

## Degree Outcomes Statement: 2025

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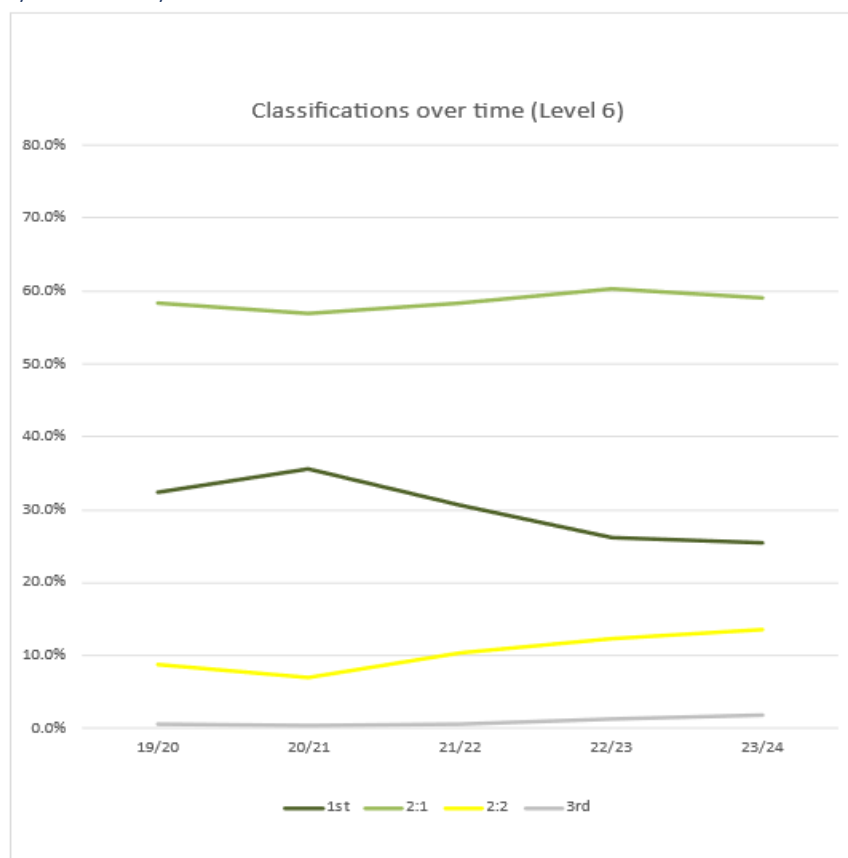
### Institutional degree classification profile

1. The University's undergraduate degree classification profile is shown below<sup>1</sup>. It sets out the percentage of degree classes awarded at the institutional level over the last five years for our level 6 degree programmes and our combined level 6 and 7 undergraduate degree programmes. The reasons for presenting the data in these forms are:
  - Both sets of data are provided because the combined degree classification profile for all our undergraduate honours programmes better reflects the portfolio of programmes that we offer, where nearly one sixth of first degree graduates in 2023/24 graduated from integrated masters programmes.
  - The profile is provided at the institution level because data is otherwise aligned to our organisational structure, which is not meaningful to an external audience.
2. This Statement includes degree outcomes from the 2023/24 academic year, which is the third year on our journey back to pre-pandemic norms following an earlier period of disruption as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. Our classification ratio had been relatively stable prior to the pandemic period, plateauing throughout the period 2016/17 to 2018/19. The proportion of First Class outcomes increased in 2019/20 and 2020/21 following actions to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic; covered in greater detail in the previous years' Degree Outcomes Statements.
4. In the graduating class of 2023/24, the proportion of First Class outcomes decreased by 1.4 percentage points when compared to 2022/23 figures (level 6 and 7 combined). Correspondingly, the proportion of graduates achieving Good Honours decreased by 1.5 percentage points in the same period.
5. Our degree classification algorithm remained unchanged throughout the pandemic period, although was temporarily qualified in 2019/20 and 2020/21 to account for the impact of the pandemic, and in 2023/24 to support the response to the Marking and Assessment Boycott (covered in greater detail in the previous years' Degree Outcomes Statements).

