

De Montfort University
Equality Impact Assessment Report

Work Area: Preparation of the DMU Research Excellence Framework (REF) Submission

Persons with authority to make changes to the work area:

Executive Board, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation), REF Director, Director Research, Business and Innovation, Deans, Heads of Research.

Person responsible for drafting the assessment:

Beverley Lambie, Research Strategy/REF Manager, Research, Business and Innovation Directorate

Date of Report: Initial EIA Screening carried out January 2011; full EIA carried out February 2013 and subsequently revised September 2013 & November 2013.

Aims of the work area, process or function

The Research Excellence Framework is the process for assessing research in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and will be used to determine the distribution of QR funding. It replaces the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). The first exercise under the REF will be in 2014.

A University Steering Group was established to guide the University REF submission process. The group was chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and was ultimately responsible for decisions on selection of staff and approving the final version of the submission.

Equality Relevance

Only academic staff in post on the census date (31st October 2013), with a contract of 0.2 FTE or greater, and whose primary employment function is to undertake 'Research' or 'Teaching and Research' could be considered for inclusion in the submission. Since preparation of the REF submission involves selection of academic staff to be included in the return, the work area has equality relevance for all individuals/groups with protected characteristics. Currently DMU is able to monitor staff who have disclosed on the protected characteristics of sex, age, race and ethnicity and disability. The university is also collecting data on sexual orientation and religion or belief but does not yet have a significant body of information on this for analytical purposes.

Assessment of Impact

In January 2011 an initial EIA screening of DMU Plans and Procedures for Preparation of DMU's REF submissions was carried out and this was used to inform the content of the DMU REF Code of Practice (see below for details).

It was considered that the following groups of staff could be affected differently in either a positive or negative way:

- Part-time staff
- Early Career staff
- Staff with caring responsibilities
- Disabled staff, including those with long term health conditions

It was also considered that the following factors could lead to staff being affected differently in either a positive or negative way:

- Pregnancy, maternity, adoption and paternity
- Sex
- Gender identity

The REF 'Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions' supports HEIs in promoting equality and diversity when preparing submissions to the REF through drawing up and implementing a Code of Practice on the fair and transparent selection of staff. The guidelines aid institutions in including all their eligible staff who are conducting excellent research, as well as promoting equality, complying with legislation and avoiding discrimination.

All HEIs intending to make a submission for the REF were required to develop, document and apply a Code of Practice on the fair and transparent selection of staff for inclusion in their REF submission.

The DMU Code of Practice aimed to provide transparent information about the relevant committees, and their membership, and the decision-making process so that all eligible staff were fully aware of how and when the University made decisions in the run up to the REF submission deadline, and what the processes were for appealing against those decisions.

A key feature of the Code of Practice was information on the criteria for selection of staff for inclusion in the submission and to outline how staff with 'individual circumstances' will be treated. (i.e. Circumstances that may significantly constrain a member of staff's ability to produce four outputs will be taken into account. Such staff may be included in the submission with a reduced number of outputs without penalty.)

DMU's Code was approved by the University Executive Board in spring 2012 and by HEFCE in December 2012.

Data, Evidence and Feedback Used

The following data sources were used for the initial EIA screening:

- DMU Equality monitoring data (i.e. numbers of staff in different categories, particularly 'teaching only', 'research and teaching', 'research only'.)
- Data gathered as part of the 'Readiness for REF' exercise September 2010
- HEI sector 'benchmark' data e.g. comparative data available from the HEIDI database
- Diversity data collected for the RAE'08 (comparison of DMU staff selected for inclusion in submissions compared with the total population of DMU academic staff.
- The Equality Challenge Unit Report on the Impact of the Process to Promote Equality and Diversity in the RAE'08.

Analysis of DMU diversity data collected for the RAE'08 indicated that female staff may be under-represented in the research community at senior levels. However, no analysis or commentary on the data was produced at the time. At a national level possible causes for differences in the research selection rate of males and females have been identified including gender occupational segregation and work-life balance issues.

