

Degree Outcomes Statement: 2022-23

Introduction

1. Solent University Southampton is a practice-oriented, industry- and employment-focused, open, friendly, lively and inclusive academic learning community based in the heart of Southampton city centre. Delivering education for more than 160 years, the university is proud to reassert its commitment to protecting the value of our degrees and outline our fair, transparent and consistent approach to maintaining academic standards.
2. Following our rating of Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework (awarded in summer 2023), with both the student experience and student outcomes aspect ratings also being rated Gold, this statement provides further context in which the University ensures that its degrees meet national expectations for degree standards. It includes links to key documents providing further information and has been approved by the Academic Board and the Board of Governors (both of which include student representation).

Academic governance

3. The University's governance structure allows for rigorous strategic and operational oversight of the quality of delivery and the standards by which the University assesses its provision. The university has an Academic Handbook which includes procedures for monitoring and reporting on quality and standards through its committee structure, culminating in an annual report to the Board of Governors.
4. The Board of Governors delegates authority to the Academic Board. The Academic Board is responsible for general issues relating to research, scholarship, teaching and courses at the University. Within its remit, Academic Board has a responsibility for
 - a. The policies and procedures for assessment and examination of the academic performance of students;
 - b. the content of the curriculum;
 - c. academic standards; and
 - d. the validation and review of courses.

5. The Academic Board reviewed the governance structure reporting into it during the first half of 2023. In order to support Academic Board in achieving its responsibilities. The Education Committee has responsibility for advising Academic Board on the effectiveness of the University's arrangements for:
 - a. securing the quality of the student learning experience;
 - b. safeguarding academic standards; and
 - c. developing and monitoring the Learning, Teaching and Student Success Supporting Strategy.

The Committee's deliberations are supported with appropriate data reflecting internal and external requirements.

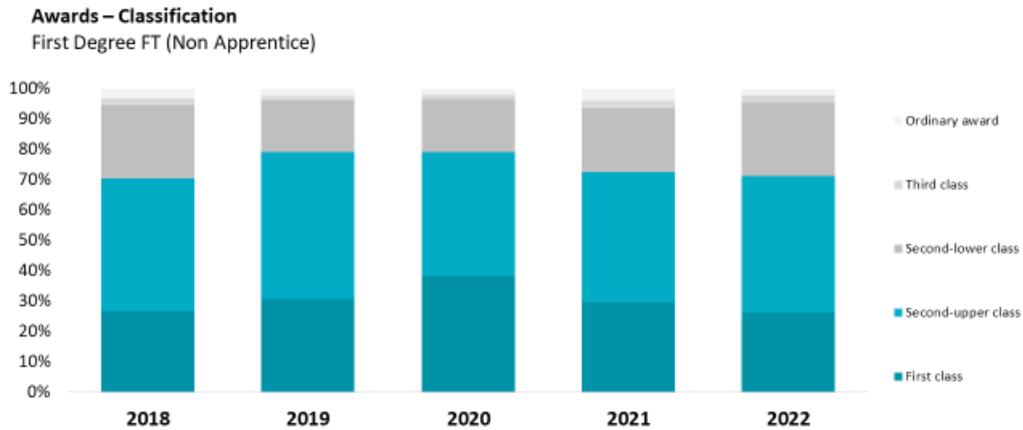
Classification algorithms

6. The Solent University Degree Algorithm is set out in the [University Academic Regulations](#), which were fully reviewed and revised taking into account sector guidance and practice in 2023. Temporary adjustments were made in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years to support students during the Covid 19 pandemic.
7. The regulations have been designed to balance the full range of factors that contribute to the final outcome of a student from penalties for late submission and consideration of extenuating circumstances to the weighting of marks across levels and the classification boundaries. This ensures that the outcomes for students are fair, appropriate and aligned to national standards and expectations.
8. The University applies standard bands to classifications in line with those of the UK Higher Education sector. For the award of Bachelor's degrees with honours, a student is required to pass all 360 credits of their award. The University places an emphasis on the exit velocity of students taking 70% of a student's final award from their final year outcomes and 30% from those primarily based at level 5. This allows Solent students, many of whom are the first in their family to enter Higher Education, the time and space at level 4 to explore the expectations of a university education and the opportunity to make and recover from mistakes on their journey, without this having a significant impact on their final award. The award therefore reflects the standard of student achievement.
9. The algorithm takes the best 100 credits at level 6 to calculate 70% of the students' final award grade and the next best 100 credits from the level 5 and lowest graded level 6 modules to calculate the remaining 30% of the student's final award. However, the University does not operate a borderline for consideration of awarding a higher classification, and simply takes a two decimal place outcome, and awards the higher classification if the weighted outcome is at *9.5% or above.

Institutional degree classification profile

10. The data include all undergraduates, full- and part-time. It includes students studying at partner institutions in the UK and excludes all students studying wholly overseas.

