

TEESSIDE UNIVERSITY – DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT – 2023*The data discussed below relates purely to undergraduate degree-level outcomes.*

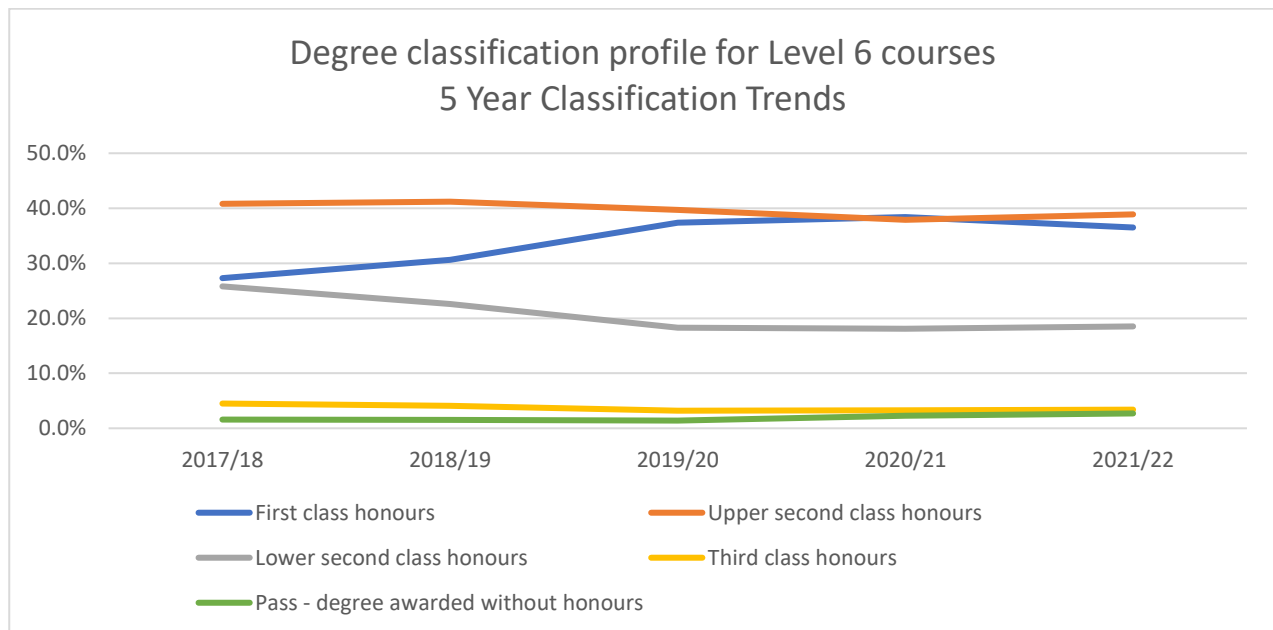
Point of Clarification: This is the fourth Degree Outcomes Statement published by Teesside University. In line with the expectations in the guidance from the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment¹, the University Statement refers to the statistical trends between 2017/18 – 2021/22. The subsequent paragraphs reflect contemporary practice, commenting on our current and future plans in the academic year the Statement is published (2023/24).

Section 1: Institutional Degree Classification Profile

1. The degree classification profile for Teesside University over the last five years is provided below:

Table 1: Degree classification profile for Level 6 courses from 2017/18 to 2021/22

Classification	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
First Class Honours	27.3%	30.6%	37.4%	38.4%	36.5%
Upper Second-Class Honours	40.8%	41.2%	39.7%	37.9%	38.9%
Lower Second-Class honours	25.8%	22.6%	18.3%	18.1%	18.5%
Third Class Honours	4.5%	4.1%	3.2%	3.3%	3.4%
Pass Degree (Awarded without honours)	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	2.3%	2.7%
Total Good Honours	68.1%	71.8%	77.1%	76.2%	75.4%



2. The data demonstrates the following:

- a. **Good Honours** – There was an incremental rise in good honours attainment (First Class Honours and Upper Second Class Honours) between 2017/18 and 2019/20; since 2019/20, good honours attainment has remained relatively stable, with marginal falls in 2020/21(0.9) and 2021/22 (0.8). Good honours attainment in 2021/22 is 7.3% higher than in 2017/18.
- b. **First Class Honours** – There has been an incremental rise in First Class Honours between 2017/18 and 2020/21. In 2021/22, there was a fall of 1.9% from the previous year.
- c. **Upper Second Class Honours** – The percentage of Second Class Honours has remained consistent between 2017/18 and 2021/22. In 2021/22, there was a 1.0% rise in Upper Second Class Honours from the previous year.
- d. **Pass Degrees (Awarded without honours)** – There was also a marginal rise in Pass Degrees (Awarded without honours) for the second year in a row, which is 1.1% higher than in 2017/18.

