

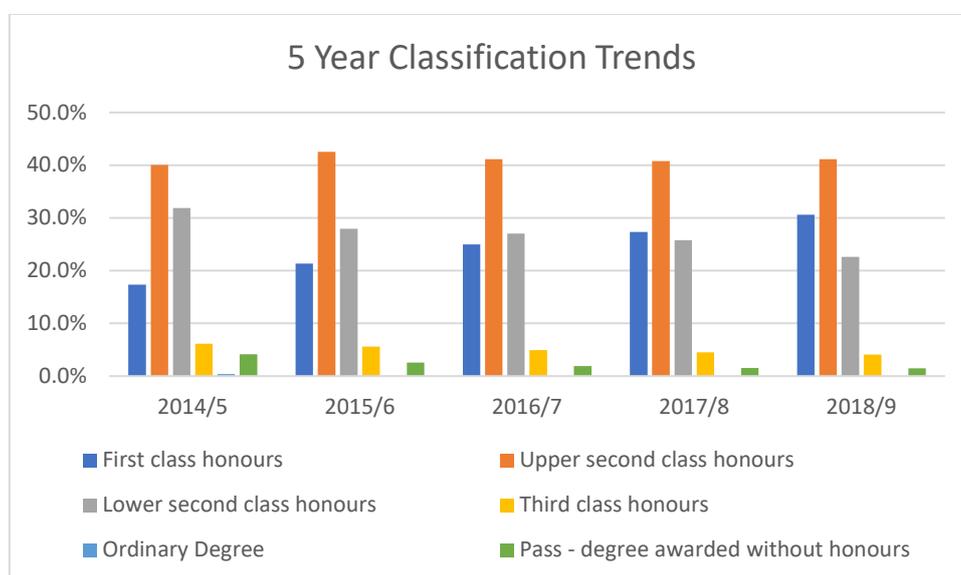
## TEESSIDE UNIVERSITY – DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT

**Note:** The data discussed below relates purely to undergraduate degree level outcomes.

### Section 1: Institutional Degree Classification Profile

The degree classification profile for Teesside University [TU] over the last five years is provided below:

Classification	2014/5		2015/6		2016/7		2017/8		2018/9	
First class honours	498	17.3%	619	21.3%	744	25.0%	837	27.3%	894	30.6%
Upper second class honours	1152	40.1%	1236	42.6%	1224	41.1%	1250	40.8%	1202	41.2%
Lower second class honours	917	31.9%	812	28.0%	805	27.0%	790	25.8%	661	22.6%
Third class honours	177	6.2%	162	5.6%	147	4.9%	138	4.5%	120	4.1%
Ordinary Degree	11	0.4%	1	0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Pass degree awarded without honours	119	4.1%	74	2.5%	57	1.9%	48	1.6%	44	1.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2874</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2904</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2977</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3063</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2921</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



The data demonstrates there has been an incremental rise in good honours attainment (First Class and Upper Second-Class) over the five-year period. 2018/19 data shows the award of good honours degrees to be 71.8%, which is 4.3% below the sector average of 76.1%. There are a wide number of contributing factors to this increase, including the revitalised strategic direction ([Teesside 2020](#)) that was implemented in 2015, raising the University's ambitions. A rolling review of the portfolio linked to enhancements in learning, teaching and assessment and the student experience have also played a part in improving outcomes for our students.

TU has a long-established track record in supporting the Widening Participation agenda, which is evidenced in our [Access and Participation Plan \[APP\] 2019/20](#). At undergraduate degree level, characteristic outcomes demonstrate that the attainment gap between BAME and White has narrowed over this period, with a 9% difference in 2018/19 (**Appendix 1 – Chart 1**). The University continues to build on its success by engaging the BAME population in various outreach activities, working closing with local community groups and actively supporting Middlesbrough's Ethnic Minority Achievement Team. Consideration of undergraduate gender data reveals broadly the same pattern over the last five years with better outcomes by males. However, it is interesting to note that in the final reporting year, females out-performed males by 1% (**Appendix 1 – Chart 2**). Age data is relatively unchanged over the five-year period, with students aged under 21 consistently out-performing older students in achieving good honours at undergraduate degree level study (**Appendix 1 – Chart 3**). The University has developed targeted support, such as the Twenty-One Plus Student [TOPS] event, which aims to improve outcomes for mature students. The data highlights that more work needs to be done to improve outcomes in relation to students with a disability. Whilst 2015/16 and 2016/17 saw a

narrowing of the achievement gap for disabled students, the following two academic years have seen a gradual increase (**Appendix 1 – Chart 4**). As part of a package of initiatives to support students in this category, there is a focus on further embedding the principles of universal design for learning into the curricula. Moreover, the University has a wide range of support mechanisms available to support students, including specialist advisers and provides training for staff who support students with disabilities.

