

Degree Outcomes Statement

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Effective from January 2025

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1.1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 The University of Manchester has published this Degree Outcomes Statement in line with <u>guidance</u> from the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA). The guidance recommends that all higher education institutions across England publish a Statement to outline how we ensure the value of degrees are protected in line with sector-recognised standards. The Degree Outcomes Statement explains how final degree classifications are calculated, and how the University meets standards set out in Office for Students' ongoing conditions of registration (B4 and B5) and the UK Quality Code.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 The Degree Outcomes Statement provides the results of internal reflection and review of their arrangements for teaching, learning and assessment of students, academic regulations, and academic governance.

1.3 Applicability

1.3.1 This document applies to all undergraduate students at the University of Manchester.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 Key terms

- 2.1.1 Pedagogy: methods and practice of teaching.
- 2.1.2 QAA: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education responsible for ensuring quality and standards in UK higher education.

2.2 Acronyms

- 2.2.1 APP: Access and Participation Plan
- 2.2.2 IMD: indices of multiple disadvantage
- 2.2.3 OBL: Online Blended Learning

3.0 Statement Overview

- 3.0.1 Institutional Degree Classification Profile: The Universities Degree classification Profile shows the percentage of degree classifications awarded by the University since 2017. The University operates in accordance with the Universities UK Degree Classification: Statement of Intent, which outlines a commitment to protect the value of UK degrees. The University's Access and Participation Plan outlines the University's strategy to reduce the awarding gap between students of different sex, area backgrounds, ethnic groups, disabled and non-disabled students, and other groups who may experience barriers to higher education. A new Access and Participation Plan has recently been approved which will come into effect in the 2025/2026 academic year. The current Access and Participation Plan will remain in place until the end of the 2024/2025 academic year. The University monitors and publishes awarding gaps and the Access and Participation Strategy Group oversees the work of the University to widen participation and reduce progression and awarding gaps.
- 3.0.2 Good practice and teaching and learning enhancement activity: The Teaching Excellence team at the University deliver a number of initiatives to foster a culture of sharing good practice in teaching, learning, assessment and student support, such as the University's AdvanceHE Fellowship Scheme (formerly LEAP), the annual Teaching and Learning Conference, and the New Academics Programme. The Teaching Excellence Team develop various toolkits and resources to support teaching staff to enhance their practice.
- 3.0.3 Assessment and marking practices: The <u>Assessment Framework</u> creates a consistent basis for the approach to assessment at the University, including conducting and undertaking assessment, and the outcomes of assessment such as marking, moderation and feedback. Details of intended learning outcomes, including how assessment criteria will enable students to demonstrate achievement of these outcomes must be published in programme specifications. The Teaching Excellence Team offer resources, such as the Online Blended Learning (OBL) toolkit, to support appropriate assessment design and promote good practice.
- 3.0.4 **Quality assurance:** The University of Manchester has a robust institutional framework to maintain consistency and alignment with expected standards and quality for all programmes. All programmes should also be aligned to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, discipline-specific <u>Subject Benchmark Statements</u>, and <u>The Framework for Higher Education</u>. Scrutiny from student partners, industry

professionals, academic peers, External Advisors, and external examiners is an important part of programme approval and major amendment. All colleagues are responsible for the quality assurance of programmes, and a cyclical schedule of continuous monitoring is in place to enable critical reflection on the quality of programmes and to maintain high standards.