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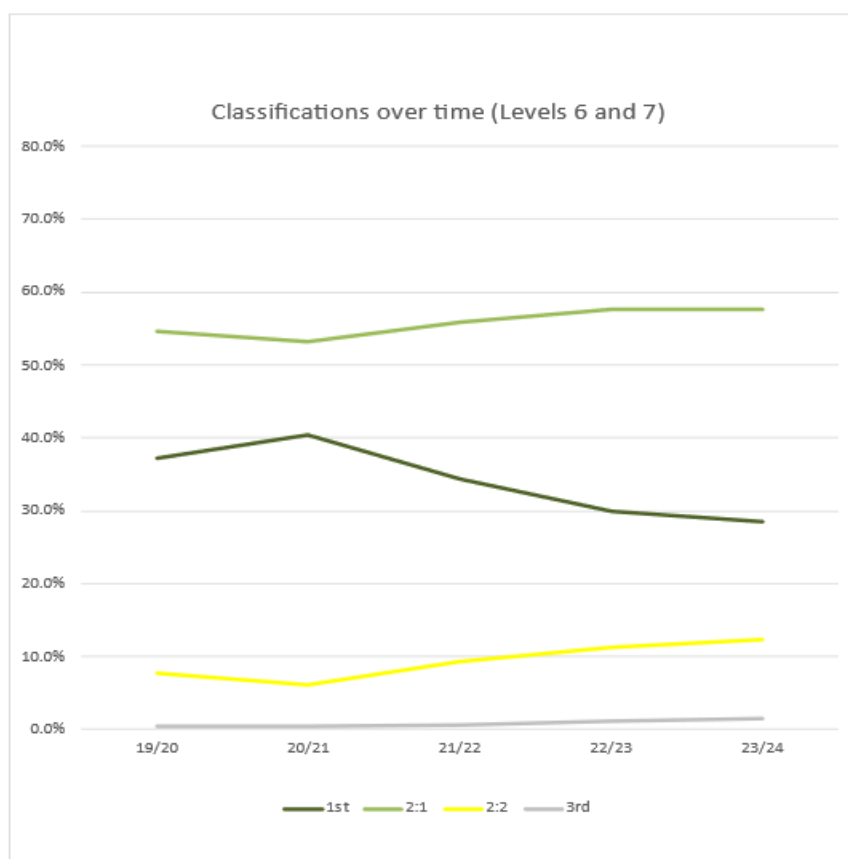
<sup>1</sup> Information on how this data is derived is provided in a note at the end of the document.

Table 1: Degree classification profile for level 6 degree programmes at the University of Bristol, 2019/20 – 2023/24



Year of award	Total awards	First Class	Upper Second Class	Lower Second Class	Third Class	First and Upper Second Classes Combined
19/20	3983	32.3%	58.3%	8.8%	0.6%	90.6%
20/21	4049	35.6%	56.9%	7.0%	0.4%	92.5%
21/22	4315	30.6%	58.4%	10.4%	0.6%	89.0%
22/23	4466	26.2%	60.3%	12.2%	1.3%	86.5%
23/24	5310	25.6%	59.1%	13.6%	1.8%	84.7%

Table 2: Degree classification profile for level 6 and 7 degree programmes at the University of Bristol, 2019/20 – 2023/24



Year of award	Total awards	First Class	Upper Second Class	Lower Second Class	Third Class	First and Upper Second Classes Combined
19/20	4893	37.2%	54.6%	7.7%	0.5%	91.8%
20/21	4896	40.4%	53.1%	6.1%	0.4%	93.5%
21/22	5188	34.3%	55.8%	9.3%	0.5%	90.1%
22/23	5365	29.9%	57.7%	11.3%	1.1%	87.7%
23/24	6151	28.6%	57.6%	12.3%	1.5%	86.1%

