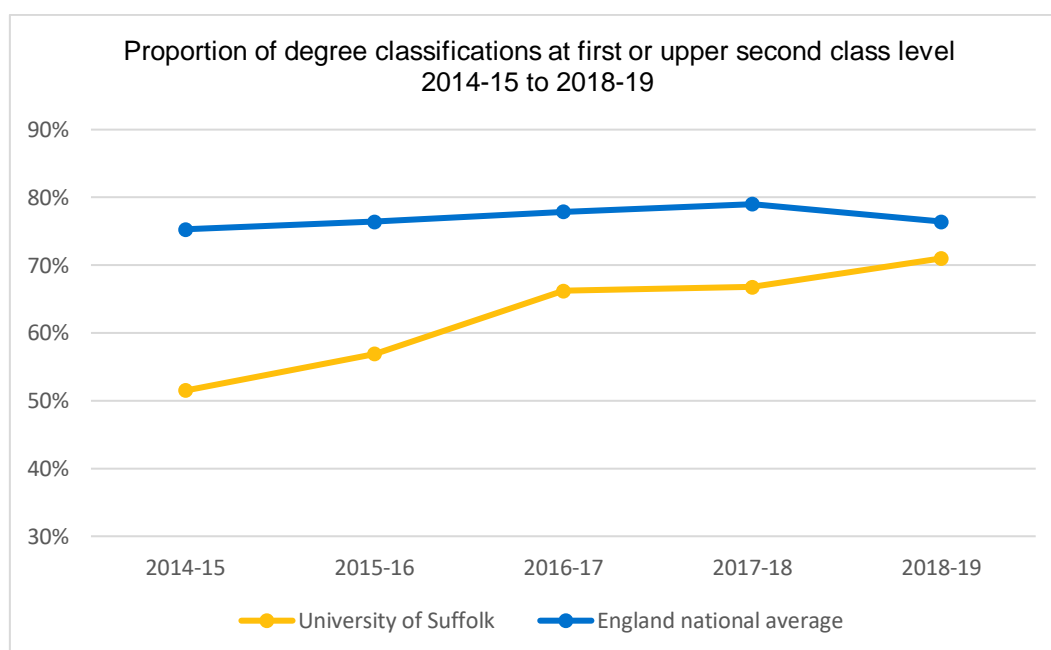


DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT 2019-2020

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 Suffolk¹ and our partner institutions over the last five years are summarised in Appendix A. Mirroring the situation across the HE sector, there has been an increase in the proportion of awards made at first or upper second class level over this period, particularly following a change to our assessment regulations implemented in a staged manner from 2014-15 to bring the University into line with sector norms.² Changing entry profiles may also have impacted on attainment rates: 47% of the qualifying cohort entered with low or non-tariff qualifications in 2012-13, but only 28% had the same profile in 2016-17, with corresponding increases in those entering with medium tariff qualifications (from 16% to 22%) and high tariff qualifications (from 9% to 12%). The proportion of degrees awarded at first or upper second class level remains below the sector average.



Our Access and Participation dataset shows that the increase in the proportion of first and upper second class awards is mirrored across most student profile groups. Attainment rates for specific disadvantaged groups have improved over the period, and reducing any remaining gaps in attainment is a strong focus for our work on [Access and Participation](#).

¹ The University previously operated as University Campus Suffolk, with students receiving joint awards of the University of East Anglia and the University of Essex. Taught degree awarding powers and university title was attained with effect from August 2016, with the first independent awards made for those graduating in 2016-17.

² This review was prompted by recognition that our assessment regulations disadvantaged students compared to others within the sector by setting more stringent requirements for module achievement, progression and degree attainment than the norm. The [OfS analysis of changes in degree classifications over time \(July 2019\)](#) showed that in 2010-11, the proportion of 'good' degrees awarded at University Campus Suffolk was significantly lower than might have been explained (-10.2%), which may have been a reflection of the stringent assessment regulations in place at that time.