- 3.0.5 Academic governance: The Governance structure at the University of Manchester is comprised of several bodies. Senate acts as the University's principle academic authority and provides annual quality assurance reports to the Board of Governors. Senate is supported by several committees and groups, including two Academic Quality and Standards Committees, one for Teaching, Learning and Students, and one for Research. The Teaching, Learning and Students Committee is tasked with maintaining academic quality and standards in teaching and learning, and the enhancement of the student experience. Teaching and Learning Delivery are responsible for managing the Quality Framework, reviewing institutional teaching and learning policy and guidance, including student academic appeals and complaints, and maintaining the Student Protection Plan which identifies the risk to continuation of study for students. Any major issues that are identified are investigated by the relevant body or group and addressed.
- 3.0.6 Classification algorithms: The University's classification algorithms for its taught degree programmes are detailed in our <u>Undergraduate Degree</u>

 Regulations and Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations. Bachelors degree classification is determined using a weighted average for three-year degrees. These weightings are also used as a guide for four-year Bachelors programmes. For postgraduate taught students, degree classification for the award of merit and distinction is based on the weighted average mark across the programme. There may be variations to the classification algorithm, generally due to stricter requirements of professional or statutory bodies. The Degree Regulations also contain information on compensation, reassessment, and details of arrangements for considering students whose mark profiles sit in classification thresholds or borderlines. All students are informed of these classification algorithms through the Degree Regulations and School specific supplementary material.
- 3.0.7 **Teaching practices and learning resources:** In the University's Vision and Strategic Plan, Our Future, our priorities for teaching and learning are enhancing the quality of our teaching, a transformative student experience, realising students' potential: 'Manchester made me', an education for global leadership, and lifelong and flexible learning. The Teaching Excellence team aim to support teaching quality and embed innovative teaching methods by enabling tailored, ongoing professional development for academic staff and the opportunity for staff to share best practice through their blog web page. Our on campus facilities include the University of Manchester Library,

which provides a wide range of paper and electronic resources, and a welcoming study space for students. The <u>Campus Masterplan</u>, is a £1 billion ten-year plan to create a world-class campus with plans to further develop research labs, study space, and accommodation. The University also offers a range of wellbeing and support resources available to students, including the <u>Counselling and Mental Health Service</u>.

3.0.8 **Future actions:** There is a commitment to review this Degree Outcomes Statement each year. The University has a wide range of plans to improve the quality of teaching, reduce differences in degree outcomes between student-groups, and improve the student experience. Annual priorities for improving teaching, learning and the student experience are approved by the Teaching and Learning Strategy Group (TLSG) each year.

4.0 Degree Outcomes Statement

4.1 Institutional degree classification profile

- 4.1.1 The University's degree classification profile can be seen in the document linked to below, which shows the percentage of degree classifications awarded since 2017.
- 4.1.2 The University remains committed to the targets set out in our Access and Participation Plan and to implement strategic evidence-based interventions to remove the Awarding gap for all students. The University continues to see an awarding gap between white, black and Asian students. In 2022/23, the awarding gap between white and black students increased from 12.5% in 2021/22 to 18.6%, significantly higher than our milestone target. The awarding gap between white and Asian students was 12.9% in 2022/23, an increase from 9.3% in 2021/22 We have met our APP milestone target for the awarding gap between disabled and non-disabled students which in 2022/23 has decreased to 0.9%, from 2% in 2022/23. The gap between IMD (indices of multiple disadvantage) Quintile 1 and 5 students has increased from 13.6% in 2021/22 to 14.3% in 2022/23.
- 4.1.3 Our <u>degree classification algorithm</u> has remained the same (aside from additional arrangements put in place during and following the Covid-19 pandemic to seek to ensure that students studying during this period were not adversely affected by the pandemic; for example, the introduction of a 1% increase in the boundary zone between classifications).

- 4.1.4 With reference to our Degree Outcomes, we operate in accordance with the <u>UUK</u>

 <u>Degree Classification 'Statement of Intent'</u> and review our outcomes regularly in order to identify any unexpected uplifts.
- 4.1.5 The University is firmly committed to being an open and accessible university that pro-actively seeks out students capable of benefiting from higher education. The University's strategy for widening participation is set out in our Access and Participation Plan with the Office for Students (OfS) and is overseen by the University's Access and Participation Strategy Group. The Access and Participation Plan covers the whole of the student lifecycle, from increasing the entry rates of widening participation students into HE to improving retention and attainment rates whilst at university and supporting progression into graduate-level employment or further study.