¹ Degree Classification: Transparency, Reliability and Fairness - A Statement of Intent

3. There are a wide number of contributing factors to the academic success of our students, including the revitalised strategic direction that was first implemented in 2015. The bold ambition set out to deliver an excellent student and learning experience and to equip our students with the skills to be the leaders of the future. This overarching corporate strategy placed students at the heart of all decision-making, which has been reaffirmed within our new corporate strategy, [Teesside 2027: Ambition Delivered Today](#). To deliver this strategy, the University has undertaken an ambitious programme of transformation of learning, teaching and the student experience [see para. 23 for examples], which continues to have a significant positive impact on students.
4. To explore the emerging evidence that sector-wide measures introduced during 2019/20 may have helped to close the attainment gap for disadvantaged groups, the University led a group of Higher Education institutions in a [QAA Collaborative Enhancement Project](#) that analysed the impact of alternative assessment methodologies and associated regulations introduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The project illustrated how clear, positive outcomes can develop from adversity and how agile thinking and responses to change have allowed the University to put creative solutions and inclusive practices in place within a short period of time with the cumulative effect of improving our students' outcomes.
5. The University has a long-established track record in supporting the Widening Participation agenda, which is evidenced in our [Access and Participation Plan \[APP\] 2020/21-2024/25](#). At the undergraduate degree level, characteristic outcomes demonstrate that:
 - The Ethnicity data for 2021/22 shows a fluctuation in good honours attainment rates for different Ethnic groups in comparison with 2020/21. With falls in attainment rates for Asian, Mixed and Other students but a rise in attainment for Black students (**Appendix 1 – Chart 1**). The combined attainment rate for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students in 2021/22 is 73.2%, which is a fall of 4.5% from 2020/21. While there is a widening of the attainment gap of -2.8% in 2021/22 from +1.9% in 2020/21, the trend in ethnicity data shows a closing of the gap in attainment between students from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds and White students (**Appendix 1 – Chart 2**).
 - The Gender data in 2021/22 shows a 0.1% rise in good honours attainment for male students to 78.0%, with a 1.3% fall in good honours for female students to 73.9%. The good honours attainment gap in 2021/22 of 4.1% remains higher for male students, showing the continuing trend of better outcomes by male students, with the exception of 2018/19, which saw female attainment briefly outperform male attainment by 1%. (**Appendix 1 – Chart 3**).
 - The Age data shows a fall of 1.5% in good honours attainment in 2021/22 for students aged under 21 to 75.0%. There was also a fall of 0.1% in attainment for students aged 21 and over to 75.9%. However, for the first time in the reporting period, the achievement rate for students aged over 21 was higher than for students aged under 21 (**Appendix 1 – Chart 4**). The data shows the success of the University's approach of providing targeted support to improve outcomes for mature students.
 - The Disability data shows a fall of 1.2% in good honours attainment in 2021/22 for students with a disability to 70.9% and a fall of 0.5% in attainment for students with no disability to 76.6%. The data highlights that whilst the achievement gap for students with a disability narrowed during 2019/20 (-2.8%), it widened in 2020/21 (-5.5%) and in 2021/22 (-5.7%) (**Appendix 1 – Chart 5**).
6. The University's strategic plan, Teesside 2027, continues to place students at the centre, with a demonstrable desire to transform lives and economies by embracing diversity and through generating and applying "knowledge that contributes to the economic, social and cultural success of students, partners and the communities we serve". Many of the steps to achieve this are outlined in the [APP](#) and monitored through its approach to Planning and Performance Review, which is embedded throughout the University. The University's pedagogic approach to learning and teaching complements this by aiming to develop the skills and understanding to enable students from diverse groups to enhance their lives and succeed. The University will continue to monitor and review the outcomes of the APP and its Assessment Boards through established channels.

