

Degree Outcomes Statement

1. Institutional Degree Classification Profile (Level 6 only)

- 1.1 This table shows the proportion of each year's qualifiers at Level 6 in a given degree classification group.¹ A further breakdown of performance at Level 6 by demographic is contained in the Appendix.

%	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
First	20.2	19.8	23.2	26.4	31.5
Upper Second	56.8	56.2	56.4	56.6	52.8
Lower Second	20.1	21.6	18.6	15.1	14.1
Third/Pass	2.9	2.4	1.7	1.8	1.6

- 1.2 The University has reflected on the relative achievement of students in other reports, including in our Access and Participation Statement.

2. Assessment and Marking Practices

- 2.1 Programmes are approved and validated in accordance with external benchmarks, including the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, Subject Benchmark Statements, and the requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies. Programme Learning Outcomes are mapped against the requirements of external stakeholders and the Framework for Taught Programmes during the validation process. Assessment is designed around these Programme Learning Outcomes.
- 2.2 The University's Assessment Framework sets out the key policies and principles which must be followed in designing and managing assessment and the Framework for Taught Programmes provides advice and guidance. The Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) regularly reviews the Framework and these policies to ensure they remain in line with sector practice. The *Double-Blind Marking and Moderation* policy sets out expectations for the marking of assessment tasks, including what types of assessment tasks should be double-blind marked and how final marks should be agreed. It also sets out the University's Moderation process, which is carried out for all summatively assessed work.
- 2.3 Pre-Board meetings of the Board of Examiners consider the outcome of moderation and are required to confirm that the marking and moderation has taken place in accordance with University policy.

¹ The data used in this report exclude any data previously published for classifications in Medicine.

- 2.4 The procedures for Boards of Examiners are set out in the Quality Handbook and have recently undergone extensive review and have been updated (March 2020). Analysis of Programme Data is a standard agenda item for Boards of Examiners, requiring summary statistics of modules and the reporting of the distribution of degree classification and trends over time.
- 2.5 External examiners are appointed for all programmes of the University. Approval for appointments rests with the Vice-President (Education). External examiners are invited to review all stages of the assessment process that count towards an award and to engage with the programme team throughout the year. Their role is to approve the form and content of draft examination papers, coursework and other assessments, confirm that marking criteria developed for each assessment, and the standards of marking, are appropriate in line with University policy and are being applied appropriately and consistently across the programme. If additional external expertise is required to support external examiners in a specific subject area, the University will appoint additional (external) advisors to work alongside the external examiner.
- 2.6 Staff are supported to design appropriate, authentic and relevant assessment through specific Continuing Professional Development activity offered by the Centre for Higher Education Practice. The University's Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice is a part-time, work-based programme for newly-appointed members of academic staff which aims to develop knowledge and skills in learning and teaching in line with national standards recognised in the UK Professional Standards Framework.
- 2.7 The University's regulations for Academic Appeals have been developed in accordance with the Good Practice Framework from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. At Stages 2 and 3, appeals are heard by individuals outside the appellant's School, which enables the benchmarking of decisions across the institution.
- 2.8 The University's regulations for Academic Integrity were reviewed in time for the 2019-20 academic year, in accordance with the Good Practice Framework from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and advice from the Quality Assurance Agency on Essay Mills. The University's Academic Integrity Network brings together individuals possessing wide-ranging expertise and experience across all key areas of AI regulation, policy, and practice to audit, share and develop best practice in the areas of student experience, support, and well-being, quality enhancement and quality assurance.
- 2.9 The University's Regulations for Special Considerations were reviewed substantially in time for the 2014-15 academic year and will be reviewed again during the academic year 2020-21. The Special Considerations Forum considers the consistency of decisions made across the University. The number of students who have applied for special consideration of their assessment has doubled in the past five years and, of those who have applied, two thirds (up from half) of applications now lead to an outcome where either "Circumstances will be taken into consideration when considering final degree classification" or "There are sufficient grounds for believing that the candidate's performance in the relevant assessment(s) had been adversely affected".