The Equality Challenge Unit Report on 'The Impact of the Process to Promote Equality and Diversity in the RAE 208' indicated that across all HEIs no significant differences were noted with regard to ethnicity and that numbers of staff with a disclosed disability 'were so small that it was not possible to draw any meaningful conclusion from the data made available'.

Consultations

The University Research committee, relevant trade unions and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) and Disabled staff groups were consulted when the DMU REF Code of Practice was drawn up and various changes were made to the initial draft before the final version was submitted for approval by the Executive Board. Recently a career development focus group meeting was held, particularly aimed at early career researchers and staff who have had a career break. At this meeting participants were asked about any barriers they have encountered to career progression. No specific equality related issues were mentioned – issues raised included work-life balance, finding time for research in a busy schedule, lack of obvious mentoring opportunities, lack of internal funding opportunities etc..

Actions taken to address issues arising from the screening exercise

The following actions to promote equality and avoid discrimination were implemented and detailed in the Code of Practice:

- Information about the REF and about plans and preparations for submissions has been made available on the University Intranet and was communicated to all staff through meetings, events and briefings (these started in 2010 to cover the emerging impact agenda and information about the impact pilot exercise, with details about the REF itself once the guidance was released in July 2011). Staff were encouraged to participate in discussions about the issues relating to the REF and to raise any concerns they may have with their line manager, relevant senior staff with responsibility for research co-ordination and review, the Research, Business and Innovation Directorate or People and Organisation Development Directorate.
- All staff involved in making decisions about the REF undertook appropriate equality and diversity training. In addition specific training in relation to selection of staff for the REF was arranged by the Research, Business and Innovation Office (RBI) in conjunction with POD. The facilitators were trained at one of the Equality Challenge Unit REF training events. Use was made of training material made available on the Equality Challenge Unit web site. Attendance at this REF specific training was mandatory.
- External Reviewers appointed by the University were made aware of the Code of Practice

- All staff were made aware of the provision for individual circumstances to be taken into account by REF panels through briefings and direct communication (i.e. personal email and personal letter, general emails, information on the website etc.). In spring 2012 a communication was sent (as a personal letter to their home address, alongside emails and information on the DMU website) to all relevant academics asking them to indicate if there are any individual circumstances that may have constrained their ability to produce four outputs. Staff were invited to provide information 'in confidence' to a named individual in POD by returning a form. Arrangements were also made to communicate with members of staff absent from the University on long term sick leave/maternity leave. Information was available in other formats if required.

Analysis of the data about staff seeking a reduction in outputs through the individual circumstances mechanism is in the appendix of this report.

Review of EIA – February 2013

In February 2013 the preliminary selection of staff for the REF was undertaken. Staff were placed into one of three categories; green (i.e. were to be included as part of DMU's REF submission - 174 staff were in this category at this point in time); Red (were excluded from DMU's REF submission – 619 staff were in this category at this point in time) or Amber (might still be included in DMU's REF submission subject to sufficient outputs of a suitably high standard being made available – 74 staff were in this category at this point in time).

Between February and 31st November staff who had been categorised as amber were selected for submission if:

- they identified an output that had not previously been considered which was deemed to be of a suitably high standard
- they secured enough outputs of a suitably high standard in the public domain
- they received written confirmation from their publishers that the "missing" output(s) would appear in the public domain before the 31st December 2013 and thus were eligible to be included in the submission.

In February 2013, preliminary analysis of data for all staff on 'research' and 'teaching and research' contracts was undertaken, alongside analysis of the staff we had selected, or anticipated we would select, for the REF based on the categorisation above. A breakdown of the statistics is given as an appendix to this report. The findings were as follows:

- The selection rate of staff from BME backgrounds was similar to the selection rate of staff from white ethnic backgrounds.
- The selection rate of staff with a declared disability was also similar to the selection rate of staff without declared disability.

The selection rate of male staff was significantly higher than of women (60.3 vs 39.7) staff.

Nationally identified causes for differences in the research selection rate of males and females for RAE2008 included gender occupation segregation and work-life balance issues.

