

# Access, equality and diversity

**Vision:** A college where inclusivity, equality and diversity are understood, recognised and celebrated across the community and where there are no invisible barriers to entry or to students reaching their full potential.

St Edmund Hall is home to a diverse and vibrant academic community, with students, tutors and non-academic staff from over 72 countries (Figure 2).

However, when compared to other Oxford colleges we are currently close to the bottom of the league table for numbers of BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) students, those from low socio-economic backgrounds, and/or those with a physical disability. This is not a position that we want to be in. Over the past few years, we have put considerable money and effort into building a strong outreach focus,

which has seen improvements in the proportion of students being accepted from under-represented groups when compared against acceptances across the University (Figures 3–6). But there is still a considerable amount of work to do in order for the Hall to be a welcoming place to work for a wide and diverse range of not only students, but also staff and academics.

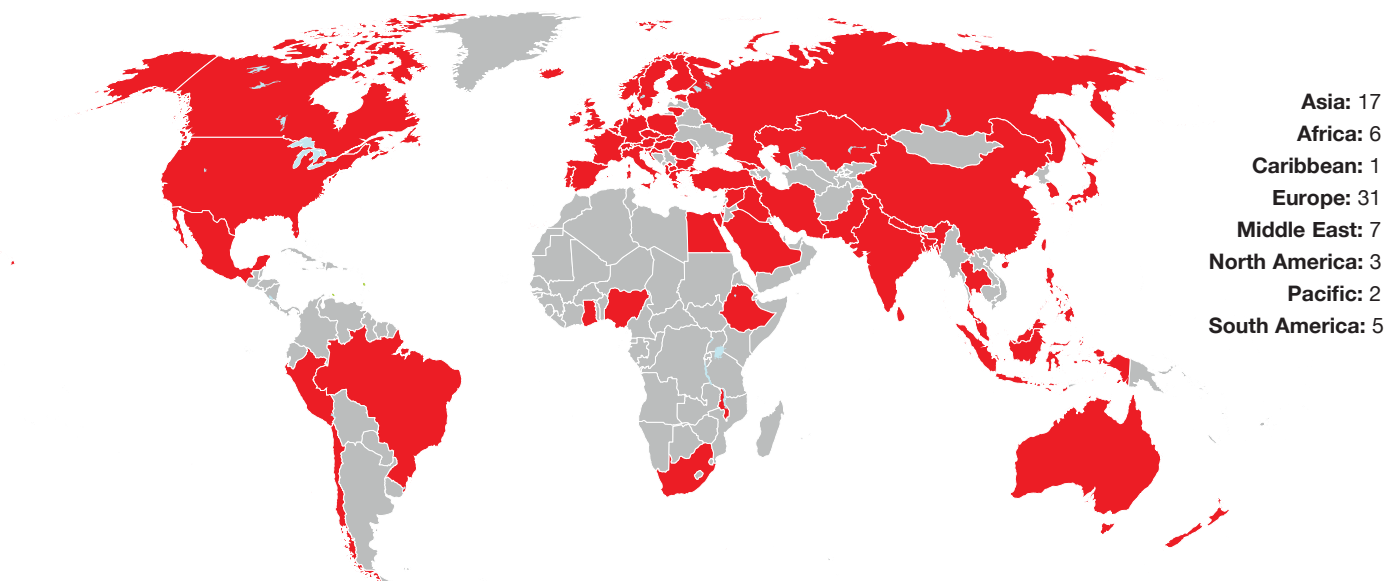


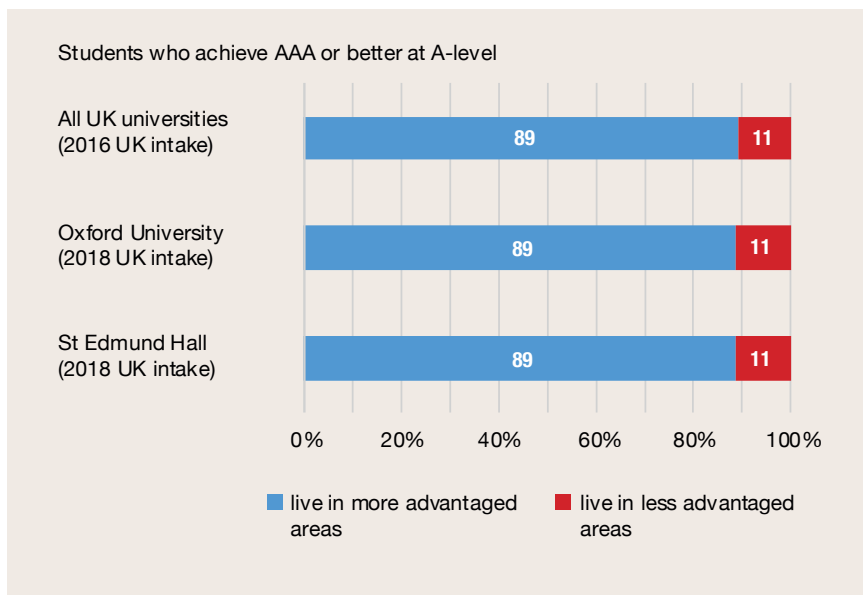
