GOLDSMITHS

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Occasional Statistical Review: Analysis of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic students throughout the student lifecycle

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents analysis of the relative performance of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students compared to other groups of students at Goldsmiths. It highlights relatively high attainment profiles for BAME students upon enrolment and a larger than average BAME student population. However, the paper highlights discrepancies in the relative performance of BAME students compared to other groups in relation to continuation, progression between years and eventual degree attainment – issues seen most clearly in our Black student population. Despite this, compared to the typical outcomes of our benchmark group and the wider sector, achievement of 'good honours' by BAME students at Goldsmiths tends to be above average.

Further research is required before definitive conclusions can be drawn, and the relatively high proportion of students with 'unknown' ethnicity suggests that aspects of the data should be treated carefully (particularly when it comes to analysing progression and degree attainment). With that in mind, further research is planned, working with the Students' Union and other stakeholders to inform a future project that will seek to address areas where disadvantage is evident.

INTRODUCTION

1. In response to Goldsmiths Students' Union's priorities for this year and the external focus on the experience and attainment of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students in the HE sector[1], this report brings together BAME student data around key indicators of the academic lifecycle of undergraduate students: applications, total students, average entry tariff, non-continuation into year 2, cohort progression and degree classification.

2. While much of the data for Goldsmiths and other institutions is already publicly available from the Higher Education Statistics Agency, our intention in publishing this analysis is to inform discussions internally to address areas where the experience of BAME students appears to compare disadvantageously to that of White students. We hope this will in turn enable us to work with others across the sector to share good practice in improving the experience and outcomes of BAME students.

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[1] Particularly around the BAME attainment gap and lack of diversity in UK elite institutions – as highlighted by WonkHE and David Lammy MP's recent investigation.

3. This report focuses on institution level data and where possible, contains comparisons to the sector and our benchmark group[2]. The authors have avoided providing narrative explanations of the possible reasons for the trends identified, except where these are likely to be helpful to readers outside Goldsmiths.

4. The ethnicity grouping has been kept consistent across all data sets as the HESA defined 5-way ethnicity split of: Asian, Black, White, Other (including Mixed) and Unknown/Not Applicable.

APPLICATIONS

5. Starting with the total number of Undergraduate applications Goldsmiths received by ethnicity over the last two admissions cycles[3], there has been an overall increase in the number of applications, with the exception of Black applications, which have decreased 1.4%, as indicated by table 1.

6. Conversely, conversion rates overall (i.e. students who are offered a place and then enrol) have decreased between the two admissions sessions, with the exception of Black conversion rate which has increased by 1.2%, as indicated by table 2.

	2015-16		2016-17		% +/-
	Count	%	Count	%	
Asian	850	44.3%	1067	55.7%	11.3%
Black	433	50.7%	421	49.3%	-1.4%
Blank	8778	49.1%	9104	50.9%	1.8%
Other (including mixed)	381	44.2%	481	55.8%	11.6%
Unknown/not applicable	668	48.3%	716	51.7%	3.5%
White	1588	47.4%	1764	52.6%	5.3%
Grand Total	12698	48.4%	13553	51.6%	3.3%

Table 1 Total applications by ethnicity: 2015-16 and 2016-17 with proportion comparison

	2015-16			2016-17			% +/-
	offers	accepted	conversion	offers	accepted	conversion	
Asian	744	635	85.3%	942	797	84.6%	-0.7%
Black	378	334	88.4%	356	319	89.6%	1.2%
Blank	4279	59	1.4%	4596	10	0.2%	-1.2%
Other (including mixed)	339	296	87.3%	435	363	83.4%	-3.9%
Unknown/not applicable	617	558	90.4%	662	582	87.9%	-2.5%
White	1449	1296	89.4%	1613	1403	87.0%	-2.5%
Grand Total	7806	3178	40.7%	8604	3474	40.4%	-0.3%

Table 2 Offers and acceptances by ethnicity 2015-16 and 2016-17 with conversion rate comparison

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[2] Our benchmark group is defined as: Brunel, City, Kingston, LSE, Queen Mary, Roehampton, Royal Holloway, SOAS, Greenwich, Westminster, UAL
[3] Applications during 2015-16 and 2016-17 for 2016-17 and 2017-18 entry.

PROPORTION OF TOTAL STUDENTS

7. Over the last three years, the number of BAME students as a proportion of our total UG student population (including international students) has grown consistently, increasing 6.6% during the period.

8. Looking more in depth at 2015-16, chart 2 shows Goldsmiths also attracts a high proportion of BAME UK-domiciled students compared to the wider sector and benchmark group[4], although specifically against our benchmark group we tend to attract fewer Asian students. This may be explained by the subject mix of the majority of our competitors where Medicine and STEM subjects are represented more heavily. For Black and Other ethnicity students, we compare similarly to our benchmark group.

