



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION REPORT

2023

"I'm delighted to introduce The College of Legal Practice's first EDI annual report. It shows that we are doing well in creating an inclusive learning and working environment, but also highlights areas for us to improve.

The College created an EDI framework in November 2022, with engagement from across the organisation at every level, including our Board. The EDI working group have been active in considering many issues and starting to create positive change throughout the last year as we become more established.

I've been particularly pleased in the way that the whole staff team have engaged with our EDI speakers, events and discussions, feeling safe with each other, to learn, be curious, share and self-reflect each time.

We have committed to monitoring our data and publishing a report annually to share the progress the College has made, so this is the first of many!"



Dr Giles Proctor

Chief Executive Officer

The College of Legal Practice

In December 2022, the Board approved the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Framework. This report shares the progress that the College has made against the framework within 2022-23 and key EDI data for monitoring purposes.

Background Context

One of the College's stated purposes is to help professionals reach their unique potential. One of its goals is to increase access to the legal profession.

As a higher education provider, we have a duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

The EDI framework sets out our goals, next steps and milestones underpinning our commitment to this duty

The EDI framework considers

- Our People
- Our Students
- Our Programmes (curriculum proposition)
- Our Governance

The EDI framework and plan was developed through consultation with students and staff, and research into the wider context of EDI in the education sector.

The framework will evolve as we as an organisation develop both structurally and in terms of its activities and wider stakeholder relationships.

OUR PEOPLE: STAFF

Staff Recruitment

We have been pleased to see that our explicit references to our commitment to EDI and the use of diverse imagery in recruitment adverts have resulted in diverse applicant fields for our vacant staff roles over the past year.

For example, within the recent recruitment round for an administrator:

- 17% felt able to share that they had a disability or health condition
- 60% were white
- 82% declared they were heterosexual
- 7% declared that they were in receipt of free-school meals

Over the year, this success in attracting a range of diverse candidates has resulted in an improvement in the diversity of our staff team.

Staff and Supervisor diversity

Appendix 1 shows the findings of the College's first EDI survey of staff and supervisors. Findings suggest that the diversity of our staff and supervisor team aligns with our student diversity across the majority of the demographics and characteristics.

Please note that whilst Appendix 1 shows the diversity of our teaching team as of September 2023, some of this profile is likely to have changed as supervisors change.

Staff Development and Culture

In 2023, All College of Legal Practice staff responded to our first survey on inclusion and wellbeing. The results were positive, with 94% of staff agreeing that they belong at the College and 83% believing that they can bring their whole self to work. This survey will be re-run on an annual basis.

The leadership team have also been taking recommendations forward from the wider team to ensure that more time for informal opportunities are available, both virtually and face-to-face as a team in order to build working relationships and more regular communication. This can be shown by the extended time given to informal time together in whole team meetings.

Increasing staff's cultural awareness, understanding and competency

We have held several training and engagement sessions with staff to increase our cultural understanding and competency. These include sessions on social mobility with Browne Jacobson, neurodiversity, Ramadan, non-binary awareness week and inclusive behaviours with AdvanceHE. The inclusive behaviours agreed

by the team (Appendix 2) are now included in the employee handbook for induction and with supervisors.

The team meeting in December 2023 focused on better supporting those with reasonable adjustments building on the AdvanceHE training completed by student services and members of the academic team.

The EDI working group have been sharing on a regular basis with the College team tips, articles and resources throughout the year on key cultural, religious or awareness raising days and months. These include Chinese New Year, Yom Kippur, islamophobia awareness month, neurodiversity celebration week, international women's day, LGBTQ+ history month, disability history month, dyslexia awareness week, trans awareness week, social mobility week, national inclusion week, South Asian heritage month and world mental health day.

STUDENTS

Student Recruitment

In the last year, the event programme has increased to include careers events that have focused on those who might have limited opportunities for networking or non-traditional routes into the legal profession. For every panel with external speakers, the team have tried to find a diverse range of speakers, both from our student cohorts and externally. We have also improved the accessibility of our virtual events through the introduction of closed captions.

The event programme has continued to have a focus on under-represented groups such as the panel event in November with black junior professionals, the neurodiversity panel held in March and the social mobility event for firms in June.

Diversity has continued to be a priority through the imagery we use in ads, testimonials, on the website and in articles. We have also sought out partnerships with organisations and influencers that are strongly focused on EDI and share our values, such as London Young Lawyers, The Lawyer Network, Browne Jacobson, The Muslim Lawyers Hub and Rare Recruitment.

Our most recent student ambassadors came from a diverse background, all are people of colour and with differing stories to tell of accessing and progressing in the legal industry.

Increasing access to the profession

The College has now run three scholarship rounds and joined Birmingham Law Society's diversity scheme for the first time. The team have set up a partnership with the Aspiring Solicitors Foundation and continued to support the Law Society's Diversity Access Scheme (two fully-funded places).

Currently we have 16 students fully or partly funded through several different scholarship schemes. The success of our scholarship students has been similar to our overall student cohort. We have had some notable successes such as

Nataliia, a Ukrainian lawyer who completed our GFL and passed SQE1 first time and another anonymous scholarship student who also passed SQE1 first time.

We were pleased to see that the diversity of the scholarship applicants was very varied. For example for the current round, that closed in autumn 2023:

28% considered that they had a disability or health condition

60% were people of colour, with a high proportion of black applicants

- 60% declared themselves heterosexual
- 71% of their parents were in non-modern or traditional professional occupations
- None attended a fee paying school in the UK
- 52% were eligible for free school meals

Student Career & Wellbeing Support

In 2023, the College ran several careers and wellbeing events to support students' wider career aspirations. Examples include writing a CV, positioning yourself for a training contract, managing setbacks and resilience.

The student services team and members of the academic team have completed two training programmes with Advance HE, so they are fully equipped to support those who may need reasonable adjustments. A project group is being set up to look taking forward a list of improvements.

Increasing students' cultural competency

EDI awareness information, resources and events are now being included in weekly update for students aligned with those being shared with staff and on our social media channels.

OUR PROGRAMMES

Capturing & reviewing equality data for students

Appendix 1 details the diversity of our students in 2022-23 and compared to HESA statistics our students are more likely to declare that they are part of an under-represented group than other postgraduate students.

Our students currently tend have a broader spread of ages, a higher level of religious beliefs and ethnic diversity than other postgraduate students.

Supervisor Development

Many of the resources and training that have been shared with the core College staff team have also been shared with wider supervisor team, including information on dyslexia, neurodiversity, use of pronouns and Ramadan. A discussion was also held on the use of gender neutral language.

