

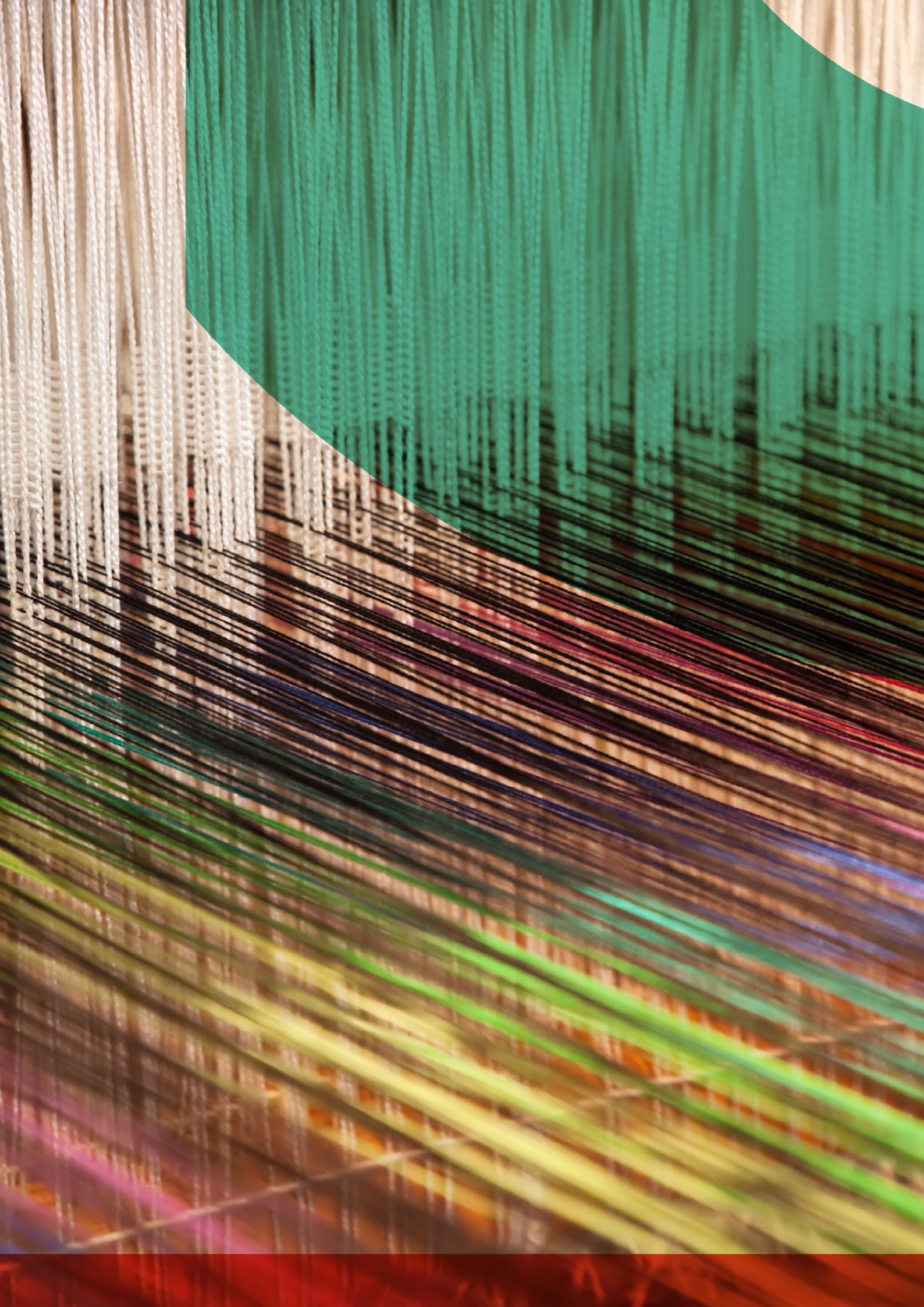


UK Research  
and Innovation

# Detailed ethnicity analysis of funding applicants and awardees **2014-15 to 2018-19**









# Executive summary

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has published detailed ethnicity analysis of funding applicants and awardees over the past five years. This builds on data published in June 2020 for diversity characteristics of its funding applicants and recipients for financial years 2014-15 to 2018-19. The publication included results on applications and awards by ethnicity and presented results broken down by two ethnic categories: ethnic minorities and white. This report presents results from analysis of patterns of applications and awards of the ethnic groups comprising ethnic minorities.

