



British Philosophical Association



# Women in Philosophy in the UK

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On behalf of the British Philosophical Association and  
the Society for Women in Philosophy UK

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## Authorship & acknowledgements

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## Contents

Authorship & acknowledgements	2
1. Introduction	5
2. The data	6
Methodological note	6
The questionnaire results compared with 2011	6
The 2021 questionnaire results in tabular form	8
HESA data	8
Discussion	9
3. Research	9
Undergraduate studies	11
Implicit bias	12
Intersectional oppression	13
4. Actions & initiatives	14
Sexual harassment & sexual violence	14
Diversity in the curriculum	15
Athena SWAN	16
Equality Act 2010	17
5. The BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme	17
6. What (else) can we do?	18
Broader issues	19
7. References	20
8. Other resources referred to in this report	24
Blog posts & series	24
Websites	24
Policies & procedures	25
Schemes & initiatives	25

## I. Introduction

The BPA/SWIP report in 2011 (Beebee & Saul 2011) was the first ever report on women in philosophy in the UK. We are pleased to say that the ten years since then have seen an enormous and international upsurge in efforts to improve gender diversity in philosophy. In the UK, our focus, the BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme was instituted in 2014 and has now been adopted by some 28 UK philosophy departments and 13 learned societies (along with their associated journals), as well as a handful of overseas departments and societies. In 2015, Athena SWAN was extended to non-STEM subjects, offering an additional programme to help philosophy departments with these issues. And SWIP UK now has a long-running mentoring scheme for women in philosophy.

Although the 2011 report and the guidelines just mentioned focus on gender, we recognise that gender diversity cannot be addressed without attention to intersecting categories such as race, disability, and class. Minorities and Philosophy, with 19 chapters in the UK at last count, takes this point as foundational to its efforts. The BPA and SWIP have issued guidelines for accessible conferences and public lectures, and are working on a survey on race in philosophy in the UK. There is an enormous amount more to be done in this area, and we are currently falling short.

In this follow-up report, we again focus primarily on gender. We highlight some of the various initiatives that have emerged in the last ten years, and we give a brief overview of the vast amount of research that has been conducted on the under-representation of women in philosophy since 2011 (including work on intersectional oppression). We also present new data. The data show that there have been improvements across the board. On the other hand, they also reveal that we are still a long way from gender parity; at the current rate of progress it would take at least another 50 years to achieve parity at PhD student level, and 20 years to achieve parity at permanent staff level—though the latter is of course unlikely to occur unless there is a significant increase in the rate of progress of the former.