Figure 2: The home countries of the St Edmund Hall student body in 2018–19 (highlighted in red)





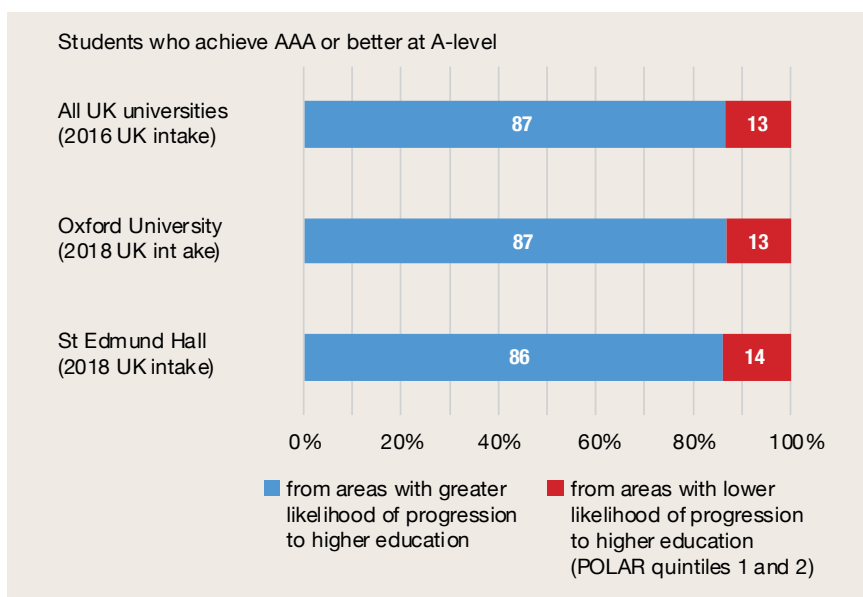
**ACORN** is a postcode-based tool that categorises the UK's population by level of socio-economic advantage. ACORN uses a range of data – such as accommodation type, household income, population density and lifestyle habits – to produce estimates of the characteristics of each individual household and postcode (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Student comparison across ACORN categories; St Edmund Hall versus Oxford University and UK universities<sup>4</sup>**



**POLAR** is a postcode-based tool that measures how likely young people are to participate in higher education based on where they live. POLAR quintiles are calculated by dividing the number of young people in local areas who enter higher education aged 18 or 19 by the overall young population in those areas. POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 represent around 13% of UK students achieving three A grades or better at A-level at UK universities (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Student comparison across POLAR quintiles; St Edmund Hall versus Oxford University and UK universities<sup>5</sup>**

