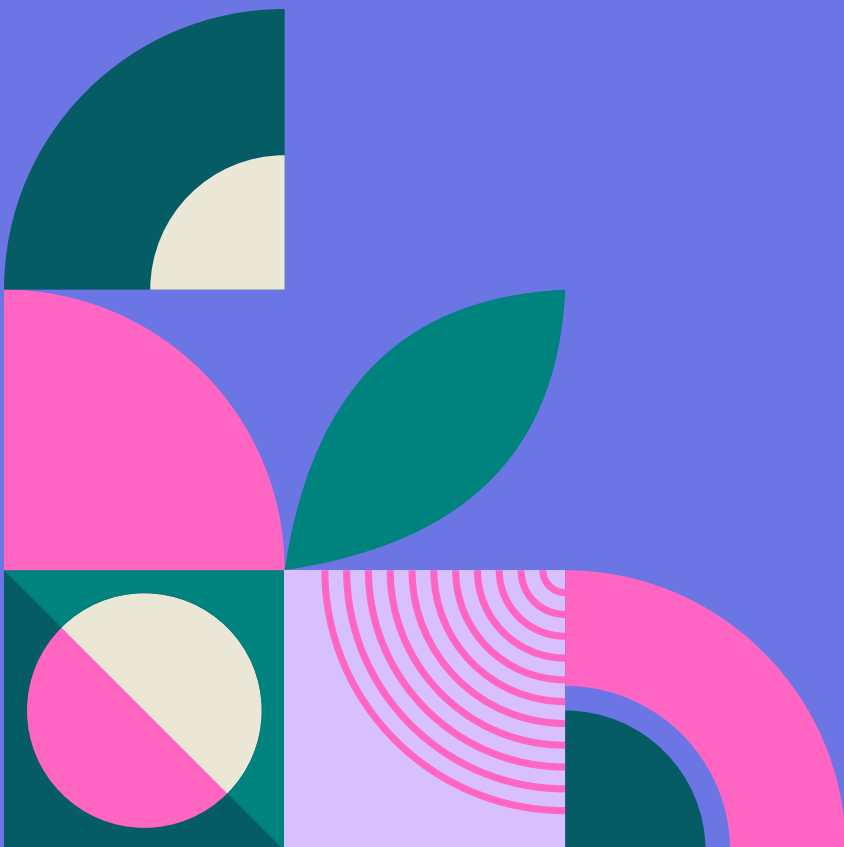


# INVESTIGATING THE EXPERIENCES OF RACIALISED EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS AT LSE

Moé Suzuki



**MAY 2025**

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# PROJECT TEAM

## MOÉ SUZUKI

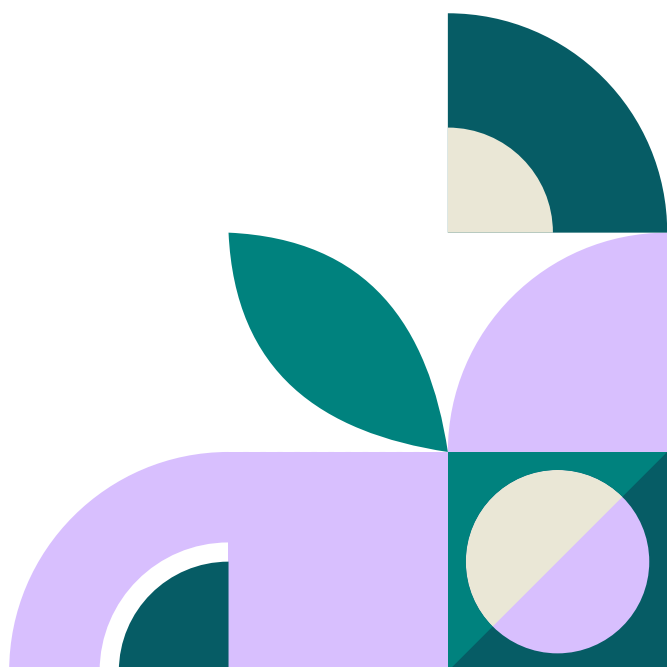
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Moé is a Fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science, teaching on the interdisciplinary LSE100 course. Working across critical migration and refugee studies, politics, and media studies, their current research theorises the 'humanisation' of refugees. Before entering academia, Moé worked as a researcher and Japanese/English translator. They were also once an active member of a Tokyo-based grassroots feminist group, Chabujo, involved in community organising around sexual violence. With an interest in the relationship between pedagogy, research, and social transformation, Moé sees this project as part of their commitment to collaborative work to create positive change, however small.

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Kristeena Monteith is a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her research explores Caribbean feminists' lived experiences navigating structural inequalities in their activism on and offline, and what this can tell us about political participation in the region and beyond. Her research is inspired by her experience as a Caribbean feminist community organiser and media and communications for development specialist. She has worked on issues such as abortion and gender based and intimate partner violence including with Jamaican LGBTQ organisation WE-Change. Kristeena sees this project as part of her broader interest in exposing and countering the epistemic violence that marginalises racialised as non-white voices and experiences and reclaiming those voices so we can better understand where we stand.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

This pilot project focuses on the experiences of early career researchers (ECRs) at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), who are racialised as ‘non-white’. Several studies have highlighted the barriers academics in UK Higher Education who are racialised as ‘non-white’ face (e.g. Equality Challenge Unit, 2011; Mahony and Weiner, 2020; Bhopal and Henderson, 2021; Arday, 2022a, 2022b; Advance HE, 2024), particularly Black women (Rollock, 2019). These barriers include those related to entering academia, during the post, and when leaving the post.

Studies have also highlighted the benefits of having racialised staff in terms of improving racialised students’ experience and attainment (Akel, 2019; Rana et al., 2022). However, as Arday (2022a) points out, race is a neglected lens through which precarious employment is examined in the existing literature. This is despite the overrepresentation of racialised staff in fixed-term contracts, and underrepresentation in more senior roles (Advance HE, 2024, pp. 136–139).

Racialised staff are particularly underrepresented at Russell Group universities in the total number of staff and higher-level contracts (Baltaru, 2024). Advance HE (2024) data shows that 29% of ‘Black, Asian and minority ethnic’ (BAME) UK national staff and 46.6% of BAME non-UK national staff were on fixed-term contracts, compared with 23.3% of white UK national staff and 31.7% of white non-UK national staff.<sup>1</sup> Although this project sought to interview staff on both fixed-term and permanent contracts, all but one participant is on fixed-term contracts. Tellingly, the one participant on a permanent contract said they did not feel like their position at this institution was secure. This speaks to the need to attend to how race shapes ECRs’ experiences of higher education.

The LSE UCU report, *The Crisis of Academic Casualisation at LSE* (2023), was what sparked the idea for this project. I<sup>2</sup> became curious about how racialisation and casualisation might intersect, particularly given the existing evidence on racialised academics’ over-representation in fixed-term roles and their difficulties in getting promoted and remaining in academia (Equality Challenge Unit, 2011; Mahony and Weiner, 2020; Bhopal and Henderson, 2021; Arday, 2022a, 2022b; Advance HE, 2024, 2024).

So far, there has been no research conducted to understand the experiences of racialised ECRs at LSE. Although LSE collects Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion data, these tell little about how racialised ECRs experience the institution. The main aim of this project was thus to understand how racialised ECRs experience LSE through interviews. The project combines this qualitative data with quantitative data, provided by the EDI Team at LSE. With a mixed methods approach, this study sheds light on any challenges they face, as well as good practice they have benefitted from.

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<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that a higher proportion of non-UK nationals, who may not have secure immigration status in the UK, are on fixed-term contracts. This speaks to the importance of taking migrant justice seriously as an issue linked to precarity and racial justice.

<sup>2</sup> Where “I” is used, this refers to Moé. They wrote the full draft of the report, which was then proofread and edited by Kris.

