

Diversity & Inclusion Survey, 2023
Political Studies Association of Ireland

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Report by:

Caroline Godard
Diversity & Equality Officer

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Summary

The Diversity & Inclusion Survey was disseminated after the Annual Conference 2023 to all PSAI members with the aim of gathering feedback on the demographics of PSAI members and identifying areas in which PSAI can improve inclusion of its members. The survey was disseminated to all PSAI members by email and through PSAI's newsletter. 49 responses were gathered between November and December 2023, representing about a fifth of all of PSAI's members.

Respondents broadly welcomed the survey, with several responses suggesting that members were keen to see PSAI initiatives promoting Diversity and Inclusion. The results show that PSAI members generally think that PSAI encourages diversity and inclusion through its actions: A large majority of respondents agreed with the statements that PSAI encourages diversity and creates an inclusive and respectful environment; 83% thought that diversity in participation is encouraged in PSAI actions; about 90% felt valued and respected. Yet this view was not shared unanimously.

Furthermore, respondents thought that PSAI should continue its efforts to improve diversity in gender (78%), ethnicity (89%), variety in academic status (83%), facilitate accommodations for those with disabilities in the organisation (89%), and continuously strive to improve inclusion in its activities and at the conferences it organises. Numerous suggestions were made in the qualitative feedback on how this could be done. Generally, respondents thought PSAI efforts to grow its diversity and improve its inclusion could be made more visible.

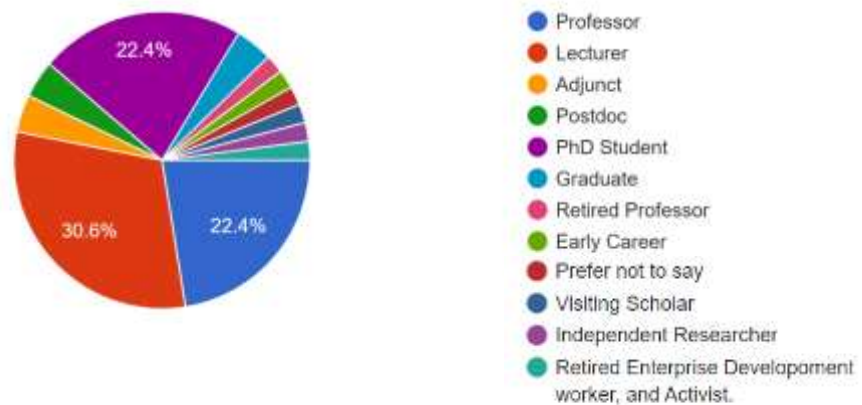
After providing details about the respondent pool and its demographics, the remainder of this report provides graphs of the raw data accompanied with short descriptions with respect of Diversity and Inclusion in the association generally and at the PSAI conferences more specifically. The last section provides a summary of the qualitative feedback received and concludes with recommendations to the PSAI Executive Committee (EC). Questions about the survey can be directed to the current PSAI Equality and Diversity Officer at psaiequalitydiversity@gmail.com.

Respondents

This survey was administered to the members of the Political Studies Association of Ireland contacted by email, as well as to members and non-members recipient of the PSAI newsletter between the 17th November and the 13th December 2023. Of the 49 individuals who responded, all indicated being members of PSAI. This figure represents 18% of the 272 PSAI members contacted for a response. 22% of the respondent indicated being at the rank of Professor, 30% of the respondents were Lecturers, and 22% of the respondents were PhD students. The other categories totalled one or two responses only.

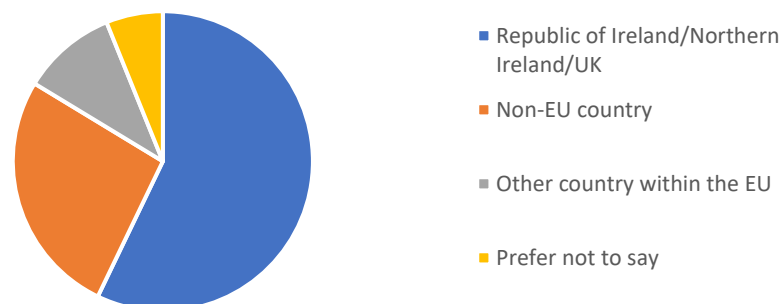
What is your academic status?