4.2 Good Practice and Teaching and Learning Enhancement Activity

- 4.2.1 The <u>Teaching Excellence Team's Website</u> and <u>blog posts</u> encourage sharing of good practice in relation to teaching, learning, assessment and student support (Academic Advising). Various teaching toolkits and resources have been designed to provide ideas, strategies and techniques to support teaching staff in enhancing key areas of their teaching, learning, assessment and advising practice.
- 4.2.2 The Teaching Excellence Team's annual Teaching and Learning Conference facilitates the sharing of good practice and cross-disciplinary networking on strategic themes. For example, 'Exploring Assessment' was a key theme of the 2024 conference, covering: innovation in assessment; optionality, modularity and moderation; feedback; and assessing large cohorts. The conference is also a pipeline for sharing material to improve practice through the TEA blog and the Open Workshops Programme. Recordings and resources are also made available on the Teaching Excellence website.
- 4.2.3 Assessment and Feedback is a popular strand of the <u>Teaching Excellence's Open</u>

 <u>Workshop Programme</u>, which runs throughout the academic year and is open to all staff
- 4.2.4 A Teaching and Learning Online Network (TALON) Yammer group is well established for colleagues to share good practice and find answers to queries relating to teaching, learning or assessment, with over 600 colleagues currently signed up. This is a peer-to-peer group which is self-sustaining and has led to active collaboration on education projects.

- 4.2.5 The Teaching Excellence Team coordinates the University's Advance HE Fellowship Scheme (formerly LEAP) which is accredited by AdvanceHE to make awards against Descriptors 1-4 of the UK Professional Standards Framework. As part of their award alumni are invited to share their practice via One-Minute CPD videos or case studies. The scheme is available to all staff and there are various routes for students to gain awards through participation in relevant University activities.
- 4.2.6 Good practice is routinely brought into the New Academics and Fellows Programme with more units being delivered collaboratively across the three Faculty pathways.

 New academics are supported in gaining an Advance HE fellowship which is required as part of their probation.
- 4.2.7 The Teaching Excellence Team has a fellowship programme for colleagues to work on strategic projects and University-wide initiatives. Fellows work closely with student partners providing employment opportunities for students and bringing students into the heart of academic development initiatives.
- 4.2.8 Our <u>Teaching and Learning Excellence at Manchester webpage</u> provides information about fostering a culture of excellence for both students and academics. This aligns with our Teaching, Learning and Students (TLS) priorities and includes some of the examples highlighted above, plus details of initiatives to prepare future leaders for a challenging, ever-changing world, for example, through Stellify (co-curricular activities and volunteering opportunities) and Ethical Grand Challenges.

4.3 Assessment and Marking Practices

- 4.3.1 The University has an <u>Assessment Framework</u> in place which governs our approach to assessment across the institution and includes policies on marking, moderation, feedback, examination board procedures and mitigating circumstances. We also have a set of <u>Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations</u> which contain the regulations specific to a student's programme of study, including details concerning assessment and progression, reassessment and classification.
- 4.3.2 Processes for designing assessment are in place whereby specific assessment criteria are produced in order to demonstrate that students' intended learning outcomes are achieved. Schools publish details of their programmes' intended learning outcomes in a programme specification set up for each individual programme.
- 4.3.3 The <u>Teaching Excellence Team</u> has produced an <u>Online and Blended Learning (OBL)</u>
 <u>Assessment Toolkit</u> which outlines the University's key assessment principles and recommended inclusive online assessment types. This quidance has been developed

to help colleagues to make decisions about assessments in an online, blended and flexible learning environment. The team also provides <u>other resources for staff around assessment</u>, including a contract cheating toolkit, which aims to raise awareness about contract cheating as a form of academic malpractice, and offer ways in which to combat it. More work around Assessment Security generally (anti-cheating measures) has taken place in recent years in order to identify the issues and encourage students in good practice.

