

Degree Outcomes Statement 2024-25

What is the Degree Outcomes Statement?

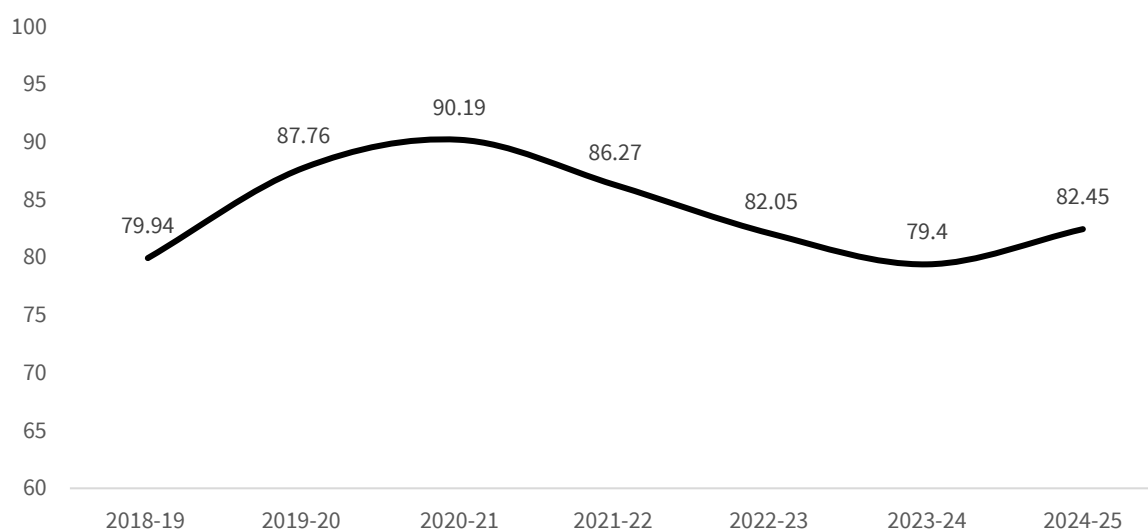
1. Degree Outcomes Statements present and reflect upon higher education institutions' classification profiles for undergraduate awards. The UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment ([UKSCQA](#)) has [asked providers to publish and act upon Degree Outcome Statements](#) since 2018-19 as part of the higher education sector's commitment to protecting the credibility and value of awards.
2. The regulator for higher education in England, the Office for Students, sets [Conditions of Registration](#) for registered providers. Condition B4 requires that "relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously. The Degree Outcomes Statement is one tool through which Queen Mary prompts discussion and reflection on classifications.
3. Universities UK ([UUK](#)) made additional [commitments](#) on the long-term protection of the value of UK degrees, asking institutions to plan a roadmap to return to 2018-19 classification distributions following the disruption of the coronavirus pandemic. This Statement includes consideration of the impact of the pandemic upon outcomes and procedures linked to classification and award.
4. Management of Queen Mary's Degree Outcome Statement is overseen by the Education Quality and Standards Board, which includes representation from academic and professional services staff and our Students' Union. The Statement draws upon input from our examination boards, the reports of external examiners, statistical data, and strategic objectives and projects.

Scope

5. In line with sector expectations, the Degree Outcomes Statement considers undergraduate awards at academic level six classified under the Honours system. It does not cover level seven or unclassified undergraduate provision, or postgraduate taught provision. Queen Mary conducts significant additional analysis and review of its full range of provision as part of internal quality assurance processes.
6. Queen Mary's provision is primarily delivered through three academic Faculties. Each Faculty saw a peak in so-called "good honours" outcomes (First Class and Second Class (Upper Division) classifications) during the pandemic, with percentages falling somewhat in the following years. Queen Mary also has a small amount of provision not directly associated with the Faculties.
7. The data used in this Statement is drawn from Queen Mary's Business Intelligence Tool, PowerBI and, relates to the awarding year rather than the HESA reporting year. All historical data used in the Statement has been updated to match the same reporting criteria. Queen Mary believes that this provides a more accurate dataset for the purpose of the Statement as it allows the inclusion of all awards relating to a given year, including any issued after the HESA reporting date each autumn.