## 2. The data

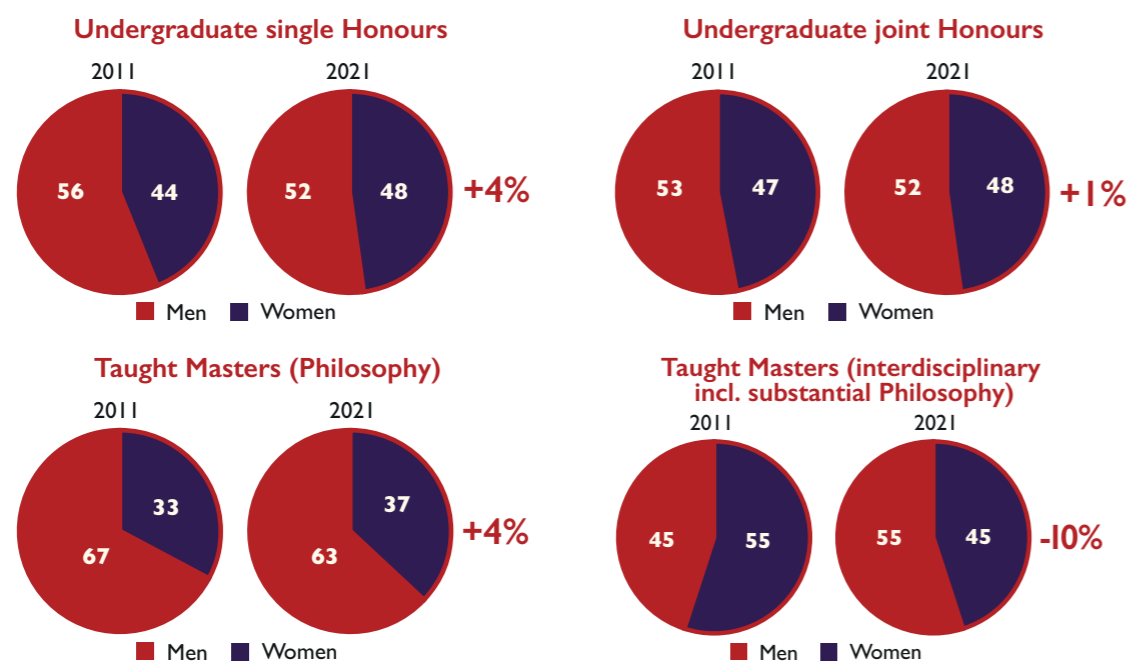
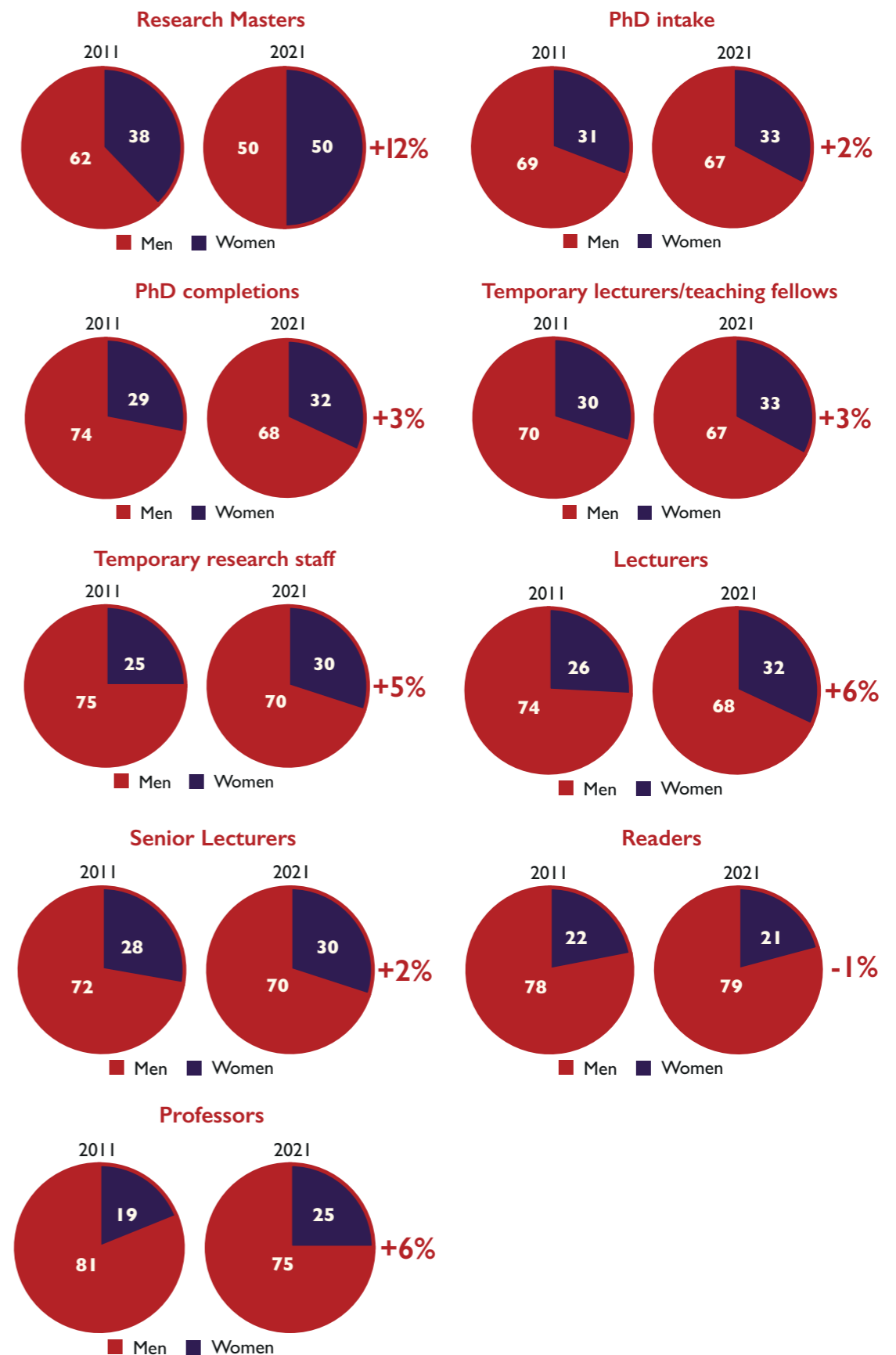
### Methodological note

As for the 2011 report, the data were gathered by means of a questionnaire distributed to heads of department. They were asked to provide raw numbers of male/female students/staff in each category as of the 2018–19 or 2019–20 academic year; or, in the case of undergraduates, raw numbers of students in a single year group. (A methodological note: the 2021 survey newly included a nonbinary gender category, but the numbers in this category were too small to include in the charts below. We suspect this is a substantial underestimation, due to inadequate reporting processes for students to change the gender on their records.)

41 departments participated, compared with 38 in 2011; the overall numbers of staff and students captured was slightly higher in 2021, covering 4,369 students, 531 casual and temporary teaching staff and 564 permanent staff compared with 3,823 students, 497 casual/temporary and 498 permanent staff in 2011. 28 departments participated in both studies; the difference between the statistics for those 28 departments in 2021 and for all participating 2021 departments was negligible so we can be reasonably confident that the changes between 2011 and 2021 are not merely a result of the change in which departments participated.

### The questionnaire results compared with 2011

The 2021 results in tabular form, including sample sizes and combined percentages for undergraduate, Masters, etc., can be found further down..