The University's strategic plan, [Teesside 2020](#), clearly place students at the centre, with a demonstrable desire to transform lives and economies, by "embracing diversity and actively opposing prejudice". Many of the steps being taken to achieve this are outlined in the [APP](#) and monitored through its approach to Planning and Performance Review, which is embedded throughout the University. TU'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.

## Section 2: Assessment & Marking Practices

TU has long-standing and well-embedded quality assurance processes in place via the [Quality Framework](#), giving confidence that its awards reflect national and international quality standards and expectations. This includes the Quality Assurance Agency [QAA] Quality Code and Subject Benchmark Statements, Office for Students' Conditions and Ongoing Conditions for Registration, and Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body 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. TU'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], which has been recently reviewed and relaunched in September 2019. 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 aims to recognise achievement and award credit wherever and whenever possible.

A key part of the Quality Framework is the University's [Assessment & Feedback Policy](#) [AFP], which was revised and implemented in September 2019. It applies to all taught provision, explicitly mapping to the relevant sections of the 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 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.

TU has a two-tier system for External Examiners at module and award level. They are appointed based on clear University criteria, which has 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 sessions ensure they are fully briefed about their role, expectations and the modules/course(s) they are examining, and the regulations applied to them. They 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, which involves reviewing student work. Reflection on 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.

Academics new to TU are required to attend a comprehensive induction, which includes raising awareness of the role of External Examiners at the University. 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 and the Learning, Teaching & Enhancement Continuing Professional Development sessions underpin and enhance learning, teaching and the student experience. A key element is the suite of

Future Facing Learning [FFL] sessions for academics, that is the University's strategic approach for engaging students in digital delivery and learning to enable them to be future-ready in their chosen careers. A central development session has also been created, for launch in 2020/21, aimed at TU staff to highlight the role of External Examiners and how they can be effectively engaged with modules and courses, linked into raising understanding of national sector standards such as the FHEQ.

### Section 3: Academic Governance

As noted above, the University has robust and well-established processes in place to ensure the classification outcomes awarded align to TU policies and regulations and are reflective of sector benchmarks and expectations (including those with Partners, who follow our standard regulations). This enables the University to have confidence that the value of its qualifications is protected over time.

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 who 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. TU operates a two-tier system of Module and Progression & 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 into the Assessment Board processes.

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 level. There is also comprehensive annual reporting and analysis on student complaints and appeals, which feeds into the review and alignment of regulations to ensure fair and equitable treatment of students. Through our [Continuous Monitoring & Enhancement](#) process, there is a timely and responsive approach to improving our provision, student learning experience and outcomes. All these result in action-planning and monitoring to implement enhancements, ensuring we provide learning and qualifications that will continue to have value after graduation. Annually, the 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

**Degree Classification:** For consistency and transparency, TU uses a universal degree classification system across all subjects, which is applied to all TU 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 to other universities, our calculation reflects and acknowledges student success towards the end of their studies. TU 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 2003/4 and re-affirmed at a more recent review in 2013/14. 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 [current undergraduates](#) can be found in Section 7.2 of these regulations.

TU Integrated Masters Degree classification is 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 L6 and 7, weighted 40%:60%

The best outcome of the above will be awarded to the student. The calculation for [Integrated Masters Degree Awards](#) can be found in Section 7.2 of these regulations.

**Understanding the Assessment Regulations:** The last significant review of the assessment regulations in 2013/14 simplified the regulations and rationalised the availability of discretion that could be applied by Assessment Boards, thereby supporting transparency and consistent decision-making. The requirements for reassessment of failed work are clearly defined in the [Assessment Regulations](#) (see section 4.5), whereby students are normally allowed a maximum of one reassessment opportunity. The approaches were

determined in order to enable students to manage their own learning within an academic level. 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. TU staff are supported in understanding the Assessment Regulations through a variety of fora starting at induction, through to annual workshops and guidance documents. The University believes this approach to be in line with sector norms, which provides protection of the value of the University's award.

