



# ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNICITIES IN UK POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

Following the recent [notice of a joint Research England and Office for Students funding competition to reduce inequalities in postgraduate research](#), this UKCGE Policy Briefing gives an overview of access and participation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) postgraduate researchers (PGRs).

*The following briefing uses data and data categories from the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA), with support from Research England.*

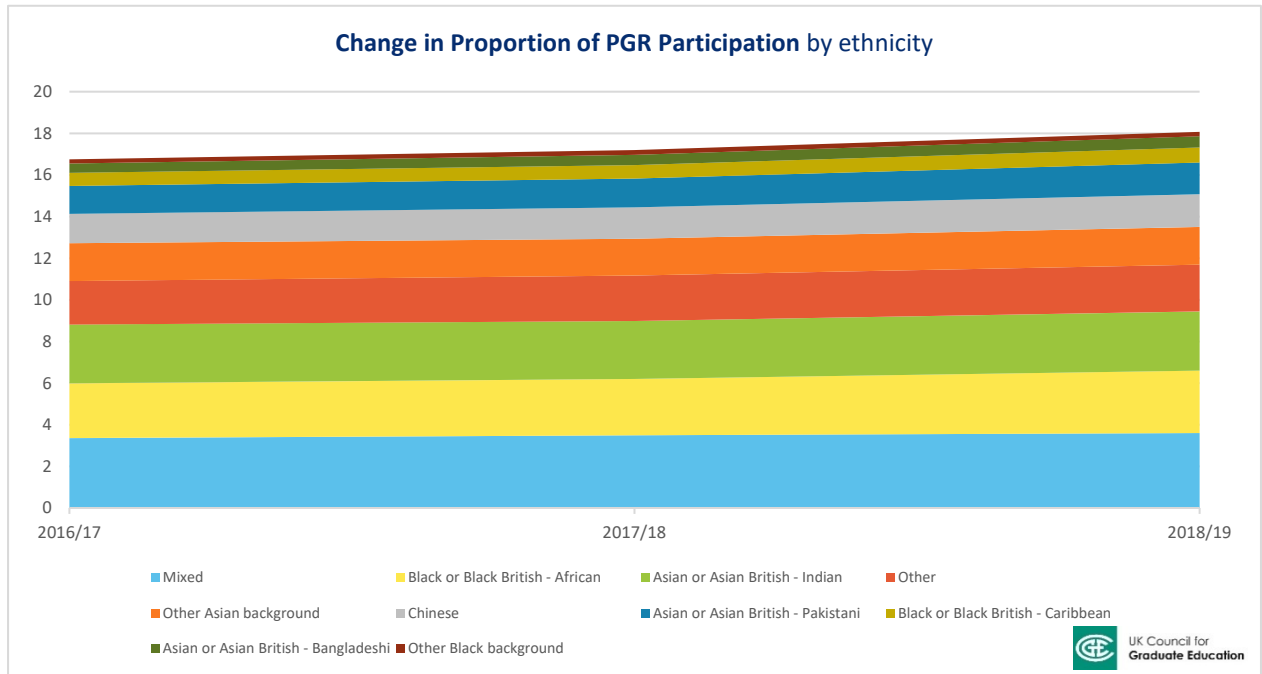
## Summary

There are important differences in the inequalities between different ethnic groups in relation to postgraduate research, the following summary should be taken as an illustrative overview only:

- The proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students enrolled in UK HE in 2018/19 drops from 24.81% at undergraduate level to 18.07% at postgraduate research level (excluding enrolments where ethnicity is unknown).
- Between 2016/17 – 2018/19 there was a growth of 1.3% in the proportion of BAME PGRs.
- In 2018/19, 48.19% of BAME PGRs received no award or financial backing for their tuition fee, as compared with 32.66% of White PGRs.
- 18.91% of White PGRs qualified in 2018/19, as opposed to 16.13% of BAME PGRs.