An action agreed by the REF Steering Group at this stage was for Faculties to be asked to review staff eligible for selection, in particular female staff, to ensure that no one had inadvertently been overlooked or excluded.

Review of EIA September & December 2013

In September & December 2013 a further analysis of data for all staff on 'research' and 'teaching and research' contracts and for those staff finally selected for the REF was conducted. (As the number of staff selected for individual Units of Assessment are very small an analysis of the data at subject level was not felt to be appropriate.)

Despite there being significant staffing changes in the University since the EIA review in February (e.g. staff leaving under a voluntary severance scheme) and although one or two additional staff who had not previously put themselves forward for selection were identified by Faculties and encouraged to submit individual circumstances forms, the selection rate of male and female staff remained disappointing.

Full analysis of the DMU submission was then undertaken in December and this data is also in the appendix (data for September is not shown).

It should be noted that the provision for staff to highlight 'individual circumstances' has encouraged staff to put themselves forward for consideration for the REF, who otherwise might not have done so. We believe that this process was successful, as evidenced by the reduction in FTE of staff returned by DMU in comparison with RAE2008 but the increase in headcount (218.2 vs 225.17 FTE; 248 vs 232 headcount); the increase in the number of females selected; and the maintenance of numbers selected for other protected characteristics in comparison with our 2008 data. This data gives us confidence that that the quality thresholds for selection did not have a specific negative impact upon protected groups, or on those individuals who were eligible to be returned with a reduced number of outputs. Of staff submitting 'individual circumstances' forms around twice as many are female than male. Full analysis of this data is given in the appendix.

Analysis of the numbers of staff submitted in October showed a selection rate of 68.1% for male staff, and 31.9% for female staff. This is an improvement upon the split of staff selected for RAE08 (71%/29%). We believe that the increased rate of selection of pro rata staff (evidenced by DMU returning a larger headcount than to RAE2008, despite returning a slightly smaller FTE) helped support our gender balance – DMU has more female staff on pro rata contracts than male.

However, the final selection rate of female and male staff in proportion to population size, still showed a gap of 17.4%

Total

	submitted	Total population	% represented of population
male	169	448	37.7
female	79	388	20.3

As of the end of September 2013 there had been no formal appeals relating to selection for the REF. This is considered to be a fair indication that the measures set out in the Code of Practice to ensure fair and transparent selection of staff for the REF have been effective.

It is anticipated that the University's Equality and Diversity strategy and associated action plans will continue to promote equality of opportunity for all researchers going forward.

Promotion of Equality – positive duties and future actions

As highlighted in the initial Equality Impact Assessment screening document, the inclusion of excellent researchers in the REF submission who happen to have protected characteristics may encourage others with similar backgrounds to put themselves forward as active researchers.

HEFCE guidelines include provision for equality related 'individual circumstances' to be taken into account in assessing the research undertaken by individuals. This provision may encourage staff who, for example, have had career breaks or periods of absence due to a disability to put themselves forward as active researchers.

Until the next exercise, institutional initiatives to support research need to provide a supportive framework for equality and diversity issues. Examples of initiatives that are intended to reinforce and improve current practice include:

- Signing the Athena Swan charter and obtaining the Bronze award - see <http://dmu.ac.uk/about-dmu/professional-services/equality-and-diversity/equality-consultation-and-involvement-groups/athena-swan.aspx> - actions in KAA 2,3,5,7,8 specifically support improved REF outcomes.
- In January 2014, as the start of an annual exercise, all research active staff were asked to complete an individual research plan (IRP) to explain their research plans in detail over the next 12 months, in the context of their longer term vision. As part of this process staff were explicitly asked about their training and development needs, and any requirements for mentorship. Over the census period these forms will provide a rich source of data about our research landscape, and will facilitate the identification of any gaps in provision or take-up from various groups. Staff were also asked to self-declare whether they consider themselves to be ECRs, mid-career researchers or senior researchers to ensure that support can be targeted appropriately to the individual.
- In ca. August 2014 the institution intends to launch a leadership and management framework to ensure all staff are provided with appropriate support at all stages of their career. This framework encompasses both training and development and mentorship and coaching.