While the primary analytic lens of the project was race, I sought to take an intersectional approach to understand how other aspects of identity and personal circumstances like caring responsibilities, sexuality, religion, gender, disability, and migration status impact ECRs' experiences of the institution.

Given that this project interviewed 7 ECRs racialised as 'non-white', it is framed as a pilot study. One major realisation I had was that relationship-building is key to a project like this, where a certain degree of trust between the researcher and the participants is necessary given the potentially sensitive nature of the conversations. Having been at LSE for one year on a fixed-term contract when I began this project, in hindsight, I had not yet built up the relationships and networks that may have allowed me to recruit more participants. However, I am still grateful for this experience of being able to speak to colleagues about their experience, reflecting on my own academic journey, and forging new connections along the way.

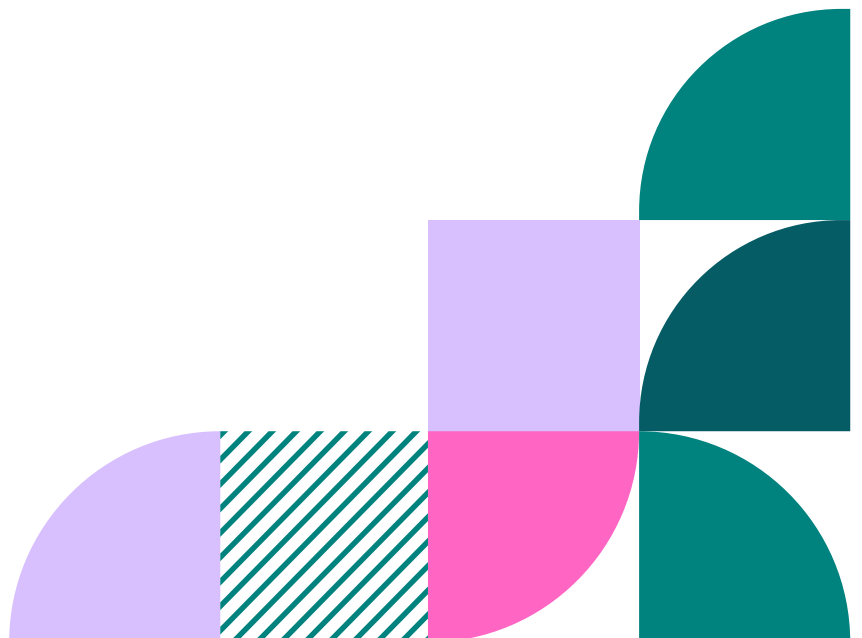
## On the term 'racialised'

While recognising its limitations, this project uses the term 'racialised' to emphasise the processes through which people become identified and constituted as 'non-white' in the context of the UK and LSE. In short, being 'non-white' is not a static state of being. It is by being in relation to others, and various power structures of the world, that one becomes racialised. Although it is a broad term, it also has the benefit of being able to capture as many experiences as possible under this broad category. As the first study of its kind at LSE, we hope to provide a basis for future studies that can investigate the specific barriers faced by particular groups among racialised ECRs.

## LSE Race Equity Action Plan

As part of its Race Equity Framework, LSE's [Race Equity Action Plan](#) lays out six key priorities. Among them, this project addresses the following three in particular:

1. Addressing and building confidence amongst staff around race equity
2. Building a diverse pipeline of future social scientists
3. Making School leadership and governance more diverse and inclusive



# METHOD & METHODOLOGY

The interviews took place between October 2024 and April 2025. People who met the following three criteria were invited to participate:

1. They currently work at LSE
2. They are a researcher who obtained their PhD within the last 10 years, including Academic staff (e.g. Professors and Assistant Professors), Research career track staff (e.g. Assistant Professorial Research Fellows, Research Officers and Fellows), Policy career track staff (e.g. Policy Officers and Fellows), and LSE Fellows<sup>3</sup>
3. They self-identify as someone who is racialised as ‘non-white’

In the end, 7 participants in various academic roles at LSE were interviewed. Participants were asked to complete a short pre-interview survey to collect basic information. The Principal Investigator then carried out semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 1 hour. Interview questions were structured around four themes: research, teaching, wellbeing, and community and a sense of belonging. Transcription files were coded manually through an iterative process, focusing on the question of how racialised ECRs experience LSE as an institution.

To protect the identities of the participants, we have decided to disclose minimal information about their background, not cross-reference identity categories, and only use quotes that will not jeopardise their identities. Overall, there was a mix of:

- People from various racial backgrounds, religion, and gender.
- Age range of 24-44.
- Participants on fixed-term and permanent contracts. All but one are on fixed-term contracts.
- Various immigration statuses: e.g. British citizenship, settled status, on a visa.

Throughout this report, the gender-neutral pronouns of they/them are used to refer to all participants to protect their anonymity. The quantitative data were obtained through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Office at LSE, based on Human Resources data.

## Ethics

This study was approved by the LSE Research Ethics Committee.

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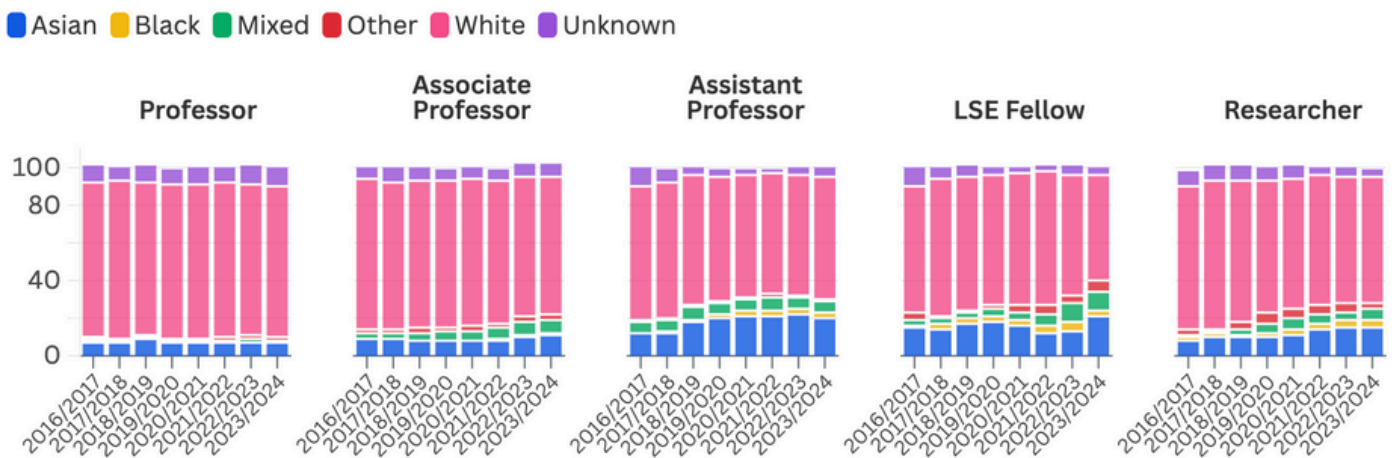
<sup>3</sup> This categorisation is based on the [Early Career Researchers Network's](#) definition.

Following feminist researchers who highlight the situatedness of knowledge (e.g. Haraway, 1988; Collins, 1991; Lugones, 2010), we note that the project team members are racialised as non-white and work at LSE. The Principal Investigator is also a Fellow on a fixed-term contract. Our positionalities informed and shaped this project.

# FINDINGS

## Quantitative data on staff ethnicity and academic role

The project’s main interest was to see if there is a correlation between race (‘ethnicity’) and seniority of academic role. For this reason, the quantitative data focuses on the relationship between race and academic role, and the changes in this relationship between the academic year 2016/2017 and 2023/2024. The academic roles are defined as per the [HR Workforce Scorecard](#) (see Appendix). Note that the graphs only show the proportion, not the actual numbers of staff. The Appendix contains the actual percentages, as well as the “Full Person Equivalent”<sup>4</sup> according to LSE data. For some academic years, the ‘Black’ category is missing altogether from the original data (see Appendix). This shows up as “0” in the graphs.