Learning Design & Delivery

The College's learning already has accessibility at the heart of its design. In addition to this, the academic team have constantly taken on feedback from students regarding accessibility, for example they piloted recording workshops within the Graduate Foundation in Law Programme to support access to learning. Reviewed learning depth and hours across programmes and made improvements.

EDI considerations have been added as a section on programme development forms and reports to ensure that the impact on EDI is considered as part of our key decision making processes.

OUR GOVERNANCE

The Programme Committee and Board both receive EDI reports at every meeting and have given positive feedback so far.

A religious holidays observance framework has been agreed to ensure that we are considerate to the range of religious holidays across the year and their potential impact on students' ability to learn and complete assessments.

PRIORITIES FOR FOCUS IN 2024

- Increase students' engagement and involvement in EDI discussions and events
- Allocate themes to EDI working group members to help the team consider ongoing opportunities for training and increases in cultural understanding in specific areas.
- Improve the implementation and take up of EDI training/bite size engagement across the team – led by full leadership team

Alice Payne & Daniel Styran-Furness

EDI Working Group

Appendix 1: Student and Staff demographics, 22-23

1a: Staff

The graphs below show the demographics of the College's staff and supervisors, compared to the data published by HESA in the Staff Return datasets.

Samples sizes: The College of Legal Practice (COLP staff data = 41, 5-year average of national staff data = 390780)

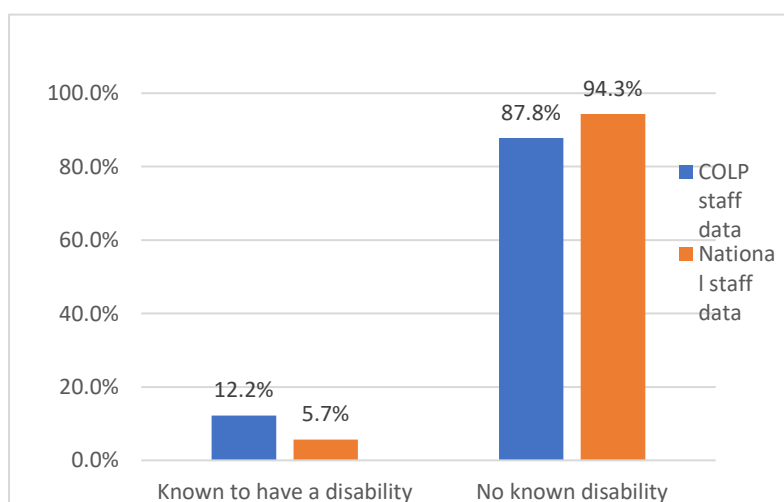
Summary of findings:

Disability	COLP disclosed higher levels of disability
Age	COLP reported higher proportions of staff over the age of 55, and fewer under the age of 25
Sex	COLP reported a much higher proportion of females to males, when compared to the national dataset
Ethnicity	COLP reported broadly similar, but slightly higher levels of ethnic diversity than the national dataset (both datasets are less diverse than their student population counterparts)
Nationality	Nearly all of COLP staff reported UK nationality (95%), whereas there was more diversity in the national dataset (77% UK nationality)

DISABILITY

Staff reported higher levels of disability compared to the national dataset, with 12.2% and 5.7% respectively.

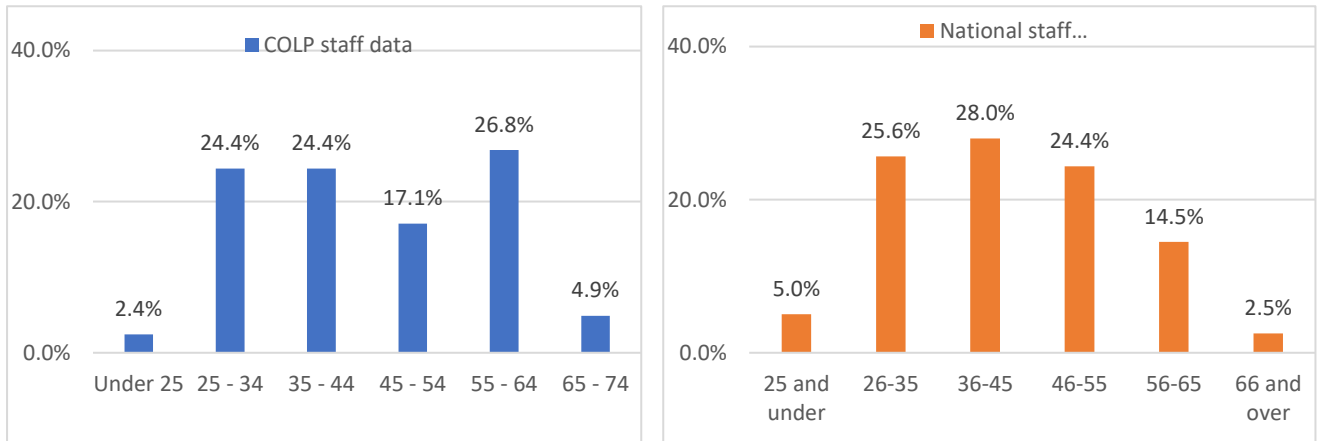
As a small and well-connected organisation, College staff may feel more invested in contributing to the anonymised EDI analysis and therefore be more likely to disclose a disability.



AGE

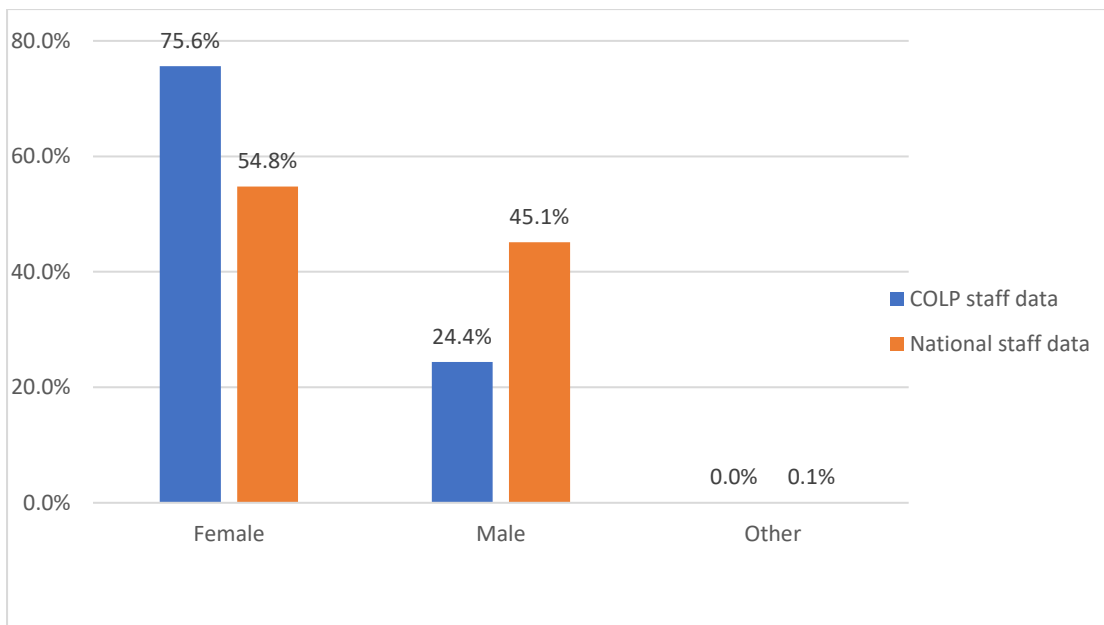
Age categories for national data vs COLP data were not quite aligned (1 year difference in each bracket), but were similar enough to make approximate comparisons.