4.3 Quality Assurance

- 4.3.1 The University of Manchester protects the integrity of its degree outcomes through a collective responsibility for quality assurance. Colleagues across the university (and where delivery takes place at a validated partner) operate closely and collaboratively, and within a robust institutional framework that maintains consistency and alignment with expected standards and quality.
- 4.3.2 Objective scrutiny is an integral component of our quality framework where student partners, industry professionals, academic peers and external examiners are a prominent feature of programme approval and major amendment processes, the latter of whom are also required to attend examination boards. Such critical inspection prevents complacency, supports calibration across and within subject areas and ensures compliance with sector expectations. A coordinated programme to review practices is being strengthened across this academic year and future years, including partnering with those outside the immediacy of the Programme Team which will form part of this process.
- 4.3.3 A cyclical schedule of continuous monitoring, review and enhancement ensures there is a constant and cumulative dialogue to ensure the maintenance of standards and the enhancement of the student experience at the University. The Annual Performance Review considers classification data as part of its scope, and an extended meeting of the Teaching and Learning Strategy Group (TLSG), provides a summative opportunity to join up critical reflection from throughout the year. An aggregated institutional report of external examiner feedback and a summary report of those submitted by Collaborative Academic Advisors, as well as Faculty quality statements and consideration of all major changes to programme portfolios are scrutinised for their compliance with regulatory and sector requirements. This annual review of teaching and learning also ensures we can be satisfied that assessment practices have taken place in accordance with our University <u>Assessment Framework</u> and the University <u>Quality Framework/programme enhancement processes</u>, managed by Teaching and Learning Delivery, Division of Student and Academic Services (SAS).

- 4.3.4 External Examiners are appointed at the University both at programme and subject level with a specific remit to ensure assessment procedures have been properly discharged, and the standard of our awards and student performance maintain at least nationally comparable standards. Faculty-approved appointments of External Examiners are subject to recruitment, induction and supporting practices to ensure their role in assuring degree outcomes are in line with QAA's core practices and expectations on externality. External examiners are asked to draw upon their comparative experience of sector norms to review all core assessments leading to classification, as well as to moderate work to reconfirm alignment and level of rigour as applied in practice by academic colleagues. Annual External Examiner reports are shared with students as part of a transparent system of quality assurance based on partnership.
- 4.3.5 All new programmes are subject to additional scrutiny by an External Adviser to express their professional judgement about the alignment of intended learning outcomes and overall programme assessment structure with external reference points, specifically the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and discipline-specific <u>Subject Benchmark Statements</u>, and <u>The Framework for Higher Education</u>. No programme can reach the second stage of approval without fulfilling the requirement to appoint and to act upon the feedback from this autonomous subject expert.

4.5 Academic Governance

- 4.5.1 The University of Manchester's governance structure is comprised of a number of authoritative bodies, some of which include both officers of the University and lay members.
- 4.5.2 The <u>Senate</u> plays a key role in the governance of the University of Manchester, acting as the University's principal academic authority. A large number of the statutory powers reserved to Senate are regulatory in nature and control the academic business of the University. The Senate is responsible to the <u>Board of Governors</u> for the promotion of research and for monitoring standards in teaching.
- 4.5.3 Senate is supported by two Academic Quality and Standards Committees, for Teaching, Learning and Students (AQSC TLS), and for Research. AQSC TLS is tasked with assuring Senate regarding the maintenance of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning, and the enhancement of the student experience.
- 4.5.4 An annual assurance report regarding quality and standards for Teaching, Learning and Students is provided to AQSC TLS and the Board's Audit and Risk Committee,

