

Degree Outcomes Statement

1. Introduction

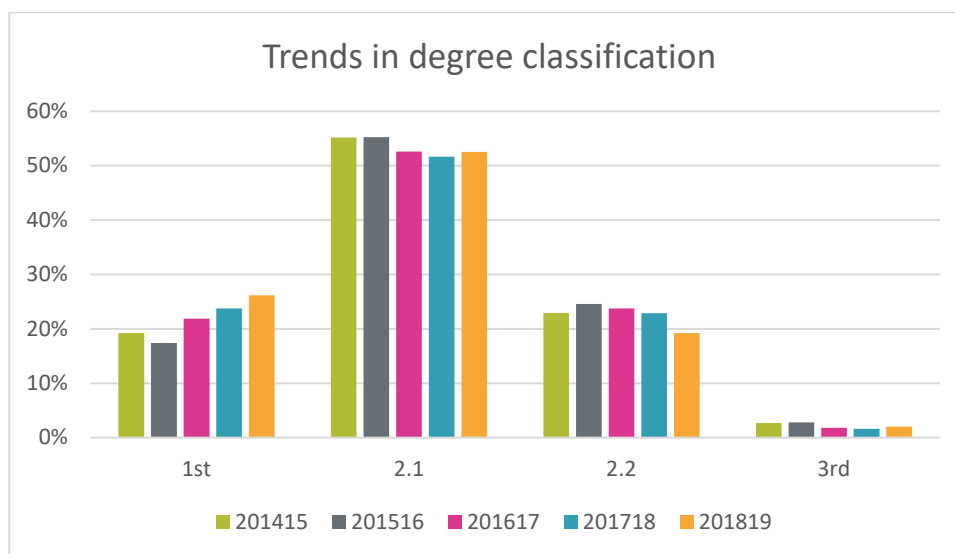
The Oxford Brookes Degree Outcomes Statement (DOS) is published in line with the [statement of intent](#) published by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA), together with UUK and GuildHE, in 2018-19 and the guidance issued by the [Quality Assurance Agency](#). The focus of the DOS is students studying in the UK for level 6 awards, i.e. Bachelor's degrees; and it is based on the University's degree outcomes profile from 2014-15 to 2018-19, using data extracted from the University's [APTT Key Performance Indicators dashboard](#) (eCSIS). A range of data was reviewed in putting together the statement, split by a range of factors in order to give a broad overview of the outcomes for students studying in the UK for Oxford Brookes awards of Bachelor's degrees (on campus and at ACP partner colleges). The data underpinning the charts in the DOS is included in the appendix.

The population was limited to graduates leaving with Bachelor's degrees with Honours, and who studied in the UK. The data were split by study institution (on-campus and ACP), study mode (full time and part time), fee status (home and international), domicile (UK and overseas). Data were also extracted for all study modes, institutions, domiciles and fee statuses as a point of comparison. Ethnicity for all study institutions, study modes, fee statuses and domiciles was also examined. An overview of outcomes for Integrated Master's degrees was also considered, as these are primarily undergraduate programmes; however numbers on these awards are too small, and too sensitive to percentage fluctuations, to be able to draw meaningful conclusions.

