



Degree Outcomes Statement

Academic Year 2022/23

1. Institutional Degree Classification Profile

In 2022/23, 22.7% of degrees awarded by Bath Spa University were classified with First Class Honours. This represents a small drop against the previous two years. This can largely be explained partly with reference to:

- the end of the “no-detriment” policy put in place in the years most affected by the Covid pandemic
- the implementation of the new Undergraduate Framework
- the growth in the number of graduates at franchised partnership institutions included in this data

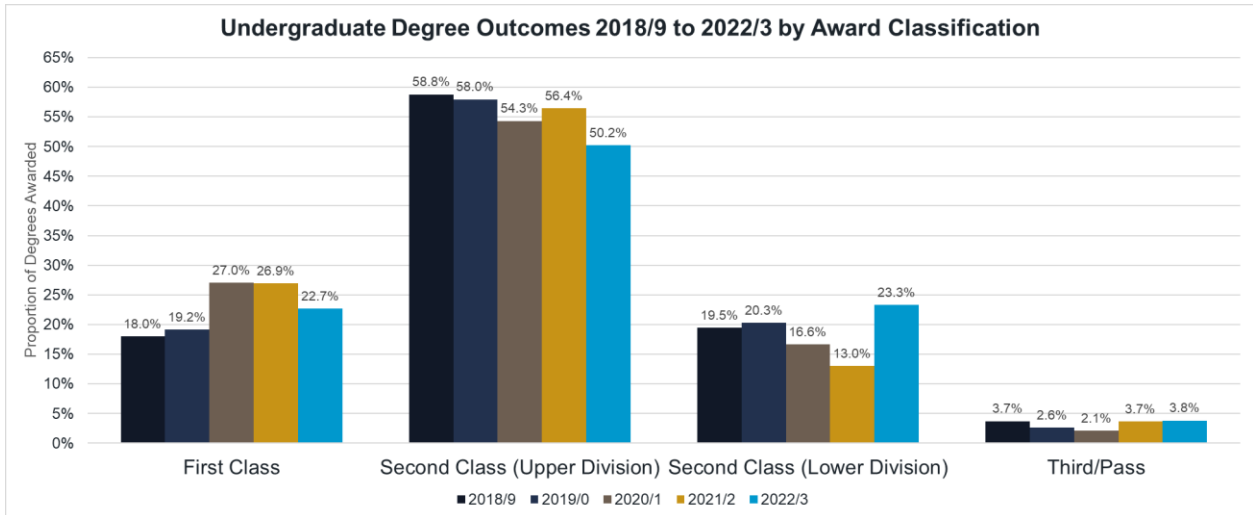


Figure 1. BSU Undergraduate degree classification distributions by year, 2018/9 to 2022/3

These factors also impacted the Good Honours rate – the percentage of awards given First Class or Upper Second-Class honours. In 2022/23, the Good Honours rate fell to 72.9, down from a high of 83.4% in 2021/22. For courses taught directly by Bath Spa, the Good Honours rate was 78.4%. This is in line with the UK Sector average for 2021/22 (Sector-wide data for 2022/23 is not yet available).

