Degree Outcomes Statement

Academic Year 2024/25

1. Institutional Degree Classification Profile

In 2024/25, 21.6% of degrees awarded by Bath Spa University were classified as First Class honours (see figure 1). This is a decrease on the figure of 23.5% for 2023/24, but has been countered by an increase in the number of students achieving a Upper Second-Class honours, up from 42.1% last year to 47.5% in 2024/25, which has resulted in 3.5% increase in the number of students achieving Good Honours, from 65.6% in 2023/24 to 69.1% in 2024/25 (see figure 2).

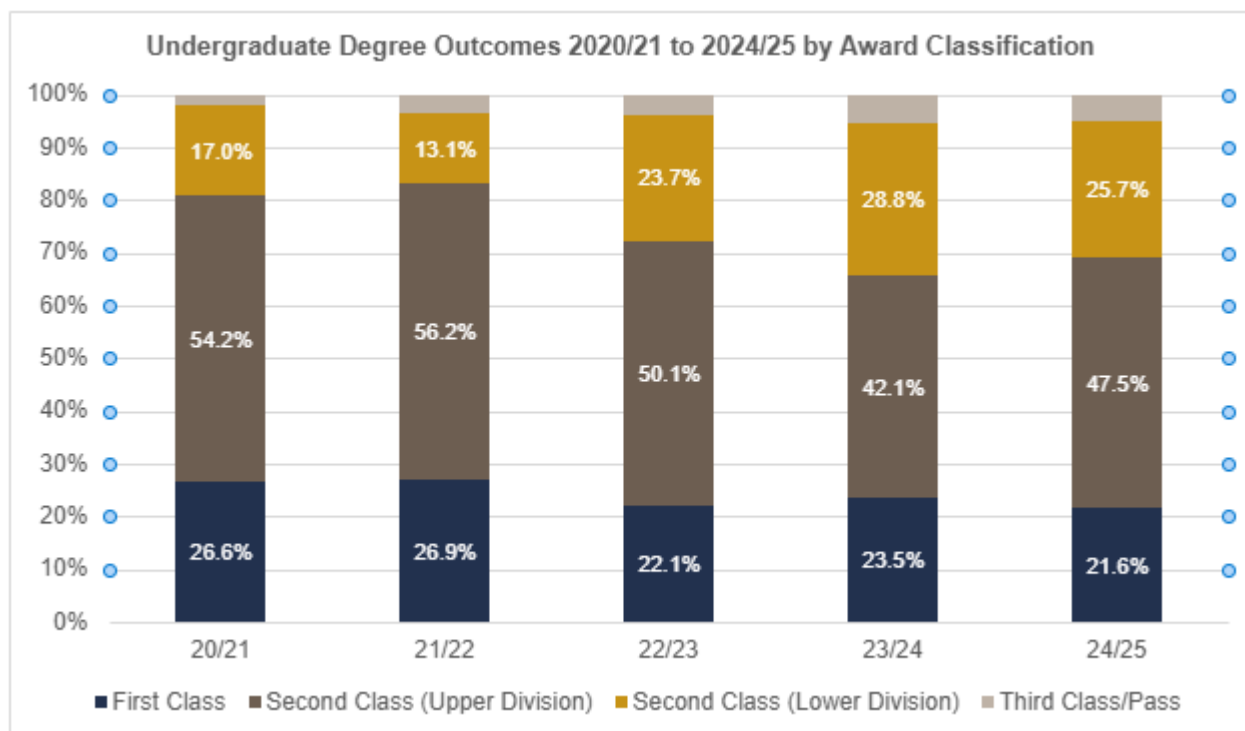**Figure 1: BSU Undergraduate degree classification distributions by year, 2020/21 to 2024/25**