Section 2: Assessment & Marking Practices

7. The University has long-standing and well-embedded quality assurance processes via the [Quality Framework](#), giving confidence that its awards reflect national and international quality standards and expectations. This includes cognisance of the Office for Students (OfS) Regulatory Framework, Quality Assurance Agency [QAA] Quality Code and Subject Benchmark Statements, Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements, and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) requirements as appropriate. There is also involvement of other key stakeholders such as students,

Partners, employers/industry experts and service users, which inform the development and enhancement of the curricula, starting at course development through to approval, ongoing monitoring, and periodic review. The University's [Assessment Regulations](#) are developed in line with the English Framework for Higher Education Qualifications [FHEQ] and detail the requirements for module achievement, progression and award, including degree classification. They are underpinned by the University's [Credit Accumulation and Module Scheme](#) [CAMS]. CAMS provides the building blocks for the University's credit framework. It ensures awards are structured to enable a coherent student learning experience, promote progression through academic studies, and aim to recognise achievement and award credit wherever and whenever possible.

8. A key part of the Quality Framework is the University's [Assessment & Feedback Policy](#) [AFP]. It applies to all taught provisions, explicitly mapping to the relevant sections of the OfS Regulations, IfATE (for apprenticeship provision), QAA Quality Code and wider institutional policy frameworks, including regulations relating to Academic Appeals and Extenuating Circumstances that reflect guidance from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. The AFP is structured around three main sections (Assessment Design, Assessment Standards, and Assessment Feedback) and is a key driver in facilitating an institutional shift in emphasis away from 'End Course Assessment' towards 'In Course Assessment' and continuous feedback as embedded features in good assessment design at the course level. Aligned to this is the further development and implementation of generic assessment/marking criteria, which are mapped to the threshold Fellow of the Higher Education Academy [FHEA] standards and supported by rigorous and standardised staff guidance regarding marking and moderation processes.
9. The University has a two-tier system for External Examiners at module and award levels. They are appointed based on clear University criteria, which have evolved from sector guidance (QAA Quality Code: Advice & Guidance on External Expertise and PSRB requirements, as appropriate). External Examiners are provided with a central induction and have an opportunity to have a local induction with the School they are assigned to. These induction sessions ensure they are fully briefed about their role, expectations, the modules/course(s) they are examining, and the regulations applied to them. External Examiners work closely with Course Teams to confirm academic standards are maintained and are in line with national requirements, with particular scrutiny regarding assessment, moderation, progression and award (degree algorithm/classification method), which involves reviewing student work. Reflection on the comparability of standards across the sector is a crucial part of this activity. The culmination of this process is a detailed annual report and action plan to the University's Academic Board.
10. The University provides new academic staff a comprehensive induction, in which colleagues are introduced to the various departments and workstreams, providing an understanding of how these can support the role of an academic. An overview of the University's Future Facing Learning (FFL) approach and its Academic Enhancement Framework (AEF) is provided, and specific aspects of academic practice are discussed that will be particularly relevant. New academic staff are also required to undertake the PgCert Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (Academic Professional) if they do not hold a relevant teaching qualification. This is part of a suite of programmes available within the University's Recognising Excellence in Learning and Teaching [RELT], which is the University's Professional Development Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education. RELT is accredited by Advance HE and aligns with the [UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education](#) [UKPSF]. RELT, the LTExChange and Learning and Teaching CPD underpin and enhance learning, teaching and the student experience. A key element is the suite of FFL sessions for academics supports the University's strategic approach to engaging students in digital delivery and learning to enable them to be future-ready in their chosen careers. The University's focus on digital learning places it in a strong position when responding to the ongoing impact of the pandemic on learning and teaching.

Section 3: Academic Governance

11. As noted above, the University has robust and well-established processes in place to ensure the classification outcomes awarded align with the University policies and regulations and are reflective of sector benchmarks and expectations (including those with Partners who follow the University standard regulations). This enables the University to have confidence that the value of its qualifications is protected over time.
12. The University's Academic Board retains overall oversight and responsibility for the conferment of awards and the associated academic regulations and policies alongside its Standing Committees, which have delegated responsibility from the Board. The Student Learning & Experience Committee has responsibility for academic quality and standards via the relevant academic regulations and policies. The application of the University's Assessment Regulations is managed through Assessment Boards.