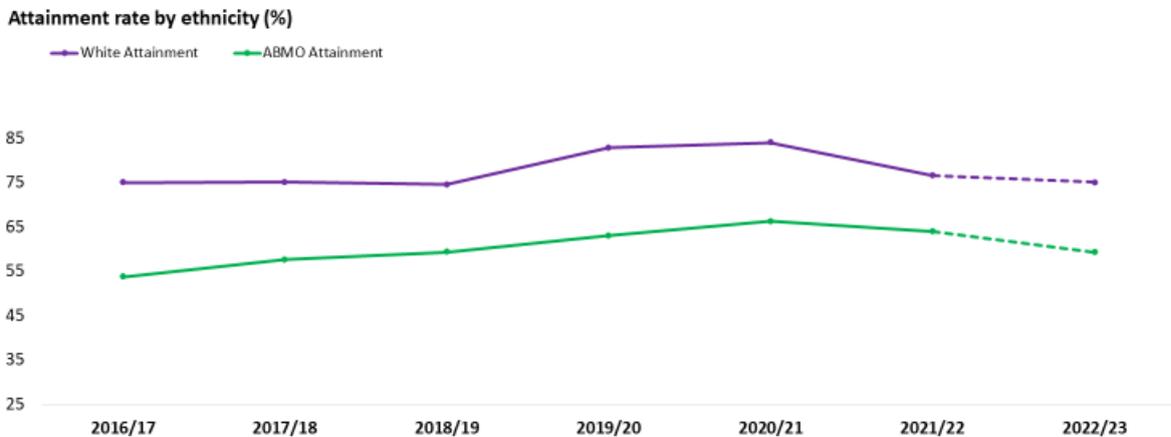
UG First degree, Full time, Taught or Registered



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UG First degree, Full time, Taught or Registered – UK domiciled only

Data prior to 2022/23 is QFS published
Latest year is internal early indicator



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- The proportion of good degrees is returning to level seen prior to the Covid 19 pandemic and is in line with the vast majority of HEIs across the sector. The principles adopted during the pandemic followed guidance from both the Quality Assurance Agency and the Office for Students.

12. The proportion of first class and upper second class degrees is partly attributed to a number of key initiatives, including the introduction of the Solent Course Improvement Plan to support the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment activities along with inclusivity practices on courses and the work of the Student Achievement Team supporting students whose academic profile indicates that they are performing at a level very close to the borderline between different degree classifications (further information on this and other enhancements to academic support and provision is given below). In addition, the University has a range of quality assurance mechanisms in place to ensure that such increases reflect student achievement within a context of appropriate academic standards. These are outlined below.

Teaching practices and learning resources

13. Solent University's commitment to continually enhancing the quality of our teaching and our curriculum has been exemplified through the Triple Gold award in the TEF through strategically delivered through the following mechanisms.
14. The Education Office supports the University in its goal of providing an excellent student learning experience by helping develop the delivery of innovative, inclusive, and stimulating teaching. As a result, our graduates maximise their educational potential and head out into their careers with confidence. In partnership with students and the academic community, the team supports our teaching staff to design activities or produce engaging material for students' learning to ensure that every student, on any course, can access excellent teaching and learning opportunities. To promote consistency of provision and experience, course teams are supported by a team of learning technologists and instructional designers who provide innovative approaches and help find the most effective way to do things. Whether it is exploring how to get more out of Solent Online Learning (SOL, our Virtual Learning Environment), ensuring accessible and inclusive practice, advising students or working on blended learning, the digital education team helps our academic staff teach and our students learn.
15. Solent's Course Dashboard and Course Impactful Interventions Programme (SIIP): The Course Dashboard annually summarises the performance of all courses against metrics which represent external (eg NSS, Graduate Outcomes) and internal (eg value added scores for B.A.M.E. and White students) quality indicators. These metrics are benchmarked against the sector or against internal thresholds with a three-year track record to explore trends, identify causes of detriments and assess the impact of interventions. The Dashboard is RAG rated and weighted to ensure that courses with metrics that do not meet our expectations float to the top and are then prioritised for intensive support. This support is systematically provided through SIIP which is driven by the Education Office in collaboration with key personnel across the University. SIIP is designed to facilitate sustainable improvements by embedding good practice in course teams for the metrics that are flagged red.
16. Departmental Associate Heads have a core responsibility for Learning and Teaching: Each department and the Warsash Maritime School has appointed a senior academic who works closely with the Education Office and the Vice Provost Education to deliver improvements to learning and teaching for the benefit of our diverse student population. They drive the SIIP process for courses in their area as well as deliver strategic priorities such as improvements to NSS and module evaluation scores, the institutional Graduate Outcomes Plan, the Access and Participation Plan and the Inclusive Curriculum Framework.
17. Student Inclusive Curriculum Consultants: Solent University is committed to student partnership and values students as co-creators and producers of knowledge. We have introduced the Student Inclusive Curriculum Consultants scheme. This is in addition to our student and staff course

committees within the course representation system, a high-level Student Board chaired jointly by the Chief Student Officer and University Secretary and the President of the Students' Union and student voice forums. We have done this to ensure that the voices of all our students are heard. We train and pay students to support SIIP and course teams so that resources and teaching practices are accessible, reflect our diverse student body in the curriculum and prepare students to positively contribute to a diverse and global environment. Student Inclusive Curriculum Consultants are supported by a co-ordinator recruited for their commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Assessment and marking practice