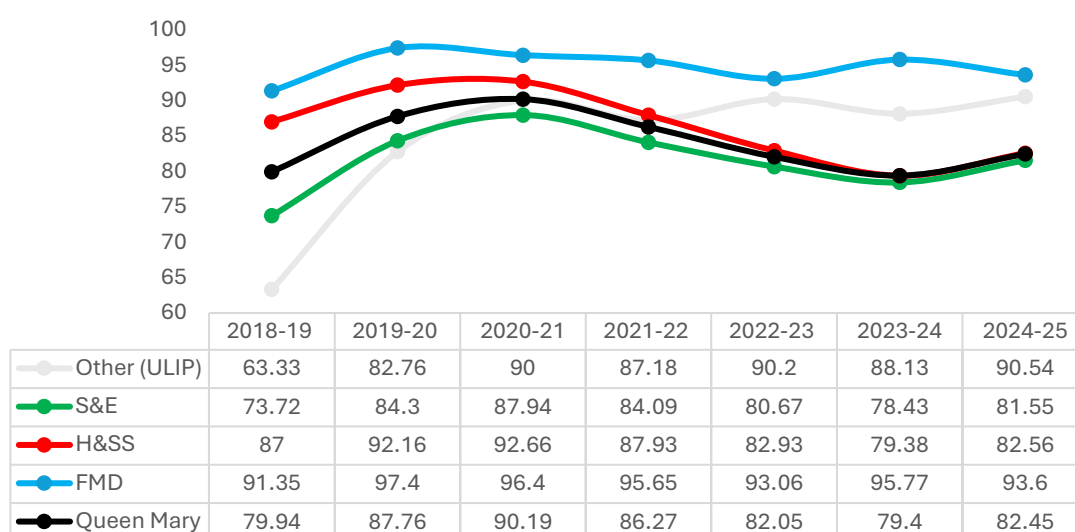
“Good honours” outcomes at Queen Mary

Queen Mary University of London (UG level 6 programmes):
Percentage of "good honours" awards over time



8. In 2018-19, 79.94% of Queen Mary awards within the scope of the Degree Outcomes Statement were conferred with so-called “good honours”, or First Class and Second Class (Upper Division) classifications. Queen Mary met the UUK commitment to return to 2018-19 “good honours” levels in 2023-24, with 79.4% of awards in scope conferred with “good honours”; in 2024-25 there was a slight increase to 82.45%. The University is satisfied that this is justified and within the appropriate bounds of tolerance, but continues to closely review both the proportion of “good honours” outcomes and, specifically, the proportion of First Class outcomes awarded.

Queen Mary vs Faculties (UG level 6 programmes):
Percentage of "good honours" awards over time



9. The figure above breaks down “good honours” awards across Queen Mary’s Faculties. The results show a much greater level of consistency than in 2018-19. The Faculties of Science and Engineering (81.55%) and Humanities and Social Sciences (82.56%) have converged. Those two Faculties account for 95.4% of the 5,346 2024-25 awards within the scope of this Statement.
10. The fact that there is a higher figure for the Medicine and Dentistry is not in itself of concern; the majority of undergraduate awards in the Faculty are for qualifying medical and dental degrees that are not in scope. The 172 awards in scope include a significant proportion of intercalated bachelors degrees, which are normally only open to students who have already completed a minimum two years of study and are already performing at 2:1 or higher level, so the high proportion of “good honours” outcomes is expected.
11. The final category, ‘Other’, refers to awards for programmes that sit outside of the Faculties. All 74 such 2024-25 awards relate to the University of London Institute in Paris. The relatively small cohort means that there is greater scope for natural variation in performance between years, though figures are broadly stable and in line with the Queen Mary averages.
12. A range of factors mean that Queen Mary does not expect all programmes, schools/institutes, and faculties to have identical results, and there can be and have been legitimate and intended improvements in student outcomes in some areas. These include entry tariffs, educational initiatives including resources and support, and targeted interventions to – for example – address attainment gaps. Queen Mary set closing the value-added attainment gap between White and BAME students as an institutional key performance indicator; considering the awards within the scope of the Statement, this gap has narrowed between 2018-19 and 2024-25.
13. Internal quality assurance measures including Programme Review and the work of the Examination Boards reflect annually on outcomes, seeking to understand and explain variations at programme and school/institute level and to take action if this should be required.
14. Queen Mary is satisfied that its outcomes are justified and are on an appropriate trajectory following the impact of the pandemic years and mitigations that applied during that period. It remains committed to ongoing scrutiny and review of its outcomes and is confident in its awarding processes.