## Diversity of UK Postgraduate Research

For the period 2016/17 – 2018/9, ethnicity data for 43.5% of the PGR population is unknown. This has been excluded from graph below. (NB [HESA uses “Unknown” to denote PGRs who are Non-UK domiciled](#)).

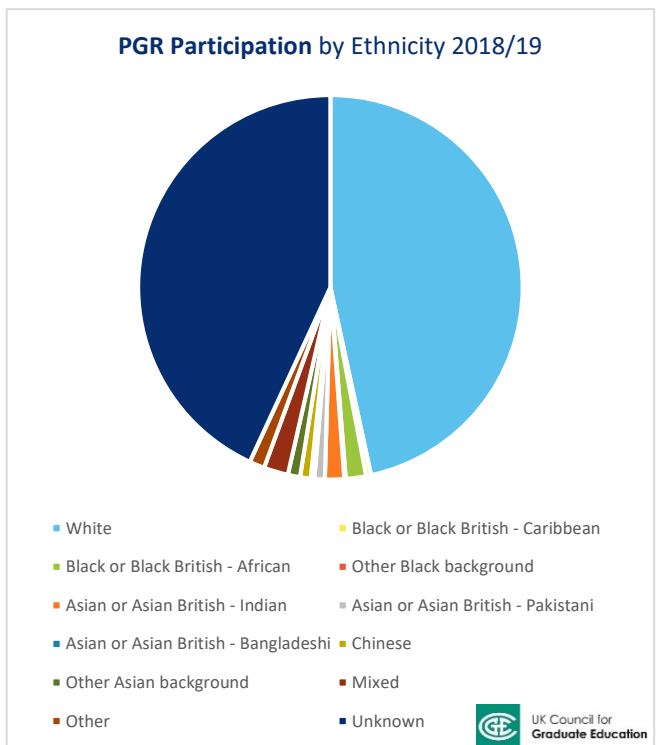


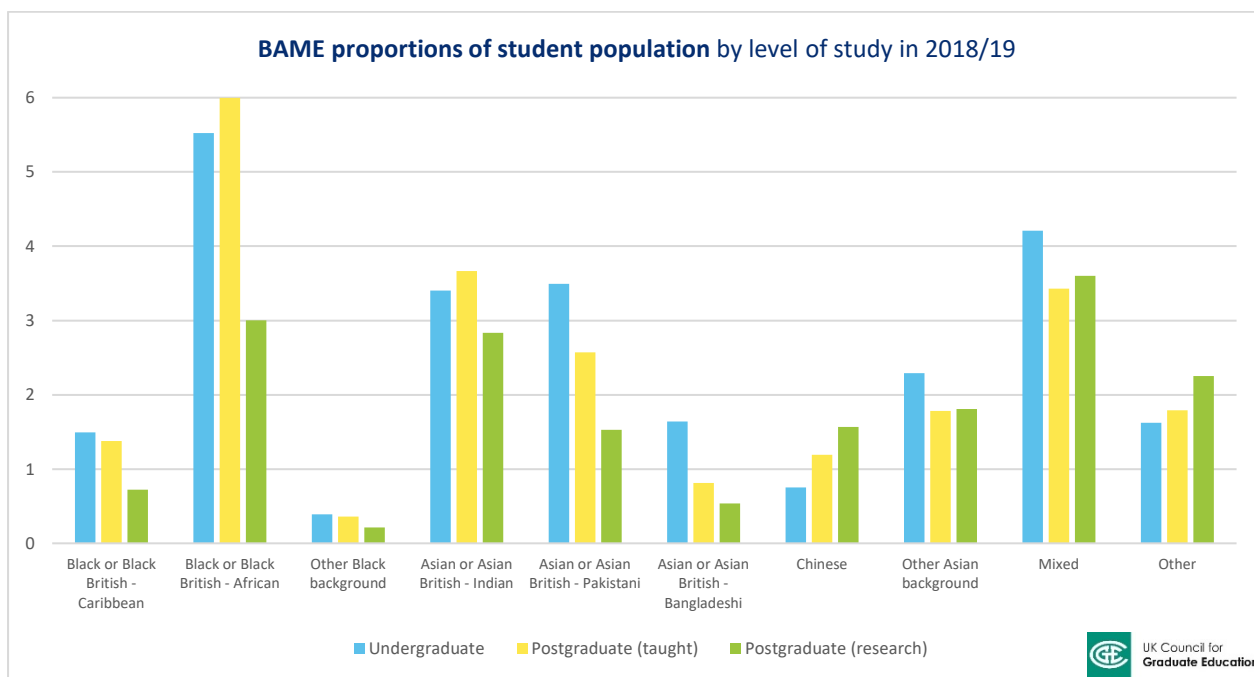
Between 2016/17 and 2018/19 the proportion of White PGRs dropped 1.3% from 83.24% to 81.93%.

