

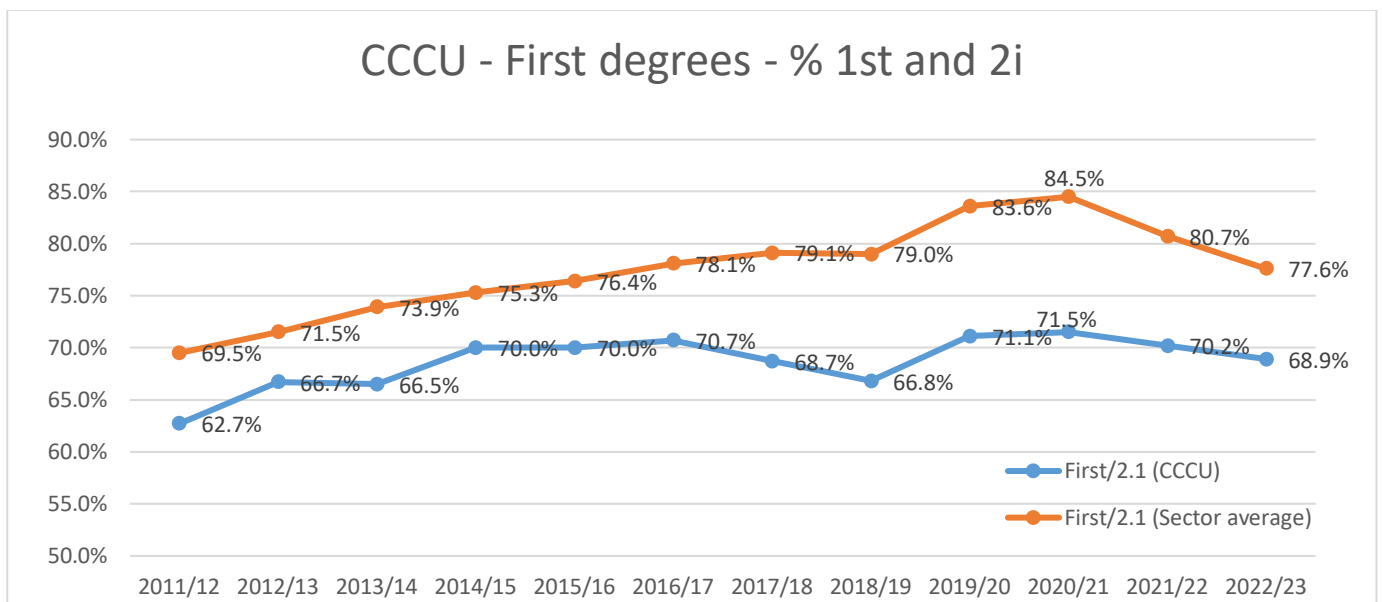
# Degree Outcomes Statement 2024

## 1. Degree Outcomes

1.1 Canterbury Christ Church University's degree classification profile is provided in the figures below. It sets out degree outcomes over the last twelve years, identifying the percentage of undergraduate degrees awarded in each class and the percentage of 1<sup>st</sup>/2i class degrees. All undergraduate degrees were awarded at level 6, excepting integrated masters' awarded at level 7.

### Classification of first degrees awarded by year

Figure 1: 12-year trend CCCU 1<sup>st</sup>/2i degrees awarded<sup>1</sup> alongside the sector average<sup>2</sup>



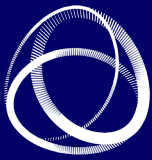
1.2 As shown in figure one, the proportion of 1<sup>st</sup>/2i degrees awarded at Canterbury Christ Church University has varied but followed a similar trajectory to the sector. However, the proportion of 1<sup>st</sup>/2i degrees remained significantly below the sector average during this period and has not grown as fast as the sector average. Overall, the proportion of 1<sup>st</sup>/2i degrees awarded has risen between 2011-12 and 2020-21, then declined slightly from 70.2% in 2021-22 to 68.9% in 2022-23. The sector average 1<sup>st</sup>/2i degrees for 2022/23 has dropped by 3.1 percentage points to 77.6%.