Academic governance

15. Queen Mary University of London is an autonomous higher education provider that holds and exercises independent degree awarding powers and establishes its own educational policies and procedures with reference to sector regulation and guidance including the Office for Students’ ([OfS](#)) [Conditions of Registration](#) and the Quality Assurance Agency’s ([QAA](#)’s) [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#), [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#), and [subject benchmark statements](#).
16. The Senate, subject to the overall superintendence of Council, has general responsibility for the academic activity of Queen Mary. The Senate delegates responsibility for the operation of matters relating to academic standards and the quality of the student experience to the Education Quality and Standards Board (EQSB). The EQSB is chaired by the Vice-Principal (Education) and includes representation from academic and professional services colleagues, and student representatives. It is serviced by the same team that services the Degree Examinations Boards, to ensure a strong link between policy and observed practice. The EQSB has established a dedicated Assessment Sub-Board with a range of responsibilities linked to degree outcomes, including assessment design and integrity, ongoing review of our degree algorithms, and reviewing marking practices and grade descriptors.

17. The Degree Examination Boards (DEBs) have authority to approve awards. In most cases there is one undergraduate and one postgraduate taught DEB for each faculty, serviced by the Directorate of Governance and Legal Services for consistency of approach, including consistency of application of regulations and policies. Multiple school/institute-level Subject Examination Boards (SEBs) report to each DEB, each with external examiners. SEBs confirm marking, and progression outcomes. DEBs have a responsibility to ensure consistency and appropriateness of approach within and between the SEBs and review qualitative and quantitative reports on their outputs each year. DEBs and SEBs are chaired by academic staff with considerable experience in assessment. Faculty-level groups comprising the Faculty SEB and DEB Chairs provide for a forum in which to reflect upon results and share good practice outside of the formal DEB meetings.
18. Queen Mary does not engage in franchising and does not accredit degrees on behalf of any other providers. Where we enter a partnership with another provider we conduct bespoke review exercises to establish commonality in standards, including marking criteria. Where appropriate, this includes a mark conversion scheme to draw direct equivalencies between the marks issued at Queen Mary and at the partner institution.
19. Queen Mary degrees at level six are classified using a weighted aggregate mark held to one decimal point (the 'Classification Mark'). All three developmental years count towards this mark, with year one counting for 10%, year two 30%, and year three 60% (1:3:6 weightings). We believe that including the first year marks is important; we have a high proportion of students from non-traditional backgrounds and wish to ensure that they are given the maximum possible incentive to engage fully with their programmes and assessment from the start. This is balanced by the relatively low overall weighting given to the first year, as we also wish to recognise positive exit velocity. Students must take most modules in each developmental year at the corresponding academic level; having the final year count for 60% of the Classification Mark ensures that the degree outcome is properly reflective of material at the level of the award itself.
20. We do not practice discounting (outside of the [pandemic contingency measures](#)) – all 360 credits count towards classification. We use a single algorithm for each award rather than a 'best of two' or similar approach as we believe that consistency of approach is important. We amended our regulations for 2015-16 entry, significantly increasing the minimum requirements for award; at the same time, we harmonised the degree algorithms in use to adopt a consistent approach across all Faculties, schools and institutes. The School of Law, for historical reasons, classified LLB awards on profile (how many modules at each grade) rather than a weighted mark until 2020-21 entry but since that time has used the common regulations. A very small number of other programmes have small variations to the award requirements linked to the requirements of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) that accredit the awards; in all cases the exceptions result in more stringent rather than more lenient approaches, and concern the minimum requirements to qualify for the award itself, rather than the classification algorithm.
21. Queen Mary operates a borderline classification policy. It is a wholly algorithmic system, but historically included limited scope for discretion where a student had approved extenuating circumstances that could not be taken into account elsewhere (that provision was removed following the publication of the UKSCQA's [Principles for Effective Degree Algorithm Design](#) in 2020). Students within 1.5% of a borderline fall into a zone of consideration (except at pass/fail, where there is no borderline consideration). A student in the zone with half or more of their final year credits at or above the level of the higher classification will be raised into the next classification banding. Examination boards and external examiners pay particular attention to borderline cases; in the event of any concerns or unusual patterns of achievement the Degree Examination Board would intervene and, if appropriate, escalate this for consideration.

22. Students at Queen Mary on all programmes within the scope of the Degree Outcomes Statement have two attempts to pass each module, a first attempt and one resit of the assessment (without a repeat of the teaching). On resit, the module mark is capped to the minimum pass mark to reflect the fact that the student did not pass it at the first attempt. Where students have extenuating circumstances, they can be given additional attempts ('first sits') without penalty and without incrementing the attempt number; in rare cases a repeat of the whole module including teaching can be offered (a 'first take').
23. Queen Mary operates a 'fit to sit' policy; if a student attempts an assessment they cannot normally claim for extenuating circumstances against that assessment – this protects the integrity of the assessment as a measure of students' attainment.
24. Queen Mary's degree algorithms and borderline classification policy are available for students and other stakeholders to view in the relevant editions of the Academic Regulations, the Assessment Handbook, and in school/institute student handbooks.