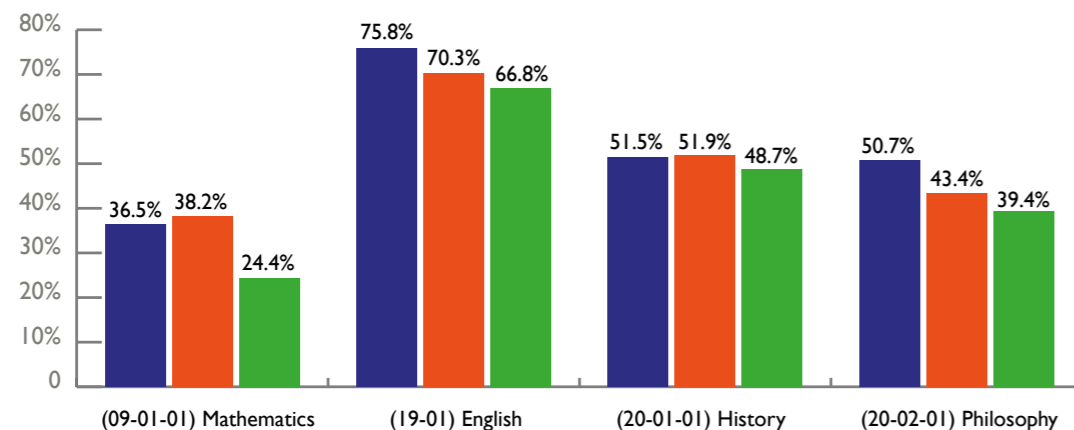
## The 2021 questionnaire results in tabular form

Level	% Women	Sample size
UG single Honours	48	1519
UG joint Honours	48	1503
<b>Women as % of UG students = 48% (2% increase from 2011)</b>		
Taught Masters (Philosophy)	37	625
Taught Masters (Interdisciplinary with significant philosophy input)	45	173
Research Masters	50	113
<b>Women as % of Masters students = 40% (3% increase from 2011)</b>		
PhD intake	33	268
PhD completions	32	157
<b>Women as % of PhD students = 33% (2% increase from 2011)</b>		
Casual teaching staff (inc. TAs)	33	361
Temporary lecturer / teaching fellows	33	55
Temporary research staff	30	115
<b>Women as % of temporary staff = 32% (4% increase from 2011)</b>		
Lecturers	32	208
Senior Lecturers	30	127
Readers	21	51
Professors	25	178
<b>Women as % of permanent staff = 30% (6% increase from 2011)</b>		

## HESA data

The following graphs come from the UK's Higher Education Statistics Agency:

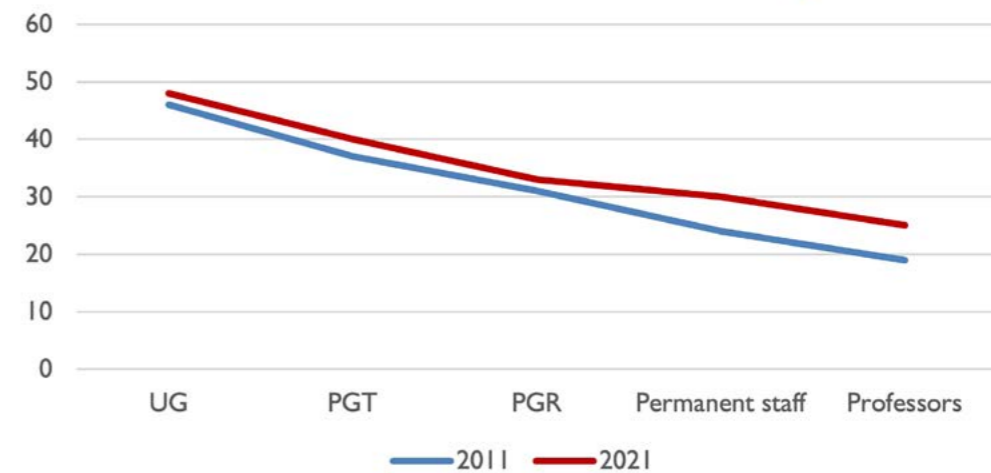
### Proportion of female students on First Degree (new entrants), PGT (all registered), and PGR (all registered), HESA returns 2019/2020



## Discussion

In general, the data from the current survey paint a picture of slight improvement at nearly all levels, with substantial improvement in the percentage of permanent staff who are women (up from 24% to 30%, see the table above) and in the percentage of professors who are women, (up from 19% to 25%). Nonetheless, there is clearly still much to do: women continue to enrol on philosophy courses in numbers very close to men (48%, up from 44% in 2011), but they continue to leave the field starting at MA level and then yet more at PhD level. While women are slightly better represented at undergraduate, Masters and PhD levels than they were in 2011, the drop-off between undergraduate and PhD remains unchanged at 15 percentage points.

### % women at different career stages



The Higher Education Statistics Agency data (see above) shows a similar trend amongst students, with a roughly 5% improvement at each level since 2011—women making up 45% of all undergraduates, 38% of PGTs and 35% of PGRs designated as 'philosophy' by HESA in 2020. (For US data, see e.g. [Schwitzgebel et al. 2021](#) and the [women-in-philosophy.org data page](#).)

Overall, these figures suggest to us that it would be well worth focusing attention particularly (though obviously not exclusively) on ways that undergraduate and post-graduate experiences for women can be improved.

## 3. Research

Perhaps the most significant change since we published the 2011 report has been the explosion of research attention devoted to the issue of the underrepresentation of women in philosophy. While the underrepresentation of women in academia was already well studied, especially in STEM, there had been virtually no empirical research relating to women in philosophy. There has now been a huge amount of work in this

area. While it was relatively easy to summarise the research then, it is simply not feasible now. Articles that survey some of this work are [Thompson 2017](#), [Kings 2019](#), and [Holroyd and Saul 2018](#). (For an excellent overview of research on diversity in academia more generally, see [Stewart and Valian 2018](#).) For an extensive database of research on equality, diversity and inclusion in academic philosophy, see [The Philosophy Exception](#) website.

