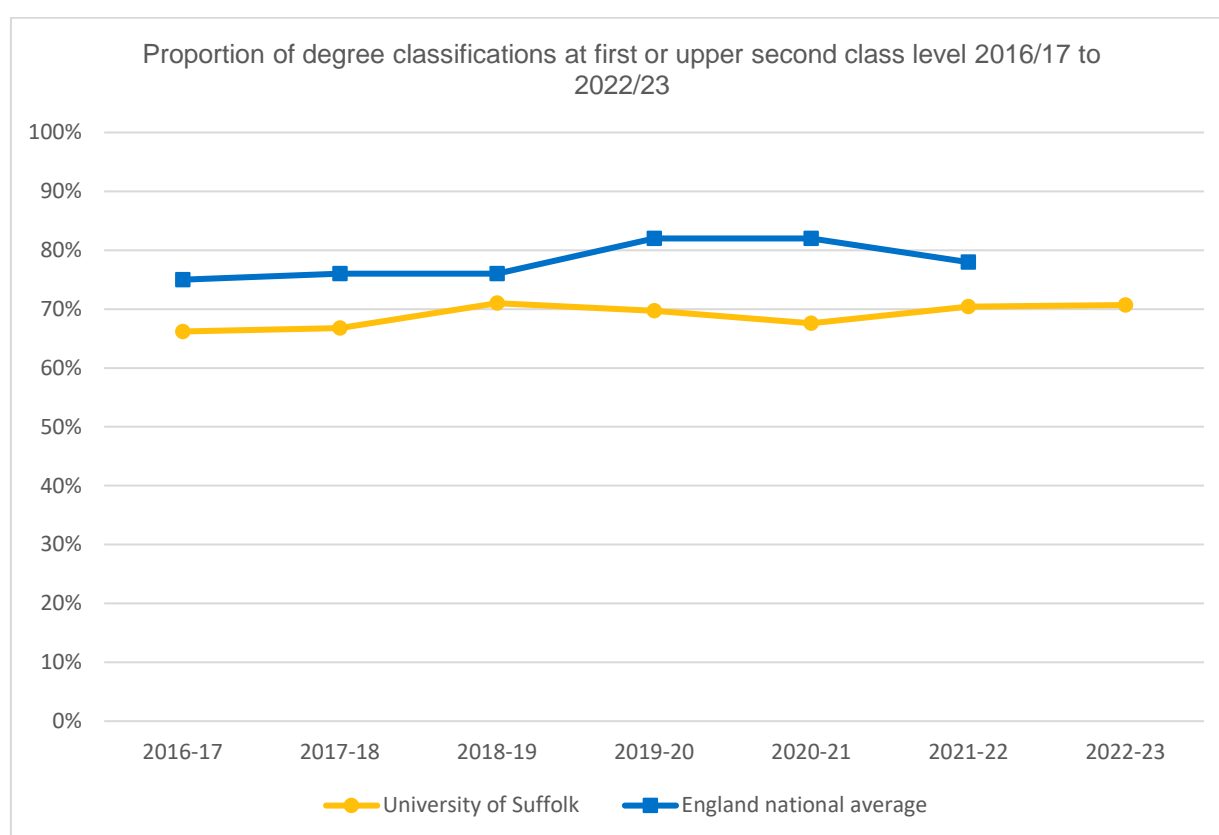


DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT 2022-23

At the University of Suffolk, we are committed to maintaining robust academic standards and ensuring that student attainment is assessed fairly and consistently in line with relevant sector external reference points, so that our awards maintain their value over time.

Our degree classification profile

Degree outcomes at the University of Suffolk and our partner institutions since 2016-17 are summarised in Appendix A. The proportion of awards made at first or upper second class level has remained fairly stable, fluctuating by no more than five percentage points over the period. Attainment rates continue to be below the sector average.



The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

The 2019-20 and 2020-21 data should be viewed within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, with the first national lockdown commencing in March 2020. Like most institutions across the sector, the University made changes to assessment practices where necessary (for example in instances where examinations could no longer be conducted in person) and implemented temporary variations to assessment regulations to mitigate against any adverse effects of the pandemic on student learning and achievement. The approach was informed by Office for Students (OfS) and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) guidelines and was developed following consultation with relevant academic and professional services staff and Students' Union representatives.