### **Recent Changes to 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 slight 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 the percentage of students awarded by this option had been very low since its introduction and it was less understood by staff and students. 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.

## **Section 5: Teaching Practices & Learning Resources**

The data in Section 1 demonstrates that TU has seen a year-on-year improvement in good honours, which can be attributable to a range of strategic approaches that have taken place over the last five years. Arising from [Teesside 2020](#), 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 delivering a high quality academic experience, with a focus on empowering students to become *confident, critical, creative, adaptable, articulate and aspiring*. Some of the main elements underpinning this ambition are:

- An integrated and holistic approach to student development via Student & Library Services, providing an array of support services, ranging from academic skills to personal effectiveness, wellbeing and resilience. This comprises targeted services for specific groups of students. 2019/20 saw the launch of the flagship Student Life Building on campus, which brings together student-facing services in one location, further improving the student experience and promoting well-being. In recent years, through the Campus Masterplan, TU has invested over £270 million in campus developments, including new industry standard teaching facilities and the development of social learning spaces, which will see a further £300m invested in the campus up to 2026. Alongside this, a Student Life digital 'chatbot' has been launched, available 24 hours a day, to help students access the right advice and services.
- Future Facing Learning [FFL] (see **Appendix 2**) – a unique pedagogical approach that underpins the University's commitment to teaching excellence in creating exciting opportunities for staff and students to teach, learn and transform in a digital environment. This includes a dedicated CreatorLab that acts as a hub for digital innovation through co-creation and a digital classroom. The University's Digital Development Programme has been designed to upskill and support staff to embrace digital technology to enhance their teaching and is supported by Microsoft. Staff engaging in the programme are provided with an iPad, keyboard and a toolkit of apps to inform their pedagogic practice. 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. FFL is designed to be more accessible, assist retention, progression and achievement, providing students with a unique set of skills to succeed in the future.
- Student Futures Strategy that aims to help drive and improve students' employability and transferable skills through embedding employability within the curriculum. This is a multifaceted approach encompassing entrepreneurship, careers 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 and without the curricula, encourage students' 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. This will be further enhanced during 2019/20 with a review of the University's Course Board process, with the aim of creating an even stronger forum for students to provide feedback on their student learning experience. 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 2018/19, TU was nearly 10% ahead of other universities within the University Alliance for academic staff with Fellowship, and just over 17% 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 learning and teaching conferences, held twice each academic year, which also include opportunities to demonstrate innovative practice. This reflects the University's commitment to develop professional high-quality staff that deliver to student expectations and work is continuing around the area of reducing the proportion of staff without a recognised teaching qualification alongside raising the profile of Fellowship recognition. [See also Section 2 above 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 innovate pedagogic practices as noted above. Embedding employability and workplace/placement opportunities, where appropriate, within courses help provide real-world relevance to students' learning and outcomes, alongside opportunities such as internships and volunteering.

The effect of these strategies and developments is evidenced in the sustained upward trend in employment and highly skilled employment outcomes for full-time undergraduates over the previous three years, from 88.1% to 92.4% and 50.6% to 56.9% respectively. Outcomes from the 2019 National Student Survey also demonstrated that TU outperformed the English Sector average in the following categories: teaching on my course, learning opportunities, assessment and feedback, academic support, learning resources, learning community, student voice and Students' Union.

## Section 6: Good Practice & Actions

The University has a variety of forums within which degree outcomes across all provision, not only undergraduate, are considered in detail each year, including: Progression & Award Boards, Award External Examiner Reporting, Annual Reports to Academic Board on Assessment Board Operation, [Continuous Monitoring & Enhancement](#) process, Access & Participation Plan preparations, as well as University Executive Team meetings.

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 & 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 is a well-established and robust process that 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.

As part of the activity to produce this statement, a review of practice at other universities evidenced the availability of a degree calculator in some institutions. To further enhance students' understanding of the assessment regulations and specifically classifications, it is proposed, that during 2020/21, a simplistic 'degree calculator' is developed and made available on the web. This will support students' understanding of the levels of achievement required in the modules they study in order to achieve a particular classification. Initial discussions with the Students' Union have taken place, and they have agreed to host this on their website. Pending the outcome of this pilot, further consideration will be given to extending this to other levels of study.

