

Council Diversity Monitoring Annual Report 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Council is committed to an annual collection of some diversity data regarding its board member composition (aligned to the Higher Education Statistics Agency Governor information). The aim of this reporting is to align Council with good practice, support the enhancement of a board development framework for Council and to demonstrate inclusive leadership, with an annual report being received by it and a summary published on its webpages.
- 1.2 The following data was collected via a survey in November and December 2024. All members were invited to engage, with members' disclosure of information being voluntary. Each question included a prefer not to say option. Tables 1-5 display the characteristics for all of Council's current membership (17) in terms of age, disability status, ethnicity, nationality and sex. Data sets are small and therefore there are potential sensitivities around the data. For this reason, cross-tabulated data is not provided.
- 1.3 Comparable data has been included from the previous year's survey¹ alongside sector benchmark data from the Advance HE biennial '[Diversity of Governors in Higher Education Report](#)' published in December 2024. The average size of a UK university governing body is 19, so Council's current configuration of 20 (when all lay member positions are filled) is on par with the sector. Other national board diversity statistics are also shared where available. The University's relevant all staff profile data has also been included from January 2025.
- 1.4 Council is reminded that it does not have explicit diversity targets relating to its composition but moreover has charged its Nominations Committee with placing diversity in its broadest sense, at the heart of search activity and ensuring inclusive practices are followed.

¹ Census point December 2023 with 17 respondents from a membership of 19.

2. Council Composition

Table 1: Council Age Profile

	LU Council 2023	LU Council 2024		2024 Advance HE Benchmark
25 and under	2	2 (12%)		6%
26-35	0	0	(29%)	41%
36-45	1	1		
46-55	2	4		
56-65	5	5	(59%)	53%
66 and over	7	5		

- 2.1 Table One shows that, over the past year Council has marginally lowered its average age but there are fewer current serving members than in 2023. It is anticipated that once new appointments have joined, Council will have broadly maintained its age profile. Though this age distribution is not atypical for such bodies, this is a characteristic Council should remain mindful of. Research has shown that age diversity can reduce group think and lead to more critical judgement of management decisions and actions. The University's staff age profile is not included here, as age range fields are not comparable.

Table 2: Disability Status

	LU Council 2023	LU Council 2024	LU Staff Profile	2024 Advance HE Benchmark
Disclosed disability	4 (27%)	4 (24%)	10%	7%
Not known to have a disability	10	13	90%	
Unknown	1	0		

- 2.2 Members were not asked to disclose any information other than whether they were known to have a disability (including hidden disability).

Table 3: Ethnicity

	LU Council 2023	LU Council 2024	LU Staff Profile	2024 Advance HE Benchmark
White	15 (88%)	13 (76%)	82%	82%
Black	1	2 (12%)	1%	18%
Asian	0	0	8%	
Mixed	1	2 (12%)	2%	
Other	0	0	2%	0

- 2.3 Regarding ethnicity, Council has maintained the strong progress made in this area, with diversity arising primarily from the lay Council membership category. Council currently has greater diversity than the average board composition within the sector. However it is understood that incoming lay Council member appointments will likely increase the percentage of white members again. Therefore, attracting a diverse pool of candidates will need to remain a focus for the Nominations Committee in future searches.
- 2.4 Outside of the Higher Education Sector, the Parker Review 2021 considered how the ethnic and cultural diversity of FTSE companies could be improved. This included a target that all FTSE 250 Boards should have appointed one director from a minority ethnic background by December 2024 (by March 2024, 70% have already met this target with 13% of all Board positions are held by minority ethnic directors). Therefore, it appears the University is performing well compared to other corporate governance sector targets.

Table 4: Nationality

	LU Council 2023	LU Council 2024	2024 Advance HE Benchmark
United Kingdom	15	15 (88%)	91%
European Union	1	1	4%
Non-EU	0	0	5%
Other	1	1	

Table 5: Sex

	LU Council 2023	LU Council 2024	LU Staff Profile	2024 Advance HE Benchmark
Female	8	11 (65%)	55%	44%
Male	11	6 (35%)	45%	56%

- 2.5 When benchmarked with the AdvanceHE average and national statistics, the Council's current reported composition relating to women's representation on the governing body performs well. From the FTSE Leaders Review 2024, nationally within the FTSE 350 companies, women comprised 42.1% of board members. The University's Council has a much stronger representation of females and exceeds this target and the 30% target established by the 30percentclub.org. In contrast to previous years, lay member appointments make a more significant contribution to this performance. With the recent approved appointment to Council the percentage of female lay members is expected to rise further still in early 2025. Council may need to consider this balance carefully in future lay member searches, especially as there will be further change of members mid-year by virtue of the Students' Union elections and the appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor.

January 2025