Our assessment and marking practices

Our academic provision aligns with the revised [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.³ Assessment criteria for specific programmes are subject to regular scrutiny through [course \(re\)approval](#) and [external examiner processes](#), with external academic and employer representation on all course (re)approval panels.

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](#). All external examiners in 2018-19 confirmed that our marking was fair and in line with that of other HE providers across the sector. 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.

³ 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 method for calculating degree classifications

Our degree classification algorithm draws 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 must be passed at both levels of study: no condonement of marginal failure is permitted. The number of resit opportunities available to students varies depending on the mark awarded for the failed assessment.⁴ The use of a limited amount of discounting at each level to determine the degree classification is 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 is rigorously and consistently applied across all academic provision (including at partner institutions), with Assessment Boards having no discretionary powers.

Our classification algorithm is clearly communicated to students and other relevant stakeholders through our [Framework and Regulations for Undergraduate Awards](#), which has been developed and updated with student input. There are accompanying interactive [student guides](#) which explain the assessment regulations and the calculation method in a student-friendly manner.

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 which we believe have contributed to improvements in 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 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. The proportion of University academic staff with HEA recognition has increased from 36.8% in 2015-16 to 46.8% in 2018-19, with several members of professional services staff also gaining recognition for their support of student learning.
- 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.
- Capital investment in facilities and resources to support teaching and learning, including a substantial refurbishment of the northern part of the [campus](#); investment in specialist teaching laboratories (for example in health, science, physiology and biotechnology); and the introduction of a new, user-friendly online learning environment (Brightspace) 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.

⁴ [Framework and Regulations for Undergraduate Awards](#), paragraphs 61-69.

**University of Suffolk degree classification outcomes
2014-15 to 2018-19**

University of Suffolk overall (including partner institutions)	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Degrees awarded	864	822	858	933	822
First class	13.7%	15.2%	19.0%	22.3%	26.4%
Upper second class	37.8%	41.7%	47.2%	44.5%	44.6%
Other classification	48.4%	43.1%	33.8%	33.2%	29.0%
First or upper second class	51.5%	56.9%	66.2%	66.8%	71.0%
First or upper second class national average (England)	75.3%	76.4%	77.9%	79.0%	76.4%

By institution	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	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	668	50.7%	641	55.9%	671	65.7%	714	65.4%	631	68.1%
East Coast College (Great Yarmouth)	29	44.8%	32	65.6%	32	78.1%	40	55.0%	34	70.6%
East Coast College (Lowestoft)	55	45.5%	50	58.0%	46	58.7%	34	64.7%	47	76.6%
Otley College	2	100.0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Suffolk New College	9	55.6%	3	66.7%	7	85.7%	20	55.0%	2	50.0%
West Suffolk College	101	60.4%	96	60.4%	102	67.6%	125	80.8%	108	86.1%

By University academic school (excluding partner institutions)	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	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	45.3%	51	70.6%	75	73.3%	39	76.9%	41	75.6%
Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology	125	46.4%	116	50.0%	140	65.0%	141	57.4%	108	69.4%
Health and Sports Sciences	253	56.1%	245	60.4%	238	66.4%	285	66.7%	266	60.5%
Social Sciences and Humanities	215	48.8%	229	50.7%	218	62.8%	249	66.7%	216	75.5%

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

By age	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	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)	335	46.3%	296	48.0%	329	65.7%	351	65.2%	308	67.9%
Mature (21 and over)	502	55.6%	510	62.7%	501	67.3%	559	68.7%	492	72.8%