Empirical research on the underrepresentation of women in philosophy has included, for example:

- Fairly large-scale surveys of undergraduate students taking introductory philosophy courses in the US and Australia ([Baron et al. 2015](#); [Thompson et al. 2016](#); see also [Dougherty et al. 2015](#)).
- The gathering, reporting and analysis of data concerning gender and journal submission and acceptance rates ([Krishnamurthy et al. 2017](#), [Schwitzgebel 2015](#), [Wilhelm et al. 2017](#); [Leuschner 2019](#)).
- Psychological research on the explicit and implicit biases of philosophers in the US and UK ([Di Bella et al. 2016](#)).
- Studies of citation rates and patterns in philosophy ([Healy 2015](#), [Schwitzgebel 2019](#)).

There has also been a huge increase in the quantity of largely or wholly non-empirical work published on the profession of philosophy—some on gender specifically and some on diversity more generally.

It is perhaps especially worth noting the edited volumes and special issues that have appeared since 2011, including:

- C. Bellon and M. Walker (eds) 2011. [The Climate for Women in Philosophy](#) (*APA Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy* 11)
- A. Wylie (ed.) 2011. [Women in Philosophy: The Costs of Exclusion](#), (*Hypatia* 26)
- M. Crouch and L. Schwartzman (eds) 2012. [Special Issue: Gender, Implicit Bias, and Philosophical Methodology](#) (*Journal of Social Philosophy* 43)
- K. Hutchison and F. Jenkins (eds) 2013. [Women in Philosophy: What Needs To Change?](#) (Oxford University Press)
- A. Cudd (ed.) 2013. [Hypatia Essays on the Place of Women in the Profession of Philosophy](#) (*Hypatia* 28, Virtual Special Issue 2)
- M.A. Crouch (ed.) 2014. [Diversity and Philosophy](#) (*APA Newsletter: Feminism and Philosophy* 13)
- M. Pilipchuk (ed.) 2017. [Facing Issues in the Profession](#) (*Hypatia* 32)
- V. Tripodi (ed.) 2017. [Discrimination in Philosophy](#) (*Rivista di estetica* 64)
- Q. Kukla (ed.) 2017. [Symposium on Gender Representations in Value Theory Journals](#) (*Public Affairs Quarterly* 31)
- H. Beebe, H. and A. McCallion (eds) 2020. [Special Issue on Diversity in Philosophy](#) (*Symposion* 7)

- J. Garvey (ed.) 2021. [Diversity in Philosophy](#) (*The Philosophers' Magazine* 93)

There have also been increasing efforts to draw attention to the work of women philosophers, including the following books and series:

- S. Finn (ed.) 2021. [Women of Ideas](#) (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- R. Buxton and L. Whiting (eds.) 2020. [The Philosopher Queens](#) (Unbound).
- C. Mercer and M. Rogers, [Oxford New Histories in Philosophy](#) (book series), NY: Oxford University Press.
- T.M. Schmaltz (ed.), *Journal of the American Philosophical Association special series on women in the history of philosophy*.

Below we provide a very brief description of just three areas that have been the focus of a great deal of research over the last ten years.

## Undergraduate studies

There have been several empirical studies of undergraduate students, but the results of these studies are somewhat at odds with each other. In particular, there is conflicting evidence regarding the role of university and pre-university influences. This may well be due to national differences.

[Baron, Dougherty and Miller \(2015\)](#) surveyed 250 students at the beginning and end of an introductory philosophy course at the University of Sydney, and [Thompson, Adleberg, Sims and Nahmias \(2016\)](#) surveyed 1500 students towards the end of an introductory philosophy course at Georgia State University. [Herfeld, Müller and von Allmen \(f/c\)](#) surveyed around 150 philosophy students at LMU Munich.

A focus on introductory courses provides a relatively large sample size. It makes sense to focus attention on introductory courses because the evidence suggests that at universities where students do not choose their Major ('Honours' in Australia) until after they have completed a year or two of university study, there is a significant reduction in the representation of women after they take their first introductory course: in a sample of 50 US universities [Paxton, Figdor and Tiberius \(2012\)](#) found the percentage of women dropped from 43% in introductory philosophy courses to 35% of students majoring in philosophy.

[Dougherty, Baron and Miller \(2015\)](#) provide a classification for various hypotheses that might explain this drop-off—course content hypotheses, teaching method hypotheses (e.g. implicit bias and hypotheses concerning gender differences in philosophical intuitions), hostile atmosphere hypotheses (e.g. discrimination and sexual harassment), internalised stereotypes/gender schema hypotheses (e.g. stereotype threat), and the impractical subject hypothesis—and make a provisional assessment of the state of evidence so far; they consider not just the two above-mentioned studies but also other studies and sources of data.

Their basic conclusion is that the evidence to date is far from conclusive, although some studies provide some empirical support for some of the hypotheses. For example, their own study ([Baron, Dougherty and Miller \(2015\)](#)) found some evidence for a 'pre-university effect': rather than being disproportionately put off majoring

in philosophy by their introductory course, female students came into the course already disproportionately disinclined to do so. This suggests that gender schemas pervasive in society (Stewart and Valian 2018) may be at least partly responsible for shaping women's intentions to major in philosophy.

