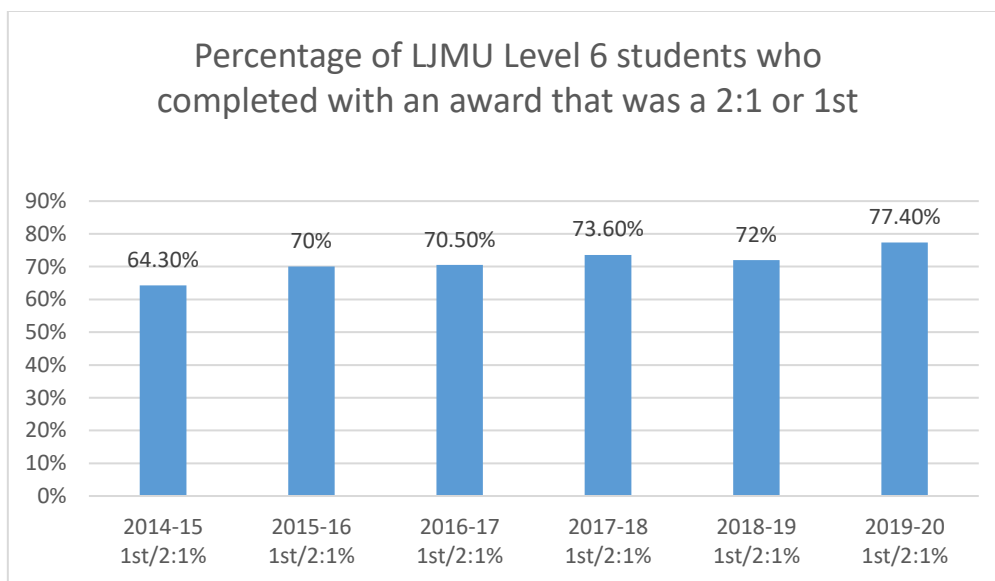


## Degree Outcomes Statement

### Institutional Degree Classification Profile

The following table details the percentage of Level 6 students who were awarded a Good Honours Degree<sup>1</sup> between academic year 2014-15 and 2019-20.

2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
64.3%	70%	70.5%	73.6%	72%	77.4%



Over the reporting period:

- An average of 71.4% of Level 6 students were awarded a Good Honours Degree.
- The University's current classification algorithm (see [Classification Algorithm](#)), used for the first time in 2018-19, saw the number of Good Honours Degrees awarded:
  - Decline slightly overall (-1.6%).
  - Decline in three out of five Faculties.
  - Decline in 11 Schools.
- On average, a higher percentage of Good Honours Degrees were awarded to female students in comparison to male students (76% compared to 65.7%).

<sup>1</sup> A 'Good Honours Degree' is defined as either First Class Honours or Upper Second Class Honours (2:1).

- On average, a higher percentage of Good Honours Degrees were awarded to white students in comparison to BAME students (73.6% compared to 55.9%). Between academic session 2018-19 and 2019-20 the number of BAME students who were awarded a Good Honours Degree increased by 8.4%.
- On average, a higher percentage of Good Honours Degrees were awarded to UK and EU students in comparison to international students (72.3% and 71.2%, respectively, compared to 45.7%). It is worth noting that, between academic years 2018-19 and 2019-20, the number of international students who were awarded a Good Honours Degree grew by 9.5%, whilst the number of UK and EU students who were awarded a Good Honours Degree grew by 6.1%.
- The outcomes for students with a declared disability, and those without, were largely similar. On average, 71.7% of students without a declared disability were awarded a Good Honours Degree in comparison to 68.4% of students with a declared disability. Between 2018-19 and 2019-20, there were comparable increases in the percentage of Good Honours Degrees awarded to students with a declared disability and those without (+4.4% and +5.5%, respectively).
- A higher proportion of Good Honours Degrees were awarded to students who entered with A-Levels in comparison to students who entered with other qualifications. On average, 80.6% of students who entered with A-Levels were awarded a Good Honours Degree in comparison to 59.3% of students who entered with other qualifications. On average, 69.6% of students who entered with an A-Level and a BTEC were awarded a Good Honours Degree.

## Assessment and Marking Practices

The University ensures that its assessment criteria meets sector reference points through the following mechanisms:

- The design and development of programmes aligned to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, National Credit Frameworks, Subject Benchmark Statements, Apprenticeship Standards<sup>2</sup>, and the requirements of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies<sup>3</sup>. Programme approval/re-approval processes require programme teams to articulate how these external reference points have informed the design/review of a programme(s).
- Engaging external expertise in the programme approval/re-approval process.
- Engaging External Examiners to:
  - Provide impartial and independent comment on the quality and standards of programmes, in relation to national standards and frameworks.
  - Comment on the reasonable comparability of standards achieved at other UK providers, with whom the examiner has experience.

