

Business in the Community Diversity Benchmark

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Table of Contents

About the Diversity Benchmark.....	3
1. What is the Business in the Community Diversity Benchmark?	3
2. How does it work?.....	3
3. What do benchmark participants receive?	3
4. When will I receive my benchmark feedback?	3
5. When can I benchmark?	4
6. Am I eligible to benchmark?	4
7. Is there a cost involved?	4
8. Does the Diversity Benchmark cover employee wellbeing?	4
9. How is the benchmark methodology different to previous years?	4
10. Does continuous benchmarking affect how banding is assessed?	5
11. What if I want to supply you with supporting information but it is commercially sensitive and/or confidential?	5
12. Are there specific benefits for members of the gender/race equality campaigns?.....	5
How to register and participate in the benchmark	6
13. How do I sign up to benchmark?	6
14. How do I register / login to the online benchmark platform?.....	6
15. How do I submit my benchmark submission?	6
16. How do I save my answers?.....	7
17. My login doesn't work / my benchmarking account appears to be suspended?.....	7
18. Can I have multiple logins for my organisation?	7
19. If more than one person is logged in at once will information be saved correctly?	8
20. What should I do if I'm not sure how to answer a question or worried that I am not completing the survey correctly?	8
21. What if I don't feel I can fully complete all of the survey?	8
22. We don't monitor very much, will that be a problem?	8

23. How are the sectors determined and can I choose which sector my organisation belongs to?	8
24. Can I copy answers from my organisation's 2015 submission to my organisation's 2016 submission? ..	9
25. Can I change my submission after submitting?	9
26. What if I can only send my evidence as hard copy (paper)?	9
27. What is the definition of BAME and / or white ethnic identity?.....	9
28. How is the benchmark methodology different to previous years?	10
Assessment, Results and Feedback	10
29. Who assesses my submission?	10
30. How can my organisation use the benchmark for public recognition?	10
31. Can I share my benchmark results?.....	10
32. Will anyone else know my results?.....	10
33. Can I see how other organisations performed in the benchmark?	11
34. How is the benchmark different from Business in the Community's workplace Gender Equality and Race Equality Awards and <i>The Times Top 50 Employers for Women</i> list?	11
Further questions or clarifications	11
35. Who can I contact if I have further questions?	11

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About the Diversity Benchmark

1. What is the Business in the Community Diversity Benchmark?

The Business in the Community Diversity Benchmark measures age, gender and race workplace diversity. The benchmark is a **management tool** to help organisations evaluate their performance, including peer comparisons, and inform **evidence-based decision-making** around workplace diversity.

Participants benefit from: bespoke feedback and recommendations that support with practical steps for improving performance; identification of strengths and weaknesses; opportunity for peer comparison; and a confidential score and banding (Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze or non-banding) that reflect performance.

2. How does it work?

The benchmark consists of two distinct surveys: Part 1: Workplace Data and Part 2: Policies and Practices. Part 1 interrogates the 'what'; Part 2 interrogates the 'how'. Together, they are the complete benchmark – a comprehensive picture that provides an invaluable gap analysis tool for any employer.

Part 1: Workplace Data asks for quantitative information about your workforce. **Part 1 is available for age, gender and/or race.**

Part 2: Policies and Practices asks about policies, procedures and processes your organisation is using to make your workplace better for all employees. **Part 2 is available for gender and/or race.**

Organisations can choose to benchmark in Part 1 only for age, gender and/or race, or to participate in the complete benchmark (Part 1 and Part 2) for gender and/or race.

3. What do benchmark participants receive?

Part 1 participants receive a data report and score. The data report benchmarks your score and data against sector peers, public and private sector participants, and all benchmark participants.

Complete benchmark participants (Part 1 and Part 2) receive: a data report and score (as for Part 1), a written feedback report with expert recommendations, a performance banding, and an action planning meeting with a diversity expert. Participants receive a digital planter and printed certificate to communicate their banding.

Organisations that are core members of the gender and race campaigns can select two further areas for expert feedback per strand (in addition to the main written feedback report). Champion members can select up to five additional areas per strand.

4. When will I receive my benchmark feedback?

We aim to supply participants with feedback reports within 6-8 weeks of submissions being received and any data clarifications or errors being resolved.

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5. When can I benchmark?

We offer a continuous benchmarking service. There is no submission deadline. Instead, participants have the flexibility to benchmark whenever best suits their internal processes, resource capacities and reporting cycles.

This process gives participants the best of both worlds – the flexibility to complete the benchmark when it suits them, and ongoing access to the most current version of their peer group benchmark data.

To ensure organisations are monitoring their progress, we recommend organisations participate in the benchmark annually at a time that suits their annual cycle.