2. Institutional degree classification profile

Overall picture

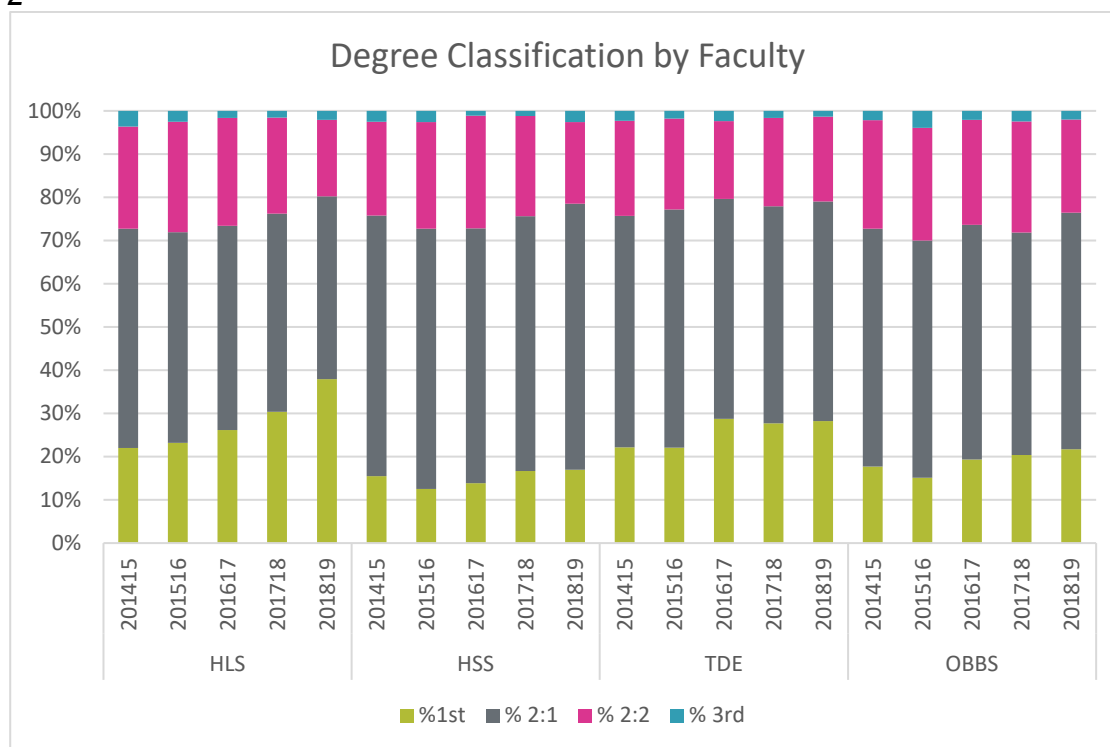
Table 1:



Across the University overall, there has been a steady increase in the award of good degrees (1st class and 2.1) over the last five years, with a slight dip in 2015-16. This trend is primarily due to an increase in the proportion of first class degrees awarded (rising from 19% in 2014-15 to 26% in 2018-19); while the proportion of second class (2.1 and 2.2) Honours awards has dropped slightly, and the proportion of third class awards has remained relatively consistent (at very low levels). The profile of degree outcomes for students who took four-year programmes which include a foundation year is not significantly different to the overall university picture: the proportion of 'good' degrees is almost the same, but students who took foundation years graduated with a slightly higher proportion of 2:1s, and a correspondingly lower proportion of 1st class awards, compared to the whole university population.

Faculty by Faculty

Table 2



When considered by broad subject area (analysed at Faculty level), the main contributing factor to the recent upward trend in first class awards appears to be a notable increase in the award of first class degrees in the Faculty of Health & Life Sciences. The degree outcomes in HLS have improved largely due to the impact of a change in assessment practice three years ago, when the grading of practice was introduced into the assessment regime of Nursing programmes. Practice elements make up 50% of the learning experience on these programmes, but was previously simply given a pass/fail grade and did not contribute to module grades. Changes were made to practice grading so that students would place more value on placement learning, and to help drive up the quality of practice education. We have found that many students achieve high grades in placement, and this has substantially increased the number of good awards. The phenomenon of practice colleagues awarding high grades is widely reported by a number of providers across the sector; and to address the inflation in degree classifications, the contribution of practice assessments to the module grade is to be reduced to 20% of the assessment weighting.