Like the previous publication, data on number and proportion of applicants and awardees and award rates are shared.

- For the first time, UKRI presents results by more detailed ethnicity categories to understand the variation within the ethnic minority categories.
- Results are presented by:
  - ethnicities (Asian-Bangladeshi, Black-African, Mixed-Other etc.) and;
  - ethnic groups (Asian, Black, Mixed).
- In this publication, we present results for UKRI for the three application roles and studentship starts for 2014-15 to 2018-19. Results are not presented at the Research Council level as numbers become small with further disaggregation of ethnic minority applicants and awardees.

## Key findings include:

- Amongst the three application roles, people from ethnic minorities form the largest share of applicants and awardees as Co-Investigators (CIs), relative to Principal Investigator (PIs) and Fellows.
- Within ethnic minorities, applicants from the Asian ethnic groups form the largest share, followed by applicants from Mixed and Black ethnic groups.
- There is further variation within specific ethnic groups. For example, applicants from Chinese and Indian ethnicities form the largest ethnic groups amongst Asians. For the Black ethnic group, applicants of African ethnicity form the largest group as PIs and CIs.

- The proportion of ethnic minority Fellows has increased by 6pp (percentage point) to 18% and that of CIs by 9pp to 19% from 2014-15 to 2018-19 of all awardees. Patterns within ethnic minority group have remained steady in this time period for both the roles, with those from Asian ethnicities forming the largest proportion, followed by those from Mixed and Black ethnicities.
- Comparisons with labour market and academic market share reveal that the proportion of certain ethnic groups as awardees exceeds their labour market share, whereas the converse is true for others. For example, the share of PIs from Black and Bangladeshi ethnicity is below their labour market and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) staff share and that of PIs and researchers from Chinese ethnicity is greater than their labour market share but in line with the HESA staff share.
- For recipients of doctoral studentships, we do not have ethnicity information for almost 30% of awardees. As a result, our understanding of ethnicity composition of studentship starts is partial. Ethnic minority students form 13% of the awardees who disclosed their ethnicity in 2018-19. Students from Asian ethnic groups are the largest group within the ethnic minority group, followed by those from the Mixed and Black ethnic groups.

We caution against using these findings alone to draw conclusions on the relationship between ethnicity and application and award rates. Further investigations are required to understand the determinants of application and awards by ethnicities. Areas for additional exploration include barriers faced by researchers from certain ethnicities in applying for research funding.



# Introduction

For diversity analysis of UKRI's funding portfolio, we have previously aggregated ethnicity categories into ethnic minority and white. This analysis was last published in June 2020 and can be found here (<https://www.ukri.org/our-work/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-data/>).

We have now looked at differences in application and awards by:

- more detailed ethnicities and aggregate ethnic group (see details below in table 1)
- for financial years 2014-15 to 2018-19
- for Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator and Fellow application roles

This will allow us to understand the patterns of funding applications and awards within the ethnic minority group.

## We present the following results by ethnicity for UKRI:

- Number and proportion of applicants
- Number and proportion of awardees
- Award rates

In this report, we also provide comparisons with the academic staff population and the labour market population (employed) in the UK to understand the representativeness of the distribution of UKRI's funding<sup>3</sup>.

Award rates are not discussed in the narrative due to small numbers of awardees from ethnic groups comprising ethnic minorities, which limits the validity of comparisons amongst groups<sup>2</sup>.

