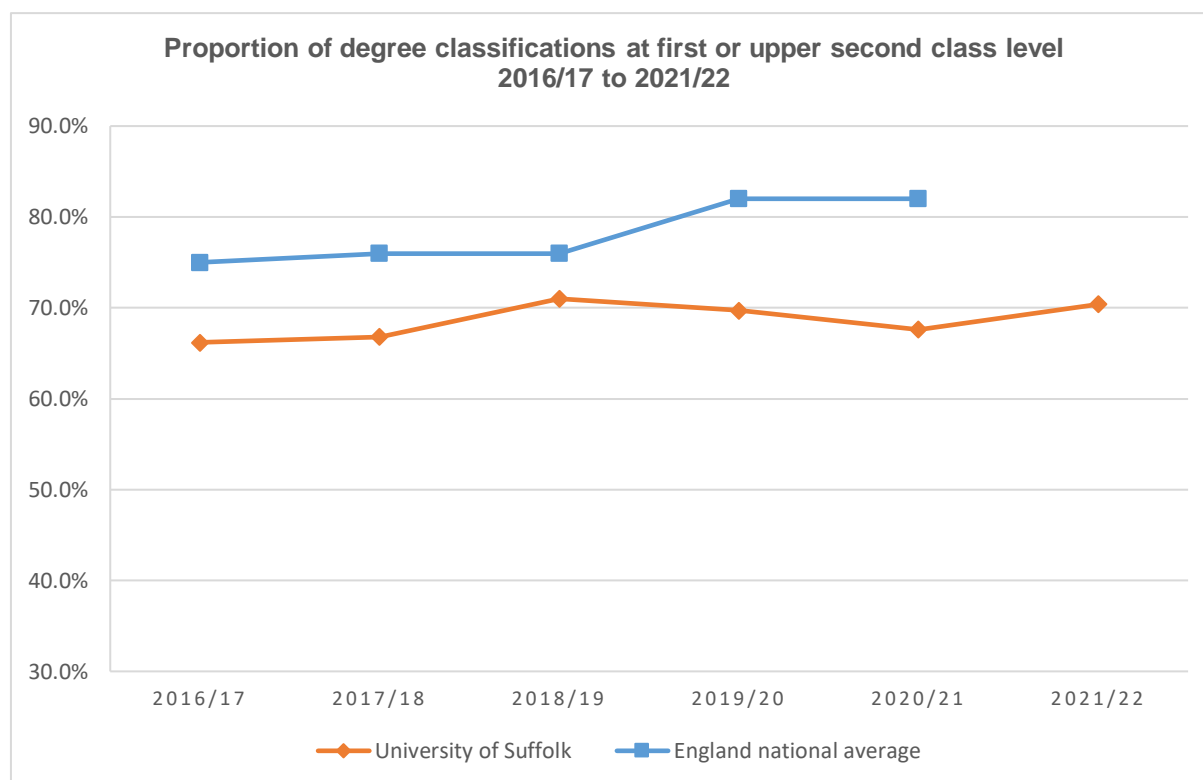


DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT 2021-22

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, with the 2021-22 rate (70.4%) already back in line with pre-pandemic levels in 2018-19 (71%). Attainment rates continue to be below the sector average and have not seen the increase in national data since 2018-19.



Our Access and Participation dataset shows that the attainment gap between White and BAME students has reduced in 2021-22 to 8.1 percentage points, which continues the trend from 2019-20. For the first time, students with a declared disability in 2021-22 have a higher attainment rate (72.1%) compared to students without a declared disability. Likewise for age gap, with students 21 and over now with a marginally higher attainment rate of 71.7% compared to 70.9% for students under 21. Analysis of POLAR4 quintile data shows the gap between quintile 1 and 5 students has reduced to 4.8 percentage points compared to 12.2 percentage points in 2020-21, this has been helped by an increase in attainment rates for quintile 1 and 2 students (of 5.2 and 3.6 percentage points respectively). Similarly, for national IMD quintiles, the gap between quintile 1 and 5 students has reduced to 7.2 percentage points compared to 17.3 percentage points in 2020-21, again helped by an increase in attainment rates for quintile 1 and 2 students (of 8.4 and 9.6 percentage points respectively). Following an

increased gap between male and female students in 2020-21, the gap has reduced to 9.4 percentage points in 2021-22. The reduction in attainment gaps demonstrates the University's commitment to our work on [Access and Participation](#).

