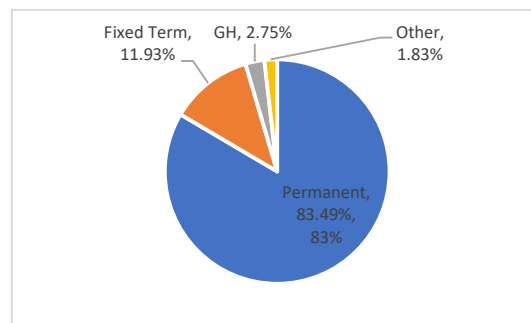


GENDER.ED Stakeholder Survey 2023

mapping gender and sexualities researchers and teachers across the University

In 2023, we conducted a survey open to all gender and sexuality researchers, educators and professional services staff members at the University of Edinburgh. This was a chance for you to tell us about your experiences, needs and aspirations 3 years after the first such survey was conducted in 2019. Responses: 118 individuals (2 excluded) from across 12 schools and university-wide professional services support structures. Once again, we used the Jisc (Bristol) online survey. All responses are anonymised.



Key Findings

"GENDER.ED's greatest success, to my mind, is how it has become institutionalised. My experience as part of the Global Academies shows how this is not a given. That GENDER.ED has flourished and is a core network is really encouraging and benefits not just me but all of us. Of course, core funding should be much-improved."

1. Institutional support remains uneven, with scope for improvement in key areas

Is gender and sexualities research and teaching valued and supported at the University of Edinburgh? 74.67% feel that gender and sexualities research is 'somewhat valued' or 'very valued' in their School (compared to 80% in 2019), with similar figures at Subject Area level (76.92% in 2023 and 75.2% in 2019). When asked about opportunities for collaboration with other gender and sexualities researchers in the University, approximately 2:3 responded with either 'a great deal', 'a lot' or 'a moderate amount' in both 2023 and 2019. 53% of respondents observed they do not face any challenges in teaching gender and sexualities. In contrast to these positive responses, responses to other questions and free text comments highlighted the need for 'more funding and resources for researchers', and raised issues of 'lack of time and training to develop courses and teaching resources', 'precarious job contracts', and 'fraught debates on gender and sexualities within the University and beyond'. Respondents repeatedly noted the scope for more concrete and substantive institutional support. The University needs to prioritise 'gender' in its strategic vision and policy.

"I feel as if the institution is not brave enough in supporting marginalised and 'outsider' scholars and courses... that highlight structural oppressions, particularly those based on the intersections of race, class, gender and sexuality. Science/ tech focus (digital, environmental, health) tends to dominate all agendas. and cultural easily disappear from view."

2. GENDER.ED is seen as constructive force, raising the profile of gender and sexualities studies

In the [2019 survey](#), respondents expressed their keenness to use GENDER.ED to publicise and showcase their work, to build connections and community through networking events, and to support teaching, research and research training. In 2023, those who are familiar with GENDER.ED see it as a positive force contributing significantly to the University's academic landscape by fostering a sense of community among gender and sexualities scholars, and raising the profile of gender and sexualities teaching and research. Respondents identify the hub's principal achievements as being 'demonstrating to the University, the strength and variety of this sometimes neglected inter-/multi-disciplinary field', 'building a welcoming, inclusive and intellectually rich community (across different parts of the Uni, career stage and students)', 'creating opportunities for intellectual, research and pedagogical exchange', 'making connections across the Uni and beyond' and 'supporting flagship courses, particularly [UGCW](#) and [Intro to Queer Studies](#)'. They note the opportunities GENDER.ED provides through its year-round [calendar of activities and events](#) for 'networking and learning about research and change projects that they would otherwise not be aware of'. The [Annual Research Showcase](#) is by far our most appreciated and widely attended event. Other notable activities and opportunities respondents mention include Deep Dive organised by the hub's [Gender and Sexualities Studies Reading Group](#), events we have sponsored at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, we offer with

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[feminist research methods training](#) funding from the Scottish Graduate Schools, and paid [internships for undergraduates and PhD researchers](#).

“I think GENDER.ED has really raised the prominence of gender and sexualities studies-related teaching across the University. It has both created a productive space for interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration and put weight behind isolated gender scholars in some Subject Areas/Schools.”

3. There are wide-ranging aspirations and challenges

In response to questions about future aspirations for the hub, and what respondents would like to see it accomplish in the next five years, there was a variety of important suggestions pertaining to [GENDER.ED’s core mission](#) of promoting excellence in teaching, research and knowledge exchange in gender and sexualities studies. These include ‘further “scaffolding” gender/queer studies curriculum with appropriate resources’, ‘connecting in more systematic ways with students, particularly undergraduates’, ‘being more active in the research space, expanding further into research collaborations and consultancy’, ‘strengthening its intersectional and decolonial lenses’ and ‘continuing to provide solidarity in challenging times’. Highlighting the hub’s role as a critical friend of the institution, number of respondents expressed a desire to see GENDER.ED emerge as ‘a voice that is both listened to and sought-after by the University leadership’, especially when it comes to ‘policy and practice around gender equality and trans inclusion’. Navigating the tensions and contradictions, and ongoing debates within the field of gender and sexualities in the UK and beyond in a professional and lawful way is a key challenge for GENDER.ED. Some respondents put forward very concrete ideas: ‘platform more feminist and trans collaboration’, ‘bring Global South scholars and activists for exchange’, ‘expand profile in the light of the Edinburgh City Deal’, ‘consolidate cluster of activities into one landmark effort – an annual interdisciplinary networking conference,’ ‘oversee a minor or master in gender studies’ and ‘become a more collective/ collaborative space – more like a centre’. The variety of

aspirations and expectations is indicative of the varying priorities and perspectives of the different stakeholders associated with GENDER.ED. Respondents were, however, unanimous in recognising the need for more core funding and resources for GENDER.ED to thrive.

4. Need for greater clarity, widening reach, and strengthening communications strategy

Many more respondents know about GENDER.ED in 2023 compared to 2019. However, the hub needs to do more to raise its profile and to widen its reach. Nearly half the respondents are still either ‘somewhat familiar’ or ‘not familiar at all’ with its role and activities. When asked what GENDER.ED represents for them, many couldn’t comment, and a number of those who did, considered it as a space committed to ‘promoting gender equality in the University’, or for ‘gender-based research and advocacy’.¹ One respondent noted: ‘it sometimes feels like there’s no new people in the network; same people attend all events.’ Going forward, we also need to strengthen and consolidate our communications strategy. 71.93% of respondents have accessed our (old) website. Several noted that they found it difficult to navigate and were unable to easily locate content on our upcoming events, flagship courses, undergraduate prizes, reading group, and newsletter – issues which have since been addressed on our new [website](#). 43.86% of respondents noted they would like to receive the (currently bi-monthly) [newsletter](#) once per semester. Those who do read our [blog](#), read it either when a new post is publicised (47.83%) or monthly (52.17%), and are most interested in reading about cutting-edge research in the University (34.43%) and internationally (24.59%), especially from the global south (16.39%). In free text comments, respondents note they want to read more content on ‘LGBTQ+ and anti-racist intersectional work and feminist pedagogy’. [GENDER.ED’s directory](#) users expressed a strong preference for making the courses searchable separately from the researchers – a change that has since been implemented.

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¹ This lack of clarity about GENDER.ED’s role could be partly a function of the change in the demographic filling the survey. In 2019, survey respondents were predominantly School of Social

and Political Science staff whereas in 2023 there were mainly Information Services Group staff who are not directly engaged in academic research and teaching on gender and sexualities.