with a known disability at SOAS was 15% which matched the national average and exceeded the London average of 12%. Over the five-year period between 2019/20-2023/24, SOAS' proportion of students with a known disability rose to 19%, a 4-percentage point increase.

As with staff, this increase could be driven by several factors, from improved disclosure, growing awareness of disability, or increased trust and confidence among disabled students that they are safe sharing this information, and SOAS will respond with appropriate support.

The London average also increased over this period from 12% to 15% reflecting a broader regional and national trend toward improved recognition for disabled students. The UK Sector saw a similar rise to that of SOAS rising steadily from 15% to 18%.

Table 18: % of disabled students over five academic years.

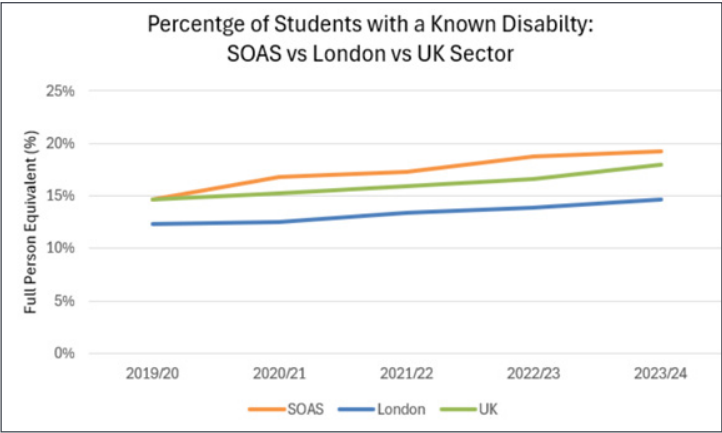| Known Disability	Academic Year				
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
SOAS	15%	17%	17%	19%	19%
London	12%	12%	13%	14%	15%
UK	15%	15%	16%	17%	18%

Figure 24: % of students with disability over five years.

The following graph shows the 2023/24 declared disability split at SOAS. Students who declared a disability mostly reported a 'Learning difference such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D' (35%), followed by students with 'Two or more conditions' (30%) and students with a 'Mental health condition, challenge or disorder, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety' (28%).
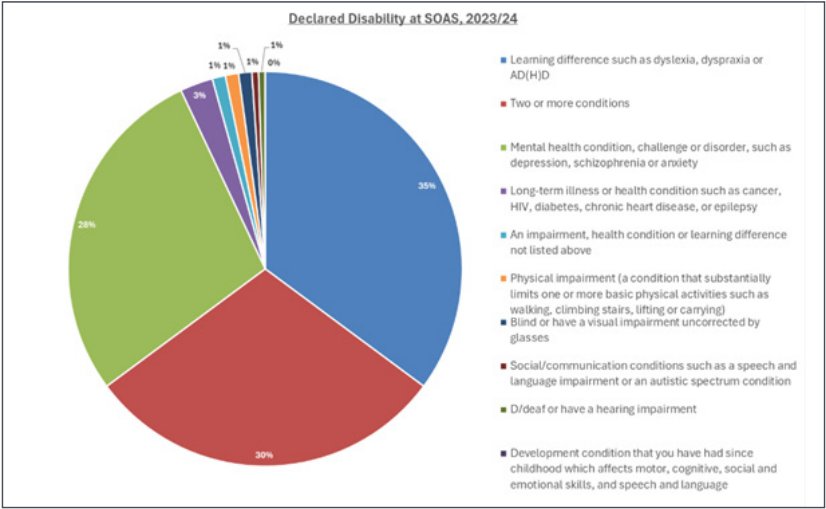

Figure 25: declared disability category for SOAS students 2023/24.

2.6 Sexual Orientation

Figures provided are for UK-Domiciled Students and Non-UK Domiciled Students.

Over the five-year period, the proportion of students identifying as Heterosexual or Straight remained largely stable at around 70%, except for a dip to 55% in 2022/23, before returning to previous levels in 2023/24. The percentage of students identifying as Bisexual showed a gradual upward trend, rising from 6% in 2019/20 to 8% in 2023/24. In contrast, those identifying as Gay or Lesbian remained consistent at 3% throughout the period.