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.

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.

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 2021-22 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.

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 annual [Risk-Based Monitoring and Enhancement \(RiME\) processes](#), and institutional level trends are also considered as part of central RiME reporting. Where classification profiles for particular schools or partners appear significantly different to the University's norm, internal [risk alert processes](#) 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 during 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,

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.

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](#).

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.
- A move to a [block and blend](#) delivery model, following a pilot project in 2019-20, 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, and The DigiTech Centre in 2021, to support the delivery of computing related provision offered by the University. The new Health and Wellbeing Building, opened in 2022, provides 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](#), 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 will restart internal actions set from the 2019-20 degree outcomes statement, which were paused during the pandemic, and these should be completed in 2022-23. No specific actions were identified during 2020-21. 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
Degrees awarded	858	933	822	908	1156	1262
First or upper second class	66.2%	66.8%	71.0%	69.7%	67.6%	70.4%
First or upper second class national average (England) ³	75.0%	76.0%	76.0%	82.0%	82.0%	

By institution	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	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%
East Coast College (Great Yarmouth)	32	78.1%	40	55.0%	34	70.6%	45	80.0%	59	67.8%	41	65.9%
East Coast College (Lowestoft)	46	58.7%	34	64.7%	47	76.6%	27	77.8%	33	87.9%	19	78.9%
Suffolk New College	7	85.7%	20	55.0%	2	50.0%	11	63.6%	9	88.9%	9	77.8%
West Suffolk College	102	67.6%	125	80.8%	108	86.1%	109	77.1%	140	75.0%	97	82.5%
Global Banking School	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	0.0%	43	27.9%	74	10.8%
London School of Commerce	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	63	60.3%	239	86.6%
Unitas	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0.0%	21	42.9%	20	5.0%

By University academic school (excluding partner institutions)	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	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%
Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology	140	65.0%	141	57.4%	108	69.4%	110	74.5%	185	65.9%	162	64.8%
Health and Sports Sciences	238	66.4%	285	66.7%	266	60.5%	334	65.9%	339	65.2%	326	69.6%
Social Sciences and Humanities	218	62.8%	249	66.7%	216	75.5%	211	69.7%	215	78.1%	243	77.8%

Degree classification outcomes by student profile (based on the University's internal Access and Participation Plan dataset)

By age	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	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
Young (under 21)	329	65.7%	351	65.2%	337	68.0%	346	67.9%	420	67.9%	395	70.9%
Mature (21 and over)	501	67.3%	559	68.7%	463	73.0%	531	71.8%	614	72.0%	774	71.7%

