

# SCONUL Equality, Diversity and Inclusion statistics report: Ethnicity of our workforce 2021-22

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## Foreword from the SCONUL Chairs

The SCONUL Board is pleased to share the findings of the EDI Statistics for 2022-23. We hope this is just a starting point in bringing together this data and taking decisive action off the back of it. Getting to this point has been a great deal of work and we are thankful for the work carried out by Dr Mohammad Ishaq and Dr Asifa Maaria Hussain, which looked into the experiences of global majority staff in libraries and also the authors of the SCONUL EDI benchmarking project report, whose recommendations guided this work.

# 1 Introduction

Following the publication of SCONUL's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarking Report (SCONUL,2022), and as part of our on-going commitment to help drive improvements in equality, diversity and inclusion across the library sector<sup>1</sup>, data on the ethnic diversity of the workforce have been captured for the first time. This work came off the back of a previous report, commissioned by SCONUL, which looked at the experience of global majority staff in a library setting.

We have tried to be mindful in our use of language and so have moved away from using the term BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic), which the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities suggested should be phased out in 2021. We are now using the terms global majority and also UK ethnic minority, recognising the diverse make-up of the world population that isn't represented in the same way in the UK. We use these terms interchangeably in this report.

The purpose of the collection of this data has been to gain a greater understanding of the ethnic make-up of SCONUL members workforce to inform future actions to improve diversity in the library workforce and to provide a benchmark against which to assess progress in addressing inequality. It is designed to complement the work being undertaken by CILIP<sup>2</sup>, but also to give a greater understanding, not only of numbers, but more granular details around job titles, salary, contract types, working patterns and length of time in current role. This is important because equity requires more than just fairness in terms of number of staff employed, but also fairness in terms of pay, job security, promotion and career development.

A total of 87 institutions provided data for at least one of the EDI questions – 55% of the 157 respondents to the 2021-22 SCONUL survey overall. However, in some instances,

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<sup>1</sup> SCONUL has 190 members, comprised of University, National and Research libraries. A full list of members can be found here: <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/members-and-representatives>

<sup>2</sup> CILIP's workforce mapping report is available here: <https://www.cilip.org.uk/general/custom.asp?page=workforcemapping>

respondents indicated that their data was not complete and so the analysis that follows is based on data provided by a total of 83 respondents (53% of the respondents to the 2021-22 SCONUL survey). It is important to note that the analysis that follows is based on a subset of the workforce in the library sector and may not be representative of the sector overall.

For clarity, ethnic categories have been grouped as follows:

- **White** includes White, White - Scottish, Irish Traveller, Gypsy or Traveller, plus Other White background
- **Black** includes Black or Black British - Caribbean, Black or Black British - African, and other Black background
- **Asian** includes Asian or Asian British - Indian, Asian or Asian British - Pakistani, Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi, Chinese, and other Asian background
- **Mixed** includes mixed - White and Black Caribbean, mixed - White and Black African, mixed - White and Asian, other mixed background
- **Other** includes Arab and other ethnic background
- **Not known** also includes those cases where 'information refused' was selected

These categories represent the HESA categories for university staff and while we recognise the limitations and flaws of this categorisation, they have been used to try and make the data collection for member institutions easier. We do recognise the particular challenges this presents for our CONUL members, around some very problematic language, and will undertake a full review of our categorisation in 2024. Our reporting has used the broader categories and indicated <5 when there are low numbers in a category to minimise the risk of staff being identified in the findings.

## 2 Headline findings

Our initial findings show:

- lower levels of global majority staff in senior positions in libraries
- a higher percentage of global majority staff in lower paid positions, compared with higher bands
- higher rates of global majority staff on insecure and part-time work.

## 3 Detailed findings

### 3.1 Job role

The first chart below (Figure 1) shows the number of staff from all ethnicities in the different job roles. Unsurprisingly, para-professional staff make up the largest part of the workforce, followed by professional staff, which comprises roles like liaison, digital and special collections librarians, as well as academic skills advisors. “Other” roles are largely ancillary posts, like shelvers and security. Managers and senior managers make up a far smaller proportion of the workforce, which highlights the difficulty in getting promotion to these types of role.

