Degree Outcomes Statement
April 2022

Institutional Degree Classification Profile

The institutional degree classification profile for all students for the past five academic years is set out in the attached table.

A diagram outlining the University's mechanisms for assuring standards is presented under Appendix 1.

The proportion of first class degrees has increased by 3 percentage points (pp) in 2020/21, and for first and upper second class degrees combined, by 4.9pp. The improved outcomes are seen across all student groups, and of particular note are the improved outcomes for Asian (+6.2pp) and Black students (+7.1pp) compared to White students (+2.5%). As a result we have seen a reduction in the awarding gaps between Asian and White, and Black and White students. The increase in first class awards in the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences reflect the improved outcomes for international students. The outcomes for students in the College of Engineering, Design and Physical Sciences are above the University average, and reflect the greater proportion of students who undertake a work placement or study for an integrated Master's degree; both recognised as positively influencing degree outcomes.

We believe the improved outcomes are a reflection of our increased academic support and investment in technology to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, allowing students to access and engage with their learning during lock-down periods. We improved the volume and range of resources available to students and accelerated our deliberate focus to improve the quality of learning and teaching, including launching a new mandatory development programme for staff new to teaching. We continued to focus on programme design, well-defined learning outcomes, transparent assessment and marking practices with clear expectations, and support for students. The **Access and Participation Plan** describes our activities to address awarding gaps, and in 2020/21 we introduced anti-racism training for staff.

Assessment & Marking Practices

In order to be awarded a degree, students must demonstrate that they have successfully achieved the approved learning outcomes for their programme. These are defined in the Programme Specification, and achievement is evidenced through successful attainment of the required assessments.

The University's assessments are governed by Senate Regulation 4, which includes information on appointment of External Examiners and extenuating circumstances. Assessments must be approved by the internal Panel of Examiners following consultation with the independent External Examiner. Marking schemes/criteria and University grade descriptors are used to ensure a consistent approach to marking, which is further assured through internal moderation or double-marking of assessments, and the sampling and review of assessments by External Examiners.

The module grades and the integrity and fairness of the assessment process are confirmed by the Panel of Examiners. The Board of Examiners make progression and award decisions on behalf of Senate. External Examiners are members of both the Panels and Boards of Examiners. Academic conduct and academic appeals are governed by Senate regulations 6 and 12, respectively, ensuring a transparent and consistent approach applies to all students.

Academic Governance

The University sets and maintains its standards by having in place **a strong academic governance model** that provides oversight of programme approval, assessment, marking, annual monitoring and periodic reviews. Externality is key to this governance, and as recommended by the QAA UK Quality Code, their Advice and Guidance on Course Design and Development, Assessment, and on External Expertise, the following are in place:

- External reviewers, including from Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and accrediting bodies, provide independent scrutiny of programme development and approval, and of periodic programme reviews.
- Adherence to external reference points, including QAA subject benchmark statements, QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and requirements of external bodies.
- External Examiners, PSRBs and accrediting bodies provide assurance that our practices are sound and that the expected FHEQ and professional standards are met. External Examiners provide annual reports, which are responded to by the programme team and discussed at Boards of Studies, with oversight by the College Education Committees to ensure that issues are appropriately addressed and actions monitored. The University Education Committee, and subsequently Senate, receive a University-level summary report that highlights any issues and good practice arising from the External Examiners' scrutiny.

Central to the University's governance of academic standards is the University Education Committee. Reporting to Senate, it is responsible for the oversight and development of University-wide quality assurance processes. Senate is the University's principal body responsible for the regulation, governance and quality assurance of the academic work of the University.

Council, our governing body, receives reports from Senate on the University's academic work at each of its meetings, and further assures itself through independent internal audits and the engagement of external reviewers, including for this Statement.