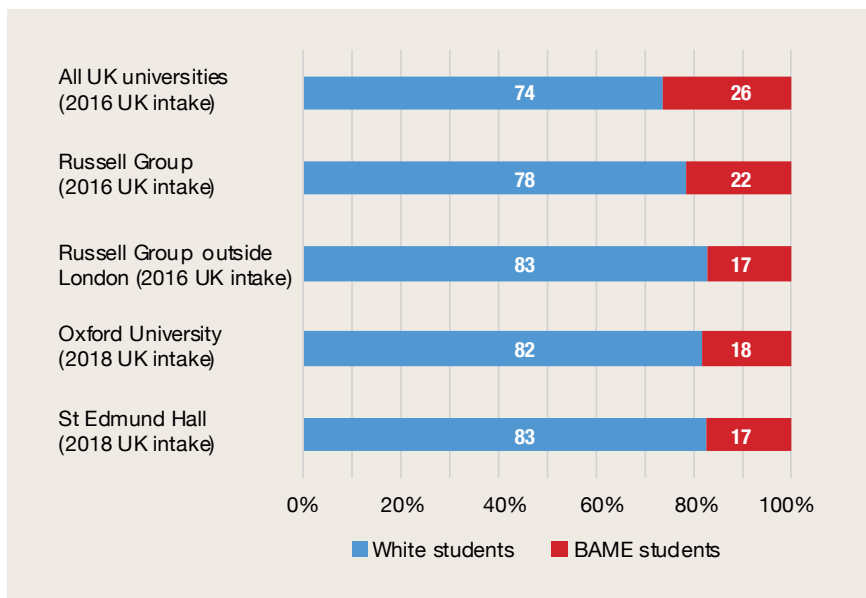


4 Most recent available national data cover the 2016 intake: defined as first-year, first-degree, UK-domiciled undergraduate students, academic year 2016/17. AAA+ pool includes equivalent Scottish qualifications. The statistics exclude those whose ACORN status is not known. Excludes Type 34 from ACORN category 4 – Type 34 appears in 'other ACORN categories'.

5 Most recent available national data covers 2016 intake: defined as first-year, first-degree, UK-domiciled undergraduate students, academic year 2016/17. AAA+ pool includes equivalent Scottish qualifications. Excludes those whose POLAR status is not known.

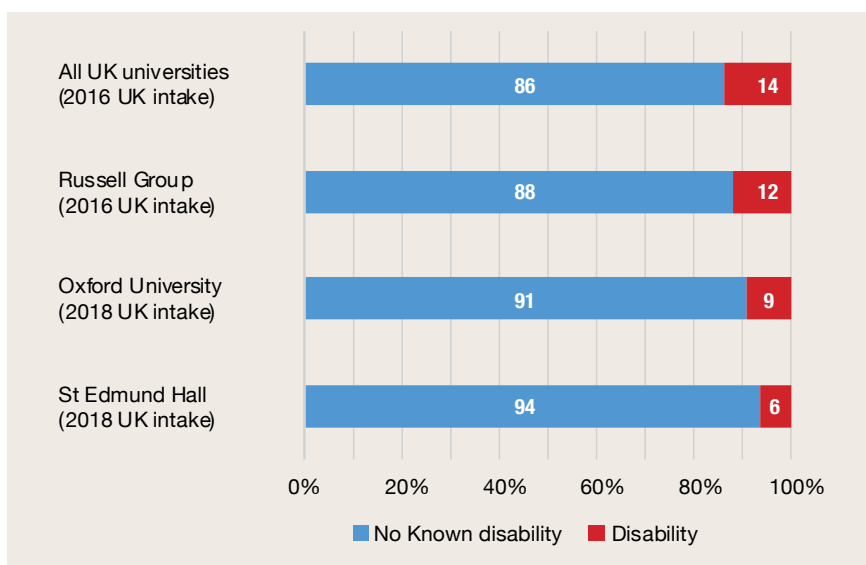
**Ethnicity** refers to the ethnic origin of UK students, as declared on the UCAS application (Figure 5). Our data include only those applicants who have indicated their ethnicity (94% of our applicants). UK-domiciled Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students include those who indicate in their UCAS application that they identify as Black (including African, Caribbean and other Black background), Asian (including Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Chinese and other Asian background), Mixed Heritage, or any other ethnicity except White.

**Figure 5: Comparing BAME student intake across UK universities versus St Edmund Hall and other UK universities<sup>6</sup>**



**Disability** data in this report (Figure 6) refer to disabilities that students have declared on their UCAS application. Despite recent improvement in the diversity of applicants and intake, we need to attract more students from traditionally under-represented groups to apply to the Hall as their first choice. The applications for 2019 entry to the college saw only 45.5% of prospective undergraduates submitting a direct application, versus 54.5% open applications – in comparison to the University average of 82.9% direct applications and 17.1% open applications.

