

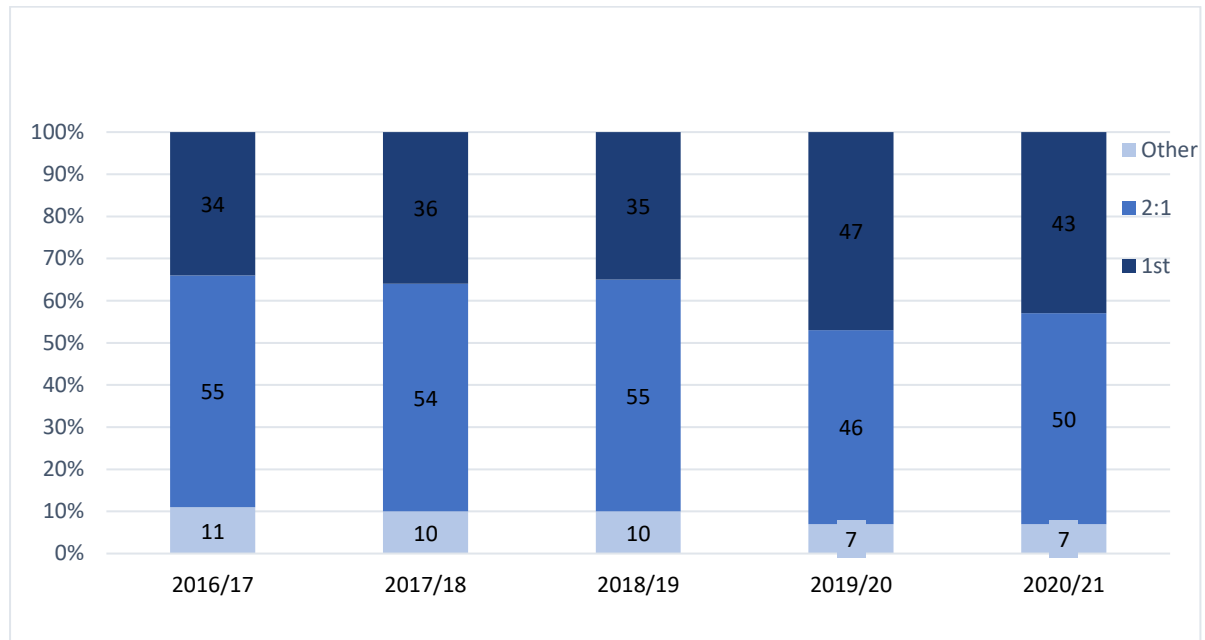
University of Bath, Degree Outcomes Statement

1. Institutional degree classification profile

- a) This statement and results relate to University of Bath full-time undergraduate students who are domiciled in the United Kingdom.

Chart 1: Award of undergraduate degrees 2016/17 to 2020/21 by classification

Full time UK-domiciled undergraduate students



Source: HESA data return

Table 1: Award of upper degrees 2016/17 to 2020/21

Full time UK-domiciled undergraduate students

	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
University	1894	89%	2061	90%	2202	90%	2272	93%	2381	93%
Bachelors	1369	87%	1476	87%	1601	89%	1640	92%	1767	92%
Masters	525	92%	585	97%	601	95%	632	96%	614	96%
BAME ¹	211	81%	260	85%	280	85%	303	91%	361	90%
White	1670	90%	1796	91%	1908	91%	1953	94%	2003	94%
Disability declared	214	84%	229	87%	264	85%	340	92%	368	91%
No disability	1680	89%	1832	90%	1938	91%	1932	94%	2013	94%
Female	833	92%	914	92%	970	93%	982	95%	1060	95%
Male	1061	86%	1145	88%	1231	88%	1288	92%	1318	91%
Other			<5		<5		<5		<5	
POLAR Q1-2 ²	251	90%	287	87%	303	87%	277	91%	329	90%
POLAR Q3-5	1535	89%	1617	91%	1814	92%	1889	94%	1959	94%

Source: HESA data return

BAME includes Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnic groups but excludes White minorities. Ethnicity is self-declared at enrolment. We recognise the diversity of individual identities and lived experiences and we also recognise that BAME is an imperfect term.

POLAR quintiles 1-2 are the areas with the lowest participation rates of young people in higher education in the UK. POLAR data includes young students (under 21 years old on 31 August in their year of entry) only.