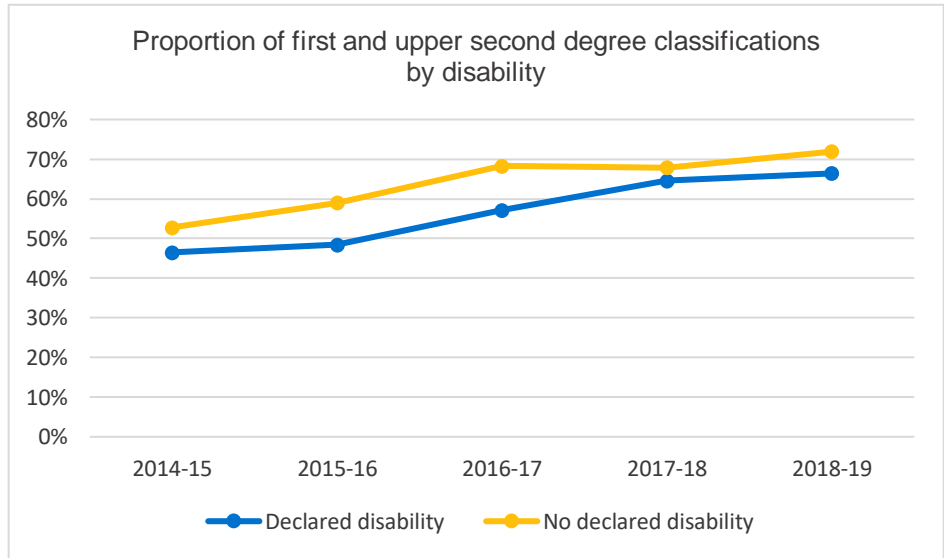
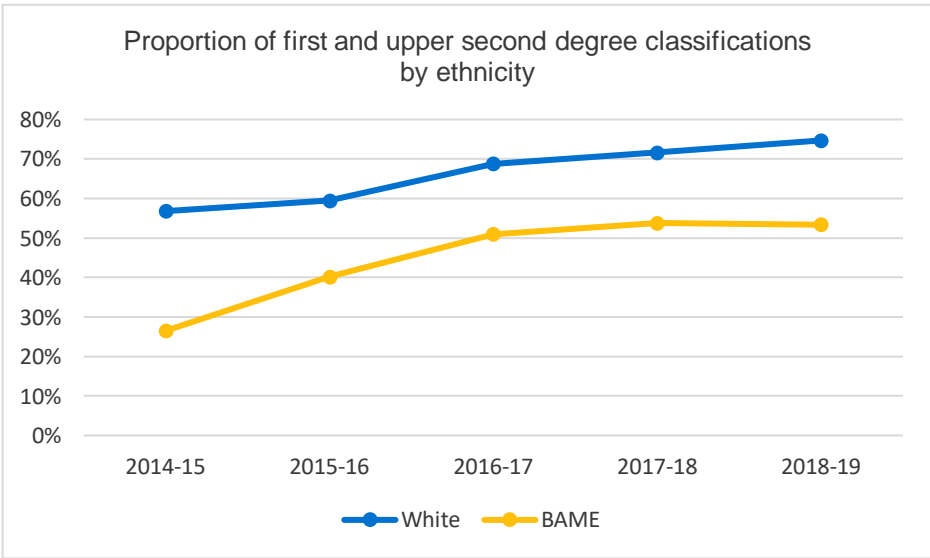
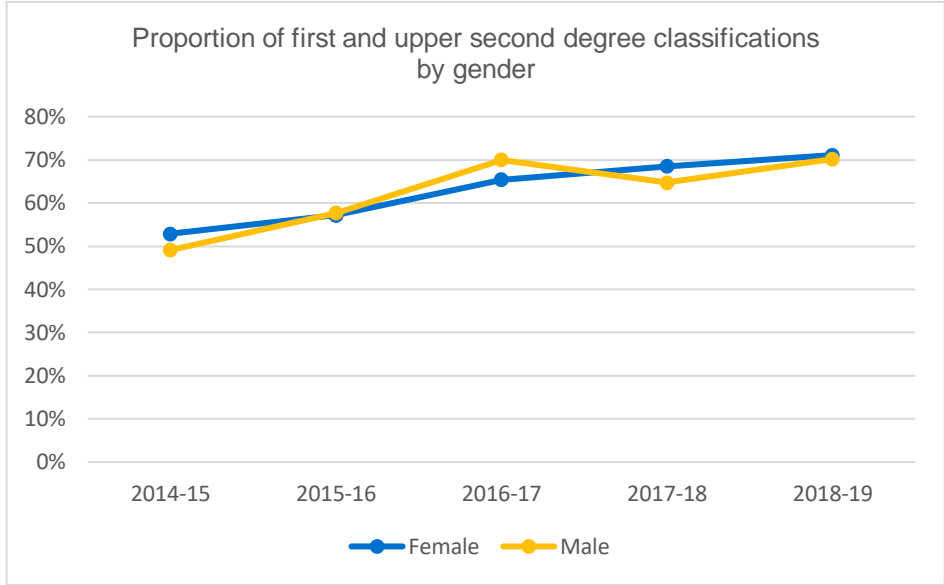
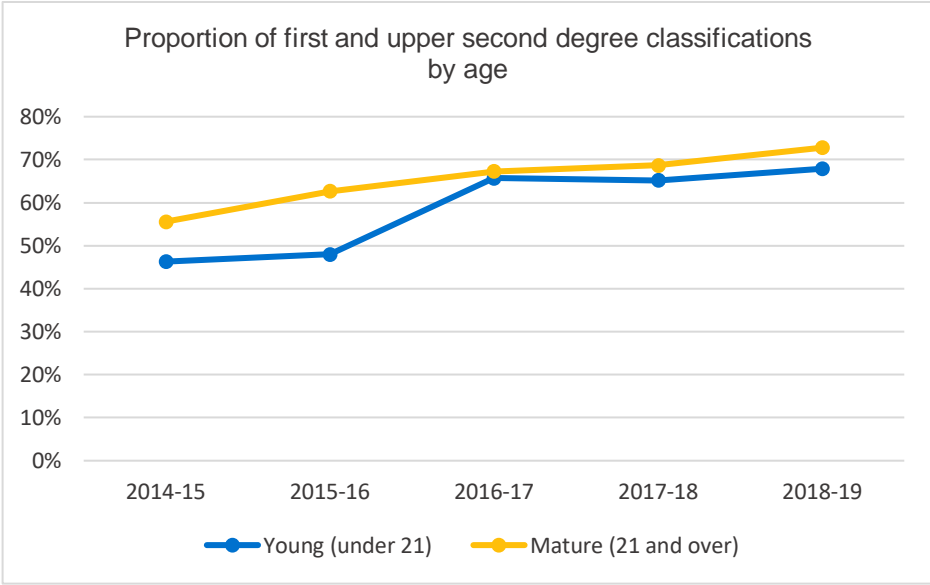
By gender	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1
Female	613	52.9%	598	57.2%	610	65.4%	644	68.5%	592	71.1%
Male	224	49.1%	208	57.7%	220	70.0%	266	64.7%	208	70.2%