3. Academic Governance

- 3.1 The University has a system of Academic Governance that recognises the Senate's role in awarding degrees. The Senate delegates powers to committees and individual roles within the University to manage its framework for assuring the quality of awards on its behalf.
- 3.2 The Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) works on behalf of the Senate to assure the standards and quality of all credit bearing programmes offered by the

University, including collaborative provision arrangements in the UK and overseas. The AQSC's responsibilities include the consideration, approval and re-approval of programmes, the checking of exemptions, variations and additional requirements to the University's Regulations, the closure and withdrawal of programmes and the response to recommendations from Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies. The AQSC also oversees the development and revision of policies and procedures in the areas of learning, teaching and assessment.

- 3.3 School Programmes Committees report to the AQSC on issues related to the quality and standards of programmes in their areas of expertise.
- 3.4 Boards of Examiners ratify marks and make recommendations for awards. Faculty Education Committee then confirms that recommendations have been arrived at through correct application of University processes and regulations.
- 3.5 Boards of Examiners review decisions against past results and AQSC reviews the overall distribution of awards by degree class on an annual basis.

4. Classification Algorithms

- 4.1 The regulations for determining the final classification of undergraduate awards are listed in the University's Calendar as the Regulations for the [Progression, Determination and Classification of Results: Undergraduate and Integrated Masters Programmes](#).
- 4.2 The University has operated a single harmonised set of Regulations based on a Final Average Mark for undergraduate degrees since 2006. The original Regulations were introduced reflecting on existing sector practice at the time. A number of revisions were made to these in 2012, which provided clarification of student referrals and repeats. The only changes since 2012 have been made to incorporate new developments in the curriculum (for example, the introduction of Minors programmes and the introduction of a Year in Employment opportunity). Having successfully revised its Regulations for standalone postgraduate taught programmes in 2018-19, particularly with a view to clarifying the understandability of the language used to describe its procedures, the University will begin the process of reviewing its Regulations for undergraduate and integrated masters programmes in 2020-2021.
- 4.3 In line with sector practice, the Regulations aim to give students a chance to re-sit assessments (referral) where appropriate, but cap the marks achieved on subsequent assessments in the calculation of degree classifications. The Regulations also recognise that students may exceptionally underperform in one module and that this should not necessarily be a barrier to progression or final award, providing performance elsewhere is satisfactory. The Regulations do not allow students to re-sit modules to improve their overall grades. Finally, through the structured consideration of students whose marks are in borderline areas, the Regulations recognise that performance near to grade boundaries should be viewed sympathetically and, in the context of performance elsewhere, result in the upgrading of degree classification in some cases. In the past five years, the proportion of borderline upgrades has remained consistent in each classification category.
- 4.4 Where a Final Average Mark falls close to a grade boundary, a higher classification is awarded if the Final Average Mark rounded to the next integer places the student into the next classification, or if the unrounded Final Average Mark is within two marks of the next highest class **and** at least 50% of the credit points, weighted by Part, are derived from Module marks in the higher class or above.

- 4.5 Undergraduate modules are categorised as core, compulsory, or optional. Core modules must be passed at the module pass mark (usually 40, unless an exemption has been approved as part of a requirement of a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body). A student who has passed all core modules and has achieved the University standard average mark for the Part, but who has achieved less than the module pass mark (but greater than the University qualifying mark) on a module which is not core totalling at most 15 ECTS of that part may **compensate** their performance: that is, despite achieving less than the pass mark, they may progress to the next Part of the programme to a final award.