9. Table 3 shows the total number of students studying for a First Degree over the last three years. BAME student numbers have increased 7.6% between 2014-15 and 2016-17[5]. Table 4 compares our 2015-16 total student proportions against the sector and our benchmark group. Compared to the sector, Goldsmiths has attracted a higher overall proportion of BAME students, as indicated by the green highlighting.
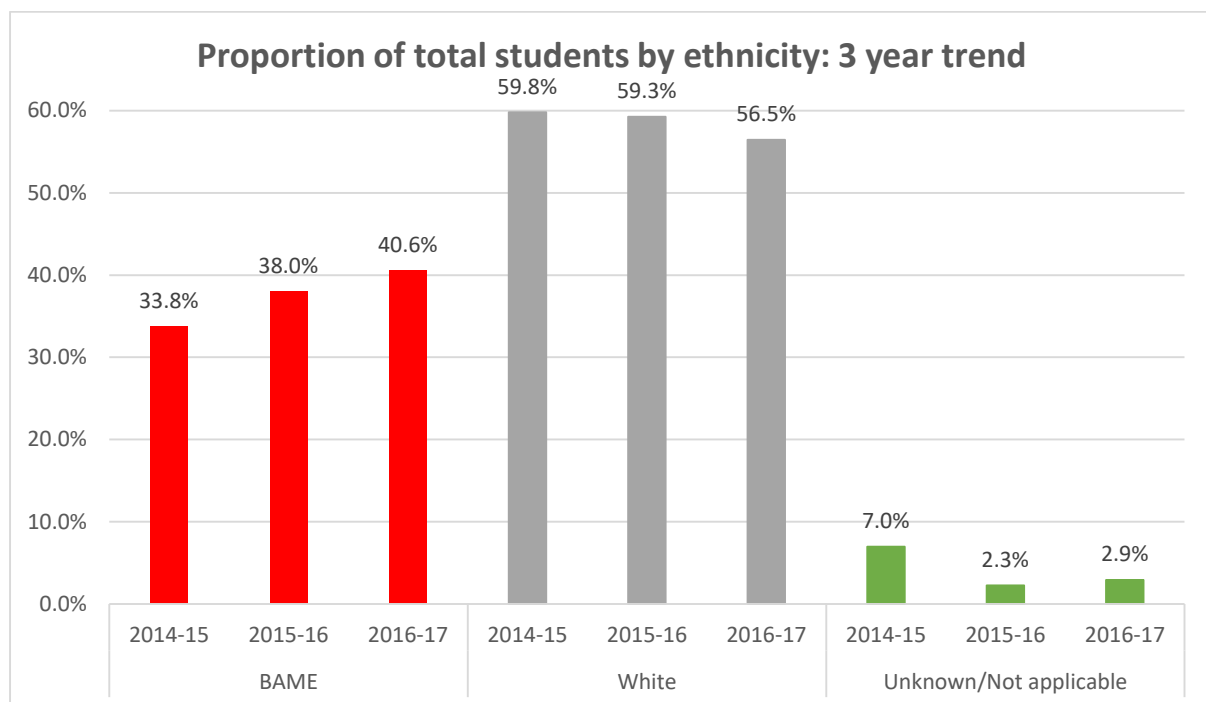

Proportion of total students by ethnicity: 3 year trend

Chart 1   Proportion of total students by ethnicity 2014-15 to 2016-17

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[4] 2015-16 is the most recent session of HESA published data for comparison. Sector and Benchmark figures are for UK domiciled students only.
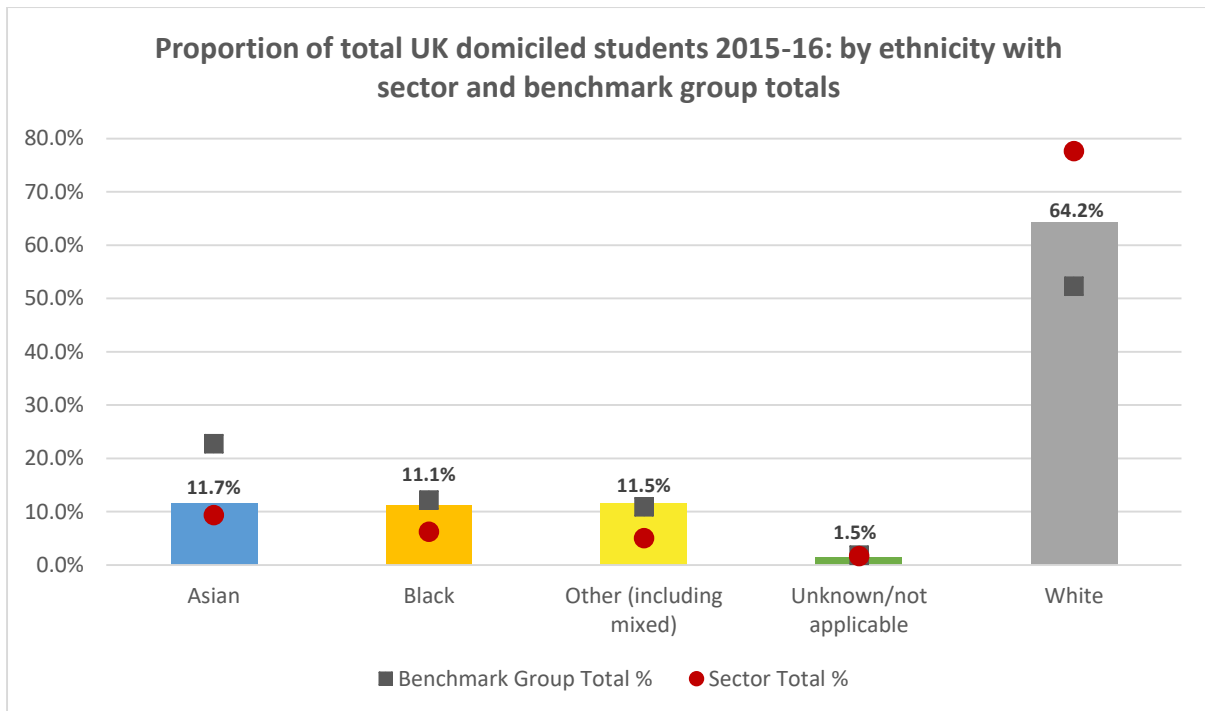[5] This BAME figure arrived at as the sum of Asian, Black and Other proportions