Degree Algorithm

The algorithms used for the calculation of awards are detailed in Senate Regulation 2, and apply to all programmes, including those delivered through partnership arrangements. There are strict criteria for the consideration of borderline candidates. The final award is based on a weighted grade point average (GPA) of Level 5 (1/3) and Level 6 (2/3) with the following restrictions:

- all Level 5 and 6 marks contribute to the award;
- no award can be made with an F (fail) grade in the profile;
- the volume of credits at E (narrow fail) grade is restricted (e.g. none allowed for the award of a first class degree);
- no compensation is permitted.

Each year students take 120 credits of study and assessment. At level 4, reassessment is permitted in as many modules as are required to meet progression rules (to a maximum of 120 credits). At levels 5 and 6, reassessment is limited to 40 credits. All reassessments are capped at D- (threshold grade), and no student (in the absence of extenuating circumstances) will have more than two opportunities per assessment.

To further assure ourselves of the integrity of our awards the University maintains a Rounding Policy that specifies that rounding at module level, where multiple assessments are combined to give a single mark, is restricted to one decimal place. With effect from summer 2022 the zone of consideration is restricted to 0.5 grade points (equivalent to 1%) below the borderline, and any uplift requires a minimum of 50% of the grade profile to be in the higher class.

Learning and Teaching

Brunel has been recognised nationally for its innovation in teaching practices and learning resources, in particular related to assessment: we received a Collaborate Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) in 2016 for our work on Integrated Programme Assessment (IPA), and in 2019 for Digital Examinations; as sector-leading initiatives they have been extensively shared across the sector, and are being adopted or adapted by many institutions. The IPA approach provides a mechanism to address overassessment by using synoptic assessments that challenges students to integrate information and apply it to new contexts. From our own evidence base, we know that requiring fewer but more heavily weighted assessments increase student achievement. The use of Digital Examinations supports all students who increasingly find it difficult to write by hand for long periods of time, and the digital footprint through all stages of the assessment process facilitates investigations where there are concerns about the integrity of the process.

The strategic focus on learning and teaching over the past 10 years has had a particular emphasis on recognition and support for staff. A new Academic Education career pathway for those that provide leadership of learning and teaching practice and innovation within their departments and across the University was introduced in 2013/14. Following a review of our support for staff in relation to professional development related to learning and teaching, a new Academic Professional Development Unit was launched in August 2020 that provides a range of development opportunities to enhance academic practice. In 2020-21, 573 members of staff were recognised as fellows by Advance HE, including 40 Senior Fellows and 6 Principal Fellows.

COVID-19 Response

The continued restrictions due to Covid-19 necessitated measures to be in place to reduce the impact of any disruption on students. However, the context in spring 2021 was different from 2020, and the University took the view that any measures taken would need to focus on helping students to manage any individual difficulties they experienced using our existing policies and processes.

The University applied the overarching principle that students should be supported to progress or complete their studies as intended, but with decisions about progression and awards based on evidenced achievement. Examinations were undertaken remotely, with assessments modified to make them suitable for such a format. Data presented in this Degree Outcome Statement demonstrate that the University assessment approach has not disadvantaged any particular groups.

Identifying good practice, and actions

The operation of University-wide award algorithms and associated award regulations (introduced in 2009) is considered to be best practice, so that all students can be confident that their awards are the result of transparent and fair processes.

The content of this statement relates to information that is regularly monitored, including degree outcomes by characteristics; our processes and procedures; and governance structures. The Degree Outcomes Statement will be reviewed annually to ensure that the information provided on our external website is accurate.

