DEGREE OUTCOMES

STATEMENT

2022

Degree Outcomes Statement 2022

The publication of Degree Outcomes Statements forms part of a sector wide commitment to protect the value and credibility of Higher Education qualifications, and the degree classification system that underpins them, in the interest of students, past, present and future. This statement covers the five years up to and including 2020/21. Some data from 2021/22 is included.

The UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA) expects HE providers to periodically publish Degree Outcomes Statements analysing their institutional undergraduate degree classification profile, recognizing degree awarding trends and degree awarding gaps between different demographic groups of students. The statement clarifies how the University monitors and manages the academic standards of its undergraduate awards at Levels 4-6.

This statement covers all level 6 awards. The Board of Governors owns this statement, and the Quality Standards Committee oversees its implementation.

Institutional degree classification profile

'Good honours degrees' covers the awarding of first class and upper second-class degrees (1st and 2:1 classifications). Results in Table 1 shows an upward trend in 'good honours' degrees over the period of review rising from 69% in 16/17 to 81% in 20/2 before falling to 78% in 21/22. That there was a rise in good honours in 20/21 results from two separate processes. One is a long-term set of interventions around assessment enhancements designed to improve student outcomes, and the second is the short-term impact of the no detriment policy adopted during the pandemic and cyberattack. Similar increases were reflected across the sector. See Figure 1 - Degree classification against sector and London Moderns.

Mode of Study	Degree Classification	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
LSBU total	First	27%	29%	30%	32%	39%	38%
	Upper Second	42%	40%	40%	40%	42%	40%
	Lower Second	26%	26%	24%	24%	18%	19%
	Third	5%	5%	5%	5%	2%	3%
	Number of students	2686	2633	2514	2426	2594	2781

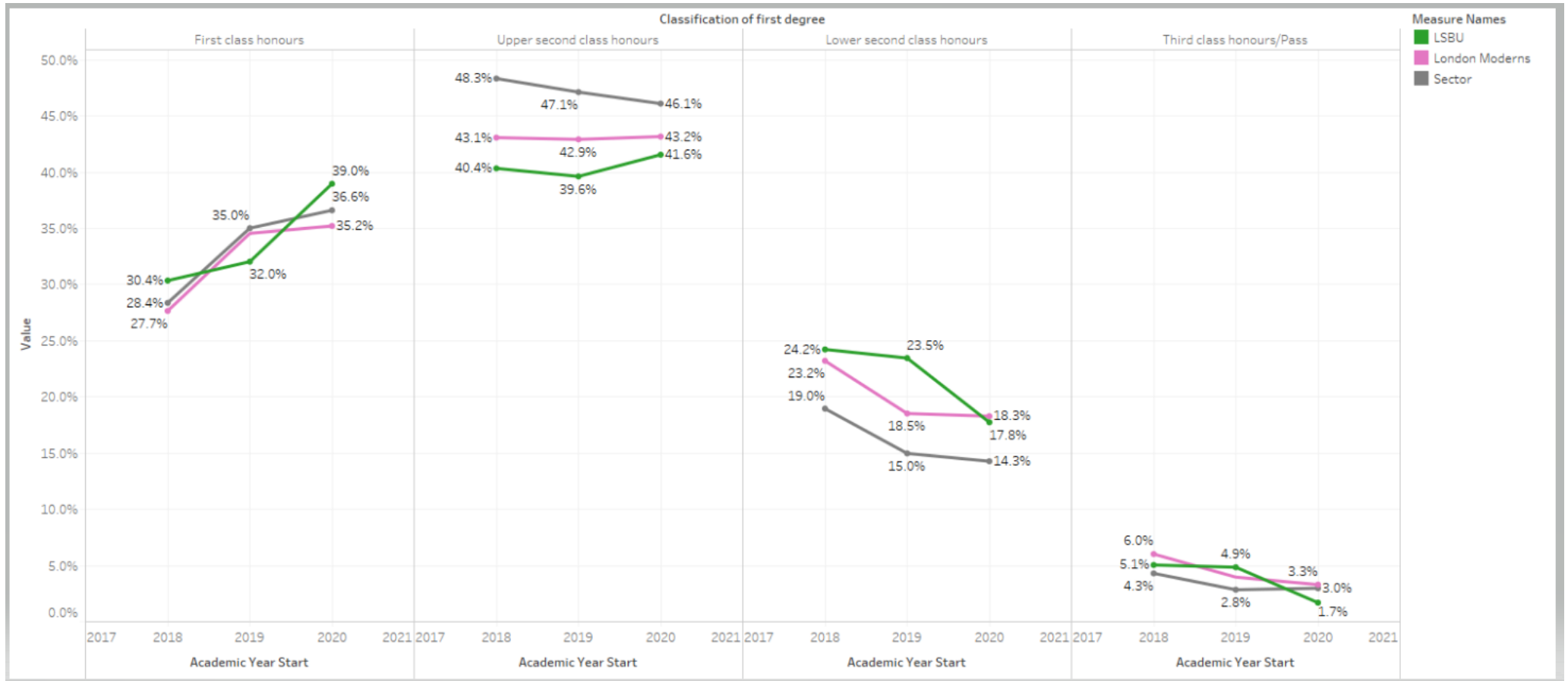*Table 1 - Awards by Classification 2016/17 - 2021/22*