5. Teaching Practice and Learning Resources

- 5.1 The University's approach to teaching and learning over the past five years has focussed attention on areas identified through the National Student Survey and methods of student engagement. Final degree outcome has not been an area of focus (and nor would it be used at institutional level as a measure of success), but the University would expect improvements in teaching resources, improved programme design, approaches to assessment, and a revised feedback strategy to be evidenced in the performance and achievement of its students.
- 5.2 The University's Education Committee oversees the education strategy, including aspects of teaching practice and learning resources.
- 5.3 The University's Education Strategy identifies Teaching Quality and Enhancing Academic Support as two major strands of activity and has invested in projects designed to improve the experience of our students in both these areas.
- 5.4 The University has made investments in improving the academic skills of students, from writing workshops to the physical and online support through the Academic Skills Hub. Feedback from students is that the Hub has made a significant impact in developing student skills and supporting students to achieve throughout their academic journey. Further development of our Academic Skills provision is underway, with a particular, though not exclusive, focus on supporting students recruited under our widening access activities.
- 5.5 The University's Centre for Higher Education Practice, launched in 2018, promotes academic professional learning for every member of academic staff in all areas of academic activity and at every stage of their career. It leads practice in specific initiatives which impact on student learning and achievement.

6. Identifying Good Practice and Actions

- 6.1 The review of degree classifications has identified several areas of good practice. The consistency of application of our regulations; the consistency in marking practices; the management of our assessment; and the use of dashboards within our Boards of Examiners are all indicators of good practice.
- 6.2 Whilst the University was aware of the rise in applications for Special Consideration and had already set up a working group with the aim to reconsider the Regulations in 2020-21, the review of degree classifications has uncovered detail that will be investigated further during the 2020-21. In particular, there appears to be a link that needs to be better understood between the rise in applications for Special Consideration, the outcomes from those applications and final degree outcomes.

7. Risks and Challenges

- 7.1 The preparation of this Degree Outcomes Statement has been delayed by the significant work that has been required as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 7.2 In response to the pandemic, the University opted to move to assessment at programme level for Semester 2 of the 2019-20 academic year, to make changes to the degree algorithm to recognise this, and (in common with many institutions across the sector) to include a “no detriment position” within the calculations of the Regulations. There was a modelling of the likely effects of these changes in advance of their implementation, but we are aware that changes made to support the student body during that period are likely to impact on the profile of degree outcomes for several years to come. The University will continue to monitor this closely.
- 7.3 As a result of Covid-19, temporary changes were also made to the Regulations governing Academic Appeals, Academic Integrity Special Considerations to support students through this time. The University will need to monitor the impacts of these changes on degree outcomes.
- 7.4 Whilst not unique to Southampton, the challenge is to devise an approach to teaching, learning and assessment which remains robust but is also sufficiently resilient and flexible to allow it to adapt rapidly and effectively to the uncertainties of the future, whilst ensuring that students are aware of their responsibilities as a member of an academic community. (For example, this is likely to mean a significantly reduced reliance on traditional in-person timed, invigilated examinations as the major form of assessment and an increase in coursework and essay-based assessments.)
- 7.5 The University will work with its staff, student body, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, External examiners and other relevant stakeholders to address these challenges for the future.

This Degree Outcomes Statement was prepared before the final degree outcomes for all students from the 2019-20 academic year were available.

8. Appendix 1: Breakdown of institutional degree profile (Level 6, excludes Medicine)

8.1 Proportion of each years' qualifiers in a given degree classification group: by domicile group

	2014/15				2015/16				2016/17				2017/18				2018/19			
	First	2:1	2:2	Third/Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/Pass
Home	21.0	59.8	17.3	2.0	20.5	59.7	18.1	1.7	23.7	58.9	16.2	1.2	26.9	58.5	13.2	1.4	32.0	55.1	11.7	1.2
Islands	18.5	44.4	29.6	7.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
EU	25.0	49.4	21.4	4.2	27.1	44.5	27.1	1.3	27.9	54.4	17.6		28.1	53.4	16.9	1.7	38.8	43.6	16.1	1.5
Overseas	13.9	44.1	34.9	7.2	14.3	41.0	38.4	6.4	18.7	42.3	33.7	5.3	21.0	41.7	31.3	6.0	22.1	40.8	32.3	4.8
Total	20.2	56.8	20.1	2.9	19.8	56.2	21.6	2.4	23.2	56.4	18.6	1.7	26.4	56.6	15.1	1.8	31.5	52.8	14.1	1.6