Pandemic mitigation measures

25. The coronavirus pandemic, beginning in 2019-20, necessitated review of our award and classification rules to protect students. We took robust steps to ensure that this was the case while maintaining appropriate standards. Queen Mary reduced the overall credit requirements for award to those we had used prior to our last review (pre-2015-16 regulations) for 2019-20 finalists. For all students we allowed discounting of the lowest scoring modules from 2019-20, recognising that students might be unable to engage with all assessments and/or unable to perform to the level of their ability due to disruption to their educational experience. We discounted the lowest 30 credits of marks from 2019-20 or (at the point of classification) the entire 2019-20 year, whichever gave the more favourable outcome. For 2019-20 *finalists* we excluded 30 credits in all cases, and never the entire year, recognising the importance of content at the academic level of the award and that the final year counted for 60% of the Classification Mark. These changes have largely worked through the system now, with reduced effects each year (as the year that is discounted has a lower percentage weighting for students who were in the first year in 2019-20 versus those who were in the second or third year). We also amended our borderline classification policy for 2019-20 and 2020-21 finalists, raising students who fell within 1.5% of a borderline and who had (a minimum) 15 credits fewer than half of all final year credits at or above the level of the higher classification. Reflecting on these accommodations we remain satisfied that they were academically appropriate in the extraordinary circumstances of those years and in the sector's period of uncertainty over the extent and duration of the impact of the pandemic on education. However, we have now moved away from those measures and would carefully consider our previous experiences and contingency regulations in the event of another emergency situation.

Assessment and marking practices

26. Queen Mary's assessment and marking criteria are designed to ensure compliance with sector reference points, including the OfS' Conditions of Registration, PSRB requirements, and guidance documents such as the QAA's Subject Benchmark Statements and Quality Code for Higher Education; Queen Mary has conducted detailed benchmarking against all of those publications and is satisfied that our processes are fully in line with the recommended and required practices.
27. Assessments are designed to test the specific learning outcomes set out in programme and module specifications. Marking is always criterion- and not norm-referenced – marks are based on an individual student's attainment measured against the marking criteria specific to that assessment. Queen Mary has generic grade categories at institutional level, and detailed marking criteria are set at

school/institute level in accordance with relevant subject benchmarks - these may be generic to a whole school or tailored to individual assessments. Scaling of marks to meet expected 'norms' is prohibited, and scaling is reserved as a repair mechanism for 'broken' assessments, where a problem was discovered. Such scaling is rare and requires the approval of both the Subject and Degree Examination Boards.

28. Staff must be trained to mark and must do so in accordance with Queen Mary's Marking Policy, which underwent a major review in 2023-24. The Policy ensures that at least half of the assessments for each module undergo quality assurance testing beyond the initial marking; this can be double-marking, where a second marker marks all submissions in full and the two markers agree a final mark, or moderation, where the second marker looks at a sample of scripts and determines whether the first marker's marks, as a whole, are appropriate. Samples from across the range of achievement and in sufficient numbers to allow an informed judgement are then sent to external examiners for comment and to ensure that the marking is in line with Queen Mary's expectations and norms for the sector and discipline. Queen Mary has invested in a business intelligence tool, PowerBI, with powerful reporting functions for examination boards that support longitudinal review of assessment and module marks, including showing differences between cohorts on the same module, comparison between the results for the specified module and other modules taken by the same cohort, and isolation of individual students to compare results between modules and years.
29. External examiners attend Subject Examination Boards and submit annual written reports to Queen Mary. These have been positive in relation to marking and assessment, and no issues of institutional concern have been raised. All reports are considered by the Directorate of Governance and Legal Services, which submits an annual report to the Education Quality and Standards Board. An 'External Member' – a senior member of staff with responsibility for academic quality and standards at another university – fulfils a similar role at the Degree Examination Boards, commenting on issues of process and the appropriateness and comparability between institutions of regulations.
30. During the pandemic Queen Mary amended its assessment methods, notably including a move to more assessments that could be delivered remotely. We supported this transition with expert working groups and procedures and retained and continue to develop many aspects of that provision. Like many institutions we faced some initial challenges with student behaviour in online assessments and continue to develop procedures to further increase the robustness and integrity of assessments, including the return to greater synchronicity in assessments, development of guidance specific to online assessments (including guidance on where online assessment may not be appropriate), and a bespoke online training course on academic integrity which it is expected that all students will undertake.