COLP reported nearly twice the proportion of staff over the age of 55 compared to the national dataset (31.7% vs 17%).



SEX

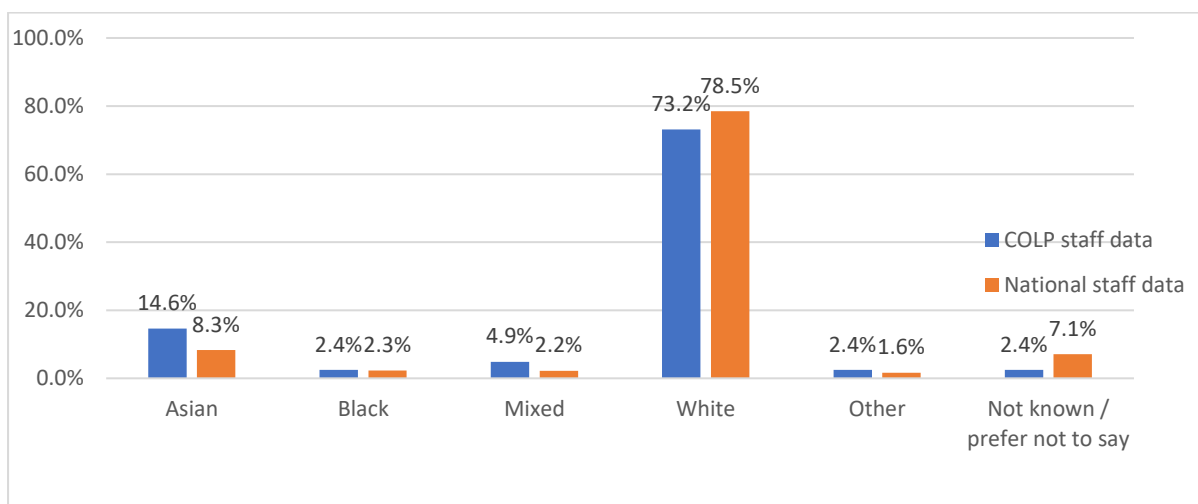
COLP had a much higher proportion of females to males, when compared to the national dataset (COLP females: 75.6%, national females: 54.8%)



ETHNICITY

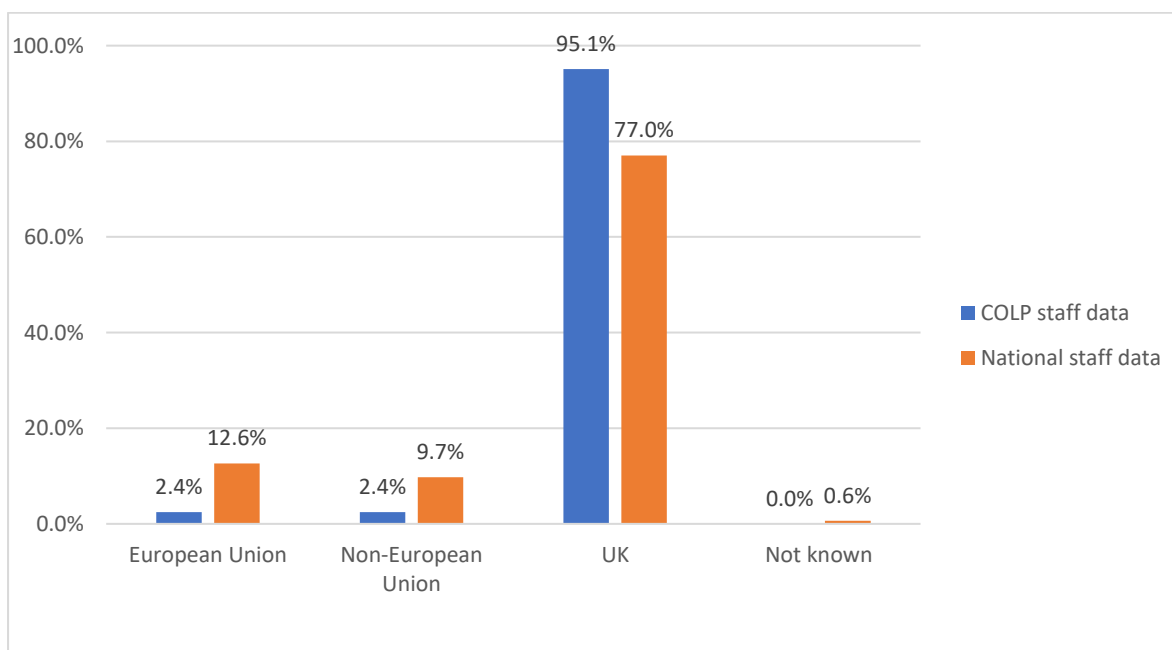
COLP staff reported broadly similar but slightly higher levels of ethnic diversity than the national dataset.

Staff with a Black ethnic background made up less than 2.5% of both the COLP and national datasets, however students with a Black ethnic background made up between 9.4% (national) and 15.2% (COLP) of the student datasets - the third highest reported category.



NATIONALITY

Nearly all COLP staff reported UK nationality (95%), whereas there was more diversity in the national dataset (77% UK nationality).



1b: Student Data

The graphs below show a comparison of COLP student demographics and the publicly available student data published by HESA.

Samples sizes: COLP student data = 571 (unless otherwise indicated), 5-year average of national student data = 32840 (unless otherwise indicated)

The HESA student dataset has been filtered to include only students who are studying Law, at Postgraduate Taught Masters level or Other Postgraduate level, with any domicile (unless indicated otherwise).