Table 2: Award of 1st class degrees 2016/17 to 2020/21*Full time UK-domiciled undergraduate students*

	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	1st		1st		1st		1st		1st	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
University	721	34%	826	36%	853	35%	1133	47%	1111	43%
Bachelors	456	29%	518	31%	543	30%	757	43%	765	40%
Masters	265	47%	308	51%	310	49%	376	57%	346	54%
BAME ¹	58	22%	78	25%	82	25%	114	34%	133	33%
White	659	35%	748	38%	766	37%	1013	49%	968	45%
Disability declared	79	31%	79	30%	91	29%	157	42%	144	35%
No disability	642	34%	747	37%	762	36%	976	47%	967	45%
Female	305	34%	378	38%	374	36%	500	49%	532	48%
Male	416	34%	447	34%	478	34%	631	45%	579	40%
Other	0	0%	<5		<5		<5		0	0%
POLAR Q1-2	99	36%	100	30%	112	32%	137	45%	146	40%
POLAR Q3-5	588	34%	659	37%	720	36%	956	47%	936	45%

Source: HESA data return

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POLAR quintiles 1-2 are the areas with the lowest participation rates of young people in higher education in the UK. POLAR data includes young students (under 21 years old on 31 August in their year of entry) only.

- b) The University of Bath delivers a range of degrees through its Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Engineering & Design and School of Management.

Table 3: Award of upper degrees by Faculty/School 2016/17 to 2020/21*Full time UK-domiciled undergraduate students*

	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	1st & 2.1		1st & 2.1		1st & 2.1		1st & 2.1		1st & 2.1	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
University	1894	89%	2061	90%	2202	90%	2272	93%	2379	93%
Faculty of Engineering & Design	342	92%	400	94%	361	92%	402	95%	464	95%
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences	684	89%	755	90%	842	90%	862	96%	901	94%
Faculty of Science	752	85%	723	86%	820	88%	841	89%	817	90%
School of Management	116	96%	183	99%	179	98%	167	98%	199	99%

Source: HESA data return

Table 4: Award of 1st class degrees by Faculty/School 2016/17 to 2020/21*Full time UK-domiciled undergraduate students*

	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	1st		1st		1st		1st		1st	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
University	721	34%	826	36%	853	35%	1133	47%	1111	43%
Faculty of Engineering & Design	165	44%	192	45%	178	45%	212	50%	261	53%
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences	165	22%	194	23%	231	25%	353	39%	339	35%
Faculty of Science	332	38%	356	42%	364	39%	466	50%	410	45%
School of Management	59	49%	84	46%	80	44%	102	60%	101	50%

Source: HESA data return

- c) In the academic year 2020/21 93% of our UK domiciled undergraduate students achieved a first or a 2.1; 43% graduated with a first class degree.
- d) Degree outcomes may be affected by a combination of factors including subject mix, entry qualifications, student demographics, improvements in learning and teaching, student choice, changes to the curriculum, and degree algorithms. [The Analysis of Degree Classifications Over Time: Changes in graduate attainment from 2010-11 to 2020-21](#), published by the Office for Students in May 2022, takes some of these factors into consideration in its evaluation of degree outcomes across the sector. The report concluded that there are few unexplained increases in the University of Bath's classification profile compared to other institutions.
- e) Students graduating from 2019/20 onwards have experienced disruption to their learning, teaching and assessments due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Recognising this, the University introduced a range of measures to seek to ensure that students were not unduly disadvantaged by Covid-19. Full "no-detriment" measures were implemented for students graduating in 2019/20. Students graduating in later years have also experienced some specific pandemic-related measures although to a lesser extent. These measures were coupled with a move to online assessments to replace in-person examinations. We are satisfied that these measures represented a proportionate and necessary response, using our existing regulations and standards where possible, and our approach was comparable to similar measures across the sector. We continue to analyse our approach during the pandemic to establish the impact on student outcomes.
- f) The University prides itself on its high academic standards. It monitors degree outcomes annually.
- g) We believe that our excellent degree results are due to a combination of factors:

- i. We admit a consistently high calibre of student to the University. The average A-level tariff on entry, of students who graduated with a 2.1 or a first in 2020/21, was 182 points, equivalent to the typical profiles of students with A levels of A*A*A or AAAB.
- ii. Three quarters of our students undertake a four- or five-year programme, developing professional skills either through a placement, a study abroad opportunity, or professionally accredited awards. In 2020/21, 23% of our undergraduate students graduated from an integrated masters programme (predominantly in Science and Engineering).
- iii. Relative to UK Higher Education as a whole, our subject profile includes a large proportion of programmes in Engineering, Physical Sciences and Mathematics in which traditionally, across the sector, a higher number of firsts are awarded. Of those students who achieved a first class award in 2020/21, the A-level tariff was 189 points. In 2020/21 30% percent of undergraduate students awarded a first graduated from an undergraduate masters level programme.
- iv. 65% of our students graduate from a programme with a work or study placement. They achieve higher grades than those on non-placement programmes. The placement market is competitive with many employers seeking graduates with an average grade of at least a 2.1. Between 2015 and 2019, the proportion of students graduating from a placement programme increased from 66% to 70%; however, the proportion of students graduating from a placement programme fell back to 65% in 2020/21.
- v. The majority of our students have an opportunity to demonstrate the culmination of their learning through a major independent research project or dissertation in their final year that is weighted proportionately towards their classification calculation.

2. Assessment and marking practices

- a) The University's [Quality Assurance Code of Practice](#) describes in detail the processes we have in place to assure the standard of our degrees and to meet national standards.
- b) The standard of the award is validated, and its compliance with national expectations assessed, when a new programme is approved by the University.
- c) Exam questions and pieces of coursework are subject to a process of moderation by academic staff internal to the University. Exam papers, and significant pieces of coursework, that contribute to the final award, are also moderated by our External Examiners, to provide assurance that they are of a suitable standard.
- d) Examination papers and pieces of coursework are marked by an examiner according to a mark scheme. A sample of marked work is moderated by a second member of staff within the department to monitor the consistency and reliability of marking.
- e) In the final year of their programme the majority of students will conduct a project or produce a dissertation. These pieces of work, which have a significant bearing on the final award, are blind double-marked, a process that ensures that the marks of the first marker are concealed from the second.

- f) Examinations and, where practical, other assessments such as coursework, are marked anonymously to guard against unconscious bias.
- g) All students are expected to undertake training in, and a test of their understanding of, academic integrity prior to their first progression point.

3. External examining

- a) Our core course life cycle processes involve an element of scrutiny from outside the University, from the approval of a new programme through to awarding a degree.
- b) At least one External Examiner, normally an academic, but occasionally a professional expert, from outside the University is appointed to every programme. They provide advice and guidance on both the quality of the educational experience and the maintenance of academic standards. Their role involves the reviewing of exam questions, looking at a sample of marked work and attending Boards of Examiners for Programmes. Their advice is also sought on course development including in 2022/23 the outcome of a University-wide review of its undergraduate curriculum. External Examiners are appointed to strict criteria to assure both their expertise and their impartiality.
- c) Our students are assessed against specific criteria that are approved by the University with external involvement. Departments develop their own degree classification descriptors appropriate to the discipline.
- d) External Examiners are required to report on their findings, once a year, following Boards of Examiners. They generally praise the high standards achieved by our students.
- e) We are currently reviewing our external examining arrangements with a view to strengthening the external voice in quality and standards and aligning with sector best practice.

4. Academic governance

- a) There are three tiers of decision-making involved in awarding a degree.
 - i) Boards of Examiners for Units are responsible for determining unit outcomes;
 - ii) Boards of Examiners for Programmes are responsible for determining programme outcomes;
 - iii) Boards of Studies of Studies are responsible for making an award on behalf of Senate.
- b) Unit outcomes are compared to the outcomes of previous years to ensure that any deviation from the norm is accounted for. However, there are no quotas for our results. We assess to criteria, not to norms, to ensure that exceptional performance is rewarded appropriately.
- c) Boards of Examiners are not allowed to change the marks of individual students. If there is evidence that the marks presented to the board are not an accurate reflection of standards, the BEU may scale the marks of the whole or part of a cohort. Scaling affects marks in approximately 3% of units. The practice is monitored carefully by the Education, Quality and Standards Committee and also communicated to our students.

- d) The Board of Examiners for Programmes may take into consideration Individual Mitigating Circumstances that have affected a student's performance. The classification of a student with valid Individual Mitigating Circumstances may be adjusted to one class higher, with appropriate evidence and within very specific parameters. These parameters are set out in [Individual Mitigating Circumstances & Assessment: Principles & Procedures within & outside the New Framework for Assessment: Assessment Regulations](#).
- e) Independent observers, appointed from within the University, may attend Boards of Examiners and report their findings to their Faculty. At least one External Examiner must attend the Board of Examiners for Programmes for finalists.
- f) Training is compulsory for all new Chairs of Boards of Examiners.
- g) The University's Education, Quality and Standards Committee receives an annual report on assessment processes including a summary of issues and good practice raised by External Examiners and Independent Observers.
- h) Degree Outcomes Group supports the monitoring of degree classifications, and the outcome gap, at the institutional level. It meets regularly and reports to the Education, Quality and Standards Committee and Senate.
- i) We receive a relatively low number of academic appeals.
- j) Where a programme is delivered at a partner organisation, the Board of Examiners is chaired by a member of University of Bath staff, and the External Examiner is appointed by the University of Bath.
- k) Senate receives a report annually on degree classifications. Degree outcomes also form a key part of the annual report on the University's performance presented to Senate and Council.