For the next exercise, DMU may wish to revise its Code of Practice to require a formal report back to the relevant committee about the REF status of any member of staff who is granted a reduction in the required number of outputs to ensure no member of staff who has been granted a reduction in the number of outputs is inadvertently overlooked.

It should also be noted that, for the next exercise, effective communication about the eligibility of both staff and outputs for selection will be key.

It is anticipated that new initiatives to promote a research culture at DMU (e.g. individual research plans) will also support the promotion of research in terms of both quality and equality.

Publishing this report

Copies of this Report will be made available on the University Website alongside the DMU REF Code of Practice.

A copy will also appear on the equality pages of the DMU intranet and on the Equality pages of the DMU web site. (A copy of the initial EIA screening document is already available on the DMU web site - <http://www.dmu.ac.uk/documents/about-dmu-documents/equality-and-diversity/equality-impact-assessment/eia-screening-ref-plans-and-procedures-jan-11.pdf>.)

Next Review

A new Equality Impact Assessment will be required for any future research assessment exercise. At this stage it is anticipated that a research assessment exercise will be conducted in 2020.

Signature:



Professor Andy Collop
PVC Research and Innovation

Appendix

Analysis of Academic Staff on 'Research' and 'Teaching and Research' Contracts as at 1.1.13

University Figures	Number	%
White	736	84.7
BME/other	124	14.3
Information Refused/unknown	9	1.0
Total	869	100.0

Male	466	53.6
Female	403	46.4
Total	869	100.0

Disabled	40	4.6
Not disabled	824	94.8
Info declined	4	0.5
Unknown	1	0.1
Total	869	100.0

Age 34 and under	73	8.4
Age 35 to 54	553	64.7
Age 55 and over	243	28.0
Total	869	100.0

Analysis of projected Academic staff selection for the REF on 'Research' and 'Teaching and Research Contracts as at 1.1.13

University Figures Number %

White	203	85.3
BME/other	33	13.9
Information refused/unknown	2	0.8
total	238	100.0

Male	168	70.6
Female	70	29.4
Total	179	100.0

Disabled	5	2.1
Not disabled	231	97.1
Info declined	2	0.8
Unknown	0	0.0
Total	238	100.0

Age 34 and under	17	7.1
Age 35 to 54	221	92.9
Age 55 and over	69	29.0
Total	869	100.0

Analysis of all Academic staff on 'Research' and 'Teaching and Research' Contracts as at 31st October 2013

The data tables below show the population of staff eligible for the REF (according to REF eligibility guidelines) by age, disability, ethnicity and sex.

In general, there are some changes to the overall population numbers between 01.01.13 and 31.10.13. This is for a number of reasons, including a voluntary severance programme and a coordinated recruitment strategy targeting new lecturing/ research staff, both of which would have resulted in a slightly lower headcount at the census date

Age	Eligible	Eligible %
Age less than 35	59	7.1
Age 35 to 54	541	64.7
Age 55 and over	236	28.2
Total	836	100

This data shows that the majority of staff sit within the 35 to 54 age group.

Disability	Eligible	Eligible %
Disabled	35	4.1
Not disabled	794	94.9
Info declined/ unknown	7	1.0
Total	836	100

This table shows that 4.1% of staff eligible for the REF have disclosed a disability.

Ethnicity	Eligible	Eligible %
White	707	84.5
BME/other	118	14.1
Refused/unknown	11	1.3
Total	836	100

This table shows that the majority of staff are White British.

Sex	Eligible	Eligible %
Male	448	53.6
Female	388	46.4
Total	836	100

This table shows that, in general, there are slightly more male than female academic staff.

Analysis of Academic staff selected for the REF on 'Research' and 'Teaching and Research Contracts as at 31.10.13

These tables show proportions of eligible staff selected for REF by age, disability, ethnicity and sex.