Attainment of specific groups

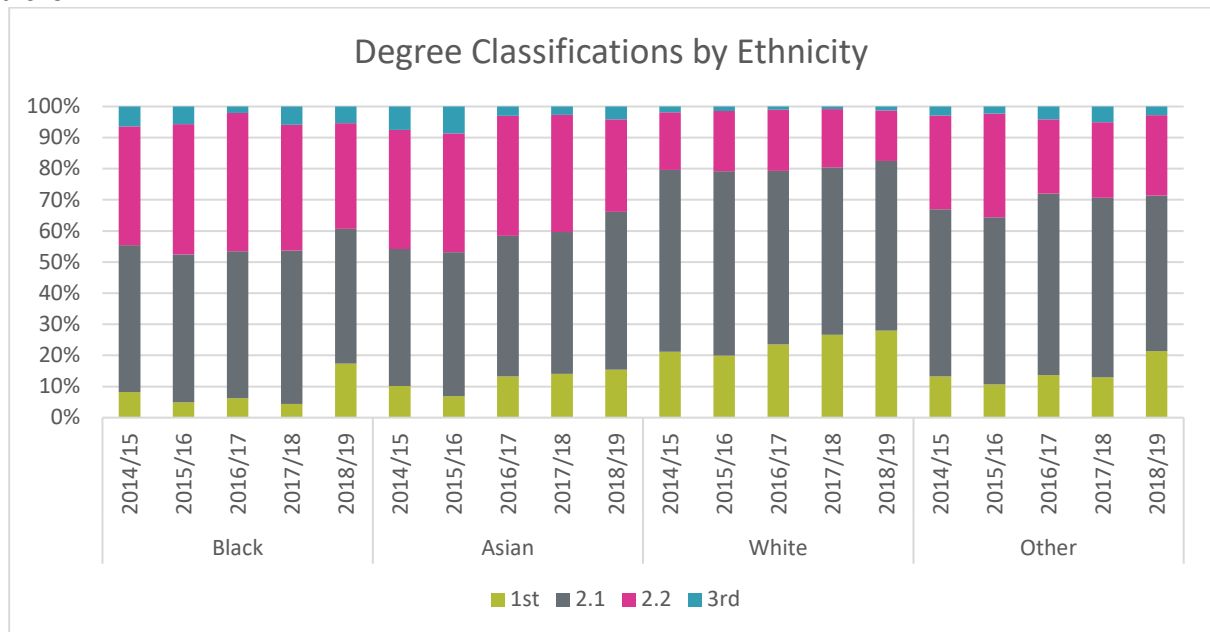
Particular groups of students appear to be achieving fewer 'good' degrees than others, for example: international (non EU) students; Associate College Partnership students; Black and Asian students; and part-time students all graduate with a higher proportion of 2.2 and 3rd class awards. The University's Access and Participation Group and its associated Inclusive Teaching Working Group has established a planned programme of work for addressing the degree outcomes differential for all these student groups over the period 2020-25, as detailed in the University's Access and Participation Plan.

Associate College Partnership

For students taking Brookes programmes at ACP partners, the degree classification profile shows broadly similar proportions of the cohorts achieving first class degrees when compared to those studying at Oxford Brookes; but markedly fewer gaining 2.1 and more being awarded 2.2 and 3rd class awards. Most ACP graduates initially take a Foundation degree, which have lower entry requirements than on-campus Bachelor's degrees, followed by a one year Honours level top-up programme. The ACP colleges provide high levels of academic and pastoral support to enable students to achieve well, and many Foundation degree students are encouraged to progress to the Bachelor's degree route. Most of these top-up programmes require a minimum overall average mark on the linked Foundation degree programme in order to gain entry, based on evidence that a certain level of attainment will bring a good likelihood of success for students progressing to these programmes. Students on three-year degree programmes (usually linked to an Apprenticeship standard) appear to have better degree outcomes than Foundation degree graduates taking level 6 top-up programmes. However, very small numbers in the three-year degree category mean that these values are more sensitive to small differences, and this finding should therefore be treated with caution.