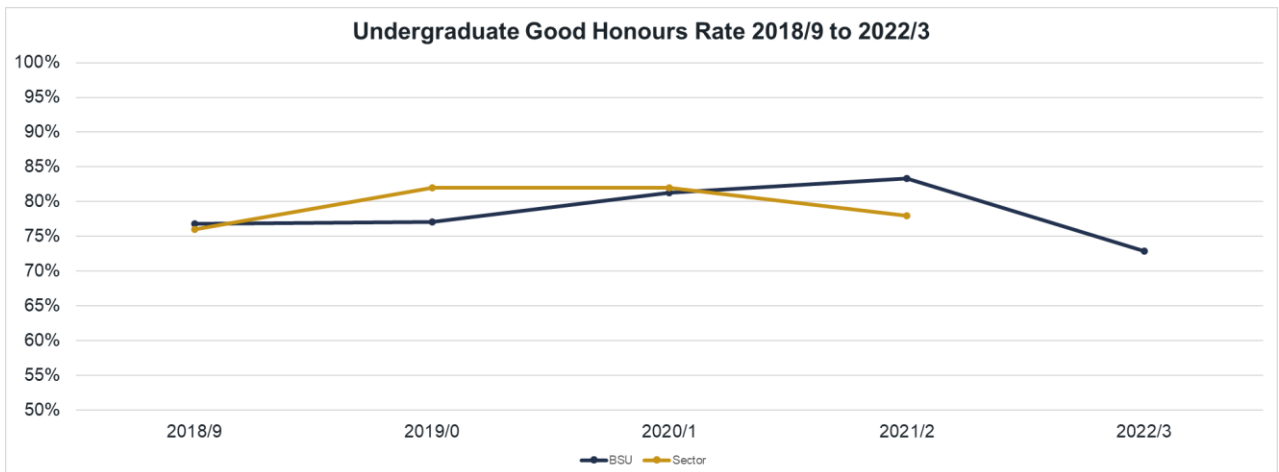


Figure 2. Undergraduate Good Honours rate, BSU versus UK sector average, 2018/9 to 2022/3

Academic Year	First Class	Second Class (Upper Division)	Second Class (Lower Division)	Third Class / Pass	All Awards
2018/9	349	1,138	377	72	1,936
2019/0	343	1,038	363	47	1,791
2020/1	455	915	280	35	1,685
2021/2	477	1,000	230	65	1,772
2022/3	421	932	433	71	1,857

Table 1. BSU Undergraduate degrees awarded by classification, 2018/9 to 2022/3

We actively monitor our trends in degree outcomes, including at course level and across student demographic groups on an annual basis, and this is reported into our internal governance structures. The Central Assessment Board also considers trends in degree outcomes to ensure oversight from Chief External Examiners.

The University's standard algorithm for the classification of degrees was operated for the first time in 2022/23, with a no-detriment policy having been active for the calculation of classifications in academic years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22, to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. As anticipated, the percentage of undergraduate students being awarded a Good Honours (First or 2:1) classification has dropped to pre-pandemic levels, following the instatement of the normal classification algorithm.

We are committed as an institution to enabling all students from all backgrounds to achieve their full potential, and therefore have university-level actions set out to address any attainment differentials based on various student characteristics.

2. Assessment and Marking Practices

The FHEQ and Subject Benchmark statements are utilised as key reference points during the [Programme Design and Approval](#) phase, where the programme and its constituent modules are developed, along with assessments to measure attainment of intended learning outcomes. Programme design is an iterative co-creation process which draws on expertise including internal members of staff, external academic members, students, employers, and professional bodies.

Internal moderation of marking is applied to both home and partner provision, and all summative assessments are moderated on a sample basis. When the University is establishing new programmes with collaborative partners, it is normal for 100% of marking to be moderated in the initial phases before reverting to the standard requirements outlined in the [Assessment and Feedback Policy](#). Requirements for double and second marking are set within our Assessment and Feedback Policy.

We operate two levels of external examining for both home and partner provision: Chief External Examiners who attend final awards boards and comment on the overall framework, regulations and student outcomes; and subject external examiners who comment at module level. We have established criteria for appointment of external examiners, to ensure they can provide a knowledgeable and impartial view of the University's programmes.

On an annual basis, external examiners confirm that we are maintaining threshold academic standards in accordance with the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark statements, and that the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended learning outcomes. Responses are provided to

External Examiners on an annual basis, and actions reconfirmed the following year. The Education Committee receives an overview of subject and institutional level themes and risks arising from external examiner reports.

We have an [Assessment and Feedback Policy](#) which provides details of the expectations around assessments, marking, moderation and the use of external examiners to ensure the consistency and fairness of marking.

We have an [Appeals Policy and Procedure](#), which details the process and steps students can take to appeal decisions which would impact on their progression, assessment and degree outcomes.

We have an [Exceptional Circumstances Policy](#), which defines how students may apply for special consideration if they are unable to complete an assessment due to circumstances beyond their control.

We have a robust process for the regular review of our policies and procedures and reporting on appeals, exceptional circumstances and academic misconduct are considered on an annual basis by the Academic Board. Updated policies are published in an [Annual Policy Bulletin](#).