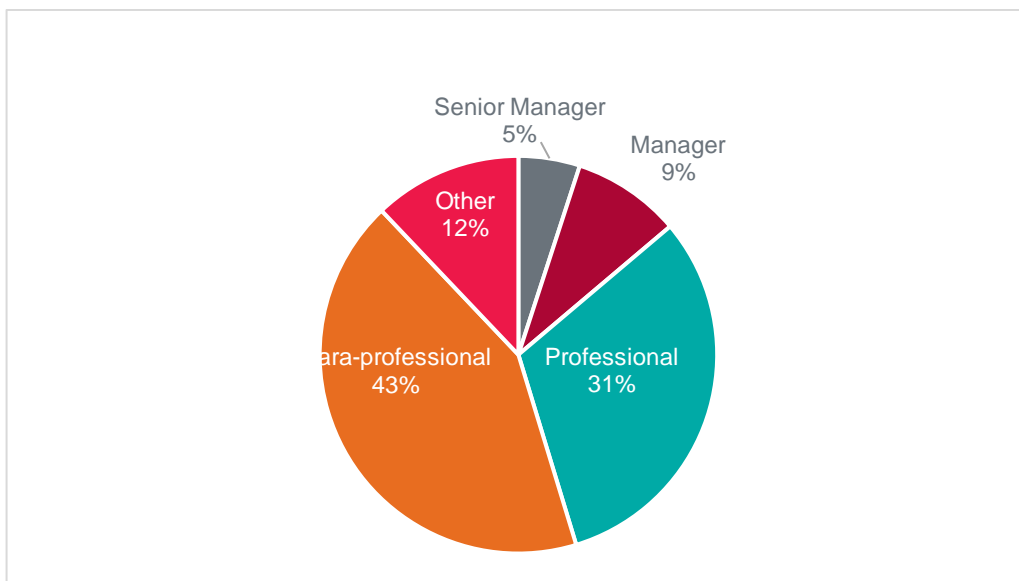


Figure 1: Job roles (ALL)

Overall, 79 institutions provided the breakdown of staff by their job role – representing 38% of the total FTE of staff provided in question 1.5 of the SCONUL return.



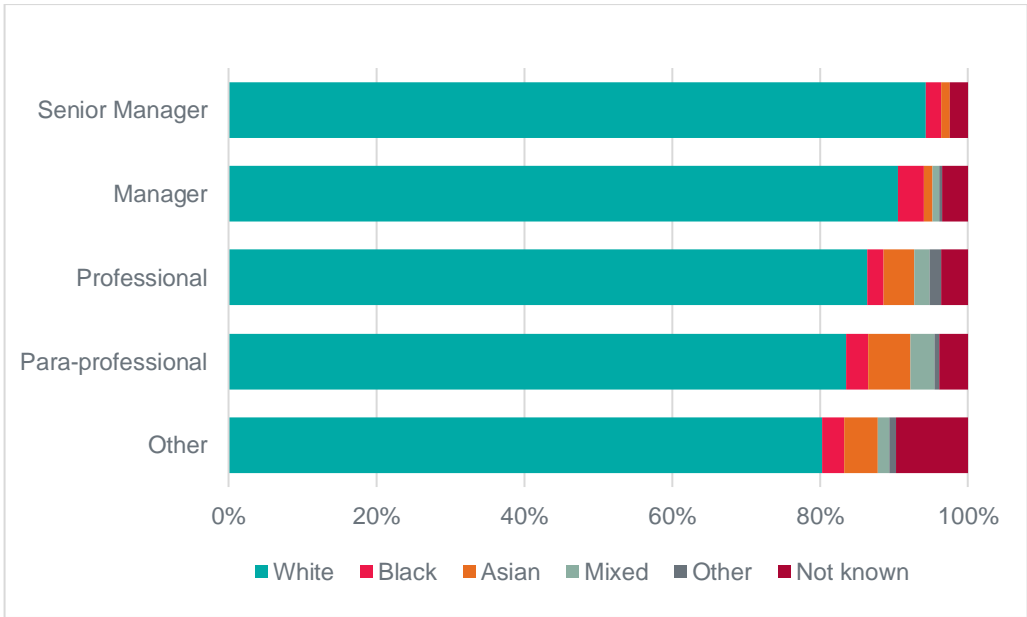


Figure 2: Job role by ethnicity

Figure 2 illustrates that staff from a white background account for 80% or more of staff within each job role at responding institutions – ranging from 80% of ‘other’ staff to 94% of senior managers. Overall, it was not known which ethnic group 9.7% of ‘other’ staff identified with, and it is possible that these were staff in roles such as security (which is often outsourced) and student shelvers (which are largely casual roles). It is likely institutions might not have the required information for these staff.

