**Appendix A: Data Issues Specific to Non-Binary and Transgender Students within UK Higher Education**

Two areas of particular interest to scholars researching inclusivity and diversity within higher education are trans-gender populations (i.e., those that have transitioned from male to female, or female to male) and non-binary populations (i.e., those that identify as a gender identity other than “male” or “female”). Data on these populations is often difficult to source. Approaching universities directly through FOIA requests also reveals what further information is available in their data where it is not currently available from aggregate sources such as HESA. However, several key issues were highlighted through the data collection process that made it infeasible to include any discussion of these populations in this paper’s analysis:

1. The data is not always available, as some universities do not recognise non-binary genders on their student record, and/or do not encourage students to express their preferred gender identity clearly.
2. Where universities do track this data, not all students are willing to provide information.
3. Where students are willing to provide information, universities are not always clear on how this data is tracked.
4. Where universities have tracked this data, the data may not be sufficient for statistical analysis.

Several specific factors should be highlighted that pertain to these issues.

The UK government does not recognise gender identities other than ‘male’ and ‘female’ in most instances. For example, British passports only permit gender classifications of ‘Male’ or ‘Female’. This is a matter of great debate within the UK and it is possible that changes will be made in the next few years that will allow the kind of research presented in this article to be revisited. Despite this lack of legal recognition, potential confusion arises in research of higher education demographics: the only government agency to offer a third gender designation of ‘other’ is HESA, one of the key organisations for university data in the UK.

However, despite the availability of a third gender designation of ‘other’ which is recognised and tracked by HESA, the lack of legal recognition of this designation by the UK government may place universities in a difficult position. For example, where a student’s record has a perceived need to match their immigration records, it may prove difficult to ensure that a student’s identity is properly recognised whilst fulfilling the legal duties of the institution. Changes to legislation would be required to address this issue and ensure that persons are embodied with the ability to freely express their preferred gender in a way that can be tracked within data.

There also exists a significant and understandable level of caution regarding identifying yourself publicly as non-binary. Whilst discrimination is increasingly challenged at universities, prejudice has not yet been eliminated. Students may have concerns about prejudice within the university. Students may also have concerns regarding their data if the university received a request for information. To ensure that gender expressions are accurately recorded in the data, universities must take steps to ensure that all students are comfortable identifying their preferred gender on campus, and evidence adequate safeguards on the data to prevent unwanted further identification.

Any method of preparing data for publication has an unfortunate and unavoidable effect on non-binary populations. Students must not be individually identifiable from published data so, as already discussed, demographics which have small populations are normally represented as an indefinite “less than 5”.[[1]](#footnote-2) Several methods for handling this non-numeric data are possible.

With an average of over 500 courses per year but only around 50 non-binary students represented in HESA data for “(W3) Music”, the statistical likelihood is that most courses in the data set will not have any non-binary students. To some extent, this is reflected in the data received from universities, many of whom confirmed that no students identified as non-binary throughout the period requested. We could, therefore, treat “less than 5” in this category as equivalent to “0” on the basis that this is the closest to our mathematical average. However, this would entirely erase non-binary students from the dataset. There are no courses which have more than 5 non-binary students listed on the student record.

We could instead determine that “less than 5” is equivalent to any given number – e.g., 3 students, as has been done for male and female students where relevant. However, as universities often opted to record “0 students” as “less than 5 students”, this would – in effect – create hundreds of additional non-binary students. This would create a false representation of the extent of non-binary music students by vastly over-inflating their numbers.

Potential over-representation and under-representation both lead to high uncertainty and low confidence in any conclusions, and neither would offer a holistic or accurate depiction of the representation of these individuals in higher music education.

The tracking of transgender populations has additional complexity when the question of how to record the data arises. Universities are often unclear as to whether they should be tracking preferred gender or legal gender. This applies not only at a policy level (e.g., what should the university staff be requesting) but also during student registration: students may not be informed of the university’s policy on gender or may choose to ignore the university’s stated policy if they disagree with it. As a result, it cannot be determined whether the data provided by universities to researchers reflects the preferred gender or the legal gender of students (nor where legal gender and preferred gender differ). This has several effects on the data presented in the paper. For example, it is these issues that may have led to Newcastle University being unable to provide gender statistics for their music-related courses.

