

This statement provides an analysis and overview of the trends in undergraduate degree classification profiles for AU in line with the guidance provided by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA): [Guidance for Degree-Awarding Bodies on Producing Degree Outcomes Statements](#)

Institutional degree classification profile

Percentage of Students by Degree Classifications					
Class	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
1	23%	27%	23%	24%	23%
II(1)	53%	50%	47%	48%	48%
II(2)	21%	21%	26%	23%	25%
III/PASS	4%	3%	4%	3%	4%

The proportion of first class honours degrees awarded over the past 5 years has remained relatively stable (making allowances for the impact of no-detriment policies implement during 2019/20 and 2020/21) The proportion of upper second

class II(1) degrees awarded has declined slightly whereas the proportion of lower second class II(2) has increased over the same period.

Percentage of Degree Classifications by Subject						
Subject	Class	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
STEM	1	24%	30%	26%	28%	25%
	II(1)	47%	45%	43%	43%	45%
	II(2)	23%	21%	27%	25%	27%
	III/PASS	6%	4%	5%	4%	4%
Non-STEM	1	22%	24%	20%	20%	21%
	II(1)	57%	54%	52%	57%	55%
	II(2)	19%	20%	25%	20%	23%
	III/PASS	*	*	*	*	*

These proportions reflect the latest available national picture of a greater proportion of first class honours degrees being awarded in STEM subject areas. Conversely a greater proportion of upper second class degrees are awarded to students studying non-STEM subjects.

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/outcomes/breakdown>

Percentage of Degree Classifications by Sex						
Sex	Class	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Female	1	26%	28%	27%	28%	27%
	II(1)	55%	51%	48%	49%	50%
	II(2)	18%	19%	22%	21%	21%
	III/PASS	*	*	*	*	*
Male	1	19%	25%	18%	21%	19%
	II(1)	50%	48%	47%	46%	45%
	II(2)	25%	23%	31%	26%	31%
	III/PASS	6%	4%	5%	6%	6%

As seen in in previous years, female students continue to receive a greater proportion of good honours (1 and II(1)) awards than male students. While this trend is in line with the picture across England and Wales the difference between male and female outcomes at AU is greater than that seen on a national level.

Percentage of Degree Classifications by Disability						
		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Known to Have Disability	1	24%	28%	24%	26%	23%
	II(1)	52%	48%	52%	47%	46%
	II(2)	19%	22%	21%	24%	28%
	III/PASS	*	*	*	*	*
No known Disability/Unknown	1	22%	27%	23%	24%	23%
	II(1)	53%	50%	47%	49%	49%
	II(2)	22%	20%	27%	22%	24%
	III/PASS	4%	3%	4%	3%	4%

In 2023/24 24% of graduates were known to have a disability. The proportion of students achieving a first class honours degree in 2023/24 is consistent regardless of whether the student is known to have a disability or not. The proportion of upper second class degrees awarded is slightly higher among students that are not known to have a disability.

Percentage of Degree Classifications by age at award						
Age	Class	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Below 25	1	23%	22%	23%	24%	22%
	II(1)	53%	50%	49%	49%	48%
	II(2)	20%	20%	25%	23%	26%
	III/PASS	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%
25 and above	1	19%	20%	27%	33%	26%
	II(1)	48%	44%	35%	39%	47%
	II(2)	26%	28%	30%	18%	19%
	III/PASS	*	*	*	*	*

9% of graduates in 2023/24 were over the age of 25. Older graduates have tended to achieve a higher percentage of first-class awards than younger graduates. This trend was reversed for a short period during the pandemic.

** Denotes that the data has been suppressed as per the Higher Statistics Agency rounding strategy to reduce the risk of identifying individuals from published figures*

This information is reviewed annually at Quality and Standards Committee. Where necessary internal reviews are undertaken to better understand trends and any unexpected changes.

