

Degree Outcomes Statement 2025

First Degree Graduates' Classifications (FT and PT) – Headcounts (rounded down to nearest five)

	Total Headcount (Rounded)	First Class Honours	Upper Second Class Honours	First and Upper Second Combined	Lower Second and Third Class Honours / Pass Combined
2018/19	1451	350	568	918	533
2019/20	1503	403	624	1027	476
2020/21	1439	447	585	1032	407
2021/22	1418	390	565	955	463
2022/23	1727	492	718	1210	517
2023/24	1582	469	686	1155	427

	Total Headcount (Rounded)	First Class Honours	Upper Second Class Honours	First and Upper Second Combined	Lower Second and Third Class Honours / Pass Combined
2018/19	1451	24.1%	39.1%	63.3%	36.7%
2019/20	1503	26.8%	41.5%	68.3%	31.7%
2020/21	1439	31.1%	40.7%	71.7%	28.3%
2021/22	1418	27.5%	39.8%	67.3%	32.7%
2022/23	1727	28.5%	41.6%	70.1%	29.9%
2023/24	1582	29.6%	43.4%	73.0%	27.0%

The graduating class of 2023/24 show 73% achieving a First or Second Class Degree, the highest level within the five-year reporting period. The rate of Third Class degrees has fallen to its lowest level in the reporting period. We believe this to be, in part, a reflection of the impact of the institutional focus on assessment and feedback as reflected in the current and most recent University Learning Teaching and Assessment Plans. There has been a clear focus in the last five years on improving the clarity, consistency and transparency of assessment tasks and marking criteria, alongside introducing more authentic assessment within our curriculum which is preparing our students for their future careers.

Having considered our degree attainment data in terms of particular student characteristics we have identified that there is a gap in the outcomes of students with characteristics of socio-economic disadvantage measured using Indices of Multiple Deprivation (187 students in IMD Quintile 1), with 16.8% poorer outcomes than the most advantaged students. There is a 14.1% gap between students with reported cognitive disabilities (n=25) and a 5.7% gap between students with multiple disabilities (n=57) compared to those with no reported disabilities. There is a 32% gap between Black British students (n=27) and white students' degree outcomes, and a 20% gap between Asian students (n=76) and white students' degree outcomes. There is a 19% gap between Mixed ethnicity students (n=40) and white students' degree outcomes.

The University is committed to removing barriers to attainment and to providing opportunities and support to all its students. The University's Access and Participation Plan (APP) sets out the range of positive steps it is taking to close attainment gaps for students with particular characteristics. The University's APP 2024-2028 includes targets of:

- Eliminating the difference in degree Attainment (1st and 2:1) between IMD Q1 students and IMD Q5 students
- Eliminating the difference in degree Attainment (1st and 2:1) between POLAR4 Q1 students and POLAR4 Q5 students
- Reducing the difference in degree Attainment (1st and 2:1) between Black students and White students
- Reducing the difference in degree Attainment (1st and 2:1) between students with cognitive disability and non-disabled students
- Reducing the difference in degree Attainment (1st and 2:1) between students with Multiple disabilities and non-disabled students

2. Assessment and marking practices

The University of Cumbria assures itself that assessment criteria meet sector reference points through the following key mechanisms:

- The design, development and approval of degree programmes with alignment to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), national credit frameworks and subject benchmark statements;
- The application of the University's Academic Regulations, Procedures and Processes which align to the FHEQ;
- The operation, and ongoing review and development of, the University's Curriculum Design Framework
- The requirement for external engagement in programme approval processes, through the use of External Advisors and External Team members appointed from other institutions across the UK;
- The recruitment, induction of suitably qualified staff to deliver degree programmes and the ongoing review and professional development of these staff (including the University's commitment to Advance HE's UK Professional Standards Framework);
- The use of internal moderation processes, and double marking for dissertations of 40 credits and above;
- The use of External Examiners from other institutions who moderate assessment for the University's programmes and provide annual reports which provide assurance of, and commentary on, academic standards;
- The consideration through formal committees of annual reports on a range of key processes including student appeals, student complaints and academic malpractice.

3. Academic governance

Effective academic governance is essential in protecting the value of the University's qualifications over time. Academic Board, the most senior deliberative committee within the University, has responsibilities including academic standards, the validation and review of courses, policies and procedures for assessment and the content of the curriculum. Academic Board discharges these responsibilities through a range of sub-committees. Annual items considered through sub-committees include reports on External Examiner Reports, validation and student casework. Such reports cover all of the University's provision including that delivered through collaborative partners.

The University's assessment procedures and processes (including formal Assessment Boards) are responsible for ensuring that moderation processes have taken place. This, alongside formal reporting from External Examiners, provides assurance of marking standards wherever the University's programmes are delivered.

Academic Board reports to Academic Governance Committee, a sub-committee of the governing body; University Board. Academic Governance Committee (AGC) is responsible for providing assurance to University Board that the academic-related registration conditions of the Office for Students, including those relating to quality and standards, continue to be met. AGC provides an

Annual Report to University Board on this basis. Members of AGC and University Board have significant higher education leadership experience, ensuring that there is appropriate challenge of the University's outcomes and performance in relation to quality and standards.