Black and Minority Ethnic students

Table 3



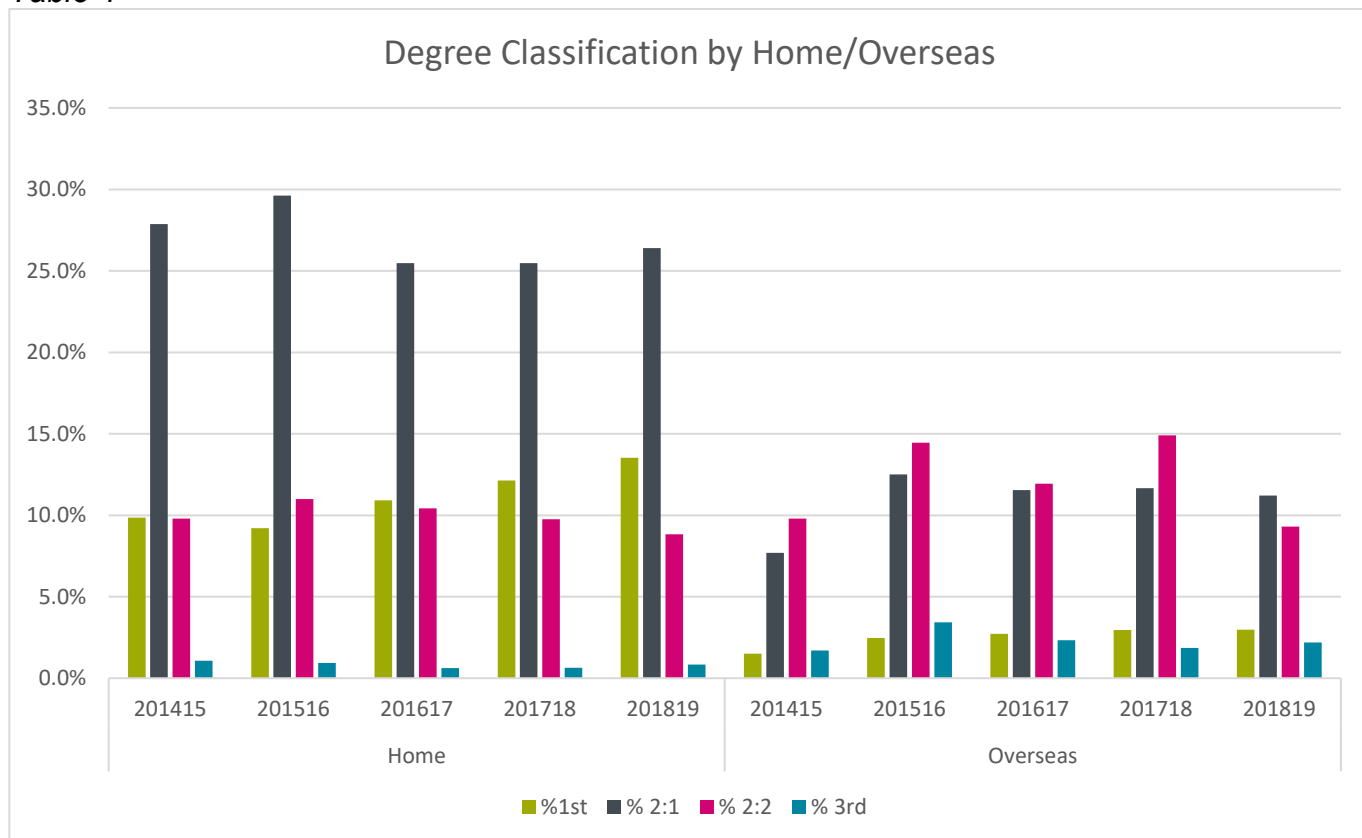
The proportion of first class and 2.1 awards made to BAME ethnic group students is lower than for White students; with degree profiles for these groups showing more 2.2 and third class awards being made. For UK domiciled first degree students, Oxford Brookes showed an attainment gap in 2017/18 of 13%, when comparing White with all ethnicities except White (against a sector gap of 13.7%). Action to address differential degree outcomes for BAME students is a strategic priority, and key objectives are set out in the University's Access & Participation Plan. The current headline data available suggests that there is a continued reduction in the BAME attainment differential at Oxford Brookes in 2018-19.

Part-time students

Undergraduate programmes are not routinely offered as part-time study routes at Oxford Brookes. However, this study option may be available to students who experience academic or personal difficulties while studying at Oxford Brookes, and are unable to meet the requirements of a full-time programme; but who do not wish to withdraw from their studies altogether and are in a position to retrieve their position so as to qualify for an award. This is a supportive option, enabling students to complete their studies, albeit over an extended period of time, who might otherwise have dropped out of higher education.

International students

Table 4



The attainment gap between home/EU and international students is unexplained and further work will be carried out in order to gain a greater understanding of the factors involved.