Assessment and marking practices

1. Assurance of assessment and marking practices is provided through engagement with external examiners and assessors, from the development of programmes through to delivery, assessment and annual monitoring while cyclical review processes take a longer-term perspective of cohort performance and achievement at subject level. Examination boards are centrally managed and rigorous checks are in place to ensure that the University adheres to its regulations and conventions. Annual reports from external examiners confirm that standards are in line with those elsewhere and the threshold standards in the UK. Subject level undergraduate academic external examiners are managed through a central team and overseen by the Quality and Standards Committee, which superseded the Academic Board as a result of a review of the academic sub committees of Senate undertaken in summer 2024, and the final Senate degree awarding board involves external scrutiny of AU's processes by a senior administrator from another UK university.
2. External examiners are key to the assurance process. Appointees are academics experienced in assessment, curriculum design, and enhancement of the student experience. Criteria for appointment and their role are set out in the AQH and an online briefing is provided for all new externals. A summary and overview of external examiner reports is provided through the annual quality assurance statement reported directly to Senate and Council, the governing body. Aberystwyth staff also act as external examiners and panel members at other

institutions, engage with staff development including as Advance HE Fellows, and Senior Fellows, all of which contribute to a wide awareness of external reference points and subject benchmarking.

3. The AQH sets out the processes and provides guidance for assessment, marking and moderation procedures, treatment of special circumstances and appeals. Boards undertake an analysis of results as part of the exam board process. All work, including examinations, is marked against criteria outlined to students at the beginning of a module. Annual reports on examination processes and the level and types of academic appeals demonstrate transparency and accountability with regards to these processes and provide reassurance that marking and moderation processes are effective. Special circumstances are managed at a Faculty level, with recommendations reviewed centrally and difficult cases referred to a central Senate panel.

Academic governance

4. Quality and Standards Committee and the Education and Student Experience Committees have replaced the Academic Board and report directly to the Senate, which is responsible for academic standards, quality assurance and enhancement of all provision. Partnership arrangements are overseen by the Collaborative Provision Committee, which also reports to Senate. The Senate Examination Board is the degree awarding board to which all departmental boards report. Quality and Standards Committee and Senate are given the opportunity to contribute to and comment on this Degree Outcomes Statement and the annual QA statement provides the governing body with oversight of QA, including partnership activities.

Classification algorithms

5. AU Examination Conventions determine progression between years of study and the algorithm for the calculation of degree classes. Regulations and quality assurance procedures are published online in the Academic Quality Handbook (AQH) <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/>. The honours classification system is determined according to a common set of conventions. The 'cascade' is a weighted average of all modules taken in part two contributing to the final degree. It allows students to retrieve earlier poor performance; focusing on and rewarding good performance while not giving undue penalties for failure; it can cope with different possible combinations of levels and modules of different credit weightings, giving a lower weighting for lower-level modules. The algorithm has not changed since its inception in the 1990s apart from the weighting given to year abroad studies. Students are normally assessed immediately following completion of teaching and allowed two resit opportunities for a capped mark (40% for FHEQ level 4, 5 and 6 and 50% for level 7), with the exception of a small number of professionally accredited programmes which have specific requirements; reassessment is not allowed for any passed modules.

Teaching practices and learning resources

6. The University continues to invest in improvements in learning resources and to support innovation in teaching practices and a dedicated Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit supports academic staff. University policy supports mandatory lecture capture for all lectures; electronic submission of text-based word-processed coursework with online marking and feedback; principles of effective feedback including guidelines for exam feedback; required minimum presence (RMP) on the VLE; an attendance policy combined with attendance monitoring; mandatory reading lists for all modules; Peer Support of Teaching with tools for organising and recording completed sessions; institution-wide Student Experience Survey (SES). The university makes use of learning analytics and an engagement dashboard by personal tutors including proactive interventions with low-engaging students, and in-class polling software to encourage active learning. VLE accessibility has been enhanced through the introduction of Blackboard Ally, and a move to Blackboard Ultra which has a more accessible and mobile friendly interface for staff and students. New Generative AI tools in the VLE have been introduced to help staff and support new ways of learning (including online role play activities). The university has invested in improvements to library spaces, ensuring a range of different types of study spaces to meet the needs of our students. Our Academic Engagement Team provide extensive support to students and staff to maximise the use of our library resources, and also to provide students and staff with information literacy and

digital skills that are essential to all our users. Effective teaching practice is shared through annual L&T conference, Exemplary Course Award (ECA), Mini Conferences, and CPD programme.

Identifying good practice, and actions

7. The operation of a single university wide degree algorithm is one of good practice and centrally managed processes help to deliver consistent application of rules across all academic departments. In the interests of further improving consistency, work will continue to review procedures to see where more operational activities could be automated.

Risks and challenges

8. While we are confident that no notable risks have been identified, we will maintain a close watch on the data. The annual quality assurance statement to the Governing Body is the mechanism by which quality assurance processes are reported, drawing attention to activity in the previous year. A traffic light system provides an indication of the level of concern against the key issues identified in the executive summary in the report.

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