The 'pre-university effect' is, however, somewhat puzzling from a UK perspective, where most students choose their major before arriving at university and—outside Scotland—have limited opportunities to switch once they start, and we have seen close to gender parity in these numbers for some time. There is a drop-off in the UK between undergraduate and Masters levels (from 48% to 40% in 2021). But this cannot be explained, even in part, by a pre-university effect, given that female undergraduates in the UK have all already actively chosen to major in philosophy.

It is of course possible, however, that gender schemas are reinforced to students during their undergraduate study, and this may well make a difference to whether they continue beyond the BA. Further support for the claim that gender schemas play a role in women's under-representation comes from Leslie et al.'s 2015 US study, which identifies a negative correlation between, on the one hand, the extent to which people in a particular discipline believe that "fixed, innate talent" is a requirement for success in that discipline and, on the other, how well women are represented amongst PhD students. Their suggested explanation for this is that such innate talent is stereotypically associated with maleness. Philosophy was the discipline with the highest rate of agreement that innate talent is required, with maths coming in some way behind in second place. (The same negative correlation across the different disciplines existed for African Americans, but not for Asian Americans.)

Bearing in mind that there is a drop of 15 percentage points (from 48% to 33%) in the representation of women between undergraduate and PhD study in the UK—with an 8-percentage-point drop from undergraduate to Masters—it is clear that there remains a great deal of potential for useful research to be done on the early stages of the 'leaky pipeline' in philosophy. A large-scale study within the UK context, building on the work already done in the US and Australian contexts, would be especially useful.

## Implicit bias

In the 2011 report we discussed implicit bias as a possible factor contributing to the underrepresentation of women in philosophy, drawing on research that suggests that implicit biases have a significant impact on women in STEM subjects, which have been much more thoroughly studied. There has been an explosion in literature on implicit bias, within both psychology and philosophy. As is probably to be expected, one effect of this is increased controversy over exactly how to define 'implicit bias'. It is now clear, for example, that it is wrong to simply define these biases as 'unconscious', despite the widespread usage of this terminology. To a very rough approximation, we can understand these biases as something like largely unconscious, largely automatic associations which affect how members of social groups are perceived, evaluated, and responded to. These associations derive from those that are prevalent in the broader culture or cultural subgroup. What implicit biases people manifest is very much affected by contextual factors. The biases of

individuals do not remain unchanging over time, although (interestingly) the biases that are prevalent in particular cultural groups and locations do. (For more on implicit biases, see Brownstein 2019.)

As far as we know, only one study (Di Bella et al. 2016) has focused specifically on the implicit biases of philosophers. This study found that while men in philosophy consistently showed an implicit association between maleness and philosophy, women in philosophy showed an increasing implicit association between women and philosophy, as they spent more time in the field (a puzzling finding which clearly merits further research). Both men and women *explicitly* associated philosophy with maleness.

There have also been increasing concerns raised about the relationship between implicit biases and real world behaviour (Oswald et al. 2013), about the efficacy of bias change (Forscher et al. 2019), and about the effectiveness of popular interventions such as implicit bias training (Equality & Human Rights Commission 2018; Duguid & Thomas-Hunt 2015). Jules Holroyd and Jennifer Saul (2018) survey these concerns in a recent paper specifically addressing reform efforts in philosophy. They argue that the concerns about real world behaviour and about bias change are largely unfounded; but also that it is right to acknowledge that some interventions are not effective, and that many training programmes are poorly designed. However, they argue that well-designed training, which focuses on institutional reform rather than individual change, is still well supported by the available evidence. Moreover, they argue that reforms in philosophy which have been justified with reference to implicit bias are actually multiply justified, and so do not rely solely on justifications based in implicit bias.

It is important to note that studies of implicit bias have only recently started to take account of the way that identities like *woman* and *man* intersect with racial, class, and other identities. We know of no studies examining implicit bias and non-binary identities.

## Intersectional oppression

The last decade has brought a salutary (though belated) rise in awareness of the ways that gender oppression intersects with other forms of oppression, and also an increasing awareness of the importance of addressing these other forms of oppression. This awareness has occurred both inside and outside academia. Our focus here is especially (but not exclusively) on philosophy. Here are some key pieces of research that have appeared during this period:

- The first empirical study on the representation of Black people in philosophy, focused on the US (Botts et al. 2014).
- A US study showing a correlation between beliefs about innate brilliance and how well women and Black and Asian American people are represented amongst PhD students in a wide range of disciplines, including philosophy (Leslie et al. 2015).
- The APA's 2018 Diversity and Inclusion Report on the demographics and experiences of current and recent doctoral students in philosophy in the US (Dicey

Jennings et. al. 2018).