In varying the assessment regulations, the University sought to ensure a consistent, reliable and fair approach for all students, providing additional flexibility while ensuring that progression and award decisions were based on reliable evidence of student achievement of intended learning outcomes in order to maintain academic standards. The important formative value of assessment at Levels 3 and 4 was taken into account, with potential for greater flexibility during these earlier stages of study when results do not contribute to final awards. For students at a more advanced stage in their studies, it was agreed that final degree classifications should not be compromised if students' performance in assessments undertaken during the period of disruption was lower than in non-affected assessment. However, subsequent impact analysis showed limited need to use alternative degree classification algorithms, which may have contributed to the relative stability in first and upper second class degree outcomes during the pandemic.

Following the easing of restrictions, the University has reflected carefully on experiences during the pandemic, both with regards to the learning and teaching experiences of its students and the assessment regulations. With the exception of changes adopted specifically to respond to the pandemic situation (such as the no detriment 'safety net' described above, which only applies to assessments taken within the period of disruption), adaptations determined to have had a positive impact on the student experience have been retained.

Our assessment and marking practices

Our academic provision aligns with the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#), with sound processes in place to ensure that assessment and marking practices operate in accordance with Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) reference points. The University's generic marking criteria, which were introduced in 2016 to support the move to a percentage marking scheme, provide a standard internal reference point to support consistency in marking across the University and our partners.¹ Assessment criteria for specific programmes are subject to regular scrutiny through [course \(re\)approval](#) and [external examiner processes](#), with external academic and employer representation included in the (re)approval process.

We ensure consistency in marking through standardised internal and external [moderation processes](#) that are subject to [Assessment Board](#) oversight. Where practice partners are involved in assessment in the workplace, training is provided to ensure understanding of University requirements and expectations. We benefit from independent external input in line with the UK Quality Code's advice and guidance on [external expertise](#), with a sound appointment and induction process for [external examiners](#). External examiners confirmed that across all courses our marking was fair and in line with that of other HE providers across the sector during the 2022-23 reporting cycle. Any [academic appeals](#) or [extenuating circumstances](#) applications by students are considered centrally via dedicated panels, drawing on an established pool of academic and professional services staff which facilitates consistency of decision-making.

¹ They adopt a similar approach to the [degree classification descriptions](#) published as an annex to the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies in October 2019.

Our academic governance arrangements

Our [governance arrangements](#) provide assurance that the value of qualifications awarded over time is protected. All academic schools and partner institutions are required to analyse trends in award classifications as part of the annual quality assurance monitoring processes and institutional level trends are also considered through governance structures. Where classification profiles for particular schools or partners appear significantly different to the University's norm, internal risk alerts are employed to investigate and, where appropriate address any emergent issues. Internal quality audit schedules include regular observations of the conduct of Assessment Boards, with the outcomes reported to the Quality Committee. An annual summary of external examiner reports is considered by the Quality Committee and Senate, providing independent external assurance on the maintenance of standards. This feeds into an annual assurance report to the University's governing body (the Board) on compliance with the Office for Students' (OfS) conditions of registration, including those relating to quality and standards.

Any proposed changes to [assessment regulations](#) are subject to approval by Senate, based on consideration of external requirements, impact assessments and comparison with sector norms. The changes are also subject to review to guard against any adverse unintended consequences post-implementation.

Our method for calculating degree classifications

The degree classification algorithm used at the start of the period under review² drew on a student's performance in their best 100 credits at Level 6 (which must include the dissertation) and their best 100 credits at Level 5 or above, weighted 60:40 respectively. All modules had to be passed at both levels of study: no condonement of marginal failure was permitted. The number of resit opportunities available to students varied depending on the mark awarded for the failed assessment. The use of a limited amount of discounting at each level to determine the degree classification was designed to minimise the impact of under-performance in a single 20 credit module, while still expecting the threshold standards to be met through passing all modules. The algorithm was rigorously and consistently applied across all academic provision (including at partner institutions), with Assessment Boards having no discretionary powers.

A periodic review of the University's undergraduate assessment regulations was conducted during 2020-21, drawing on an analysis of practice within the sector; consultation with staff, student representatives and external examiners; and consideration of assessment data. This resulted in a range of changes being agreed by the University Senate for implementation in 2021-22, including the removal of third attempts at assessment (noting the relatively high failure rate for these and the operational burden of administering them); a reduction in the amount of trailing credit permitted when progressing between levels; and the extension of condonement of marginal failure of non-mandatory modules to all levels of study (subject to a maximum of 20 credits per level) in line with sector norms. No changes to the classification algorithm are being implemented at this stage, but the use of discounting is being kept under review.