3. Improving the learning experience and degree outcomes for all

Inclusive teaching

The University has a strong commitment to developing inclusive learning and teaching environments and improving degree outcomes for all our students. This commitment is now formalised in a number of key institutional resources and structures:

- A cross-university project has developed a theoretical framework based on universal design for learning to underpin the development of tools, advice and events to support consideration of inclusive practice in curriculum design and development (the Inclusive Practice benchmarking tool), has promoted approaches to practice that are inclusive (through 'Differences that make a Difference' guides), and has run sandpit events and roadshows to review and revisit learning activities with inclusive practice foregrounded. The tools and advice are all curated in one place at <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/ocslid/inclusive-teaching/>
- The Inclusive Teaching Working Group mentioned above works with Faculty representatives to progress inclusive curriculum development and pedagogy across the

institution. A number of programme teams have now engaged with the inclusivity benchmarking tool as part of the periodic review process.

- Since 2018-19, all programme teams are asked to reflect systematically on their approaches to developing inclusive learning environments for students as part of the annual monitoring process for taught programmes; and the module descriptor template has been revised, with prompts to encourage discussion around alternative assessments and to ensure other features of inclusive design are at the forefront of module and programme design.
- In academic years 2018/19 and 2019/20, six programme areas, covering all four Faculties, participated in pilot interventions designed to address the degree outcomes differential for BAME students. These will be evaluated in summer 2021, and the outcomes reported to the Access and Participation Group.

New academic framework

A [new academic framework for undergraduate programmes](#) has been developed over the last two years, and will replace the Undergraduate Modular Programme structure from September 2020, for level 4 entrants. A key aim of the new framework is to support transition, progression and attainment for all students. The new academic framework involves a change to undergraduate programme structure so that:

- progression is based on a linear model of progress through discrete levels of study from level 4-6, with the removal of reference to Stage I (level 4) and Stage II (levels 5 and 6);
- there is a minimum limit of compulsory modules per study level;
- there is a maximum limit on optional modules;
- a limited amount of credit may be awarded where a pass mark has been marginally missed (between 30-39%), providing that the minimum number of required modules for that level have been passed satisfactorily – the new system of limited compensated passes is designed to prevent students from trailing failed modules into the next level;
- only two takes of a module are permitted, rather than the current maximum of three.

4. Assessment and marking practices

Assessment is taken seriously at Oxford Brookes, and we have a strong commitment to designing assessment for learning. The University's philosophy and approach to assessment was previously articulated in the Brookes Assessment Compact (2009) - this formed a central reference point in programme design and review, and was highlighted to students in all programme handbooks. It was reviewed in 2019, and a new Assessment and Feedback Policy for taught programmes has now been approved by Academic Board to replace the Compact from 2020/21. The new policy was assessed for currency and reach against the QAA Quality Code advice and guidance on Assessment. The policy firmly guides staff to position assessment of, for and as learning into their curricula for all students. An additional piece of work has generated guidance on the development and use of assessment rubrics and new online staff development resources to reflect and build assessment practices have been made available to the university's teaching staff. There has also been a significant reduction in the number of examinations from September 2019, especially in semester 1; however, this change to assessment approach will not yet have impacted on degree outcomes.

External examiners are highly satisfied with the rigour and care taken in respect of the assessment processes across the disciplines at Oxford Brookes, including marking, moderation, and the operation of examination committees – examiners note that programme teams take marking and moderation seriously, and are ‘committed to getting the marks right’. They note that marking standards are applied fairly and consistently: the quality of marking is often described as ‘exemplary’, and internal moderation is transparent and well documented. According to our external examiners, examination committees are well organised, well attended, sensitively chaired, and conducted with care and consideration for students. The assessment processes for programmes delivered through partnership arrangements is governed by same requirements as home provision; and the responsibilities of all parties, in respect of teaching and learning, assessment and awards, are clearly set out in the programme documentation and Operations Manuals governing the partnerships.

5. Academic governance

Quality assurance requirements governing the assessment processes, including the operation of examination committees, can be found in the [University Regulations](#) and in the [Quality & Standards Handbook](#)

The Quality & Learning Infrastructure Committee (QLIC) plays a key role in the oversight of academic quality and standards, as a sub-committee of the Academic Board, and its sister committee - the Teaching & Learning Enhancement Committee (TLEC) – plays a major role in driving forward University-wide enhancement initiatives, such as those referred to above, and in overseeing action plans arising from both internal and national student surveys. The student experience is at the centre of the University’s governance structures, and both these committees are chaired by the PVC (Student & Staff Experience). The Faculty academic management structures, including Associate Deans (Student Experience), Principal Lecturers (Student Experience) and Programme Leads, provide local leadership for quality assurance and the dissemination of good practice in teaching and learning across the University.

