

Degree Outcomes Statement 2024-2025

Introduction

In line with sector guidance, (specifically the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment) this Degree Outcomes Statement has been designed to provide transparency about Health Sciences University (HSU) awards degrees and to assure stakeholders that academic standards are upheld. It analyses the institutional degree classification profile and presents the results of an internal review of teaching, learning, assessment, and governance practices.

This statement demonstrates compliance with the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) and the [UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment \(UKSCQA\)](#) and, for institutions in England, the Office for Students' conditions of registration on academic standards (B4 and B5) (Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) guidance).

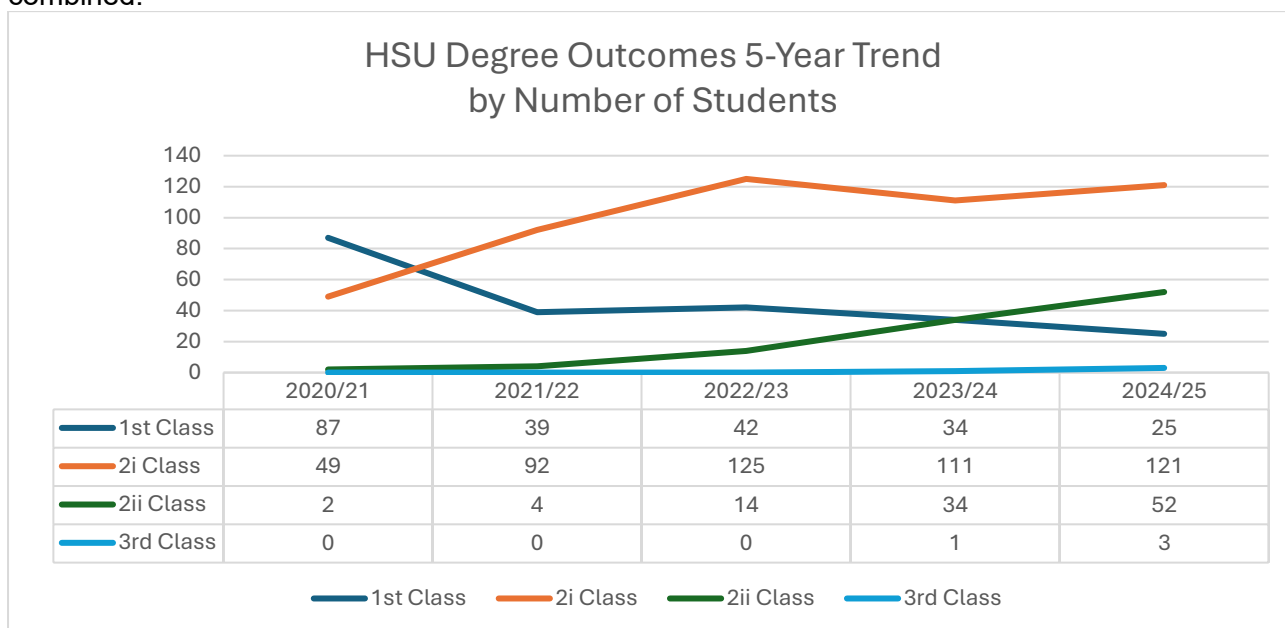
Scope

In line with [UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment \(UKSCQA\)](#) guidance, the degree outcomes statement should cover final classifications for graduates on Level 6 [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies \(FHEQ\)](#) courses.

Due to small cohort sizes, this statement presents aggregated degree outcomes across all eligible Level 6 FHEQ courses and the M.Chiro (including the BSc exit award) to enable trend analysis over a five-year period.