This Degree Outcomes Statement 2025 has been considered and endorsed by Academic Governance Committee and approved by University Board. **ONCE APPROVED**

4. Classification algorithms

The University of Cumbria operates a single algorithm to calculate Honours Degree classifications as set out in the Academic Regulations. Module marks using percentages are used for award classification purposes with degree classification being based on the mean percentage mark. The pass mark for undergraduate modules is 40%.

Bachelor degrees are calculating using a weighted mean of 30% at (Level 5 – Year 2) and 70% at Level 6 – Year 3). In the case of top-up degrees where all the modules are at Level 6, the classification is based on the mean mark of the marks for all modules undertaken.

Percentage marks are ascribed to Bachelor degree classifications as follows:

Type of Classification	Lower final mark threshold	Upper final mark threshold
First Class	69.50%	100%
Upper Second Class	59.50%	69.49%
Lower Second Class	49.50%	59.49%
Third Class	39.50%	49.49%
Fail	0%	39.49%

Where the mean percentage mark is within 2% of the next higher classification band and at least 100 credits (or in the case of top up degrees 40 credits) are in the higher classification, the student will be awarded the higher classification. Pass/Fail modules are removed from the degree calculation.

Undergraduate students are allowed a reassessment for any module that they fail on the first attempt. Marks for the reassessment are capped at the pass mark. Students can exceptionally be allowed an uncapped reassessment in cases where extenuating circumstances have been submitted and approved. If students fail on reassessment, they have the opportunity to re-register to retake the module in its entirety, repeating the assessment and having another reassessment opportunity during the retake.

The University operates a system of compensation meaning that marginal failure in a module (a mark of between 35% and 39%) can be 'compensated', in that a pass is awarded for the module but the actual mark stands. Compensation can be applied in up to 40 credits of modules at Level 4, up to 20 credits at Level 5 and up to 20 credits at Level 6. The exception to this is modules which have been validated as 'core' meaning that compensation is not allowed; this normally applies to programmes governed by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) regulations.

In academic year 2020/21, Emergency and Additional Regulations were applied in recognition of the impact of the Covid19 pandemic on students and their learning. The degree calculation provisions of the Emergency and Additional Regulations continue to apply to an increasingly very small number of continuing students in 2024/25 and beyond, applying only to any students who were studying modules counting towards degree classification during the period of March-August 2020.

Students are directed to the University's Academic Regulations which include degree classification algorithms through admissions and enrolment processes. The regulations are further signposted within Programme Handbooks and module guide information on module sites on the University's Virtual Learning Environment. The Academic Regulations are available [here](#).

5. Teaching practices and learning resources

The University is committed to continual improvement of teaching and learning practice as set out in our Academic Strategy and our Learning Teaching and Assessment Plan. Enhancements to benefit teaching practices and learning resources in recent years include:

- Investment in online resources and digital library resources to improve the accessibility of resources for all students, whether studying on campus, blended or distance/online learning programmes (including apprenticeships)
- Investment in online learning tools and digital technologies
- A sustained programme of staff development for those involved in teaching or supporting students
- Enhancement of student feedback processes to better understand and respond to student feedback, including from 2024/25 a new module evaluation survey tool
- A continued focus on improving assessment briefs and assessment rubrics to help students better understand assessment criteria and to provide transparency in how marks are allocated for work
- Curating access to high quality open access library resources for use by our collaborative partners to support students who study on validated and franchised programmes

6. Identifying good practice and actions

External Examiners, in 2024/2025, identified good practice in the following areas:

- The diverse and authentic range of assessment strategies
- The constructive, supportive and detailed feedback given to students, including the feedback feed forward approach
- The quality and consistency of marking across modules
- The levels of support for student, the programme teams were commended for being responsive and supportive

The University is focussed on a number of key actions including:

- Implementing the 2024-27 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Plan, supported by linked staff development, with a focus on authentic assessment
- Employing good Curriculum Design and Learning, Teaching and Assessment practices to remove barriers to success for diverse student groups
- Addressing variations in attainment on different campuses or in different study modes through an informed and comprehensive appraisal of the structural and circumstantial contexts of the different groups
- Enhancing student advice and support to proactively support our learners throughout their educational and personal journey with us
- Ensuring a consistently high quality experience for students accessing their learning online

7. Challenges and areas for development

The University of Cumbria is committed to making Higher Education accessible to learners from a variety of backgrounds and to meeting the workforce needs of the regions of Cumbria and North Lancashire. We are a multi-site University with campuses in Carlisle, Lancaster, Ambleside and from 2025 in Barrow in Furness, West Cumbria. We have a diverse academic portfolio with many professionally accredited programmes, including significant numbers of apprentices studying for a University of Cumbria degree, many of which are studying online. We believe that every one of our students has the potential to achieve and are committed to providing students with high quality teaching, learning opportunities and student support that will support their success.

The University's Access and Participation Plans take a "Whole Provider" approach to improving outcomes for students in underrepresented groups with the intention that most institutional effort is devoted to creating curricula, teaching, pastoral and social systems which are inclusive and equal by default and which see the measures of success at different stages of the student lifecycle as interconnected. There is a further focus on interventions for specific groups of students where a significant gap exists between their achievement and that of students in the majority group.

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