- before the report is submitted to a joint meeting of the Board of Governors and Senate.
- 4.5.5 The Teaching and Learning Strategy Group (TLSG) is chaired by the Vice-President for Teaching, Learning and Students. Its remit is to develop, promote and monitor strategies, policies and procedures for the delivery and enhancement of teaching and learning, as well as to develop and monitor policies and procedures for the maintenance of standards and the enhancement of the student experience (undergraduate and postgraduate taught, including collaborative provision).
- 4.5.6 The Teaching and Learning Strategy Events group has a wider membership from across the University and acts as an advisory group to the Teaching and Learning Strategy Group.
- 4.5.7 Teaching and Learning Delivery within the Division of Student and Academic Services (SAS) manages the <u>Quality Framework</u>, including determining the processes by which reviews of the quality and standards of educational provision and the student academic experience take place, and has responsibility for managing and reviewing institutional <u>teaching and learning policy and guidance</u>, including <u>student academic appeals and complaints</u>.
- 4.5.8 The University's <u>Student Protection Plan</u>, a requirement on HEIs from the Office for Students, contains an assessment of risks to continuation of study for students, including measures to mitigate risks and links to refund policy.
- 4.5.9 Any major issues that are identified or brought to our attention by External Examiners, through internal quality processes, student appeals and complaints or by student representation methods, are investigated by the relevant body or group, with actions put in place to address such issues if required.

4.6 Classification algorithms

- 4.6.1 The University's classification algorithms for its taught degree programmes are detailed in our <u>Undergraduate Degree Regulations</u> and <u>Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations</u>. If specific Schools require any variations to the classification algorithms for particular degree programmes, they must seek approval from their Faculty; generally, any such variations would only be due to stricter requirements of professional or statutory bodies.
- 4.6.2 Bachelors degree classification is determined using a weighted average for three-year degrees. These weightings are also used as a guide for four-year Bachelors

programmes and those which also include a study abroad year or placement, unless there are alternative requirements for external accreditation by a professional or statutory body.

- 4.6.3 The <u>Undergraduate Degree Regulations</u> provide details of arrangements for consideration of students whose mark profiles sit in classification thresholds or borderlines, including the process of classification review. After allowances have been made for mitigating circumstances, students whose weighted average at the first assessment is within the boundary zone of a degree classification (2%, or 3% for Third Class), they must be awarded the higher degree classification as long as a number of criteria are satisfied: for undergraduate students, 2/3 of the credits taken in the awarding academic year are equal to/higher than the final award (for example, if the student is in the boundary between a 2.1 and a first, 2/3 of the credits must be at 70% or higher to fulfil this criteria and award the student a first class degree).
- 4.6.4 For postgraduate taught students, degree classification for the award of merit and distinction is based on the weighted average mark across the programme calculated to one decimal place, where marks for individual course units are recorded as whole numbers. After allowances have been made for mitigating circumstances, postgraduate students whose total mark at the first assessment is within the boundary zone of a degree classification (2%), must be awarded the higher degree classification as long as both the following criteria are satisfied: for the award of distinction, 2/3 of the credits are equal to/ or higher than the final award.
- 4.6.5 Students are required to successfully complete all course units registered against their programme of study, in order to qualify for an award. Where a student is unsuccessful at their first attempt, they may be offered a reassessment opportunity for the affected unit, unless in the final year; the marks for these reassessments are capped at the lowest compensable mark.
- 4.6.6 At undergraduate level, compensation is available for a maximum of 40 credits, per level, at levels 4 and 5 of an undergraduate programme.
- 4.6.7 Postgraduate taught programmes can be compensated up to 40 credits for PG Diploma/Masters and 20 credits for a PG Certificate. The number of credits referred and those compensated cannot exceed half the taught credits in total. The total number of credits allowable for referral for a PG Diploma/Masters is 60, of which 40 can be compensated. For a PG Certificate, the total number of credits allowable for referral is 30 credits, of which 20 can be compensated.

- 4.6.8 Students are informed about these algorithms via the <u>Degree Regulations</u> and programme or School specific supplementary material in their programme handbooks or School intranet. External Examiners are provided with links to the Degree Regulations and other related policies and procedures, so that they are aware of these as part of their role.
- 4.6.9 These algorithms and specifications of the <u>Degree Regulations</u> are the standard arrangements for all taught programmes, unless programmes are accredited by professional bodies which may have alternative arrangements.

