

University of Surrey Degree Outcomes Statement 2023

1. Degree Classification Profile

Trends in Degree Outcomes

- 1.1 The University's degree outcomes for undergraduate programmes for the period 2017/18 to 2021/22 are summarised in Table 1 (FHEQ level 6 awards only, excluding Integrated Masters). The 5-year data analysis shows that the proportion of 1sts and 2:1s (known as Good Honours) at FHEQ level 6 has fluctuated from **83.7%** in 2017/8 to **77.4%** in 2021/22. The University's response to the coronavirus pandemic contributed to a small upward movement in the proportion of Good Honours in 2019/20 and 2020/21 by **2%-3%** higher in comparison to 2018/19 but the rate was still lower than in 2017/18. These degree outcomes were verified by external examiners, who provided positive feedback on the integrity and rigour of assessment practices and the quality and standards of Surrey degree awards in relation to the national standards and frameworks.
- 1.2 In 2021/22, Boards of Examiners were using the PowerBI-generated data analysis of student results to highlight potential risks for student progression and attainment. Safety net policies that University implemented in 2019/20 and 2020/21 to support students during the pandemic were no longer applicable in 2021/22, which resulted in a **4.8%** dip in Good Honours in comparison to the previous year. The number of 1st class degree awards has also declined and was at the lowest level over the past 5 years, at **26.5%**. The factors influencing the outcomes shown below are discussed within the rest of the statement.

Table 1: Summary of the University of Surrey degree outcomes 2017/18 to 2021/22

Award Year	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22	
1st	1,068	39.8%	802	29.7%	914	31.8%	1,153	33.2%	808	26.5%
2:1	1,185	43.9%	1,327	49.2%	1,419	49.1%	1,705	49.1%	1,546	50.8%
Good Honours	2,253	83.7%	2,129	78.9%	2,333	80.9%	2,858	82.2%	2,354	77.4%
2:2	374	13.9%	475	17.7%	464	16.1%	549	15.7%	577	18.9%
3rd	22	0.8%	43	1.6%	36	1.2%	27	0.8%	50	1.6%
Ordinary	42	1.6%	49	1.8%	51	1.8%	44	1.3%	65	2.1%
Total	2,691		2,696		2,884		3,478		3,046	

Subject Level

- 1.3 Figure 1 provides data relating to Good Honours degree outcomes for each of the three Faculties in the last five years (2017/18 – 2021/22). This data is also compared against the University's trendline that shows small movement between years with some notable exceptions:
- The Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences has the smallest number of students graduating at FHEQ level 6 as this Faculty offers substantial Integrated Master's provision. This creates an element of natural variation in the data when making comparisons between years. The outcomes at level 6 are often influenced by the extent to which students choose to continue to Master's level or to graduate with the Bachelor's degree. When outcomes from FHEQ level 7 Integrated Master's programmes are also taken into consideration, the variation in degree outcomes between all three Faculties is much reduced.
 - In 2018/19, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences saw a 7.7% decrease in the proportion of Good Honours, to **79.0%**. This was slightly improved in 2021/22 to **79.8%**, just above the average Surrey's figure of **77.4%** for Good Honours.

- Overall, in 2021/22 the Good Honours degree outcomes' gap between all three Faculties was the narrowest than at any other point in the past five years.

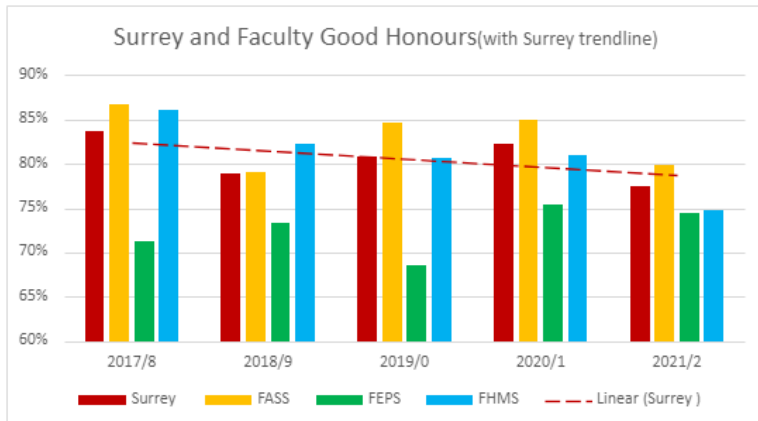


Figure 1 Surrey and Faculty Good Honours degree outcomes data: 2017/18 to 2021/22

Student Characteristics

UCAS Tariff on Entry

- 1.4 Over the review period the average entry tariff of students graduating from Surrey has reduced as shown in Figure 2 but remains generally strong. The degree outcomes for Surrey students are set against this strong previous academic performance as measured by UCAS Tariff. In Figure 2 UCAS Tariff figures have been normalised against the new UCAS tariff introduced in 2017/18.