### Trends and factors affecting degree outcomes in 2023/24

- In July 2022 Universities UK, along with their members in England, committed to a number of actions in respect of undergraduate degree outcomes. Our Degree Outcomes Statement of 2023 outlined how we were meeting each of these commitments. For 2025, this Degree Outcomes Statement will highlight how we continue to meet key commitment 'd.' (returning the proportion of top classifications to 'pre-pandemic' levels by 2023/24, where 'pre-pandemic' is defined as 2018/19).
- In the 2023 Degree Outcomes Statement, we reported that we had made strong progress in returning our degree outcome profiles towards the pre-pandemic 2018/19 baseline, and in 2024 we reported that our proportions of Firsts and Good Honours in 2023/24 were slightly

lower than those seen in 2018/19, and in terms of historical comparison, were now more closely aligned with rates last seen in 2015/16.

8. This trend has continued further throughout the most recent award period, with the small decreases in Firsts and Good Honours described in paragraph 4.
9. Whilst expecting that the removal of pandemic mitigations would restore us to pre-pandemic awarding patterns, the additional scale of the reduction observed from 2023 onwards warranted further exploration. The publication of HESA sector comparison data, whilst delayed, provided crucial external context as it confirmed that this pattern was a national phenomenon.
10. We are cognisant that the graduating class of 23/24 are amongst the cohorts of undergraduates who commenced their university studies in the period of major pandemic-related disruption, and who are likely to have experienced repeated periods of disruption throughout their education prior to commencing university.

## Degree Classifications and Student Characteristics

11. The University underlines its commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion by undertaking routine analysis of degree attainment and monitoring of awarding gaps for a range of student characteristics. The table below shows the attainment in First and Upper Second Class degrees for a number of demographic characteristics, for example, students with disabilities are shown with the difference in outcomes when compared to students without disabilities; the gap for each ethnicity is measured in comparison to White.

Table 3: Attainment by Demographic Characteristic (level 6 and level 7 combined)

Demographic Group	Headcount 2023/24	First Class		Upper Second Class		First and Upper Second Classes	
		2022/23 (diff.)	2023/24 (diff.)	2022/23 (diff.)	2023/24 (diff.)	2022/23 (diff.)	2023/24 (diff.)
Disability	1381	28.7% (-1.6)	27.2% (-1.8)	58.8% (+1.2)	59.1% (+1.8)	87.4% (-0.4)	86.2% (0.0)
Ethnicity (Asian)	1069	21.8% (-11.0)	19.1% (-13.3)	56.2% (-3.1)	55.0% (-4.2)	78.0% (-14.1)	74.1% (-17.5)
Ethnicity (Black)	121	13.9% (-18.9)	14.0% (-18.3)	64.3% (+5.0)	55.4% (-3.9)	78.3% (-13.9)	69.4% (-22.2)
Ethnicity (Mixed or Multiple)	403	31.7% (-1.1)	28.5% (-3.8)	55.2% (-4.1)	59.1% (-0.2)	86.9% (-5.2)	87.6% (-4.0)
Ethnicity (Other)	145	27.0% (-5.8)	22.8% (-9.6)	52.0% (-7.3)	52.4% (-6.8)	79.0% (-13.1)	75.2% (-16.4)
Fee Status (Overseas)	1117	18.3% (-13.8)	16.1% (-15.2)	52.7% (-6.0)	51.6% (-7.3)	71.0% (-19.8)	67.7% (-22.5)
Gender (Female)	3452	30.2% (+0.6)	28.9% (+0.7)	59.6% (+4.1)	59.8% (+5.0)	89.8% (+4.7)	88.6% (+5.7)
Mature (over 21y at entry)	241	35.4% (+5.7)	24.1% (-4.7)	46.9% (-11.3)	56.0% (-1.6)	82.3% (-5.6)	80.1% (-6.3)
POLAR (Quintiles 1 and 2)	832	25.7% (-7.1)	22.5% (-10.2)	59.6% (+0.9)	63.0% (+4.8)	85.3% (-6.2)	85.5% (-5.3)

(Positive difference means demographic group achieves that outcome more frequently than their comparator.)