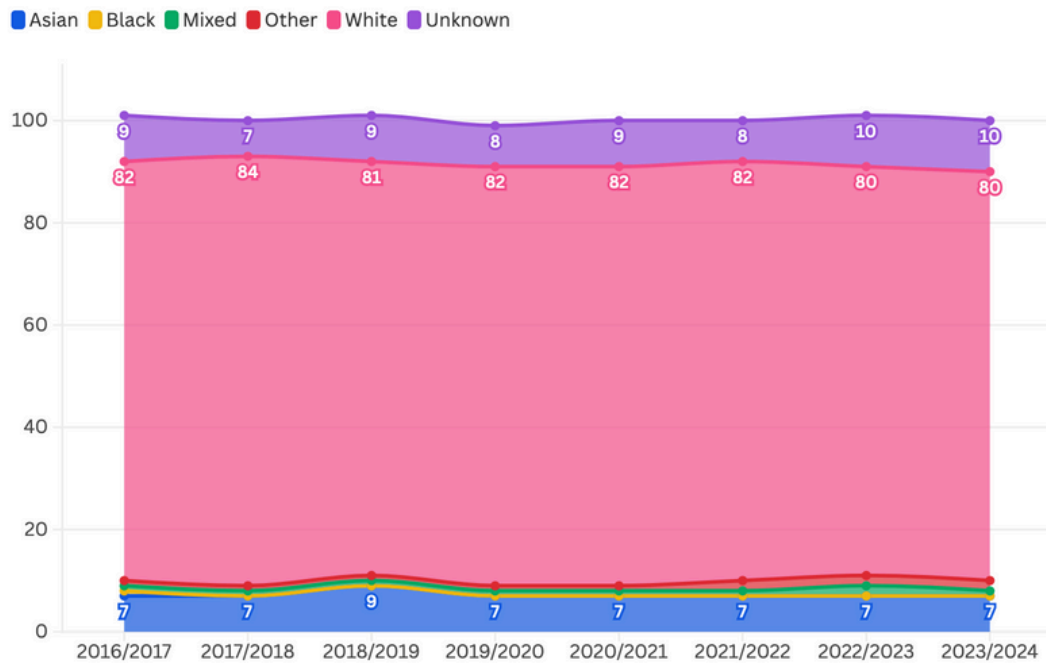


**Figure 1: Academic role and ethnicity (%) by year**

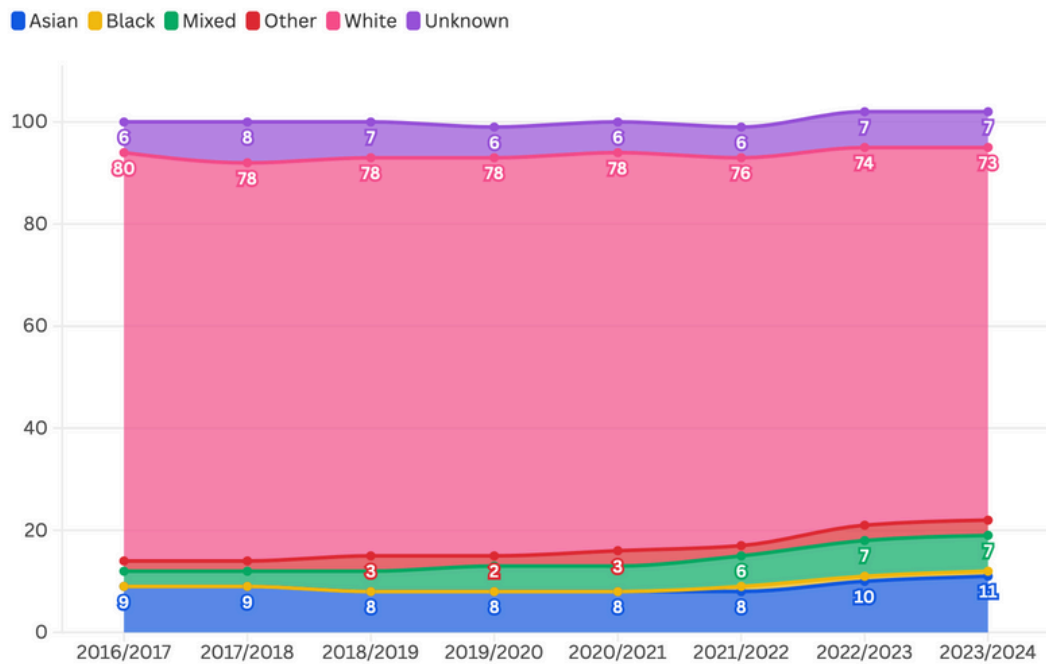
Figure 1 shows how the racial breakdown for each academic role has changed between 2016/2017 and 2023/2023. For all job posts apart from Professor, the racial diversity of the role has increased over the years. However, particularly notable is the lack of Black staff. They are virtually non-existent at Professor level; they hold an extremely small percentage (between 0-1%) from 2016/2017 through 2023/2024. As discussed in the qualitative analysis below, there is a significant problem with staff retention. This figure corroborates existing evidence that there is a ‘leaky pipeline’ issue (Advance HE, 2024) at LSE, where racialised staff are overrepresented in fixed-term contracts (e.g. as LSE Fellows, which is framed as a “career development role” for a maximum of 3 years) and underrepresented in more senior academic roles.

<sup>4</sup> Following the Higher Education Statistics Agency's standard rounding methodology to ensure anonymity, we have rounded the numbers to the nearest multiple of 5.

Figures 2-6 below provide a more detailed snapshot of the racial breakdown for each academic role<sup>5</sup>. What becomes clearer in those graphs is that for all the roles apart from Professor, racial diversity has been increasing over the past years. It is notable that the proportion of Black staff are low compared with staff from Asian, Mixed, and ‘Other’ backgrounds. This raises questions about what is erased when broad categories like “Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic” are used to discuss staff hiring and retention.