The University operates a two-tier system of Module and Progression and Award Boards. Results and final classifications are considered by these Boards, operating under a common set of Terms of Reference and Membership. Impartial external scrutiny of the University's assessment processes and regulations is undertaken by Module and Award External Examiners as noted in Section 2. They confirm academic standards via moderation of marking and assessment, contributing their professional independent opinion to the Assessment Board processes.

13. There is routine reporting on the operation and outcomes of our Assessment Boards, with detailed consideration of engagement with and feedback from External Examiners at module, course, and institutional levels. There is also comprehensive annual reporting and analysis on student complaints and academic appeals, which feeds into the review and alignment of regulations to ensure fair and equitable treatment of students. Through the University's **Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement** process, there is a timely and responsive approach to improving provision, student learning experience and outcomes. All these results in action planning and monitoring to implement enhancements, ensuring the University provides learning and qualifications that will continue to have value after graduation. Annually, the University's Board of Governors is provided with a comprehensive summary of the University's academic quality assurance arrangements, providing reassurance to the Board on the effectiveness of the University's operations.

Section 4: Classification Algorithms

14. **Degree Classification:** For consistency and transparency, the University uses a universal degree classification system across all subjects, which is applied to all Teesside University undergraduate awards, including those with Partners. The calculation applies two methods, giving students the best possible outcome based on their achievement. Students are required to complete 360 credits of learning, which may include 20 credits of compensation at each level of learning. The first method uses the weighted mean average of the best 100 credits at Level 5 and the best 100 credits at Level 6, weighted 30%:70%. The second method uses the Level 6 average only. The final degree classification is based on the most favourable outcome from these two methods. Comparable with other universities, the calculations reflect and acknowledge student success towards the end of their studies. Teesside University students normally make sustained progress over the duration of their course and often achieve "exit velocity" in the final year. This classification has been in place since a review of the assessment regulations in 2003/04 and re-affirmed at reviews held in 2013/14 and 2021/22. Students completing a Level 6 top-up degree are classified on the weighted mean average of all Level 6 modules studied. The degree calculation for students graduating in 2023/24 can be found in Section 4.2 of the **Undergraduate** Regulations.
15. Teesside University Integrated Masters Degree classifications are similarly calculated as follows:
 - Weighted mean average of the best 100 credits at Levels 5, 6 and 7, weighted 20%:35%:45%
 - Weighted mean average of the best 100 credits at Levels 6 and 7, weighted 40%:60%
16. The best outcome of the above will be awarded to the student. The degree calculation for students graduating in 2023/24 can be found in Section 4.2 of the **Integrated Masters** regulations.
17. The temporary changes to the degree algorithm implemented as part of the No Detriment Approach [NDA] during the pandemic were in place during 2019/20 only. In 2020/21, the NDA degree calculation was only applied to a small number of students as a transition measure due to the course structures; in all other cases, the University employed its standard degree algorithm described in para. 14 since 2020/21.
18. **Understanding the Assessment Regulations:** The 2013/14 review of the assessment regulations simplified the regulations and rationalised the availability of discretion that could be applied by Assessment Boards, thereby supporting transparency and consistent decision-making. The assessment regulations do not include 'zones of consideration' or 'automatic uplifts' for borderline cases. This safeguards transparency and consistency of decision-making as they are clearly understood by University and Partner staff and students, being equitably applied across all provision. This is reinforced through key documentation such as Student Handbooks, guidance and support from Personal Tutors, Course Leaders, and the Students' Union. University staff are supported in understanding the Assessment Regulations through a variety of ways, including staff induction, annual workshops, and guidance documents. The University believes this approach is in line with sector norms, which provide protection for the value of the University's awards. The most recent review in

2021/22² raised the minimum threshold at which compensation could be applied and streamlined the regulations to make them more accessible to our students and staff. The changes were approved by the Academic Board and were implemented in 2022/23 for new cohorts. Future iterations of this Statement will reflect on the impact of these changes.