The largest growth among BAME participation was for Black or Black British – African PGRs, whose proportion of the total PGR population grew by 0.37% from 2.63% to 3%.

At this rate of growth, it would take 24 years for the proportion of Black or Black British – African PGRs to equal the equivalent proportion at PGT level (= 6%).

Given that 5 other ethnicities saw growth of less than 0.1% over that period, it seems unlikely that greater diversity in PGR participation will be achieved without direct intervention.



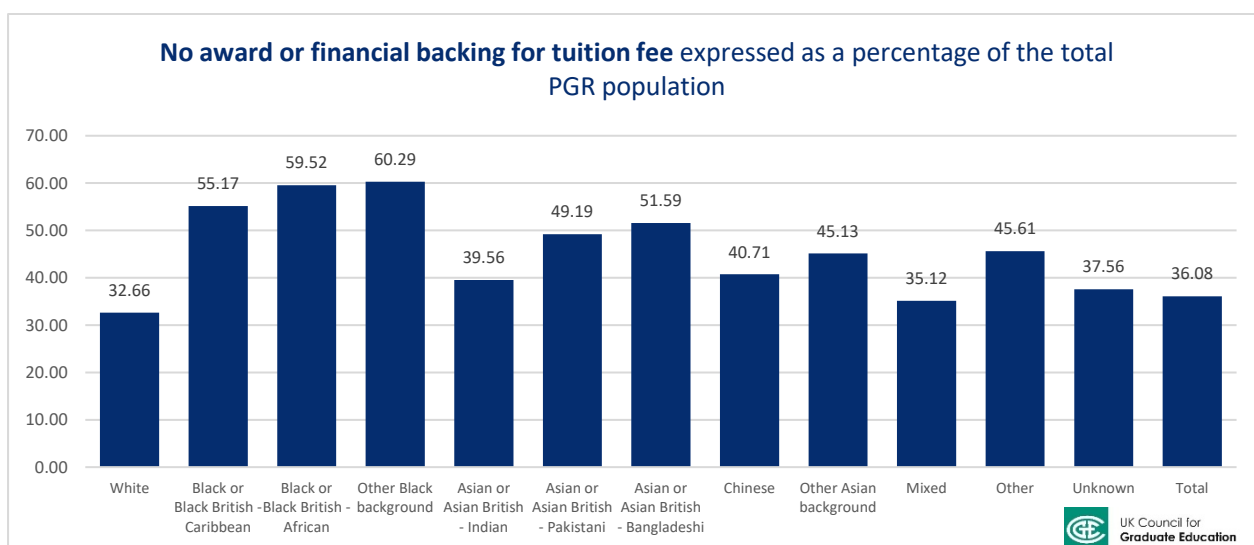


White student enrolments in 2018/19 were 75.19% at undergraduate level and 81.93% of the postgraduate research population, a difference of +6.74%.