3. Academic Governance

The Academic Board is responsible for the academic leadership of research, scholarship, teaching and courses at the University, as defined by the Academic Board and sub-committee terms of reference. The Academic Board provides an Annual Report on Quality and Standards to the Board of Governors to confirm the University's approach to the management of academic standards and the quality of the student experience.

The value of qualifications awarded over time for home and partner provision is protected by processes which also ensure marking practices are followed. These are overseen by Academic Board and its sub-committees and include:

- Subject Boards which determine marks for individual modules, and Central Assessment Boards which makes judgements about student's performance as a whole, as defined in our [Academic Regulations](#), and the [Undergraduate Academic Framework](#).
- External examining system, as referenced above.
- Academic Board maintains annual oversight of degree outcomes.
- [Programme Review](#), which is a two tiered process underpinned by a set of core KPI metrics, to drive improvement in course areas via an Active Monitoring Plan or Local Enhancement Reflection.
- Link tutors are appointed for partner provision, who monitor and report on the academic quality of the partner provision, both in terms of the learning and teaching, and the attainments of students on those programmes. Processes to enable institutional oversight of our collaborative provision are outlined in the [Partnership Management](#) procedures.

4. Classification Algorithms

The Bath Spa algorithm for the determination of final award classification is outlined in section 5 of the [Undergraduate Academic Framework](#) along with a [Guide for Students on the Undergraduate Framework](#), which explains the practical application for students.

The current Bath Spa University algorithm used to calculate the classification of awards was established following a review in 2016/17 to align the classification algorithm weighting across programmes and years, credits included in the final algorithm, progression rules and rounding. This algorithm is applicable to all undergraduate students. The algorithm excludes the weakest 20 credits at level 5 and 6 to enable creative risk taking and for students to be able to take credits outside of their subject in line with our university strategy. The algorithm weights the classifiable credits for level 5 at 30% and level 6 at 70%. This weighting split reflects the nature of the portfolio at Bath Spa, with many of the University's programmes requiring projects, dissertations, performances or artefacts in the final year of study. The algorithm is rules based, with no discretion, borderlines or rounding at the final award level.

A no-detriment policy was implemented in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a temporary amendment to the algorithm. The weakest 40 credits at Level 5 and 6 were excluded from the calculation of

degree classification for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 graduates. This has now reverted to the weakest 20 credits being excluded at those levels now the normal classification algorithm is in force.

The Bath Spa resit limits are outlined in the [Academic Regulations](#). Students who fail at the first attempt have an opportunity to retrieve their work for a capped pass mark. A further fail requires a re-take with attendance for uncapped marks. Our resit limits are broadly in line with our comparator institutions and feedback from our external examiners.

The University set up an Academic Standards Working Party in 2022 to review the ongoing suitability of the standard algorithm, its alignment with UK expectations for degree algorithm design, and classification data operating on previous and current algorithms. Following a review of 2022/23 degree outcomes, it was agreed that the degree algorithm remained fit for purpose and should be retained. This will be kept under review.

5. Teaching Practices and Learning Resources

As our student degree outcomes have remained relatively consistent over the last five years, our focus has primarily been on the enhancement of teaching and learning and a whole cohort approach to reducing awarding gaps, informed by our student feedback. These include tools to improve the accessibility of and engagement with our programmes, including content capture, alternative formats, online resource development, a new Virtual Learning Environment, 'support to study' processes, attendance monitoring, a new approach to academic advising, and a new student feedback portal. Our experience during the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated our use of online and blended approaches to teaching and learning, with student feedback highlighting the inclusive and accessible nature of these activities. The University also published a [Learning and Teaching Delivery Statement](#), outlining its institutional approach to learning and teaching.

We have committed to the targets in our [Access and Participation plan](#). To achieve this it is our intention to continue pursuing a whole cohort approach to enhancement and engagement that will benefit all. However we recognise that this may result in improvements in good honours attainment across the entire cohort.

6. Identifying good practice

As identified above, good practice highlighted includes:

- A whole provider approach to supporting our students and enhancing educational practice
- Strengthening an evidence and insight-led approach to inform Subject and Assessment Boards
- Rigorous and extensive use of external expertise throughout our processes
- Rigorous processes to maintain oversight and review of degree outcomes