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<sup>2</sup> As applicable.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

- Approve all summative assessments associated with their programme(s), for the coming academic year, in order to ensure that students are assessed fairly.
  - Moderate a sample of assessed work, and judge whether students have fulfilled the objectives of the programme, the learning outcomes of the modules, and reached the required standard.
  - Participate in the University's Boards of Examiners, where marks and awards are confirmed.
- The professional development of academic staff through:
    - Comprehensive staff development.
    - Engagement in subject/discipline specific networks.
    - Research and scholarship.
    - Acting as External Examiners at other Institutions. To support colleagues, the University was an early adopter of AdvanceHE's External Examiner Professional Development programme.
- A sample of assessed work is second marked, for the purposes of internal moderation. Second marking ensures consistency by confirming the marks awarded by the first marker(s). The sample of assessed work provided to External Examiners is required to include evidence of second marking.
  - In order for a Board of Examiners to proceed, confirmation must be provided that internal and external moderation has taken place.
  - In relation to Collaborative Provision, where the responsibility for setting, marking, and moderating assessment is delegated to the partner organisation, this must be approved via the programme approval process, which takes into consideration the academic experience of the programme team.

## **Academic Governance**

Academic Board is accountable to the Board of Governors, and has overall responsibility for the University's awards, the quality and standards of its academic programmes, the University's Academic Framework Regulations, and its Framework for Quality and Standards.

Academic Board has distinct sub-committees, which have delegated responsibility for the oversight of Quality and Standards<sup>4</sup> and Teaching, Learning and Assessment<sup>5</sup>.

A range of reports and data are considered through the governance structure, each academic year, which provide assurances of the value, standards and quality of the University's awards, including those delivered through partnership arrangements.

The University's Boards of Examiners are established by, and responsible to, Academic Board.

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<sup>4</sup> Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.

<sup>5</sup> Education Committee.

## Classification Algorithm

The class of degree awarded to students is based upon the Award Mark.

In order to get a traditional Bachelor's degree, students are required to achieve 120 credits at each level.

Students are required to pass Level 4, but these marks are not taken into consideration when calculating the Award Mark. Marks achieved at Level 5 are weighted at 25%, and those at Level 6 are weighted at 75%. The Award Mark is calculated from 120 credits achieved at Level 6 and from 120 credits<sup>6</sup> achieved at Level 5.

Only modules carrying a numerical mark (i.e. not a pass/fail grade) may contribute towards classification. All Level 6 credits contributing to an award must be mark bearing.

The Class of Degree, determined by the Award Mark, is as follows:

- <40% = Fail
- 40% - 49% = Third class (3<sup>rd</sup>)
- 50% - 59% = Lower second class (2:2)
- 60% - 69% = Upper second class (2:1)
- >70% = First class (1<sup>st</sup>)

A student is awarded the higher classification of degree where the Award Mark is 1% below the classification boundary, and more than half of the credits at Level 6 are in a class above that indicated by the Award Mark.

As part of the University's measures to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on award outcomes, an Award Mark Safeguard was introduced. This comprised both a discount of credit, from the calculation of the final award mark, and a temporary extension to the classification borderline (see [COVID-19 section](#)).

The above approach applies to students studying at Liverpool John Moores University and its collaborative partners.

The current algorithm for calculating degree classifications arose out of a review of the University's Academic Framework Regulations, and was used for the first time in 2018-19.

Students have the right to one referral opportunity in any failed module(s). If students fail to gain the credits for a module(s) at the second attempt, they may be eligible for an Exceptional Second Referral for up to 20 credits. In order to be eligible for an Exceptional Second Referral, students must have achieved 100 credits at the applicable level.

If a student has exhausted the permitted referral opportunities, but has attained between 60 and 99 credits within a level, they can be offered the opportunity to re-register for a Final Module Attempt (FMA) upon the failed module(s). Students are

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<sup>6</sup> Or 240 credits where students have completed a sandwich placement or additional study abroad year.

permitted FMAs on the basis that they have not completed a previous level via this mechanism, and that the Board of Examiners has appropriate reason, and evidence, to be confident that the student will engage.

The maximum mark obtainable for a referral, Exceptional Second Referral and Final Module Attempt is 40% or the minimum pass mark for the module.

Subject to a valid personal circumstances/special mitigation application, students who have experienced difficult personal circumstances are permitted to defer an assessment(s), undertaking it at the next appropriate opportunity.