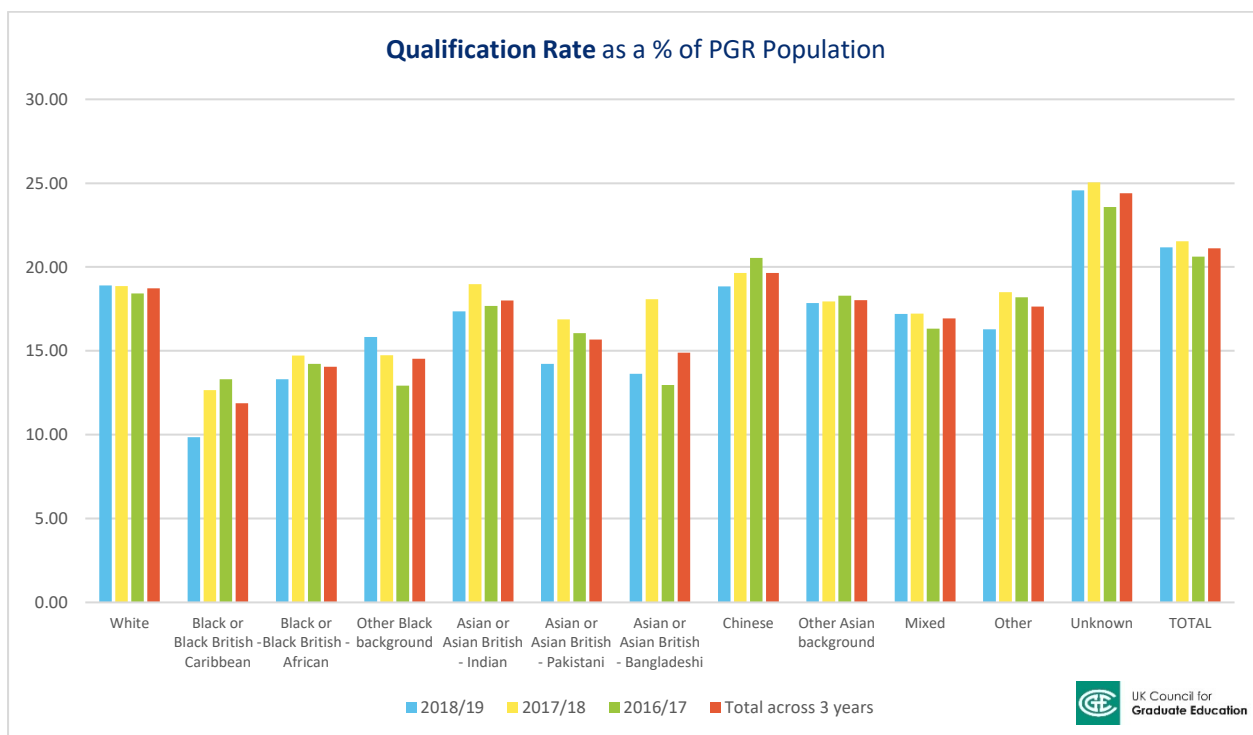
By contrast, the proportion of Black or Black British – African students, for example, was 5.53% of undergraduate enrolments and 3% of the PGR population, a difference of -2.52%.

8 of the 10 minority ethnicities recorded a higher level of undergraduate participation as compared to postgraduate research in the same year.

## Success & Participation



All minority ethnicities are more likely than White PGRs to have no award or financial backing for tuition fees. For example, 32.66% of White PGRs had no financial backing to support the cost of their tuition fees, as compared with 59.52% of Black or Black British – African PGRs (a difference of 26.86%).



Submission rates by ethnicity are not publicly available. However, it is possible to compare the proportion of qualifiers within an ethnic group and level of study

For example, 18.91% of White PGRs qualified in 2018/19, as opposed to 13.3% of Black or Black British African PGRs.

There may be several determinants for this disparity in qualification rate for postgraduate researchers, including mode of study. However, the disparity may also indicate differences in access to support during write-up and / or success rates across ethnicities.

[ENDS]

If you would like to comment on this or any other development in postgraduate education, please write to our Director at: [owen.gower@ukcge.ac.uk](mailto:owen.gower@ukcge.ac.uk)