Age	Eligible	Eligible %
Age less than 35	22	8.9
Age 35 to 54	152	61.2
Age 55 and over	74	30.6
Total	248	100

This table shows that the largest age group submitted was 35 to 54 years 61.2% and the smallest was those under 35 years 8.9%.

Disability	Number	%
Disabled	6	2.4
Not disabled	239	96.4
Info declined	3	1.2
Total	248	100

This table shows that largest group submitted were staff who had not disclosed a disability 96.4% and the smallest was those who had declined to declare their disability status 1.2%

Ethnicity	Number	%
White	207	83.5
BME/other	37	14.9
Unknown	4	1.6
Total	248	100

This table shows that largest group submitted were ethnic white staff 83.5 and the smallest was those who had declined to declare their ethnicity 1.6%

Sex	Number	%
Male	169	68.1
Female	79	31.9
Total	248	100

This table shows that largest group submitted were staff who had not disclosed a disability 96.4% and the smallest was those who had declined to declare their disability status 1.2%

Analysis across the protected groups.

These tables for age, disability, ethnicity and sex show the proportions of eligible staff across each horizontal bands who were submitted for REF 2014.

All staff

	Eligible	Submitted	% of eligible staff entered
Total	836	248	29.7

This table shows that 29.7% of all eligible staff were submitted to the REF 2014.

Age

Age	Number Eligible	Eligible %	Number Submitted	Submitted %	% of eligible staff entered
Age 34 and under	59	7.1	22	8.9	37.2
Age 35 to 54	541	64.7	152	61.2	28.1
Age 55 and over	236	28.2	74	30.6	31.4
Total	836	100	248	100	

This table shows that there was a gap 9.1% between proportions of eligible staff who are under 35 years of age and those in the 35- 54 age band. This may be accounted for by staff who are early career researchers, as opposed to staff who have significant teaching and course responsibilities.

Disability

Disability	Number Eligible	Eligible %	Number Submitted	Submitted %	% of eligible staff entered
Disabled	35	4.1	6	2.4	17.1
Not disabled	794	94.9	239	96.4	30.1
Info declined	4	0.6	3	1.2	75
Unknown	3	0.4	0	0	0
Total	836	100			

This table shows that there was a 13% gap between proportions of eligible staff who are declared not disabled and those that are declared disabled. Due to low numbers of disability declarations, 35 staff, this may not be proved as 'significant data', however it is an issue for DMU to take account of.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Number Eligible	Eligible %	Number Submitted	Submitted %	% of eligible staff entered
White	707	84.5	207	83.5	29.3
BME/other	118	14.1	37	14.9	31.3
Refused/unknown	11	1.3	4	1.6	36.4
Total	836	100	248	100	

This table shows that there was a small gap of 2% between proportions of eligible staff who are declared ethnically white and those that are declared black or other non white ethnicity. In this case it shows that proportionality more BME staff submitted to the REF than ethnically white eligible staff.

Sex

Sex	Number Eligible	Eligible %	Number Submitted	Submitted %	% of eligible staff entered
Male	448	53.6	169	68.1	37.7
Female	388	46.4	79	31.9	20.3
Total	836	100	248	100	