Only the number and proportion of awardees is provided for studentships as UKRI does not hold data on applicants for studentships. We present aggregated results for the seven Research Councils<sup>4</sup>. Results are not presented for individual Research Councils as numbers become small with further disaggregation by ethnicity.

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1 Results by detailed ethnicity categories (e.g. Asian-Bangladeshi, Black-African etc.) are not presented for Fellowship applicants and awardees as numbers become small with further disaggregation by ethnicity.

2 The results are presented in the MS Excel spreadsheets. Discussion of differences in award rates between aggregated ethnic minority and white applicants can be found in our previous publication (<https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UKRI-020920-DiversityResultsForUKRIFundingData2014-19.pdf>).

3 Labour market share refers to people in employment (aged 16 to 64). Academic staff share refers to those in 'both teaching and research' contracts. See 'Data sources' section for further details.

4 Two of UKRI's constituent bodies – Research England and Innovate UK – predominantly fund organisations (universities and businesses, respectively) rather than individuals, which is why they are excluded from our analysis. Diversity data for universities is collected, analysed and published by HESA. See: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/23-01-2020/sb256-higher-education-staff-statistics>. Our approach going forward is to strengthen and align data collection across all UKRI bodies.



# Ethnicity categories

- Applicants are presented with Office for National Statistics (ONS) harmonised list of ethnicity options through the Joint electronic submission (Je-S) system.
- Previously, we have published results for ethnic minority and white applicants and awardees. The ethnic minority category however conceals variation within and between ethnic groups which is presented in this publication.
- We are presenting results by:
  - Ethnicities selected in Je-S
  - Aggregated ethnic groups (Asian, Black and Mixed) as described in table 1.
- Applicants have the option of not disclosing their ethnicity in Je-S. Note that we do not have information on 4-10% of applicants and awardees for research grants and fellowships over the five year period.
- For studentship recipients, we do not have ethnicity information (either Unknown or Not Disclosed) on between 28% and 32% of studentship recipients<sup>5</sup> in the five year period.

**Table 1: Ethnicity categories**

	Ethnic group	Ethnicities (Options in Je-S)
<b>Ethnic Minority</b>	Mixed	White and Black Caribbean
		White and Black African
		White and Asian
		Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background
	Asian	Indian
		Pakistani
		Bangladeshi
		Chinese
		Any other Asian background
	Black	African
		Caribbean
		Any other Black / African / Caribbean background
	White	British
Irish		
Any other White background		

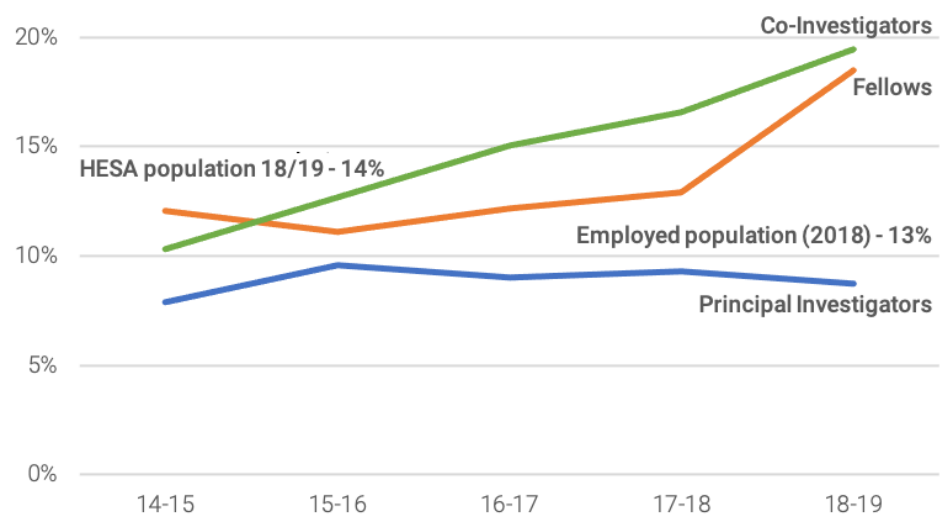
<sup>5</sup> Demographic information for studentships is collected through the studentship functionality, where awarding Research organisations input information on studentship recipients.