1.3 Over the last nine-year period, the proportion of 1<sup>st</sup>/2i degrees awarded has remained relatively stable, returning in 2019-20 to the levels seen in 2016-17, with a decline in 2022-23 of 1.3 percentage points compared to the previous year, the lowest in four years.

1.4 According to the OfS Analysis of Degree Classifications over time “we observed 77.6 per cent of students attaining a first or upper second class degree in 2022-23, an increase of

<sup>1</sup> CCCU data, except for Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), is sourced from HESA 2023. Accessed 17/09/2024.

<sup>2</sup> Office for Students. *Analysis of degree classifications over time: changes in graduate attainment from 20210-11 to 2022-23*. Available at: [Analysis of degree classifications over time: Changes in graduate attainment from 2010-11 to 2022-23 \(officeforstudents.org.uk\)](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/analysis-of-degree-classifications-over-time-changes-in-graduate-attainment-from-2010-11-to-2022-23). Accessed 19/09/2024.

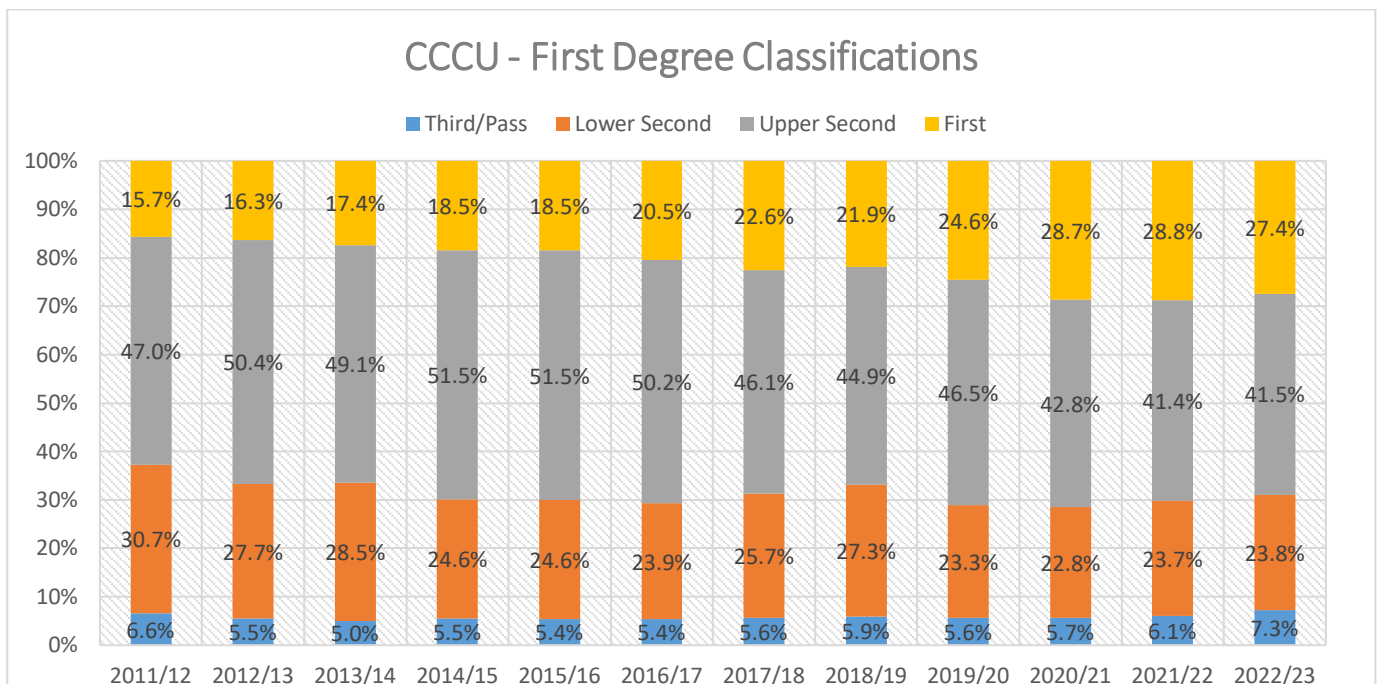


# Degree Outcomes Statement 2024

10.1 percentage points” across the sector since 2010-11. In 2022-23 at Canterbury Christ Church University, the rate of 1st/2is awarded was 68.9%, 8.7 percentage points below the sector average.