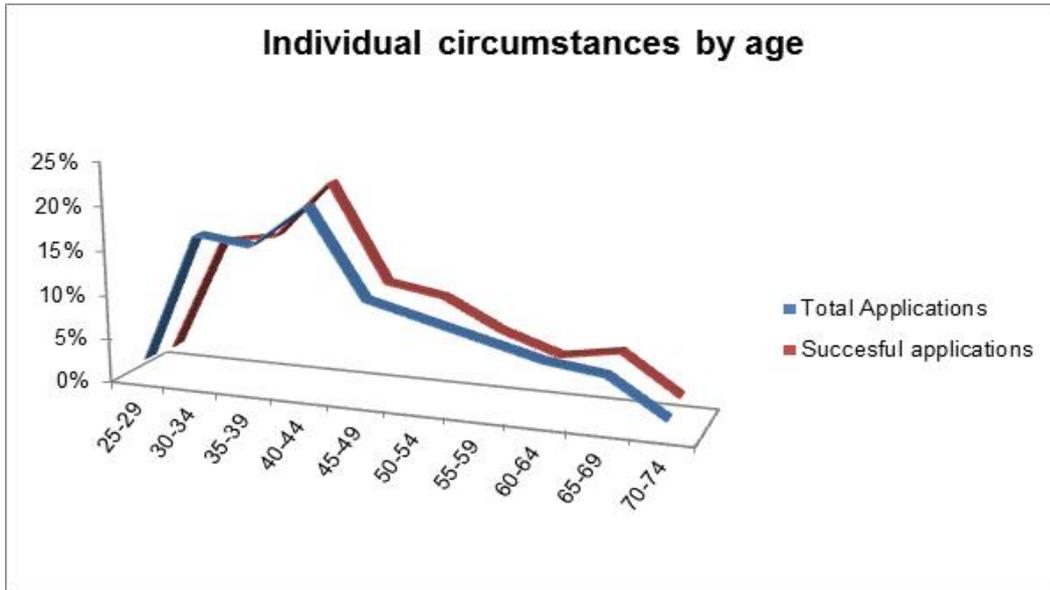
This table shows that there was a gap of 17.4% between proportions of eligible male and female staff.

Individual Circumstances Data

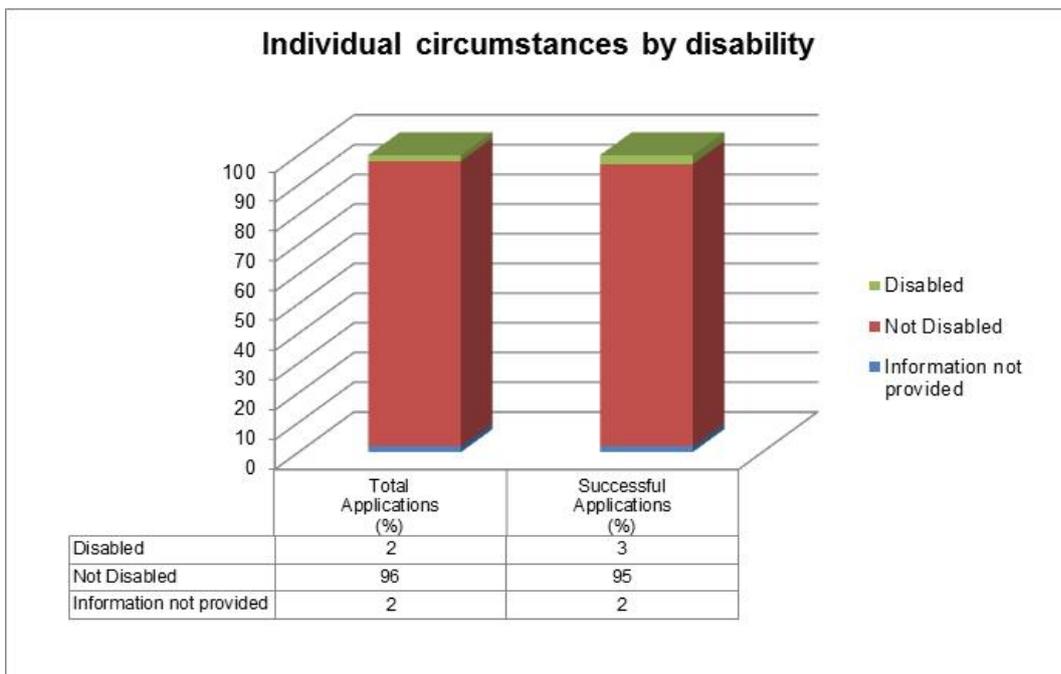
The following data provides an analysis of staff who applied for individual circumstances and shows those who applied and those subsequently granted a reduction. Data is show by age, disability, ethnicity and sex.

123 employees applied for individual circumstances, 93 successfully received a reduction in their REF submissions (75.6%).