Institutional Degree Classification Profile

The following data identifies the overall institutional classification profiles of the above courses combined:

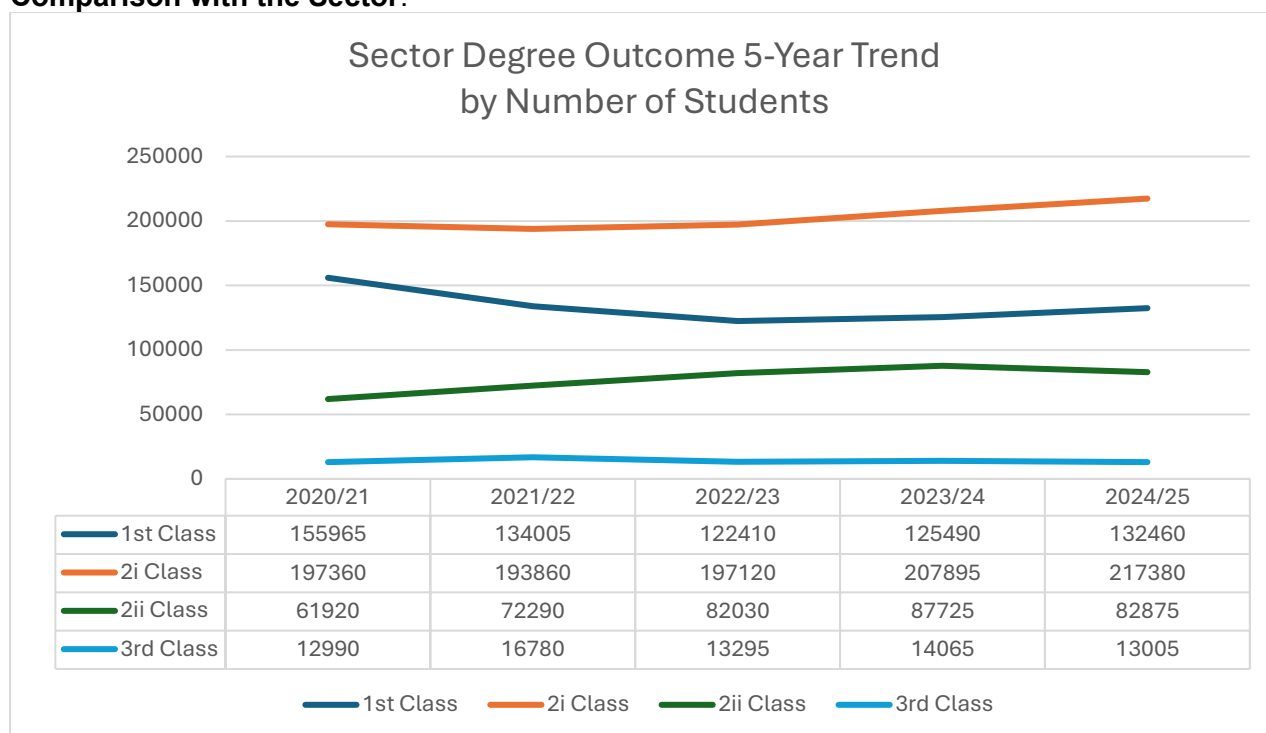


It is noted that in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 this data represents the degree outcomes of the M.Chiro BSc Hons Exit award and the M.Chiro only as no Level 6 FHEQ courses had graduated in these years, however this data is representative of 138 and 135 students respectively.

Trends in classification are summarised as follows:

- The number of **3rd class degrees** has increased over the past two years.
- The number of **Lower Second class (2ii) degrees** has increased over the past five years and last year represented just over a quarter of classified degrees awarded.
- The number of **Upper Second class (2i) degrees** has remained relatively consistent over the past three years representing around two thirds of classified degrees awarded in 2024-2025.
- The number of **1st class degrees** has gradually decreased over the past five years.

Comparison with the Sector.



Source: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/outcomes>

The table below shows the % proportion of each degree classification awarded within the sector:

Sector Academic Year	1st Class	2i Class	2ii Class	3rd Class
2020/21	36%	46%	14%	3%
2021/22	32%	46%	17%	4%
2022/23	30%	48%	20%	3%
2023/24	29%	48%	20%	3%
2024/25	30%	49%	19%	3%

The table below shows the % proportion of each degree classification awarded by HSU:

HSU Academic Year	1st Class	2i Class	2ii Class	3rd Class
2020/21	63%	36%	1%	0%
2021/22	29%	68%	3%	0%
2022/23	23%	69%	8%	0%
2023/24	19%	62%	19%	1%
2024/25	12%	60%	26%	1%

Based on the above data, HSU’s degree classification profile differs from the sector in a number of consistent ways. In 2024–2025, First Class degrees account for 12% of awards compared to 30% across the sector. This is offset by a higher proportion of Upper Second-Class degrees at 60% (49% sector) and Lower Second Class degrees at 26% (19% sector), with a comparable proportion of Third-Class awards.