Figure 1 - Degree classification against sector and London Moderns

Impact of Measures taken during the COVID Pandemic

In March 2020, the National lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic required university wide changes to modes of delivery and assessments across all courses. Assessments were redesigned to enable students to continue with their studies. Alternative methods of assessments were approved for Semester 2 - Summer 2020, which allowed students to complete their assessments remotely. Academic Regulations were updated and a 'No Detriment Policy' was implemented to ensure no student would be unfairly disadvantaged by the impact of the pandemic. External examiners reviewed the adjustments being made to assessments to verify that these were reasonable and appropriate.

Demographics

The University is committed to eliminating attainment gaps within its diverse student body. Closing the attainment gaps is an institutional key performance indicator. Figure 2 - Good Honours by Ethnicity shows that white students are awarded a higher percentage of good honours versus any other group. However, the data shows that the awarding of good honours to BAME students has increased from 61% in 2016/17 to 74% in 2020/21. The attainment gap has narrowed in the same period from 20.6% to 15.1%, from 2016/17 to 2020/21 (Figure 3 - Attainment Gap between White and Black students). Similarly the awarding of good honours degrees to those students with a known disability increased from 67% in 2016/17 to 76% in 2020/2021, with a positive message around the attainment gap that shows an improvement over the same time period move from -3% to -5%. These data are an indication that our approach to inclusive learning and teaching is removing some barriers to successful outcomes.

Good Honours by Ethnicity

Ethnicity (6 way)
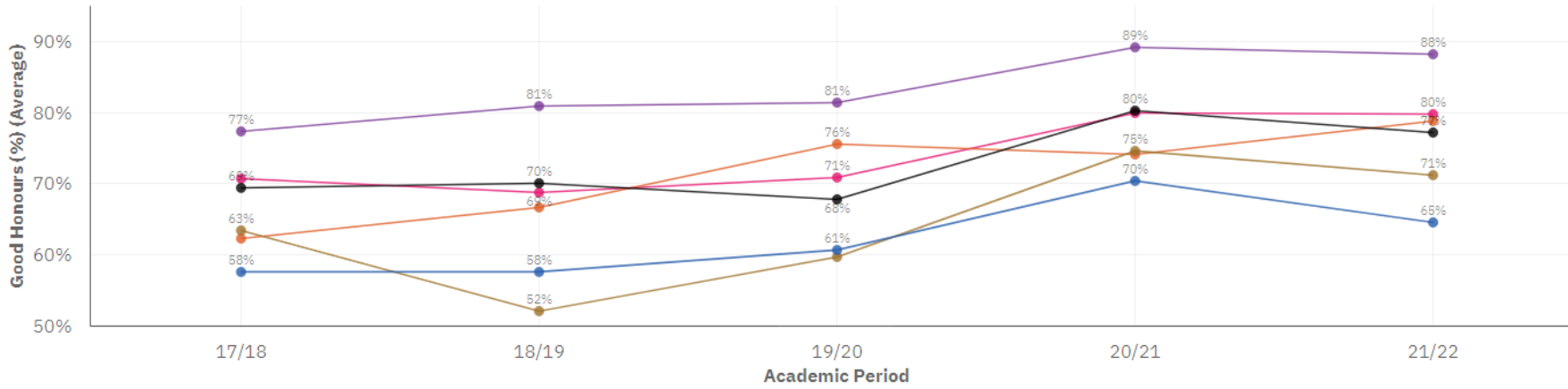● Asian ● Black ● Mixed ● Other ● White ● Ethnicity not known

