

# URGE

## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

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URGE Demographic Data for Durham University, Earth science and Geography Departments

This is what was found by Diversity@Durham at Durham University on demographic data (public and internal facing) as well as stated goals for representation, and/or proposals to collect and report demographic data.

- **The link(s) to demographic data at our organization are here:**

**Student demographic data:** <https://www.dur.ac.uk/respect/studentdata/>  
2019-2020:

Undergrads: 1% Black, 24.7% AME, 74.3% white (drop in black undergrads over 5 years)  
Postgrads: 1.7% Black, 52.7% AME, 45.6%% white (2019-20 was first year that AME postgraduate population overtook white postgraduate population)

**Staff demographic data:** <https://www.dur.ac.uk/respect/data/staffdata/>  
2018-2019 (institutional level):

Academic: 1.4% Black, 13.7% AME, 82.3% white (slight rise in black/AME staff over 5 years)  
Services: 1% Black, 4% AME, 72% white (reasonably consistent over 5 years)

Annual snapshots show that both Science and Social Science Faculties show significant increase in AME staff in last 5 years but only minimal increase in Black staff.

NB: Much of publically-available demographic data is collected at a higher aggregate level than departmental.

**Staff recruitment data:** <https://www.dur.ac.uk/respect/data/staffdata/recruitment-data/ethnicity/>

**Public** data only shows hires, not applicant pools or acceptance rates. Interview panels are provided with data on the pool for each post and at each stage from applicants, longlisting to shortlisting.

Both Earth Science and Geography show narrowing diversity of pool through the process:

### **Earth Science staff**

From applied / shortlisted /accepted in applicant pools

- Overall numbers for BAME identifying: 21.53-12.80-7.27%
  - Academic posts: 25.13-14.85-5.26%
  - Professional Services posts: 11.11-9.52-11.76%

### **Geography academic staff recruitment – identifying as BAME**

- Applied 24%
- Longlisted 18%
- Shortlisted 19%

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- offered AND accepted 12%

BUT note that in case of Geography about 33% of those *declining* offers are non-white suggesting that there may be an issue in persuading non-white colleagues to come rather than making offers.

**Staff promotion data by ethnicity:** <https://www.dur.ac.uk/respect/data/staffdata/ethnicity-prog/>  
Promotion data record % of those promoted by ethnicity. It does not show success rates by ethnicity, which might be more informative.

- **How does your organization compare to others, or to the field as a whole?**

In terms of academic staff, the *institution* has more AME staff than national average but a lower % of academic black colleagues. Both of the faculties in which our two departments sit recruit relatively high % of AME staff but very low numbers of Black staff and so we are currently below median in terms of academic and professional services staff who declare their ethnicity as BAME. It is important to note that our ethnicity data is not provided alongside nationality so it is not known fully the degree to which our ethnic diversity is driven by recruitment of international staff. Based on a more detailed analysis of our staff in one department, the proportion of BAME staff is driven partly by international staff in post-doctoral researcher grades. We see no gender differences in BAME recruitment.

We compare ourselves to nationally-available statistics for our disciplines and which are provided to every recruitment panel.

Cost Centre	Core Academic (Teaching & Research)						Professor					
	All UK Universities			Russell Gp Universities			All UK universities			Russell Group Universities		
	BAME	Unkn.	White	BAME	Unkn.	White	BAME	Unkn.	White	BAME	Unkn.	White
(124) Geography & environmental studies	7.0%	4.9%	88.1%	6.7%	5.5%	87.8%	3.6%	6.8%	89.5%	2.10%	7.7%	90.2%
(111) Earth, marine & environmental sciences	5.7%	6.6%	87.7%	4.9%	8.6%	86.5%	2.9%	7.8%	89.3%	3.10%	8.7%	88.2%

Student-wise, we recognise that we have an access challenge around the ethnic mix of our intake. Whilst the BAME proportion of all UK-domiciled students at Durham has been increasing over recent years, it remains below the UK average, because there are geographical factors at work. Durham's position is consistent with its regional context. The population of the North East Region is not very



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ethnically diverse, and this is reflected in the ethnic diversity of the NE universities (with the exception of Sunderland and Newcastle which now have London campuses).

That said, Durham has a particular issue around the proportion of Black students, which we have begun to address by generating higher levels of participation in access schemes by Black young people and forming effective relationships with groups that support Black students. In October 2018 Durham was awarded a Corporate Fellowship Award by the Reach Society for its work in this area.

- Data from UK geoscience community (more relevant than comparison to US) available in soon to be published (nature geoscience) paper of Downey et al., (2021) Tackling the geoscience racial diversity crisis in the Global North – a UK perspective : <https://eartharxiv.org/repository/view/31/> (Downey et al., 2021) – relevant data sections highlighted below:
- *Physical Geography, Geology and Environmental Sciences are the three worst Physical Science subjects for BAME student undergraduate participation in UK HE, and are very poor for retention of these students into postgraduate research (PGR).*
- *2011 UK Census, 18.5% of UK 18 year olds identify as BAME. But only 5.2% of Physical Geography, 6.86% of Environmental Science and 10.4% of Geology PGR students identified as BAME in 2018/19. - far lower than other Physical Science subjects (22.5% in Materials Science and 14.8% in Chemistry*
- *On average, over the past 5 years just 1.4% of Geology PGR students were Black even though 3.8% of UK 18-24 year olds identify as Black.*
- *During the last five years, there have been two years for both Geology and Physical Geography when NO Black women took up full time PGR study*
- *Retention of BAME Physical Geography and Environmental Science students into PGR was worse in 2018/19 than over the previous five years*