18. The University has comprehensive and effective policies and procedures to assure the quality and standards of its awards which are set out in its [Academic Handbook](#).
19. All Solent University courses are designed in accordance with the Solent University [Inclusive Real World Curriculum Framework](#) (IRWC) to ensure national standards published through subject benchmarks and relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, are met. Courses are only approved after thorough scrutiny by a validation panel which always includes external experts alongside experienced University staff and a student representative. The panel examines the proposed courses to ensure that all aspects of the course including assessment strategies, module and course learning outcomes are fulfilled to an appropriate standard.
20. University processes ensure that all assessment tasks are designed to provide the opportunity for all students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills and to discriminate between achievement levels. Draft assignment briefs and examinations undergo an internal scrutiny process. These are also reviewed and confirmed by subject expert external examiners for those assessments which take place at award level or grades contribute to classification outcomes. Any revisions proposed through these steps are considered and implemented before assessment tasks are given to the students.
21. The marking of students' work is undertaken by academic staff working to the assessment and marking standards outlined for each piece of assessed work. These are aligned, through the University's generic grading criteria to national standards. A sample of marked work from each assessment task is internally moderated to ensure consistency and appropriateness of feedback provided to students and the grades awarded. Subject expert module external examiners also review a sample of student work from all award level assessment activities or where grades contribute to classification outcomes to ensure University standards are aligned to national expectations.
22. The University operates a grade marking approach to assessing students, firstly identifying the classification band in which the student's work falls, and then categorising this as high, medium or low within this band. This work has provided greater reliability to the assessment processes over the last 12 years, has been thoroughly reviewed and is seen to offer a clear, consistent and fair way to evaluate the student's performance. Where an assessment has clear right or wrong answers or there are specific requirements by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body, percentage marks are used.

Teaching practice

23. Our activities are designed to support colleagues in continuously improving their learning and teaching practice. The Education Office offers a range of programmes and services to help academics develop. These include resources for new teaching staff, a PG Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, routes to Advance HE Fellowships at all levels, ongoing CPD and peer practice exchange.

Student Achievement Team

24. The Student Achievement team has a particular focus on overall level 6 (L6) achievement. The team aims to have a positive impact on the achievement and rates of students achieving a 1st/2:1 each academic year through a series of interventions. During 2022/23 the following programmes took place:
- a. **Level 6 degree calculators and videos were launched:** In November 2023. In the first 9 months of operation there were 460 views and downloads and over 1000 minutes of content delivered. This was a new initiative to support autonomy for students in goal setting and understanding how the degree is calculated. All students who then attended a 1:1 achievement tutorial received a degree with honours.
 - b. **Class visits** were delivered reaching 156 students. These included input from Solent Futures, helping students to consider next steps and better understand what they need to do achieve their goals in terms of degree outcomes and career planning.
 - c. **Student success events:** marketed to all level 6 students, built upon what was offered at class visits, including information, advice and guidance on how the degree is calculated along with presentations from Solent Futures and the Library team, with the opportunity for students to have a 1:1 drop-in with members of these teams following the event. 47 students took part in 6 events.
 - d. **Module support:** 174 level 6 students with repeat or trailing modules (outstanding modules yet to be completed), were triaged for support to provide information on how to successfully complete their work and how it may impact their degree award. When end-of-year results became available, 293 L6 students with retakes were prioritised for contact, to encourage them to submit their work and improve their overall achievement.

Identifying good practice

25. In addition to the internal mechanisms the University has for identifying good practice, noted above, external examiners provide helpful feedback which reflects their understanding of practice across the higher education sector. The following is a small sample of comments from External Examiner Annual reports related to the academic year 2021-22:

These modules demonstrate innovative good practice

I am pleased to see a range of inclusive assessment methods used.

The connection of the third-year modules is extremely sophisticated, aligned directly to industry requirements.

The team should be commended for providing such detailed feedback. Feedback is clearly structured, with areas of strength identified, along with areas for development. It was particularly pleasing to see feed-forward comments in the form of 'Moving Forward'. The team have thought carefully about the feedback they provide each student.

Student enhancement activities are clearly taken serious across the programmes with good practice evidence in many modules. This mainly comes from being comfortable inviting the world of work into the classroom and assessment.