This question was created to understand the ethnic diversity at all levels in libraries, but we were particularly interested in middle and upper management levels and the level of career progression. Disappointingly, the number of global majority staff decreases as you move up the career ladder and these figures provide an important insight to the current lack of equity within the library workforce, and a spur to action for the community to address this inequality.

### 3.2 Pay Bands

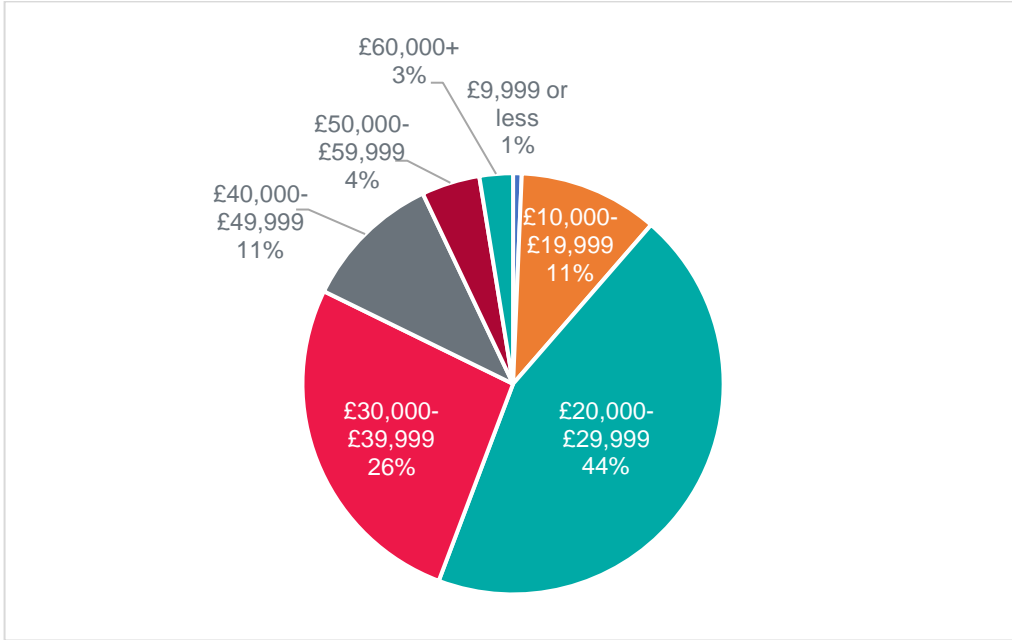


Figure 3: Pay bands (ALL)

Figure 3 shows the percentage of staff in each pay band. Overall, 78 institutions provided the breakdown of staff by their pay bands – representing 45% of the total FTE of staff provided in question 1.5 of the SCONUL return.