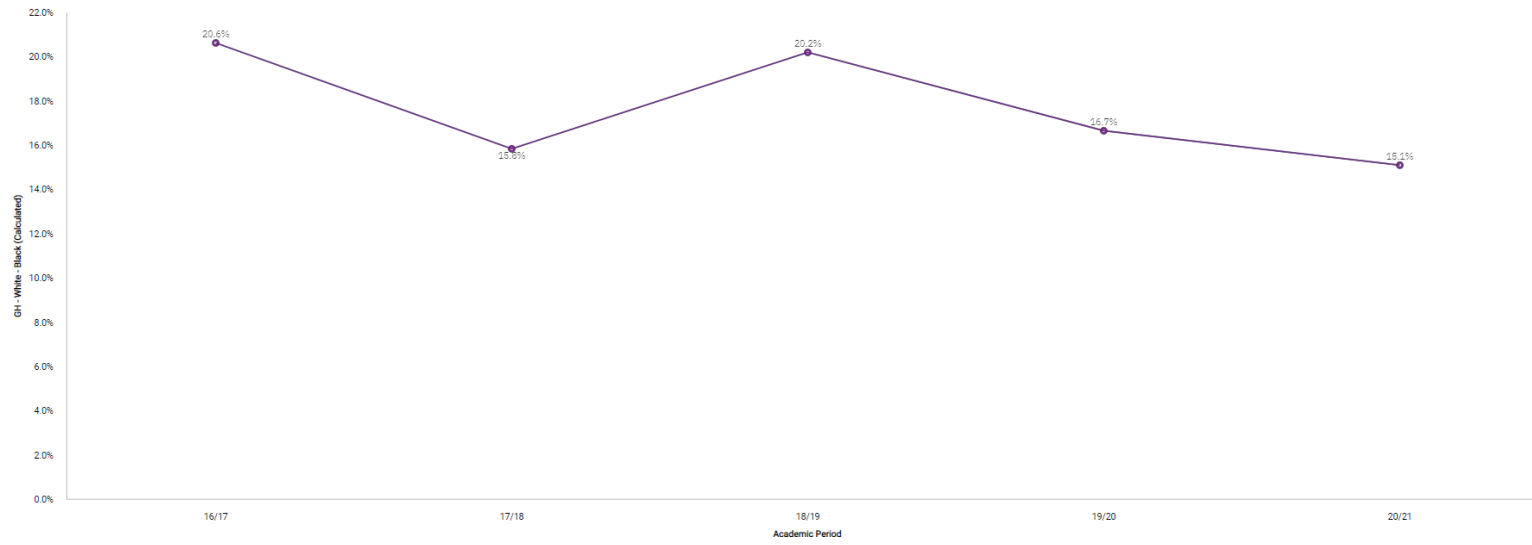*Figure 2 - Good Honours by Ethnicity*

Figure 3 - Attainment Gap between White and Black students

Assessment and marking practices

The Undergraduate Curriculum Framework prioritises assessment, equality, diversity and inclusivity as areas at the core of our pedagogic approach. The Curriculum Framework sets out expectations for the design, delivery and structure of undergraduate courses at LSBU including specifying the assessment loads expected per 20 credit module.

Our assessment strategies and methodologies, marking and feedback are consistently monitored to ensure continued alignment with sector minimum standards and best practice. A strategic project is underway to improve guidance for designing more effective assessment and feedback strategies. It aims to directly impact the consistency in assessment and feedback practices institutionally.

External Examiners moderate all modules that contribute to an LSBU award assuring that standards and comparability are maintained, and judging whether the achievement of students is comparable with the sector. External Examiners confirm that threshold academic standards are maintained in line with the FHEQ, and that the assessment process accurately and fairly measures student achievement.

