UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT 2023/24

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1. Introduction

1.1   The University's mission is to create, share and apply knowledge to make a difference to individuals and society. In doing so, the University is proud of our high-quality student experiences and successes and is committed to protecting the value of the University of Portsmouth degree over time.

1.2   This Undergraduate Degree Outcomes Statement updates the Statement published in 2023, providing an analysis of the 2022/23 final year undergraduate degree classifications for graduates, with a focus on first-class (1st) and upper second-class (2:1) awards. We have reviewed the 2022/23 undergraduate degree outcomes against previous years, and provide an overview of the award gap.

1.3   The data presented in this report is from publicly available data sources: The Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA) and the Office for Students (OfS). Data from these sources typically looks at full-time (FT), first-degree (FD) students hence it will be delayed and different from data presented in the University's internal Annual Monitoring report which focuses on our undergraduate (UG) full-time (FT) students and reports results for 2023/2024 academic year which is not available at the time of writing in public data sources.

2. Institutional Degree Classification Profile

2.1   The 5-year analysis in Table A below illustrates the 1st and 2:1-degree classification profile with an 8-percentage point range over the period from 2018/19 to 2022/23. Whilst always remaining 1-3% below the national average, the University's overall percentage of 1st and 2:1-degree classifications trajectory during these five years has largely mirrored the trends within the sector as a whole.

2.2   The proportion of first-class degrees awarded at the University of Portsmouth ranged from 26% to 35% between 2018/19 to 2022/23 (see Table B). Across all five years, the University was within 1-4% of the sector's proportion of first-class degrees.

Table A: Overall percentage of combined 1st and 2:1-degree classifications for UK, EU and International students completing first degree.

	Academic Year				
	2018/19	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**
University of Portsmouth	73%	79%	81%	76%	76%
Sector*	76%	82%	83%	79%	77%

* Figures are taken from https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/outcomes and specifically from Table 16. Values have been rounded to the nearest integer. Unclassified degrees excluded following HESA Guidelines.

Table B: Overall percentage of 1st degree classifications for UK, EU and International students completing first degrees.

	Academic Year				
	2018/19	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**
University of Portsmouth	26%	31%	35%	30%	*31%*
Sector*	28%	35%	36%	32%	30%

* Figures are taken from https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/outcomes and specifically from Table 16. Values have been rounded to the nearest integer. Unclassified degrees excluded following HESA Guidelines.

2.3   In July 2022, Universities UK members in England committed to returning by 2023 to the levels of 1st and 2:1s awarded before the pandemic. In 2021/22 and 2022-23, the University's 1st and 2:1s were back in line with pre-COVID 1st and 2:1 outcomes, i.e. 78%. The University has reversed the increase in first-class and upper-second-class awarded degrees to pre-COVID levels ahead of the Universities UK target date.

2.3   Table C below provides a breakdown of 1st and 2:1s based upon those awarded to full-time undergraduate White students vs. Black students. The University's awarding gap varied over a four-year period between 16% in 2019/20 to 23.7% in 2021/22. The magnitude of the gap at the University of Portsmouth is similar to that within the sector where over the last four years the gap has at its lowest been 18.3% and at its highest 22.9%.

Table C: Office for Students (OfS) Awarding Gap between White and Black Students on Full-Time Undergraduate Students

	Academic Year				
	2018/19	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**
University of Portsmouth	23.3%	16%	19.1%	23.7%	27.0%
Sector*	22.9%	19.8%	18.3%	20.1%	22.4%

*Figures taken from the OfS Access and Participation Plan Attainment data (https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/). Figures rounded to 1 decimal place.

2.5   The awarding gap is a priority area for the University, with a particular focus on Black students and those from the most deprived areas. The University has been a member of the Race Equality Charter since 2018 and has earned in 2021 a Bronze award as a result of its commitment to uplifting our Black, Asian and Minority ethnic staff and students. In the latest Access and Participation plan the awarding gap remains a key focus with a detailed action plan in place to address the gap (available here).

2.6   The University is committed to eliminating unexplained gaps in performance and outcomes between priority groups by 2025 and to going further in addressing absolute gaps in performance by 2030. The University Vision 2030 and Strategy 2025 sets out our ambition to be the leading modern University in the UK. Through innovative and inclusive education, we will support every student to reach their potential, with outstanding outcomes. By 2030 we will ensure that awarding gaps are a thing of the past. Unexplained gaps exist when comparing Black students' percentage of 1st and 2:1s to White students' percentage of 1st and 2:1s, and when comparing male students against female students, over the four years. In addition, in 2024 the University launched a strategic University-wide Raising the Heat on the Awarding Gap campaign with every academic and professional service department taking forward an action plan to reduce the gap. Reducing and eliminating these gaps are a priority focus for the University.