Degree Classification Outcomes

		2020/1	2019/0	2018/9	2017/8	2016/7	AVERAGE
University (All students)	1st	28.8%	25.8%	26.1%	25.2%	25.1%	26.3%
	2:1	53.0%	51.1%	49.6%	51.0%	49.9%	51.0%
	2:2	16.5%	21.0%	21.9%	20.6%	22.5%	20.3%
	3rd	1.7%	2.1%	2.4%	3.3%	2.5%	2.4%

			2020/1	2019/0	2018/9	2017/8	2016/7	AVERAGE
Age *(All students)*	Young (<21)	1st	28.8%	25.5%	26.0%	24.8%	25.6%	26.2%
		2:1	53.0%	51.8%	50.9%	51.9%	50.5%	51.7%
		2:2	16.4%	20.7%	20.8%	20.0%	21.7%	19.8%
		3rd	1.7%	2.0%	2.4%	3.3%	2.3%	2.3%
	Mature (>21)	1st	29.0%	28.3%	26.9%	28.0%	21.7%	26.8%
		2:1	52.4%	45.3%	40.3%	44.0%	45.8%	45.6%
		2:2	16.6%	23.4%	30.2%	24.6%	28.0%	24.5%
		3rd	2.0%	3.0%	2.6%	3.4%	4.5%	3.1%
Disability *(All students)*	No Disability	1st	28.7%	25.4%	25.5%	25.0%	25.1%	26.0%
		2:1	53.3%	51.5%	49.5%	50.9%	49.6%	51.0%
		2:2	16.4%	21.1%	22.3%	20.8%	22.7%	20.5%
		3rd	1.6%	2.0%	2.6%	3.3%	2.6%	2.4%
	Disability	1st	29.6%	28.2%	29.0%	26.3%	25.3%	27.9%
		2:1	51.3%	49.0%	50.3%	51.8%	52.0%	50.8%
		2:2	16.9%	20.1%	19.4%	19.0%	20.6%	19.1%
		3rd	2.1%	2.7%	1.3%	3.0%	2.0%	2.2%
Entry Qualifications *(Home students)*	A-Level	1st	34.0%	30.0%	31.7%	30.3%	29.8%	31.3%
		2:1	52.1%	50.4%	50.3%	53.3%	54.6%	52.1%
		2:2	12.7%	17.4%	16.3%	14.8%	14.2%	15.1%
		3rd	1.3%	2.1%	1.6%	1.6%	1.4%	1.6%
	A-Level and Other	1st	26.0%	23.5%	20.7%	22.3%	22.6%	23.0%
		2:1	55.8%	53.7%	53.1%	49.4%	51.0%	52.6%
		2:2	16.7%	21.7%	23.5%	24.5%	24.1%	22.1%
		3rd	1.5%	1.2%	2.7%	3.8%	2.3%	2.3%
	Not A-Level	1st	17.0%	14.8%	19.9%	19.0%	19.3%	18.0%
		2:1	54.8%	51.1%	44.2%	49.7%	42.0%	48.4%
		2:2	25.4%	31.3%	32.3%	26.2%	34.9%	30.0%
		3rd	2.8%	2.8%	3.6%	5.1%	3.7%	3.6%
Ethnicity *(All students)*	White	1st	39.2%	36.9%	38.2%	36.9%	36.0%	37.5%
		2:1	48.8%	48.6%	47.3%	47.8%	48.6%	48.2%
		2:2	11.0%	12.5%	12.9%	13.1%	14.4%	12.8%
		3rd	1.0%	2.0%	1.6%	2.1%	1.1%	1.6%
	Asian	1st	27.7%	22.7%	21.6%	19.5%	20.8%	22.8%
		2:1	53.7%	52.5%	50.4%	52.2%	47.9%	51.6%
		2:2	16.9%	22.7%	25.3%	24.4%	27.8%	22.9%
		3rd	1.7%	2.2%	2.6%	3.9%	3.4%	2.7%
	Black	1st	17.0%	15.8%	13.3%	14.6%	10.0%	14.3%
		2:1	56.8%	51.9%	52.4%	54.9%	58.2%	54.7%
		2:2	23.5%	28.9%	30.7%	27.4%	28.8%	27.8%
		3rd	2.7%	3.4%	3.6%	3.1%	3.0%	3.2%
	Other	1st	23.7%	21.0%	19.4%	20.0%	24.3%	21.7%
		2:1	55.2%	52.2%	50.8%	52.2%	49.8%	52.2%
		2:2	18.9%	26.1%	27.2%	23.0%	22.5%	23.4%

