

Degree outcomes statement 2022-23

1. Introduction

1.1 York St John is proud to reaffirm our ongoing commitment to protect the value of our degrees and to our transparent, consistent and fair approach to academic standards.

1.2 Over 60% of our undergraduate students come from one or more of the different social groups that are underrepresented in higher education. Our [Access and Participation Plan](#) sets out our longstanding commitment to widen access and promote fairness in education. This degree outcomes statement demonstrates our commitment to protecting the value of our students' degrees over time.

2. Our degree classification profile

2.1 Our degree classification profile sets out the percentage of degree classes awarded over the last five years for our undergraduate (level 6) degree programmes. It is provided at the University level because data is otherwise aligned to our internal structures, which is not meaningful to an external audience.

2.2 The percentage of students achieving a good degree fell by 9.6% between 2021/22 and 2022/23, improvements in this regard will be a key focus during the 2023/24 academic year.

2.3 Further focussed work is still required for students with disabilities, from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and for students from the most deprived areas where the most recent data highlights ongoing challenges in closing the attainment gap. The attainment gap for mature students continues to improve, with the 2022/23 data showing a further increase in those students graduating with a first or upper second degree classification.

Year of award	Total awards	First Class	Upper Second Class	Lower Second Class	Third Class
2018-19	1,600	21.4%	50.1%	24.5%	4.0%
2019-20	1,729	30.0%	46.6%	21.1%	2.4%
2020-21	1,693	31.4%	50.4%	16.5%	1.6%
2021-22	1,393	30.7%	44.1%	22.3%	2.9%
2022-23	1,364	21.6%	43.6%	29.7%	5.1%

Figure 1: Total awards and degree classifications over time

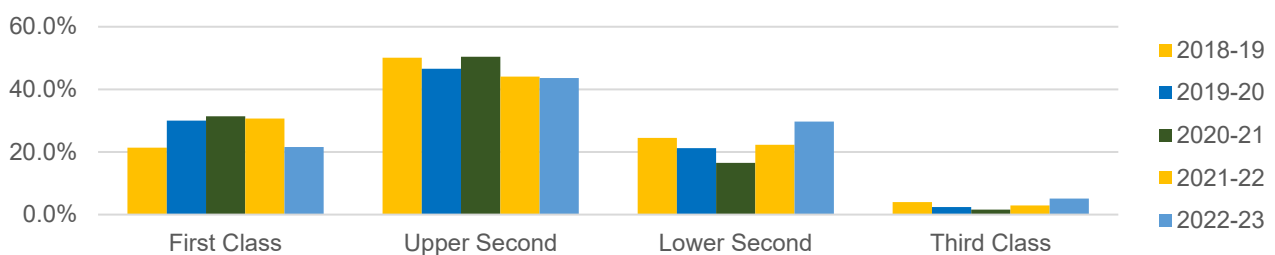


Figure 2: percentage classification of undergraduate (level 6) awards by academic year

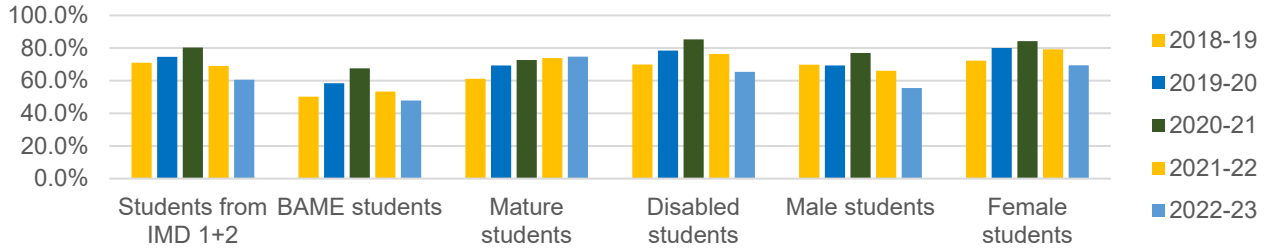


Figure 3: percentage of first and upper second-class degrees awarded to undergraduate (level 6) students by academic year (IMD: Index of Multiple Deprivation)

3. UCU Marking & Assessment Boycott

- 3.1 The UCU Marking and Assessment Boycott (“MAB”) began on 20th April 2023 and ran to 15th September 2023. The University followed the approved “Contingency plans for staff shortages that impact on assessment and examinations” (Section 13, [Code of Practice for Assessment and Academic Related Matters](#)) to mitigate against any negative impact on our students.
- 3.2 The Chairs of Quality and Standards Committee and the Progress and Award Examination Panel approved the approach taken by the Schools and External Examiner endorsement was formally received.
- 3.3 MAB did not have any impact on degree outcomes, all students in their final year received a final degree classification and will be able to graduate as planned.