Teaching practices and learning resources

31. We are engaged in continually developing our teaching practices and investing in our learning resources. Much of this work is led by, or draws on the expertise of, the Queen Mary Academy. We have a co-created pedagogic approach, the Active Curriculum for Excellence (ACE). In developing the ACE Approach, we worked with our students to bring together the lessons learned from educational experiences during the Coronavirus pandemic. Our focus was to reintegrate our community back into campus life enabling students to enjoy an active and engaging curriculum. The following elements underpin this pedagogic approach:

- i. student-paced learning activities – students can follow these at their own time and pace;
 - ii. interactive large group sessions – these build on independent learning activities and provide an opportunity to test, progress and stretch students’ understanding;
 - iii. learning-by-doing sessions – these include tutorials, lab work, seminar debates, employability skills training, clinical training, patient treatment, Problem-Based and Team-Based Learning;
 - iv. small active learning groups – provide an opportunity to both build up a small community of practice, and to enjoy peer-to-peer opportunities;
 - v. co-curricular activity.
32. We place significant value on having qualified teaching staff. We have continued investment in the recognition, which has led to increases in the number of staff with teaching qualifications and fellowship.
33. We developed and launched the Student Enhanced Engagement and Development (SEED) Award to celebrate and recognise students’ contribution to co-creation. Since launching the SEED Award launch, more than 100 students have received this recognition.
34. The funding of innovative educational strategic projects has also aided students in achieving to their full potential. In 2018, we launched the President and Principal’s Fund for Educational Excellence, which was established to encourage a culture of educational innovation and exploration at Queen Mary. The Fund was increased in 2023 and awards £120,000 each year to projects across the institution to support the development of innovative and impactful educational projects.
35. To bring together our work to share and promote excellence in education, we annually host the Queen Mary Festival of Education as one of the highlights of the year. It provides an opportunity for our community of educators to come together to share and develop effective practice. Through raising the profile of educational excellence, and disseminating excellent practice throughout the University, we are supporting staff to ensure that students can achieve good degree outcomes.
36. Queen Mary Libraries make major contributions to the strategic ambitions of the University relating to learning, research and reputation. This includes providing a wide range of information resources and services, providing accessible spaces and continuing to develop our unique collections. A recent major redevelopment of the Mile End Library included the addition two floors of study space and the refurbishment of existing reading rooms and other spaces. This made 500 additional study spaces available. There has also been a significant increase in the scope of academic skills and information literacy provision, open to students across all disciplines. In addition to increasing Library Services provision, now including Maths and Statistics support, we also introduced an online tutoring service that provides formative feedback to students on their work. Further, we have recently ring-fenced £80k per year to increase the number of e-textbooks, and increased the collection development budget by £100K per year to widen the range of digital materials, such as primary archival sources, that students are able to access
37. Across the University, we have over 100 areas which are used for student study space. We established a Study Spaces Working Group to promote the availability of these different spaces, to determine common standards for them, and lead on the process of rolling refurbishments in consultation with academic stakeholders. Students at Queen Mary have access to our Mile End, Whitechapel and West Smithfield libraries, and can also access Senate House Library and the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies library.

38. Across our London campuses, we provide a wide range of specialist teaching and learning facilities, including computer laboratories, teaching labs, clinical skills rooms, performance and rehearsal spaces, Bloomberg terminals, and a recently opened haptics suite for dental education. The University has made considerable investment in developing new educational facilities which support interactive, engaging, and collaborative learning.
39. Education is supported by a range of digital learning tools, including our lecture capture system, QReview. Our virtual learning environment (VLE) has benefitted from recent significant investment to improve stability by moving to cloud hosting, and we have also undertaken a refresh of the theme in response to student feedback. We have also deployed Blackboard Ally, which reviews content on the VLE for accessibility. Since 2020, we have made a significant investment in the development of Mixed Mode Education, for which we were shortlisted for an award by UCISA in 2022. Staff delivering Mixed Mode Education can use both MS Teams, providing flexibility in the platform, and have access to training in the effective use of the platform. MME is supplemented by a range of other digital pedagogies, including the use of mixed-reality, to provide students with new ways of experiencing practical activities. Principally this has been through using HoloLens technology in medicine and in chemistry.