The "Other sexual orientation" category also remained relatively stable, fluctuating slightly between 3% and 4%. Meanwhile, the "Not Known" category saw a peak in 2022/23 at 33%, followed by a decrease to 15% in 2023/24. It is important to highlight these figures as each year students choose not to share their sexual orientation, which likely means that the actual proportions of LGBTQ+ students may be slightly higher than reported. Overall, the data shows a stable majority identifying as heterosexual, with a gradual increase in bisexual representation and steady figures for other groups.

Table 19: Student sexual orientation (%) over five academic years.

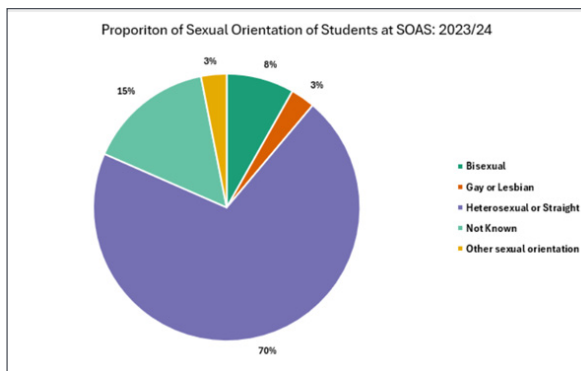|	Academic Year				
Religuous Belief	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23*	2023/24
Bisexual	6%	7%	7%	6%	8%
Gay or Lesbian	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Heterosexual or Straight	69%	70%	70%	55%	70%
Not Known	19%	17%	16%	33%	15%
Other sexual orientation	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Figure 26: student sexual orientation snapshot 2023/2024.

2.7 Religion and Belief

Note: Figures provided are for UK-Domiciled Students and Non-UK Domiciled Students. Between 2019/20-2021/22 and 2022/23- 2023/24 different methods of data extraction have been used. Numbers are therefore not directly comparable, but reasonable interpretation can be made to highlight trends and patterns.

Over the past five years, the proportion of students identifying as Muslim has increased, rising from 24% in 2019/20 to 37% in 2023/24. This marks the largest shift in religious identity within the student population.

In contrast, the percentage of students reporting no religion has declined steadily, from 45% to 35%. The proportion of Christian students has also decreased over the same period, from 21% to 16%. Other religious groups, including Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Sikh, and those selecting "Any other religion or belief," remained relatively stable, with only a small increase in Hindu students (from 3% to 5%).

Overall, the data shows a trend toward greater religious diversity, with a notable growth in the Muslim student population and a gradual decline in non-religious and Christian identities.

Table 20: Declared Student Religious Beliefs over five years (2019/20 – 2023/24)

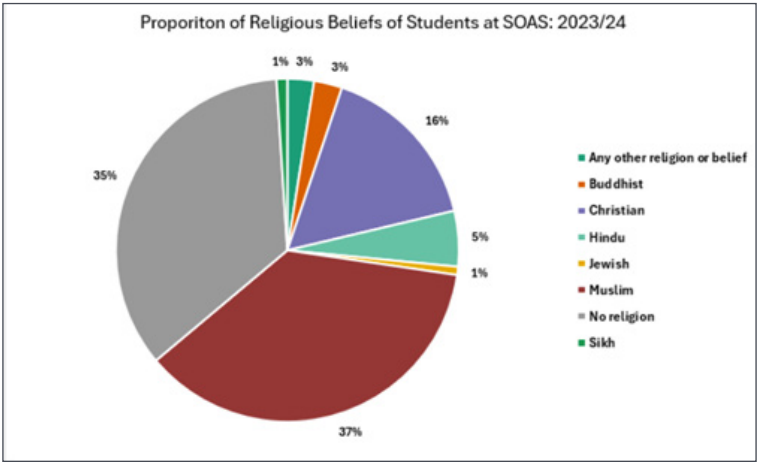| Religuous Belief	Academic Year				
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Any other religion or belief	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Buddhist	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Christian	21%	19%	18%	16%	16%
Hindu	3%	3%	3%	4%	5%
Jewish	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Muslim	24%	28%	32%	34%	37%
No religion	45%	44%	41%	38%	35%
Sikh	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Figure 27: students' religious belief 2023/24.