



**London
South Bank
University**

EST 1892

DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT 2019-2020

Degree Outcomes Statement 2019/20

This Statement outlines how London South Bank University (LSBU) protects “The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards”¹. This statement covers all level 6 awards. The Board of Governors owns this statement, and the Quality Standards Committee oversees its implementation.

¹ The revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education - <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

Institutional degree classification profile

LSBU utilises a standard classification system across all courses. This is established in the Academic Regulations which are reviewed regularly. The regulations are available on the University's website ².

Table 1 below shows the breakdown of awards by classification for LSBU students over the last five years.

Mode of Study	Degree Classification		14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
LSBU total	First		19%	23%	27%	29%	30%
	Upper Second		41%	41%	42%	40%	40%
	Lower Second		32%	29%	26%	26%	24%
	Third		8%	7%	5%	5%	5%
			3004	2582	2686	2633	2514

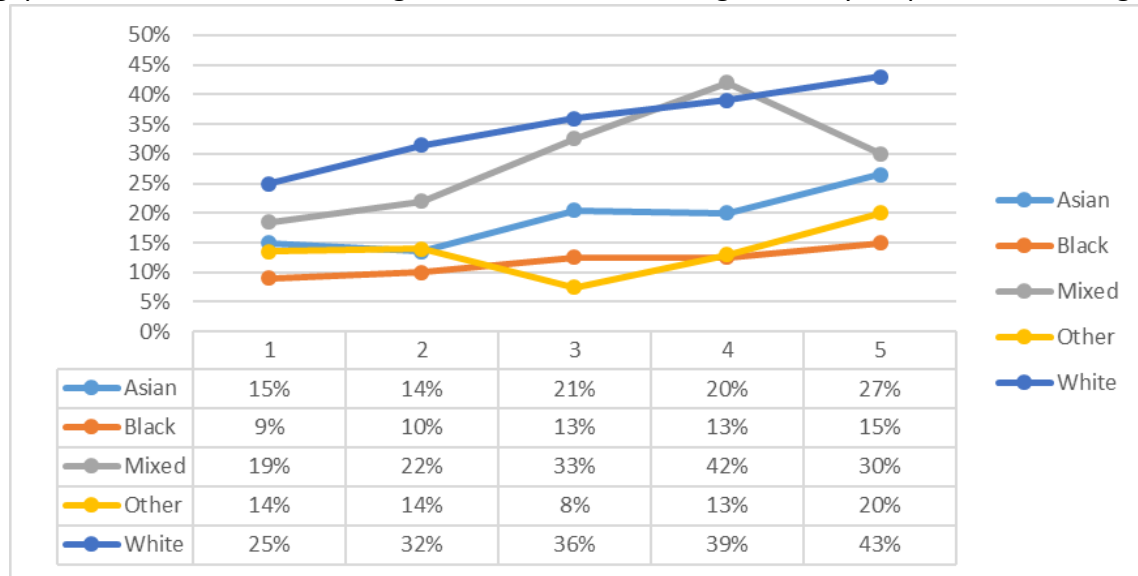
Table 1 - Awards by Classification 2014/15 - 2018/19

In the last five years there has been a rise in first class honours attainment. Table 1 - Awards by Classification 2014/15 - 2018/19 shows that attainment of good honours degrees rose from 60% in 14/15 to 70% in 18/19, with an 11% rise in the First Class honours. This is largely in line with the 9% increase in First Class honours across the sector during this period. Some of the University's increase is explained by an increase of 8% in the proportion of part time students achieving first class honours between 17/18 and 18/19. The high attainment of part time students is attributed to their industry relevant experience and greater experience and appreciation of the course expectations resulting from their employment. This is specifically the case of the School of Built Environment and Architecture whose part-time cohort accounts for 45% of the LSBU part-time population.

Figure 1- Awards by Classification and Ethnicity 2014/15 - 2018/19 shows the breakdown of first class honours degree classification by ethnicity during the last five years. This shows that that white students were awarded a higher proportion of first class honours degrees at the University, compared to all minority ethnic groups. Across all ethnicities during the last 5 years there has been an increase in first class honours awards, however the awarding gap

² Academic Regulations 2019/2020 - <https://www.lsbu.ac.uk/about-us/policies-regulations-procedures>

between ethnicities has remained with the awarding gap for Black students widening from 16% to 28% during the five year period. Awarding gaps across all



other ethnic groups remain but these are more stable.

Figure 1- Awards by Classification and Ethnicity 2014/15 - 2018/19

Assessment and marking practices

Assessment and feedback are at the heart of students' academic journey, and makes a strong, positive contribution to students' learning. Our Education Strategy prioritises assessment and equality, and diversity and inclusivity as two areas at the core of our mission.

LSBU's course approval process ensures that course design utilises the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), appropriate subject benchmark statements, and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education as reference points in design. The approval process embeds externality using external experts and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) input as appropriate. Course approval confirms the appropriateness of learning outcomes and determines whether assessment strategies enable students to demonstrate achievement beyond the threshold levels.

External Examiners are employed for all modules to assure that standards and comparability are maintained, and judge whether the achievement of students is comparable with the sector. External Examiners appointments use specifically defined criteria to ensure that they are appropriately qualified and able to assess whether standards are maintained. The use of External Examiners is fundamental to the integrity of the assessment process and are embedded from the scrutiny of assessments to the conferment of awards.