Chart 2 Proportion of total students in 2015-16 by ethnicity against Sector and Benchmark Group proportions

	Asian		Black		Other (inc. mixed)		Unknown/NA		White		Total Count
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	
2014-15	500	11.9%	464	11.1%	501	12.0%	58	1.4%	2663	63.6%	4186
2015-16	629	14.0%	528	11.8%	550	12.3%	52	1.2%	2725	60.8%	4484
2016-17	762	17.0%	590	13.2%	560	12.5%	98	2.2%	2474	55.2%	4484

Table 3 Total First degree students by ethnicity: 2014-15 to 2016-17

	Asian	Black	Other (inc. mixed)	Unknown/NA	White
Goldsmiths Total	14.0%	11.80%	12.3%	1.2%	60.8%
Sector Total	10.7%	6.9%	5.2%	0.9%	76.3%
Benchmark group Total	17.0%	13.80%	12.5%	2.2%	55.2%

Table 4 Proportion of Total first degree students in 2015-16 by ethnicity, compared to Sector and Benchmark Group

AVERAGE TARIFF

10. The Average Entry Tariff (AET) of BAME students at Goldsmiths is lower than that of White students, maintained with slight fluctuations over the last four years as displayed in chart 3. In 2016-17, Asian AET was 307, Black 310 and Other 328, compared to White at 363. This represents an average of 315 points for BAME as a whole, a difference of 48 points with White AET (this approximates to a difference of one AS level at grade B).

11. All BAME ethnicity categories maintained a lower AET than the Goldsmiths overall average of 338 in 2016-17. Black students have generally maintained the lowest AET, with minor fluctuations over recent years.

12. Focusing on 2015-16 against the available sector and benchmark group averages for that year[6] (Chart 4), AET was lower for all ethnicity categories at Goldsmiths than our benchmark group average, the most significant being Asian AET, at 39 points lower than benchmark average. This can possibly be explained, again, by the relative lack of Medicine and STEM subjects at Goldsmiths compared to our benchmark group – these subject areas typically have higher entry requirements and sizable Asian student cohorts.

13. Interestingly, our Black AET is one point higher than sector average. However, Black AET is significantly lower than all other Ethnicity category AETs across the whole sector: this may be for a wide range of reasons related to average secondary level attainment for Black students, and universities' offer-making strategies.
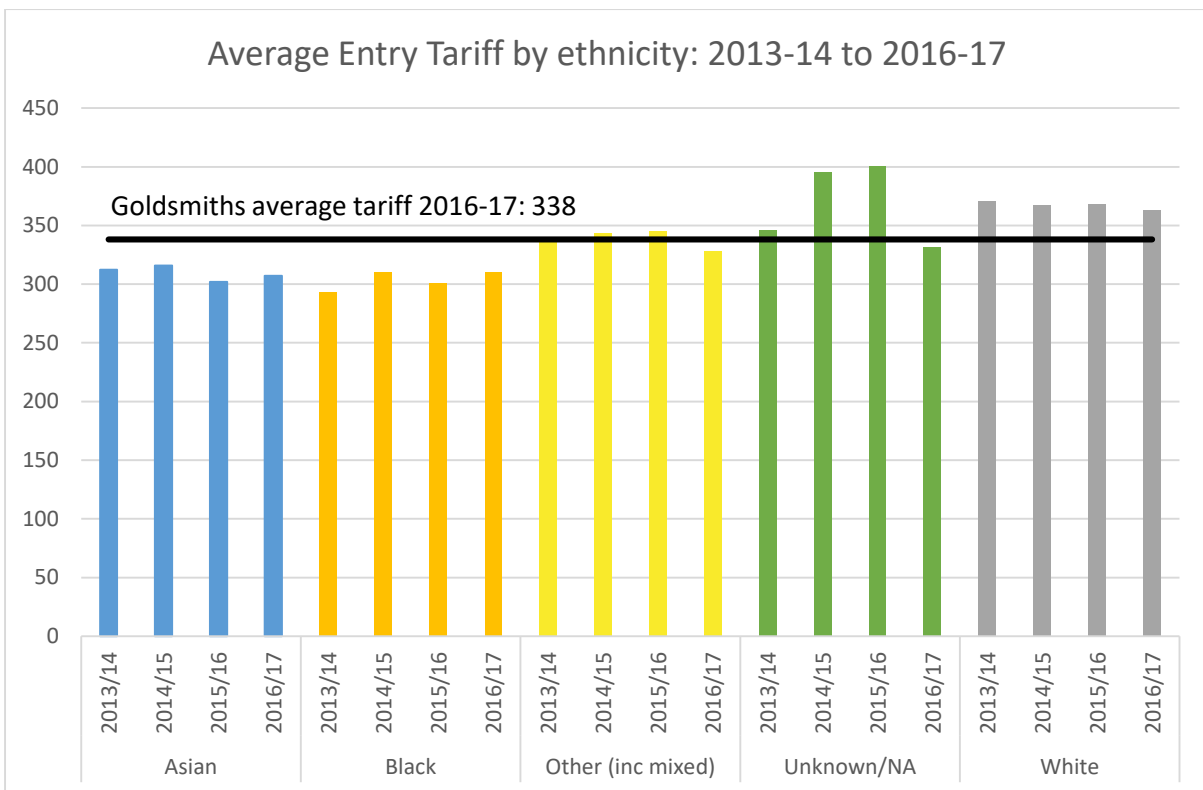

