

# UEA DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT

## 1 Degree classification profile

### 1.1. Institutional Degree Classification Profile

The below table/ graph shows the University of East Anglia’s (UEA’s) annual degree classification profile between academic years 2016/17 and 2023/24.

Fig.1.

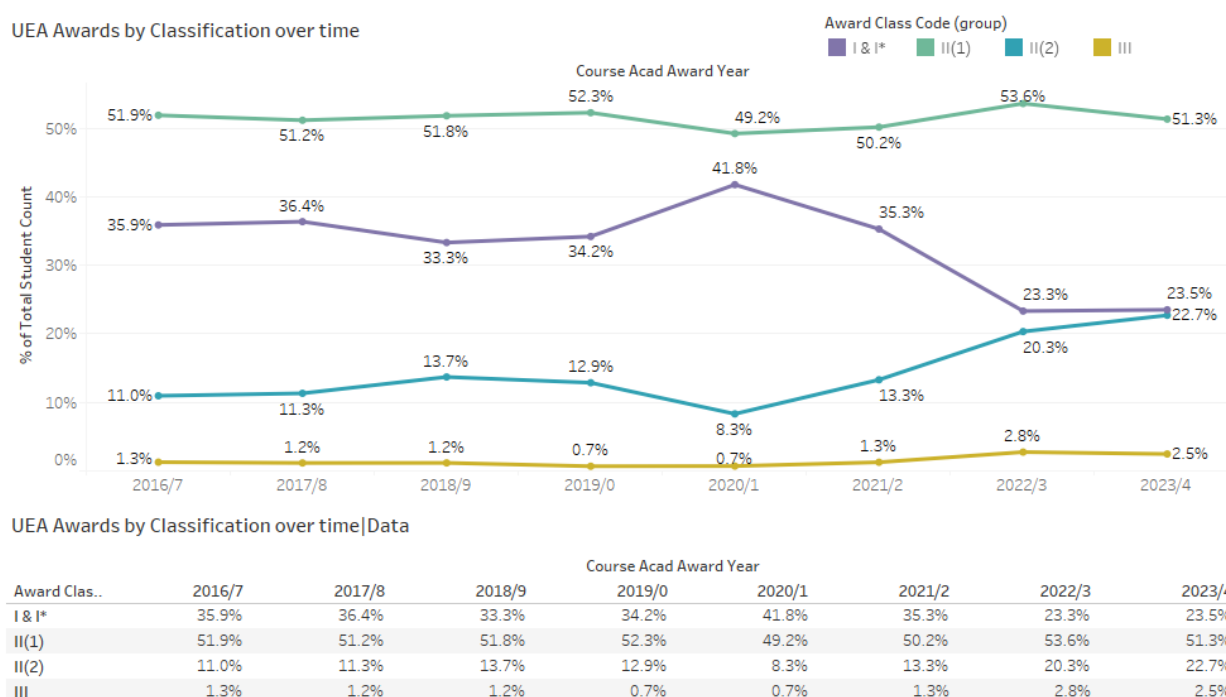


Figure 1 shows that the percentage of First Class degrees awarded at UEA remained broadly consistent at 33%-36% between 2016/7 and 2019/0 before rising to almost 42% in 2020/1. The percentage of First Class awards then returned to the previous level in 2021/2 before dropping to 23% in 2022/3 and 2023/4.

Factors underpinning these trends, and the actions taken by UEA in response are explained below.

### 1.2. Degree Classification Profile Split by School

Figure 2 summarises the percentage of Firsts by school over a 5 year period.

The University of East Anglia degree algorithm changed in 2018/9 for new starters and the first graduates affected by the revised algorithm would have been in 2020/1 for students on 3 year programmes. The algorithm change removed automatic uplifts for students close to classification boundaries and this had an impact on degree outcomes. The automatic uplift was previously applied to students whose classification mark fell within 2% of a degree classification boundary where either at least 120 credits of their final two years were in the higher classification or their stage average mark for their final year was in the higher classification. The change was introduced to ensure the maintenance of rigorous academic standards and to ensure the credibility of our awards. The consequence of this change was masked in 2020/1 and somewhat in 2021/2 due to the no-detriment measures introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The change to the degree algorithm influenced the degree outcomes seen in 2022/3 and supports the return of the proportion of Firsts to a more expected level.