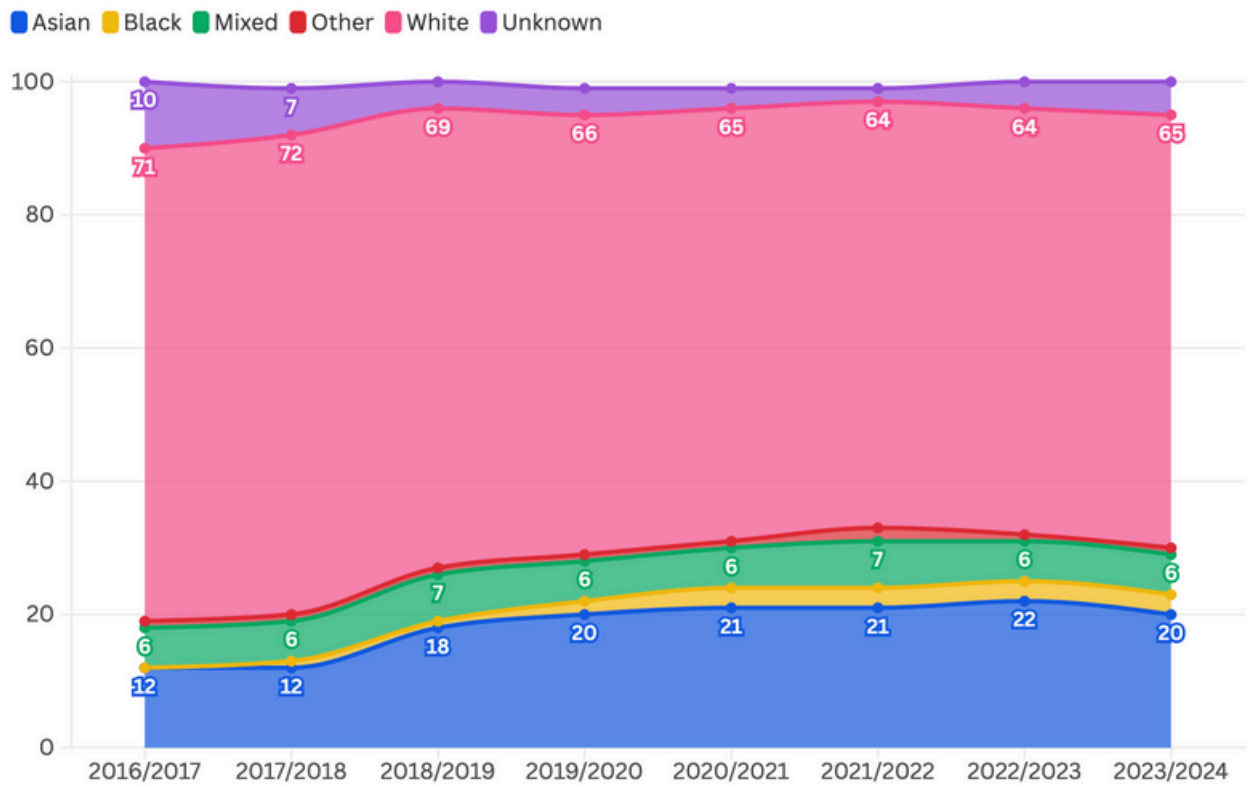


**Figure 2: Ethnicity breakdown of Professor role (%) (2016-2024)**

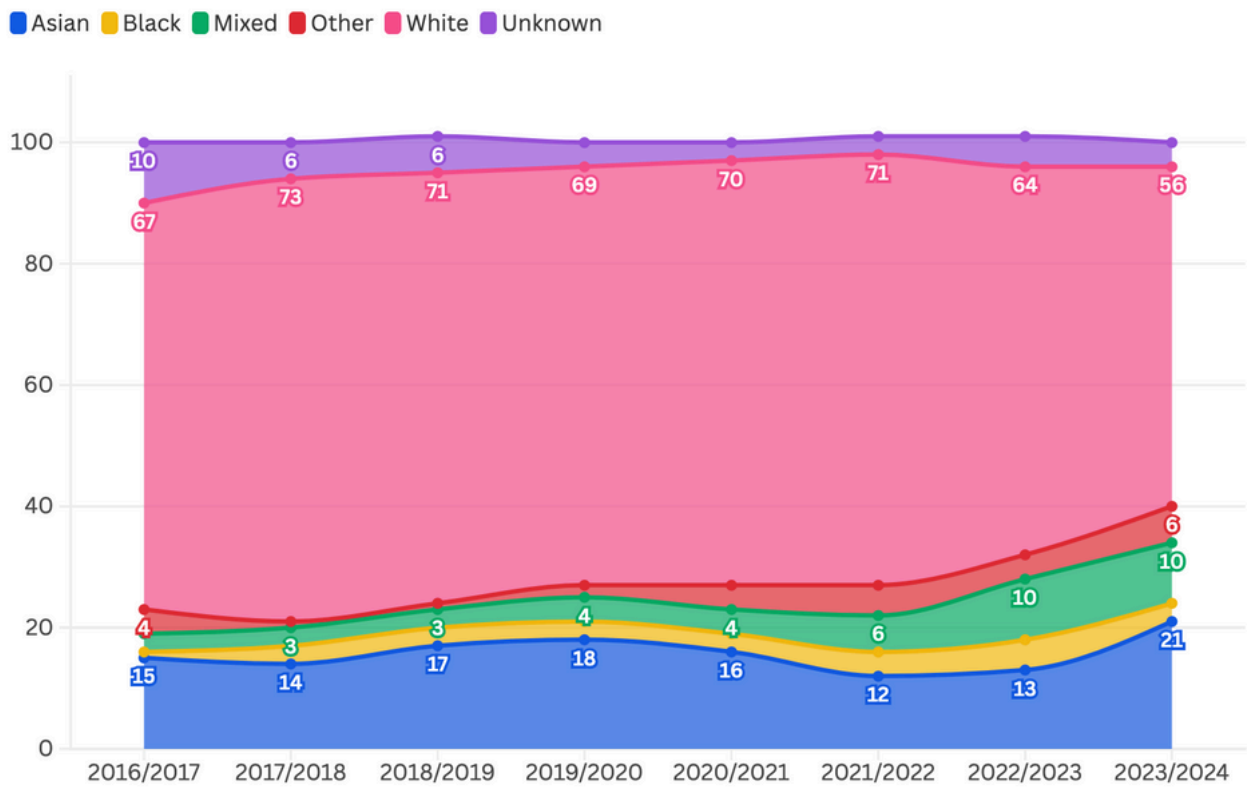


**Figure 3: Ethnicity breakdown of Associate Professor role (%) (2016-2024)**

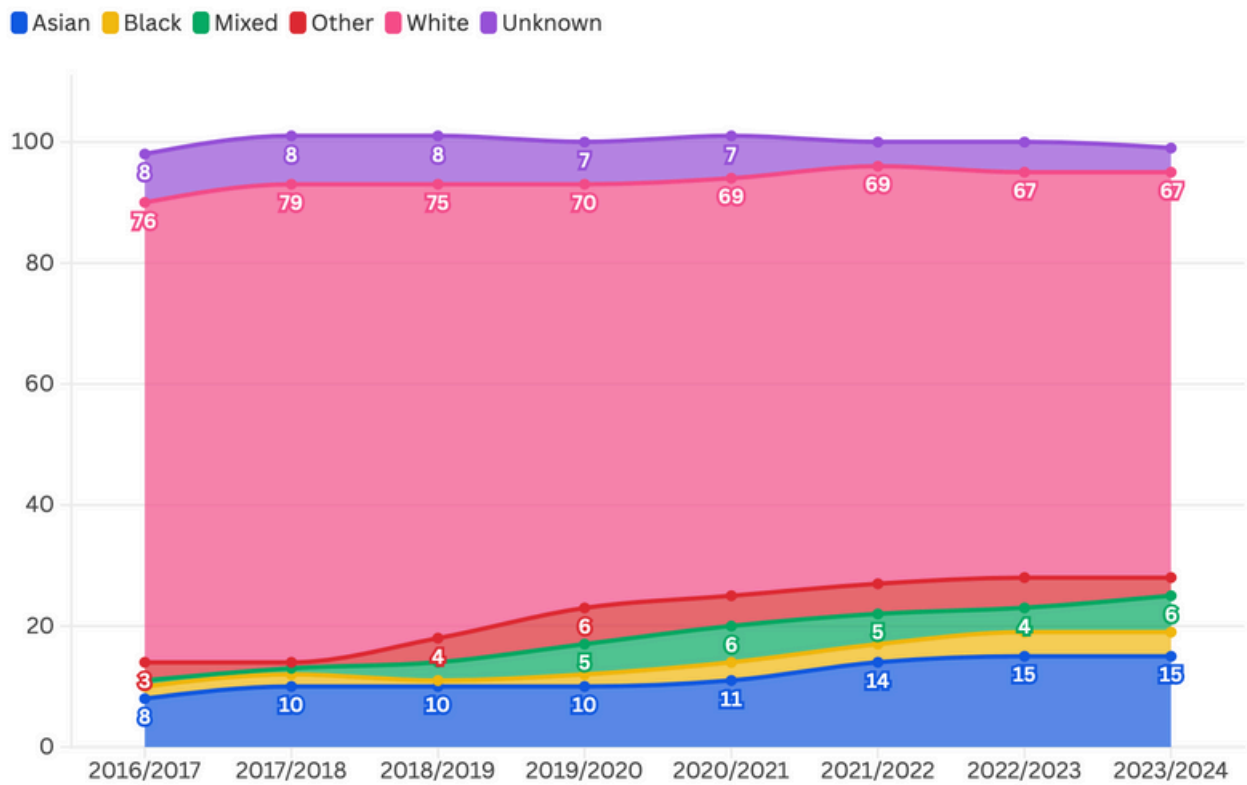
<sup>5</sup> The numbers show the percentage. There is no number where there is an overlap between different categories. The raw data in the Appendix all the data for each role.