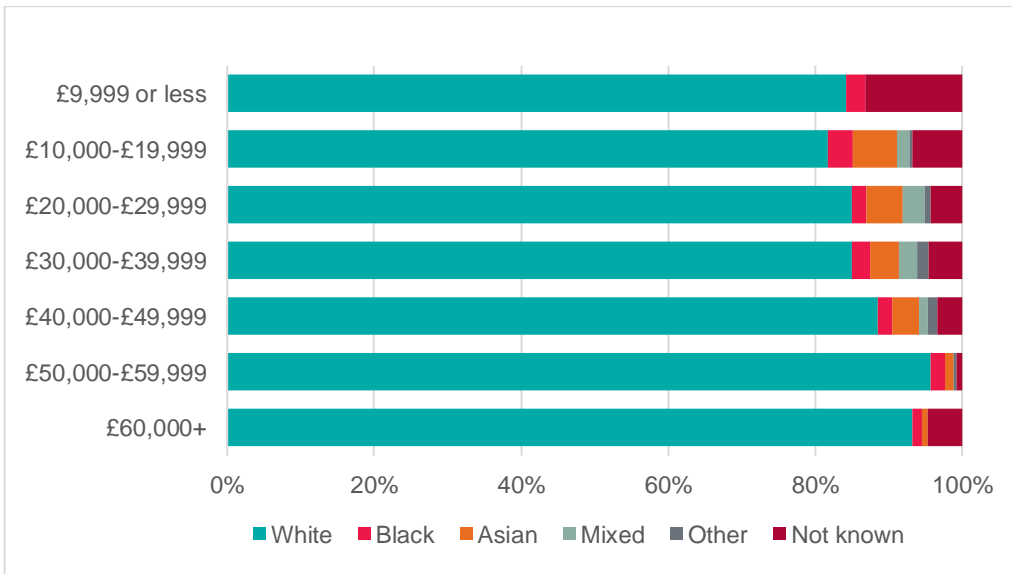


Figure 4: Salary bands by ethnicity

Figure 4 displays the ethnic groups of staff by their salary bands and highlights that staff from a white background accounted for more than 80% of staff in each salary band at responding institutions, with staff from a white background accounting for more than 90% of staff with a salary band of £50,000 or more. This aligns with the results of the first question, which show fewer global majority staff in senior management positions.

### 3.3 Contract status

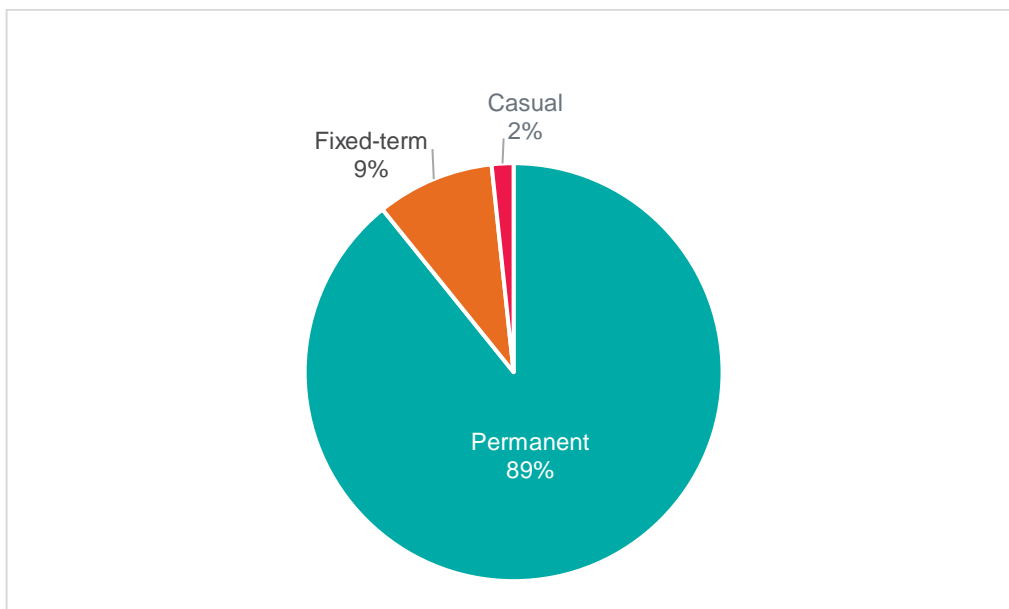


Figure 5: Contract status (ALL)

Figure 5 shows the contract status of all staff. Overall, the SCONUL community has much stability in its staffing, with almost 90% of staff on permanent contracts and only 2% on casual hours contracts. The majority of casual contracts are likely to be students employed in some capacity but might also cover security staff.

Overall, 81 institutions provided the breakdown of staff by their contract status – representing 45% of the total FTE of staff provided in question 1.5 of the SCONUL return.

