

# BAM



## FELLOWS

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# HOLDING UP A MIRROR TO RACE AND GENDER IN UK BUSINESS SCHOOLS

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A report produced by the British Academy of Management's College of Fellows  
working group on EDIR, led by

Professor Sue Vinnicombe OBE FBAM

Professor Fiona Wilson FBAM

# Holding up a mirror to race and gender in UK Business Schools

Statistical analysis of Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data shows a 6% gender imbalance in favour of men in Business and Management Schools in the UK. This is double that found in the wider labour market. While there is relative gender parity at entry level in the HE labour market, this disappears with career progression. At professorial level only 26% is female (Śliwa et al., 2022a). Similarly with race, while 12% of employed people in the UK self-identify as from an ethnic minority, in Business Schools, a much larger percentage (28%) report being from an ethnic minority. However, percentages decrease with career progression so only 2% of professorial staff are black, 2% mixed and 16% Asian. Many Business Schools now have courses on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. It appears though that they are unable to practice what they teach and put their own houses in order (Grace and Ammerman, 2022). Qualitative research too demonstrates how gendered and racialized inequalities persist (Bhopal and Henderson, 2021; Śliwa et al, 2022b; Yarrow and Davies, 2022).

## BAM Fellows working party on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Our working party include thirteen Fellows from a wide range of UK Business Schools. We asked them for data on the gender and ethnicity of Business School Professors in their universities. Data was received from eight. This showed that the percentage of female professors ranged between 21% and 45%. Only three of the eight had more than one third female professors. In one particularly stark example of a UK business school, there were 75% female faculty but only 22% of professors were female. Data on ethnicity was more difficult to obtain. We expected this to be data that had been collected and was publicly available, but that was not the case. As the data on ethnicity was so difficult to obtain, we resorted to counting the numbers of professors with names from ethnic minorities; this data was found on the business school website academic staff lists. This showed the number of ethnic minority professors being very low. For example, three business schools had none or one. The best had 28% but we suspect double counting due to the way the school was structured.

Given the inequalities the data revealed, we looked to see what, if any, insight the promotion criteria from three of the business schools could offer. What was striking was the overwhelming number of criteria and the lack of clarity about those criteria. For example, one business school's promotion document was 26 pages long and included some very vague criteria such as "considerable external examining experience".

To redress the inequalities demonstrated in both the quantitative and qualitative data, Business and Management Schools need to take a number of actions. Firstly, they need to acknowledge the nature and extent of the problem. They need both internal and external accountability in their governance structures. They need to monitor, measure and publish their figures on gender, race and their pay equality. They need to set targets for equality (e.g. 35% female professors within 3 years) and monitor progress towards those targets (Doldor, 2021). They must actively tackle institutional and cultural sexism

(Yarrow and Davies, 2022). Given Business and Management Schools' role in leadership, they need to actively promote equality, focussing on the instruments that the law in the UK already provides. They may for example request anonymised CVs from candidates in recruitment and promotion processes, or give women who take time out for maternity leave 6 months off teaching and administration duties in order to catch up with their research. Greater clarity and transparency of promotion requirements and processes are needed. Perhaps career workshops open to all faculty could focus on promotion requirements and developing a case for promotion for those on different contracts (teaching and research versus teaching only).

## References:

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British Academy of Management  
Five Kings House  
Queen Street Place  
London  
EC4R 1QS

[Bam@bam.ac.uk](mailto:Bam@bam.ac.uk)  
[www.bam.ac.uk](http://www.bam.ac.uk)

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