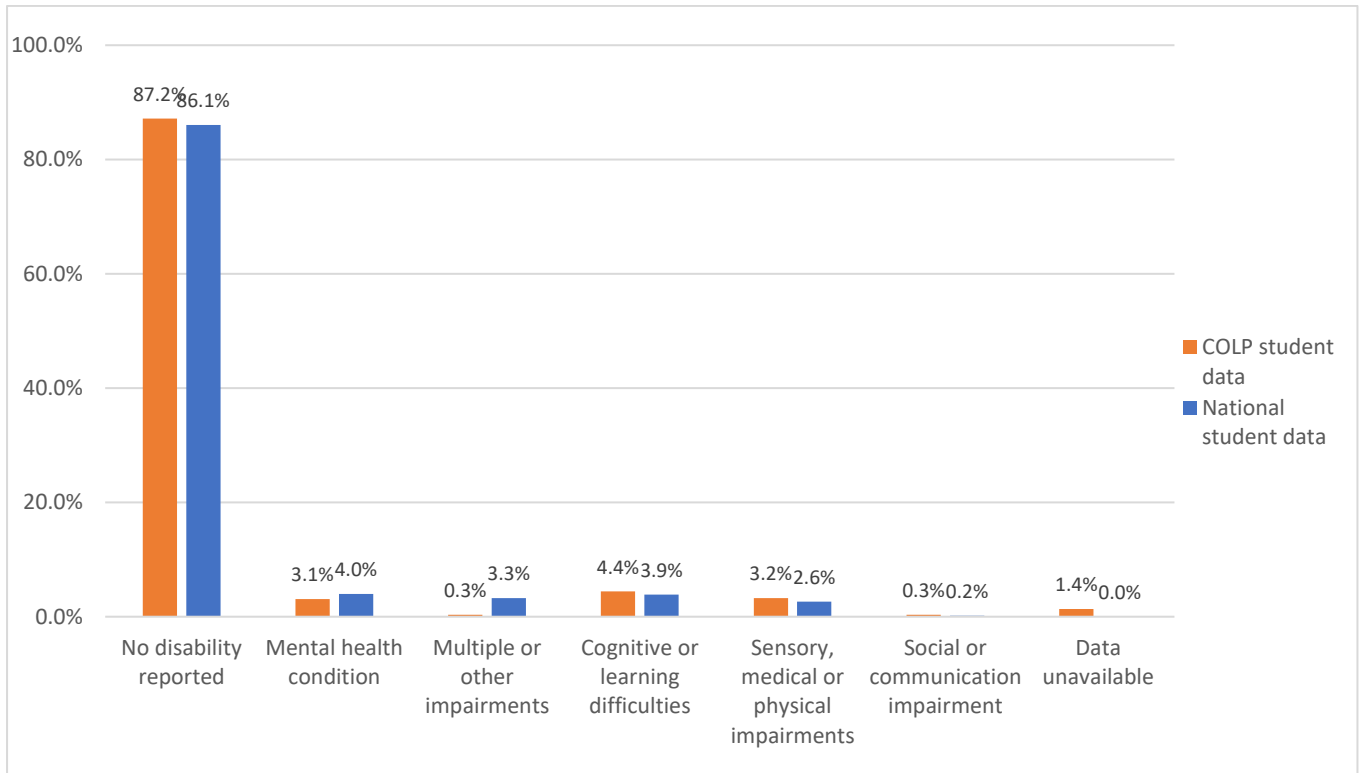
Summary of findings:

Disability	Reported similar proportions
Age	COLP showed a broader distribution across age categories, whereas the distribution of national data was heavily skewed in favour of the 21 to 25 age bracket
Gender/Sex	Reported broadly similar proportions, COLP had a slightly higher female:male ratio
Gender Identity	Reported similar proportions (where data was disclosed)
Religion	COLP reported a higher level of religious beliefs generally (66.6% vs 59%), with an increase in the proportion of Christian categories, but were broadly similar in terms of distribution across other religions
Sexual Orientation	Reported similar proportions (where data was disclosed)
Parental Education	Reported similar proportions (where data was disclosed)
Ethnicity	COLP showed higher levels of ethnic diversity, particularly with regards to students with a Black or Asian background (ethnicity data was only available in the national dataset for UK domiciled students)

DISABILITY

COLP students reported similar levels of disability compared to the national dataset, with 87% and 86% reporting no disability respectively.

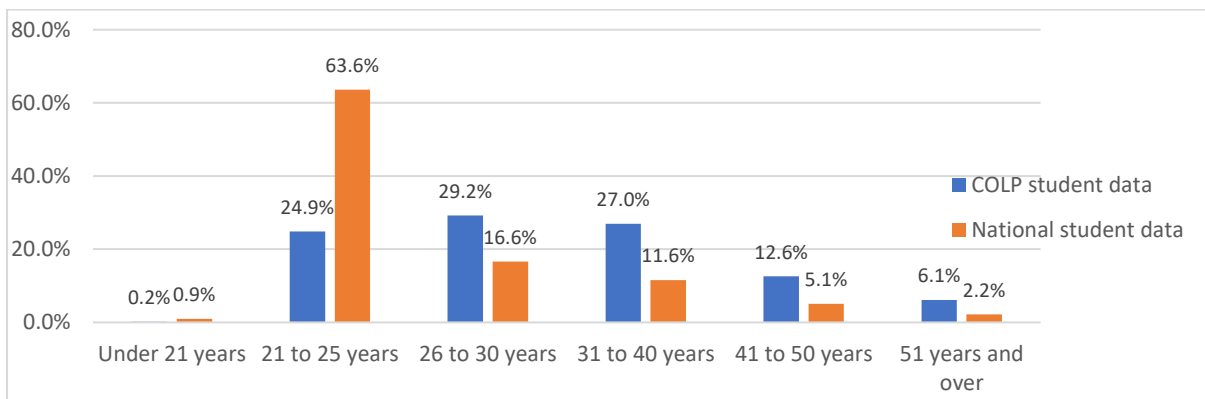
Disability type data comparison is much less meaningful here, due to differences in dataset categorisation and counting at a national and organisational level



AGE

Students at the College of Legal Practice had a much broader age group distribution, reporting a higher proportion of students in all age categories over 25yrs