The information has been broken down in to the following:

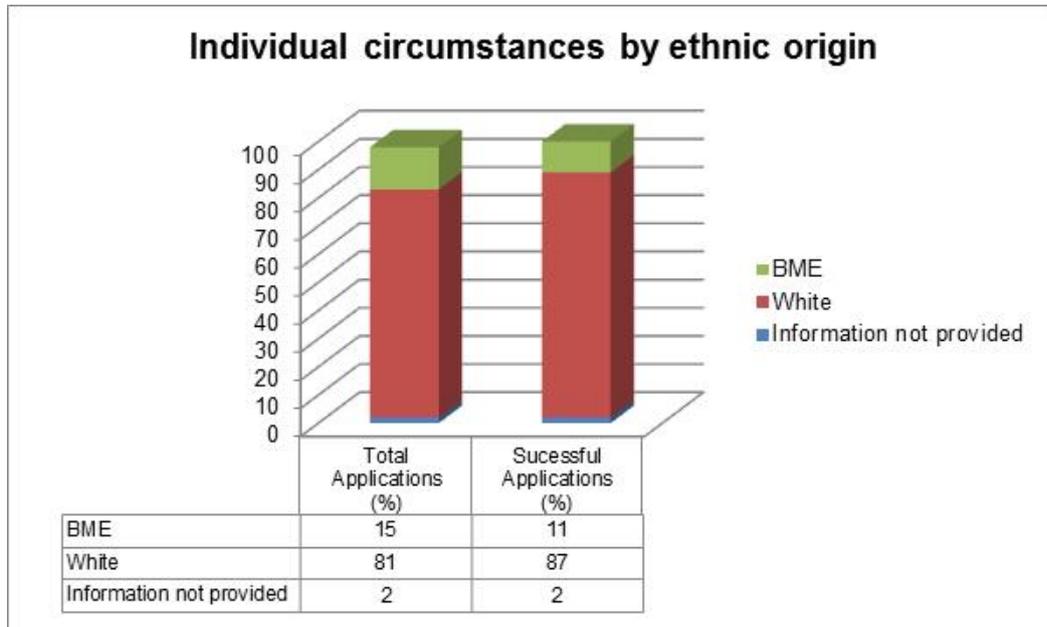


35% of staff that applied cited early career researcher as a reason for a reduction. Of the successful applications 29% of these were for the same reason.

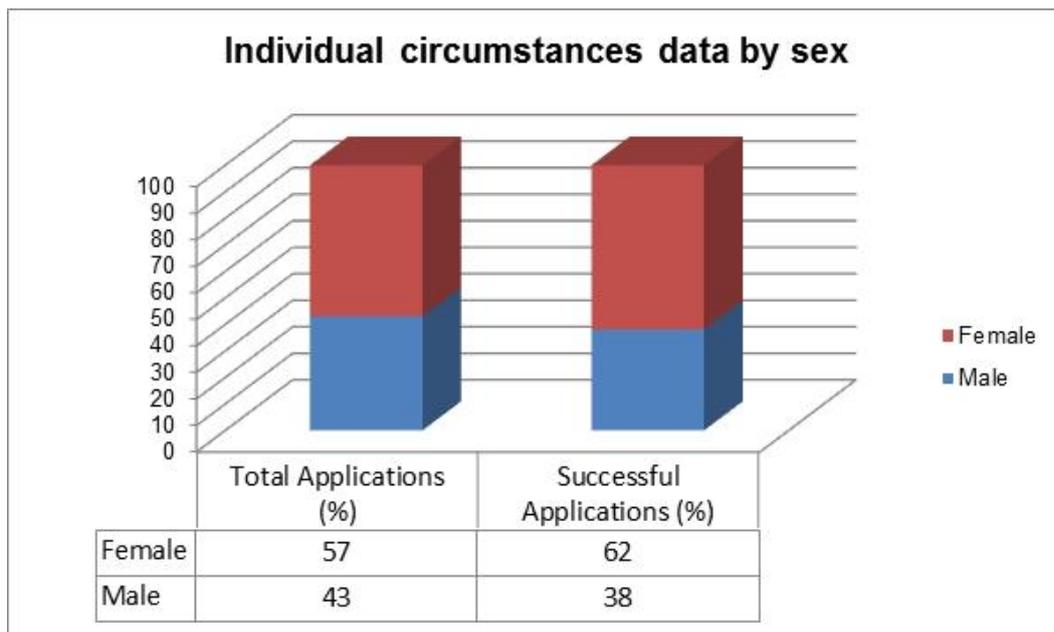


When looking at disability the statistics highlight that staff members with a disability have been successful.