**Figure 4: Ethnicity breakdown of Assistant Professor role (%) (2016-2024)**



**Figure 5: Ethnicity breakdown of LSE Fellow role (%) (2016-2024)**



**Figure 6: Ethnicity breakdown of Researcher role (%) (2016-2024)**

Figures 7 and 8 below compare the ethnicity breakdown for each academic role in the academic year 2016/2017 and 2023/2024. Those graphs more clearly demonstrate how the proportion of racialised staff at more junior positions, particularly LSE Fellows, has increased since 2016/2017. As discussed in the Recommendations section below, the fact that many racialised ECRs are more precariously employed (e.g. as LSE Fellows or Researcher), suggests that precarity and race equity are intertwined. In other words, precarity is a racial justice issue. Another noticeable change is the decrease in the percentage for Black Professor: from 1% in 2016/2017 to 0% in 2023/2024.<sup>6</sup> Although this may be to do with how people identify, it is still worth noting.

<sup>6</sup> Note that 0% does not necessarily mean 0 people. Given the rounding methodology, 0% could mean any number between 1-2.

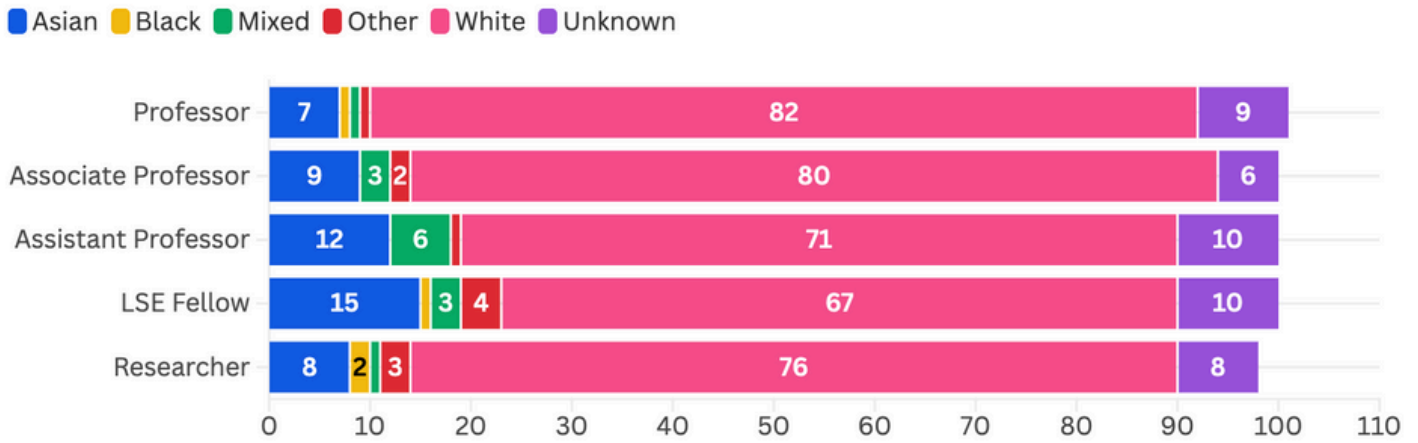


Figure 7: Ethnicity breakdown of academic role (%) (2016/2017)

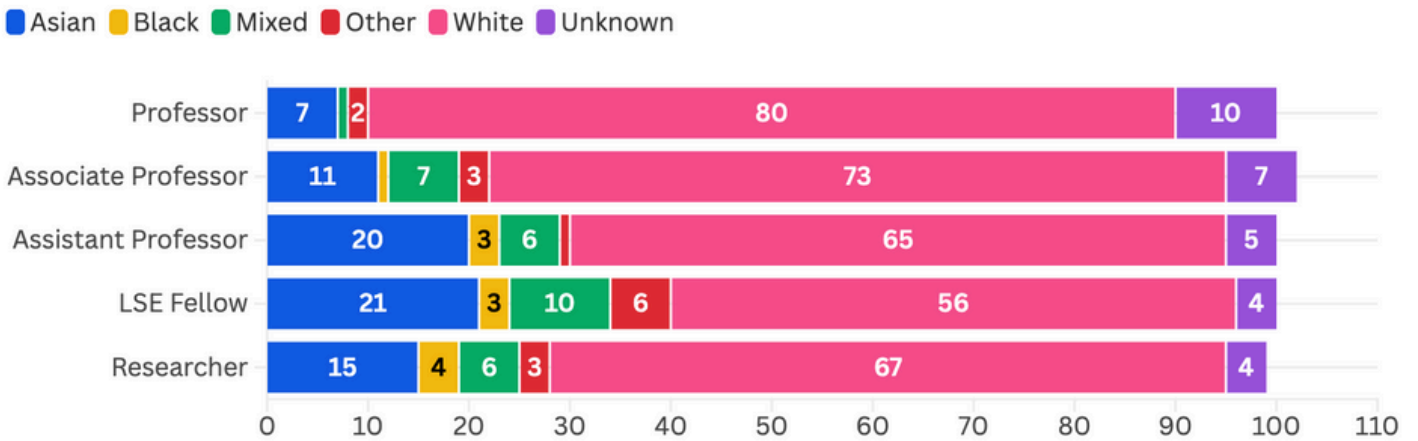


Figure 8: Ethnicity breakdown of academic role (%) (2023/2024)

# Interview data on the experiences of racialised ECRs

Below is a summary of core themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview data.

## Institutional culture

- **Norms and culture differ significantly by department/team.** Some departments/teams are more open to suggestions and feedback, mentoring, and collaboration, and make racialised ECRs feel heard. Others are more hostile and competitive; closed off to new staff or those from different racial backgrounds and fields of expertise. As a result, some participants have felt isolated and “invisible” and mentioned that such feelings of invisibility and isolation can be a reason to leave the institution or department. This is likely to have implications on staff retention at LSE.
- A common theme among participants is that **one has to find their own way** – it is “**sink or swim**”, as one participant described it. One needs to learn how to navigate “elite academia”. Some participants have managed to carve out an autonomous space for themselves to pursue their own research and initiatives. Institutional support (e.g. financial, mentoring) enables ECRs to make full use of such opportunities.

- Social events being centred around drinking alcohol can make some feel excluded.
- Participants noted how LSE is an “elite” institution with a stamp of recognition and brand that can open doors. This can foster a competitive environment, where being a “good scholar” and being a “good person” are sometimes antithetical.

## Teaching

- There is **consensus among Fellows who were interviewed that teaching tends to overtake everything else and become “overwhelming”**. As a result, there is not enough time for research, which is needed to secure another/permanent job. Applying to jobs is time-consuming, with one participant describing it as a “part-time job”. This was not the case for participants in other roles, who did not describe teaching in those terms.
- The lack of existing plans and support for some courses creates extra work for ECRs who may never teach the course again. Sometimes ECRs have to design classes from scratch (this is not factored into their hours), other times the convenor takes charge.
- Admin can be extremely time-consuming. One participant mentioned delays in issuing contract and pay.
- As racialised (and gendered) ECRs, participants **spoke of being judged that they are not ‘good enough’**. They therefore felt the **need to prove that they are good researchers and teachers**, which sometimes meant doing extra work. For example, participants spoke of wanting to question ‘the canon’ and reviewing the given reading list, having a sense of duty to make class content relevant to the diversity in the classroom, and not wanting to reproduce how they were taught at university as racialised people. Achieving these requires **time and energy, which is not accounted for in the teaching load**.
- One participant spoke of striking the balance between proving that one can do a good job and standing out, and being visible and different as a racialised scholar; standing out too much can invoke hostile reactions.
- Needless to say, there are different varieties and degrees of racism that racialised scholars experience. **Anti-black racism** is particularly notable. Participants noted the toll of having to navigate anti-black racism from students. There is a deep-seated idea among students that black scholars are a “DEI [diversity, equity, and inclusion] hire”, that they’re “stupid”, and are “the imposter”. Black scholars are constantly having to disprove this.
- Participants have had their **expertise undermined or questioned by students**. This is particularly the case if they teach about race or gender. Being from outside of the UK and not having a ‘British accent’ can also lead to one’s credibility being questioned by students. One participant mentioned using humour to pre-empt racism: “I’m not sure if you’ve noticed, but I’m not a native English speaker”.
- Racism can also manifest in subtle ways, making one question oneself as there may be no ‘concrete evidence’.
- Racialised scholars have had to navigate racialised dynamics and conversations. They thus feel better equipped to handle difficult conversations in the classroom, incorporating their own experiences into their pedagogical approach. On the one hand, they **feel the responsibility to have critical conversations about race**, but participants also mentioned **feeling exhausted** of speaking about such topics.
- **Teachers are increasingly expected to take on a pastoral role**, which adds to the workload. One participant said, “It’s such a generous role. And I’d like to be a generous person. But...**it’s very had to do that role when no one is being generous with you**”. Another participant mentioned how they are compassionate towards others, especially our students, but not towards themselves.