- Nicola Rollock's report for the UCU on Black women professors in the UK (Rollock 2019).
- First-person reflections on being a woman of colour in philosophy from Tracy Llanera in "The Brown Babe's Burden" (Llanera 2019), Saba Fatima in "On the Edge of Knowing: Microaggressions and Epistemic Uncertainty as a Woman of Color" (Fatima 2017) and Kathryn Sophia Belle in "Being a Black Woman Philosopher: Reflections on the Founding of the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers" (Gines 2011).
- Kristie Dotson's argument that academic philosophy is hostile to both diverse practitioners and diverse approaches (Dotson 2012).
- Robin Dembroff on how analytic philosophy is unwelcoming to trans philosophers (Dembroff 2020).
- Teresa Blankmeyer Burke's reflections on being Deaf in philosophy (Blankmeyer Burke 2013).
- Shelley Tremain's *Dialogues on Disability* interview series with disabled philosophers.
- Philosopher Saray Ayala's work on being a foreigner in academia (Ayala-López 2018).
- Meena Krishnamurthy on "Decolonizing Analytic Political Philosophy" (Krishnamurthy 2016).
- Reflections from Arianna Falbo and Heather Stewart on "Being a First-Generation or Low Income Graduate Student" (Falbo & Stewart 2020).
- MAP has provided a wonderful [collection of resources](#).
- Many of the special issues and volumes we listed earlier contain great papers on these issues as well.

## 4. Actions & initiatives

The last ten years have also seen a flourishing of interventions aimed at improving the situation for women and other marginalised groups in philosophy and in academia more widely. In this section, we briefly survey some of the areas that have received the most attention at local, institutional and national levels.

### Sexual harassment & sexual violence

At the time of the last report, philosophy (and the news media) had recently become aware of the widespread nature of sexual harassment in our field, due to both [What is it Like to be a Woman in Philosophy?](#) and recent media attention to the topic. At that time, there was not very much reporting on sexual harassment in other areas of academia. That situation has changed significantly, however. In 2016 Universities UK produced a report, *Changing the Culture: Report of the Universities UK Taskforce on Violence Against Women, Harassment and Hate*

*Crime Affecting University Students* (Universities UK 2016). This included a set of recommendations, many of which have been or are being implemented across the university sector, concerning e.g. bystander training, fostering a zero-tolerance institutional culture towards sexual violence and harassment, and developing centralised reporting systems. There is also now an important lobbying and education group on staff sexual misconduct in the UK, the [1752 Group](#).

Sexual harassment and sexual violence have also loomed large in the media. In 2017 the MeToo movement, founded by Tarana Burke back in 2006, burst into prominence in the mainstream media. This also led to a large number of revelations from fields other than philosophy and a high level of student activism, publicising universities' failure to respond adequately to reports of harassment and sexual violence. All of this has—unsurprisingly—revealed philosophy's problems to be a part of a wider phenomenon, and universities have started to respond by instituting, for example, consent training for new undergraduates, enhanced staff training, and better institutional policies for responding to incidents. Some (e.g. UCL) have instituted personal relationships policies.

There is clearly far more awareness of these issues—and a greater willingness to address them—in academia than there was ten years ago. However, it is important not to be complacent, and in particular it is important not to see the problem as one that is to be addressed solely at an institutional level. Sexual harassment and violence happen to our own students and colleagues. They often happen in environments that are uncomfortably close to home—at our conferences or post-seminar drinks, for example—and victims are often understandably unwilling to report incidents at an institutional level. (A 2019 NUS survey of further education students has some relevant statistics; see [National Union of Students 2019](#), 25–6). We therefore, as individuals, as departments and as a profession, need to ensure that we create and sustain a culture that both minimises risk (e.g. by adopting and advertising local staff-student relationship and conference behaviour policies) and maximises the chance that victims will report incidents to us, e.g. by making it clear that they will be taken seriously and that staff know what to do if an incident is reported to them.

### Diversity in the curriculum

Our rather modest (though still relevant) advice in the 2011 report was to "do anything you can to make students aware that there are women philosophers", by, e.g., ensuring that they are well represented on reading lists. This task has now been made considerably easier—with respect to both women and other minority groups—by the development of several websites, for example the [Diversity Reading List](#), the [Encyclopedia of Concise Concepts by Women Philosophers](#), the [Deviant Philosopher](#), and the APA's [UPDirectory](#).

There has also been considerable activism devoted to pushing for greater curriculum diversity. This includes high-profile student activism outside philosophy such as the UCL Students' Union's *Why is my curriculum white?* and the NUS's *Decolonise Education* campaign. It also includes important work in philosophy, such as Kristie Dotson's "How is this Paper Philosophy?" (Dotson 2012) and work in popular venues such as Bryan Van Norden's "Western Philosophy is Racist" (Van Norden



2017a—an edited excerpt from his 2017b book). Anecdotal evidence suggests that many UK philosophy departments' approaches to the curriculum itself are shifting, with a much more open-minded attitude towards what count as legitimate or desirable topics, traditions and texts to teach to undergraduates.

For example, ten years ago it was nearly unheard-of in the UK for adverts for lecturing positions to specify teaching expertise in race, gender, feminist, or non-Western philosophy; it is now fairly commonplace. Similarly, topics and traditions such as feminist epistemology, ethics and philosophy of science, Buddhist approaches to personal identity, the philosophy of disability, and the metaphysics of race and gender are increasingly covered in undergraduate courses. Staff are finding ways of incorporating Islamic, African and Chinese philosophy into their courses, female philosophers are increasingly being taught as part of the canon in the history of philosophy, and so on.

Whether such moves are starting to, or will in the future, have an effect on the representation of women and other marginalised groups remains to be seen. To our knowledge, no empirical research has been conducted on that question, and this currently represents a significant lacuna in the empirical work briefly surveyed in §3 above (See [Beebee and McCallion 2020](#)).