Chart 3 Goldsmiths average entry tariff by ethnicity: 2013-14 to 2016-17

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[6] 2015-16 is the most recent session of HESA published data, where we can obtain figures from other institutions for comparison

Average Entry Tariff 2015-16: by ethnicity with sector and benchmark group averages
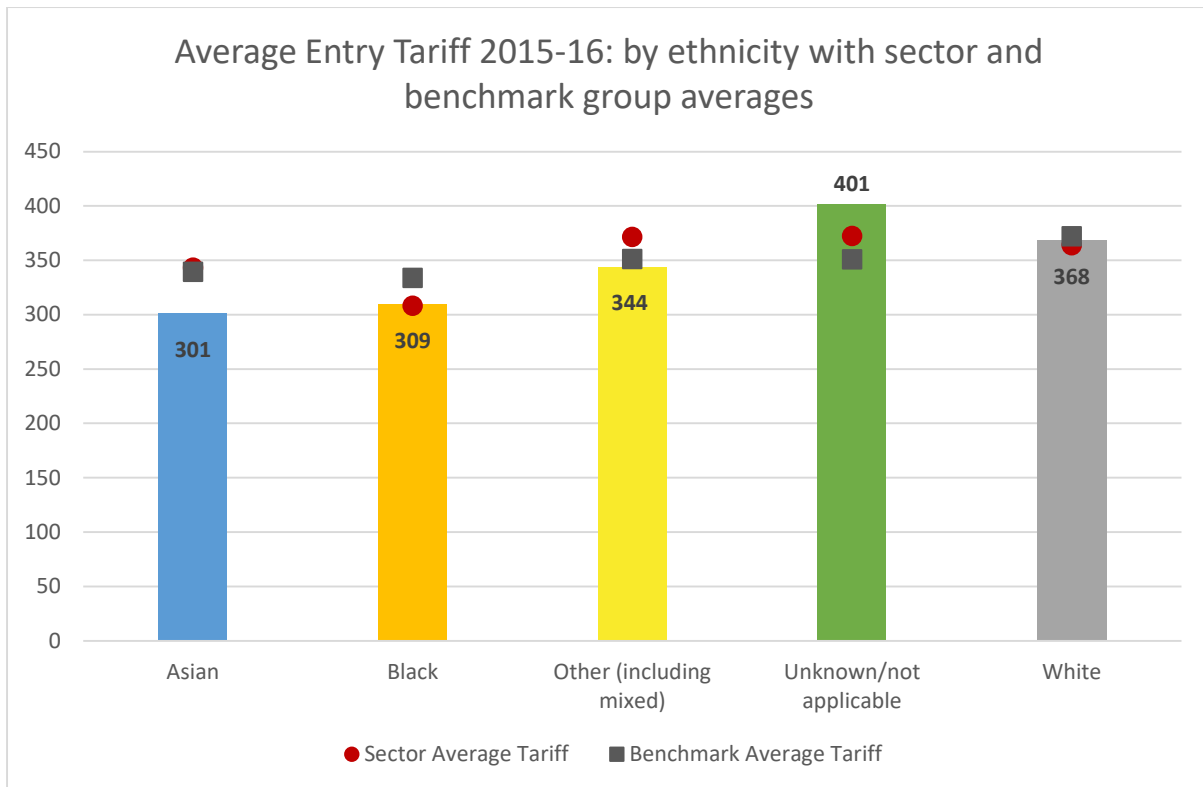

Chart 4 Goldsmiths average tariff 2015-16 by ethnicity with sector and benchmark group averages

NON-CONTINUATION

14. In October 2017 HEFCE published a report[7] quantifying the year one outcomes for first degree UK-domiciled students over several years. Key findings were that overall, proportions of students leaving HE, repeating and transferring after year one has increased since 2011. The total proportion of 2014-15 year one students in the sector no longer at their starting institution in year two was 9.8%. Goldsmiths' own comparable figure for 2014-15 year one entrants (taken from table 4, overleaf) was 14.0%.

15. Year one non-continuation rates by ethnicity over two years (table 4) at Goldsmiths indicates that the loss of Black students is higher than that of both White students and our total population average. These figures also compare unfavourably to the sector attrition average for all ethnicities of 9.8% for 2014-15 entrants, mentioned above.