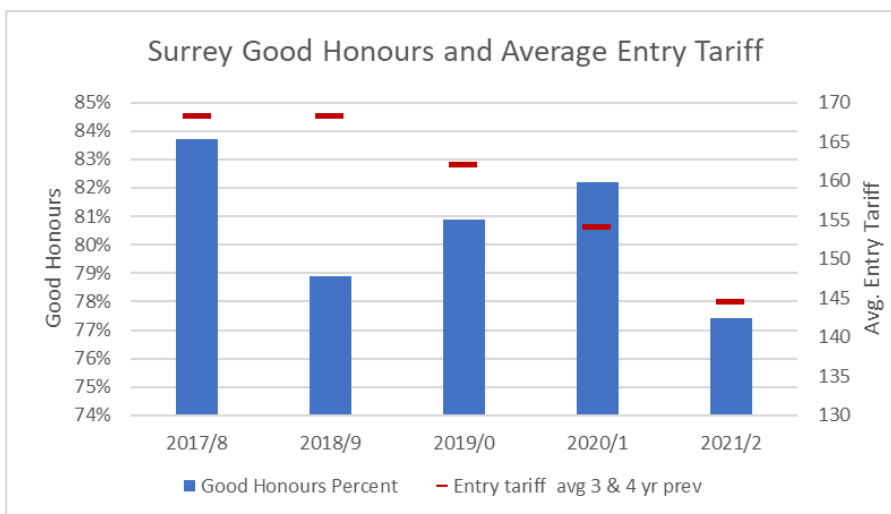


Figure 2 Surrey Good Honours vs. average entry tariff: 2017/18 to 2021/22

Combined socio-economic (Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPN) and Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)) and ethnicity factors

- 1.5 Figure 3 shows the difference in Good Honours degree outcomes between students from low socio-economic backgrounds (combination of LPN and IMD factors, with 1 is high and 7 is low). The numbers show a degree of volatility between years, which will be kept under review as part of the University's approach to supporting access and participation. However, broadly speaking, outcomes for 2021/22 are similar to the pre-pandemic level in 2018/19.



Figure 3 Surrey Good Honours vs. socio-economic factors: 2017/18 to 2021/22

1.6 Reducing the awarding gap is one of the top priorities for the University and a key target of the University's [Access and Participation Plan](#). Data analysis of the awarding gap between Global Majority students (including Black, Asian, Mixed and other ethnic minorities) and Black only student cohorts in comparison to White students is included in the Table 3 below. This data shows that the awarding gap between Black and White students in 2021/22 was slightly larger than in the previous two years, but in comparison to the pre-pandemic 2018/19 it was narrower by **5%**.

Table 2: Good Honours comparison between student ethnic groups (UK-domiciled students)

Award year	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22	
Global Majority	1,109	77.5%	1,046	68.6%	1,136	72.8%	510	76.1%	455	71.4%
Black	158	67.7%	178	60.1%	164	69.3%	184	68.5%	215	62.3%
White	1,685	88.6%	1,751	85.6%	1,836	86.4%	2,152	87.1%	1,752	82.8%
Black vs White	20.9%		25.5%		17.1%		18.6%		20.5%	

1.7 Internal data analysis of our FHEQ level 6 Good Honours student cohort demonstrates that a larger proportion of Global Majority students come from lower socio-economic backgrounds in comparison to White students, at a ratio of **40% vs 25%**. In combination with the impact of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, this factor has contributed to the increased awarding gap in 2020/21 and 2021/22. The pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis factors impacted upon Black, Asian, Mixed and other ethnic minority students overall (and Black students in particular) more than upon White students.

Disability

1.8 Although the overall number of disabled students remains relatively small, this cohort of the undergraduate student population is gradually increasing with every year. The Good Honours awarding gap between disabled and non-disabled students in 2021/22 continued



Figure 4: Comparison between disabled and non-disabled student attainment – Good Honours

a positive upward trend and students with declared disability achieved a higher proportion of Good Honours by **0.5%**, which was the best result in the past five years.

