

German Sub-Faculty Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Audit, November 2024

Introduction

This paper is meant to be read as the third update to the extensive September 2021 report by Joanna Neilly. The focus in this update is on major changes made in teaching in the academic year 2023-24 as well as significant results from the latest audit.

There was a reasonable response rate to the audit: 9 respondents, of which 7 permanent postholders, 1 graduate student with teaching responsibilities, 0 fixed-term/early career lecturers/researchers, 0 Lektor*innen, and 1 who defined their roles as 'other'. This is down from a total of 12 respondents in 2023 and 16 respondents in 2022. Thank you to everyone who filled out the audit!

This survey was designed to find out how we currently address diverse experiences and approaches in our teaching across three main areas: language, linguistics, and literature/culture. It was based on the survey conducted in September of 2021, but, to make it lighter-touch (like the previous updates), asked respondents to focus on changes they made since the last survey. In keeping with the Faculty approach and to align with other SFs, as advised by the Race and Diversity Champion Phillip Rothwell, the audit was framed in terms of the UK's protected characteristics (age; gender reassignment; disability; race including skin colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation; pregnancy and maternity; being married or in a civil partnership). Respondents were however also welcome to comment on other types of diversity, e.g. class. This is not just about representing authors/ filmmakers/ theorists etc. from underrepresented groups, although this is essential to a diverse curriculum, but also about critical approaches to teaching which encourage discussion of various perspectives, questions of power and oppression, etc.

Current Practice

The major points emerging from this update are as follows:

- Responses show that colleagues continue to think about ways of diversifying their curricula across the breadth of teaching in the Sub-Faculty.
- As was the case in previous surveys, the responses show that across the Sub-Faculty we continue to pay a lot of attention to sex and gender, race, ethnic/national origin, sexual orientation, and religion and belief, including in texts by seemingly 'non-diverse' authors.
- Two topics which the audit suggests are underdeveloped in our offerings, again in line with previous years, are disability as well as gender reassignment and trans and non-binary identities. That said, responses showed an interest in approaching these topics – disability in particular – but a lack of time/tools to do so.
- Class, although not one of the protected characteristics in the UK but nevertheless called out specifically in the audit's questions, wasn't mentioned.

A selection of good examples from current practice from the audit:

- Respondents said they continue to introduce a variety of contemporary and/or non-canonical authors into their teaching whose texts address questions related to diversity. Examples include: Yoko Tawada, Ruth Klüger, Linda Stiff, Thomas Hettche.
- In Linguistics teaching, attention is paid to a broad range of topics related to diversity. Examples include discussions of Kiezdeutsch and Unserdeutsch.
- Language classes too, translation in particular, remain a great place for introducing diversity in both authors and textual subjects.
- One respondent had their students read Leila Essa's article in *Die Zeit* on Mithu Sanyal, Asal Dardan and the exclusionary system of the German book market. The article can be found here: <https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2021-03/mithu-sanyal-asal-dardan-cancel-culture-rassismus-identitaet-marginalisierte-gruppen>

Changes that have come into effect since the last audit:

- After a review of Prelims Paper IV, the new course has now gone into effect. It was put on hold for a year due to lecture capacity and uncertainty about the future of Paper III. In the first

audit, Paper IV was identified as most pressing as it is the only literary/cultural studies paper taken by beginners.

- In response to last year's suggestions about the sharing of (best) practices around Paper VIII, various colleagues shared their reading lists amongst themselves. Those who were involved expressed that it was helpful to see others' reading lists and said that they were tempted to make changes based on others' models. It might be worth making this an exercise that includes the entire Sub-Faculty, see below.

Further Suggestions

Further Suggestions from the German SF Audit:

- One graduate student expressed the willingness to address topics of diversity while finding papers 'traditional in scope'. It might therefore be helpful to think about ways in which we can encourage first-time tutors, especially graduate students, at Oxford to think about ways of addressing diversity within various Papers. Perhaps this can be discussed with Katherine Ibbett as DGS.
- There seems to be quite some interest in addressing disability amongst respondents, while at the same time a lack of knowledge around the subject was expressed. It might be fruitful to think of ways of addressing the topic (Sub-)Faculty- or Division-wide (e.g. via a lecture series or a TORCH Network) or of ways of sharing materials between colleagues.
- While Paper VIII is often commented on as in need of further attention, this time it was also suggested that its format is very well suited to incorporating both students' and tutors' interests and concerns with respect to diversity as well as to experimenting with new authors and/or topics. The suggestion was to create a Sharepoint site to share colleague's formats for Paper VIII, that is, to formalize the sharing of Papers VIII amongst colleagues which happened informally in response to the last audit.
- More generally speaking, this and previous audits have shown an appetite for more sharing of materials, also beyond Paper VIII.
- It was suggested that more could be done to signal to students that the dissertation (Paper XIV) and the bridge essay lend themselves to topics of diversity.

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