The continuous benchmarking service is available from September 2016.

6. Am I eligible to benchmark?

Any employer of any size, sector and location with a UK presence is welcome to participate in the benchmark. For example, if you are an international employer with a significant workforce in the UK, we encourage you to participate and benchmark against UK peers.

7. Is there a cost involved?

Participation in Part 1: Workplace Data is free for any organisation.

Pricing for the complete benchmark is below. Free participation in the complete benchmark is a benefit of membership of the relevant gender and/or race campaign(s).

Pricing for the complete benchmark (Part 1 & Part 2):

Complete Benchmark*	Non-Member	Member of BITC	Gender campaign member	Race campaign member	Member of BITC gender and race campaigns
Gender	£2,600	£2,100	Free	£2,000	Free
Race	£2,600	£2,100	£2,000	Free	Free
Gender and race	£4,200	£3,350	£2,000	£2,000	Free

*Any member of the age or wellbeing campaigns will receive a discount to participate in the complete benchmarks.

8. Does the Diversity Benchmark cover employee wellbeing?

We are currently reviewing our wellbeing benchmarking offer. If you would like more information about our Wellbeing campaign, please contact [Stephanie Schreiber](#), Wellbeing Adviser.

9. How is the benchmark methodology different to previous years?

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The benchmark methodology will change with respect to the dataset against which participants are benchmarked.

Previously, we offered participants a 2-3 month window to complete a submission. We then collated all the data received, calculated averages and provided participants with feedback showing how they compared against the cohort of submissions received during the submission window.

By removing the submission window period, we will no longer receive a cohort of participant submissions at one given point in time. Instead, we will have a continuous flow of submissions, and our benchmark dataset will increase with every additional submission.

The dataset will eventually cover several years of submissions. However, for benchmarking purposes, participants will be benchmarked against data from the last two years.

The initial dataset will be the 2015 cohort of 98 submissions received in July 2015. In previous years, the cohort has been around 100-115 participants. This dataset will increase and/or be updated when organisations make benchmark submissions from September 2016.

When an organisation submits data more than once within a two-year window, only the most recent data submission will be taken into account. Data older than two years will be excluded from benchmark calculations.

10. Does continuous benchmarking affect how banding is assessed?

This methodology of continuous benchmarking only affects how participants are compared. Benchmark performance bands (Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze and non-banded) have always been assessed entirely on the merits of the submission alone, and this continues to be the case with continuous benchmarking. The performance of other participants has no bearing on individual score or banding achieved.

Only organisations that participate in the complete benchmark (Part 1 and Part 2) for gender and/or race will receive a banding. These participants will receive a banding certificate and planter, a data report and score, written comments and recommendations, and an action planning meeting with a Diversity Adviser.

11. What if I want to supply you with supporting information but it is commercially sensitive and/or confidential?

All data submitted for benchmarking purposes is regarded as commercially sensitive and kept confidential and secure. The Terms and Conditions of benchmark participation are appended to the surveys.

12. Are there specific benefits for members of the gender/race equality campaigns?

Yes, there are. Any member of the gender and race campaigns wanting to participate in a complete benchmark has the option to receive up to two further data reports within a 12 month period of their initial benchmark submission, as long as their membership is current.

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For example, if your organisation submits a complete benchmark in September 2016, within 6-8 weeks you will receive the complete reporting package (a data report, written recommendations, action planning meeting with one of our diversity experts, and a banding). In addition to this, you also have the option to request a further two updated data reports at any point during 12 months after the initial submission was made (i.e. before September 2017) – i.e. in February 2017 and again in June 2017 – as long as your membership of the relevant campaign is current. These data reports would re-calibrate your September 2016 submission against the latest and growing set of data.

This option is only available to organisations that are members of the Business in the Community gender and race campaigns.

How to register and participate in the benchmark

13. How do I sign up to benchmark?

Signing up to benchmark is easy. All you need to do is contact us and we will help you to register and manage payment, where relevant.

If you are a member of one of Business in the Community’s workplace campaigns on age, gender, race or wellbeing, please speak with your Diversity Adviser, Wellbeing Adviser, or main campaign contact to register your interest.

If you are a member of Business in the Community, but not a member of the workplace campaigns, please speak with your Corporate Advisor.

If you do not have a membership with Business in the Community and/or would like further information or guidance about benchmarking, please email [Ruth Yohannes](#).

14. How do I register / login to the online benchmark platform?

When you decide to participate in the benchmark and want to set up a login, please provide us with your name and email address and you will be registered on to Probench, our online benchmark platform. Login details will be automatically sent to the email address provided.

In order to register to benchmark and receive login details, please contact your Diversity Adviser or the Benchmark and Knowledge Manager and supply your name and email address.