19. **Review of the Degree Classification:** One of the outcomes, following the 2013/14 review, introduced the discounting of the lowest 20 credits at Levels 5 and 6 (pro-rata) from the classification calculation (as noted above) and a further method based on the best 80 credits at Level 6. This resulted in a nominal increase in the number of “good” honours at that time, although the picture was mixed across Schools. This was monitored annually, and, in 2018/19, the removal of the 80-credit option (effective from 2019/20) was approved on the basis that it was less understood by staff and students and the percentage of students awarded by this option had been very low since its introduction. Since 2014/15, the University has continued to enhance the regulations based on an annual evaluation of the Assessment Board process, resulting in minor amendments and clarifications, which are clearly communicated to students and staff. The Foundation Degree, Undergraduate, Integrated Masters and Taught Masters Assessment Regulations were reviewed in 2021/22, which involved sector research, consultation with students, staff, partners, and external examiners. The review considered numerous aspects of the regulations and concluded that the classification calculation remains appropriate. The University will continue to analyse student outcomes, alongside the design and application of degree algorithms across the sector, to ensure that the value and academic standards of our awards are maintained and contemporary.

Section 5: Teaching Practices & Learning Resources

20. Arising from Teesside 2027, the University's Learning & Teaching Strategy is a key driver for enhancing teaching practice and outcomes for students. It aims to enable students to develop skills and understanding to enhance their lives through the delivery of a high-performing and innovative curriculum portfolio that focuses on empowering students to embrace cutting-edge digital technology, ensuring they are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and experience to flourish and thrive.
21. Some of the main elements underpinning this ambition are:
 - Future Facing Learning [FFL], introduced in 2017, set out a bold ambition to deliver an excellent student and learning experience that would ensure the academic success of students and equip them with the skills to be the leaders of the future. The approach underpins every aspect of course design and delivery, FFL outlines an uncompromising commitment to staff development, the enhancement of teaching and learning facilities and the deployment of digital teaching infrastructure, coupled with unprecedented investment across the campus.
 - An integrated and holistic approach to student welfare and development that provides an array of support services, ranging from academic skills to personal effectiveness, wellbeing, resilience, and targeted services for specific individuals and/or groups of students. January 2020 saw the launch of the flagship Student Life Building, which brought together student-facing services in one location, further improving the student experience and promoting well-being.
 - Through the Campus Masterplan, TU has invested £280 million to date in campus developments, including new industry standard research, education and teaching facilities and the development of social learning spaces. The current phase of the Masterplan operates until 2027, with future investments planned.
 - From September 2018, full-time first-year undergraduates, through the Teesside Advance Scheme, were provided with an iPad, keyboard, and specialist toolkit of apps to enable engagement. The provision of the iPads and additional loan equipment made available during the pandemic provided the technical infrastructure for our students to continue and succeed with their studies and was part of a comprehensive package of support provided by the University, which included financial aid, enhanced academic and mental health support and regulatory adjustments.
 - Following a global exercise, the University became the first Adobe Creative Campus in Europe in October 2020, which was the latest step in the University's FFL initiative to provide students and staff with access to Adobe's industry-leading creative and design tools and digital learning resources. Dedicated CPD activity helped staff embed the tools into their curricula.
 - Student Futures Strategy that drives and improves students' employability and transferable skills through embedding employability within the curriculum. This is a multifaceted approach encompassing entrepreneurship, career guidance, volunteering, work placements and support for graduate employment, which is particularly important for many of our students from the local region who face socio-economic challenges. The variety of opportunities made available to students, within

² 2020/21 Review covered Assessment Regulations for Foundation Degree, Undergraduate Degree, Integrated Masters and Taught Postgraduate.

and without the curricula, encourage student' engagement in their studies and assessment and ultimately have the chance to positively influence their academic achievements and enrich their experience.