8.2 Proportion of each years' qualifiers in a given degree classification group: by JACS subject area

	2014/15				2015/16				2016/17				2017/18				2018/19			
	First	2:1	2:2	Third/Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/Pass
(2) Subjects allied to medicine	14.5	54.2	28.7	2.5	17.3	54.3	25.5	2.8	20.8	54.7	22.2	2.3	28.7	54.6	15.3	1.5	35.5	48.3	15.3	0.8
(3) Biological sciences	21.6	66.2	10.3	1.9	22.1	61.1	15.8	1.0	21.3	61.6	16.3	0.8	25.1	62.8	12.0	0.1	33.5	55.0	10.4	1.1
(6) Physical sciences	18.9	50.6	26.0	4.5	17.1	50.4	29.5	3.0	20.1	57.1	19.5	3.4	23.2	55.7	18.2	2.8	22.6	54.9	19.6	3.0

(7) Mathematical sciences	27.3	36.7	30.7	5.4	31.2	38.2	24.7	6.0	43.1	33.0	19.3	4.6	47.9	30.2	16.5	5.4	44.3	36.1	16.0	3.6
(8) Computer science	43.9	34.7	15.3	6.1	46.7	37.9	11.8	3.6	36.4	51.7	10.6	1.3	54.5	29.5	16.1		48.0	34.2	14.6	3.2
(9) Engineering & technology	30.5	37.2	24.8	7.5	28.8	33.3	34.4	3.5	31.8	31.4	35.4	1.4	17.0	37.5	41.4	4.1	28.5	35.3	28.1	8.1
(B) Social studies	21.8	60.1	16.3	1.9	18.1	66.5	14.6	0.8	24.6	61.3	14.1		27.6	60.5	10.8	1.1	34.4	57.3	8.0	0.4
(C) Law	10.7	59.6	29.2	0.6	5.8	60.6	31.0	2.7	9.8	66.8	21.7	1.6	10.7	65.2	22.4	1.6	8.3	64.8	25.0	1.9
(D) Business & administrative studies	16.9	53.3	25.0	4.7	16.6	47.3	32.5	3.6	24.9	52.2	21.0	1.9	33.4	52.1	13.3	1.3	40.9	44.5	14.3	0.3
(E) Mass communications & documentation	16.7	72.7	10.6		27.6	63.2	9.2		-	-	-	-	36.9	55.4	4.6	3.1	37.6	57.4	5.0	
(F) Languages	22.6	70.3	7.1		24.0	66.4	9.6		21.8	67.1	10.7	0.4	26.8	62.5	9.8	0.9	27.1	64.6	7.8	0.5
(G) Historical & philosophical studies	21.7	71.8	6.1	0.4	22.0	73.8	3.6	0.7	22.7	72.1	4.9	0.4	21.4	69.8	8.5	0.4	27.5	67.2	5.4	
(H) Creative arts & design	17.1	51.0	26.3	5.6	15.4	45.4	33.5	5.6	22.8	45.6	27.8	3.8	18.7	53.0	22.5	5.8	26.0	46.0	24.4	3.6
(I) Education	-	-	-	-	25.5	56.9	17.6		29.8	46.8	23.4		41.1	44.6	12.5	1.8	29.7	50.0	20.3	