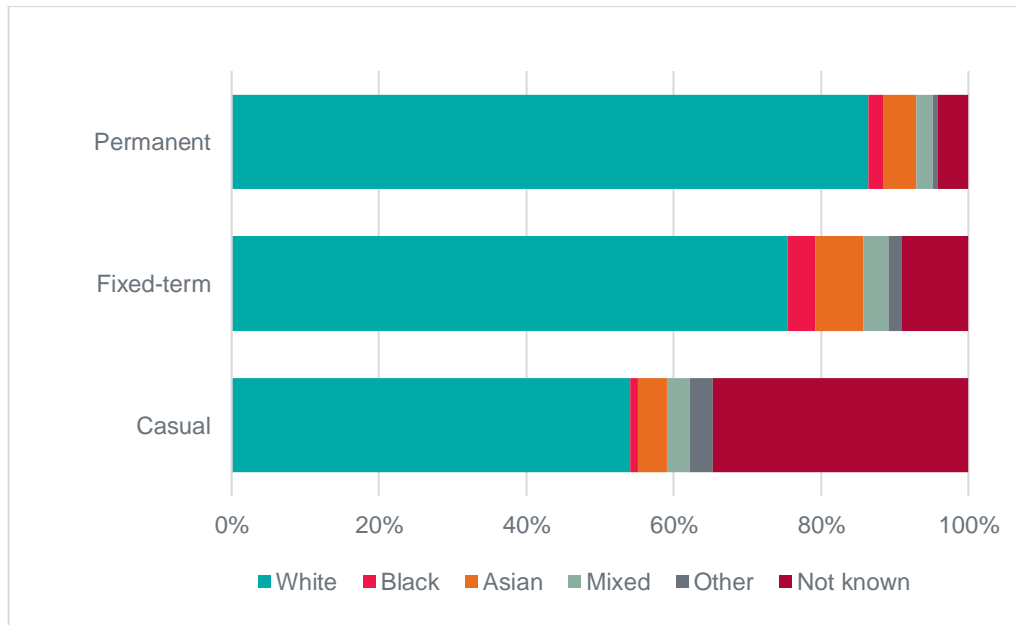


Figure 6: Contract status by ethnicity

Figure 6 highlights that, at responding institutions, 86% of permanent library staff were from a white background, compared to 75% of staff on a fixed-term contract and 54% of casual staff. Overall, it was not known which ethnic group 35% of casual staff identified with, and several institutions noted that they do not collect this data from their casual staff such as student shelvers. Global majority staff do appear to have slightly elevated levels of fixed term contracts which again is a matter of concern and something that the SCONUL community collectively needs to address.

### 3.4 Work pattern

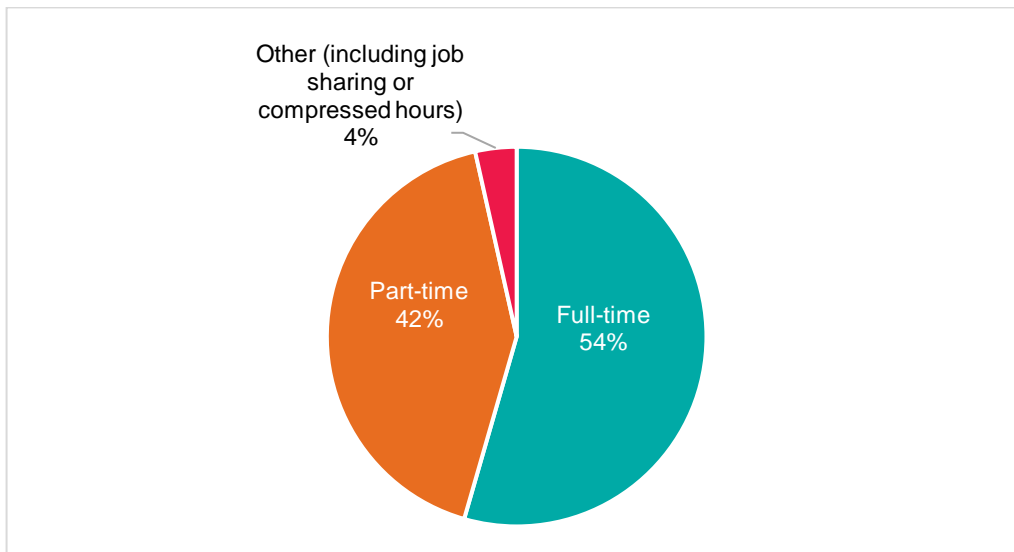


Figure 7: Work patterns (ALL)

Figure 7 shows that slightly more than half of the workforce works on a full-time basis. The reported figure of 4% for compressed hours and job share was lower than we expected, but it is possible these work patterns were largely reported under part-time hours.

Overall, 80 institutions provided the breakdown of staff by their work pattern – representing 45% of the total FTE of staff provided in question 1.5 of the full SCONUL return.