**Figure 6: Comparing intake of students with declared disabilities across UK Universities versus St Edmund Hall and other UK universities<sup>7</sup>**

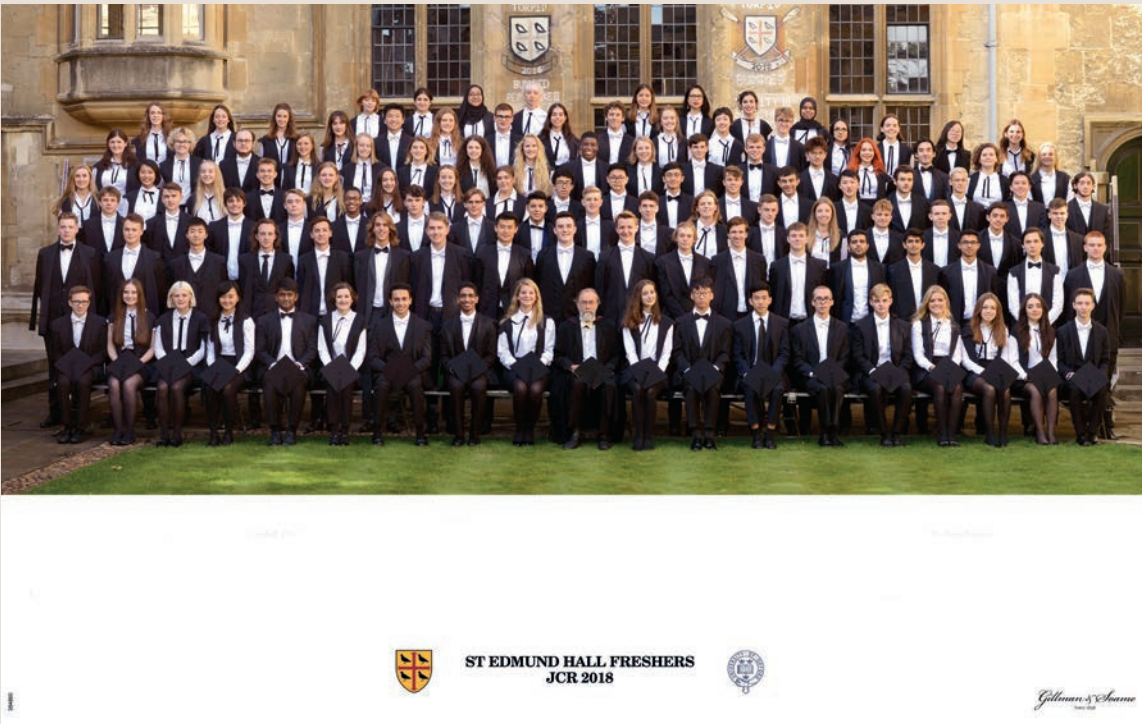


<sup>6</sup> Most recent available national data covers 2016 intake: defined as first-year, first-degree, UK-domiciled undergraduate students, academic year 2016/17. Oxford data excludes students whose ethnicity status is not declared.

<sup>7</sup> Most recent available national data covers 2016 intake: defined as first-year, first-degree, UK-domiciled undergraduate students, academic year 2016/17.



The first cohort of women matriculated in 1979, representing 23% of those matriculating



Matriculation photo in 2018, where 45% of those matriculating are women

A key question is whether there is something associated with external perception, our behaviours and/or our communication in terms of access, equality and diversity that creates barriers to entry currently not visible to Governing Body members and staff. If so, we may need to acquire some knowledge of what these are, and which of our current perceptions and behaviours are seen as working against our ambition to embed and sustain a culture of inclusivity, equality and diversity for all those that live and work in the St Edmund Hall community: students, staff and faculty alike.

In an attempt to understand the external perceptions of St Edmund Hall in terms of access, equality and diversity, the Governing Body working group invited a number of students (both undergraduate and graduate) and staff from diverse and currently under-represented communities, based in Oxford but external to the college, to offer comment and provide feedback. Their insights were extremely helpful and opened the group's eyes to the practical realities of daily prejudice within Oxford.

## To achieve these aims, we propose to undertake the following actions:

An overwhelming message was that members of these groups do not want to be treated as 'special' but rather want to participate fully in an environment where every student and staff member is treated as being equal and valuable whatever their background, ethnicity, faith, gender or orientation.