3.   Assessment and Marking Practices

3.1   The University's [Assessment Regulations for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Courses](#) are publicly available and are explicit, transparent and accessible to ensure availability to all audiences.

3.2   The Assessment Regulations for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Courses include the University's marking and feedback practices. These practices have been developed, and are regularly reviewed, to ensure the University meets the Office for Students B Conditions of registration, and in this case Condition B4: Assessment and Awards. As such, these practices are central to how the University sets and maintains the academic standards of its awards.

3.3   After a detailed review, the University launched a revised Assessment Regulations policy in September 2024. This updated policy enhances support for students through the assessment process, introduces categorical marking to promote greater transparency and consistency in marking, and also addresses and removes historic barriers to success, ensuring that all students have equitable opportunities to demonstrate their academic achievements while maintaining rigorous academic standards.

4.   Teaching Practices and Learning Resources

4.1   The University's Strategy commits to being recognised nationally and internationally for our success in offering world-class undergraduate and postgraduate education to people with the potential and motivation to succeed. Through the [University of Portsmouth Student Charter and the Hallmarks of a Portsmouth Graduate](#), we develop knowledgeable, independent graduates with a global outlook, who are set for success in their future careers and make a positive contribution to society. Thanks to exceptional teaching, facilities and student experience, students are empowered to meet and exceed the expectations in the Charter and develop the characteristics outlined in our Hallmarks.

4.2   The University in [2023 was awarded the highest overall rating of Gold](#) in the Teaching Excellence Framework which it also attained in 2017. This renewed accreditation which lasts for four years confirms the University's commitment to offering its students an outstanding learning experience and ranks it among the top universities in the UK for teaching.

4.3   The University reviews and updates course curricula regularly to ensure they incorporate the latest research evidence and professional practice, meet national standards, and employer expectations and respond reflectively to student feedback. Course teams are supported through these reviews using the enABLe workshop process. Within and beyond the curricula, students are supported in developing their wide-ranging research, problem-solving and personal skills. Our approach to maintaining academic standards and assuring quality through course monitoring and updates is based on three core pillars: the effective sharing of good practice; data-informed early intervention through local action planning; and student co-development.

4.4   The University invests significantly in researching and applying innovative pedagogic practices and approaches to enhance student engagement, outcomes and transformational learning opportunities. This is exemplified through enABLe, the University's innovative learning design framework, which has been recognised by JISC and the Office for Students (OfS) as an example of best practice in supporting a team-based approach to learning design. This has led to an institutional focus on Teach Well, Consistently Well as a key driver for engagement and enhancement. This message is supported through our Level-7, 30-credit module entitled Teach Well: Principles to Practice module which covers three pedagogical pillars of learning design, teaching practice, and assessment and feedback. Beyond these initiatives, more specific interventions, such as TESTA (Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment) have been integral in developing a collaborative student-centred approach to redesigning assessment. When the University revised its curricula in 2019 to align with our 2019 Curriculum Framework courses were supported through TESTA. This work continues each year with 8-12 courses engaging in TESTA. The University employs 1,785 academic staff, of whom 52.5% have fellowships awarded through an Advance HE accredited CPD scheme (above the sector average of 49.8%). Our Fellowships include 14 Principal Fellows (PFHEA) and 81 Senior Fellows (SFHEA). All categories of Fellowship have demonstrated growth this year: Associate Fellow D1 122%, Fellow (D2) 69%, and D3 85%. We also have one successful CATE (Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence) award holder.

4.5   Students play a central role in working with staff to drive consideration of how data and the student's voice can be used to shape our enhancement activities. Their voice is crucial in helping staff better understand the context in which the student outcomes data have come about, and to engage with cultural concepts for which data and benchmarks are not readily

available such as student identity, belonging and community. Working with students is essential in our drive for continued positive student outcomes within the context of robust academic standards.

5. Challenges and Opportunities

5.1   The University is aware of awarding gaps for differential student groups (see Table C) and, in the latest Vision and Strategy of the University, has committed to reducing these gaps, and we have set ourselves challenging targets by when to do this. Indeed, progress has already been made with the latest internal data for full-time undergraduates in 2023/24 showing a 17% awarding gap down from 27% in 22/23. Similarly, internal data shows that the awarding gap between those of Mixed and White backgrounds has reduced from 12% in 2022/23 to 5% in 2023/24 for full-time undergraduates. Whilst this progress is encouraging we recognise this is only the first step in a journey to reducing the awarding gaps.

5.2   As part of the University's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and innovation plans, a comprehensive review of the External Examining role and practices will be undertaken in the forthcoming academic cycle. This review aims to ensure that the External Examining process continues to deliver maximum benefit for students by upholding academic standards, enhancing assessment practices, and supporting the integrity of degree outcomes for the future.