In 2021/22 the proportion of First class degrees in many schools returned to a level seen pre-COVID after a rise in 2020/21 due to University Safety Net measures. It is worth noting that the Safety Net was still impacting outcomes in 2021/22 as Finalists in this year would have had a counting year during the main pandemic period.

The full impact of changing the degree algorithm can fully be seen in 2022/23 and 2023/24 where the safety net effect is no longer applied.

Fig.2.

## Proportion of firsts by School

Department	Award Class Code (group) / Course Acad Award Year I & I*				
	2019/0	2020/1	2021/2	2022/3	2023/4
Art, Media and American Studies	31.8%	43.0%	28.6%	24.1%	20.8%
Arts and Humanities					33.3%
Biological Sciences	40.9%	58.1%	49.6%	29.0%	18.3%
Chemistry	51.1%	75.0%	42.1%	25.4%	17.2%
Computing Sciences	50.0%	56.8%	46.8%	33.2%	31.9%
Economics	34.0%	47.3%	32.2%	26.7%	24.5%
Education and Lifelong Learning	28.9%	26.0%	20.9%	13.3%	18.8%
Engineering	38.5%	63.6%	38.7%	20.0%	17.3%
Environmental Sciences	38.1%	46.1%	23.8%	22.9%	18.0%
Health Sciences	41.6%	49.1%	54.0%	34.1%	44.2%
History	27.5%	28.8%	22.6%	17.4%	18.0%
International Development	38.1%	35.9%	30.0%	28.6%	19.2%
Law	12.1%	21.5%	12.4%	4.7%	3.7%
Literature, Drama and Creative Writing	31.8%	33.2%	32.7%	22.0%	32.4%
Mathematics	45.1%	62.7%	48.9%	24.1%	28.6%
Natural Sciences	57.1%	76.9%	52.4%	60.0%	42.9%
Norwich Business School	36.5%	39.6%	31.6%	19.9%	16.3%
Pharmacy	42.4%	40.7%	37.4%	25.0%	24.8%
Physics	40.0%	90.0%	47.6%	12.5%	22.2%
Politics, Philosophy, Language and Communication Studies	28.5%	36.2%	29.5%	17.6%	20.4%
Psychology	19.7%	28.0%	17.7%	15.7%	11.2%
Social Work	26.3%	45.8%	59.1%	15.4%	12.5%
Sociology				18.8%	26.7%

The ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continued from AY 2019/20 into 2020/21. Accordingly, the no-detriment contingency measures and actions aimed at supporting student attainment, progression and completion of summative assessment for AY 2019/20 were carried forward and continued into AY 2020/21. Further mitigations were also introduced to support student experience and progression with a focus on inclusive practice in mind (this included a suite of measures which incorporated, safety netting of an impacted year average; reduced assessment burden; increased use of compensation and additional time for completion of tasks). The impact of these no-detriment measures in terms of inclusivity are evidenced in the medium-term trends in the gaps between underrepresented and disadvantaged students and their peers.

Institutional confidence in the rigour of assessment and award processes is supported by our internal quality assurance activity, moderation and external examiner scrutiny.

### 1.3. Degree Classification Profile Split by Student Characteristics

UEA reviews degree awarding rates by different characteristics for all undergraduate students as part of the evaluation of the impact of UEA's Inclusive Education Policy (covering Curriculum, Assessment, Pedagogy and Environment) which supports our ongoing commitment to significantly reduce degree awarding gaps between identified demographic groups.

UEA's current Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25 (APP) makes a strong commitment to closing degree awarding gaps for Home undergraduate students from underrepresented student groups where the assessment of performance showed specific areas

of concern. The APP also commits the University to continually monitor differential degree awarding to address any opening gaps.

Specific targets were set as part of the University's registration with the Office for Students (OfS) to achieve annual improvement on:

- Proportion of good honours degrees awarded to students from areas least likely to enter higher education (POLAR Q1) – to bring this in line with POLAR Q5 students by 2023/24.
- Proportion of good honours degrees awarded to black students – to bring this in line with white students by 2027/28.

The OfS APP data set, which is used to set and monitor these targets has been reviewed for the 2022/23 academic year and indicates that further action is needed to consistently address the Home UG POLAR Q1 student and black student degree awarding rates.