8.4 Proportion of each years' qualifiers in a given degree classification group: by **demographic characteristic**

Characteristic	2014/15				2015/16				2016/17				2017/18				2018/19			
	First	2:1	2:2	Third/ Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/ Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/ Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/ Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/ Pass
Female	20.0	59.3	18.8	1.9	19.9	58.7	19.5	1.9	23.8	56.9	17.8	1.5	27.0	58.6	13.0	1.4	33.6	53.5	12.2	0.7
Male	20.5	52.6	22.4	4.5	19.7	52.3	24.9	3.2	22.3	55.6	19.8	2.2	25.5	53.7	18.3	2.5	28.4	51.7	17.0	2.9
Gap	0.5	-6.7	3.6	2.6	-0.2	-6.4	5.4	1.3	-1.5	-1.3	2.0	0.7	-1.5	-4.9	5.3	1.1	-5.2	-1.8	4.8	2.2
BAME	15.5	52.9	27.8	3.8	14.2	49.3	32.7	3.9	18.3	52.1	26.6	2.9	20.8	52.8	22.0	4.3	21.4	51.3	23.5	3.8
White	22.8	60.9	15.5	0.8	22.7	59.7	16.4	1.1	25.6	59.3	13.8	1.2	28.5	58.7	11.9	0.9	35.0	54.1	10.1	0.9
Gap	7.3	8.0	-12.3	-3	8.5	10.4	-16.3	-2.8	7.3	7.2	-12.8	-1.7	7.7	5.9	-10.1	-3.4	13.6	2.8	-13.4	-2.9
Mature	14.2	44.7	35.9	5.2	17.1	51.0	27.8	4.2	16.6	50.2	29.4	3.8	24.7	51.2	21.2	3.0	31.6	46.0	19.6	2.7
Young	21.5	59.4	16.7	2.4	20.3	57.1	20.5	2.1	24.2	57.4	16.9	1.4	26.6	57.3	14.4	1.7	31.5	53.6	13.5	1.5
Gap	7.3	14.7	-19.2	-2.8	3.2	6.1	-7.3	-2.1	7.6	7.2	-12.5	-2.4	1.9	6.1	-6.8	-1.3	-0.1	7.6	-6.1	-1.2
Disability declared	55.5	21.5	20.9	2.2	55.3	20.9	22	1.8	60.1	18.5	19.8	1.6	56.7	27.3	15.4	0.6	54.3	28.9	15	1.8
No disability declared	57.0	20.0	20	3	56.3	19.7	21.5	2.5	56.0	23.8	18.4	1.8	56.6	26.3	15.1	2	52.6	31.9	14	1.6
Gap	1.5	-1.5	-0.9	0.8	1.0	-1.2	-0.5	0.7	-4.1	5.3	-1.4	0.2	-0.1	-1	-0.3	1.4	-1.7	3.0	-1	-0.2
Parental education = N	19.5	57.3	20.6	2.5	19.3	57.8	20.7	2.2	21.7	58.2	18.4	1.6	25.3	57.5	15.3	1.8	29.2	57.8	11.8	1.3
Parental education = Y	22.0	57.4	17.7	2.9	21.3	56.0	20.7	2.0	25.4	56.3	17.1	1.2	28.8	56.2	13.5	1.4	34.0	51.2	13.3	1.5
Gap	2.5	0.1	-2.9	0.4	2.0	-1.8	0	-0.2	3.7	-1.9	-1.3	-0.4	3.5	-1.3	-1.8	-0.4	4.8	-6.6	1.5	0.2