## Athena SWAN

AdvanceHE's [Athena SWAN](#) scheme aims to address gender inequality in UK higher education. Universities and departments (or larger academic units) can apply for bronze, silver and gold awards, and the scheme was expanded in 2015 to cover not just STEM but all academic subjects. AdvanceHE have also launched a Race Equality Charter, but REC awards are currently only available at the level of whole institutions.

Many philosophy departments (or schools within which they sit) now have Athena SWAN awards, and in many cases some of the policies and procedures adopted in the process of subscribing to the BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme have played a role in the narratives and action plans that are required in applications for Athena SWAN awards.

Athena SWAN is a relatively blunt instrument, however, and is certainly no panacea for addressing the underrepresentation of women in philosophy. For one thing, it focuses largely on staff rather than students and hence its potential impact is significantly restricted by the fact that only about a third of philosophy PhD students (and hence potential academic staff) are women. In addition—specifically in those cases where the Athena SWAN application is made at the level of a multi-department school—there is the danger that policies and initiatives instituted for Athena SWAN purposes are insufficiently localised to make a significant difference to departmental culture and practices. There is also the danger in such cases that staff come to think that, since gender equality initiatives are being pursued at a higher institutional level, it is all taken care of and they therefore do not need to change their own practices or attitudes. In other words, Athena SWAN is, we believe, no substitute for the kinds of local and philosophy-specific actions that are enshrined in the BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme recommendations.

## Equality Act 2010

If you are involved in staff recruitment, it's worth knowing that the 2010 Equality Act permits employers to engage in various kinds of 'positive action' in relation to members of groups with a track record of disadvantage or underrepresentation. Such positive action includes explicitly encouraging women to apply or targeting adverts at them, and offering exclusively to women things like pre-application training or work shadowing opportunities, bursaries for qualifications, and open days or 'taster days'. It also includes offering the job to a woman in a tie-breaker situation.

We take it that the data presented in §2 of this report constitutes sufficient evidence that in the context of philosophy appointments, women fall into this category. Evidence when it comes to other underrepresented groups can be found in some of the research cited in §3.

For guidance on the above and a lot more advice and guidance on avoiding discrimination in recruitment, see the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Equality Act 2010 Guidance for Employers ([EHRC 2014](#)).

## 5. The BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme

The BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme was launched in 2014. It has now been adopted by some 28 UK philosophy departments—with more in the pipeline—and 13 UK learned societies along with their associated journals, including the Mind Association, the Aristotelian Society, the Analysis Trust, the Royal Institute of Philosophy, the BPS and BSET. It has also been adopted by three overseas philosophy departments and two overseas learned societies. (To see a list of subscribers, [go here](#).)

The impact report written as a result of a small-scale survey of subscribing departments is available from the BPA's Women in Philosophy web pages ([Murphy 2018](#)). The survey revealed the two biggest impacts to be culture change—primarily relating to a less hostile and more constructive atmosphere in seminars and workshops—and a higher proportion of female speakers at research events. While many respondents were careful to point out that it was hard to judge the extent to which improvements could be attributed to subscribing to the scheme, the overall picture was one of significant improvements on various fronts that the scheme covers. These included increases in the proportion of female postgraduates and staff, scheduling activities during normal working hours, enhanced awareness and explicit discussion of gender equality issues, more inclusive student seminar discussions, and improved student satisfaction arising from more diverse reading lists.

The [GPS website](#) contains the scheme guidelines and information about how to subscribe; a list of subscribing departments; and links to various resources.

## 6. What (else) can we do?

As noted above, Philosophy has begun to take some important steps to address the situation for women in philosophy—and (though perhaps to a lesser extent), to address the situation for members of other minority, marginalised and/or disadvantaged groups, and for those who intersect more than one group. There is still much to be done, however, as the recent data on women in philosophy that we presented in §2 illustrates. Below we highlight some examples; visit the BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme website for further suggestions and resources.

- Sign up to the Good Practice Scheme. Or, if your department, learned society or journal is already signed up, go back to your implementation plan and make sure that you're still doing all the things you said you would do (check that you're still collecting data you said you'd collect, that information you said would be in student handbooks is still there, and so on).
- Consider whether your department or learned society might adopt explicit policies or practices around diversity issues. Some policies and documents you might draw on are:
  - BSET's policy on [harassment and unwelcome behaviour](#) at conferences.
  - The BPA's [guidelines](#) for improving accessibility for people with disabilities to conferences and public lectures.
  - The Sheffield philosophy department's [gender identity policy](#) and a [blogpost](#) about developing it.
  - A [sample policy](#) for gender-neutral parental leave; and a paper ([Holroyd & Cullm/s](#)) about developing the policy.
  - A [discussion of Nottingham's efforts](#) to have a more inclusive department seminar series.
- Mentoring schemes: get a mentor, volunteer to be a mentor, encourage others to get involved. The BPA and SWIP UK have a [long-running mentoring scheme](#) and are always happy to hear from prospective mentors and mentees. Although mentees must identify as women and/or feel they are perceived or treated as women, mentors can be of any gender. [The Philosophers' Cocoon](#) is also a supportive place for early-career philosophers and runs its own mentoring scheme. Finally, [MAP UK](#) has a [mentoring scheme](#) for all philosophers who identify as members of marginalised groups.
- Consider reducing the role of letters of reference, which are subject to gender ([Dutt et al. 2016](#)), race and national biases in your hiring and student recruitment procedures.
- Make efforts to diversify your curriculum—both demographically and in subject matter. You can get help on this from the [Diversity Reading List](#), the [APA Diversity and Inclusiveness Syllabus Collection](#), the [Deviant Philosopher](#) and the [The UPDirectory](#).
- Along with all the damage done, the pandemic has also revealed the possibilities for more flexible working, online conferences, and remote attendance at meet-

ings and classes. Many of these are actually accommodations that disabled people and caregivers had asked for (often unsuccessfully) pre-pandemic. Continuing to offer these where possible could improve inclusivity in important ways.