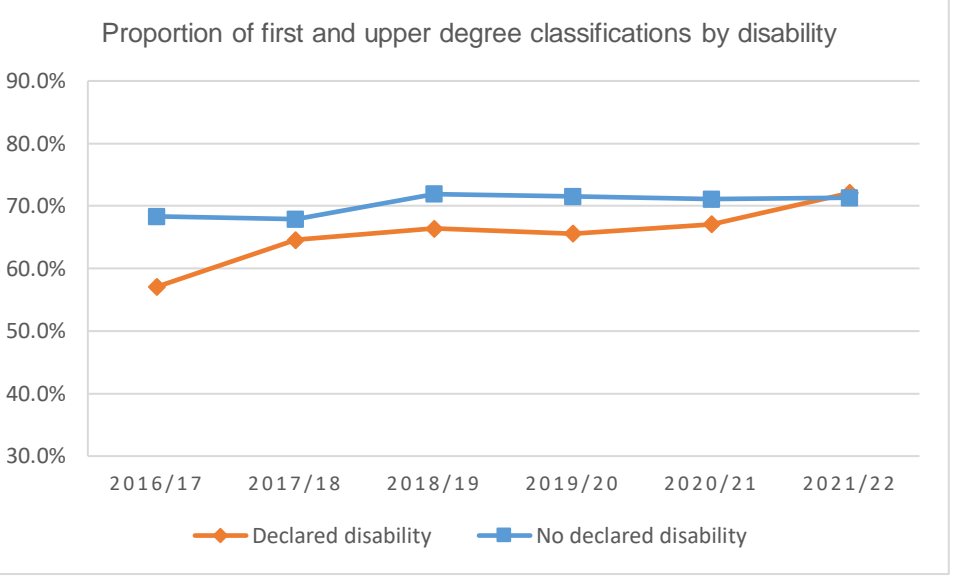
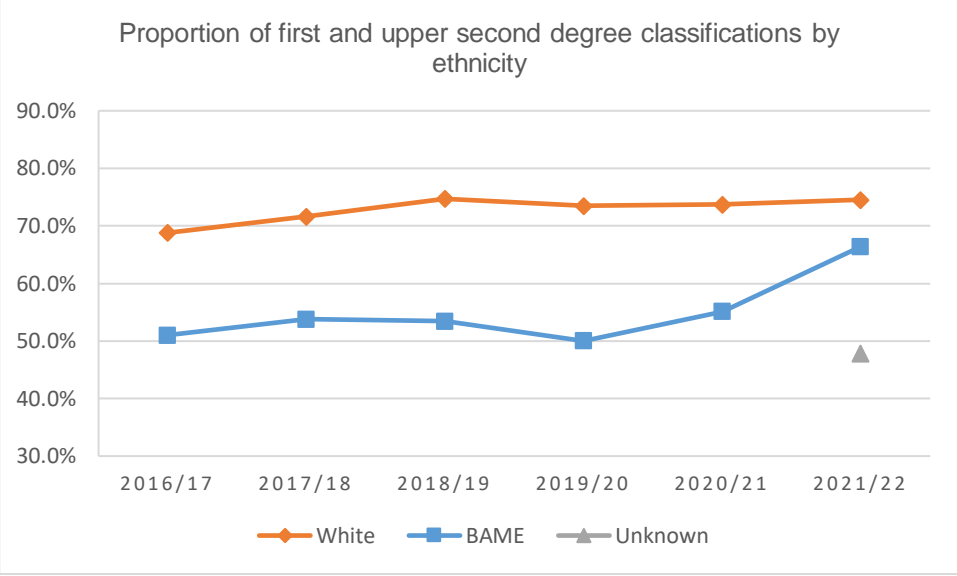
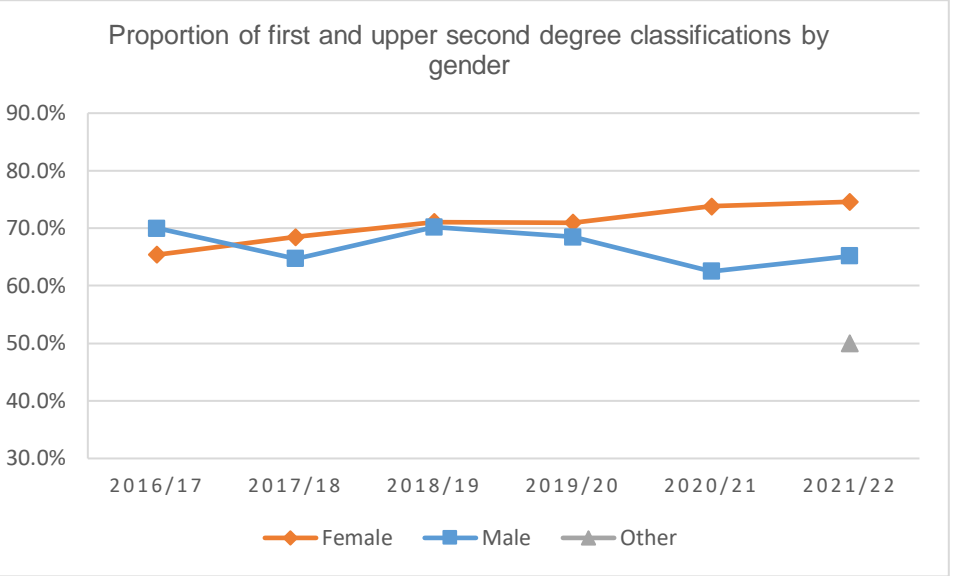
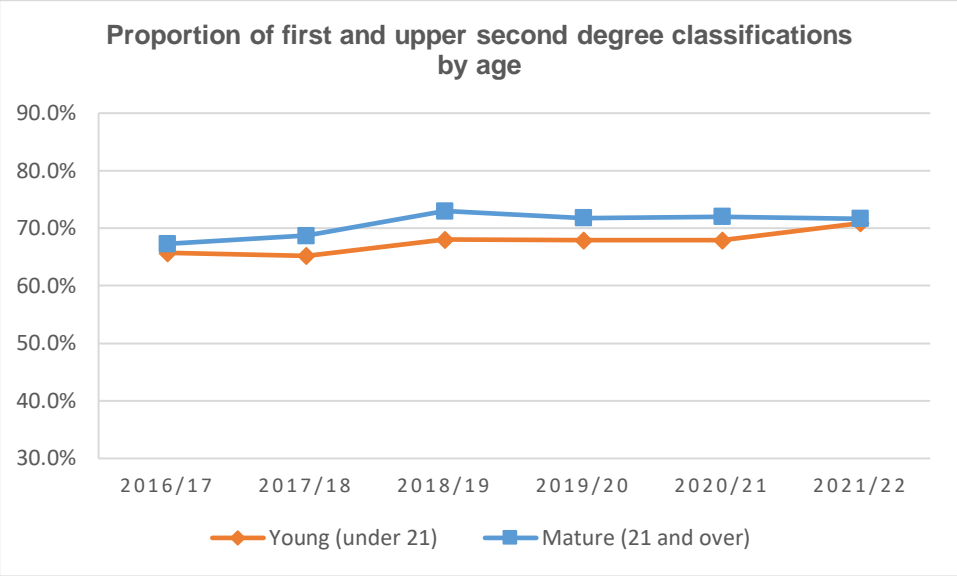
By gender	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1
Female	610	65.4%	644	68.5%	592	71.1%	620	71.0%	714	73.8%	782	74.6%
Male	220	70.0%	266	64.7%	208	70.2%	257	68.5%	320	62.5%	385	65.2%
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	50%