A deferred assessment attempt is not capped to the minimum pass mark, and is marked as if the student were attempting it for the first time.

In some instances, as a result of a valid special mitigation application, the student will not undertake the assessment again. Instead, the module leader will assign a mark for the assessment item. However, this is only permissible where there is sufficient evidence to do so, and it is subject to approval by the Chair of the Board of Examiners.

The University's classification algorithm, referral and deferral arrangements are included within students' Programme Guides and the University's Student Handbook.

### **Teaching Practices, Learning Resources and Good Practice**

A range of practice, which positively impacted upon student outcomes, has been identified through the University's Quality Assurance mechanisms, including feedback from External Examiners. Common and recurring themes include:

- The consistency and quality of the feedback provided to all students, including those who perform highly, and the use of mechanisms to facilitate the provision of "feedforward" to inform and support students' engagement with future assessments.
- The wide range of assessment types, and learning activities utilised, which accommodate the needs of all learners.
- The coherence of programmes' Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategies.
- The use of technology to support learning.
- The design of delivery of innovative, cutting-edge curricula.
- The quality of student support and assignment guidance.

In addition, within the School of Sport and Exercise Science, in response to an increase in the number of students entering from a vocational background, the School modified its approach to teaching and module development, for all Level 4 students. To this end, the School moved away from a didactic approach to teaching, towards a more active learning approach. This change in approach was informed by support from Further Education providers, who spoke to academic staff, within the School, with regard to BTEC styles of teaching and content.

## COVID-19

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in April 2020, the University's Executive Leadership Team approved a No Detriment Framework. The No Detriment Framework was developed to enable students to complete their studies, assess achievement reliably and award qualifications securely. The primary purpose of the framework was to ensure that no student was unfairly disadvantaged, as a consequence of national and/or local restrictions, whilst ensuring that institutional standards and the requirements of the Office for Students were not compromised.

The Framework included five key components; extensions, alternative assessments, waivers, award mark safeguard and experiential credit and was designed to support students to complete assessment and mitigate the impact of the global health crisis on award outcomes.

A review of the effectiveness and impact of the No Detriment Framework was considered through the University's governance structures during academic session 2020-21. Key points included:

- The impact of extensions was twofold. Firstly, marks and consequently pass rates increased slightly. Secondly, the number of Personal Circumstances applications and therefore deferrals remained relatively low.
- Alternative assessment was used extensively in all Faculties. Arrangements were understood by students and supported by External Examiners.
- The use of waivers was not extensively used across the institution. Only 0.6% of modules recorded waivers.
- Two thirds of final year students received at least a 10 credits discount. For 98% of this group, 20 credits were discounted. Only 26 students received the 40-credit deduction.
- Only a minority of students with an award mark of 68% were awarded a first-class degree classification.
- The use of the Award Mark Safeguard resulted in a 2% overall increase in the number of students who were awarded a Good Honours Degree.
- Nine students were awarded experiential credit. In all cases, the award of credit enabled them to progress to the next level, rather than contribute to a final award.

Positive feedback was received, from the University's External Examiners, with regard to the No Detriment Framework and the integrity of award marks.

## Actions Update

The first iteration of the University's Degree Outcomes Statement identified the following actions:

1. To address the differences in the degree awards of BAME students, in accordance with the University's [Access and Participation Plan](#).
2. To expand the scope of the University's Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement process, at all levels, to include a focus upon performance, by student group. This will further facilitate the identification of specific strategies to address identified award gaps, and support student achievement.

Enhancing the scope of the University's annual monitoring process will ensure that any identified variation in awards, and associated strategies to address, are considered through the University's governance structure, both at Faculty-level, via Faculty Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committees, and at Institutional-level, via the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.

In relation to action number one, the University's Access and Participation Plan outlines a range of initiatives to address a gap between the degree awards of students from BAME backgrounds and that of their white peers. The scale of the gap meant that the Plan was subject to enhanced monitoring by the Office for Students. Despite some disruption as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, steady improvement has been made. Following consideration of the University's first Access and Participation Plan monitoring report to the Office for Students the requirement for enhanced monitoring was removed.

In accordance with the Access and Participation Plan, the University will continue to seek to further reduce the differences in the degree awards of BAME students.

With regard to the second action, a review of the University's Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement process is currently ongoing. A key aim of this activity has been to ensure that the process facilitates performance by student group. The outcomes, and associated recommendations, of the Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement Review will be reported to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee in December 2021.

In addition, enhancements have been made to the University's Periodic Programme Review process, which require programme teams, as part of their quinquennial review of their programmes, to address diversity in the curriculum and, as applicable, measures to address identified degree award gaps.