Assessment and Marking Practices

- 2.1 The University [Quality Framework](#) is designed to deliver a high-quality student learning experience. In order to ensure that all Surrey's academic programmes are well aligned to sector recognised standards, the University's quality assurance mechanism includes regular monitoring, review and reporting. Oversight is provided through the academic governance structures at Faculty and University levels, reporting ultimately to the University Senate and Council.
- 2.2 The University [Quality Framework](#) includes a set of mandatory policies and procedures relating to assessment and marking practices, confirming expectations for both staff and students:
- The [Code of practice for assessment and feedback](#) defines processes for marking student work and internal moderation of marks. Where necessary, an adjustment of student marks may be considered by the Boards of Examiners for recommendation to Senate Progression and Conferment Executive (SPACE). Methods and algorithms for mark adjustment are included in the *Code of practice*. In 2021/22, a new appendix to this *Code of practice* was added to introduce a model for a workshop with a focus on the principles of pre-marking calibration. This approach is best represented as an 'academic conversation' between members of a programme team and to discuss the approaches they take to marking work.
 - Other changes to the *Code of practice for assessment and feedback* introduced in 2021/22 include (the list is not exhaustive):
 - revised 'forms and types of assessment' to integrate the new typology of assessment;
 - consolidated 'assessment strategy' that draws together expectations on the amount of assessment and how these are structured, e.g. no hidden assessments;
 - clarified conventions for the submission of online assessments;
 - clarified requirements for the double marking of projects/dissertations to minimise unnecessary double marking for smaller units of assessment within dissertation modules.
- 2.3 A student can appeal the decisions and outcomes on the grounds that are defined in the *Regulations for Academic Appeals* and *Regulations for Academic Integrity*.
- 2.4 All taught programmes have one or more [external examiners](#) whose main function is to provide independent external verification that the University of Surrey's system of assessment is fair and is fairly operated in the determination of awards made to students. External examiners are also asked to confirm in their annual reports the appropriateness of assessment methods, the application of marking criteria and the adherence to regulations and the [Code of practice for assessment and feedback](#). Reports are considered by Boards of Studies, at which student representatives are present. Students have full access to the external examiner reports relevant to their programme via the virtual learning environment. An overview of main themes, matters arising from external examiners' annual reports and examples of best practice is then considered by the Quality Enhancement Subcommittee and the University Education Committee. A formal response from the University is provided to external examiners to address any recommendations raised within their annual reports.

Academic Governance

- 3.1 The University of Surrey has a clearly defined [Code of practice for academic governance \(renamed in 2022/23 to Senate Governance\)](#) that defines the structures, policies and processes that the University has put in place to assure the setting and maintaining of academic standards and the quality of the student experience.
- 3.2 The University Council is the ultimate governing body with Senate the governing body for all academic matters. Senate is assisted in its task by various key committees, which include the University Education Committee (UEC), the University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC) and their sub-committees.
- 3.3 The Senate Progression and Conferment Executive (SPACE) is a sub-committee of Senate. All degrees and other awards are conferred by SPACE acting on delegated authority from Senate. SPACE reviews the recommendations made from Boards of Examiners for consistency and reasonableness before ratification and conferment of awards. SPACE has the authority to make appropriate changes to overall marks and degree classifications on behalf of Senate where required and in line with the [Code of practice for assessment and feedback](#).
- 3.4 Decisions regarding the award of academic credit are made by Boards of Examiners which review assessment outcomes and the underlying marking and moderation processes underpinning the University's academic standards. Boards of Examiners routinely include input from external examiners to ensure appropriate external verification of assessment outcomes.
- 3.5 Working within the framework described above, the University has an established and clearly articulated academic governance structure for the approval and management of collaborative provision, as set out within the [Code of practice for collaborative provision](#). The University's collaborative partner, Farnborough College of Technology (FCoT) is an Accredited Institution (AI) and manages the validation, annual and periodic enhancement review processes for programmes they deliver in the University's name. The University's oversight is maintained through regular meetings with FCoT's Academic Registry, attendance at FCoT's Quality and Standards Committee, etc. An Annual Review Report from FCoT is considered through the University's academic governance structure. All Surrey-validated programmes delivered by FCoT are expected to follow the University's [Quality Framework](#). Types of other collaborative activity offered by the University can be found within the [collaborative provision register](#).

Classification Algorithms

- 4.1 The University's degree classification algorithm is communicated transparently through the [academic regulations](#) which are typically applicable from the year a student enters their programme of study. The University's core classification algorithm for undergraduate degrees has remained unchanged since 2010/2011, with a 35% : 65% split between FHEQ level 5 and FHEQ level 6 for Bachelor's programmes. These weightings reflect the University's view that a student's degree classification should primarily be determined by their performance at the later and higher levels within their award while recognising achievements earlier in the programme of study.
- 4.2 For classifying undergraduate honours degrees, the University considers the overall weighted aggregate mark as the best indicator of student achievement. This is derived from aggregating module marks, weighted in accordance with their credit value and then

using the level average marks to determine the final class in accordance with the 35%:65% split degree classification algorithm (see p. 4.1 above). No other methods for calculating the final degree classification, for example a 'borderline range' (also known as a 'zone of consideration'), or discounting of credit in calculating the final degree classification to enable the award of a higher classification, etc. are permitted. Awards are classified according to the following ranges:

First Class	70% and above
Second Class, Upper Division	60-69%
Second Class, Lower Division	50-59%
Third Class	40-49%

- 4.2 Compensation is available following a failure at the first or subsequent assessment attempts for units of assessment in modules with a value up to, and including, 30 credits at FHEQ level 4. From FHEQ level 5 and above, compensation is available for modules with a value up to, and including, 15 credits. For compensation to be applied in a normal undergraduate programme, students must have achieved at least 30% module mark in the failed module and have a weighted average for the level of at least 40%. To support academic progression during the pandemic years, the University also introduced a trailing credit facility (one 15-credit module) to allow students an additional attempt to pass a module during the next academic year. This facility was retained on a permanent basis from 2020/21 onwards.

Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and Good Practice

- 5.1 Much of the University's enhancement activity at undergraduate level was focused through the NSS 85 plan which was first introduced in 2020 and is being developed through the [Continuous Enhancement Review process](#). Programme teams with low NSS satisfaction scores were engaged with the NSS Enhancement Support programme, which was facilitated by the Surrey Institute of Education (SloE) amongst others. Improved assessment and feedback for students is a key priority for the University, which in turn underpins the improved student performance. The SloE are leading the work in this area through the development of key resources, such as an assessment and enhancement toolkit, inclusive education, etc. In August 2022, SloE designed a programme of enhancement work entitled 'Assessment and Feedback Focus' as part of an annual programme of enhancement activities. This enhancement programme was trialled in 2022/23 and involved a series of masterclasses, the development of new resources, and working in partnership with students.
- 5.3 In 2021/22, the University has initiated an additional Enhancement Support for Schools/Departments with low student continuation rates. This initiative was focused on providing more support for students who struggle to complete their programme of study.
- 5.4 A distinctive feature of Surrey's approach to developing excellence in Learning and Teaching is the emphasis on pedagogical research. In 2021/22, SloE's first assessment to the REF under the Education Unit of Assessment led to excellent outcomes. Overall, SloE's research quality was ranked 20 out of 83 submissions to the Education UoA. In terms of outputs, 43% of SloE's outputs were considered world-leading (4*), placing Surrey 11th out of the 83 submissions. For impact, Surrey ranked 20th with 100% of impact case studies judged to have outstanding or very considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance.
- 5.6 A new online resource, EduHub, was launched for the University academic community as a hub for all educational resources and to highlight the latest academic developmental

opportunities available for colleagues through the SloE to support practice and education across the University.

- 5.7 A current strategic initiative, which is due to complete at the end of the 2023/24 academic year, is the Curriculum Design Review (CDR). The review provides an opportunity for academic colleagues to pause, critically reflect and enhance each foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate taught programme that we offer at the University of Surrey. The process involves drawing programme teams and other key stakeholders together to look at current and future provision in a series of workshops. The teams will then create a plan and work collaboratively to support implementation. As part of the CDR, student partners are recruited to work alongside staff to undertake a curriculum project that supports the curriculum review process. The outcome of the work forms a reflection for the curriculum design review exercise for action and implementation into appropriate programmes.
- 5.8 During the pandemic years, student transitioning into remote/online learning was proactively supported by the University via a range of 'mini-guide' resources and captured videos, including featuring prominently on a dedicated 'Studying Online' website and highlighted in key University student communications. These resources were developed in collaboration with Surrey students and were fully aligned with the pedagogical guidance for academic staff on transferring their programmes and assessment to the online context. This successful work to transform the University's online learning provision was continued in 2021/22 through various initiatives aimed at embedding online learning as common practice and was a popular option for students. In 2022/23 and onwards the University is looking to take this work further through the development of a suite of online programmes and modules.
- 5.9 Students are integrally involved in reviewing and shaping their educational experience and learning environment, with the University and Students' Union (SU) working collaboratively to ensure that students contribute to key quality assurance and enhancement processes. Students who are experiencing challenges with their academic engagement as identified through Learning Analytics will be signposted to appropriate support, notably by their Personal Tutor and the Student Success team. Having clearer expectations regarding student engagement with their programme also supports consistent application of the academic regulations concerning 'failure to make academic progress'. This is where a student appears to have disengaged with their programme and is at risk of having their registration terminated. For international students subject to Home Office requirements, disengagement with the academic programme of study can lead to a termination of sponsorship for a visa. In 2021/22, the University created a new [Code of practice for Student Learning Analytics](#) to provide transparency on the approaches that would be used by the UKVI Compliance team, and where data may be used for investigations undertaken by OSCAR, e.g. student complaints.

Assurance of the Degree Outcomes Statement

- 6.1 Surrey monitors degree outcomes routinely through its annual monitoring and reporting processes. The University Council is responsible for the approval of the Degree Outcomes Statement and reviews a revised version on an annual basis, on the recommendation of Senate. The format has remained consistent since to aid comparability between years.