## Research

- **ECRs need time, resources, and mental space to be able to focus on research.** Precarity, heavy teaching load, and navigating racialised power dynamics (more below) take away from that space significantly. Living away from family/friends and the impact of world events also affect racialised ECRs' ability to conduct research.
- There are opportunities (internal funding, events, workshops, etc.) but what **ECRs on precarious contracts lack is time to make use of those opportunities.** One participant mentioned having to do research on weekends and evenings, leading to burnout.
- There is a need for **more awareness and support for racialised scholars conducting research on sensitive and politicised topics**, which can have significant impact on their mental health, and potentially lead to harassment from the public. Such risks are heightened for racialised scholars.
- Being a racialised scholar means they can build good networks with other racialised people, including research partners and participants. However, such work can then be 'dumped' on racialised scholars, getting in the way of research that is needed to secure a permanent job.

## Wellbeing

- The consensus among participants was **a sense of disillusionment**, that the institution itself does not care about staff wellbeing. There is a perception that wellbeing is viewed as a secondary concern by the institution. There is a separation of intellectual work and wellbeing.
- Those on fixed-term contracts mentioned the **feeling of being disposable**. One participant expressed that if you don't learn how to survive at LSE, "you are easily replaced". Another said that LSE can "destroy you in the sense of your mental wellbeing and identity...knowing that you're never going to probably achieve what you want to in this institution".
- Participants mentioned **being under constant pressure**, and the difficulties of balancing different roles and responsibilities. This is exacerbated, for example, for those with caring responsibilities.
- **Precarity impacts wellbeing.** One participant on a fixed-term contract mentioned that they will not have wellbeing as long as there is a lack of stability and security.

## Lack of support for disabled staff and staff with caring responsibilities

There is a common theme for disabled staff and staff with caring responsibilities. There is a general lack of flexibility and consideration. A disabled participant said, "it's very much like, either you're here or you're not". Echoing this comment, a participant with childcare responsibilities said, "either you're here or you're not". Participants felt that LSE is implicitly communicating what kinds of people it wants to welcome into its space. Other points raised were:

- **Affordable and accessible childcare are integral to ECRs'** (and others with childcare responsibilities) **ability to carry out their research and teaching duties.** Participants mentioned how the on-campus nursery was shut in 2020 during the pandemic. Although LSE has partnerships with nurseries in Central London, they are neither close to LSE nor affordable for many staff.
- Last-minute changes (e.g. teaching schedules) incur **additional costs to those with care responsibilities** (e.g. for childcare).

- There is **not enough support for disabled staff, especially for those who are chronically ill**. There is no financial support for things that make it easier for disabled staff to work well (e.g. for commuting, medication, or equipment). Sick leave is not enough, as chronically ill staff cannot take sick leave every time they don't feel well, because "I don't feel well all the time", as one participant put it.
- There is a sense that being disabled means "take it or leave it" because there are many non-disabled people willing to do their job who do not need 'accommodations'.

## Dealing with the visa regime

Participants highlighted **inconsistent experiences with the level of support provided by LSE when dealing with visa issues**. One spoke of a relatively positive experience, with LSE paying for the application and NHS fees; helping them figure out the required documents; and being generally responsive and had the relevant information. Another spoke of a general lack of guidance from LSE; no financial assistance; and receiving poor information about which visa they needed. They noted that visa-related stress and expenses discourage them from coming back to the UK.

## Navigating racialised identities and power dynamics

- **Imposter syndrome, feeling like an "outsider", and LSE as an "intimidating" space** were mentioned by participants. Racialised ECRs are made to question whether they were hired as a 'diversity hire' or because they are 'good'. This leads them to work even harder to prove themselves.
- Participants spoke of how being racialised has made it **easier to connect, collaborate, and have vulnerable discussions with other racialised people**, including ECRs, PhD or master's students who come from marginalised backgrounds.
- One participant spoke of **owning their 'difference'** to make the space more welcoming to others like them, especially at an "elite" institution like LSE. On the other hand, they framed this **as a survival strategy** – that they had no choice but to embrace their identity to survive at LSE.
- Participants mentioned **having to navigate racialised (and often gendered) power dynamics and politics** between more senior staff or within the department more generally. When faced with racism, hostile behaviours, or mistreatment, or in anticipation of such behaviours, racialised scholars feel the need to be 'diplomatic' and create distance from such dynamics to minimise the detrimental impact on their work and wellbeing. One participant mentioned feeling "exhausted" by having to be diplomatic in such situations; another mentioned how those interactions can become all-consuming and affect their ability to conduct research. At the same time, there is no other choice than to learn to navigate racialised power dynamics to survive in this institution (especially if the people involved are gatekeepers).

## Building networks of support

- Participants spoke of the need to **find their own allies within the institution**. Line managers play a key role. They can make or break one's experience at LSE.
- **Racialised scholars are the ones who tend to step up to deal with racist incidents**. They tend to be more attuned to instances of racism, with a shared understanding of what that looks like. One participant noted the importance of teams to devise strategies to deal with racist incidents as a collective.

- **Racialised academics in more senior posts** (i.e. in positions with more power) **tend to be the ones who go out of their way to support racialised ECRs**. This work happens behind the scenes. One participant mentioned how such people have “fought” on their behalf, and that they would not have survived or stayed at LSE had it not been for such people. This raises the question of **unequal distribution of racialised and gendered (unpaid) labour**. This also relates to the issues of promotion and staff retention discussed below.
- Participants noted the importance of **having communities outside of the institution**, their own social circle who support them no matter what.
- Most participants separated LSE as ‘an institution’ (e.g. management) and the department/team they are part of. Most participants spoke highly of their department/team overall, noting it as a strong source of support. Support to take off workload is offered informally (e.g. sharing seminar notes, lecture slides, or examples of activities, or taking up a lecture). Again, there is a racialised and gendered aspect to this. One participant said it is usually racialised women who offer support proactively.

## Hiring and retention

This project highlights both the commonalities and differences among racialised ECRs. The **paucity of Black staff** is clear from the quantitative data, especially when it comes to more senior positions. Participants highlighted the impact this can have on their time at LSE. One Black participant mentioned being asked to fetch whiteboard markers by another academic. Another talked about the impact of lack of Black people in senior academic positions on their ability to imagine a future in academia. As one participant mentioned, who gets hired and promoted reflect LSE’s priorities. In other words, it is not enough to hire Black staff; the institution must be a place they can and want to stay. Other points mentioned were:

- The **marginalisation of Black staff is “extreme”**. In particular, Black research and epistemology considered to be outside of the “Western canon” are delegitimised and devalued. There are hidden assumptions about what are good journals and legitimate scholarship. One participant pointed out that, even among racialised ECRs, those who speak the language of the Western canon tend to do better at LSE. As a result of such hidden rules, **Black staff engaging in scholarship outside of the Western canon are silently pushed out of the institution**, which “very, very silently dissuade or manufacture precarity” as one participant put it.
- On the promotional process, a participant mentioned the **opacity and lack of accountability regarding the promotional process**. It is not experts in their field making the final decision. Racialised scholars are being rejected for promotion without a clear justification. This may explain the paucity of racialised, especially Black, scholars at more senior levels, as quantitative data shows that Black staff virtually disappears between Assistant Professor and Associate Professor roles. One participant questioned why we have extensive external reviews for our classes and assessments, but we do not for the promotional process.
- Echoing Rollock’s (2019) study on Black female professors in the UK, one participant mentioned how racialised scholars are being hired years behind their peers at LSE, despite bringing a wealth of professional and/or academic experience.