		3rd	2.3%	0.7%	2.7%	4.9%	3.3%	2.7%
Fee Status *(All students)*	Home/EU	1st	30.1%	27.2%	27.6%	27.3%	26.8%	27.9%
		2:1	52.8%	50.6%	49.5%	51.2%	51.2%	51.1%
		2:2	15.5%	20.1%	20.6%	18.9%	19.9%	18.9%
		3rd	1.5%	2.1%	2.2%	2.7%	2.1%	2.1%
	Overseas	1st	21.3%	16.7%	15.1%	12.9%	16.2%	16.6%
		2:1	53.8%	54.5%	50.3%	49.9%	43.0%	50.4%
		2:2	22.0%	26.8%	30.9%	30.4%	35.9%	29.0%
		3rd	2.9%	1.9%	3.7%	6.8%	4.9%	4.0%
Gender *(All students)*	Female	1st	30.0%	25.6%	27.1%	26.1%	27.8%	27.4%
		2:1	53.3%	53.0%	49.5%	54.4%	52.2%	52.5%
		2:2	15.6%	20.6%	21.9%	17.9%	18.0%	18.7%
		3rd	1.1%	0.9%	1.6%	1.6%	2.0%	1.4%
	Male	1st	27.6%	26.0%	25.1%	24.2%	22.5%	25.2%
		2:1	52.7%	49.3%	49.8%	47.7%	47.7%	49.5%
		2:2	17.4%	21.4%	21.9%	23.2%	26.7%	21.9%
		3rd	2.4%	3.3%	3.2%	4.9%	3.1%	3.3%
POLAR Categories *(Home students)*	Q1	1st	33.3%	29.9%	25.0%	26.9%	28.4%	28.6%
		2:1	50.6%	50.6%	54.3%	53.8%	51.9%	52.3%
		2:2	16.0%	14.9%	18.5%	18.3%	19.8%	17.5%
		3rd	0.0%	4.6%	2.2%	1.1%	0.0%	1.6%
	Q2	1st	26.0%	30.9%	32.8%	27.9%	25.6%	28.5%
		2:1	57.6%	52.1%	46.9%	50.8%	51.8%	51.8%
		2:2	15.3%	16.4%	18.1%	18.4%	20.6%	17.8%
		3rd	1.1%	0.6%	2.3%	2.8%	2.0%	1.8%
	Q3	1st	32.1%	23.8%	26.0%	27.0%	31.5%	28.0%
		2:1	49.1%	52.1%	52.3%	50.9%	46.9%	50.3%
		2:2	16.7%	22.3%	19.4%	20.6%	19.0%	19.6%
		3rd	2.1%	1.8%	2.3%	1.5%	2.6%	2.1%
	Q4	1st	28.6%	22.7%	23.0%	24.3%	24.6%	24.7%
		2:1	53.8%	52.2%	50.7%	52.7%	50.9%	52.2%
		2:2	16.1%	22.1%	24.1%	19.3%	21.7%	20.5%
		3rd	1.5%	3.1%	2.2%	3.7%	2.9%	2.6%
	Q5	1st	29.7%	28.1%	29.8%	28.0%	24.8%	28.2%
		2:1	53.6%	50.0%	47.9%	51.7%	54.0%	51.4%
		2:2	15.0%	20.5%	20.1%	17.7%	19.8%	18.5%
		3rd	1.8%	1.3%	2.2%	2.6%	1.4%	1.9%
Subject Area *(All students)*	CBASS	1st	26.8%	21.7%	23.0%	22.4%	20.6%	23.0%
		2:1	54.8%	56.4%	52.0%	52.0%	51.1%	53.4%
		2:2	17.2%	19.6%	23.2%	22.7%	25.9%	21.5%
		3rd	1.3%	2.2%	1.7%	2.9%	2.5%	2.1%
	CEDPS	1st	35.2%	34.8%	31.7%	32.3%	33.0%	33.4%
		2:1	49.7%	44.4%	46.5%	43.7%	45.3%	46.0%
		2:2	12.8%	18.2%	17.8%	18.5%	19.1%	17.1%
		3rd	2.3%	2.6%	4.0%	5.6%	2.6%	3.4%
	CHMLS	1st	25.3%	24.4%	25.2%	22.1%	24.7%	24.4%
		2:1	53.3%	48.0%	48.6%	58.1%	53.0%	52.0%
		2:2	19.5%	26.3%	24.3%	18.5%	19.7%	21.8%
		3rd	1.9%	1.3%	1.9%	1.2%	2.5%	1.7%