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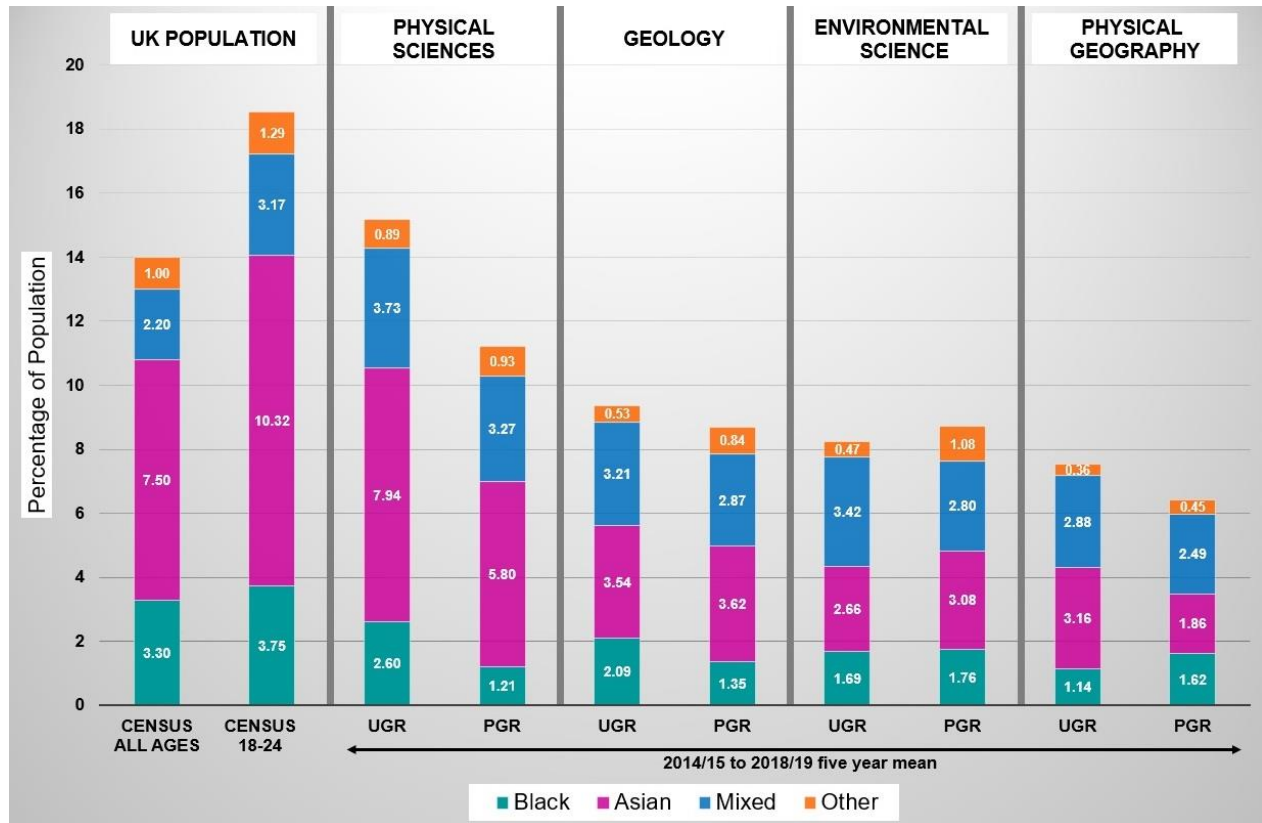


Figure 1. Representation of BAME students in Physical Sciences, Geology, Environmental Science ('Science of Aquatic & Terrestrial Environments') and Physical Geography ('Physical Geographical Sciences') from Higher Education Statistics Agency data<sup>9</sup>, alongside ethnicity data from the 2011 UK Government Census<sup>22</sup>. HESA data are based on full-time "all undergraduate" (UGR) and full-time "postgraduate research" (PGR) categories and are a five-year mean average of data from 2014/15 to 2018/19.

### Past speaker demographics

We do not record these but are likely to do so in future – but it does raise issues of having to ask sensitive questions of our speakers, many of whom will choose to decline to answer. Recent seminar programmes in both department, and including during the pandemic, have seen significant (successful) efforts to improve representation from women, from ethnic minorities, and from early to mid-career researchers.

- Public goals on demographics or increasing representation:



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- Increase awareness of Equality & Diversity challenges and duties
- Improve gender balance across the University
- Improve understanding and support of disability across the University population
- Increase numbers of BME staff and students
- Are there measurable goals stated at your organization for achieving representation?
  - Proportion of International (non-UK) students – 35% by 2027
  - Percentage of Faculty members who are female – Top third of the Russell Group by 2027
  - Percentage of academic staff who declare their ethnicity as BME and percentage of staff who declare a disability to be at Russell Group median by 2026

Related information (and metrics) can be found here:

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/equality.diversity/draft/equalityobjectives/>

- **Policy or proposed policy for collecting demographic data at your organization:**

Related information can be found here:

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/equality.diversity/managingdiversity/publicinfo/>

Relevant data is scattered all over the place!

Staff data are in Power BI (but access is limited and by request only – slow process).

Student data are held by student registry and student admissions by the admissions office.

General institutional-level data is freely available and public but more department-specific data seems to require a specific request.

### Proposed policy change:

It'd be really useful if departments were directly sent data on staff and student (that year's recruitment and the full annual snapshot) automatically once a year by the relevant central service.

- **What did you learn about other organizations (or in general) while investigating demographic data?**

Few organisations publish demographics publically down to departmental level and so whilst institution-to-institution comparisons can be done it is very difficult to do so for department-to-department.