1.5 Between 2011-12 and 2022-23 at Canterbury Christ Church University there has been a 6.2 percentage point increase between first or upper second degree attainment rates. The 3.4 percentage point increase between 2010/11 and 2011/12 was the result of changes made across the University. During this period, the University established that there was an uneven distribution of the outcomes across different subjects, and worked to remove outliers in both directions. This aligned the rates of 1st/2i with sector norms.

**Figure 2: 12-year trend first degree classifications**



1.6 Figure 2 shows a 1.4% decrease in 1<sup>st</sup> classifications awarded in 2022-23, and a 0.1% increase in 2i classifications awarded in 2022-23, compared to the previous year. There has been a 0.1% increase in 2:2s and 1.2% increase in 3<sup>rd</sup> compared to the previous year. This shows the decline is in a lower number of first-class degrees awarded with a slight rise in the number of 2:2 and 3<sup>rd</sup> awarded

1.7 The University produces detailed Student Outcomes information, which is considered at School, Faculty and University levels. The University ensures that there is a consistent understanding of student achievement within Faculties, Schools and Professional Service Departments, but it has not intervened in any way to influence the overall percentage of 1<sup>st</sup>/2i degree awards. The algorithm used to calculate the degree classification has remained unchanged during the last twelve-year period.

1.8 A breakdown of the degrees by student characteristic for the 2022-23 academic year for all first degree students shows that:

- Ethnicity – white students are consistently awarded a higher proportion of 1<sup>st</sup>/2i degrees in comparison with all minority ethnic groups; the percentage point gap



## Degree Outcomes Statement 2024

between black and white students has reduced from 40.1% in 2020-21 to 35% in 2022-23. In addition, in 2022-23 there is a 28% awarding gap between Asian and white students. Both the black and Asian awarding gaps are statistically significant.

- Disability – there is no awarding gap where students have a declared disability.
- Age on Entry – students aged 18-20 years (75.6% 1<sup>st</sup>/2i) and 30 years and over (73.7% 1<sup>st</sup>/2i) were more likely to achieve a 1/2i than those between 21-24 years (60.8% 1<sup>st</sup>/2i) and 25-29 years (70.4% 1<sup>st</sup>/2i) and the difference is statistically significant.
- Sex – male students are less likely to achieve a 1<sup>st</sup>/2i (63.3%) than female students (71.3%) and the difference is statistically significant.
- Deprivation Quintile (IMD) – students in the two most deprived quintiles (E1 and E2) were statistically significantly less likely to achieve a 1<sup>st</sup>/2i than those in E3-5.

1.9 It is a strategic priority of the University to eliminate any attainment gaps, and significant work is being undertaken to remove barriers to success, to challenge perceptions and to ensure that the sense of community with which the University prides itself encompasses all students. The [Access and Participation Plan 2024/25 and 2027/28](#) details our intervention strategies and investments to reduce these awarding gaps.

## 2. Assessment and marking practices

2.1 The University operates a two-tier system of Boards of Examiners.

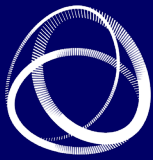
- The first tier, a Module Board of Examiners, confirms marks and awards credit at module level for all students studying the modules, and enables review of module performance against centrally-produced metrics.
- The second tier, the Progression and Award Board of Examiners, uses those confirmed marks to confirm the progression of students and the classification of awards.

2.2 Both tiers make rigorous use of External Examiners, who ensure that standards are maintained and the awards are comparable to national expectations in the subject. External Examiners submit an annual report to the University and may write directly to the Vice-Chancellor should they wish to raise an issue.

2.3 The University has a consistent set of regulations for its taught awards, except where there are alternative requirements mandated by PSRBs, and an extensive range of supporting procedures. Together they provide a robust framework for assessment. University marking procedures mandate the rigorous use of moderation and second marking and set out the role of External Examiners in ensuring that marking standards are consistent and appropriate.

### Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

2.4 In line with much of the sector, in recognition of the extraordinary circumstances experienced by students and staff as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the University's Academic Board approved a set of exceptional regulations for progression and award during 2019-2020, which applied to Foundation Year, Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7. This included relaxing the progression arrangements for Foundation Year and Level 4 where this was not



## Degree Outcomes Statement 2024

prevented by the requirements of Professional Statutory or Regulatory Bodies, extending the undergraduate compensation arrangements from 20 to 40 credits at each level, adapting the Extenuating Circumstances procedures, removing the 60 credit threshold requirement for summer reassessment and applying a No Detriment policy to ensure that students' academic outcomes were not negatively impacted by the pandemic.

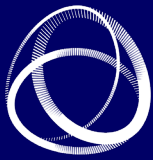
- 2.5 The University put these measures in place only for the period impacted directly by the Covid-19 pandemic. As shown in Figure 2 above, the impact of the No Detriment policy was seen in the outcomes of students who completed their studies in 2020-21. In 2021, the Academic Board assessed the impact of the regulatory changes on student progression, outcomes and performance and confirmed the full return of the standard University regulations for progression. There are no further students subject to exceptional regulations for the Covid-19 pandemic.

### 3. Academic Governance

- 3.1 The University's Academic Board is responsible for the conferment of all University awards and for assuring that the value of those awards, including those delivered in partnership with others, is maintained over time. The Academic Board exercises its oversight of academic governance through its Committees and Sub-Committees. It receives and approves an Annual Report on the maintenance of academic standards. This report has been provided annually to the University's Governing Body since the University acquired taught degree powers in 1995. The University reviewed its Academic Governance structure in 2023-24, to eliminate duplication and provide a stronger focus on risk-management.
- 3.2 The University ensures compliance with the Office for Students' general ongoing conditions of registration for quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes for all students through its policies and procedures. It utilises best practice for enhancement from the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The University's academic portfolio contains a significant number of courses that operate under the auspices of a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body [PSRB].

All courses must:

- conform to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
  - align with subject benchmarks where they exist
  - have an assessment strategy that delivers approved Course Learning Outcomes.
- 3.3 Courses are approved by a University Panel, chaired by a senior member of academic staff and for courses with PSRB accreditation it is expected that PVC Deans will chair these approval panels. A subject specific external academic advisor must be involved at the course development stage and must confirm that a course meets national standards and subject expectations. From 2024/25, the external advisor and an industry expert will attend the University Panel. No course may run until it is signed off by the procedures approved by the Academic Board.
- 3.4 The University directly approves all courses offered at its collaborative partners and maintains oversight of the management of quality and standards and student registration. All collaborative courses have a home in an academic School and a subject-specific

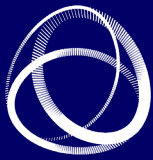


# Degree Outcomes Statement 2024

Academic Link Tutor, who ensures that all University requirements are met, including those relating to assessment. A Memorandum of Agreement with each partner ensures that obligations are well understood.

## 4. Classification Algorithms

- 4.1 The University has a single algorithm for undergraduate bachelor's degrees that is varied only in four circumstances as set out in 4.3. The algorithm has the following attributes:
- Levels 5 and 6 determine 40% and 60% of the final calculation respectively
  - there may be compensation of 20 credits at each level, providing a student achieves an average for the level of 40% and no mark lower than 30%, except where PSRB or other professional requirements prohibit this
  - the mark for the lowest 20 credits is discarded at both Levels 5 and 6 for the purposes of the algorithm
  - there is no use of discretion and no procedure for raising or lowering borderline marks.
- 4.2 The University permits two reassessment attempts, both of which are capped. Where students have not passed a particular credit threshold, they are required to undertake reassessment with attendance to consolidate their learning. The University does not allow retaking of modules for uncapped marks. These regulations for reassessment were introduced in September 2017 following an extensive review of the assessment regulations to ensure alignment with the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy. The University reviewed its Academic Framework for the Design and Delivery of Awards in 2023/24 and will undertake a review of the assessment regulations for implementation from academic year 2025/26 for courses approved under the new framework.
- 4.3 The five exceptions to the current algorithm are as follows:
- for Integrated Masters Degrees, the weighting is Level 5, 20%, Level 6, 30%, Level 7, 50%
  - where 240 credits at Levels 4 and 5 are followed by more than 120 credits at level 6 to meet the requirements of PSRBs, the weighting is Level 5, 10%, Level 6, stage 1, 30%, Level 6, stage 2, 60%
  - the Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery (Kent and Medway Medical School), which comprises 60 credits Level 4 and 60 Level 5 credits at stage 1, 120 credits at Level 5 (stage 2), 360 credits at Level 6 (stages 3 and 4), and 180 credits at Level 7 (stage 5), and its exit awards
  - for the Bachelor of Design, the classification is derived from the best 120 credits at Levels 4 and 5 and all 120 credits at Level 6, with Levels 4 & 5 determining 40% and Level 6 determining 60% of the final classification
  - where a student enters with advanced standing into Level 6, the classification is based entirely on the Level 6 marks