	2013-14 entrants			2014-15 entrants		
Ethnicity	Continue or qualify at GS	No longer at GS	% no longer at GS	Continue or qualify at GS	No longer at GS	% no longer at GS
Asian	150	17	10.2%	147	17	10.4%
Black	125	24	16.1%	137	28	17.0%
Other	141	19	11.9%	151	37	19.7%
White	778	125	13.8%	858	130	13.2%
Unknown	14	2	12.5%	30	3	9.1%
Goldsmiths Total	1208	187	13.4%	1323	215	14.0%

Table 4 Non-continuation following year of entry: UK domiciled full-time first degree entrants in 2013-14 and 2014-15

PROGRESSION

16. Table 5 (overleaf) reflects a statistical approach to tracking the academic progression of a single cohort of students. It shows continuation rates for each year of the 2014-15 cohort of new starters on Undergraduate 3-year degree programmes, by ethnicity. Proportions that are higher than the institution totals are highlighted. It should be noted that the 2014-15 cohort of students had a particularly high number of 'unknown' ethnicities which is likely to skew the outcome of each ethnic group presented. Goldsmiths has been working to bring the number of declared unknown ethnicities down and in line with the sector (see chart 1). In each session, Black and Other students consistently have the highest academic failure and withdrawal rates, the lowest continuation rates and lowest completion rates within three years. Completion rates for Black students in this particular cohort were 13.6% less than the institutional total of 82.8%, at 69.2%.

17. Black students in this cohort also had the worst completion within 3-years rate – with 26.7% staying on after three years of study to complete a three-year programme, compared to the institutional total of 15.3%.

18. However, if we look at comparing the proportions of year 3 outcomes of the 2013-14 cohort against the year 3 outcomes of 2014-15 cohort, on average, the latter cohort had lower withdrawal and failure rates across all ethnicity groups, as displayed in table 6. Better performance in each progression type against the institutional total is indicated by green traffic lights, worse performance by red traffic lights. Table 6 indicates that the proportion of Asian and Black students not completing in year 3 has increased, rising 6.2% and 1.4% respectively between the two cohorts, although in a number of other measures there is evidence that progress is underway to reduce discrepancies between the outcomes of BAME and White students.

	2014-15								2015-16								2016-17							
	Academic Fail		Continuing		Transfer out		Withdrawn		Academic Fail		Continuing		Transfer out		Withdrawn		Academic Fail		Completed		Continuing		Withdrawn	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Asian	2	1.3%	141	93.4%	1	0.7%	7	4.6%	3	2.1%	134	95.0%	1	0.7%	3	2.1%	3	2.2%	110	82.1%	21	15.7%		0.0%
Black	4	2.7%	135	90.0%	1	0.7%	10	6.7%	7	5.2%	120	88.9%	1	0.7%	7	5.2%	5	4.2%	83	69.2%	32	26.7%		0.0%
Not known/refused	1	0.3%	319	93.5%	12	3.5%	9	2.6%	6	1.9%	299	93.7%	2	0.6%	12	3.8%	2	0.7%	263	88.0%	32	10.7%	2	0.7%
Other (inc. mixed)	5	3.0%	146	89.0%	1	0.6%	12	7.3%	11	7.5%	127	87.0%		0.0%	8	5.5%	5	3.9%	97	76.4%	25	19.7%		0.0%
White	6	0.7%	812	91.4%	17	1.9%	53	6.0%	17	2.1%	757	93.2%	1	0.1%	37	4.6%	7	0.9%	637	84.1%	110	14.5%	3	0.4%
Total	18	1.1%	1553	91.7%	32	1.9%	91	5.4%	44	2.8%	1437	92.5%	5	0.3%	67	4.3%	22	1.5%	1190	82.8%	220	15.3%	5	0.3%

Table 5 Tracking the 2014-15 Cohort progression until 2016-17

	Academic Failure					Withdrawn					Completed					Not yet Completed				
	2013-14		2014-15		+/-	2013-14		2014-15		+/-	2013-14		2014-15		+/-	2013-14		2014-15		+/-
	count	%	count	%		count	%	count	%		count	%	count	%		count	%	count	%	
Asian	8	4.0%	3	2.2%	-1.7%	10	5.0%	0	0.0%	-5.0%	164	81.6%	110	82.1%	0.5%	19	9.5%	21	15.7%	6.2%
Black	6	5.2%	5	4.2%	-1.1%	1	0.9%	0	0.0%	-0.9%	79	68.7%	83	69.2%	0.5%	29	25.2%	32	26.7%	1.4%
Not known/refused	0	0.0%	2	0.7%	0.7%	0	0.0%	2	0.7%	0.7%	12	66.7%	263	88.0%	21.3%	6	33.3%	32	10.7%	-22.6%
Other (inc. mixed)	6	4.6%	5	3.9%	-0.6%	4	3.1%	0	0.0%	-3.1%	93	71.0%	97	76.4%	5.4%	28	21.4%	25	19.7%	-1.7%
White	14	1.7%	7	0.9%	-0.8%	19	2.3%	3	0.4%	-1.9%	696	84.1%	637	84.1%	0.1%	99	12.0%	110	14.5%	2.6%
Goldsmiths Total	34	2.6%	22	1.5%	-1.1%	34	2.6%	5	0.3%	-2.3%	1044	80.7%	1190	82.8%	2.1%	181	14.0%	220	15.3%	1.3%

2013-14 cohort year 3 population size: 1293

2014-15 cohort year 3 population size: 1437

Table 6 Standard 3-year programme Undergraduates: 2013-14 and 2014-15 cohort comparison of year 3 outcomes by ethnicity

DEGREE CLASSIFICATION

19. Figures for students awarded 'good honours'[8] at Goldsmiths shows that White students consistently perform better than all other ethnicities, as indicated by chart 5. Good honours for Black students are consistently lower than all other ethnicity groups, but has seen a recent rise between 2015-16 and 2016-17 of 11%. As noted in paragraph 16, the number of 'unknown' ethnicities at Goldsmiths has in recent years been high and will skew the overall results, with the 'not knowns' consistently performing above average.