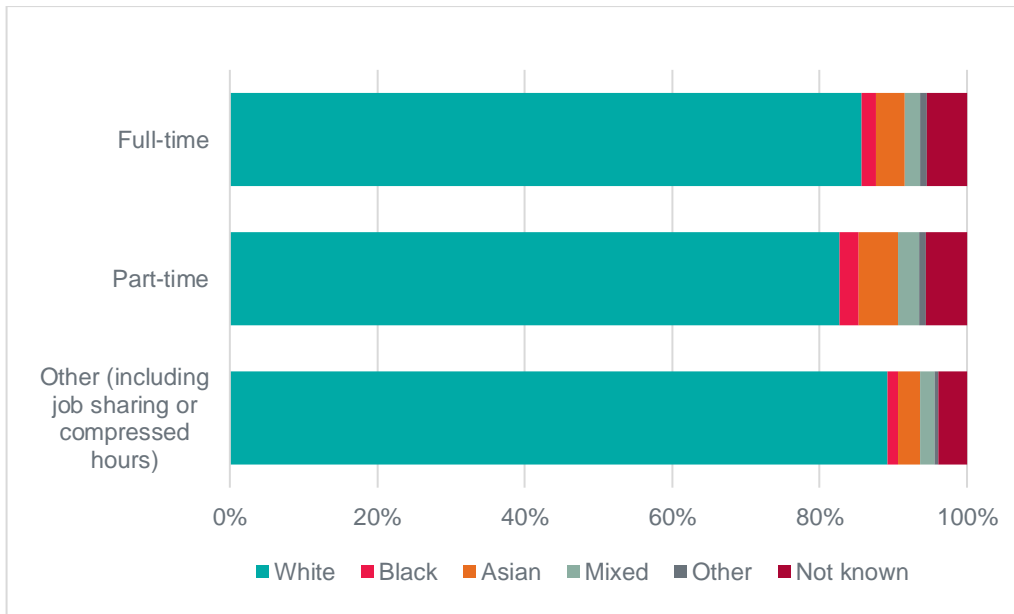


Figure 8: Work patterns by ethnicity

Figure 8 highlights that, at responding institutions, 83% of part-time library staff were from a white background, compared to 86% of full-time staff and 89% of staff on an 'other' work pattern (including job sharing or compressed hours). Work patterns are difficult to assess, without an understanding of an individual's preferred pattern. Some workers are on part-time or compressed contracts to work around caring responsibilities, but some workers would prefer full time hours, but have been unable to secure them. Often part time hours are available for out of hours and weekend cover, so this may highlight more global majority staff in these roles, which would tie in with the job role and salary banding questions.

### 3.5 Duration in current employment

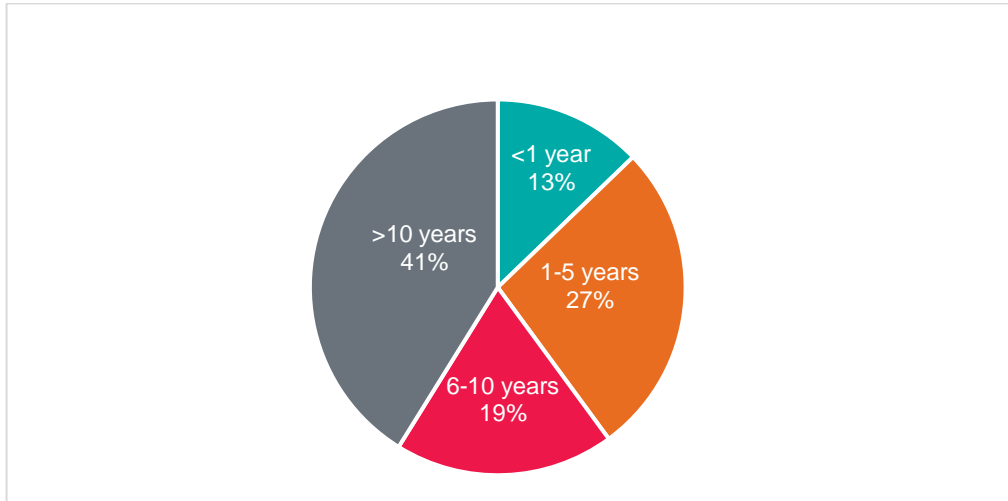


Figure 9: Duration in current employment (ALL)

Figure 9 shows a large proportion of the workforce have been in their roles over 10 years, with only a small proportion less than one year. This ties in with CILIP's work on the overall library sector (which is wider than the SCONUL membership) that there is not a great turnover of staff and that gaining a promotion can be challenging as jobs don't come up very often (Kinetiq, 2023). Low turnover can be very useful in terms of stability and retaining knowledge, but it can also reduce innovation and diversity.

Overall, 80 institutions provided the breakdown of staff by the duration in their current employment – representing 45% of the total FTE of staff provided in question 1.5 of the SCONUL return.