Combined ‘good degree’ outcomes (First and Upper Second Class) remain strong at 72%, compared to 79% in the sector. Overall, this reflects a stable classification profile, with outcomes more concentrated in Upper Second-Class awards than First Class awards.

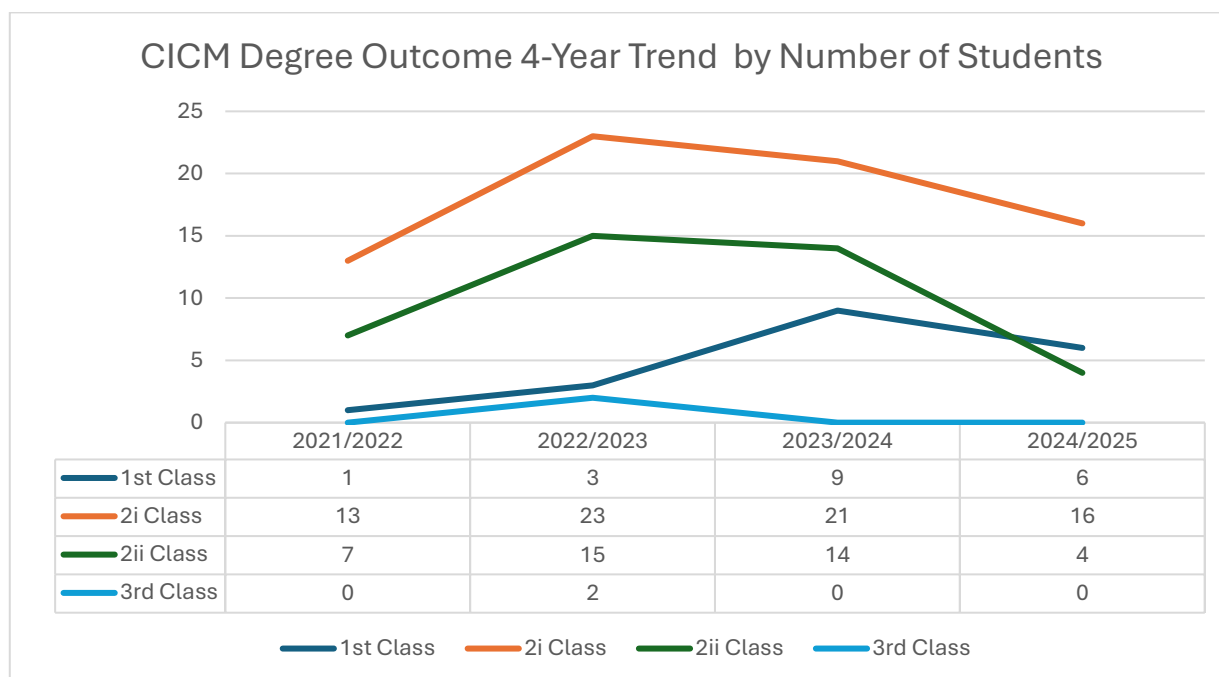
This pattern has remained consistent over time and aligns with the profile of a specialist institution with relatively small cohorts. There is no indication of inflationary drift in classifications, and outcomes continue to reflect student achievement appropriately in line with OfS expectations.

Collaborative UK Partnership Arrangements

HSU worked collaboratively with the following UK institutions where HSU awards FHEQ Level 6 degrees in partnership during 2024-2025:

College of Integrated Chinese Medicine (CICM) – Validated Provision

CICM deliver one FHEQ Level 6 course (BSc (Hons) Acupuncture) which is awarded by HSU under a validation arrangement. Four years of data are available to track degree outcomes as follows:



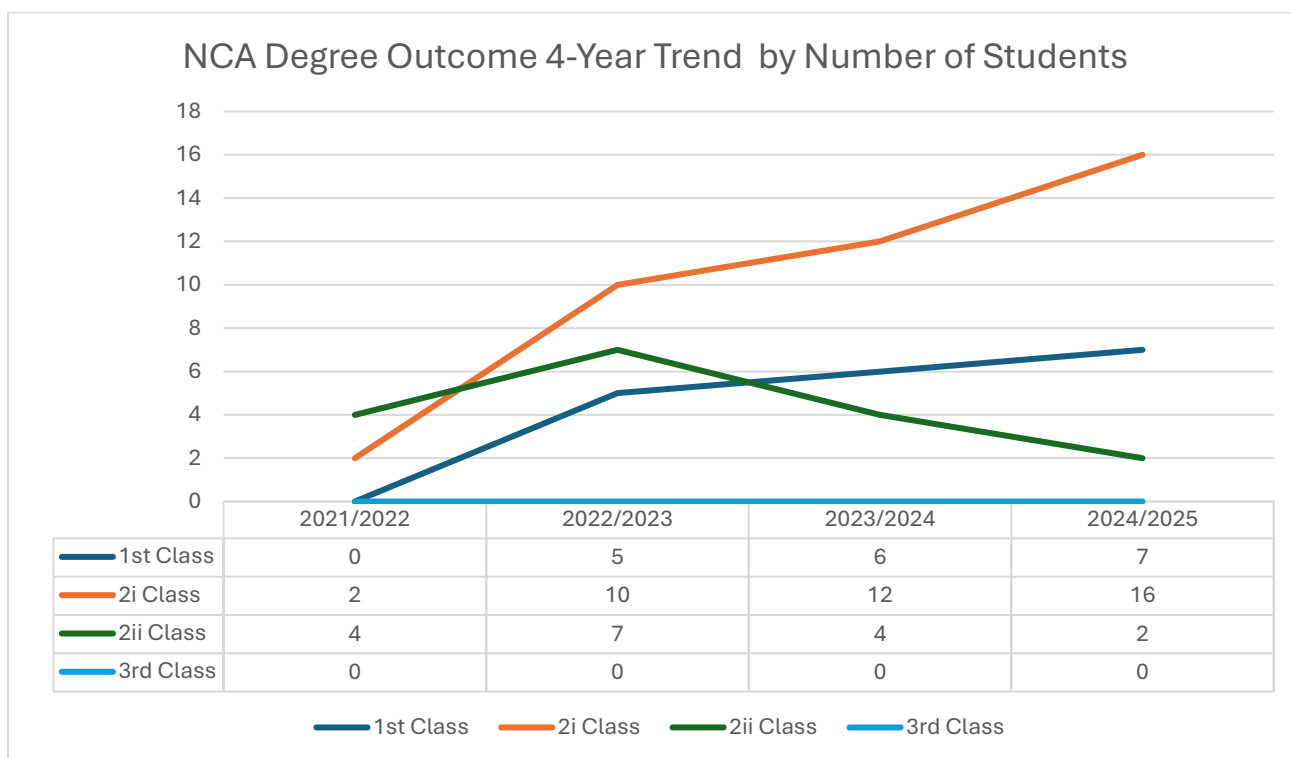
The table below shows the % proportion of each degree classification awarded by HSU for CICM undergraduate validated provision:

CICM	1st Class	2i Class	2ii Class	3rd Class
2021/22	5%	62%	33%	0%
2022/23	7%	53%	35%	5%
2023/24	20%	48%	32%	0%
2024/25	23%	62%	15%	0%

From the above data it can be seen that the proportion of 1st Class degrees awarded for CICM undergraduate validated provision has increased over the past four years and in 2024-2025 is approaching that of the sector (23% vs 30%). Similarly to HSU courses, the proportion of Upper 2nd Class degrees is higher than the sector (62% vs 48%) with the proportion of Lower 2nd Class degrees similar to the sector (15% vs 19%) and no 3rd Class degrees awarded (compared to 3% of degrees across the sector).