By ethnicity	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	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	704	56.8%	713	59.5%	724	68.8%	754	71.6%	687	74.7%
BAME	102	26.5%	92	40.2%	102	51.0%	104	53.8%	88	53.4%
– Black	52	28.8%	45	31.1%	43	46.5%	42	54.8%	44	45.5%
– Asian	29	20.7%	14	50.0%	26	61.5%	25	56.0%	13	38.5%
– Mixed	18	33.3%	30	50.0%	27	51.9%	34	55.9%	25	68.0%
– Other	3	0%	3	33.3%	6	33.3%	3	0%	6	83.3%

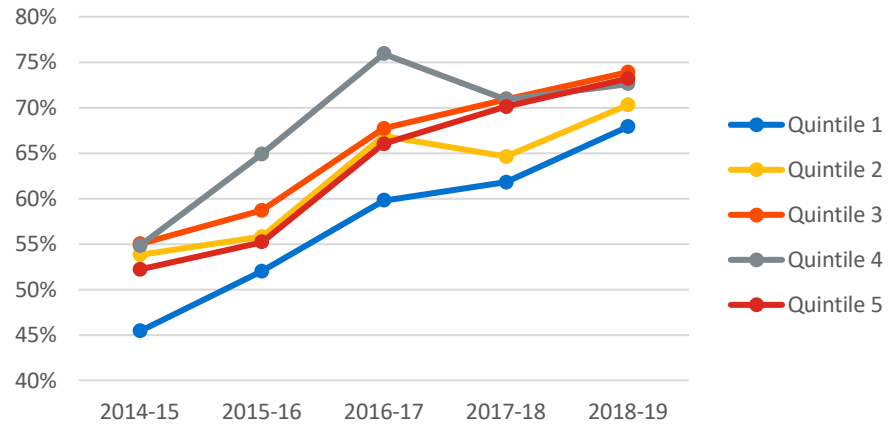
By disability	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1
Declared disability	129	46.5%	126	48.4%	126	57.1%	144	64.6%	149	66.4%
– Social or communication impairment	0	-	4	75.0%	1	100%	4	100%	4	75.0%
– Cognitive or learning difficulties	66	42.4%	59	44.1%	53	52.8%	62	58.1%	59	59.3%
– Mental health condition	18	50.0%	16	43.8%	18	77.8%	29	55.2%	38	71.1%
– Sensory, medical or physical impairments	36	47.2%	39	59.0%	41	56.1%	34	76.5%	34	73.5%
– Other or multiple impairments	9	66.7%	8	25.0%	13	46.2%	15	73.3%	14	64.3%
No declared disability	708	52.8%	680	59.0%	704	68.3%	766	67.9%	651	71.9%

By POLAR4 quintile (young people in HE in local area, based on student postcode on entry)	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	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)	205	45.4%	196	52.0%	219	59.8%	217	61.8%	224	67.9%
Quintile 2	158	53.8%	163	55.8%	166	66.9%	192	64.6%	192	70.3%
Quintile 3	169	55.0%	167	58.7%	164	67.7%	203	70.9%	161	73.9%
Quintile 4	188	54.8%	171	64.9%	170	75.9%	199	70.9%	146	72.6%
Quintile 5 (highest participation)	115	52.2%	105	55.2%	106	66.0%	97	70.1%	71	73.2%

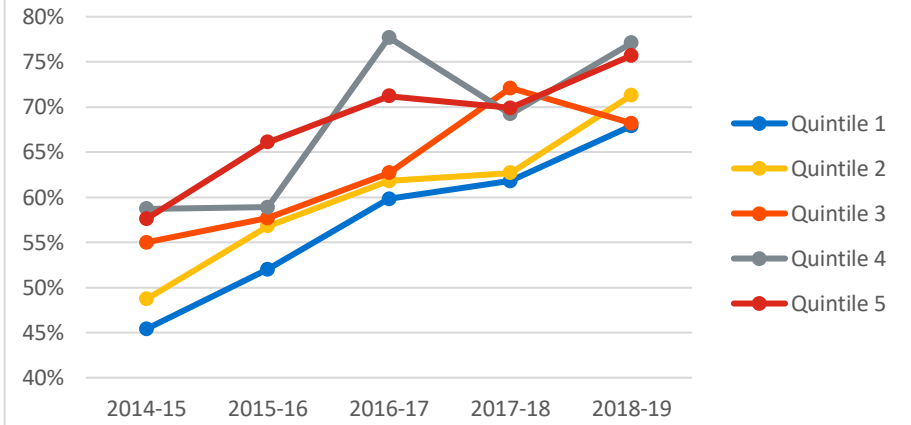
By National IMD quintile (multiple deprivation in local area, based on student postcode on entry)	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1	Degrees awarded	% 1st or 2:1
Quintile 1 (highest deprivation)	133	34.6%	119	47.1%	117	59.0%	123	56.9%	131	62.6%
Quintile 2	150	48.7%	155	56.8%	152	61.8%	169	62.7%	167	71.3%
Quintile 3	218	55.0%	227	57.7%	236	62.7%	251	72.1%	214	68.2%
Quintile 4	189	58.7%	180	58.9%	175	77.7%	221	69.2%	144	77.1%
Quintile 5 (lowest deprivation)	144	57.6%	121	66.1%	146	71.2%	143	69.9%	136	75.7%



Proportion of first and upper second degree classifications by POLAR4 quintile



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



Proportion of first and upper second degree classifications by University academic school