12. Given the significance of some of these gaps, our University Education Committee is closely monitoring the data and working with colleagues from Inclusion to further our understanding and progress towards closing these gaps.
13. In our Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25, which was agreed with the Office for Students, the University has prioritised action to close the Black, Asian and minority ethnicity awarding gap. Further information can be found in the [APP statement](#)<sup>2</sup>. The University continues to monitor degree awarding gaps across the student body within key demographic characteristics.

<sup>2</sup> Please note, the figures cited in the APP refer to 'Home' (UK-domiciled) students.

## Assessment and marking practices

### Assessment practices

14. In 2022 we launched our [Assessment and Feedback Strategy](#) to 2030, setting out our priorities for assessment to be integrated, designed for all, and authentic.
15. One such principle is that assessment tasks are designed to be appropriate to disciplinary and professional contexts, taking into account the requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory bodies (PSRB) as well as the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement.
16. When designing assessment, specific assessment criteria are devised as a means to demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes are attained. The methods of assessment are published alongside the programme intended learning outcomes in a programme specification held in our [Programme Catalogue](#).

### Marking practices

17. Marking criteria are designed to help students know what is expected of them. The University has common university-level [marking criteria](#) with descriptors that provide comparability of standards across all taught programmes. The University criteria are used as a basis for subject-specific criteria that are relevant to the discipline and the forms of assessment used and these are shared with the students.

### Assurance

18. We assure the quality of our marking through a robust internal and external process of checking and verification. The University has a policy on [internal moderation](#), to strengthen and ensure continued consistency across the University.
19. The assurance of assessment and marking practices within a programme is primarily overseen by a Programme Director (or equivalent role-holder) in consultation with the external examiner who offers expert, independent and comparative views of academic standards, of assessment processes and programme structures, and of good practice and innovation.
20. In their annual report on the quality and standards of programmes, external examiners are asked to check and comment upon the standards of the qualification and of student performance is comparable with national frameworks and with the standards of similar programmes in other UK higher education institutions.
21. In addition, the assessment strategy for a programme is reviewed by internal and external assessors at the point of development and then on an ongoing basis. Specific assessment tasks and criteria are reviewed and checked to ensure they are appropriate, normally by the external examiner for the programme, prior to them being used.
22. Recruitment, training and supporting practices ensure that external experts are able to discharge their responsibilities in line with QAA's guidance on External Expertise.

### Academic governance

23. The University's [Board of Trustees](#) has responsibility for assuring the value of awards over time, including those delivered in partnership with others. To do this the Board receives an annual report on the outcome of the University's quality review activities. The Annual Quality Assurance Report to the Board of Trustees includes a specific chapter that provides an analysis of degree outcomes and factors affecting awards.
24. The [University Academic Quality and Standards Committee](#) (UAQSC), a sub-committee of University Education Committee (UEC), oversees the operational implementation of the quality assurance framework. It is chaired by the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor with

responsibility for academic quality and standards and routinely receives summary reports on all our quality activities.

25. A quality review framework works to assure the quality and standards of education provision and student academic experience for all programmes across all levels of study. The [University Quality Team](#) (UQT) process undertakes reviews, and considers classification data as a key input along with any matters raised by students or external examiners, including any that relate to the value of the qualification, and reports to UAQSC.
26. Indeed, any issues identified or brought to our attention by an external examiner, through internal quality processes (e.g. annual quality reviews) or by student voice and representation mechanisms, are investigated and actions agreed to remedy them, with monitoring employed through the UAQSC.

### Classification algorithms

27. The University has a common classification algorithm for its undergraduate degree programmes. The common degree classification algorithm has been in place since 2011/12. The [temporary amendments to University regulation](#) for classification that were introduced during the pandemic have now ended. Similarly, [temporary regulations](#) were implemented in Summer 2023 that defined our approach to degree outcomes in the case of missing marks due to the Marking and Assessment Boycott – these have also now ended. Crucially the standards required for the award of a degree or other qualification remained unchanged throughout the period.
28. A different classification method is in place for the level 7 non-modular programmes in Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Sciences based upon the final programme mark in relation to the overall performance of the cohort, as required by the relevant accrediting bodies. Details of this are provided in our [regulations](#). Please note, Dentistry and Veterinary Sciences level 7 non-modular programmes will be moving to different methods of classification for 2025/26.
29. The University is in alignment with the UKSCQA *Principles for Effective [Degree Algorithm Design](#)*. We are confident that our common classification algorithm is in line with sector practice, as set out in the UKSCQA document and the UUK/GuildHE report on the configuration of degree algorithms<sup>3</sup>.

