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Diversity and inclusivity at university : a survey of the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) students

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Abstract

The extent to which UK universities are 'gay friendly' has received some attention in the press. Whilst there are a number of published studies exploring campus climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) students and/or staff, these are primarily localised studies undertaken in State Universities and Baccalaureate Colleges in the US. The present study is a nationwide UK study of campus climate, based on survey data collected from a sample of 291 LGBT students from 42 universities across the UK. The findings show that despite the increased implementation of an equality agenda (e.g. equal access; widening participation) in UK Higher Education, homophobia on campus is still a significant problem and therefore universities are not perceived nor experienced by LGBT students as 'safe spaces' in which to be open about sexual orientation/gender identity. The implications of the findings for university policy and practice in relation to LGBT (and indeed all) students is also explored. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Ellis, Sonja J., E-Mail: S.J.Ellis@shu.ac.uk