Loughborough University

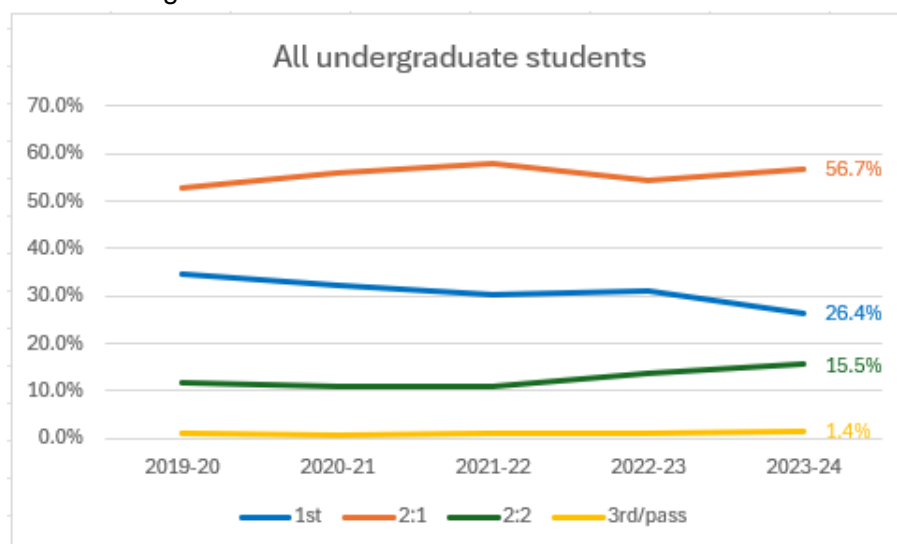# Loughborough University Degree Outcomes Statement, 2023/24

In May 2019, the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA) published a Statement of Intent. It proposed that providers should publish a degree outcomes statement analysing their institutional degree classification profile and articulating the results of an internal institutional review. This review should help assure providers that they meet the Expectations of the Quality Code for Higher Education that relate to protecting the value of qualifications and, for providers in England, the Office for Students' ongoing conditions of registration on academic standards (B4 and B5).

1. Institutional degree classification profile

The trends for degree classifications at Loughborough University are presented in the two tables below. Over the last 5 years:
- The percentage of students awarded a first-class degree decreased by 8.2 percentage points from 34.6% in 2019/20 to 26.4% in 2023/24. Sector data shows a sector decrease of 5% from 35% to 30% from 2019/20 to 2022/23 (2023/24 sector data have not yet been published)[1].
- The percentage of students awarded an upper second degree in 2023/24 (56.7%) increased slightly by 3.7 percentage points from 53% in 2019/20. Sector data show a slight sector increase from 47% to 48% from 2019/20 to 2022/23 (2023/24 sector data has not yet been published)[1].

Table 1. Degree classification breakdown since 2019/20

[1] HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) 12 September 2024 https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and- analysis/students/outcomes#classifications

Table 2. Degree classification percentages since 2019/20

Degree Class	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
1st	34.6%	32.2%	30.2%	30.9%	26.4%
2:1	53.0%	56.0%	58.1%	54.2%	56.7%
2:2	11.5%	11.1%	10.8%	13.8%	15.5%
3rd/pass	0.9%	0.6%	0.9%	1.1%	1.4%
1st and 2:1	87.6	88.2%	88.3%	85.1%	83.1%

Entry qualifications

The average entry tariff (linked to A level grades and other entry qualifications) for the students that graduated over the most recent 5-year period remained relatively stable, being 150.4 points in 2019/20 and 153.1 points in 2023/24. It is difficult to draw conclusions about the impact of entry tariff points on degree classification as both the way in which tariff points were calculated and our internal data collection methods have changed during this period. As both our degree classification and entry tariff trends are relatively flat over the 5-year period, we do not observe any particular link between the rate of award of first and upper second degrees and entry tariff.

Graduate characteristics

The percentage of students that graduated in the last 7 years with a first degree at grade 2:1 or above by gender, ethnicity and IMD quintile are shown in the table below. The ethnicity and IMD attainment gaps are described in more detail in, and are being addressed via, our Access and Participation Plan: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-providers/regulatory-resources/search- for-access-and-participation-plans/#/AccessPlans/provider/10004113

Table 3. Graduate characteristics since 2017/18

1st/2:1 awarding gaps (UK UG only)															
Characteristic		% 1st/2:1							Gap						
		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Ethnicity	White	89%	88%	91%	91%	92%	89%	87%							
	Asian	77%	76%	82%	86%	87%	79%	78%	-12%	-12%	-9%	-6%	-5%	-10%	-8%
	Black	65%	78%	76%	76%	78%	72%	69%	-24%	-9%	-15%	-15%	-14%	-17%	-17%
Gender	Females	91%	91%	91%	94%	93%	91%	89%							
	Males	81%	81%	86%	86%	87%	82%	81%	-10%	-9%	-5%	-9%	-6%	-9%	-8%
IMD Quintile	Q345	87%	87%	89%	90%	91%	88%	87%							
	Q12	77%	79%	84%	84%	84%	80%	79%	-11%	-8%	-6%	-6%	-7%	-8%	-8%

Please note that 2023/24 is provisional data - the OFS will publish the final gaps for 2023/24 in May 2025

Note: The above data are for UK domicile, full-time only. The data above is provisional subject to publication of final outcomes by the Office for Students in May 2025.

2. Assessment and marking practices

The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) is an important reference point for all Loughborough University awards. Our assessment processes, as outlined in our Academic Quality Procedures Handbook, detail how we use both internal and external expertise to ensure that assessment criteria meet sector reference points. This ensures we meet the threshold standards for Level 6 FHEQ/Level 10 FQHEIS degrees,

and ensures that there is consistency in marking, appeals and the treatment of mitigating circumstances which may have affected a students' academic performance.