### Teaching practices and learning resources

30. We want all our students to succeed and so have introduced and implemented a series of initiatives to ensure they have a positive outcome – both academically and personally – cemented within the [University's strategy pillar for education](#). Whilst it is difficult to establish a causal link between such initiatives and degree classification, we believe that the following enhancements, inter alia, at Bristol are likely to have had an effect in improving student performance and outcomes:
  - A [Bristol Institute for Learning and Teaching](#) (BILT) to inspire innovation and excellence in teaching.
  - A continuing professional development scheme for academic staff: [CREATE](#) (Cultivating Research-rich Education and Teaching Excellence)
  - Curriculum enhancement work draws on our [Curriculum Framework](#) and its six connected dimensions which together form a touchstone for curriculum design and enhancement

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<sup>3</sup> ['Understanding degree algorithms'](#), UUK/GuildHE, October 2017.

- Capital investment in teaching facilities, including increased study space.
  - A [Student Wellbeing Service](#) for our students, including placing Student Wellbeing Advisers in each academic area.
  - An [Assessment and Feedback Strategy](#), setting out our priorities for assessment to be integrated, designed for all, and authentic.
31. The University has a route to recognise and promote academic staff in teaching focussed roles to the professorial level.

## Actions

32. The University has recently developed and released an improved tool to support Programme Directors and other academic leaders to interrogate their degree outcomes. This tool supports a broader variety of filters and data points to enable a more sophisticated understanding of the factors influencing degree classifications.
33. The University has identified a potential effect on degree outcomes arising from the reduction of students studying integrated masters in favour of level 6 undergraduate programmes. We will continue to study this and other aspects of how student choice impact degree outcomes, and may report on this in a future DOS.
34. We will continue to undertake annual monitoring and quality assurance of degree outcomes. This work is overseen by our governance committee structure and findings are shared internally to inform our student inclusion, success, and widening participation activities.

## Notes on the degree classification profile data

- This data is derived at a Student Programme Route (SPR) level: SPR is the relationship between a student and a Programme, and credits towards an award are accumulated at this level.
- For each SPR record that any students have had, we return the award that:
  - Is awarded and available to the student.
  - Is the highest ranked award for that Programme. If multiple equally ranked awards were available, then the one with the latest award date is returned.
- Only awards with classification of “HONS I”, “HONS II.1”, “HONS II.2” and “HONS III” have been included.
- Students who receive awards with any other classification, or who do not receive an award at all, are not included.
- The year of the award is taken from the award record and may not match the year of the final enrolment record of the student.
- The route of an award is taken from the award record and may not match the route of the final enrolment record of the student.
- Historical years may vary slightly to previous Degree Outcomes Statement due to retrospective changes (e.g. rescinded award due to appeal, retrospective changes in EDI identity data, etc.)
- Only awards for standard UG routes have been included.
- Non-standard routes have been excluded.
- Rounding of figures may mean some tables do not appear to add up to 100%. Also, in the cases of small numbers rounding to zero, this does not indicate the outcome was truly zero – such cases are indicated by the use of a greater than (>) symbol.
- Figures cited in the Degree Outcomes Statement include all fee status students (UK, EU and Overseas) with the exception of POLAR data in Table 3, which is only available for Home (UK-domiciled) students.
- If reading in conjunction with the Access and Participation Plan or the Transparency Return, please note that these publications cover Home (UK-domiciled) students only; additionally, small reporting differences exist due some awards made close to the start of the academic year and the HESA submission date; therefore differences in some figures should be expected.