Programme approval and review panels operate on behalf of the Quality & Learning Infrastructure Committee, and provide full written reports on their decisions. It is pleasing to note that external panel members for such events give positive feedback on the conduct of these panels at Oxford Brookes, with one noting (in 2018-19) that *“My overall impression was that this was a rigorous process for promoting excellence in teaching. The Chair’s management of the review and the knowledgeable internal panel members were particular strengths. The whole approach at Oxford Brookes appeared incisive, supportive and inclusive.”*

6. Classification algorithms

Details of the assessment and award requirements for Oxford Brookes undergraduate degrees are set out in the [Undergraduate Modular Programme regulations](#) Details of grading schemes, including the Oxford Brookes Grade Point Average system can be found at <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations>

The classification algorithm for Bachelor's degrees with Honours in the current Undergraduate Modular Programme is based on the average of marks obtained in the best 14 (out of 16) Stage 2 (i.e. level 5 and level 6) modules: the marks for the best six level 6 modules are always included in this average. Alongside the degree classification, Oxford Brookes also operates a Grade Point Average system, which is calculated on the basis of the average of all modules at levels 4, 5 and 6. For students who take a one-year level 6 programme to 'top-up' a Foundation degree to a Bachelor's degree (e.g. through the Associate College Partnership), the classification is based on the average of their level 6 module marks only.

Under the new academic framework, which commences for level 4 students in September 2020, the classification algorithm will be changed to reflect the move from Stage 1 and Stage 2 to discrete levels of study. The calculation will give a 75% weighting to the average mark for level 6 study, and 25% to the average for level 5 study. In deciding on this new approach, we carried out a detailed analysis of the potential impact of changing the classification algorithm. A number of different proposed models were explored, and it was found that the algorithm we subsequently adopted showed the least potential for variation in award classification between a range of different groups (including disability and ethnicity) and grade inflation, while remaining close to our existing approach. The new degree classification will be used for the first time for students graduating in 2022-23. The GPA system will continue under the new academic framework, but is to be reviewed in 2020-21, to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Students were previously entitled to re-sit an assessment only if they scored between 30-39% (unless exceptional circumstances applied); however, re-sit regulations have been changed as of September 2019, so that students now have one re-sit entitlement for any fail grade. This change will not yet have had an impact on degree outcomes data.

7. Teaching practices and learning resources

As noted throughout this statement, the University has a longstanding and ongoing commitment to teaching excellence, manifested in the wide engagement of academic and professional services staff with the teaching practice programmes delivered by the OCSLD. These courses are open to all staff including those teaching students on Brookes programmes at our partner colleges. They all enable staff to develop their knowledge and skills in a professional community of peers while achieving recognition for their teaching from Advance HE as Fellows of the Higher Education Academy. Since 2019, any member of staff can additionally join the Brookes Teaching and Learning Community which offers a range of ways for colleagues to share teaching practice that works and develop their approaches to teaching scholarship through grants for impact-oriented projects, reading groups and seminars.

The [BrookesID award scheme](#) enables students to gain recognition for engaging with a wide range of extra-curricular activities which contribute to their academic and personal development.

8. Good practice

Our external examiners identify a considerable amount of good practice in teaching, learning and assessment across the University. A significant number of examiners are particularly impressed with the quality of student work, especially project/dissertations; and note that some students achieve exceptionally high standards. All confirm that relevant sector reference points (e.g. subject benchmark statements) and professional body standards have been met. Our external examiners consider that the Oxford Brookes curriculum across the range of provision is particularly strong in respect of:

- its currency and breadth, with reference to the expertise of teaching staff and research/practice-informed teaching;
- student-centred, and often innovative, approaches to teaching and learning, with a strong focus on graduate employability;
- assessment design, including the range of engaging assessment tasks and projects, enabling students to apply theory to practice and allowing for individual and creative approaches; and the provision of high quality feedback on assessed work.