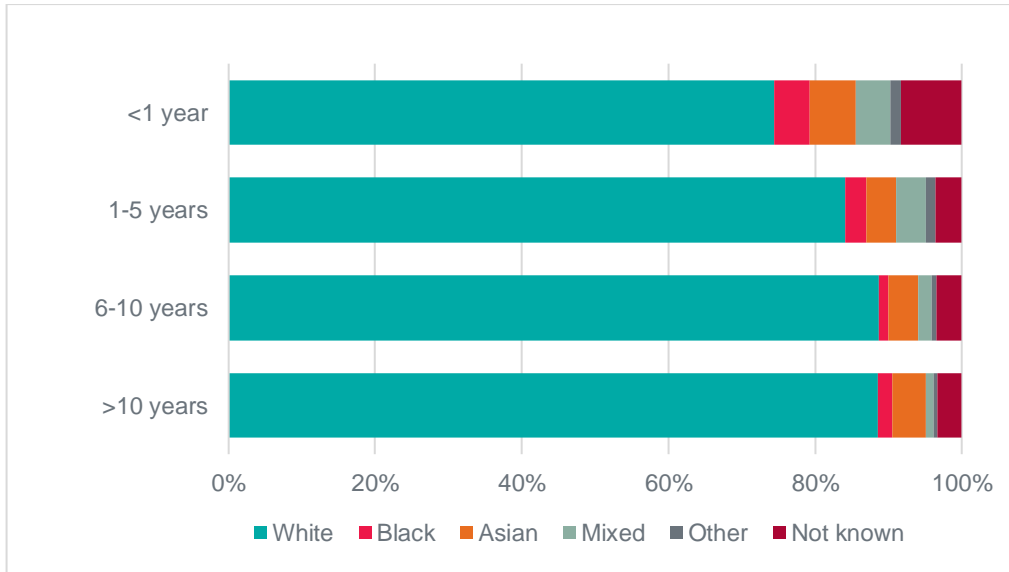


Figure 10: Duration in current employment by ethnicity

At responding institutions, library staff from a white background accounted for more than 85% of staff that had been in their current employment for more than one year and 74% of staff that had been in their current employment for less than one year.

Following on from this, staff from the global majority accounted for a larger proportion of staff that had been in their current employment for less than one year (17%) than for those staff in their current employment for more than one year (9.4%). Again this is a matter for concern and for action on the part of the SCONUL community.



## 4 Population level data

SCONUL did not ask for a general breakdown of the ethnicity of staff working in libraries, but we used the data from question 10.1.c, which had the largest number of respondents, which we could map against the different populations of the UK and Ireland. The Scottish Census data for 2022 has not yet been published, so the results are from the 2011 census and likely to be out of date.

The caveat for this data is that it only equates to 45% of the full SCONUL membership, so it is not a direct comparison and only represents some staff in SCONUL libraries. The results are presented here. The CILIP Workforce Mapping data is included to show another view of the sector demographics, but it must be stated that this work was undertaken using a different methodology and sampling set, so it is not intended to be a direct comparison. We thank CILIP for allowing us to include this data.

	Staff working in SCONUL libraries <sup>3</sup>	CILIP Workforce Mapping (2023) <sup>4</sup>	General population (Eng & Wales)	General population (Scotland)	General population (Northern Ireland)	General population ROI
White	84.8%	91.9%	81.7%	96.0%	96.6%	87.4%
Black	2.3%	0.8%	4.0%	1.1%	0.6%	1.5%
Asian	4.6%	1.4%	9.3%	2.7%	1.6%	3.3%
Mixed background <sup>5</sup>	2.3%	1.7%	2.9%		0.8%	
Other (inc. Arab)	0.9%	4.2% <sup>6</sup>	2.1%	0.9%	0.3%	1.7%
Not known	2.4%					

<sup>3</sup> The number of respondents was 5,809 from 81 institutions, comprising 45% of the membership

<sup>4</sup> This work was undertaken on the wider library population, but the report doesn't state the number of respondents. It formed a small part of a larger study of library, knowledge management and archive staff

<sup>5</sup> In Scotland and the Republic of Ireland, this category forms part of the 'other' return

<sup>6</sup> CILIP's 'other' category included 'prefer not to say'



There are differences between the recently reported CILIP statistics and the SCONUL EDI statistics, but there could be several reasons for this, including the caveats noted in the paragraph above. The SCONUL data only covers 45% of the membership and we have no way of knowing what this would extrapolate to at 100%. There is the possibility that the institutions reporting back to SCONUL had a higher than average number of global majority staff amongst their ranks, or it is also possible that academic libraries have a higher level of global majority staff than other areas in the profession, such as public libraries. SCONUL is working to achieve greater reporting numbers for the next return, so this might give us greater clarity in the next report.