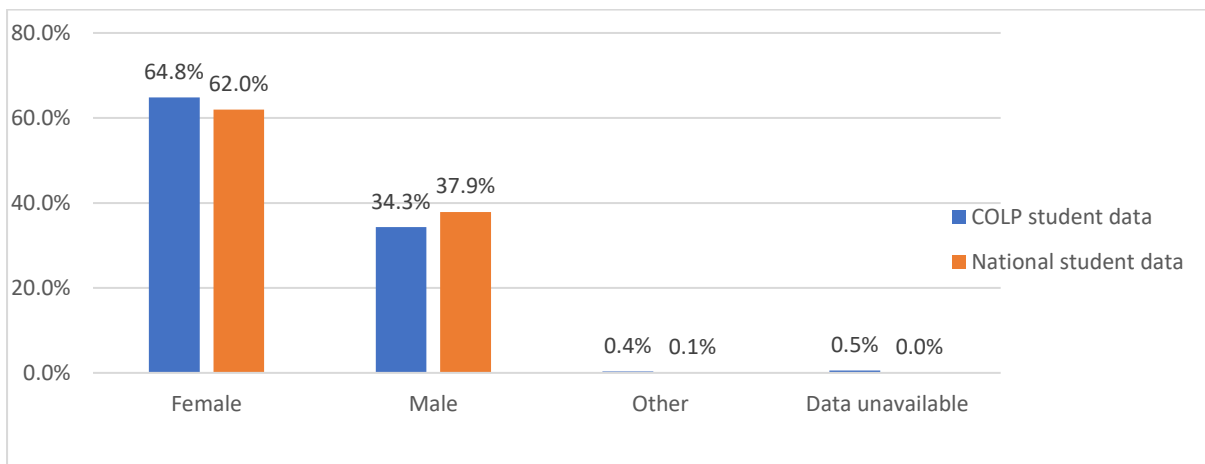
80% of students from the national dataset were under 30, whereas only 54% of COLP students were under 30



GENDER/SEX

It is important to note that national datasets report on sex, whereas the Salesforce field name states gender - therefore fields may not comparing like with like.

Given the proportion people in the most recent national Census who reported gender identity not matching sex assigned at birth (around 0.5%), it may be reasonable to compare approximate proportions.

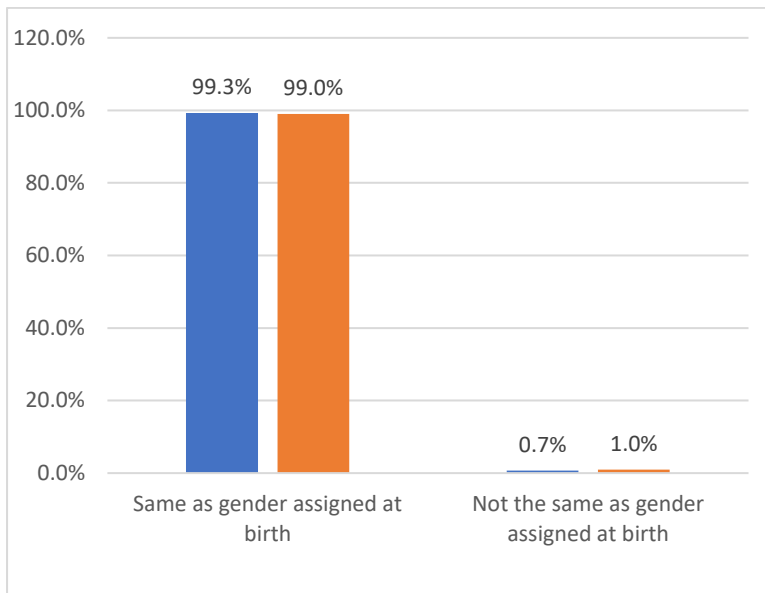


GENDER IDENTITY

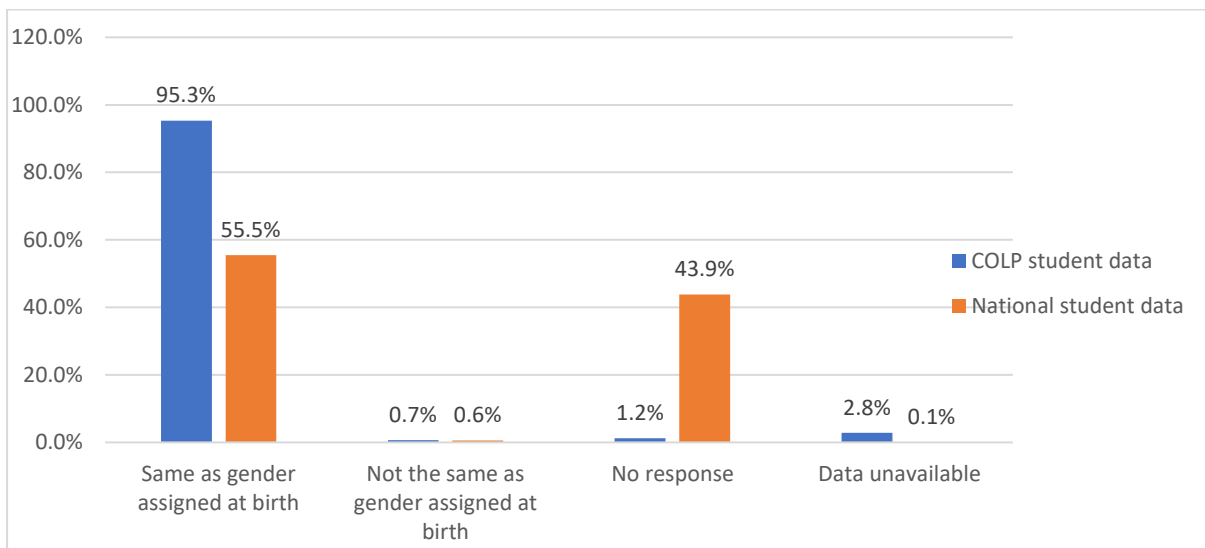
COLP students were much more likely to provide an answer for the gender identity question, with nearly 44% of the national data choosing not to respond compared with just over 1% of COLP students.