49 responses



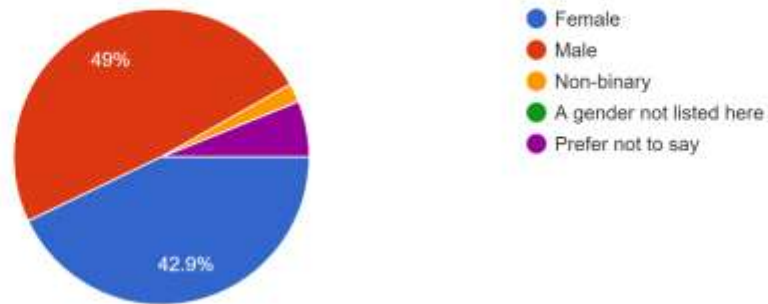
A majority of the respondents (57%) indicated that their country of birth was the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland or the UK. 20% of the respondents indicated a country of birth outside of the EU in various parts of the world. 10% of the respondents came from other countries within the EU. 3 respondents preferred not to answer.

What is your country of birth?



What best describes your gender?

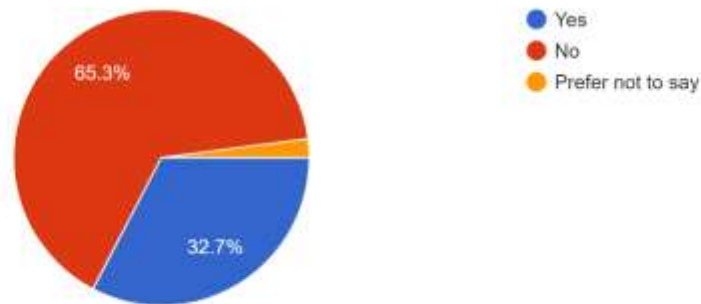
49 responses



49% of the respondents identified as male, 43% as female and 2% as non-binary, while 3 respondents preferred not to answer.

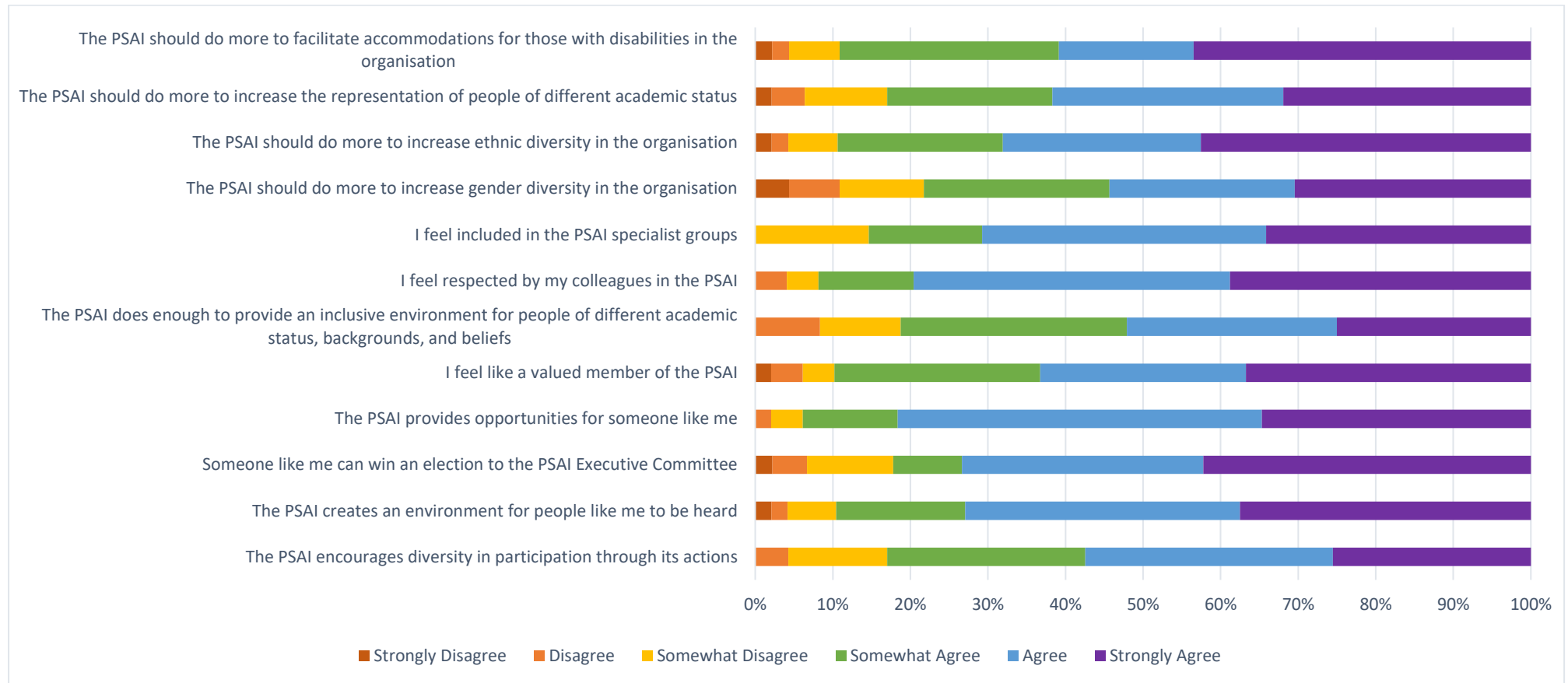
Do you perceive yourself to be a member of one or more underrepresented groups (including, but not limited to gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation or disability status)?