# Degree Outcomes Statement 2024

- in the exceptional circumstances where a PSRB's requirements may conflict with the degree classification algorithm, additional course regulations would be approved by Academic Board to account for those requirements.

4.4 Our revised Academic Framework will necessitate a review of the classification algorithm for courses approved under the new framework as we move from a 20 credit to a 30 credit structure (academic year 2025/26 onwards).

## 5. Teaching Practices and Learning Resources

5.1 The University has invested significantly in creating an infrastructure to support the delivery of its learning and teaching. Its commitment to educate the whole person, through developing excellence in learning and teaching, delivering bespoke and scheduled staff development, and playing a key role in driving pedagogical innovation and enhancing assessment literacy is central to its learning and teaching strategy.

5.2 The University keeps its grading criteria under periodic review to ensure continued alignment with sector minimum standards and best practice. In 2021-22, we completed a review exercise to ensure that our grading criteria continues to adhere to the sector recognised standards adopted by the Office for Students.

5.3 The University is fully committed to the objectives of the Professional Standards Framework and Fellowship of the HEA is valued as a means of both ensuring that academic staff are able to deliver high-quality and innovative learning and teaching, and that such activity is appropriately recognised and rewarded.

5.4 The University was one of the first universities to gain accreditor status when it was introduced in 2013, and has had verifier status since 2016.

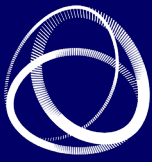
- All new members of academic staff are required to complete the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice, which confers Fellowship, and are allocated to a mentor for the PGCAP and also a mentor within their School.
- The University Certificate in Academic Practice (UCAP, which articulates with the PGCAP), provides sessional part-time, and professional service staff with an opportunity to enhance their learning and teaching as well as acquire Associate Fellowship of the HEA.
- The University's promotion structure requires Fellowship of the HEA for promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer and Senior Fellowship of the HEA for promotion to Principal Lecturer, while Fellowship of the HEA is mandatory for those applying for a Readership.

## 6. Identifying Good Practice and Actions and Review of Progress

6.1 As mentioned above, action currently being taken to close the University's awarding gap is outlined in its [Access and Participation Plan 2024/25 and 2027/28](#).

6.2 The University has been taking specific and targeted action to close its BAME awarding gap, as set out in the *Closing Our Gap Strategic Framework*, under the areas of culture, curriculum and community. From academic year 2022-23, the University enhanced its





# Degree Outcomes Statement 2024

approach to course monitoring by introducing Course Performance Plans, a revised, real-time approach to course performance monitoring and action planning. This change supports the clear assessment of the performance of each course in relation to *Closing Our Gap* and other key performance metrics, including NSS, OfS student outcomes benchmarks and, where relevant, TEF benchmarks.

## Supporting Sector Principles

- 6.3 The University's grading criteria aligns with sector recognised standards for degree classification descriptors.
- 6.4 The University has reviewed its practice against the UKSCQA External Examining Principles and is in alignment.

## 7. Risks and Challenges

- 7.1 The University continues to monitor its outcomes and ensure that its algorithm remains fit for purpose and intends to review this in the context of the introduction of a new Academic Framework and review of assessment regulations for implementation in 2025/26. The key institutional risk in relation to degree outcomes is the Black and ethnic minority awarding gap and it therefore is a top institutional priority that is included in our institutional targets and KPIs.