### Broader issues

The following issues affect philosophy, but emphatically not just philosophy—and require solutions that crucially depend on university or national action. Nonetheless, it is important for philosophers to work to remedy them.

- **Parental leave funding** for PhD students remains patchy and is often inadequate, particularly for students who are not funded by UKRI and for non-mothers wishing to take parental leave. This issue will need action at university and national level, but will be an important issue to work on.
- **Parental leave funding** is also an important issue in need of addressing for early career scholars and those on temporary contracts ([Akram & Pflaeger Young 2020](#)). Again, this needs to be addressed at university and national level.
- **Precarious employment** is one of the most important issues that we need to address—and it is one that hits first generation students, people of colour, women, disabled people and caregivers especially hard. The BPA and SWIP UK have guides aimed at both [employers](#) of, and [those in](#), non-permanent employment. Vitae's [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) is an agreement between funders and employers, whose signatories include Universities UK, UCEA, Hefce, Hefcw, UKRI and a lot of individual universities; it can be a useful document to refer to for the purposes of developing or lobbying institutions for improvements. We also urge all departments to push back against increasing precarity in academia however they can, including [working with the UCU](#) and resisting very short-term, part-time and/or rolling temporary positions.
- **The gender pay gap** in UK higher education isn't closing very quickly. Universities are required to publish an annual report. You should be able to find the reports for your own institution online (probably alongside some claims about what the university intends to do to address the problem). Also, [the UCU website](#) has some useful links and reports. (Note that interpreting GPG data is tricky given the methodology used for measuring it. For example, policies that are actually improving women's pay can make the GPG figures worse—at least in the short term—and vice versa.)
- **COVID-19** has posed uniquely horrendous difficulties for those who fell ill or who had caregiving responsibilities, or both. It has exacerbated existing gender inequities ([Malisch et al. 2020](#)). Departments and universities must work to compensate them for lost time, perhaps with teaching relief to help them restart their research; and definitely with recalibrated expectations that take these burdens into account.

## 7. References

Where items are behind a paywall or not published online, we have added a link to an open-access version (usually a preprint) where possible.

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## 8. Other resources referred to in this report

### Blog posts & series

- [Dialogues on Disability](#), Shelley Tremain's series of interviews with disabled philosophers.
- [What is it like to be a woman in philosophy?](#) A long-running blog sharing first-personal accounts of discrimination, harassment and other sexist behaviour, and attempts—both successful and unsuccessful—to prevent or address them.
- A blog post about [developing the Sheffield Philosophy Department's gender identity policy](#).

### Websites

- [Minorities and Philosophy resources site](#).
- [The 1752 Group](#): a UK-based campaign organisation dedicated to ending staff sexual misconduct in higher education.
- [The Philosophers' Cocoon](#): news, information and resources for early-career philosophers.
- [The Diversity Reading List](#) collects high-quality philosophy texts suitable for use in teaching written by authors from under-represented groups.
- [Encyclopedia of Concise Concepts by Women Philosophers](#): an encyclopedia of terms coined or discussed by women in the history of philosophy.
- [UPDirectory](#): The APA's directory of philosophers from under-represented groups.
- [Women-in-philosophy.org](#), run by Nicole Hassoun and others, has a huge amount of data on the representation of women in philosophy in the US and in philosophy publishing, as well as links to a lot of relevant resources.
- [The Deviant Philosopher](#), run by the University of Oklahoma Philosophy Department, offers resources, lesson plans, and exercises for teaching philosophy that is outside the mainstream.
- [The Philosophy Exception](#): a website run by members of the Philosophy Depart-

ment at the University of British Columbia with an extensive bibliography of research on equality, diversity and inclusion in academic philosophy.

- [The BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme](#): scheme guidelines and information about how to subscribe, a list of subscribing departments, and links to other resources.

### Policies & procedures

- [Guide for Philosophers in Non-Permanent Employment in the UK](#). (A. Bortolan, A. Fernandes, S. Pippa & R. Stern on behalf of the BPA and SWIP UK, 2017).
- [Guidelines for Accessible Conferences and Public Lectures](#) (G. Felappi, A. Gregory & H. Beebee 2018, endorsed by the BPA).
- [UCL's Personal Relationships Policy](#).
- The British Society for Ethical Theory's [Policy on Harassment and Unwelcoming Behaviour](#).
- The Sheffield Philosophy Department's [Gender Identity Policy](#).
- A proposed gender-neutral policy for [Family Leave](#).

### Schemes & initiatives

- [Athena SWAN](#)
- [BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme](#)
- [BPA/SWIP Mentoring Scheme](#)
- [Minorities and Philosophy UK](#)
- [MAP UK Mentoring Scheme](#)