By ethnicity	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	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
White	724	68.8%	754	71.6%	687	74.7%	755	73.5%	838	73.7%	828	74.5%
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	46	47.8%
BAME	102	51.0%	104	53.8%	88	53.4%	110	50.0%	138	55.1%	295	66.4%
Black	43	46.5%	42	54.8%	44	45.5%	58	43.1%	48	50.0%	122	77.9%
Asian	26	61.5%	25	56.0%	13	38.5%	27	55.6%	51	52.9%	107	51.4%
Mixed	27	51.9%	34	55.9%	25	68.0%	18	72.2%	32	59.4%	46	69.6%
Other	6	33.3%	3	0%	6	83.3%	7	28.6%	7	85.7%	20	70.0%

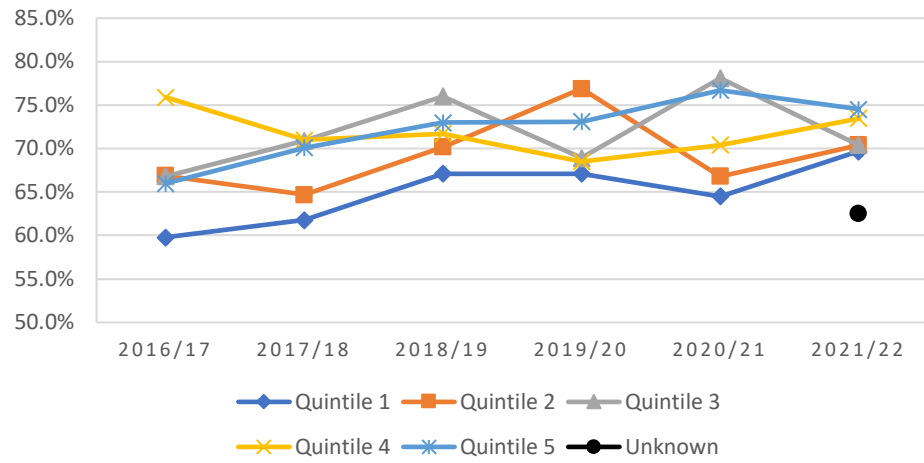
By disability	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1
Declared disability	126	57.1%	144	64.6%	149	66.4%	183	65.6%	207	67.1%	247	72.1%
Social or communication impairment	1	100%	4	100%	4	75.0%	14	71.4%	9	66.7%	15	73.3%
Cognitive or learning difficulties	53	52.8%	62	58.1%	59	59.3%	72	59.7%	86	64.0%	72	66.7%
Mental health condition	18	77.8%	29	55.2%	38	71.1%	36	75.0%	48	72.9%	74	75.7%
Sensory, medical or physical impairments	41	56.1%	34	76.5%	34	73.5%	31	77.4%	29	69.0%	43	79.1%
Other or multiple impairments	13	46.2%	15	73.3%	14	64.3%	30	53.3%	35	65.7%	43	67.4%
No declared disability	704	68.3%	766	67.9%	651	71.9%	694	71.5%	827	71.1%	922	71.3%

By POLAR4 quintile <small>(young people in HE in local area, based on student postcode on entry)</small>	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	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
Quintile 1 (lowest participation)	219	59.8%	217	61.8%	225	67.1%	240	67.1%	259	64.5%	267	69.7%
Quintile 2	166	66.9%	193	64.7%	178	70.2%	169	76.9%	220	66.8%	223	70.4%
Quintile 3	166	66.8%	203	70.9%	154	76.0%	180	68.9%	224	78.1%	257	70.4%
Quintile 4	170	75.9%	200	71.0%	152	71.7%	181	68.5%	230	70.4%	257	73.5%
Quintile 5 (highest participation)	106	66.0%	97	70.1%	89	73.0%	104	73.1%	90	76.7%	157	74.5%
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	62.5%

By National IMD quintile (multiple deprivation in local area, based on student postcode on entry)	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	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
Quintile 1 (highest deprivation)	118	59.0%	126	59.5%	131	62.6%	134	61.9%	170	57.6%	235	66.0%
Quintile 2	157	65.0%	175	61.7%	166	71.7%	167	66.5%	165	63.0%	277	72.6%
Quintile 3	126	62.9%	242	71.1%	215	67.9%	254	73.6%	279	73.5%	281	73.7%
Quintile 4	174	74.7%	208	71.2%	144	77.1%	178	73.6%	208	78.8%	187	70.6%
Quintile 5 (lowest deprivation)	146	71.2%	143	69.9%	136	75.7%	142	73.2%	207	74.9%	183	73.2%



Proportion of first and upper second degree classifications by POLAR4 quintile



Proportion of first and upper second degree classifications by national IMD quintile