Northern College of Acupuncture (NCA) – Validated Provision

NCA deliver one FHEQ Level 6 course (BSc (Hons) Acupuncture) which is also awarded by HSU under a validation arrangement. Four years of data are available to track degree outcomes as follows:



The table below shows the % proportion of each degree classification awarded by HSU for NCA undergraduate validated provision:

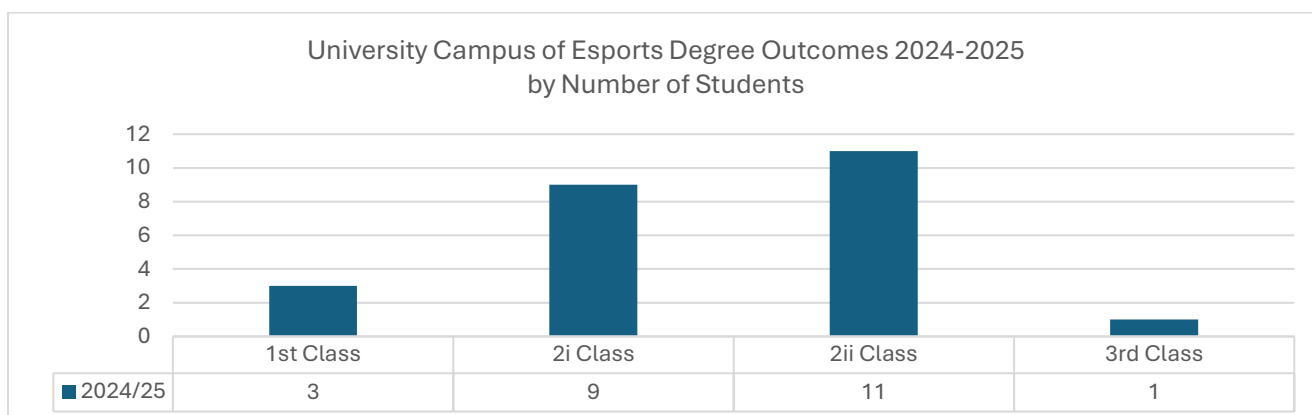
NCA	1st Class	2i Class	2ii Class	3rd Class
2021/22	0%	33%	67%	0%
2022/23	23%	45%	32%	0%
2023/24	27%	55%	18%	0%
2024/25	28%	64%	8%	0%

From the above data it can be seen that the proportion of 1st Class degrees awarded for NCA undergraduate validated provision has been consistent over the past three years and aligns to that of the sector. Similarly to HSU and CICM validated provision, the proportion of Upper 2nd Class degrees has been higher than the sector for the past two years (64% vs 49%) with the proportion of Lower 2nd Class degrees decreasing of the past four years and lower than the sector in 2024-2025 (8% vs 19%). Over the past four years, no 3rd class degrees have been awarded compared to the sector where the proportion of 3rd class degrees is awarded is 3%.

University Campus of Esports (formerly College of Esports) (UCES) – Franchise Provision

UCES deliver several FHEQ Level 6 courses which are awarded by HSU under a franchise arrangement. 2025 was the first year of UCES graduates.

UCES FHEQ Level 6 course degree outcomes are provided in the chart below. The data indicates a higher proportion of Lower Second- and Third-Class degrees, and a lower proportion of Upper Second-Class degrees, compared to HSU-delivered provision. Given the small cohort size, these differences should be interpreted with caution and are being monitored through established partnership oversight arrangements. (UCES data is representative of only 24 students.)



Assessment and Marking Practices

HSU assures itself that its assessment and marking practices meet sector reference points through the following key processes:

- Courses are designed and developed to align with the FHEQ, national credit frameworks, subject benchmark statements (where relevant) and the standards set by relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs and other accrediting bodies); this is rigorously tested through our [Course Approval Policy and Procedure](#). This process benefits from the input from external academic and professional advisors from related fields.
- External examiners are appointed in line with our [External Examining Policy and Procedures](#), using criteria that reflect the [UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance on External Expertise](#). All external examiners have an induction and where external examiners are not already experienced in the role are appointed a mentor who is a more experienced External Examiner from the existing pool of HSU External Examiners. External Examiners are responsible for confirming that our academic standards align with national expectations, considering the standards outlined within the FHEQ. They scrutinise samples of marked work in line with our [Marking and Moderation Policy and Procedure](#) (following internal marking and moderation) and are full members of relevant Assessment Boards where marks and awards are ratified. They submit a formal annual report which is considered in detail by the relevant course team and received and reviewed by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC). External Examiner reports are made available in full to students and staff. External Examiner feedback provides consistent assurance that academic standards are appropriate, comparable, and aligned with sector expectations.
- Internal marking and moderating policies which check consistency of marking standards as set out in our [Marking and Moderation Policy and Procedure](#).
- Assessment Boards are held in line with our [Assessment Board Policy and Procedure](#), with consistency of decision-making supported by having a member of professional support staff from within the Academic Registry present at all pre-board and boards, to oversee the process and offer regulatory advice. HSU Chair all partnership Assessment Boards to ratify marks and awards that lead to an award of HSU.
- Students with exceptional personal circumstances which may have impacted their ability to completed assessment are given the opportunity to inform the University and request an extension or have their circumstances considered by the relevant Assessment Board in line with our [Exceptional Personal Circumstances Policy](#). Assessment Boards may offer students the opportunity to re-take or repeat assessments where genuine circumstances are accepted. Uncapped retakes and/or repeat assessments are offered only where the student has failed the affected assessment(s) and cannot be used to improve grades.
- Students may appeal against a decision of the Assessment Board, on specific grounds and with appropriate supporting evidence, as set out in our [Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures](#). Overarching data on academic appeals held is presented to ASQC and Academic Board, and as an annual assurance report to the Board of Governors.

Academic Governance

The terms of reference and membership of committees that underpin HSU's academic governance are available on our [website](#).

Academic Board is the main academic decision-making committee of HSU and is a Committee of the Board of Governors. It provides a Quality Assurance annual report to the Board of Governors that to provide assurance that the University is continuing to manage, oversee and maintain the academic standards of its awards and that it is meeting the Office for Students ongoing Conditions of Registration for quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes for all students.

The Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC), on behalf of Academic Board, has oversight of the course consideration (approval and review), ongoing course and unit monitoring, and the course modification processes. External examiner appointments are also overseen by this committee where their annual reports are also considered providing independent assurance that academic standards and quality are being maintained over time. ASQC also has oversight of and makes recommendations on academic regulations, policies and procedures underpinning the University's taught provision. All student-facing and quality assurance policies and procedures are under the auspices of this committee and are normally reviewed on at least a three-yearly cycle.

The Education Committee of Academic Board has responsibility for developing and recommending to Academic Board strategy and policy on all aspects of the taught student educational experience, and for leading on strategic initiatives that enhance the educational experience of students.

The Partnerships and Collaborative Provision Committee (PCPC) provides the Academic Board with assurance that all collaborative and subcontracted provision is well-governed, academically robust, and compliant with regulatory requirements. It oversees the approval, monitoring, and review of partnerships and partner-delivered programmes; scrutinises quality assurance processes including annual monitoring, external examiner feedback, Link Tutor reports, and Transnational Educational (TNE) activity; monitors student experience and outcomes across partner provision; manages risks and ensures alignment with the UK Quality Code, OfS and other regulators; and reports regularly to the Academic Board, escalating any concerns or non-compliance as needed.

Assessment Boards have clearly defined terms of reference and operate in accordance with the Assessment Boards Policy and Procedure. They have delegated authority from Academic Board to approve awards of the University. Any issues that arise regarding the conduct of Assessment Boards are reported through, and any necessary actions overseen by, the ASQC on behalf of the Academic Board.

Classification Algorithms - Compliance with OfS condition of registration B4: Assessment and awards

A report published by the OfS¹ helps providers recognise and manage some areas of risk relating to bachelors' degree classification algorithms, in particular when making changes to these algorithms, and to help them comply with condition B4 (i.e., how providers can ensure that the classifications of bachelors' degrees they award appropriately reflect students' achievement and ensure that the degrees they award retain their value over time).