UEA's new APP commitments for 2025/26 to 2028/29 include furthering our understanding of the risks to equitable outcomes, including a specific objective and targets relating to degree classification:

Objective 5: Through increased consistency of inclusive practice and tailored removal of barriers to engagement, opportunities and support, UEA will ensure equality of good honours (2.1 or 1st class degree classification) degree award for all students including students eligible for free school meals, black students or students of mixed ethnicity, and students with vocational qualifications.

#### Targets

- Reduce the percentage point gap in good honours degree awarding rate between undergraduate home black students and white students.
- Reduce the percentage point gap in good honours degree awarding rate between undergraduate home students eligible for free school meals and those not eligible
- Reduce the percentage point gap in good honours degree awarding rate between undergraduate home students who entered with a BTEC qualification only and students who entered with A Level qualifications only

There are a significant number of student experience and engagement factors underpinning the degree awarding rate, both classroom and non-classroom related, and the University's APP strategy aims to address these through whole institutional commitment to the implementation of UEA's Inclusive Education Policy (Curriculum, Assessment, Pedagogy and Environment) and more targeted approaches to developing a sense of belonging and learner identity.

#### 1.4. Degree Classification Profile at Partner Institutions

UEA validates awards delivered at nine partner institutions covering approximately 2,000 students. Figure 4 summarises the percentage of First Class awards at these institutions. Following a rise over the previous two years the percentage of first class degrees awarded at partner institutions has fallen slightly in 2023/24.

Fig.4

2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
18%	16%	22%	23%	28%	25%

The relatively small cohorts at partner institutions, mean that small changes in the number of students achieving First Class awards have a large impact on percentages. There have also been changes in the profile of UEA’s partners over this period and standardisation of the award regulations governing partner provision with a number of partners transitioning from bespoke award regulations to the standard UEA regulations. It should also be noted that the changes to UEA award regulations removing uplift for borderline students were introduced later at partner institutions than for UEA’s campus based students. The first cohorts of students on three-year degrees who did not have the uplift applied completed their programmes in academic year 2023/24, which is likely to be a key reason for the decline in the number of firsts awarded. Where students at partner institutions have been supported to take a break in learning, or have had a concession to repeat a year as a result of exceptional circumstances, they remain subject to the regulations in effect at their point of initial registration. We continue to see a small number of students eligible for consideration or potential uplift.

Figure 5 shows the number and percentage of First Class awards by individual partner for the last two years. This shows a decrease in percentage of firsts across the majority of partners. The most significant percentage decrease is at West Suffolk College (22%). This is likely to be due to the continuing broadening of their portfolio which is less dominated by a single high achieving top-up degree which accounted for spikes in previous years. Increases in the percentage of firsts at individual partners are small with the exception of the Royal Marsden School. This is due to a small number of total awards being conferred in academic year 23/24 compared to 22/23 as the modular nature of RMS’s provision results in non-standard cycles for conferring of awards with graduations being held on an 18 month cycle.

The East Sussex College Group (ESCG) awarded its first UEA degrees in academic year 23/24, therefore no historical data is available for comparison.

Fig 5

Partner	22/23		23/24		22/23-23/24 % Point Change
	No of firsts	Firsts as a % of UG awards	No of firsts	Firsts as a % of UG awards	
CCN	35	18%	33	19%	1%
MTV	60	49%	40	33%	-16%
SEC	18	23%	13	18%	-5%
SMB	2	4%	1	2%	-2%

WSC	12	57%	31	36%	-22%
CI	39	31%	30	34%	3%
RMS	1	10%	1	25%	15%
ESCG			1	11%	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>-3%</b>

## 2. Assessment and marking practices

### 2.1. Institutional Approach to Ensure Consistency

UEA marking practices and criteria are governed by the UEA Senate Scales which ensure a consistent approach across the institution, while also permitting subject level variation, where appropriate to allow for Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmark guidance. Marking of all student work is subject to UEA's Moderation Policy and all programmes have external examiner oversight as defined by UEA's External Examiner Code of Practice. These policies are reviewed by the University's Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) to ensure alignment with the latest sector reference points. The latest version of these policies, along with further details around how UEA ensures students are assessed fairly can be found on UEA website at [Marking Fairly \(uea.ac.uk\)](http://uea.ac.uk).