8.5 Proportion of each years' qualifiers in a given degree classification group: by **measure of disadvantage**

Characteristic	2014/15				2015/16				2016/17				2017/18				2018/19			
	First	2:1	2:2	Third/ Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/ Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/ Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/ Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/ Pass
English IMD Q1	17.9	55.7	23.6	2.9	12.1	57.0	28.2	2.7	20.5	52.6	25.6	1.3	22.0	57.1	17.5	3.4	29.4	49.1	19.6	1.8
English IMD Q2	14.9	60.1	21.4	3.6	15.2	59.5	24.0	1.4	19.5	56.6	21.3	2.6	22.0	59.0	16.8	2.1	31.6	55.6	11.5	1.3
English IMD Q3	18.7	59.0	20.9	1.5	20.0	58.9	18.4	2.7	23.4	58.2	17.4	1.0	25.0	60.1	14.0	0.9	27.2	56.1	14.7	2.0
English IMD Q4	23.6	58.5	15.6	2.4	20.9	59.1	18.6	1.4	21.9	61.5	15.3	1.3	27.3	59.4	11.4	1.9	34.7	53.4	10.6	1.4
English IMD Q5	23.1	61.4	14.2	1.4	24.1	60.1	14.3	1.5	27.4	58.5	13.3	0.9	30.2	57.6	11.5	0.7	34.2	55.4	9.8	0.6
Gap Q5:Q1	5.2	5.7	-9.4	-1.5	12.0	3.1	-13.9	-1.2	6.9	5.9	-12.3	-0.4	8.2	0.5	-6.0	-2.7	4.8	6.3	-9.8	-1.2
POLAR4 Q1	13.2	54.3	29.9	2.6	15.0	59.7	22.7	2.7	22.6	51.9	23.5	2.1	22.4	58.4	18.0	1.3	29.7	54.2	14.7	1.4
POLAR4 Q2	23.1	56.8	18.3	1.8	21.7	54.3	23.1	0.8	25.2	53.8	20.4	0.6	26.0	56.0	16.5	1.5	31.7	56.5	10.8	1.1
POLAR4 Q3	19.3	61.4	16.8	2.5	21.9	60.0	16.0	2.1	23.1	63.1	11.7	2.2	25.2	60.8	13.0	1.0	32.8	53.4	12.2	1.7
POLAR4 Q4	20.1	58.0	19.9	2.0	22.3	61.0	15.1	1.6	24.1	60.2	14.2	1.5	29.7	57.6	11.2	1.6	31.4	56.1	11.2	1.3
POLAR4 Q5	23.4	62.5	12.5	1.5	20.0	60.6	17.8	1.6	23.8	59.3	16.3	0.6	27.6	58.9	12.1	1.3	32.8	54.9	11.3	1.0
Gap Q5:Q1	10.2	8.2	-17.4	-1.1	5.0	0.9	-4.9	-1.1	1.2	7.4	-7.2	-1.5	5.2	0.5	-5.9	0.0	3.1	0.7	-3.4	-0.4

8.7 Proportion of each years' qualifiers in a given degree classification group: by **entry route or entry qualification**

Characteristic	2014/15				2015/16				2016/17				2017/18				2018/19			
	First	2:1	2:2	Third/ Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/ Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/ Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/ Pass	First	2:1	2:2	Third/ Pass
Without Extended Project Qualification	56.4	20.9	19.6	3.1	55.4	22.4	19.6	2.6	55.4	20.0	22.6	2.0	55.5	16.1	26.3	2.1	52.4	15.4	30.5	1.7
With Extended Project Qualification	62.0	9.9	27.7	0.5	63.6	13.5	22.3	0.6	63.1	9.5	27.3		62.4	9.9	27.0	0.7	55.3	6.5	37.2	1.0
Gap	5.6	-11.0	8.1	-2.6	8.2	-8.9	2.7	-2.0	7.7	-10.5	4.7	-2.0	6.9	-6.2	0.7	-1.4	2.9	-8.9	6.7	-0.7
Any other qualification type	18.0	42.3	33.6	6.1	18.0	41.5	33.8	6.7	19.3	46.5	30.8	3.4	24.9	44.8	27.1	3.2	30.5	43.0	23.3	3.2
Level 3 qualification (A Levels and Highers)	20.6	59.8	17.4	2.2	20.1	58.1	20.0	1.9	23.7	57.7	17.0	1.5	26.6	58.2	13.6	1.7	31.6	53.9	13.1	1.4
Gap	2.6	17.5	-16.2	-3.9	2.1	16.6	-13.8	-4.8	4.4	11.2	-13.8	-1.9	1.7	13.4	-13.5	-1.5	1.1	10.9	-10.2	-1.8

8.8 Proportion of qualifiers over five years in a given degree classification group: by **Access to Southampton** (numbers condensed over five years due to size of cohort).

Characteristic	2014/15-2018/19			
	First	2:1	2:2	Third/ Pass
Via Access to Southampton	23.3	65.0	11.7	0.0
Not via Access to Southampton	25.3	55.5	17.3	1.9
Gap	2.0	-9.5	5.6	1.9