Students who transition before, during or after their course may also decide not to inform the university of this out of fear of discrimination. Even where they do inform the university, the dataset used in this research paper is unable to represent changes in student gender in the university record as it is based on student populations not student cohorts. A student changing gender within a cohort is indistinguishable from the changing gender populations due to expected demographic differences between matriculation and graduation populations.

If universities are proactive in accommodating changes in our societal understandings of presentations of gender and the growing recognition that gender is a matter of self-identification, then university data would become more accurate in tracking these populations. However, this is not currently the case and it is likely that, as a result, the data likely reflects a self-perpetuating cycle of under-identification: e.g., as the data cannot be used to track transgender individuals, transgender individuals may feel that they do not have peers amongst the student body, and therefore choose not to identify themselves either. These conflicts are well-represented by student unions across the country, and we should be optimistic that universities are being encouraged to support the right of students to self-recognition.

However, as it stands at present, discussions with academics teaching in music departments in the UK have suggested that there are a number of non-binary and transgender students on their courses which are not represented in the official data. Other sources of demographic data perhaps expose some of the extent of the ‘chilling effects’ that these key issues in university data lead to: only 0.1% of music students in 2018 HESA data identified as “Other” (HESA, n.d.-a)whilst the UK 2018 census identified 0.4% of the population as “Other” (Office for National Statistics, n.d.). Further, in a 2018 survey of the music industry, 1.7% of respondents choose not to respond as either female or male (UK Music, 2018). Whether the 0.4% or 1.7% figure represents a better idea of non-binary populations in the broader music community, HESA data still has a significantly smaller reported population. At least in part, this is likely the result of inadequate data collection processes.

However, one final issue arises when we acknowledge the small proportionality of non-binary individuals within the general population. Given a total population of around 28,000 music students in any given year (HESA, n.d.-c), we could estimate around 100 non-binary music students (based on UK census representation of 0.4%) and/or around 300 trans-gender music students (based on Stonewall estimates of around 1% representation in the general population). This is not a large population to engage with for a data research project. Any future analysis focused on these populations may therefore struggle to ensure that sufficient individuals participate as to prevent personal experiences of participants from prejudicing conclusions applied to the broader population. An analysis would need to extend across many years and have high penetration into the target populations to ensure an adequate level of confidence in the results.

Because of these manifold issues which cannot be addressed using the methodology in this study, populations of “transgender” and “non-binary” individuals cannot be addressed within this demographic survey of music in higher education institutions. Further adaptations to methodology would be required to discuss these populations using statistical analyses and answer any questions surrounding the correlations of course content and gender in these populations.

**Appendix B: Sample data request**

Dear [university],

I am a PhD student conducting some research into gender and music education in higher education institutions.

I would like to request information on the gender of the student population on music courses offered at [institution name] during the academic years: 2015/2016, 2016/2017, 2017/2018, 2018/2019, 2019/2020.

This could be provided as absolute numbers, rounded numbers, and/or as proportional data.

Is this information which you collect, and would be able to provide?