5. Classification algorithms

- a) In 2008 the University introduced a common assessment framework for all its taught programmes. This new framework harmonised its approach to awarding degrees and introduced rule-based decision-making, reducing the role of the Boards of Examiners in determining students' results.
- b) The rules for progression, and awarding undergraduate degrees are set out in the [New Framework for Assessment](#).
- c) Students are expected to complete their degree within a fixed time period—length of degree plus two years—as set out in clause 15.7 of our [Regulations for Students](#). They may retake a failed unit on one occasion, if their overall results meet the criteria necessary for reassessment. If a student fails a unit and undertakes supplementary assessment, the original "failed" mark contributes towards their stage average. Students can only improve their marks if they have to retake an entire year.
- d) The weighting of the years depends on the level of the award and the contribution of the placement. The respective weightings can be found on pp 37-38 of the New Framework for Assessment for undergraduate degrees. The first year does not contribute to the final award. The final year, or part, of all degrees is at a higher weighting to allow students to demonstrate their achievements predominantly at the level of the final award. Students

are provided with information on the key aspects of the assessment regulations, including the relative weightings of parts of their programme in their programme handbook.

- e) All credit that contributes to the final classification, is included in a student's Overall Programme Average. No units can be discounted. Results are not rounded at any point in the degree. In the final year of the award, if a student's result is on the borderline, and they have achieved half the credit at the higher classification, they will be awarded the higher class of degree.
- f) Course designs may allow failure in a limited number of credits if it can be demonstrated that course learning outcomes can be met.
- g) The University's '[no detriment measures](#)' in 2019/20 included a limited classification safety net related to assessments taken in Semester 2 of that year.
- h) Following its introduction in 2008, the New Framework for Assessment was subject to a review in 2013. Changes made to the regulations as a result of the review did not have an impact on the classification algorithm.
- i) The University's Academic Standards Working Group is currently responsible for reviewing assessment regulations and making recommendations to university statutory bodies.
- j) Aspects of the assessment regulations and parameters for Individual Mitigating Circumstances are currently under review to ensure that they remain robust in the light of changes in course design brought about by the University's curriculum transformation programme; are written in accessible language; and support student wellbeing.

6. Teaching practices and learning resources

- a) The [University's Access and Participation plan](#) describes work, both undertaken and planned, to improve the outcomes of underrepresented groups of students.
- b) The [University was rated Gold](#) for its learning and teaching in the Teaching Excellence Framework in 2017. The outcome of its next TEF assessment will be published in 2023.
- c) Both external examiners and students hold the University's approach to learning and teaching in high regard. The University scores very highly in the National Student Survey and is currently Sunday Times University of the Year.

7. Good practice, and actions

- a) The New Framework for Assessment, and associated principles and parameters for considering Individual Mitigating Circumstances, have brought considerable consistency and rigour to the making of our awards.
- b) A range of factors affect a student's overall performance. We will continue to monitor, in particular, the outcomes of final year projects and dissertations, student choices, and any changes in programme design.
- c) We will continue to work closely with our External Examiners to monitor our degree outcomes and identify the potential for grade inflation and measures to close awarding gaps.

- d) 2022 outcomes show the start of a return to pre-pandemic levels with a significant decrease in the percentage of firsts awarded and this trend is expected to continue. In addition to the lessening impact of no-detriment and other pandemic related measures, departments have become more accustomed to setting online and open book exams. There has also been a return to in-person exams in some subjects, where this is considered to be a more appropriate method of assessment. As a small number of students graduate from a five year course, measures to mitigate the effect of the pandemic are likely to continue to have an impact on degree outcomes until 2023.
- e) A recent department review of degree outcomes has highlighted a need for greater central support for departments in both analysing data and identifying actions. The University is taking action to address this through its Data Insights Group and Centre for Learning and Teaching.
- f) The University has recently undertaken a complete review of its undergraduate curriculum. A key driver for this review was to improve the assessment experience for our students with the expectation of closing awarding gaps.

Approved by Council, 24 November 2022