There is an increasing use of Assessment Briefs and marking rubrics in assessment at UEA which are supportive of student achievement and the transparency of marking decisions.

UEA's regulations governing consideration of [Exceptional Circumstances](#) and [Academic Appeals](#) which are subject to regular LTC review, help ensure consistency of approach.

Validated provision at partner institutions is subject to regulations, policies and procedures approved by UEA's LTC, which follow the same key principals as UEA-based provision with some minor adjustments to allow for differences in organisational structures at partner institutions.

The University has noted the [report](#) published by the Office for Students on assessment practices related to marking for spelling, punctuation and grammar, and compared the examples within the report to the UEA [inclusive education policy](#) and assessment guidance. The University has judged that practice is secure as the UEA policy clearly states that: "Marking practice should be shaped by marking criteria, with the secretarial aspects of writing appropriately weighted."

## 3. Academic governance

### 3.1. Ensuring Value of Qualifications Over Time and Consistency of Marking Practices

The University's Senate has responsibility for the academic standards of all qualifications awarded by the University. Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC), which reports to Senate, is responsible for the detailed oversight work in ensuring consistency of standards. LTC oversees a number of robust processes to provide assurance in regard to consistency of the

quality and standards of awards over time, both those delivered at UEA and by partner institutions.

Key processes considered by LTC include Annual Module and Course Review, scrutiny of External Examiner reports, and Annual Quality and Enhancement reporting. All these processes provide mechanisms by which any issues in relation to consistency of marking practices or academic standards can be considered and addressed.

Versions of these processes are also in place for awards delivered at partner institutions. The detailed scrutiny of these processes is by a Joint Board of Study (JBOS) for each partner which is chaired by the UEA Associate PVC Apprenticeships and Partnerships and reports to LTC.

Internal quality assurance processes were reviewed during 2016/17-2017/18 and 2023/24. Externally, the University participates in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and a number of courses are accredited by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) including OFSTED.

LTC and Senate receive annual and other reports to provide assurance that UEA satisfies the OfS Conditions of Registration.

## 4. Classification algorithms

### 4.1. Current Degree Algorithm and Communication to Students and Other Stakeholders

UEA's current degree algorithm is included in its [Bachelors and Integrated Masters Award Regulations \(BIM\)](#), available to staff and students. Students have access to support via The Student Information Zone (SIZ) and Academic Advisers to answer any queries related to academic matters, including award regulations.

Degree classification is calculated using students' average marks for their second and final year (Bachelors degrees) and their second, third and final year (Integrated masters) according to the following weighting for standard courses:

Degree	Stage 2 %	Stage 3 %	Stage 4 %
Bachelors degrees	40	60	
Integrated Masters degrees	20	30	50

### 4.2. Partner Institution Award Regulations

UEA has worked with its partner institutions over recent years to introduce standardisation across award regulations at partners. Students at all of UEA's partners are subject to the UEA Partner Award Regulations, which provide a consistent approach across all partners and UEA.

## 5. Teaching practices and learning resources

In respect of 2019/20 and 2020/21, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, teaching and learning practice was modified, in that, remote study was introduced to manage periods of National lockdown and to respond to Government guidance regarding Higher Education delivery. Assessments were also facilitated via various appropriate online formats where possible and within any Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies requirements. This move to remote study was strategically developed to ensure standards and quality of learning were

maintained and supported student outcomes. For 2021/22 and onwards some of these amended practices were retained and have been enhanced as part of the University's blended learning approach. This approach combines a selection of pedagogical activities and virtual and physical learning environments to maximise students' engagement and understanding and provide an empowering and accessible learning experience. It is directed by our Blended Learning policy which includes lecture capture technology and further underpinned by our Inclusive Education Policy, which aims to maximise the opportunity for success for all students.

The University's [Learning Enhancement Team](#) in Student Services includes roles focused on supporting staff to enhance inclusive practice in learning, teaching and assessment, such as through our [Inclusivity Network](#), and on the delivery of student inclusion projects as part of the wider, ongoing implementation of the University's Inclusive Education Policy. The team provides a range of resources to support students' and apprentices' learning, helping them to build confidence in academic writing and studying, mathematics and statistics, and studying with specific learning differences.