Our classification algorithm is clearly communicated to students and other relevant stakeholders through our [Framework and Regulations for Undergraduate Awards](#).

² Noting, however, the temporary variations to assessment regulations implemented in response to the pandemic as discussed above, with the alternative degree classification algorithm only used in a limited number of cases.

Our approach to teaching and support for student learning

We have made a range of enhancements to teaching practices and the student learning environment over the past five years to support student attainment, including:

- Implementation of a new [Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy](#), which underpins course design and development processes and places a strong emphasis on progressive models of teaching and assessment that are tailored to the needs of our student body and increasingly challenge students to take a lead role in their learning. Embedding Peer Review and Enhancement
- From 2019-20, pioneering, within the UK, a [block and blend](#) delivery model, whereby students complete one module at a time over a condensed delivery period, using both online and face-to-face learning environments.
- A parallel push to support our staff to gain Higher Education Academy (HEA) [fellowship status](#) through AdvanceHE, which has brought an increased focus on enhancement of pedagogical practices and greater recognition of professionalism in learning and teaching.
- Continued enhancements to the [academic support](#) provided to students, capitalising on our small size in order to provide a highly supportive, personalised learning environment for students, embracing and valuing diversity, with a new personal academic coach model implemented in 2021-22.
- Capital investment in facilities and resources to support teaching and learning, including opening The Hold in 2020, a purpose built heritage centre, The DigiTech Centre in 2021, to support the delivery of computing related provision, and the Health and Wellbeing Building in 2022, to provide state-of-the-art facilities to health-related provision.
- Further embedding of a user-friendly online learning environment (Brightspace) alongside a series of ['Digipath' learning modules](#) for academic staff which has facilitated the development of engaging approaches to blended and online learning.

Through our [Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching](#) and our commitment to our work on [Access and Participation](#) we are committed to continuing to transform our students' lives through a high quality academic experience that enables them to achieve their full potential.

Actions

The University remains committed to monitoring the proportion of first and upper second class honours degrees and will continue to do so through our internal governance arrangements, with actions raised where necessary.

**University of Suffolk degree classification outcomes
2016-17 to 2021-22**

University of Suffolk overall (including partner institutions)	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Degrees awarded	858	933	822	908	1156	1262	1260
First or upper second class	66.2%	66.8%	71.0%	69.7%	67.6%	70.4%	70.7%
First or upper second class national average (England) ³	75.0%	76.0%	76.0%	82.0%	82.0%	78.0%	

By institution	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1
University of Suffolk (Ipswich campus)	671	65.7%	714	65.4%	631	68.1%	704	68.9%	788	68.5%	763	71.2%	688	69.3%
East Coast College (Great Yarmouth)	32	78.1%	40	55.0%	34	70.6%	45	80.0%	59	67.8%	41	65.9%	35	60.0%
East Coast College (Lowestoft)	46	58.7%	34	64.7%	47	76.6%	27	77.8%	33	87.9%	19	78.9%	35	77.1%
Suffolk New College	7	85.7%	20	55.0%	2	50.0%	11	63.6%	9	88.9%	9	77.8%	4	50.0%
West Suffolk College	102	67.6%	125	80.8%	108	86.1%	109	77.1%	140	75.0%	97	82.5%	86	76.7%
Global Banking School	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	0.0%	43	27.9%	74	10.8%	172	68.6%
London School of Commerce	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	63	60.3%	239	86.6%	713	75.5%
Unitas	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0.0%	21	42.9%	20	5.0%	48	22.9%

By University academic school (excluding partner institutions)	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1
Business	75	73.3%	39	76.9%	41	75.6%	49	73.5%	49	59.2%	32	68.8%	25	80.0%
Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology	140	65.0%	141	57.4%	108	69.4%	110	74.5%	185	65.9%	162	64.8%	168	66.7%
Health and Sports Sciences	238	66.4%	285	66.7%	266	60.5%	334	65.9%	339	65.2%	326	69.6%	294	65.3%
Social Sciences and Humanities	218	62.8%	249	66.7%	216	75.5%	211	69.7%	215	78.1%	243	77.8%	201	76.1%