



Representation & Democracy
Making sure your voice is heard



This Guide is for Under Represented Groups.

This guide will present information and facts on under represented groups and show the importance of them and why they are needed in student leadership.

Under represented does not mean that they are a minority, rather that these groups do not attain decision making positions and their voices are not heard when decisions are being made.

Under represented groups in terms of Students' Unions encompass some of the following groups:

- ☐ Women
- ☐ International students
- ☐ LGBT
- ☐ Disabled
- ☐ Black (and ethnic minorities)
- ☐ Mature Students (aged 21 or over when starting their Undergraduate Degree, or aged 25 or over when starting their Postgraduate Degree)
- ☐ Student Parents
- ☐ Post Graduate students
- ☐ Part Time and distance learners

The University of Sheffield has a total number of 25,805 students.

3,114 students are Part Time

6,916 of our students are studying Post- Graduate Degrees

54% of students are women

26% of students are International

Approx 137 different nationalities at Sheffield

The largest International group at Sheffield are students from China (2,009)

24% of students are Mature

Approx 1,000 Student Parents

Estimated 7-10% of students are LGBT

Here are some statistics of all the full time student officers in the country from 2010-2011:

2% were student parents

3% had a physical impairment

11% Black and ethnic minorities

21% of Presidents are women

38% of Sabbatical Officers are women



Here is a list of statistics and information affecting these groups.

Women Students

There has not been a woman President at Sheffield SU in 10 years.
30% of students who ran for an Officer position last year were women.
Currently 75% of the Officer team are men.

The Office for National Statistics reported that the pay gap between men and women (taking into account both part-time and full-time employees) now stands at 19%.

Black Students:

67% of white students receive First of Upper Second Class Honours Degrees
37% of black students receive First of Upper Second Class Honours Degrees

Black Students earn up to 9% less than their white peers after graduation

They suffer disproportionate mental health problems.

Nearly one in six (15.8%) students reported that they had experienced racism in their current educational institution. From the qualitative data, it was clear that although this racism was often hard to quantify, it had a negative impact on students' attainment and overall satisfaction of their course.

LGBT Students

Half of LGBT students report negative treatment from their fellow students because of their sexuality.

1 in 7 students choose their institution because they perceive it to be gay friendly

Student Parents

60% of students with children or caring responsibilities in Higher Education have considered leaving their course. There are structural barriers to education and even completing education.

77% of Student Parents (81% for lone parents) do not feel it is easy to get involved in University life.

Disabled Students

One in four students with a physical impairment are victims of prejudice and hate crime.

The Government's cuts and welfare reform plans affecting the Disabled Students' Allowance and the Disability Living Allowance.



International Students

There is a lack of awareness of the benefits of cultural exchange and this can inhibit integration between home and international students and prevent global perspective.

The new and ever changing immigration rules mean that overseas students face additional barriers and are often prevented them being in the country at the start of their course.

Currently the only international student on the Officer team is the International Students' Officer (and they have to be an international student!). Yet 26% of our students are International?

Mature and Post Graduate Students

It is likely that the University will see a negative impact on the participation of these groups if they do not receive more support.

No one on the current Officer team are, or have been, a Post Graduate or a Mature student.

Currently for Post Graduate Taught students there is no funding system in place. PG education was ignored by the Browne Review and the Government. With fees rising for PG students there needs to be some assistance.

Mature students are more likely to be debt averse and with the new fee regime this will mean that they may not end up applying to University.

CHANGE

It's not all doom and gloom. If more under represented people start to run for elections or participate in the Students' Union structures, issues like these start to be heard. Your voice starts to be heard. You can start to raise these issues to ensure students get the support they need and the University and Students' Union can become a better place for everyone.

Representation for these groups is vital in order to be aware and understand the experiences they face. So if you care about the issues affecting you and under represented groups and want to make change in the Students' Union, University, local community and beyond! Why not to be a student officer?

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/union/you-run-us/elections/>