The 2020/21 academic year will also see:

- A review of the revised Assessment & Feedback Policy, which will reflect on assessment, marking and moderation processes.
- The launch of a central development session for staff considering applying for an External Examiner role or wishing to better understand the role of the External Examiner and how they can contribute to their course and/modules (see Section 2 above).
- An overall review of the revised Assessment Regulations that were introduced in 2014/15, with the first graduates in 2016/17.
- Continuing work on actions identified within the Access and Participation Plan (and as reflected in the classification data in **Appendix 1**) that strive to enable all students to have the same opportunities and be supported to achieve to the best of their abilities.

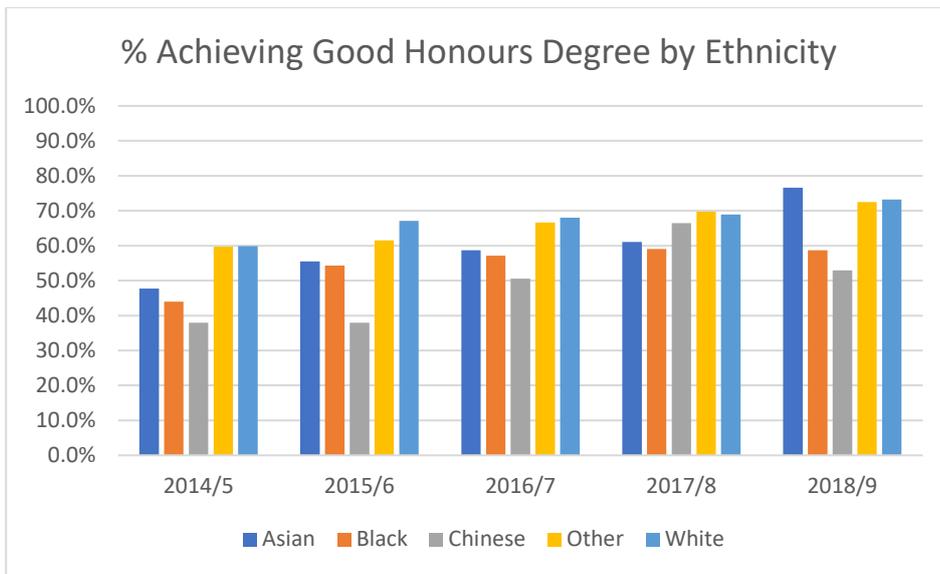
The above established University processes, plans and actions are all likely to impact directly and indirectly on the student learning experience, achievement and overall outcomes. It is proposed to review the Degree Outcomes Statement on an annual basis pending formal clarification of OfS requirements.

### Section 7: Risks & Challenges

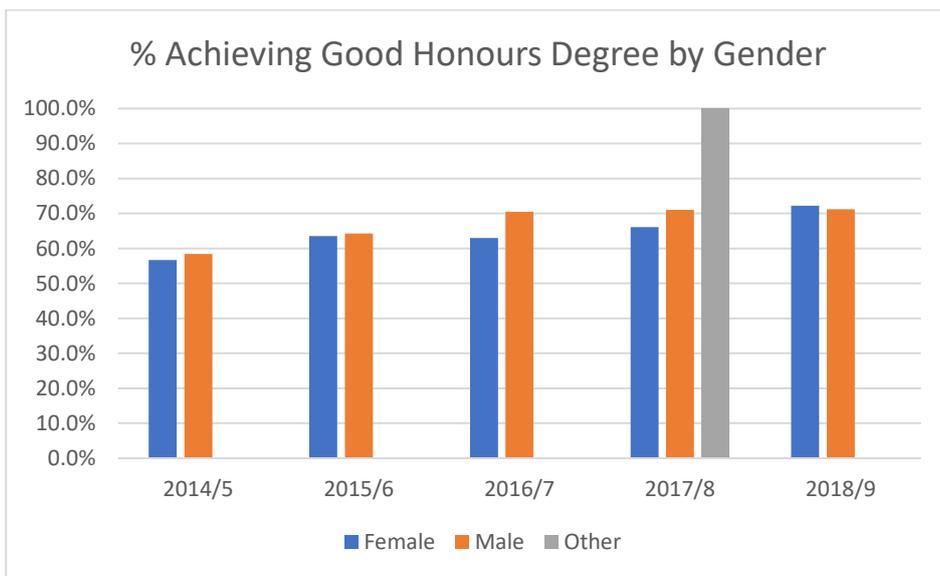
The University has embedded systems and processes that allow for the consideration and identification of risks and challenges to the quality of its provision, academic standards and the student experience. The prime vehicle for this is [Continuous Monitoring & Enhancement](#), which is a process of **ongoing 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 module level 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. This also involves analysis of reports relating to partners (International and UK College), Postgraduate Researchers and Student & Library Services. Risks, challenges, opportunities and good practice are identified, progressed and monitored throughout the following academic year via the Academic Board committee structure.