In academic year 2019 / 20, Quality and Standards committee approved the development of standard LSBU Undergraduate Marking Criteria. The marking criteria is designed to improve the clarity and consistency of marking and the quality of feedback; and narrow the attainment gap between BAME students and white students. The new criteria will achieve these goals by helping staff to have ongoing and meaningful conversations with students about their work. It is designed for use across all undergraduate courses. The roll out of the marking criteria is being phased in starting with level 4 assignments in some schools introducing it for new students in September 2019.

The University's policies for assessment are defined in the Assessment and Examinations Procedures which is regularly reviewed. Other assessment-related policies and regulations such as Extenuating Circumstances, Appeals and Complaints, and Academic Misconduct, are implemented centrally ensuring greater oversight, consistency of approach and application across the institution.

Academic governance

Our academic governance underpins the approach for protecting the value of our awards over time. 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 include 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. External Examiners ensure comparability with the sector. The remit and operation of the Boards of Examiners is documented in the Assessment and Examinations Procedures³.

Where courses are offered in partnership with others award decisions are made, where possible, by a single Award and Progression Board (APB) with appropriate representation

³ Assessment and Examinations Procedures - https://www.lsbu.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/84349/assessment-and-examination-procedure.pdf

from the partners. The APB provides oversight of the assessment process ensuring that it is operated fairly for all students, and assuring the University that they are in line with national standards.

The Academic Board approves an annual quality assurance return for the Board of Governors. 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. The return focusses on core quality mechanisms including validations, PSRB accreditations, the external examiners system and transnational education.

The university has an Institutional External Examiner whose role is to review and advise on the operation of the University's quality process. An annual report from the Institutional External Examiner provides a detailed overview evidencing how the university is discharging its degree awarding responsibilities along with recommendations for enhancements. Courses delivered through collaborative partnerships are subject to the same quality assurance and governance mechanisms as the University's 'home' provision.

Classification algorithms⁴

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.

The degree classification is calculated as 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 will form 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.

The university normally classifies all bachelor's degrees with honours based on the following bands:

Type of classification	Lower final mark threshold
First class award	70%
Upper second class award	60%
Lower second class award	50%
Third class award	40%

Teaching practices and learning resources

The University received a Silver rating for teaching excellence under the Government's Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). The University was praised for its focus on personalised learning and emphasis on supporting graduates into employment.

⁴ For some subjects / disciplines where there are PSRB or other specific course requirements some local protocols are applied.

The Teaching Quality and Enhancement (TQE) unit is responsible for developing and coordinating the University's strategic approach to the enhancement of learning and teaching, and academic quality and standards, drawing on external perspectives and recognised best practices.

The TQE leads and supports the development of academic practice through a range of activities in order to engage staff from across the institution. For example, Achieve is the university's Higher Education Academy scheme for recognising excellent teachers and teaching and enables anyone who teaches and / or support students learning to work towards recognition as a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

LEAP is the University transformation programme to improve the students' whole journey at LSBU. LEAP will act as a catalyst for redesigning services and processes putting the students at the heart of the institution and making sure that we have the right supporting technology and information structures.

Course Monitoring Process - In 19/20, the university implemented a new continuous course monitoring process. At five (5) specific points during the academic year course leaders report on the effectiveness of key aspects of course and module delivery and the progress of cohorts and individual students. The new process assists course teams in monitoring the effectiveness of initiatives such as inclusive assessment and the reduction of the awarding gap on an ongoing basis.

The BAME awarding gap project aims to reduce the awarding gap between BAME and white students. It utilises current research to develop approaches that support and encourage new research and innovation across the University. The project's emphasis on the LSBU student body has led to the development of contextually relevant interventions that work for LSBU students and provides a community of practice that enables the dissemination of successful interventions.

Identifying good practice, and actions

Course design, validation and monitoring processes are in line with the sector norms and utilise external benchmarks such as the UK Quality Code, Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and QAA subject benchmarks to ensure the consistency of the level of the award, scrutinise types and range of assessments, and the marking criteria used. Each of these is tested during validation by a panel consisting of internal and external members with relevant expertise.

Our validated provision is subject to formal annual monitoring (course and module) to enable the University to confirm that standards are maintained and quality assured. The new course monitoring procedure was agreed at Quality and Standards Committee (QSC) for academic year 2019 / 20. This new approach is based on continuous monitoring and embeds more naturally within the cycle of course delivery allowing course teams to respond in a more timely way to any issues identified.

To further improve the consistency of assessment and feedback across the institution a project to implement University wide standard marking criteria for level 4 modules from September 2019 is ongoing. Our approach based on principles of graduate outcomes is designed to improve consistency and transparency in marking and feedback for students.

Risks and challenges for the next 12 months

- The University will need to monitor and adapt its approaches to the ongoing challenges / risks posed by COVID-19 to learning, teaching and assessment.
- The University will progress and expand the BAME awarding gap project to enhance the design of curricula and assessments strategies that facilitates the reduction of the attainment gap.
- The University will continue to monitor BAME achievement and identify mechanisms to support achievement, where required and in accordance with our Access and Participation Plan.
- The University will define more specific processes for managing, monitoring and assuring the quality of apprenticeship courses to improve apprentices' outcomes.
- The University will further consider mechanisms that enable improved student progression.