Of those that disclosed gender identity status, students reported similar proportions across categories (not the same gender: COLP dataset 0.7%, national dataset 1%)

COLP N=548 / National N=18965 (disclosures)



Full dataset



RELIGION

Again, COLP students were more likely to disclose information around religious beliefs - with COLP non-response rate at 8.4% and national non-response rate at 25.9%

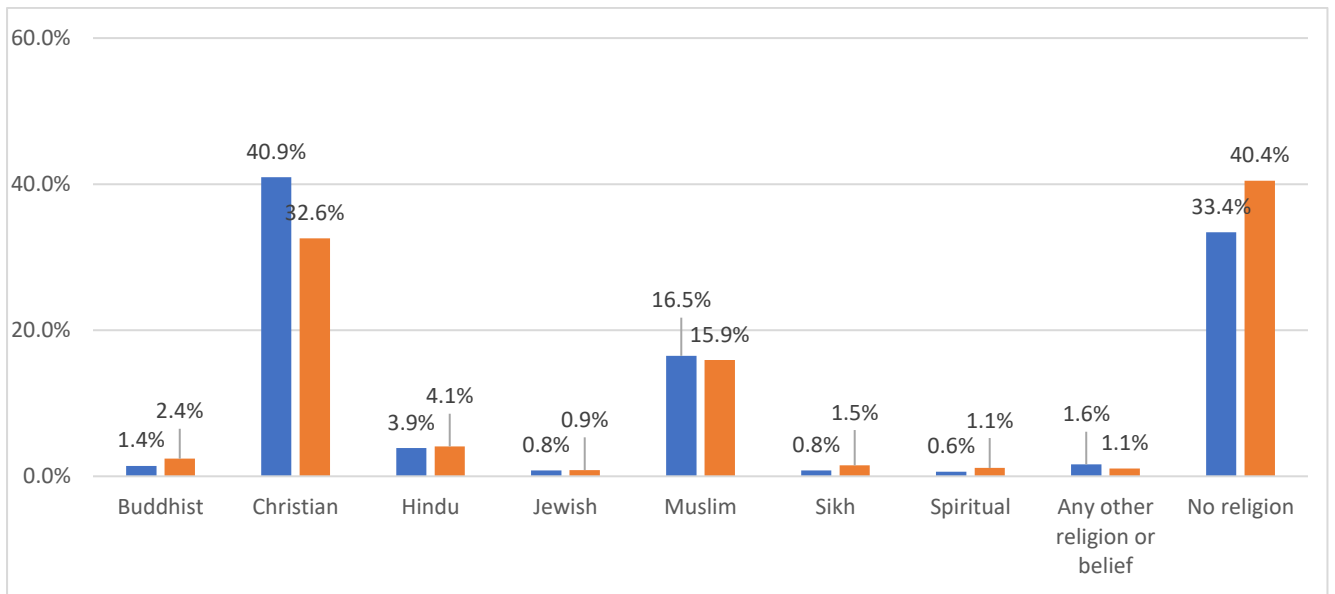
COLP had a higher level of reporting amongst Christian categories, but had broadly similar levels of reporting across all other categories.

The three most reported categories for the COLP dataset (in order): Christian, No religion, and Muslim.

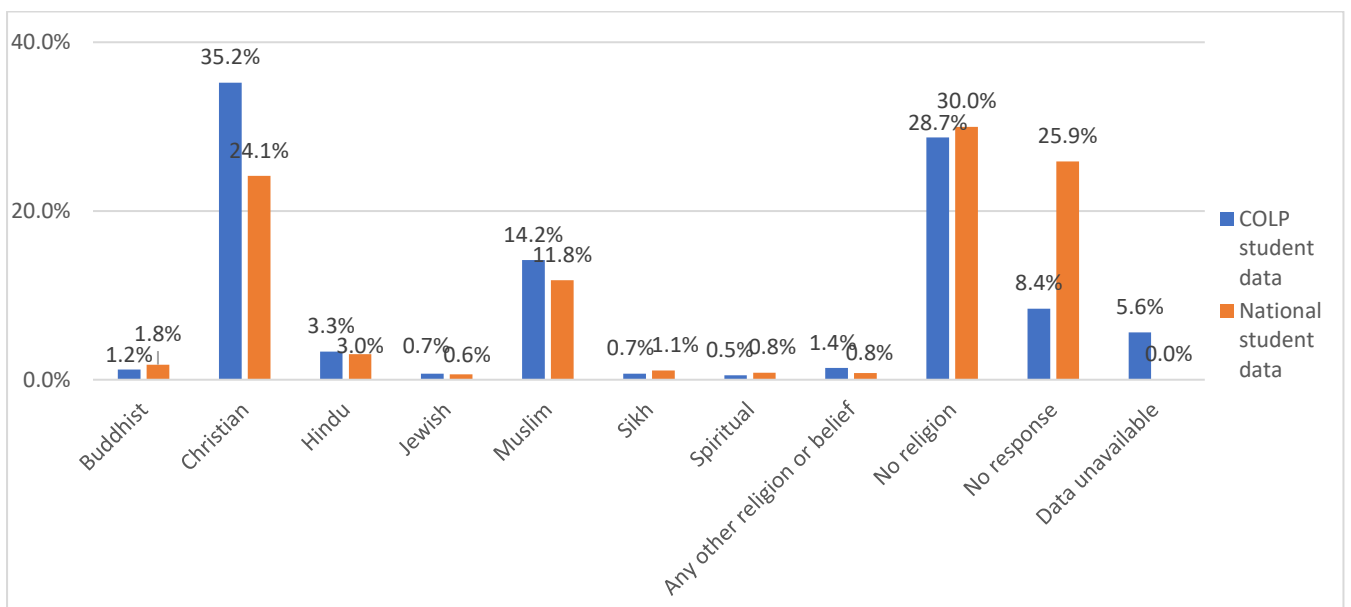
The three most reported categories for the national dataset (in order): No religion, Christian, and Muslim.

The above findings remained true when non-respondents were removed from both datasets.

COLP N=491 / National N=24338 (disclosures)