# Main findings include:

## Research grants and fellowships

1. According to the 2018/19 HESA<sup>6</sup> data on academic staff around 14% of staff are from ethnic minorities. This is close to the proportion of working age people from ethnic minorities in employment (13% in 2018).
2. As shown in figure 1, the proportion of awardees from ethnic minorities has increased for all three roles from 2014-15 to 2018-19, with the largest increase for CIs (+9pp (percentage points)).
  - In 2018-19, 19% of CIs were from an ethnic minority. From 2016-17 onwards, the share of ethnic minority CIs exceeds the ethnic minority share of academic staff and labour market respectively.
  - At 18%, the proportion of Fellows from an ethnic minority background exceeded the share of ethnic minority academic staff for the first time in 2018-19.
  - The proportion of ethnic minority PIs has increased by 1pp in the last five years and at 9% continues to be below the HESA share of ethnic minority (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Proportion of ethnic minority awardees by role and year



Source: Je-S; Annual Population Survey; HESA (academic employment function: Both teaching and research)

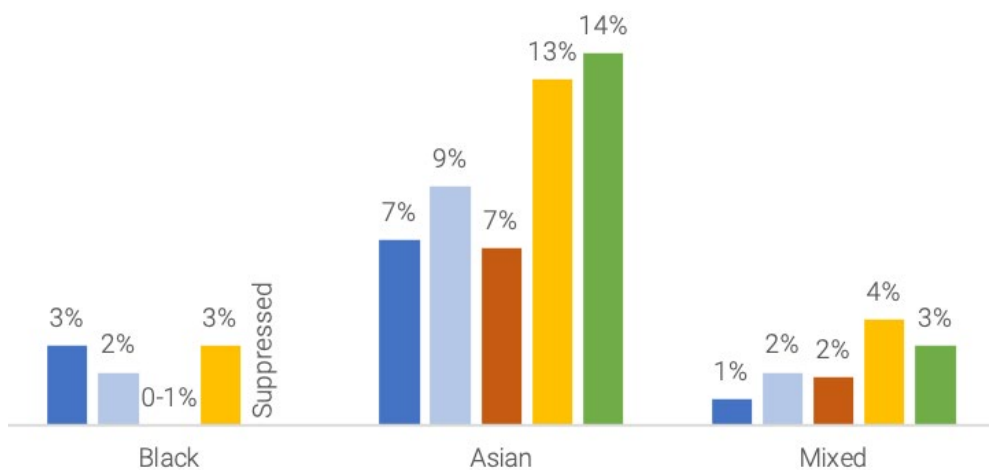
<sup>6</sup> HESA refers to the Higher Education Statistics Agency. Further details can be found here: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis>



3. Within ethnic minorities, the Asian ethnic group forms the largest proportion (two-thirds or more) of applicants and awardees for all three roles for research grants, followed by the Mixed and Black ethnic groups. Figure 2 provides comparisons of ethnic groups share in 2018-19 for each role with staff share and labour market share respectively.

- The share of all three ethnic minority groups as PIs is below their respective academic market share. The share of PIs from the Asian ethnic group is the only one that equals the labour market share.
- As CIs, the share of all three ethnic minority groups is higher than or equal to the staff and the labour market share.

**Figure 2: Awardee share by ethnicity (2018-19)**



■ Labour market share ■ Staff share ■ Principal Investigator ■ Co-Investigator ■ Fellow

Sources: Je-S; Annual Population Survey, 2018; HESA, academic employment function: Both teaching and research)

Notes:

1. Proportions for counts between 1 and 4 are suppressed.
2. There are approximately 10 Principal Investigators from Black ethnic group. Due to rounding, the proportion of Principal Investigators from Black ethnicities appears as 0-1% of Principal Investigators.
3. Mixed refers to Mixed ethnic group.