All assessment methods and criteria are aligned to learning outcomes and teaching activities, all of which are developed in accordance with the academic level of study and module credit weightings, using appropriate descriptors and consistent language that are understood by all students and staff involved in the assessment process. They reflect course and module aims as well as other factors where appropriate, such as professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) requirements. The UK Professional Standards Framework for Higher Education is a reference point for professional practice and development in respect of assessment.

We assure ourselves that these activities are effective through our academic governance arrangements (see section 3).

The University recognises the fundamental importance of External Examining to maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing academic quality. Accordingly, External Examiners are appointed to all provision that leads to a Loughborough University award.

The purposes of the External Examiner system are to ensure that the standards set for taught programmes awarded in similar subjects are appropriate for the awards, or award elements, by reference to national subject benchmarks, the FHEQ, programme specifications and other relevant information and are comparable in standard in all Universities in the UK. They are also appointed to ensure that the assessment system is fair and is fairly operated in the classification of students.

3. Academic governance

Our internal governance structures ensure rigorous strategic and operational oversight of the quality of delivery and the standards by which we assess our provision. As detailed on our Academic Quality Procedures Handbook, this includes clearly defined procedures for monitoring and reporting on quality and standards through the University committee structure, culminating annually with an assurance report to Council, the highest body at the University, about the rigour of activities relating to the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes. This enables Council to make a judgement on whether the University has appropriately set and maintained the standards of awards for which it is responsible.

Amongst other things, Council receives assurance that thorough scrutiny of all taught programmes, including those delivered by the one partner for whom we validate awards, takes place through our internal Annual Programme Review process, and as part of a wider extensive review of academic School activity by Learning and Teaching Committee. The views of External Examiners, PSRBs, companies providing industrial training placements and employers of the University's graduates, as well as the views of students and staff, are all taken into account. We are transparent with our data and degree classifications are included in our Key Performance Indicators. These are monitored regularly through our committee structure, and through discussions with the senior academic leadership in our academic Schools, and reported to Council.

We have consulted with staff and student representatives, and representatives from the partner for whom we validate awards, in the process of assuring the content of this degree outcomes statement.

4. Classification algorithms

The process for determining a degree classification is set out in [Regulation XX: Undergraduate Awards](#) and supplemented with information in [Programme Specifications](#). These are publicly available to students and all relevant stakeholders.

Degrees are awarded following the successful accumulation of credit. In order to gain credit in an undergraduate module, a student must achieve a module mark of at least 40%. Students registered for Bachelors awards need to accumulate at least 100 credits to pass each year and qualify for an Honours degree, while students registered for Integrated Masters awards need to accumulate 120 credits and an overall average mark for the year of 55% to pass each year. In line with the sector, students normally have one opportunity to resit a failed module with the module mark capped at the threshold pass mark of 40%. Where a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body has additional requirements, this is detailed in the relevant Programme Specification.

A student's degree classification is calculated as follows:

- For each year of the programme (with the exception of first year marks, which do not count towards the final degree classification), the Module Mark awarded for every module is weighted in proportion to the credits attached to the module and used to calculate an average mark for that year.
- The average marks for all years are combined in a ratio specified in the relevant Programme Specification to determine the Programme Mark.
- The Programme Mark is translated into a Degree Classification according to a table set out in [Regulation XX: Undergraduate Awards](#).
- The Degree Classification is awarded by a Programme Board, which has the discretion to lower the threshold for awarding a Classification.

We keep this methodology under review on a four-year cycle to provide regular assurance of the maintenance of standards and transparency in the classification process for all stakeholders. The next review will take place in the academic year 2024/25.

5. Teaching practices and learning resources

Loughborough University continually evaluates, revises and invests in teaching practices and learning resources in order to provide an academic experience of high quality and standard. Our teaching excellence is recognised through our [TEF Gold award](#) (Overall, and separately for Student Experience and Student Outcomes) and through internal awards, such as our Teaching Innovation Awards and Research-Informed Teaching Awards. It is also recognised through Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA), which all new academic staff are required to achieve as part of their probation requirements, and the recognition of many staff as Senior and Principal Fellows of the HEA.

Our investment and physical and digital learning resources is significant and externally recognised. The University's STEMLab was an award winner at the 2019 S-Lab Awards for Excellence in Laboratory Design, Management and Operation. The University was announced as the winner of the 'University Facilities' category at the 2024 WhatUni Student Choice Awards.

Noting that our degree classification trends are relatively flat over the 5-year period, we are satisfied that these enhancements to teaching practices and learning resources

have served to provide the highest quality of education experience for our students without prejudicing our degree classifications profile.

6. Identifying good practice and actions

The University reviews its classification mechanisms on a four-year cycle, taking into consideration feedback from External Examiners, PSRBs, academic and non-academic staff and student representatives. We consider this to be good practice as it provides regular assurance of the maintenance of standards and transparency in the classification process for all stakeholders.

Teaching Awards provide an important means for the University to recognise, celebrate and promote excellence in learning and teaching. Currently, there are three types of award, one encouraging new developments for the future (Teaching Innovation Awards), another recognising current teaching excellence (Research-informed Teaching Award) and an award created to share examples of best practice (Teaching Best Practice Award). Academic Schools also award School Teaching Awards voted for by students, and the University actively supports Loughborough Students' Union in the joint annual student-led Loughborough Academic Awards for staff.

7. Risks and challenges.

Through our regular cycle of evaluation and review of provision, taking into account internal and external viewpoints, the University monitors risks and challenges, taking action should the need arise.

Approved by University Council 27 March 2025