The University's procedures for assessment are defined in the Assessment and Examinations Procedure[1] which is regularly reviewed. Other assessment-related

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[1] Assessment and Examinations Procedure - https://www.lsbu.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/330384/Assessment_and_Examinations_Procedure_2022-23_.pdf

policies and regulations such as Extenuating Circumstances[2], Appeals[3] and Complaints[4], and Academic Misconduct[5], are implemented centrally ensuring greater oversight, consistency of approach and application across the institution.

Academic governance

The Academic Board is responsible for the academic regulations which apply to all academic awards we have the right to award under powers granted through the Further and Higher Education Act. The Academic Board delegates this authority to Boards of Examiners (BoE). BoEs membership includes external examiners, who are subject experts from other UK universities, who provide an independent point of reference to judge whether students' achievement is comparable to the sector. The remit and operation of the Boards of Examiners is documented in the Assessment and Examinations Procedures[1].

The Academic Board approves an annual quality assurance return for the Board of Governors, to confirm the University's approach to managing academic standards and quality. The quality assurance return provides an overview of the quality assurance measures and confirms the effective operation of the internal quality assurance processes and that standards are appropriate.

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[2] Extenuating Circumstances Procedure - https://www.lsbu.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/118578/student-extenuating-circumstances-procedure.pdf

[3] Academic Appeals - https://www.lsbu.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/134535/LSBU-academic-appeals-procedure.pdf

[4] Student Complaints - https://www.lsbu.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/84423/LSBU-Student-Complaints-Procedure.pdf

[5] Academic Misconduct - https://www.lsbu.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/118327/student-academic-misconduct-procedure.pdf

Classification algorithms[6]

The main degree classification algorithm for all undergraduate students is derived from the credits attained at level 5 and level 6.

The algorithm is weighted more heavily towards level 6 of our undergraduate courses since student learning and development is progressive across the years with students developing their knowledge and expertise as they move through to the later stages of their course. The degree algorithm is published in the Assessment and Examinations Procedure[1].

The classification algorithm is described below:

> The average mark for the highest 80 Level 6 credits will contribute 80% (the major part) to the final weighted average mark on which the classification will be based. The highest marks for 120 credits from Level 5 and the remaining Level 6 credits willform a weighted average mark which will be rounded to a whole number. This weighted average mark will contribute 20% (the minor part) to the final weighted average mark on which the classification will be based.

Our degree algorithm is being reviewed and benchmarked to the principles for effective degree algorithm design. Any proposed changes to algorithm will be approved by the Academic Board and implemented.

Teaching practices and learning resources

The University has invested significantly in creating an infrastructure to support the delivery of its learning and teaching specifically aimed at improving the entire

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[6] For some subjects / disciplines where there are PSRB or other specific course requirements some localprotocols are applied.

student journey. The Education Strategy articulates the attributes of the provision.

The introduction of a personal development planning tool allows students beginning their studies to complete a Personal Development Plan (PDP) which facilitates the identification of students' development needs and signposts the support available. The PDP data allows for better planning of services available to students.

Identifying good practice, and actions

These following activities are identified as good practice and outline institutional initiatives:

Through the "What works for LSBU project" the University continues to research and take specific action to close its BAME attainment gap.

Course Development Plans were introduced to support continuous improvements in course design and course performance.

A project is being undertaken to improve guidance for designing more effective assessment and feedback strategies, including key assessment activities like moderation, the use of rubrics and improving assessment criteria.

The Mid Semester module Review now allows course and module leaders to identify actionable student feedback in semester, which can be used immediately to improve the experience of those students, and results are reported to all key university committees.

Risks and challenges for the next 12 months

The University continues to monitor its degree classifications and any attainment gaps annually to ensure that teaching and assessment reflect best practices and to identify approaches to support achievement.

An evolving area of risk and challenge for the university and the sector is academic integrity and we are keeping this area under constant review as we adapt and revise our guidance in relation to new threats posed by artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT.

Our student cohort is diverse and possess a diverse range of educational experiences therefore, our developments are focussed on addressing the diverse academic and pastoral needs of our students to provide a high-quality student experience and enable student success in their courses and beyond.