We can see from the results, that there is still work to be done in having the library workforce more closely represent the general population, despite the promising initiatives undertaken to date.

## 5 Feedback from the sector on the collection of data

As this was the first year of collecting EDI data, the community gave some useful feedback on their experiences of collecting this data. Some HR departments were unwilling to release the data, due to concerns around GDPR compliance and the risk of identifying staff where the numbers of global majority staff were low despite the commitment to only publish data at sector level. This was a particular problem in smaller institutions where the overall staffing numbers were lower.

Whilst HR departments did largely hold details of their staffs' ethnicity, this wasn't always broken down into the categories that SCONUL had specified and some libraries found themselves having to undertake that work manually.

## 6 Next steps for SCONUL

We remain committed to gathering this data and tracking it across time. This is important as it shines a spotlight on current inequalities and helps the sector to understand the work that needs to be done to address these. Following feedback and discussions with the sector, we have identified a number of steps that we will take to try and drive up response rates across the sector and will undertake the following work in 2023/24:

1. Develop a data sharing statement and agreement to give to HR departments, to secure the release of the data in line with GDPR principles and work with UHR to publicise the EDI statistics work amongst their members.
2. Collect the question set separate from the main statistical benchmarking return, in a survey tool. Only one member of staff will have access to the data and the published results will be aggregated across the sector.
3. Review the question set for the next return with the EDI Statistics Working group, comprised of membership from the SCONUL Board, SCONUL office and Statistics Steering Group for sign off by the SCONUL Board.
4. Review the HESA categories for the 2024 return, with sign off from the parties listed above.
5. Continue to develop the EDI co-ordinating group, comprised of membership from SCONUL, RLUK, CILIP, SCURL, WHELP and others to release a quarterly newsletter and develop other resources.
6. Continue to work on initiatives to improve the diversity of library staff, including work on positive action, diversity in recruitment, work with Advance HE on Leading Change on Race and the development of a leadership programme for global majority staff, in conjunction with the bodies named above.

## 7 References

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## Appendix 1: Tables

Table 1: Job role by ethnicity

	Senior Manager	Manager	Professional	Para-professional	Other	Total
White	233	395	1,342	1,759	479	4,208
Black	5	15	36	61	18	135
Asian	3	5	64	121	27	220
Mixed	0	4	31	67	10	112
Other	0	2	25	16	5	48
Not known	6	15	56	80	58	215
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>1,554</b>	<b>2,104</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>4,938</b>

*Not known includes information refused*

Table 2 – Salary bands by ethnicity

	£9,999 or less	£10,000-£19,999	£20,000-£29,999	£30,000-£39,999	£40,000-£49,999	£50,000-£59,999	£60,000+	Total
White	32	504	2,170	1,297	545	247	138	4,933
Black	1	21	50	38	12	5	2	129
Asian	0	37	127	59	23	3	1	250
Mixed	0	11	75	38	7	0	0	131
Other	0	2	20	24	8	1	0	55
Not known	5	42	111	69	21	2	7	257
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>2,553</b>	<b>1,525</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>5,755</b>

*Not known includes information refused*

Table 3 – Contract status by ethnicity

	Permanent	Fixed-term	Casual	Total
White	4,476	399	53	4,928
Black	113	20	1	134
Asian	225	35	4	264
Mixed	114	18	3	135
Other	40	9	3	52
Not known	214	48	34	296
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,182</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>5,809</b>

*Not known includes information refused*

Table 4 – Work patterns by ethnicity

	Full-time	Part-time	Other (including job sharing or compressed hours)	Total
White	2,707	2,016	182	4,905
Black	63	64	3	130
Asian	123	129	6	258
Mixed	65	69	4	138
Other	27	23	1	51
Not known	174	136	8	318
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,159</b>	<b>2,437</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>5,800</b>

Table 5 – Duration in employment by ethnicity

	<1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	>10 years	Total
White	546	1,308	963	2,090	4,907
Black	36	45	14	48	143
Asian	46	64	44	107	261
Mixed	35	63	19	24	141
Other	10	20	8	13	51
Not known	61	56	37	78	232
<b>Total</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>1,556</b>	<b>1,085</b>	<b>2,360</b>	<b>5,735</b>

*Not known includes information refused*