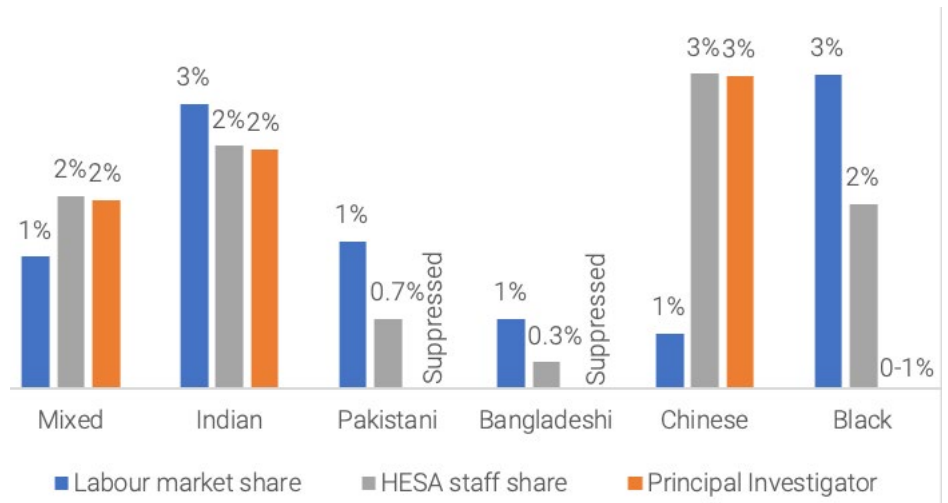
4. There are only 60 Fellows in 2018-19 from ethnic minorities although the proportion has increased from 12% in 2014-15 to 18% in 2018-19.

- There are around 45 Fellows from Asian ethnic groups and 10 Fellows from Mixed ethnic groups in 2018-19.
- The proportion of Fellows from Asian and Mixed ethnic groups is higher than the corresponding proportion of academic staff in 2018-19.
- There are fewer than five Fellows from Black ethnic groups in all the years.

5. Delving into each ethnic group, we find similar patterns for all three applications roles in the five year period.

- Amongst the Asian ethnic group, Chinese and Indian ethnicities collectively form more than 70% of all applicants and awardees, followed by those from Asian-other, Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnicities. The share of PI awardees from Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnicities is lower than their academic and labor market share (Figure 4).
- For the Black ethnic group, the African ethnicity is the predominant group, with almost 90% representation in PI and CI roles. The other two ethnicities are Black-other and Caribbean.
- For the Mixed ethnic group, the 'other' ethnicity is the largest group in all roles, followed by those from 'White and Asian' ethnicities.
- These patterns are consistent over the last five years.

**Figure 3: Comparisons of Principal Investigator, HESA staff and labour market share of ethnicities**



Sources: Office for National Statistics, Jan-Mar 2020; HESA, academic employment function: Both teaching and research; Je-S

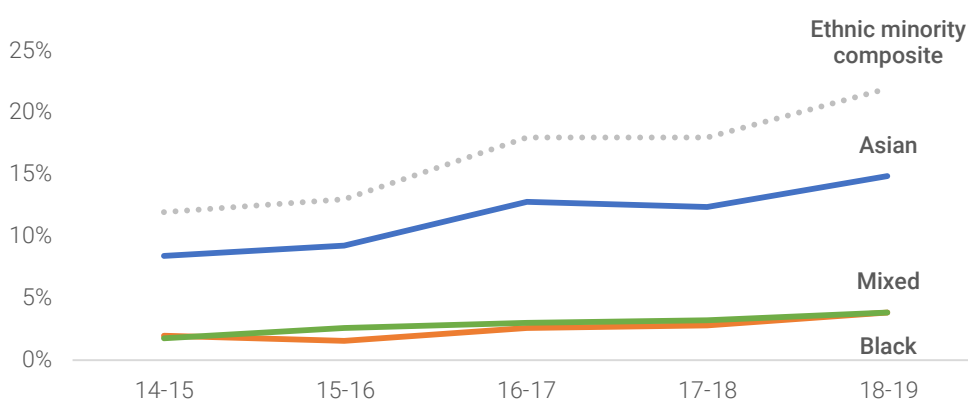
Notes:

1. Further disaggregation for labour market share for Mixed and Black ethnicities is not available.
2. Proportions for counts between 1 and 4 are suppressed.
3. There are approximately 10 Principal Investigators from Black ethnicities. Due to rounding, the proportion of Principal Investigators from Black ethnic group appears as 0-1% of Principal Investigators.
4. Mixed refers to Mixed ethnic group.



6. At +10pp, the increase in ethnic minority CIs applicants from 12% to 22% is the largest amongst all three application roles in the five year period (Figure 4). The relative proportion from each ethnic minority group has stayed constant: with applicants and awardees from the Asian ethnic group continuing to form approximately two-thirds of the ethnic minority applicants and awardees, followed by Mixed and Black ethnic groups collectively forming approximately one third of ethnic minorities.

**Figure 4: Changes in Co-Investigator applications by ethnicity (2014-15 to 2018-19)**



Source: Je-S

Note: Mixed refers to Mixed ethnic group.

## Studentship starts funded by UKRI

7. 9% of new studentship starts funded by UKRI in 2018-19 are from an ethnic minority, while the HESA estimate of the proportion of ethnic minority students in postgraduate research (PGR) population<sup>7</sup> in the UK is 18% in 2018/19<sup>8</sup>. Note that we do not have ethnicity information for 30% of studentship recipients in all years, which means that our understanding of ethnicity of studentships is partial. The proportion of studentship recipients who say that they are from an ethnic minority has increased by 1pp in the five year period.

8. Amongst ethnic minority recipients of studentships, half are from the Asian ethnic group, followed by students from Mixed ethnicities and then Black ethnicities. As shown in Figure 5, Asians form the largest group of both ethnic minority studentship recipients and PGR students. While the proportion of PGR students from Mixed and Black ethnicities are both 4% in 2018/19, those from Mixed ethnicities (3%) form a larger share of studentship starts than those from Black ethnicities (1%). (Estimates of UKRI funded studentship starts are likely affected by the underreporting of ethnicity of studentship recipients.)

<sup>7</sup> Postgraduate (research) includes doctorate (incorporating New Route PhD), masters degrees and postgraduate diplomas or certificates studied primarily through research. As a result, the diversity data for PGR population is not fully comparable to studentship starts.

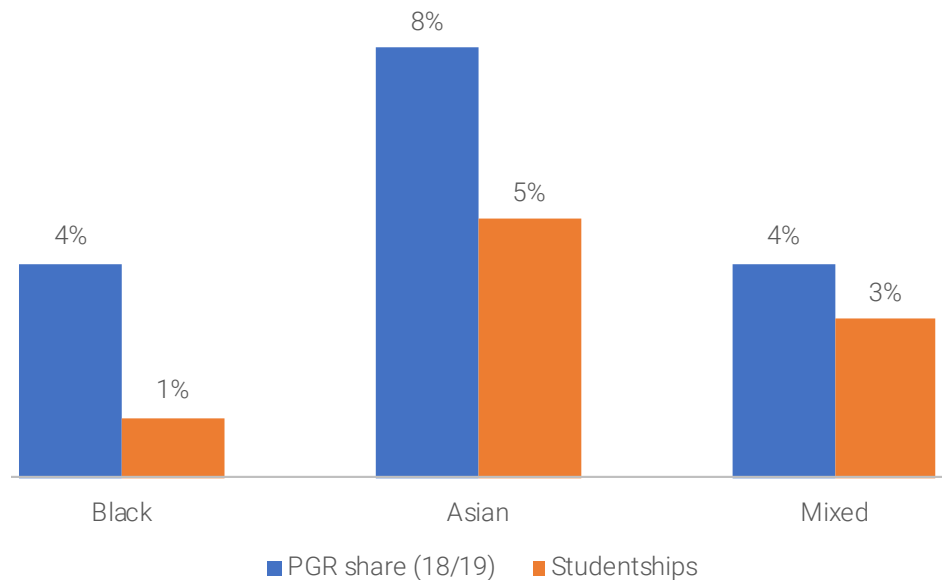
<sup>8</sup> The ethnic minority estimate for HESA PGR is the sum of the following ethnicities: Asian, Black, Mixed and Other.