Figure 2: Undergraduate Good Honours rate, BSU versus UK sector average, 2020/21 to 2024/25
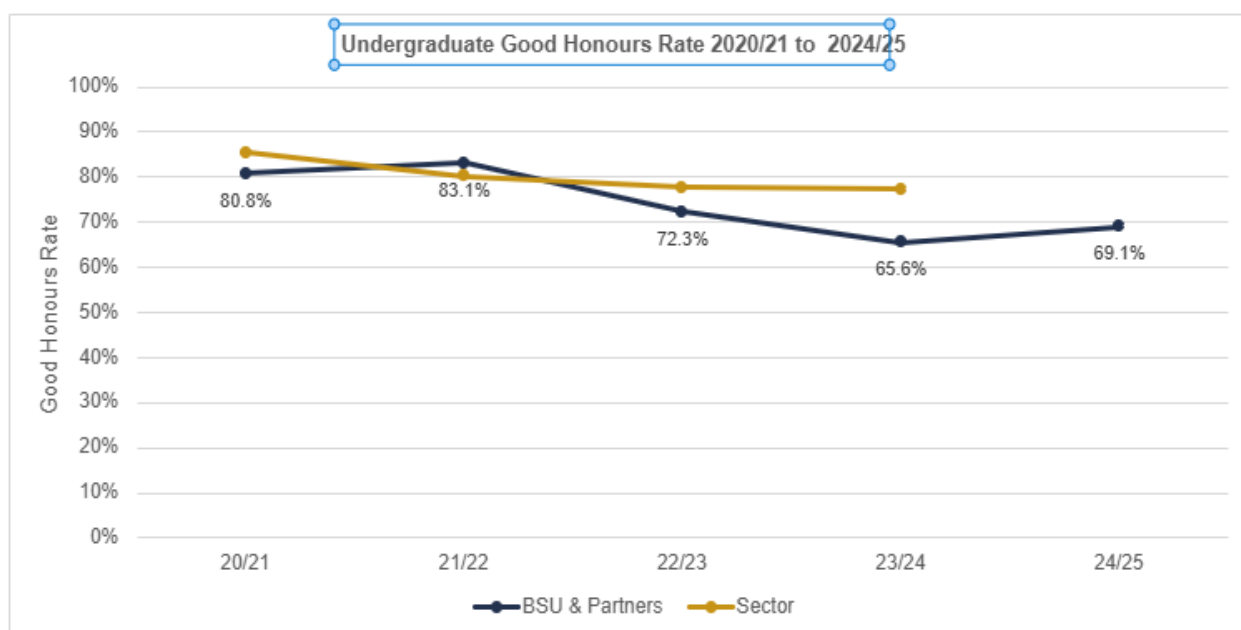
Table 1: Count of Awards

	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Grand Total
First Class	438	466	405	465	492	**2,266**
Second Class (Upper Division)	892	975	917	832	1,082	**4,698**
Second Class (Lower Division)	279	228	433	569	586	**2,095**
Third Class/Pass	37	65	74	111	118	**405**
Grand Total	**1,646**	**1,734**	**1,829**	**1,977**	**2,278**	**9,464**

Table 2: Proportion of Awards by Class

	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Grand Total
First Class	26.6%	26.9%	22.1%	23.5%	21.6%	23.9%
Second Class (Upper Division)	54.2%	56.2%	50.1%	42.1%	47.5%	49.6%
Second Class (Lower Division)	17.0%	13.1%	23.7%	28.8%	25.7%	22.1%
Third Class/Pass	2.2%	3.7%	4.0%	5.6%	5.2%	4.3%

Comparative sector data from 2023/24 indicates that the UK average for First Class honours was 29.1%, placing BSU 7.5ppts below the national figure. Similarly, while the sector-wide Good Honours rate has typically ranged between 77% and 85% in recent years, BSU's rate remains below this benchmark, though the gap narrowed slightly in 2024/25.

Attainment gaps continue to be monitored across student groups, with some signs of persistent gaps closing. For example:

- Overseas students at BSU had a Good Honours rate of 64.5%, compared to 80.9% for Home students, a 16.4ppt gap, slightly improved from 23% in 2023/24.

- Ethnic minority students at BSU received Good Honours degrees at a rate 15ppts lower than White students in 2024/25, down from a 19ppt gap in 2023/24.

- Gender gaps have narrowed, with female students outperforming male students by 2ppts in Good Honours attainment, down from 6ppts in 2023/24 and 9ppts in 2022/23.