4.7 Teaching practices and learning resources

- 4.7.1 The University's Vision and Strategic Plan, <u>Our Future</u>, sets out our three core goals of research and discovery, teaching and learning, and social responsibility. Under the goal of teaching and learning, our priorities are:
 - Enhancing the quality of our teaching
 - A transformative student experience
 - Realising students' potential: 'Manchester made me'
 - An education for global leadership
 - Lifelong and flexible learning
- 4.7.2 The University's <u>Teaching Excellence Team</u> supports our strategic aim to deliver teaching excellence. Teaching Excellence is an academic centre created to support teaching quality, embed innovative teaching methods and lead on University-wide strategic projects. We are committed to fostering and celebrating a culture of teaching excellence. Through effective and collegial partnership, Teaching Excellence enables ongoing professional development for academic staff, supported and tailored to meet their needs, consequently supporting improvements in teaching quality and standards and thus, also improving the learning experience of students.
- 4.7.3 Teaching Excellence's <u>blog web page</u> contains regular new blog posts and provides the opportunity to share practice and experience around teaching and learning with colleagues, students and the wider public how we Teach, Explore and Apply (as outlined in our blog pages).
- 4.7.4 The University's <u>Learning and Organisational Development</u> unit provides learning, training and development opportunities for all staff members, including for both academic and professional support staff. This, in turn, contributes to enhancing teaching and learning, and the student experience.

- 4.7.5 The University has a <u>Campus Masterplan</u>, which is a £1 billion ten-year plan to create a world-class campus for students and staff. As part of this, there has been recent substantial capital investment in teaching facilities and increased study space, including the Manchester Engineering Campus Development (MECD) now named the Nancy Rothwell Building. This building provides world-class sustainable research facilities, alongside flexible and innovative teaching and learning spaces that enable students to shape their own learning environment. Further plans are in place to develop the campus facilities to provide more research labs, teaching and study spaces, as well as developments in student accommodation provision.
- 4.7.6 The <u>University of Manchester Library</u> provides a welcoming space for students to study, read and work, with a wide range of paper and electronic resources available to support student, and staff, learning and development. <u>My Learning Essentials</u> is the Library's award-winning skills programme, offering face-to-face workshops and a range of online resources for both students and staff members.
- 4.7.7 There are a range of wellbeing and support resources available to students (and staff members) including a <u>student support microsite</u>, which provides advice and information and directs students onto relevant offices, student support resources or external agencies. The <u>Counselling and Mental Health Service</u> provides a wide range of resources, face-to-face appointments, group sessions and online facilities for members of the University who require assistance in this area.

4.8 Future Actions

4.8.1 There is a commitment to review this Degree Outcomes Statement each year. Annual priorities for teaching, learning and improving the student experience are approved by the Teaching and Learning Strategy Group (TLSG), which works in close partnership with the Students' Union and contains student voice representation as an integral part of the group. TLSG, which reports to AQSC TLS, oversee the effective implementation of policies, procedures and structures that support these priorities across schools and faculties. The annual assurance report regarding quality and standards for Teaching, Learning and Students details the success of the implementation of these strategies and identifies areas for improvement.

5.0 Monitoring Compliance

Adherence against this document is expected and should be monitored by Heads of Schools (or their delegates) as part of a wider quality assurance process which supports the Annual Academic Assurance Process including, Schools, Faculties,

Teaching and Learning Strategy Group, the Academic Quality Sub-Committee for Teaching, Learning and Students, and Senate.

6.0 Supporting documents and sources of support

- <u>Undergraduate Degree Regulations</u>
- Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations

Version amendment history box and Document control box

Version amendment history: Degree Outcomes Statement			
Version	Date	Reason for change	
2.0	January 2025	Transfer of document onto new template and update to all sections, approved by TLSG Policy Review subgroup. Previous versions had been hosted on University webpages and updated annually since the document's creation in 2019.	

Document control box		
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