**Appendix C: Outcomes of FOIA requests by university**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Index | University Name | Data Provided? |
| 1 | Anglia Ruskin University | Y |
| 2 | Bangor University | Y |
| 3 | Bath Spa University | Y |
| 4 | Birmingham City University | Y |
| 5 | Bournemouth University | Y |
| 6 | Brunel University London | Y |
| 7 | Buckinghamshire New University | Y |
| 8 | Canterbury Christ Church University | Y |
| 9 | Cardiff University | N |
| 10 | City, University of London | Y |
| 11 | Coventry University | Y |
| 12 | De Montfort University | Y |
| 13 | Edge Hill University | Y |
| 14 | Edinburgh Napier University | Y |
| 15 | Falmouth University | Y |
| 16 | Glyndŵr University | Y |
| 17 | Goldsmiths College | Y |
| 18 | Guildhall School of Music and Drama | Y |
| 19 | Keele University | Y |
| 20 | King's College London | Y |
| 21 | Kingston University | Y |
| 22 | Leeds Arts University | Y |
| 23 | Leeds Beckett University | Y |
| 24 | Leeds College of Music | N |
| 25 | Liverpool Hope University | Y |
| 26 | London Metropolitan University | N |
| 27 | London South Bank University | Y |
| 28 | Middlesex University | N |
| 29 | Newcastle University | N |
| 30 | Oxford Brookes University | Y |
| 31 | Queen's University Belfast | Y |
| 32 | Ravensbourne University London | Y |
| 33 | Royal Academy of Music | Y |
| 34 | Royal College of Music | N |
| 35 | Royal Conservatoire of Scotland | Y |
| 36 | Royal Holloway and Bedford New College | Y |
| 37 | Royal Northern College of Music | Y |
| 38 | SOAS University of London | Y |
| 39 | Solent University | Y |
| 40 | Staffordshire University | N |
| 41 | The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts | N |
| 42 | The Manchester Metropolitan University | DEPARTMENT ONLY |
| 43 | The Nottingham Trent University | 2016 ONLY |
| 44 | The Open University | Y |
| 45 | The University of Aberdeen | LEVEL OF STUDY ONLY |
| 46 | The University of Birmingham | N |
| 47 | The University of Brighton | Y |
| 48 | The University of Bristol | Y |
| 49 | The University of Cambridge | Y |
| 50 | The University of Central Lancashire | Y |
| 51 | The University of Chichester | Y |
| 52 | The University of East London | Y |
| 53 | The University of Edinburgh | Y |
| 54 | The University of Glasgow | Y |
| 55 | The University of Greenwich | N |
| 56 | The University of Huddersfield | Y |
| 57 | The University of Hull | N |
| 58 | The University of Kent | Y |
| 59 | The University of Leeds | Y |
| 60 | The University of Lincoln | Y |
| 61 | The University of Liverpool | Y |
| 62 | The University of Manchester | Y |
| 63 | The University of Northampton | Y |
| 64 | The University of Oxford | Y |
| 65 | The University of Portsmouth | Y |
| 66 | The University of Salford | Y |
| 67 | The University of Sheffield | Y |
| 68 | The University of Southampton | N |
| 69 | The University of Sunderland | Y |
| 70 | The University of Surrey | Y |
| 71 | The University of Sussex | Y |
| 72 | The University of the West of Scotland | Y |
| 73 | The University of West London | Y |
| 74 | The University of Westminster | N |
| 75 | The University of Winchester | Y |
| 76 | The University of Wolverhampton | Y |
| 77 | The University of York | Y |
| 78 | Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance | N |
| 79 | Ulster University | Y |
| 80 | University for the Creative Arts | Y |
| 81 | University of Bedfordshire | N |
| 82 | University of Chester | N |
| 83 | University of Cumbria | Y |
| 84 | University of Derby | Y |
| 85 | University of Durham | Y |
| 86 | University of Gloucestershire | N |
| 87 | University of Hertfordshire | N |
| 88 | University of Nottingham | Y |
| 89 | University of Plymouth | Y |
| 90 | University of South Wales | Y |
| 91 | University of St Mark and St John | Y |
| 92 | University of Suffolk | Y |
| 93 | University of the Highlands and Islands | Y |
| 94 | University of Wales Trinity Saint David | N |
| 95 | York St John University | Y |
| 96 | Liverpool John Moores University | Y |

1. Whilst some of the received data nonetheless permits a definite number to be calculated, it would be unethical to present information that permits for the identification of specific students within the dataset. The fact that this information can be calculated from received data does, to some extent, demonstrate and validate the concerns raised in this appendix. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)