These patterns reflect a range of structural and contextual factors across the University's provision. We actively monitor degree outcomes annually at programme and demographic levels, with findings reported to Education Committee and reviewed by the Progression and Awards Board (formerly the Central Assessment Board) to ensure oversight from Chief External Examiners.

We remain committed to enabling all students to achieve their full potential and institutional actions are in place to address differential attainment and uphold academic standards.

It should be noted that BSU operated a no-detriment policy for degree classification in 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22 to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The standard classification algorithm was implemented for the first time in 2022/23, contributing to a decline in Good Honours rates that year.

2. Assessment and Marking Practices

The Sector-Recognised Standards published by the Office for Students (OfS) and the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies 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. In line with the Assessment and Feedback Policy, sample sizes for partner moderation will often be above those for home provision, particularly when the partnership is new or when new programmes are being established. 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 Sector-Recognised Standards 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.

BSU maintains a suite of policies to support fair and transparent assessment:

- The Assessment and Feedback Policy outlines expectations for assessment design, marking, moderation, and external scrutiny.

- The Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure details the process and steps students can take to appeal decisions which would impact on their progression, assessment and degree outcomes.

- The Exceptional Circumstances Policy and Procedure defines how students may apply for special consideration if they are unable to complete an assessment due to circumstances beyond their control.

A Marking Criteria and Grading Descriptors toolkit was piloted during the 2024/25 academic year and is scheduled for broader implementation in 2025/26. This initiative supports a more consistent and transparent approach to grading and feedback on individual assessments, enhancing the ability to evidence how marks are determined and helping students to better target their efforts for academic improvement.

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 programmes 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:

- Module Assessment Boards (formerly Subject Boards) which determine marks for individual modules, and Progression and Awards Boards (formerly Central Assessment Boards) which make judgements about student performance as a whole, as defined in our Academic Regulations, and the Undergraduate Academic Framework.
- External examining system, as referenced above.
- Education Committee, a sub-committee of Academic Board, maintains annual oversight of degree outcomes and learning and teaching developments and is responsible for planning, implementing and

reviewing the effectiveness of interventions to ensure all students, regardless of background, are enabled to succeed in their studies.

- Programme Review, which is a two tiered process underpinned by a set of core KPI metrics, to drive improvement in programme areas via an Active Monitoring Plan or Local Enhancement Reflection.
- The growth of student numbers being taught through the University's educational partnerships has been matched by developments in governance structures to maintain oversight and enhancement of provision delivered through those partnerships. The University has a Partnership Delivery Group, which oversees the operational and delivery requirements and operational management of the University's educational partnerships, reporting to the Partnership Strategy Group. Partnership Strategy Group is responsible for maintaining senior leadership oversight of the University's partnerships and making strategic decisions around the direction of the University's educational partnerships overall.
- 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.

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.

For students registering on 'top up' awards (entering directly into the final year of study); their classifications are 100% weighted on the best 100 credits from 120 credits completed and passed at Level 6.

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 regularly reviews the ongoing suitability of the standard classification algorithm, its alignment with UK expectations for degree algorithm design, and classification data operating on previous and current algorithms.

5. Teaching Practices and Learning Resources

The University's Education Committee oversees the implementation of the Education Strategy, which outlines several initiatives to enhance learning and teaching. The University also approved a new Access and Participation plan in September 2024, which includes targeted intervention strands related to the enhancement of learning and teaching and the provision of student support for programmes delivered in Bath and at partner providers.

The Education Committee also oversees the provision of digital and physical learning resources to students and uses student feedback to inform the enhancement of the student experience. It receives reports on the outcomes of and actions being taken in response to the annual National Student Survey and oversaw the launch of module evaluation surveys in 2023/24. The Committee also receives regular reports about the work of the Learning Innovation and Skills unit, which drives forward several of the initiatives in the Education Strategy to develop teaching quality, support good curriculum and assessment design, and provide guidance to academic staff on marking and feedback. The University also has published a Learning and Teaching Delivery Statement, outlining

its institutional approach to learning and teaching, including contact hours, student workload, online learning, resources, and student engagement.

The University continues to work closely with our educational partner providers to develop learning and teaching approaches aligned with the needs of their student demographic to ensure that we support all students to achieve good outcomes.