49 responses



About one third of the respondents identified as a member of at least one underrepresented group. When asked to indicate the group(s) they identified to, disability status, gender identity and sexual orientation were the most frequently cited groups. Belonging to a minority national group was also cited. Furthermore, 16% of all respondents indicated having a qualifying disability.

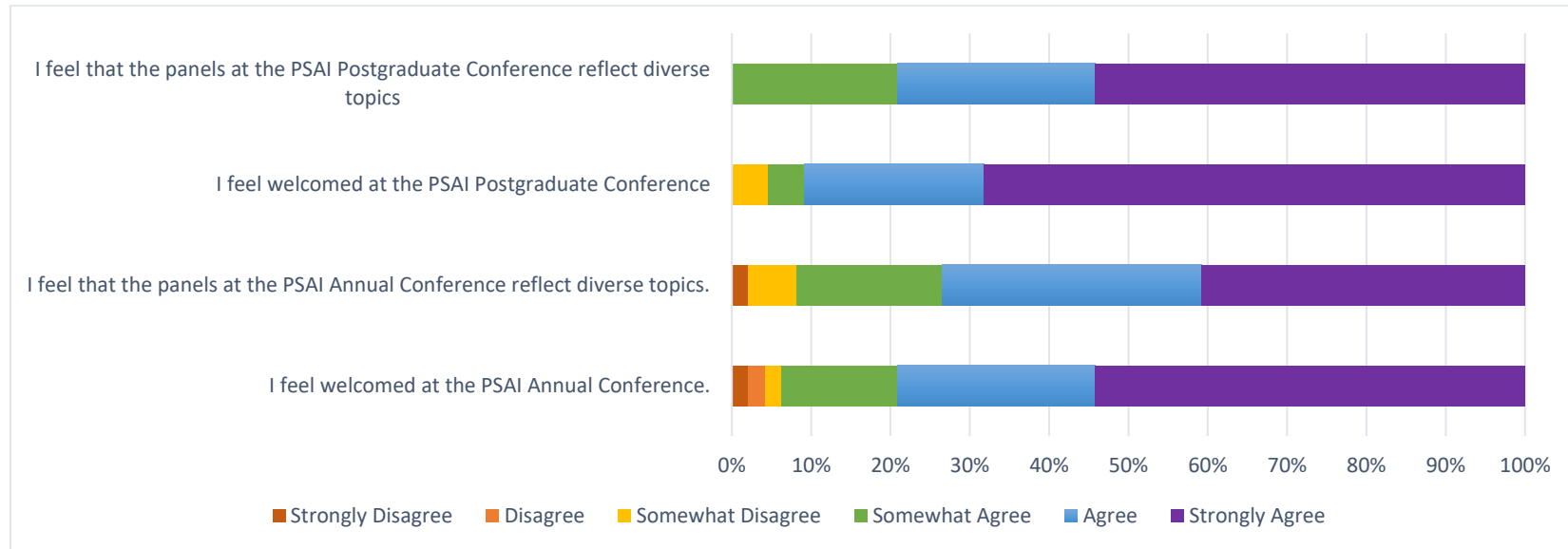
Diversity and Inclusion in the PSAI



The large majority of the respondents agreed with the statements that PSAI encourages diversity in participation through its actions (83%), creates an inclusive environment (90%) and opportunities for them (94%), felt valued (90%), included in the specialists’ groups (85%) and respected (92%) within the association. However, a few respondents disagreed with those statements, of whom some provided reasons for answering this way in the qualitative feedback. 19% *disagreed* with the statement that the PSAI does enough to provide an inclusive environment for people of different academic status, backgrounds, and beliefs. The responses also gave a sense that PSAI should continue its efforts to increase diversity in gender (78%), ethnicity (89%), variety in academic status (83%), and facilitate accommodations for those with disabilities in the organisation (89%). About 2% of the respondents chose “Not apply/Never attended” –

this figure was removed from the above graph. The number of respondents was too low to allow for a meaningful disaggregation of the responses by membership to an underrepresented group, gender, disability status or country of birth.

Diversity and Inclusion at the PSAI's conferences



Most participants responded that they felt welcomed at both the PSAI Annual Conference (94%) and the Postgraduate Conference (95%), while a minority of respondents disagreed with that statement (8% and 6%, respectively). There was a widespread view that the Conferences' panels reflected diverse topics at the Annual Conference (92%) and at the Postgraduate Conference (100%). About half of the respondents selected "Not apply/Never attended" to the questions relative to the PSAI Postgraduate Conference – this figure was removed from the above analysis. The number of respondents was too low to allow for a meaningful disaggregation of the responses by membership to an underrepresented group, gender, disability status or country of birth.

Qualitative feedback

Respondents acknowledged the efforts of PSAI to grow its diversity and improve its inclusiveness in recent years. With respect of **gender diversity and inclusion**, four respondents acknowledged the efforts made by PSAI in recent years, while two others stressed that there was room for improvement at the organisational level and at conferences. Similarly, several respondents confirmed the view that more could be done to improve the diversity and the inclusion of **ethnic, national and other underrepresented groups**, as well as the inclusion of people **with disabilities**. Efforts to include **early career researchers** were recognised (three respondents), while also suggesting that more could be done beyond the Postgraduate Conference (two respondents). The issue of **inclusion at the Annual Conference** was thematised in several comments. There were mixed opinions on holding the Annual Conference in the weekend: Some were the opinion that this arrangement did not favour inclusion and was generally not compatible with work-life balance, posing particular issues for those with caring responsibilities and those with specific constraints or needs. Others argued that midweek conferences would damage the participation of academics based outside of Ireland and limit PSAI opportunities to grow its diversity. Further on the inclusion at the Annual Conference, several comments suggested that not all individuals felt included or welcomed in past events.

Respondents' suggestions to the PSAI's Executive Committee

In the matter of **Gender diversity and inclusion**, the EC should continue its efforts to ensure gender diversity and inclusion within the association, at conferences and throughout its activities. Involving its internal resources, in particular the Gender Specialist Group, could help to promote the participation of underrepresented sex and genders when planning events and activities. Suggestions were also made to promote the Athena Swan framework for Political Science schools at the Annual Conference.

With respect to **ethnic, national diversity and other underrepresented groups**, the EC should continue its efforts and make its actions to promote diversity and inclusion in its organisation and at conferences more visible. Suggestions included: Doing outreach work with Departments across Ireland, especially among Early Career Researchers; Encouraging students with more diverse backgrounds to join or set up specialist groups in their field; Organising conferences in such a way that diversity-prone panels are more valued; And making new and existing incentives for diversity in award allocation more visible.

To improve the **inclusion of Early Career Researchers (ECR)**, respondents suggested organising an Early Career Event at each annual conference, including reserved roles for ECR within the Executive Committee, and supporting ECR participation by reducing the conference fees.

A recurring theme was the issue of **inclusion at the PSAI Annual Conference**. Possible solutions to improve inclusion at future conferences could be envisaged by the Board, reflecting the concerns over work-life balance, a salient issue for respondents with caring responsibilities and others with special needs. Solutions might include opportunities for remote participation, organising some panels before the weekend, and accommodating those with special needs upon request. Finally, several respondents suggested that PSAI should continuously strive to nurture a culture of openness to newcomers and promote an inclusive environment at its events.