4. Assessment and marking practices

- 4.1 The University’s learning, teaching and student experience strategy underpins programme design.
- 4.2 All of our degrees undergo detailed scrutiny through our [programme approval process](#) which ensures that assessment criteria and learning outcomes for all programmes are appropriately mapped to sector reference points and professional or regulatory body requirements. Following an internal compliance review all programmes proposals are considered at an external approval event, which provides independent external scrutiny by subject experts.
- 4.3 Assessment and marking practices used across the University are described in the [Code of Practice for Assessment and Academic Related Matters](#). The Progress and Award Examination Panel ensures that assessment procedures are properly conducted, and an independent external examiner for progress and award sits on this panel. This consistent application of procedures and policies ensures the value of the University’s qualifications awarded over time is protected.

5. Academic governance

- 5.1 The University’s academic governance framework is overseen by [Academic Board and its committees](#). Academic Board safeguards the academic integrity of the University and is the custodian of its degree awarding powers. Academic Board provides the Vice Chancellor and the Board of Governors with the assurance on the standards of the University’s awards and the University’s academic portfolio.
- 5.2 The oversight of quality and standards is delegated to the Quality and Standards Committee, who are responsible for the University’s [Regulations](#) and [Code of Practice for Assessment and Academic Related Matters](#), which describe the operation of the framework, and have been developed and reviewed with reference to the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#).

5.3 The effectiveness of learning, teaching and assessment practices within the University and at our [collaborative partners](#) is reviewed through a process of [annual monitoring](#), culminating in the presentation of an annual quality report and action plan to Academic Board and Board of Governors. Implementation of the action plan is overseen by [Academic Board](#) and its committees.

5.4 A new approach to programme performance has been introduced which includes detailed programme level data through our Portfolio Performance Dashboard, a Portfolio Risk Profile and an enhanced Programme Review Report. The process will be overseen by Quality and Standards Committee.

6. Classification algorithms

6.1 Our approach to degree classification is described in the [Code of Practice on Assessment and Academic Related Matters](#).

6.2 We recognise that some students do not achieve their full potential performance until their final level of study. Consequently, we award students on Bachelor's degrees the better of two calculations, an approach widely used across the sector. Level 4 marks are excluded from the calculation, level credit-weighted averages are calculated and rounded to the nearest integer, and two award mark calculations are made using different level-weightings:

- equal weighting of the final two levels (levels five and six);
- double weighting of the final level (six) and single weighting of the second level (five).

Students are awarded the better of the two calculations to determine their degree classification. Only credits gained at the University are used in the calculation.

6.3 In November 2020, Quality and Standards Committee reviewed the algorithms used in degree classifications in line with the UKSCQA report on principles of degree algorithm design. It was confident in the use of two algorithms as suitable for the University student population and pedagogy.

7. Teaching practice and learning resources

7.1 We value, recognise and reward teaching excellence with 78% of permanent staff holding a teaching qualification and 90% with [HEA Fellowship](#). Our commitment to using the [UK Professional Standards Framework \(UKPSF\)](#) as a tool for both initial and continuing professional development has underpinned our ambition to provide high quality learning, teaching, assessment and research, and contributed to the development of our degree outcomes.

7.2 Continued investment in physical and technical learning resources demonstrates our commitment to a high-quality campus, to access to IT and course specific equipment. Spending on library resources has been above the sector average and resulted in increased use by students.

7.3 The development of our approaches to [academic tutoring](#), [student attendance](#), and [student engagement](#) have enabled the University to offer pastoral and academic support when students need it the most.

7.4 The university has recently introduced new frameworks to enhance our approach to assessment, graduate outcomes and inclusivity. Details can be found at Work Related Experiential Learning Framework, Inclusive Education Framework and Generic Assessment Descriptors.

8. Risks and challenges

8.1 In the next decade, the concept of the 21st century University will continue to be reshaped. Whilst we're confident in our assessment processes and practices, we will continue to adapt in the best interests of our students. Throughout, we will continuously monitor degree outcomes and ensure that our processes continue to protect the value of our awards over time.

Version control statement

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