9. We see the following patterns within the Asian, Mixed and Black ethnic groups which are consistent over the five years.

- Students from the Chinese and Indian ethnicity form 60% of all studentship recipients from the Asian ethnic group.
- Within the Black ethnic group, studentship recipients from African ethnicities are 75% of recipients. Approximately 10 studentship recipients are from the Black Caribbean ethnicity in four out of the last five years.
- The 'other' ethnicity forms around 50% of studentship awards to people from Mixed ethnic groups.

**Figure 5: UKRI studentship starts by ethnicity (18-19) and postgraduate research populations**



Sources: Je-S studentship functionality; HESA

Notes:

1. We do not have ethnicity data for approximately 30% of all studentship awardees.
2. Mixed refers to Mixed ethnic group.

## Limitations

While our data describe the patterns of funding applications and awards amongst ethnicities, the data cannot be used to explain the variation. Further research, including qualitative or survey based enquiries, is needed to understand the factors driving these trends.

The relatively high proportion of 'not disclosed' and 'unknowns' for studentship recipients hinders our ability to gain a complete understanding of the diversity profile of studentship recipients. As described earlier, studentship diversity information is collected differently than that for applicants for research grants and fellowships. Diversity information for studentships is provided by the awarding Research organisation using the Je-S studentship Detail functionality.



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## Data sources

1. Funding data for research grants and fellowships is gathered through returns by individuals to their Joint electronic Submissions (Je-S) account, which the research community use to apply for UKRI funding. The Je-S account holds personal information including ethnicity.
2. Studentship data for student starts by years is provided by research organisations through the Je-S Studentships Detail Functionality.
3. HESA data is used to understand the diversity profile of the academic and student community in UK's higher education system. The links for HESA student data we used as benchmarks in this analysis is provided here:
  - a. [HE student enrolments by personal characteristics](#) (Figure-4, option of 'Level of study': Postgraduate (research), year: 2018/19)
  - b. [HE academic staff by ethnicity and academic employment function](#) (Table 4, option of 'Academic employment function': Both teaching and research'), year: 2018/19)
4. Labour market data for figure 2 are from:  
<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/work-pay-and-benefits/employment/employment/latest#by-ethnicity>  
Share by ethnicity is based on percentage of 16 to 64 years who were employed in 2018.
5. Labour market data for figures 1 and 3 are from:  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/labourmarketstatusbyethnicgroupa09>

Share by ethnicity is based on 'Labour market status: Employment by ethnicity: people (not seasonally adjusted)' Aged 16-64 (Jan-Mar 2020)

## Technical notes and additional information

Numbers and proportions for groups with 1 to 4 members are suppressed. Numbers greater than five are rounded to the nearest multiple of five. Counts of zero are not suppressed.

Note that the harmonised dataset is based on exclusions. Institute grants and grants with 100% award rates are not included in this dataset. Research grants and fellowships with two or more PIs or Fellows are not included in the diversity analysis. See the report published here for further details (<https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UKRI-020920-DiversityResultsForUKRIFundingData2014-19.pdf>)

The dataset contains instances of applicants applying multiple times.

Note that student ethnicity information is for UK domiciled students only.







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### **Accessibility**

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