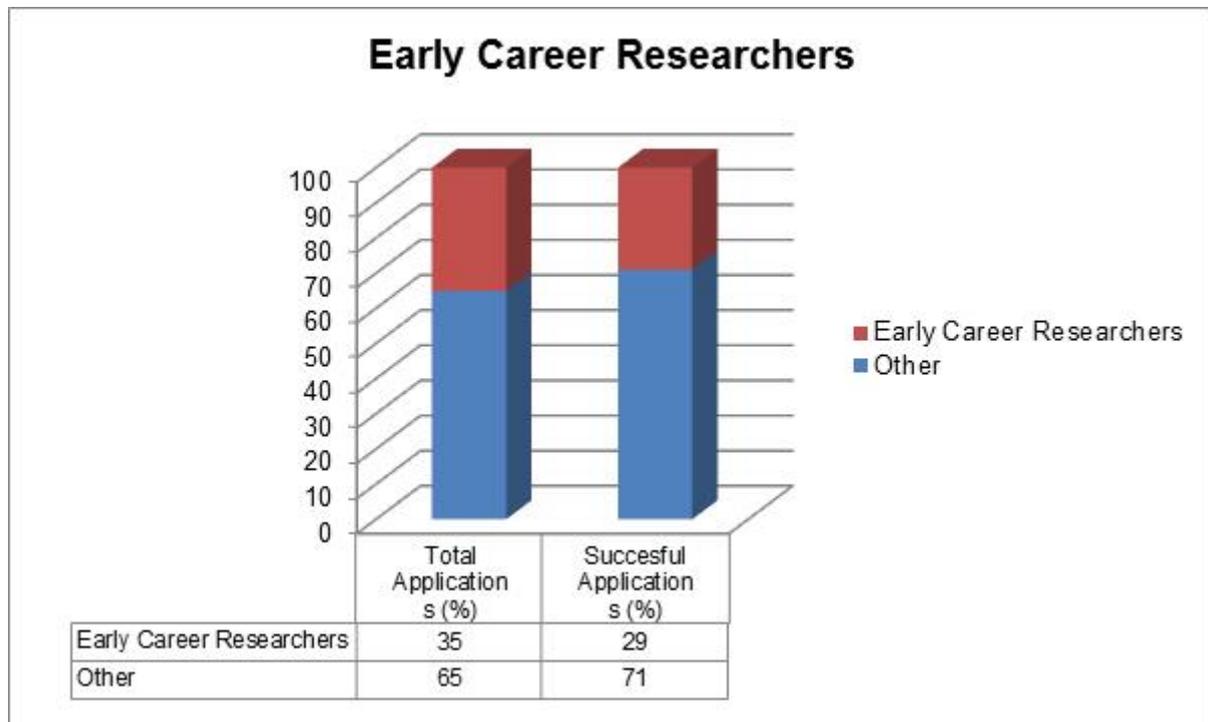
The chart below shows that the breakdown according to ethnic origin, the figures are similar for the total applications and the successful applications. This highlights that the representation of ethnic origin is equally proportioned at the application and successful application stage.



The total number of applications compared with successful applicants by age is reflected below, this highlights that each age bracket is similarly represented at both stages. For example 16% of total applicants fell in to the 35-39 age bracket and 16% of this bracket were successful.



This highlights that 14% more females applied for individual circumstances. Of the total applications 19% cited maternity as a reason. From the applications that were successful 24% more females were approved in comparison to males.



This shows that a significant number of Early Career Researcher applications were successful.