Looking ahead, we must aim to ensure that we properly understand who is 'invisibilised', or otherwise left out in our current set of practices, and consider how to avoid creating any perception of exclusion and/or discrimination. Learning from this process we should also rethink and rephrase all internal and external communications from the college that are not meeting these ideals. Finally, we should aim to reduce any other barriers to entry associated with affordability and/or disability. Ultimately, our aim should be to demonstrate a track record of admitting a diverse student body that (at least) mirrors the entry into UK Higher Education in general, and to foster a college community that understands, respects and celebrates diversity, equality and inclusivity.

1. build a clear understanding of perceptions of access, equality and diversity issues at St Edmund Hall from as broad a community as possible across the University and beyond, through asking representatives from different under-represented groups to work with us to develop appropriate partnerships to advance our goal of creating and maintaining an inclusive culture;
2. provide equality and diversity education and training for all in college – students, staff, lecturers and Fellows – so that these matters can become incorporated regularly in our reviews, engagements and committee work;
3. formulate our own clear statement(s) on access, equality and diversity to be placed on the St Edmund Hall website, to ensure that we not only work within the relevant legal frameworks concerning equality and human rights but also gain – and maintain – appropriate external accreditation (e.g. Athena Swan and Stonewall);
4. examine all internal and external college communication and rework where necessary to ensure that its tone and presentation are in line with our ideals on access, equality and diversity;
5. create dedicated funds to remove any financial and/or other barriers to application and continued study at St Edmund Hall; and
6. ensure that our estate is fully accessible for those with a disability, including an appropriate number of accessible bedrooms on the Queen's Lane site.



**Inaugural Access Hall Areas weekend in May 2019 where the college opened its gates to the wider city community – around 1,000 people visited the college over the two days**







# What will success look like in ten years?

## EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

- A student body achieving at least 40% first class degree results, with all student outcomes at II.2 or higher
- The first choice college for at least two thirds of the prospective undergraduate students that are considered for admission
- At least one Early Career Teaching and Research Fellowship (ECTRF) in each key subject area
- A strong research culture, with a defined annual programme of activities for each subject cohort
- Annual conference/symposium of interdisciplinary research on sustainability and environmentalism

## ACCESS AND DIVERSITY

- A student body of BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) undergraduates that at least mirrors the University average, with a target of reaching national average by 2030
- A proportion of students admitted from the two most socio-economically disadvantaged groups (ACORN categories 4 and 5) that at least mirrors the University average
- A proportion of on-course students with a declared disability in line with the University admissions target
- Annual equality and diversity training provided for Fellows, staff and students
- External accreditation (e.g. Athena Swan, Stonewall) gained as a marker of success

## FINANCE

- Cost to student of studying and living at St Edmund Hall is in the mid-point of other colleges
- All tutorial fellowships endowed
- Median endowment per student achieved by 2030
- Dedicated funds to remove any financial and/or other barriers to application and continued study at St Edmund Hall
- At least 40% of annual operating budget spent on teaching and research

## CULTURE

- A collaborative and creative approach to culture, involving students, academics, staff and alumni in all elements of college life
- A strong sense of shared space ownership across the college:
  - staff common room provided
  - increased use of the Wolfson Hall for concerts and other cultural events
- Annual college dinners to be held for events such as Thanksgiving, Chinese New Year, Diwali
- A dedicated Culture Fund for students covering arts, music, sciences and performances, encouraging diverse cultural activities
- Regular events with a focus on sustainability and environmentalism hosted at the college

## ESTATES

- St Edmund Hall recognised as the greenest and most environmentally sustainable college in Oxford including:
  - a zero-energy establishment
  - self-generated energy from a combination of rooftop solar panels, geothermal heat, air and/or water-sourced heat pumps and biodigesters
  - greatly reduced energy use through improved heating systems and insulation
  - eliminated use of single-use plastics
  - increased visible greenness in all college sites, e.g. green walls, rooftop gardens etc.
- New accommodation on existing college-owned land, providing a range of high-quality, affordable college-owned accommodation for all undergraduate and visiting students and all first-year graduate students
- All existing student rooms and accommodation of a good to excellent standard with 70% of rooms en-suite
- Under-utilised space opened up and repurposed for use in teaching, cultural activities and administration