20. Focusing on 2015-16 against the available sector and benchmark group averages for that year (Chart 6), the proportion of students obtaining 'good honours' was higher for all ethnicity categories at Goldsmiths than our benchmark group and the sector average. Students where the ethnicity is unknown perform 25 percentage points higher than the sector. Black students were awarded 5% more good honours than the sector in 2015-16, and this could be as much as 16% in 2016-17 if the sector position is stationary.

21. The same pattern as described in paragraph 19 above is observed for the proportion of students obtaining first class degrees, as indicated by chart 7. In 2015-16, each distinct BAME group at Goldsmiths received a smaller proportion of firsts compared to the benchmark group and sector. However, significantly, the proportion of Black students receiving first class honours has increased between 2015-16 and 2016-17 by 8%. This is the largest rise between the two years of any ethnicity group, though unfortunately at the time of writing sector-wide comparable data for 2016-17 is not yet available.

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[8] Defined as the proportion of students obtaining first class and upper second class degree classifications.
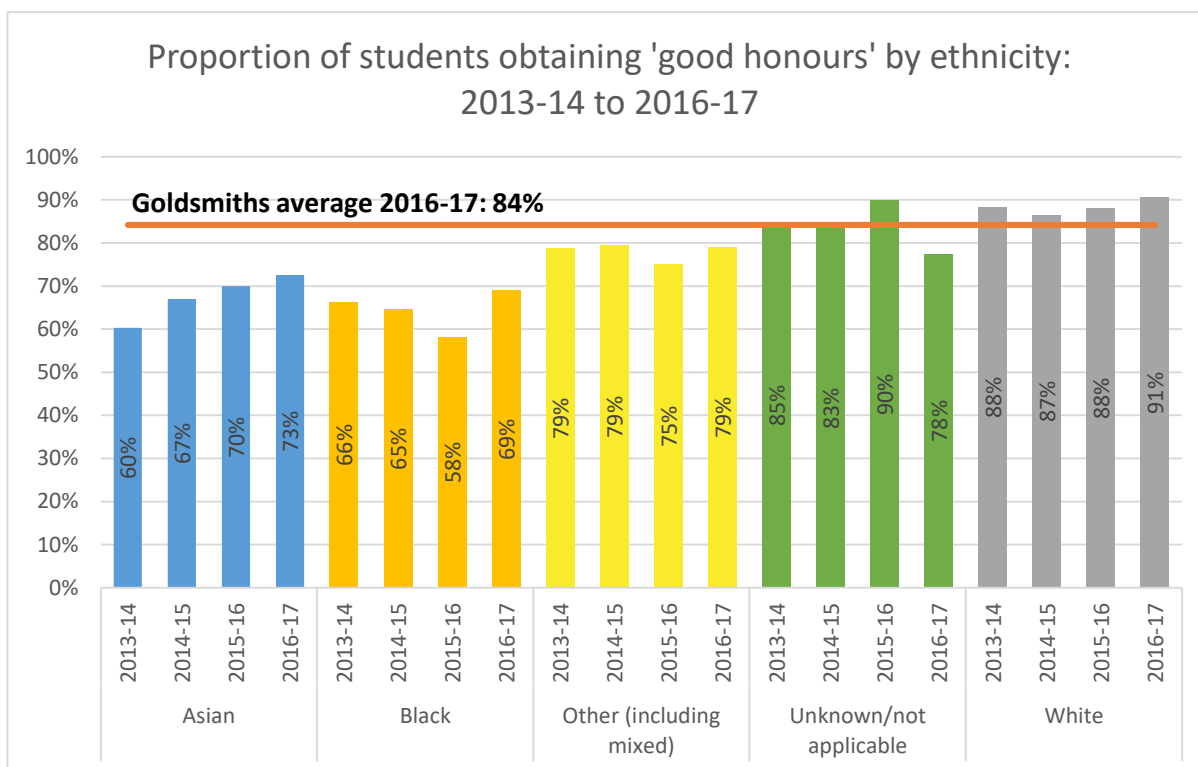
Chart 5 Proportion of students obtaining 'good honours' by ethnicity: 2013-14 to 2016-17
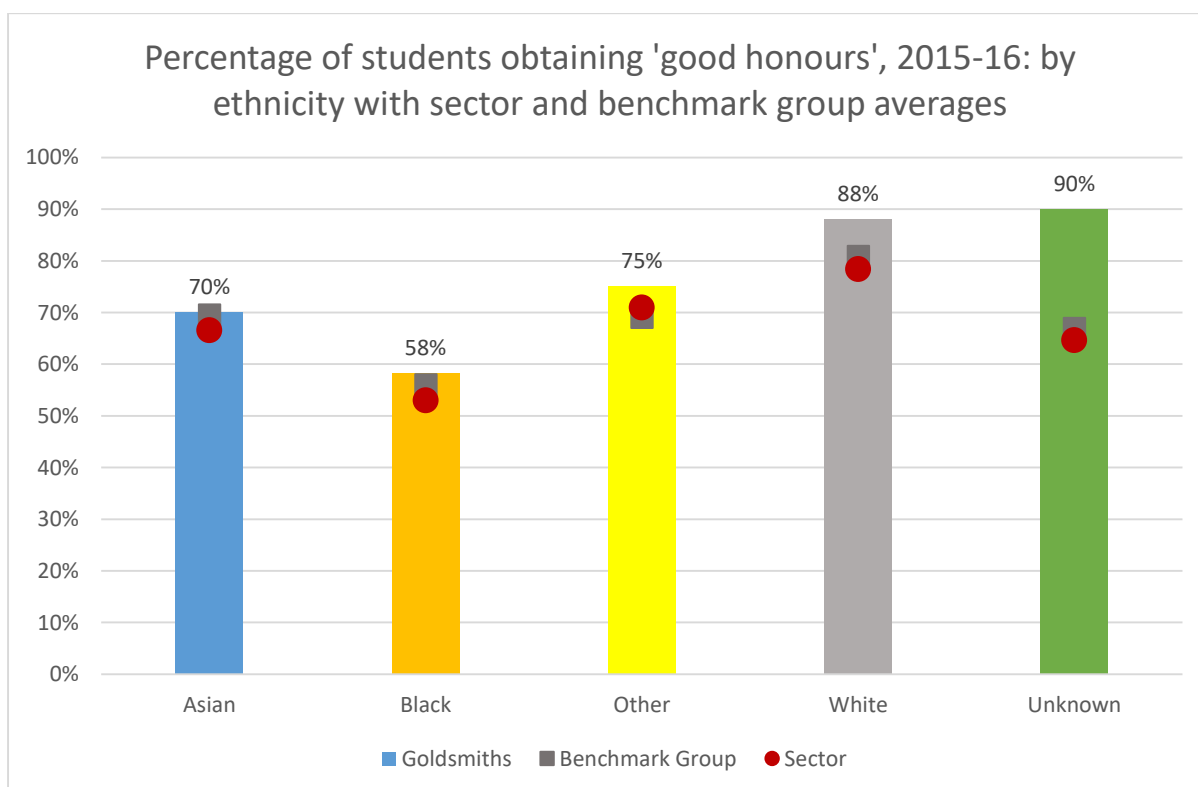