- TU has a long history of supporting and listening to the Student Voice, engaging students in shaping their learning and student experience. The relationship with students was further strengthened through the introduction of Student Voice Forums, and their online operation during the pandemic proved to be a highly successful way of engaging students, and the practice has been maintained. Other student voice strands specifically linked to learning and teaching include the University's approach to Module Evaluation and feedback to students and Pulse Surveys.
- The quality of TU staff has a strong impact on student outcomes and the overall student experience. There is considerable investment in the continuing professional development of staff at TU. From Advance HE data in 2021/22, TU was 2% ahead of other universities within the University Alliance for academic staff with Fellowship and 17.5% ahead of the UK sector average. TU's Professional Development Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning: Recognising Excellence in Learning and Teaching (RELT) is an inclusive framework and, in addition to academics, it serves diverse groups of staff in a variety of roles who are involved in teaching and supporting learning, e.g., library support staff, technicians and researchers who teach/support student learning. Good practice (internally and externally) is shared across a variety of fora, including University conferences, which also include opportunities to demonstrate innovative practice. This reflects the University's commitment to developing excellent teaching practices that deliver students' expectations, and work is continuing to increase the proportion of staff with a recognised teaching qualification alongside raising the profile of Fellowship recognition. [See also para. 12 for staff development for new staff.]
- Inclusive curricula and learning experience that recognises and embeds Equality and Diversity, removing barriers and providing opportunities to all. This is through the approach to embedding the principles of universal design for learning and FFL in curriculum development, emphasising inclusivity through innovative pedagogic practices. Embedding employability and workplace/placement opportunities, where appropriate, within courses provides real-world relevance to students' learning and outcomes, alongside opportunities such as internships and volunteering.

22. The effect of these strategies and developments is evidenced in the sustained performance in employment and highly skilled employment outcomes for full-time undergraduates between 2018/19 and 2020/21 of 74.3%, 78.1%, and 77.7%, respectively.

Section 6: Good Practice & Actions

23. The University has a variety of forums within which degree outcomes across all provisions, not only undergraduate, are considered in detail each year, including Progression and award Boards, Award External Examiner Reporting, Annual Reports to the Academic Board on Assessment Board Operation, **Continuous Monitoring & Enhancement** process, Access & Participation Plan preparations, as well as University Executive Team meetings.
24. In addition to formal review points, the University's Assessment Regulations undergo minor amendments as a result of reflection on feedback and practice from Assessment Boards, External Examiners, outcomes of student appeals and requirements from key stakeholders such as Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies and the wider sector practice. The minor amendment process is considered and approved via the University's deliberative committee structure and annual updates communicated to staff and students at the commencement of each academic year. This well-established and robust process ensures that any changes are considered in detail with an eye for any potential enhancement or risk to academic standards. Opportunities are available for annual training on updates to changes to assessment regulations and to ensure staff remain conversant with key aspects of the regulations, with specific sessions being mandatory, e.g., Assessment Board Chair training. This affords the University and students confidence that the assessment regulations are applied in a consistent, fair, and equitable manner.
25. The following actions were carried over from the 2021 Degree Outcomes Statement have been completed:
 - a. The Learning & Teaching Retention Project was fully delivered, transitioning to business-as-usual activity in 2022/23.
26. The following actions from the 2022 Degree Outcomes Statement have been completed:
 - a. The University delivered a transformational change project to review full-time undergraduate provision during 2021/22 for implementation in 2023/24. The University introduced approaches to further prepare our students for graduate-level employment.

- b. The University implemented Phase 1 of the recommendations from a review of its Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement (CME) process that will reposition the process to meet the future needs of the University. The CME ensures that academic standards are maintained and enhances the quality of learning opportunities for students. CME assesses the student experience at module and course levels and references key student outcomes indicators.
 - c. The University completed a review of Higher National and Professional Doctorate Assessment Regulations, and the new regulations were introduced for the 2022/23 academic year.
27. The following additional actions have been identified to be progressed during 2023/24:
- a. Deliver institutional-wide improvements on the use of learner analytics to support student progress and retention via the StREAM Enhancement Project.
 - b. Embed new CME processes established in 2022/23 and progress Phase 2 of the review, including the consideration of how periodic review and modifications can be more effectively linked to CME to provide an evidence base for delivering an enhanced curriculum.
 - c. Review the Credit Accumulation and Modular Scheme (CAMS) to encompass the strategic direction of the University and sector developments.
 - d. Review of the Academic Year to support the student experience, retention, and success.
28. The above activities are all likely to impact directly and indirectly on the student learning experience, achievement, and overall outcomes.