If you have an existing account with Probench, please contact your Diversity Adviser or the Benchmark and Knowledge Manager in order to activate your login.

15. How do I submit my benchmark submission?

Complete the benchmark through Probench, our secure and easy to use [online platform](#). Registration is automated once you are confirmed as a benchmark participant. Just login and start submitting the data and

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information – you can save responses as you go by clicking “confirm and next”. When you are ready to submit your completed submission, click “submit”. You will receive an automatic confirmation of receipt.

Upon receiving your submission, we will make sure it includes all the information we need to process it. We request that participating organisations identify a lead person to complete the benchmark. Contact details for this person are requested in the survey. Should we need to clarify any part of your submission, we will contact this person. Usually, this is not necessary and we can begin assessing straight away. This is the point from which Business in the Community will start processing your submission.

We recommend participants create a working group to compile and prepare your submission using the downloaded benchmark surveys to collate your data. Members of your working group might include delegates from HR, CSR, diversity and inclusion, employee volunteering, marketing, procurement or any other division you think may be useful.

To support you in preparing your data submission you can access guidance documents, worked examples, and benchmark questions for Part 1: Workplace Data only from our [website](#). If you are participating in the complete benchmark for gender and/or race and would like to see a soft copy of the Part 2: Policies and Practices questions, or for further information on the submission process, please contact your Diversity Adviser or the Benchmark and Knowledge Manager, Thomas Colquhoun-Alberts (thomas.alberts@bitc.org.uk)

Please note that we do not accept hard copy submissions.

16. How do I save my answers?

The “confirm and next” button is equivalent to “save”. Press this button often. For narrative answers, write them somewhere else first so that you can keep a backup copy (for example, in MS Word) and then copy and paste them into the relevant box before pressing “confirm and next”. Please note that narrative answers have word limits automatically enforced by Probench, our online benchmarking platform. Word counts are clearly indicated; please ensure you do not exceed the allotted word count. Any text you paste into the survey will be cut-off at the word limit.

In order to submit or final and completed submission please click ‘submit’.

17. My login doesn't work / my benchmarking account appears to be suspended?

We suspend login access between benchmark submissions. We will activate your login each time you want to complete a new submission, and will suspend access when each submission is complete. This is a security measure that helps us ensure data quality as well as prevent unauthorised access to your submission (for example, from your former employees who previously may have had login access but have since left your organisation).

18. Can I have multiple logins for my organisation?

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We allow multiple colleagues from the same organisation to have logins to complete the organisation's benchmark submission. If you would like to register additional users, we ask that the identified lead person supplies all names and email addresses to their Diversity Adviser or the Benchmark and Knowledge Manager. Login details will be sent to the email addresses provided.

Please speak with your Diversity Adviser or the Benchmark and Knowledge Manager if you think this may be a useful option for you.

19. If more than one person is logged in at once will information be saved correctly?

More than one person can work on the same survey at the same time. It does not matter whether they are sharing the same username and password or using different ones. However, avoid working on the same question at the same time. This is because whoever clicks "confirm and next" last would overwrite the other person's answer. If more than one person is working on a submission at the same time, we recommend working on different questions. We also encourage participants to ensure that the data is recorded on an off-line document such as MS Word/Excel prior to it being transferred on to the online platform. In the event that there are any occasions where data entries are not saved, this will allow you the opportunity to quickly check and fill in the blanks.

20. What should I do if I'm not sure how to answer a question or worried that I am not completing the survey correctly?

Contact your Diversity Adviser or the Benchmark and Knowledge Manager. We will identify someone who can answer your questions immediately or help you to work through the survey.

21. What if I don't feel I can fully complete all of the survey?

Don't worry if you can't answer every question. There is not a minimum number of questions that must be answered. Please try and answer what you can and then use the benchmark results to persuade your stakeholders to invest in measuring and monitoring systems.

22. We don't monitor very much will that be a problem?

There is not a minimum number of questions that must be answered in either the Part 1: Workplace Data or Part 2: Policies and Practices. We understand that monitoring varies greatly between organisations. Part of the value of benchmarking is discovering metrics used by your peers and competitors. Please try and answer what you can and then use the benchmark results to persuade your stakeholders to invest in measuring and monitoring systems.

23. How are the sectors determined and can I choose which sector my organisation belongs to?

The benchmark sectors are based on FTSE sector categories. Participants select their sector from an available list (see Guidance). We also ask participants to indicate a second choice sector in the event that

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we don't have at least four participants from your first choice sector. Four is the minimum we require to compare sector peers. Participants are informed if we need to use their second choice sector.