Full dataset

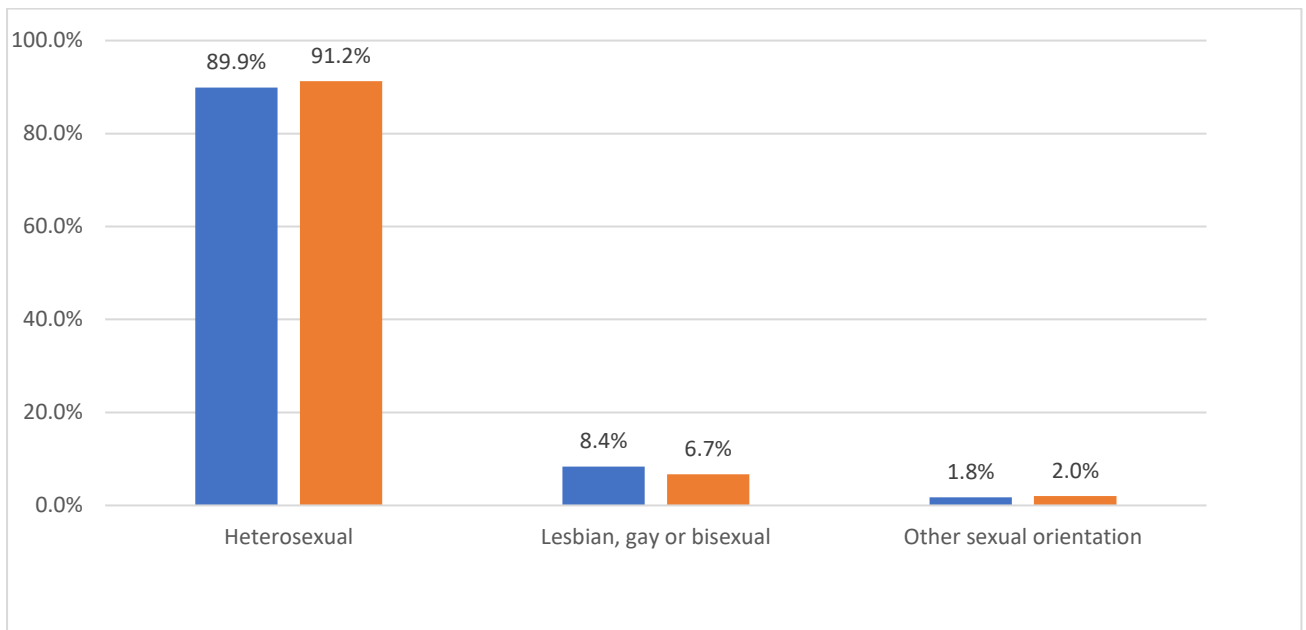


SEXUAL ORIENTATION

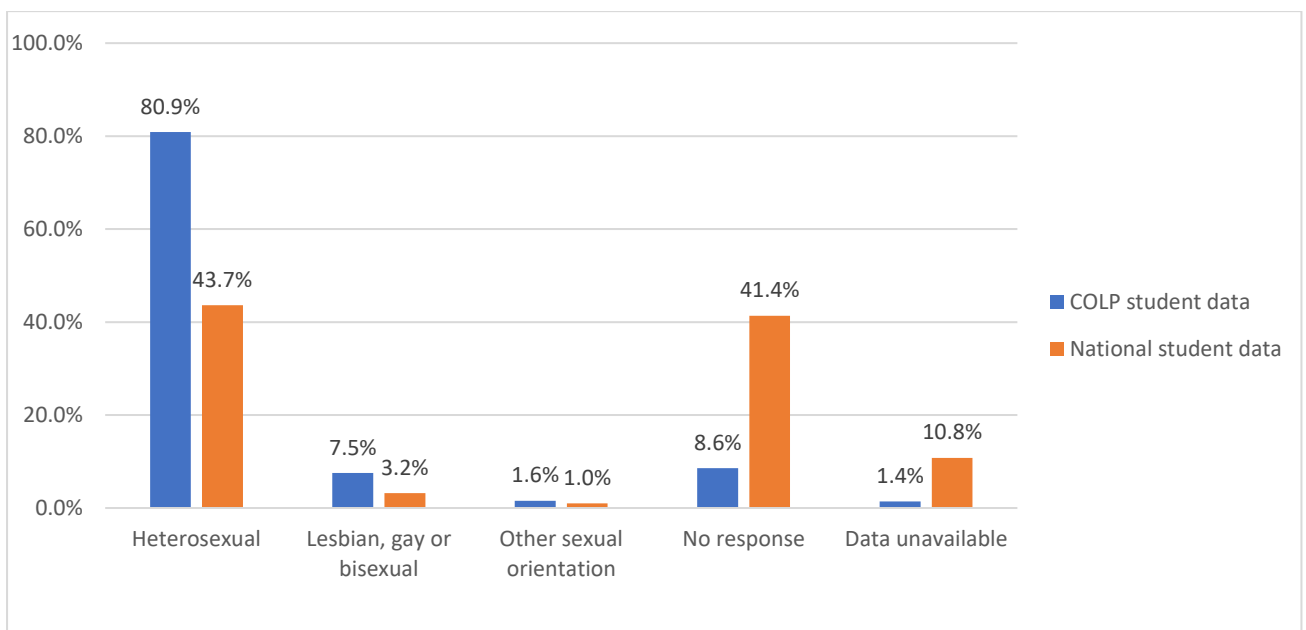
Again, COLP students were more likely to disclose information around sexual orientation - with COLP non-response rate at 8.6% and national non-response rate at 41.4%

When looking at data subsets, where students had disclosed a sexual orientation, students reported similar proportions across categories (categories other than heterosexual: COLP dataset 10.1%, national dataset 8.8%)

COLP N=514 / National N=15710 (disclosures)