Externality

The University uses a range of external reference points and external expertise to assure the quality and standards of provision and awards.

Academic Governance

The University's governance structure assures the value,and continued integrity of its awards.

How do we assure standards?

Periodic Programme Review– with input from external expertise, confirms the academic standards of awards for the previous 5 years; evaluates student academic experience, quality of learning opportunities, and good practice; makes recommendations on enhancements.

Annual Monitoring– allows the university to assure itself of the continued quality and relevance of its programmes, and identify good practice. Makes use of qualitative and quantitative data.

Partnership Reviews– periodic reviews of partnerships including contractual agreements.

College Education Committee– responsible for oversight of delivery; quality assurance and enhancement; learning and teaching; and student experience of educational provision within the College.

Programme Design– external reviewers are involved in the programme approval process, benchmarking against the sector.

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies– regular reviews to scrutinise relevant programmes and reaccredit, thereby confirming standards. 63% of undergraduate programmes have external accreditation.

University Education Committee– responsible for the oversight and enhancement of learning opportunities across the University, including the promotion of good practice and innovation; and development of University-wide quality assurance policies.

Council– the governing body of the University ultimately responsible for all statutory compliance, and amongst other things for the University's strategic direction.

Industry Advisory Boards– in relevant programmes, continuous engagement with industry sector to assure quality and currency of programmes and awards.

Senate Regulations– defined by Senate, Senate Regulations 2 and 4 set out the main regulations and frameworks for all undergraduate awards of the University.

Senate– principal body responsible to Council for regulation, governance, and quality assurance of the academic work of the University.

Subject Benchmark Statements– clear expectation built into programme design and approval.

FHEQ levels– Academic frameworks and regulations are aligned to FHEQ levels.

Academic Integrity– Senate Regulation 6 defines the procedures for academic misconduct, and cases are reported annually to Senate.

Award Rules– no discretion, condonation, or setting aside is permitted. Appendices in Senate Regulation 2.

Programme Learning Outcomes– defined in programme specifications, aligned to FHEQ levels; must be met to achieve award, and mapped to PSRB

Panels of Examiners– confirm the integrity and fairness of the assessment process. SR4.43–55

Boards of Examiners– make appropriate decisions on the academic progression of students; and recommend awards to Senate, taking into account approved Extenuating Circumstances. SR4.43–50 and SR4.56–65

External Examiners– scrutinise and approve assessment tasks, moderate to ensure sound and consistent academic judgement during the marking process, and confirm that benchmarking to FHEQ levels and subject benchmark statements are appropriate, and that academic standards are comparable with other HEIs.

Internal Moderation– ensures that sound and consistent academic judgements are made during the marking process.

Extenuating Circumstances– ensures students are given equal opportunity to succeed even when unforeseen circumstances get in the way, whilst ensuring programme learning outcomes are met. SR4.37–42

Marking Schemes/criteria– used to ensure parity between the judgements of different assessors

University Grade Descriptors– used throughout assessment processes to underpin consistency in marking.

Academic Appeals– Governed by Senate Regulation 12. Ensures academic appeals submitted by students are dealt with fairly without compromising standards.

V1.0