Section 7: Risks & Challenges

29. The University has embedded systems and processes that allow for the consideration and identification of risks and challenges to the quality of its provision, academic standards, and the student experience. The prime vehicle for this is **Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement**, which is a process of **ongoing reflection** informing course **action planning, development and enhancement**. It allows for real-time changes as well as a wider strategic reflection and action planning across the University. It begins at a module level and through to course-level reflection, leading to a Departmental (Subject) Report and School Report. An Institutional Event is held annually, which reflects on the outcomes of these reports, alongside consideration of performance against Key Performance Indicators and portfolio development. The process also involves analysis of reports relating to apprenticeships and Postgraduate Researcher students. Risks, challenges, opportunities, and good practice are identified, progressed, and monitored throughout the following academic year via the Academic Board committee structure.
30. Paragraph 27 above outlines some of the key action(s) that the University will be progressing in 2023/24 that are anticipated to lead to enhancements in regulations, procedures, student experience and degree outcomes.

Chart 1 - Ethnicity

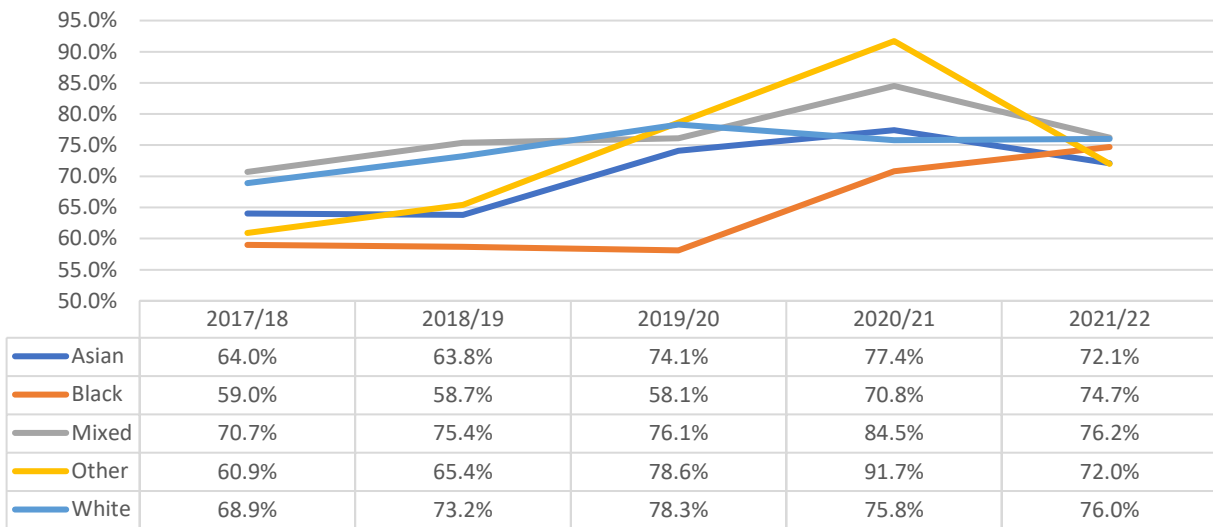


Chart 2 - Ethnicity - BAME

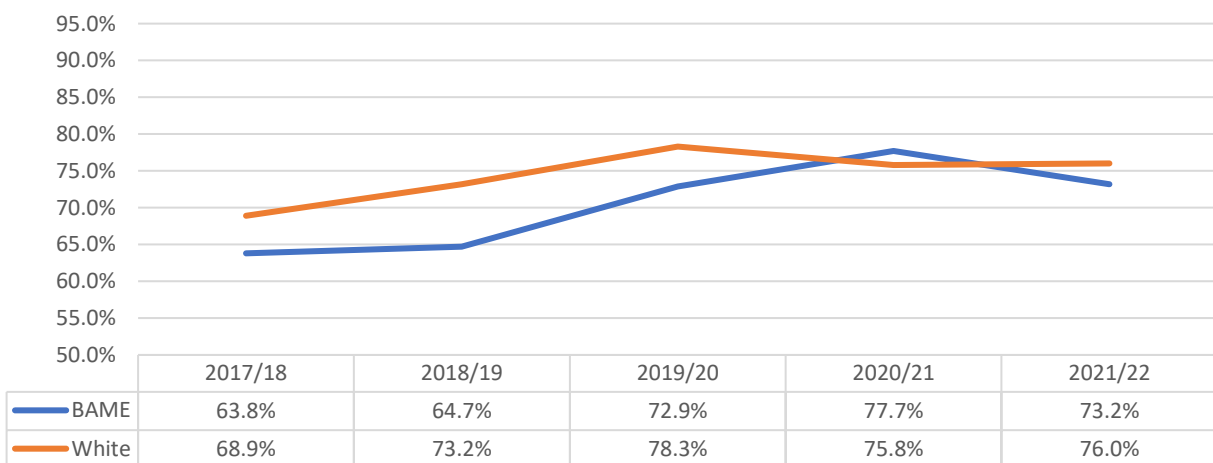


Chart 3 - Gender

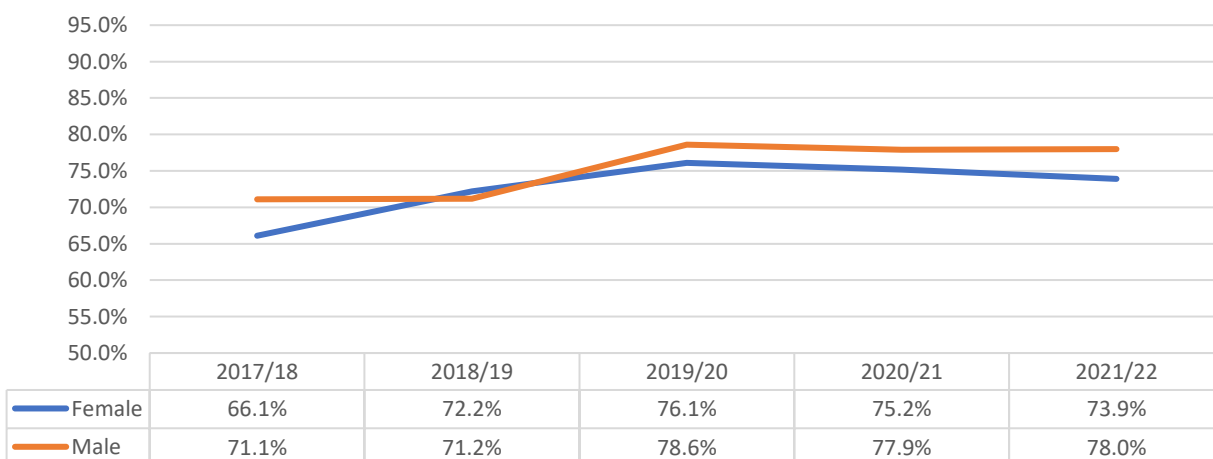


Chart 4 - Age

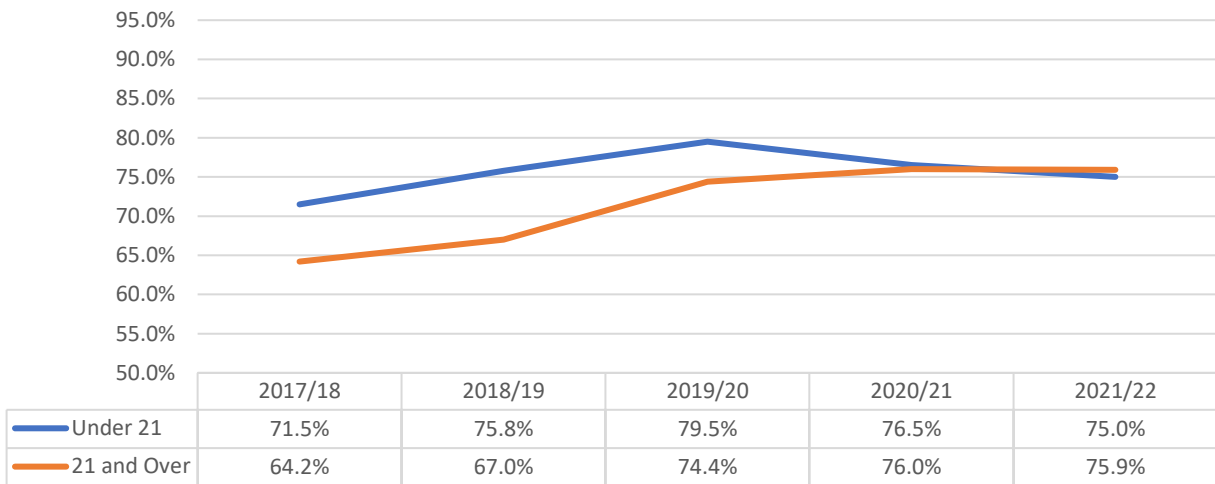


Chart 5 - Disability