## Ambiguous position of LSE Fellows

Fellows discussed the ambiguous position of being staff but not quite staff. This ambiguity means that they

are often asked to do work that is not explicitly part of the role, which they feel they need to take on to improve job prospects. Some mentioned how Fellows are being paid less than permanently employed colleagues despite having the same teaching load. Simultaneously, Fellows have a higher pressure to publish to succeed in the academic job market.

## Consequences of precarity on racialised ECRs

- ECRs are pouring their time and energy into the institution, **knowing they are at LSE temporarily**. One participant talked about leaving a “legacy” that will continue after they are gone. Another talked about weighing up what they can realistically invest their energy into, as whatever they do takes time away from research and job applications. Doing this calculation can foster a feeling of resentment. Another participant talked about how they cannot build in-depth relationships at an institution that “has to get rid of you after a few years”.
- There is a sense that one needs to be **more conscious of what they say because the job can be taken away**. One participant said that precariously employed ECRs do not have the same degree of freedom that permanently employed staff do. However, as mentioned above, even those on a permanent contract feel their job is not secure because they are racialised.

## Examples of good practice

Participants also mentioned some good practice across LSE:

- **Research and Development team** provides valuable support for ECRs.
- **Library staff** are great for accessing resources quickly. The library also provides longer loan times.
- **The Staff Counselling Service** was mentioned several times. However, participants said that it would be good to have more than 6 sessions per academic year. Coming back to the supposed separation between academic life and personal life/wellbeing, counselling service is providing a vital service for everyone navigating the challenges of life, not just work.
- A permanent member of staff mentioned research support in their role as being comparatively good: lower teaching expectations, available competitive and non-competitive funds, research allowance, and sabbatical.
- Teams **prioritising the schedules of ECRs with caring responsibilities** in timetabling was mentioned as a good practice.

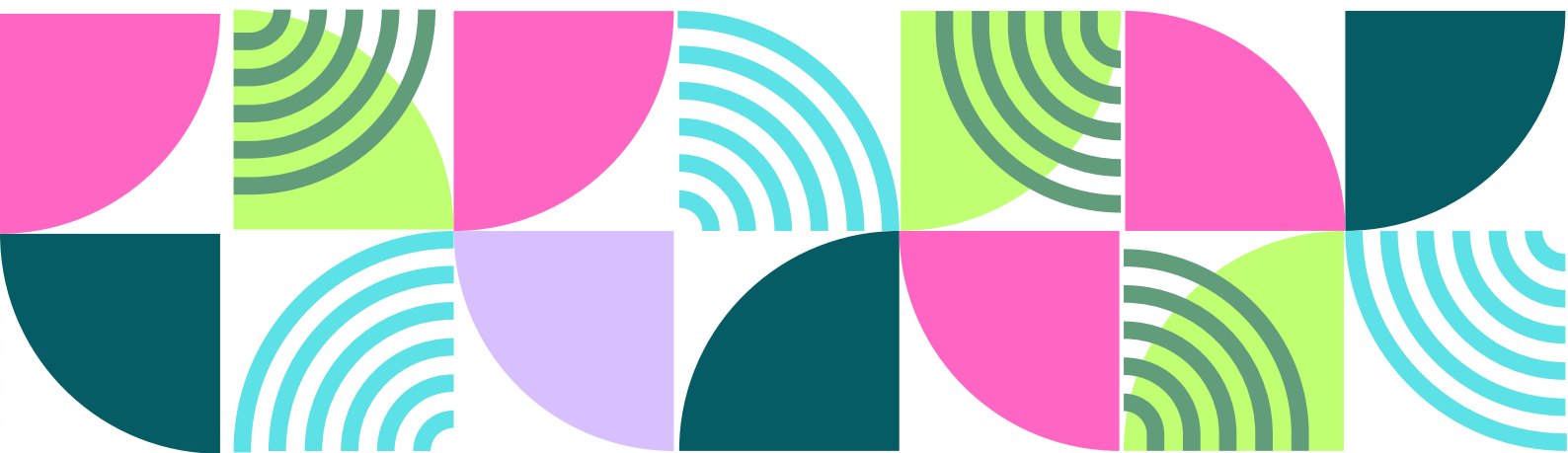
# Recommendations for LSE

There needs to be structural change if LSE is to address the issues discussed in this report. There is a limit to what individuals and individual departments/teams can do and should be expected to do. Many issues mentioned in the interviews occur because some people and departments/teams are following policies that do not match the reality of people who work at LSE, or because there are unwritten rules that are not standardised across the institution (e.g. teaching load). Again, it is worth noting Baltaru’s (2024) findings that racialised staff are underrepresented in terms of total number of staff and in higher-level contracts, particularly at “elite” (Russell Group) institutions. Given that participants explicitly talked about LSE in that way, policies to tackle racial disparities and the ‘leaky pipeline’ (Advance HE, 2024, p. 138) should target the specific challenges that manifest at LSE as an “elite” institution.

Below are some recommendations based on the findings of this report:

- **Increase transparency and minimise bias at all stages of the promotion process.** For example, people who review applications should be peers, not people who are in completely different fields. There is also need for external oversight.
- **Review and embed principles of inclusivity into departmental culture.**
- **All departments/teams should (re)consider how they are dealing with racist incidents,** e.g. from students against staff. What are the ports where racist behaviour can be stopped? What strategies are effective? Are all staff equipped to have difficult conversations?
- **More investment into mental health support for staff** (e.g. offering more than 6 counselling sessions per academic year).
- **Black staff hiring, retention, and promotion are a significant issue.** LSE Race Equity Action Plan should address this issue specifically. The broader language of ‘BAME’ or ‘ethnic minorities’ can function to conceal the fact that there are so few Black staff.
- Initiatives like Office for Students/UK Research and Innovation funded project [‘Generation Delta: Building Routes into Professorship for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Women’](#), aimed to increase the number of ‘BAME’ female professors in HE institutions in England, could be piloted at LSE to address the ‘leaky pipeline’. The initiative hosts a mentorship programme; workshops; and individual universities such as Goldsmiths are offering full doctoral scholarships for students from Black and racially minoritised backgrounds on Home fees.
- **Better support for ECRs on precarious contracts. While this report highlighted some issues racialised ECRs face specifically, others are common to all ECRs on precarious contracts (see also LSE UCU [2023]).** Those are actions that would benefit all ECRs:
  - Prepare materials that ECRs can use to teach, especially if they are filling in for someone temporarily. Some departments already do this, offering guides and notes written by former and current staff members which were mentioned by participants as a great help.
  - Formalisation of mentorship. Racialised ECRs may also benefit from a more targeted mentorship scheme, for example [the BAME Mentorship Scheme](#) at LSE.
  - Protected time for research would ensure that ECRs are able to balance teaching against research commitments that are required to secure a permanent/another academic job.
- **In addition to the above, the nature of LSE Fellowships needs to be reviewed and refined to better meet the needs of Fellows.** The “career development” opportunities offered as part of the Fellowship need to be made explicit and standardised across departments/teams, given that most Fellows who were interviewed expressed being overwhelmed by teaching.
  - The support LSE provides to ensure “career development” should be made more explicit in the handbook and contract. For example, what can departments/teams do to ensure that Fellows are able to focus on research and publications, and successfully apply for academic jobs?
  - Teaching load and responsibilities should be made explicit in the contract. LSE UCU (2023, p.25) recommends improving and enforcing guidance on teaching limits (100 hours per academic year for LSE Fellows).
- The three recommendations in the LSE UCU report (2023) on casualisation would also help to end the detrimental impacts of precarious contracts on racialised ECRs: **reversing the trend of casualisation** (hiring more staff on permanent than fixed-term contracts); establishing a **norm of open-ended contracts**; and introducing a **path for fixed-term academic staff to become permanent staff**.