Chart 6 Proportion of students obtaining 'good honours' by ethnicity with sector and benchmark group averages
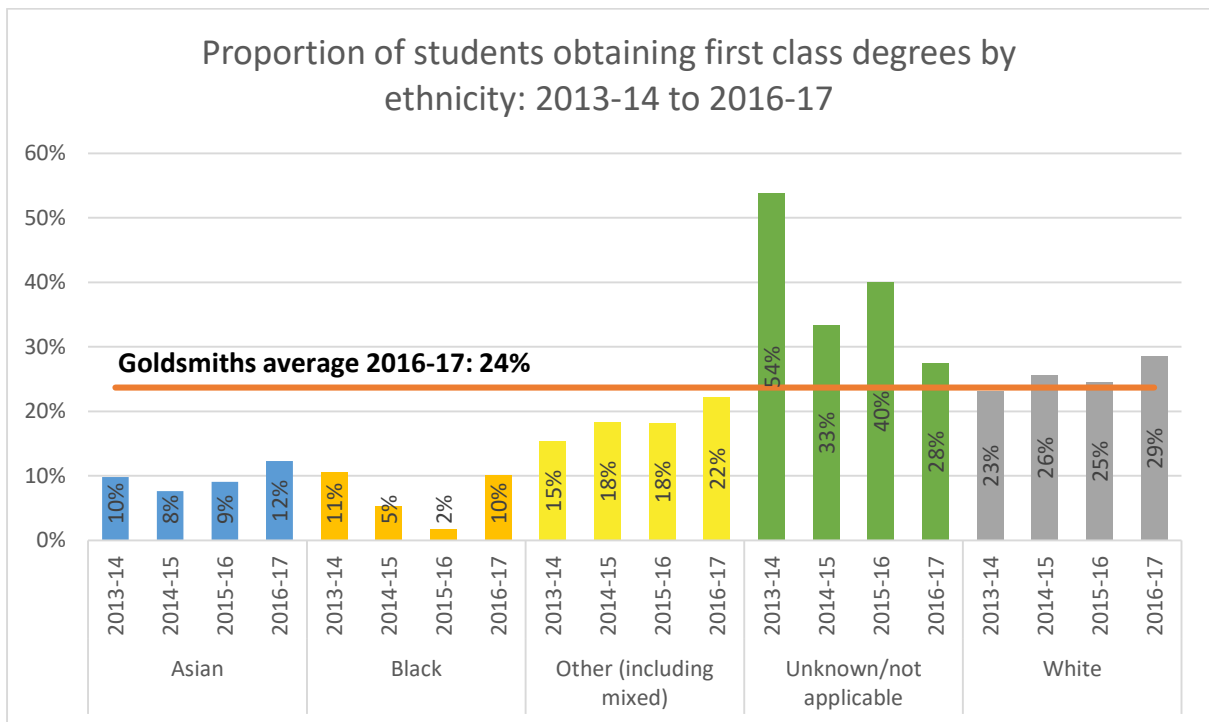
Chart 7 Proportion of students obtaining first class degrees by ethnicity: 2013-14 to 2016-17
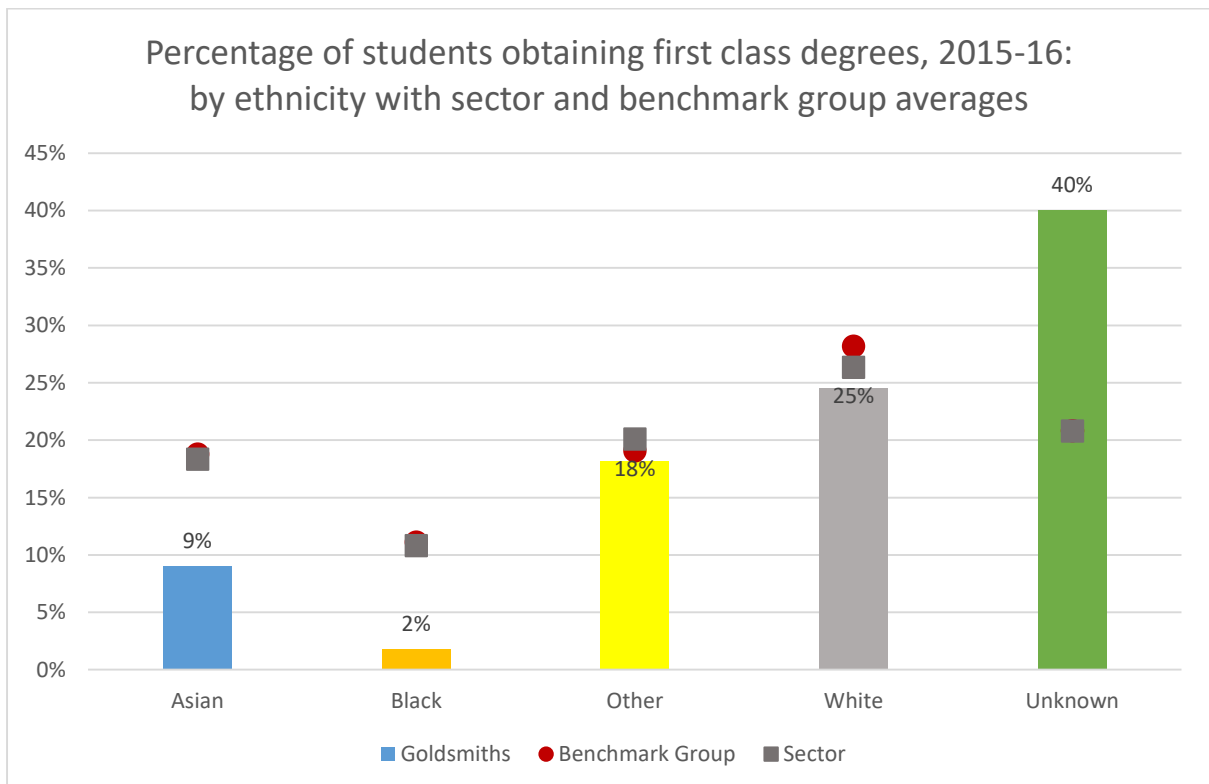