Full dataset

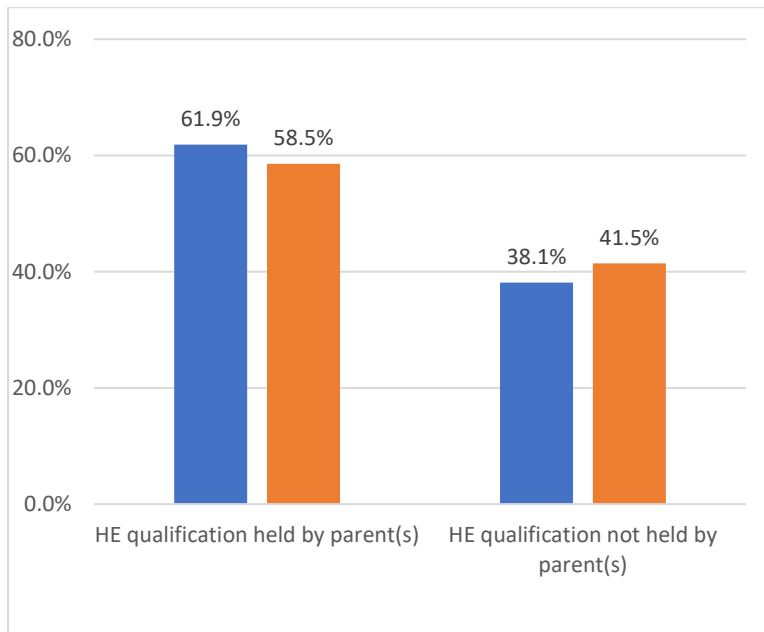


PARENTAL EDUCATION

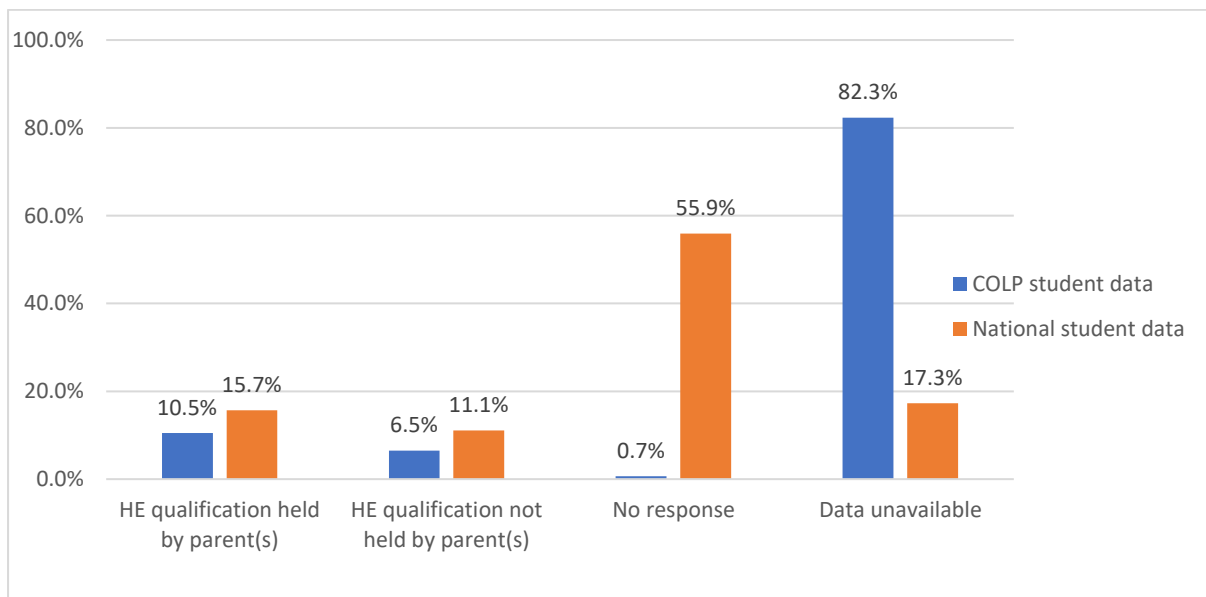
When looking at data subsets, where education was disclosed, students reported broadly similar proportions of education.

This information is a relatively recent data item collection at COLP, so data is not available for the majority of the student population.

COLP N=101 / National N=8033 (disclosures)



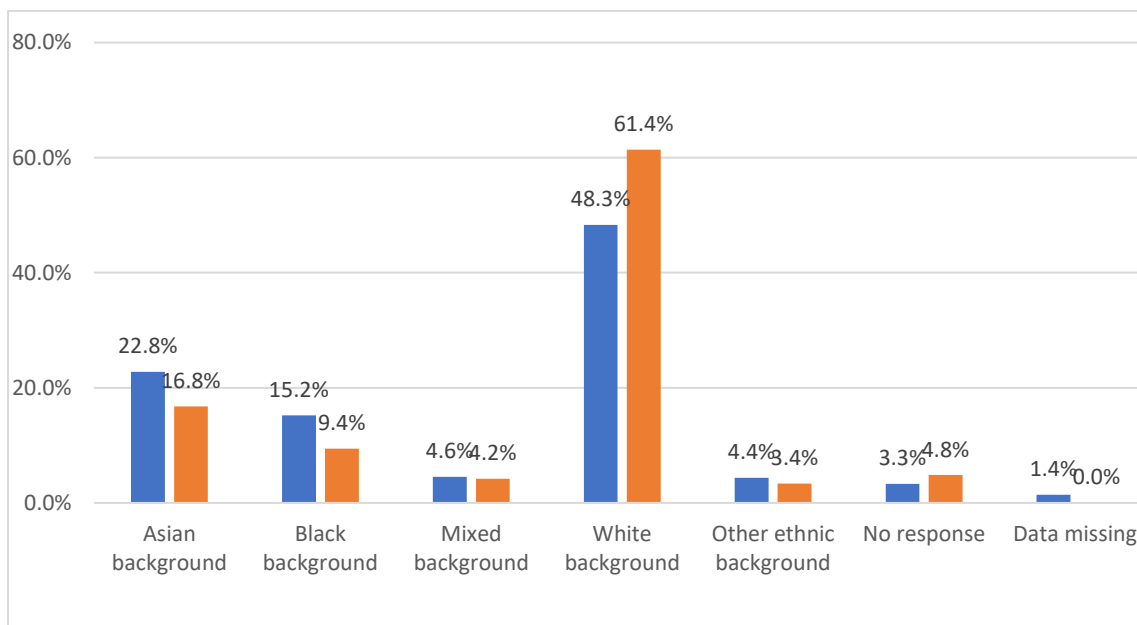
Full dataset



ETHNICITY

Ethnicity data was not available in the national dataset for non-UK domiciled students.

COLP students reported a higher level of ethnic diversity than the counterpart national dataset, particularly with regards to students with a Black or Asian background.



Appendix 2: The College of Legal Practice - Inclusivity Principles & Guidance

This guidance has been taken from a workshop with Advance HE training Dr Elliott Spaeth in Sept 2023.

Elliott's definition of inclusion:

- Accepting that the status quo isn't "fair" or fit for purpose
- Being open to challenging your assumptions
- Treating all needs as legitimate, and taking them into account when making decisions
- Being compassionate to yourself and others

NOT getting it perfect, or being able to know and meet everyone's needs at all times

The status quo:

- We often tend to design our teaching for a student who aligns with social norms. This is referred to as the “implied student”. Without meaning to, this disadvantages non-imagined students...
- We also may have pre-conceived ideas of how a “good” student behaves.
- But these ideas can come from assumptions about the intention behind behaviours, and don’t always take context into account.

Sometimes we should challenge ourselves to consider

- Our perceptions of what we think makes a good student, might not be true for the student
- For example, students should contribute to the discussion because that’s the best way to learn, or students shouldn’t multitask because it means that they aren’t paying attention
- But, they may be asking a lot of questions because they are just trying to understand, or doodling because their brain needs additional stimulation to help focus, or even they could be feeling over-whelmed and need some space so can’t take on constructive feedback

Think proactively about how practices and processes might affect different people

Practical strategies suggestions

- Be clear and explicit
- Help students feel safe to participate
- Active learning doesn’t have to mean groupwork
- Provide alternative options (e.g. reflection prompts)
- Give non-verbal (and even anonymous) ways to contribute (i.e. text chat, Mentimeter, Sli.do, Padlet)
- Model acceptance and flexibility and make it clear you support varied ways of working
- Give people a way to get in touch