- **Better support for staff with disability and caring responsibilities.** This could be in the form of being more flexible with virtual meetings or teaching, financial support for commuting, medication, and equipment.
- Future studies should interview more senior academics on permanent contracts who are racialised as 'non-white'. As mentioned by one participant, ECRs on fixed-term contracts may be less likely to be privy to processes and spaces where racialised dynamics play out more and more explicitly.



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# APPENDIX

## HR Workforce Scorecard: Job classifications<sup>7</sup>

- Professor: Grades SB10 and SBA3 in job number SRT
- Assistant Professor: Grades SB07 and SBA1 in job number SRT
- Associate Professor: Grades SB08-SB09 and SBA2 in job number SRT
- LSE Fellow: Grades SB05-SB10 in job number SLF
- Researcher: Grades SB05-SB10 and SBA1-SBA3 in job number SRO

### Raw data for the graphs

Following the Higher Education Statistics Agency's standard rounding methodology to ensure anonymity, the "Full Person Equivalent" rounds the numbers to the nearest multiple of 5. Where it says "N/A", the category of 'Black' was missing from the original data. This shows up as "0" in the graphs. Note that 0% does not necessarily mean 0 people. Given the rounding methodology, 0% could mean any number between 1-2.

YEAR	ROLE	ASIAN	BLACK	MIXED	OTHER	WHITE	UNKNOWN
2016/2017	Professor	7%	1%	1%	1%	82%	9%
	Associate Professor	9%	0%	3%	2%	80%	6%
	Assistant Professor	12%	N/A	6%	1%	71%	10%
	LSE Fellow	15%	1%	3%	4%	67%	10%
	Researcher	8%	2%	1%	3%	76%	8%
2017-2018	Professor	7%	0%	1%	1%	84%	7%

<sup>7</sup> SB and SBA refer to the salary bands according to the LSE Pay Scale.

YEAR	ROLE	ASIAN	BLACK	MIXED	OTHER	WHITE	UNKNOWN
	Associate Professor	9%	0%	3%	2%	78%	8%
	Assistant Professor	12%	1%	6%	1%	72%	7%
	LSE Fellow	14%	3%	3%	1%	73%	6%
	Researcher	10%	2%	1%	1%	79%	8%
2018-2019	Professor	9%	0%	1%	1%	81%	9%
	Associate Professor	8%	0%	4%	3%	78%	7%
	Assistant Professor	18%	1%	7%	1%	69%	4%
	LSE Fellow	17%	3%	3%	1%	71%	6%
	Researcher	10%	1%	3%	4%	75%	8%
2019-2020	Professor	7%	0%	1%	1%	82%	8%
	Associate Professor	8%	0%	5%	2%	78%	6%
	Assistant Professor	20%	2%	6%	1%	66%	4%
	LSE Fellow	18%	3%	4%	2%	69%	4%
	Researcher	10%	2%	5%	6%	70%	7%
2020-2021	Professor	7%	N/A	1%	1%	82%	9%

YEAR	ROLE	ASIAN	BLACK	MIXED	OTHER	WHITE	UNKNOWN
	Associate Professor	8%	0%	5%	3%	78%	6%
	Assistant Professor	21%	3%	6%	1%	65%	3%
	LSE Fellow	16%	3%	4%	4%	70%	3%
	Researcher	11%	3%	6%	5%	69%	7%
2021-2022	Professor	7%	N/A	1%	2%	82%	8%
	Associate Professor	8%	1%	6%	2%	76%	6%
	Assistant Professor	21%	3%	7%	2%	64%	2%
	LSE Fellow	12%	4%	6%	5%	71%	3%
	Researcher	14%	3%	5%	5%	69%	4%
2022-2023	Professor	7%	N/A	2%	2%	80%	10%
	Associate Professor	10%	1%	7%	3%	74%	7%
	Assistant Professor	22%	3%	6%	1%	64%	4%
	LSE Fellow	13%	5%	10%	4%	64%	5%
	Researcher	15%	4%	4%	5%	67%	5%
2023-2024	Professor	7%	N/A	1%	2%	80%	10%

YEAR	ROLE	ASIAN	BLACK	MIXED	OTHER	WHITE	UNKNOWN
	Associate Professor	11%	1%	7%	3%	73%	7%
	Assistant Professor	20%	3%	6%	1%	65%	5%
	LSE Fellow	21%	3%	10%	6%	56%	4%
	Researcher	15%	4%	6%	3%	67%	4%

**Relevant data for Figures 1-8 (Rounded “Full Person Equivalent”):**

Note that 0 does not necessarily mean 0 people. Given the rounding methodology, 0 could mean any number between 1-2.

YEAR	ROLE	ASIAN	BLACK	MIXED	OTHER	WHITE	UNKNOWN
2016/2017	Professor	15	0	0	0	165	20
	Associate Professor	20	0	5	5	160	15
	Assistant Professor	20	0	10	0	120	20
	LSE Fellow	25	0	5	5	110	15
	Researcher	20	5	5	5	165	20
2017-2018	Professor	15	0	0	0	180	15

YEAR	ROLE	ASIAN	BLACK	MIXED	OTHER	WHITE	UNKNOWN
	Associate Professor	20	0	5	5	165	15
	Assistant Professor	20	0	10	0	115	10
	LSE Fellow	20	5	5	0	110	10
	Researcher	20	5	5	0	180	15
2018-2019	Professor	15	0	0	0	180	20
	Associate Professor	15	0	10	5	165	15
	Assistant Professor	30	0	10	0	105	5
	LSE Fellow	25	5	5	0	105	10
	Researcher	20	0	5	10	175	20
2019-2020	Professor	15	0	0	5	190	20
	Associate Professor	15	0	10	5	165	15
	Assistant Professor	35	5	10	0	105	5
	LSE Fellow	30	5	5	5	110	5
	Researcher	25	5	10	15	160	15
2020-2021	Professor	15	0	0	5	190	20

YEAR	ROLE	ASIAN	BLACK	MIXED	OTHER	WHITE	UNKNOWN
	Associate Professor	15	0	10	5	160	15
	Assistant Professor	35	5	10	0	100	5
	LSE Fellow	25	5	5	5	110	5
	Researcher	25	5	15	10	155	15
2021-2022	Professor	20	0	0	5	195	20
	Associate Professor	15	0	10	5	155	15
	Assistant Professor	35	5	15	5	110	5
	LSE Fellow	20	5	10	10	120	5
	Researcher	35	5	10	10	165	10
2022-2023	Professor	20	0	5	5	200	25
	Associate Professor	20	0	15	5	145	15
	Assistant Professor	40	5	10	0	110	5
	LSE Fellow	20	10	15	5	110	10
	Researcher	40	10	10	15	165	10
2023-2024	Professor	20	0	5	5	210	25

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>ROLE</b>	<b>ASIAN</b>	<b>BLACK</b>	<b>MIXED</b>	<b>OTHER</b>	<b>WHITE</b>	<b>UNKNOWN</b>
	Associate Professor	20	0	15	5	145	15
	Assistant Professor	35	5	10	0	110	10
	LSE Fellow	35	5	20	10	100	5
	Researcher	40	10	15	10	170	10



# INVESTIGATING THE EXPERIENCES OF RACIALISED EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS AT LSE

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