The report highlights specific concerns regarding the inclusion of two steps included in classification algorithms as the OfS remains unclear as to how a provider can demonstrate compliance with Condition B4 when employing these practices:

1. Selecting the highest outcome from multiple algorithms; and
2. Discounting credit associated with the lowest marks.

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/wxgl0f0a/bachelors-degree-classification-algorithms.pdf>Bachelors' degree classification algorithms

Providers are required to inform the OfS if they intends to continue to include either of these steps in their bachelors' degree classification algorithms from September 2026 by 31 July 2026, so the OfS can understand the scale of continuing use of these steps (a provider with degree awarding powers that decides to discontinue using (or does not use) these steps in its algorithm does not need to inform the OfS).

HSU's bachelor's degree classification algorithms are set out in our Assessment Regulations and in the accompanying variances to assessment regulations for specific courses or Educational Partners. These are [published on our website](#) to share with students and other stakeholders.

HSU's standard bachelor's degree classification algorithm is as follows:

“Level 6 units will have a weighting of 70% towards final degree classification, with 30% weighting for Level 5 units.

Honours classification will be based on Level 6 units only in the case of candidates admitted on the basis of recognition of prior learning/credit transfer admitted directly to Level 6.

Degree classification will be calculated as follows:

- *Credit-weighted aggregate mark related as follows:*
 - *First Class* 70% or more
 - *Second Class, Upper Division* 60% to less than 70%
 - *Second Class, Lower Division* 50% to less than 60%
 - *Third Class* 40% to less than 50%
- *For the purpose of determining the final degree classification if the final credit-weighted aggregate mark is less than or equal to 0.5% below the higher classification the Assessment Board will automatically award the higher classification (i.e. a decimal of .5 or greater shall round up, a decimal of .4 or less shall round down).”*

This algorithm does not use either of the steps identified as a concern by the OfS.

Regarding variances to HSU's standard Assessment Regulations, all course-specific degree algorithm variances are subject to institutional oversight. A small number of legacy variances within partnership provision include approaches identified by the OfS as requiring review. As the awarding body, HSU is working with the relevant partner(s) to ensure alignment with OfS expectations, with changes to be implemented by 31 July 2026 through established governance arrangements.

In addition, HSU Assessment Regulations were last reviewed in 2019-2020 to align with the [Principles for effective degree algorithm design](#), and are therefore due for review. This review (due in 2025-2026) will also need to include a review of local partner and legacy UCO and UCO Educational Partner Assessment Regulations and Classification Algorithms following the merger to align these more closely with standard University regulations and algorithms, and to confirm whether any adjustment in practice is needed to ensure that the degrees HSU awards retain their value over time.

HSU keeps its approach to degree classification under regular review to ensure that awards continue to reflect student achievement appropriately and retain their value over time. In doing so, the University has regard to guidance published by the Office for Students on degree classification algorithms and the maintenance of academic standards, alongside its broader expectations relating to quality and standards (including conditions B2 and B5).

Teaching Practices and Learning Resources

Given the relatively small cohort sizes at HSU, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the impact of changes to teaching and learning, but outcomes continue to be monitored alongside other indicators of student experience and performance. The University's Education Committee continues to lead on strategic initiatives that enhance the educational experience of students on taught courses, including technology-enhanced learning and inclusive curricula, and Student and Wellbeing Services continue to provide academic support to students.

Identifying Good Practice and Actions

Given the small cohort sizes within individual programmes, it is difficult to attribute changes in degree classifications to specific practices, however the University continues to monitor this through external examiner reports, course monitoring and institutional data review.

Conclusion

Overall, the University's review of degree outcomes does not indicate evidence of grade inflation or a lowering of academic standards. Over the five-year period, the proportion of First-Class degrees has decreased, Upper Second-Class outcomes have remained stable, and Lower Second Class outcomes have increased. This does not indicate upward drift in classifications and is consistent with a stable assessment framework.

Degree outcomes reflect the profile of a specialist institution with relatively small cohorts. Variations at the course or partner level are understood and are being actively managed through established governance arrangements.

Academic standards remain secure and comparable across all provision. The areas identified reflect localised variation and the impact of scale and complexity following merger and growth, rather than systemic weaknesses. These are being addressed through structured action planning, enhanced monitoring, and strengthened oversight of partnerships.

The University will continue to monitor degree outcomes through its academic governance processes, including the planned review of assessment regulations and classification algorithms, to ensure continued alignment with OfS expectations and the maintenance of academic standards over time.