24. Can I copy answers from my organisation's 2015 submission to my organisation's 2016 submission?

With the move to continuous benchmarking, organisations that benchmarked in 2015 will already have their 2015 data pre-populated in their surveys. You need only amend or delete your data ensuring that data submitted must correspond with the reporting period indicated in the qualifying question section. Select "Clear entire page contents" to remove all data before entering new data, or amend specific data points case by case.

Surveys of organisations that did not benchmark in 2015 will appear blank and need to be populated.

We are happy to send you copies of your submission(s) from earlier years. Please contact your Diversity Adviser or Ruth Yohannes (ruth.yohannes@bitc.org.uk).

25. Can I change my submission after submitting?

Participants can amend submissions after submitting. Please contact the Benchmark and Knowledge Manager to un-submit your submission. Click the "submit" button after making your amendments.

26. What if I can only send my evidence as hard copy (paper)?

Only three questions in Part 2: Policies and Practices require corroborating evidence. We require this evidence in soft copy to be uploaded to your submission. If you do not have soft copy evidence to upload or are prevented from doing so by your IT policy, then we will accept hard copies. Please speak with your Diversity Adviser or send any evidence in an envelope marked '**Confidential**' to *FAO Thomas Colquhoun-Alberts, Business in the Community, 137 Shepherdess Walk, London, N1 7RQ.*

27. What is the definition of BAME and / or white ethnic identity?

BAME is an acronym for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. We refer to BAME extensively in both surveys, particularly in Part 1: Workplace Data where we request key metrics.

When referring to BAME and/or white groups, we always make reference to the 2011 census categories (see table below).

Note that eastern European ethnicities typically are classified as "any other white background" (Group 34).

Census 2011 Categories	Group	Description
White	31	English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
	32	Irish
	33	Gypsy or Irish Traveller

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	34	Any Other White background
Mixed / Multiple ethnic group	35	White and Black Caribbean
	36	White and Black African
	37	White and Asian
	38	Any Other Mixed / multiple ethnic background
Asian / Asian British	39	Indian
	40	Pakistani
	41	Bangladeshi
	42	Chinese
	43	Any other Asian background
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	44	African
	45	Caribbean
	46	Any other Black / African / Caribbean background

Assessment, Results and Feedback

28. Who assesses my submission?

Trained members of the Business in the Community Diversity team assess all submissions. Submissions are double reviewed to ensure quality and consistency.

29. How can my organisation use the benchmark for public recognition?

All participants that participate in the complete benchmark (Part 1 & Part 2) for gender and/or race will receive a banding (Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze or non-banded) and a Business in the Community planter. The planter recognises your organisation's achievement and is for your organisation to use entirely at your discretion. We encourage you to use your planter to publicise your achievements to audiences internally and externally.

We will not publicise your organisation's banding without your permission.

30. Can I share my benchmark results?

We encourage you to share your benchmark reports and feedback internally in order to influence and inform change, and to use your banding (certificate and planter) to communicate your achievement in gender and/or race workplace equality externally.

We ask that organisations do not share their reports externally (see Terms & Conditions).

31. Will anyone else know my results?

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Your results are confidential. Only the person specified in your benchmark submission to receive your results and members of the Business in the Community benchmarking team will see your results.

We encourage participants to circulate their feedback reports internally with key stakeholders and to publicise their banding in internal and external communications.

32. Can I see how other organisations performed in the benchmark?

No, the benchmark is a confidential survey. If you are a member of the relevant age/gender/race campaign we can facilitate an introduction to another benchmarking organisation, if that organisation agrees. Please speak with your Diversity Adviser.

33. How is the benchmark different from Business in the Community's workplace Gender Equality and Race Equality Awards and *The Times Top 50 Employers for Women* list?

The benchmark is a separate process and has a separate purpose to the Awards and the Business in the Community Gender Equality and Race Equality Awards and *The Times Top 50 Employers for Women* list.

The benchmark is an internal management tool designed to support organisations with strategy and action-planning. The data reports, score, sector comparisons and feedback reports are fundamental in supporting organisations to make informed and impactful changes to improve workplace equality. Organisations can decide whether to externally use and/or publicise their banding.

The Gender Equality and Race Equality Awards exist to celebrate and recognise specific areas of best practice from employers, across a range of award categories. *The Times'* list is an unranked public recognition list, and is entered as part of the Gender Equality Awards entry process.

If you are interested in entering a submission to the Gender Equality Awards and *The Times Top 50 Employers for Women* and/or the Race Equality Awards, please contact Louise Hall (louise.hall@bitc.org.uk).

Further questions or clarifications

34. Who can I contact if I have further questions?

If you have further questions or need further clarification, please contact your organisation's Diversity Adviser or the Benchmark and Knowledge Manager, Thomas Colquhoun-Alberts (Thomas.Alberts@bitc.org.uk or on 020 7566 6621).

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