Chart 8 Proportion of students obtaining first class degrees by ethnicity with sector and benchmark group averages

CONCLUSIONS

22. Goldsmiths total student population contains a relatively large proportion of BAME students. Typically, over one third of our student population each year is composed of BAME students - which is higher than the sector overall proportion - and this figure has been rising each year.

23. Goldsmiths performs well against the sector and our benchmark group in terms of first year average tariff for all ethnicity groups, with the exception of Asian students, which may be explained by our degree subject offering. Black entrants have the lowest average tariff, perhaps indicating disparities in attainment at level 3.

24. Despite, on average, promising entry profiles for BAME students and a healthy BAME student population, issues evidently arise with continuation, progression and degree attainment for BAME students – most clearly amongst our Black student population. Despite this, compared to our benchmark group and the sector, achievement of 'good honours' by BAME students at Goldsmiths tends to be above average – pointing to the importance of addressing the remaining attainment discrepancies as a sector. Good honours and first class degree attainment at Goldsmiths has also seen a large proportional rise in 2016-17, but the low proportion of first class degrees awarded to Black students at Goldsmiths still appears low compared to the wider sector.

NEXT STEPS

25. Goldsmiths intends to use this data release as an opportunity to inform internal discussions on how we can address some of the issues raised by our analysis. Initially this will take the form of further benchmarking work when the sector data becomes available in February 2018, and where possible, analysis at subject level. This work will be further informed by qualitative studies undertaken by the Students' Union and our Student Engagement team to hear directly from the experience of BAME students.

26. This further research will inform the creation of a project plan with an anticipated body of work that seeks to address the issues raised, to be monitored by Goldsmiths' Learning Teaching Enhancement Committee.

27. We would welcome comments on this paper. We are also aware of wider work being undertaken by the NUS in this area, and remain keen to co-operate with any efforts undertaken across the sector to ensure all students can fulfil their academic potential and enjoy a positive experience of higher education, whatever their ethnicity or background.

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