Section 6 above, outlines some of the key actions that the University will be progressing in 2020/21 that are anticipated to lead to enhancements in regulations, procedures, student experience and degree outcomes.

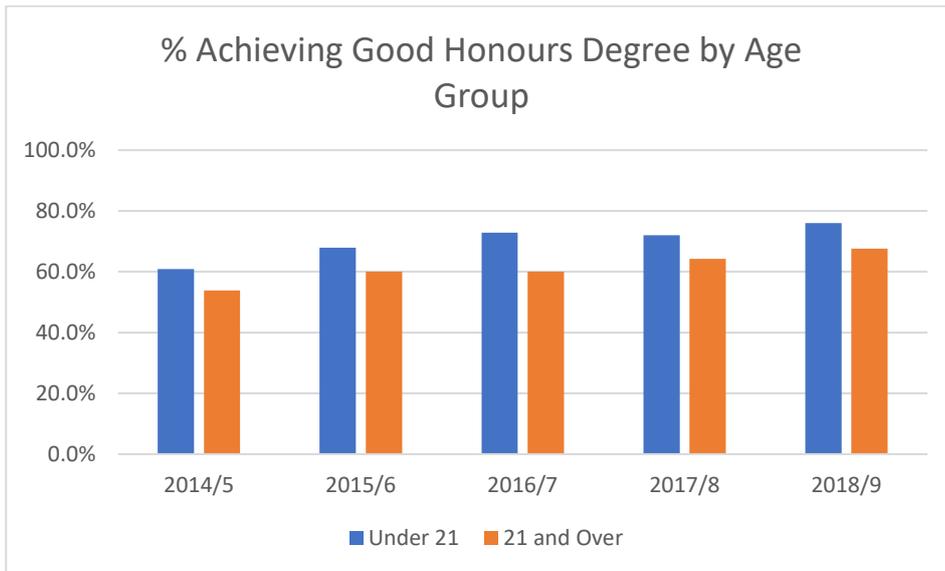
**Table 1:**



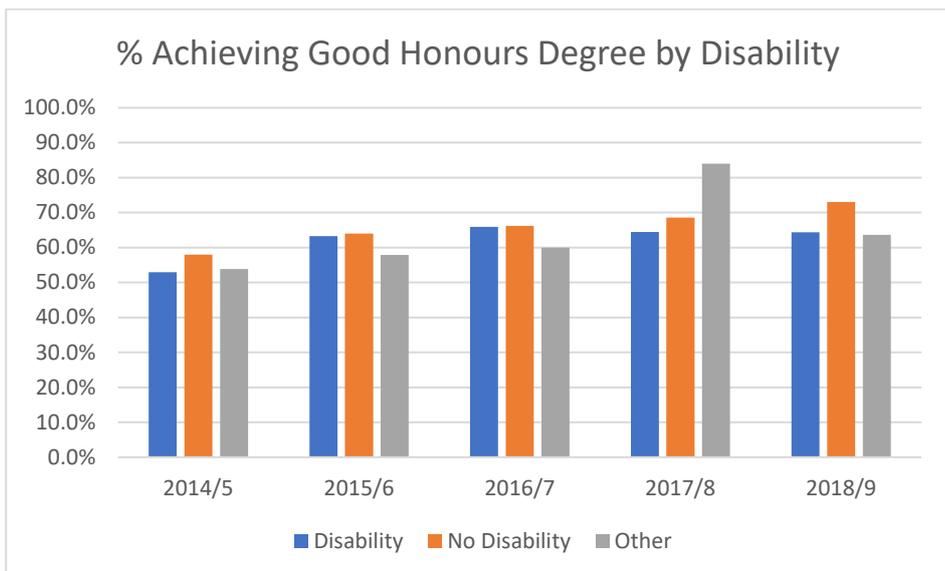
**Table2:**



**Table 3:**



**Table 4:**



FUTURE FACING LEARNING