Programme approval and periodic review panels – which also include external academics - identify similar strengths in respect of teaching, learning and assessment, and they additionally frequently commend our programme teams for demonstrating a deep understanding of the student learning experience, making creative use of the virtual learning environment and other technologies to engage students, and providing high quality academic support in a friendly and positive learning environment.

9. Areas for further review/action

- The University will continue to progress the inclusivity initiatives outlined in section 3 to address differential degree outcomes - in line with the priorities set out in our Access & Participation Plan - to evaluate their impact, and disseminate the good practice arising.
- Action remains ongoing to ensure that good practice in teaching, learning and assessment, as noted throughout this statement, is disseminated widely, and feeds into the University's programme of staff development.
- Further work will also be carried out in order to gain a greater understanding of the factors involved in the attainment gap between home/EU and international students.

Statement developed by:

Quality & Learning Infrastructure Committee, February-June 2020

Statement approved by:

Academic Board, 24 June 2020

Board of Governors, 29 September 2020

Due for review in 2023-24

Appendix – underlying data

Table 1

	1st	2.1	2.2	3rd	2018/19 N
201415	19%	55%	23%	3%	
201516	17%	55%	25%	3%	
201617	22%	53%	24%	2%	
201718	24%	52%	23%	2%	
201819	26%	53%	19%	2%	

Table 2

		%1st	% 2:1	% 2:2	% 3rd
OBU	201415	19%	55%	23%	3%
	201516	17%	55%	25%	3%
	201617	22%	53%	24%	2%
	201718	24%	52%	23%	2%
	201819	26%	53%	19%	2%
HLS	201415	22%	51%	24%	4%
	201516	23%	49%	25%	3%
	201617	26%	47%	25%	2%
	201718	30%	46%	22%	2%
	201819	38%	42%	18%	2%
HSS	201415	15%	60%	22%	3%
	201516	13%	60%	25%	3%
	201617	14%	59%	26%	1%
	201718	17%	59%	23%	1%
	201819	17%	62%	19%	3%
TDE	201415	22%	54%	22%	2%
	201516	22%	55%	21%	2%
	201617	29%	51%	18%	2%
	201718	28%	50%	20%	2%
	201819	28%	51%	20%	1%
OBBS	201415	18%	55%	25%	2%
	201516	15%	55%	26%	4%
	201617	19%	54%	24%	2%
	201718	20%	51%	26%	2%
	201819	22%	55%	22%	2%

Table 3

		1st	2.1	2.2	3rd
Black	2014/15	8%	47%	38%	6%
	2015/16	5%	48%	42%	6%
	2016/17	6%	47%	44%	2%
	2017/18	4%	49%	40%	6%
	2018/19	17%	43%	34%	5%
Asian	2014/15	10%	44%	38%	8%
	2015/16	7%	46%	38%	9%
	2016/17	13%	45%	39%	3%
	2017/18	14%	46%	38%	3%
	2018/19	15%	51%	30%	4%
White	2014/15	21%	58%	18%	2%
	2015/16	20%	59%	19%	1%
	2016/17	24%	56%	20%	1%
	2017/18	27%	54%	19%	1%
	2018/19	28%	55%	16%	1%
Other	2014/15	13%	54%	30%	3%
	2015/16	11%	54%	33%	2%
	2016/17	14%	58%	24%	4%
	2017/18	13%	58%	24%	5%
	2018/19	21%	50%	26%	3%

Table 4

		%1st	% 2:1	% 2:2	% 3rd
Home	201415	9.9%	27.9%	9.8%	1.1%
	201516	9.2%	29.6%	11.0%	0.9%
	201617	10.9%	25.5%	10.4%	0.6%
	201718	12.1%	25.5%	9.8%	0.6%
	201819	13.5%	26.4%	8.8%	0.8%
Overseas	201415	1.50%	7.70%	9.80%	1.70%
	201516	2.5%	12.5%	14.5%	3.4%
	201617	2.7%	11.5%	11.9%	2.3%
	201718	3.0%	11.7%	14.9%	1.9%
	201819	3.0%	11.2%	9.3%	2.2%