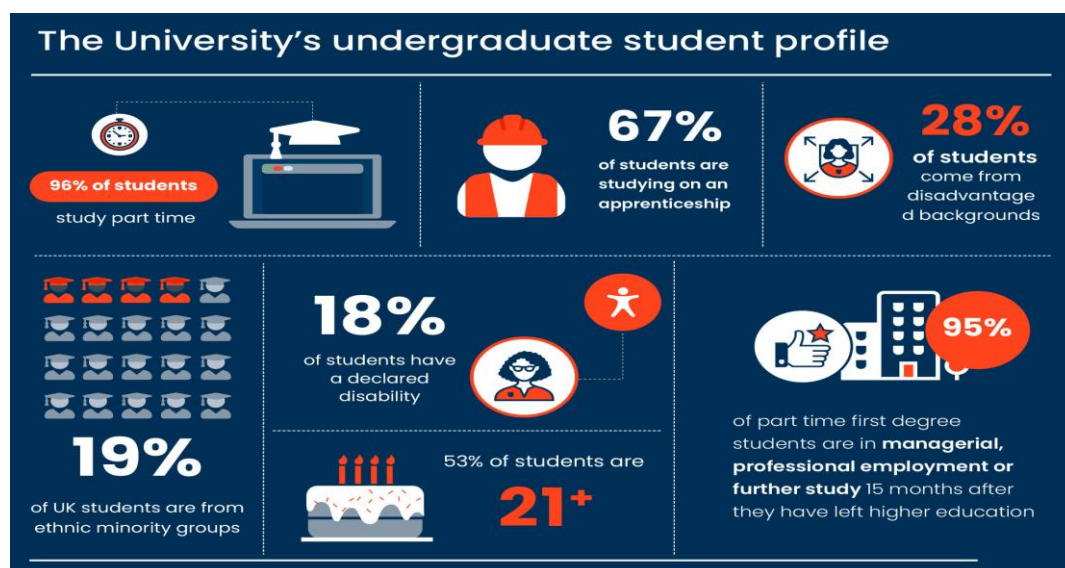


# Degree Outcomes Statement 2025

## 1. Institutional degree classification profile

The University of the Built Environment is the leading provider of online education solely for the built environment, with over 100 years' experience of providing learning opportunities of the highest quality.<sup>1</sup> The University provides industry-accredited qualifications through supported online education, accessible from anywhere in the world. The majority of students study part-time whilst in employment. Students are supported to balance their study alongside work and personal commitments. More than half of the University undergraduate students are apprentices.



Year	Number of awards (rounded to nearest 10)	Upper second class	First class honours	Good Honours
2023/24	290	47%	32%	79%
2022/23	350	53%	24%	76%
2021/22	340	54%	21%	75%
2020/21	480	52%	25%	77%
2019/20	180	48%	23%	71%

Table 1: University of the Built Environment student attainment rates 2019/20 to 2023/24<sup>2</sup>

An analysis of the data reveals the following:

- the proportion of students achieving good honours has been consistent over the last four years. This follows an increase on previous years, which can be partly attributed to enhancements in learning and teaching practices (outlined in section 5) and changes to the characteristics of the University's graduating cohort with the increase of students studying as part of an apprenticeship, with the attainment rate amongst this group remaining consistently higher than their counterparts.

<sup>1</sup> This built environment focus means that University of the Built Environment has a very narrow subject offer. Accordingly, analysis by subject is not presented.

<sup>2</sup> This data is derived from an analysis of the University of the Built Environment's Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student return. All of the University's programmes are delivered online, which means our international students study outside of the UK and are therefore excluded from the Student return (the return is collected from students registered at the reporting provider and studying within the UK; students studying wholly outside of the UK for the duration of their programme are excluded). Due to some small population sizes these numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10.

The University's attainment rate this year is generally in line with the overall sector attainment rate for 2022/23 for UK-domiciled, full-time first-degree graduates of 77.6%<sup>3</sup>;

- the proportion of students awarded a First Class degree increased from 23.7% in 2022/23 to 31.9% in 2023/24;
- all students entering the University's BSc programmes, regardless of their highest qualification on entry, have an opportunity of achieving a good honours degree, evidencing that the University's entry requirements are appropriate;
- there is a gap in the attainment rate in 2023/24 between the following groups of students:
  - mature (79.5%) and young (77.3%); this contrasts with 2022/23, where young<sup>4</sup> students outperformed their mature counterparts;
  - female (86.0%) and male (76.1%); however, this gap (9.9pp) is lower than 2022/23 (12.9pp);
  - ethnic minority (82.1%) and white (78.0%); this contrasts with 2022/23, where white students outperformed their ethnic minority counterparts; however, it does follow the closing gap in the overall sector as seen in the OfS paper "[Maintaining the Credibility of Degrees](#)";
  - from Index of Multiple Deprivation<sup>5</sup> (IMD) quintiles 4-5 (83.2%) and quintiles 1-2 (69.2%);
  - the attainment rate in 2023/24 is higher among students who have declared a disability (80.0%) compared to those with no known disability (78.6%); when comparing students with a disability, both those with and without a support plan achieved an attainment rate of 80%.

## 2. Assessment and marking practices

The University's assessment strategy is based on using a range of assessment formats that encourage self-reflection and the opportunity to make linkages to key academic literature and the incorporation of experiential learning and industry practice. The types of approaches to assessment used are coursework, computer-based, portfolio, practical and project. The University ensures that assessment meets sector standards by:

- using contextualised grading descriptors, informed by Office for Students Sector Recognised Standards and The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) 2024);
- setting assessments informed by QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and the requirements of the University's accrediting Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs);
- ensuring assessments are scrutinised at authoring stage by External Examiners;
- ensuring that appropriate assessment direction and support is provided, particularly in respect of what a threshold, good and excellent assessment should look like;
- ensuring that there is appropriate consideration of student mitigating circumstances, support for students with disabilities through additional support plans and there is a clear procedure for consideration of student appeals;

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<sup>3</sup> Full report available at [Proportion of top grades falls to pre-pandemic levels, but nearly half are still unexplained – Office for Students](#)

<sup>4</sup> Consistent with HESA grouping 'young' here includes all students aged under 21 on entry whilst 'mature' is any student that is aged 21 or over.

<sup>5</sup> The English IMD measures relative deprivation for small areas (Lower Super Output Areas, LSOAs) in England and ranks LSOAs in England from 1 (most deprived area) to 32,844 (least deprived area). Further information about the English IMD is available on the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government website. Available at [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019) and [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015)

- ensuring that marking criteria have been fairly, accurately, and consistently applied during first marking;
- ensuring all assessments are moderated (including statistical analysis of markers against the marking team, and External Examiner review) in line with QAA best practice;
- allocating markers appropriate to the subject discipline being assessed and ensuring that they complete mandatory training prior to marking;
- using Module Leaders reports to provide detailed analysis across the modules that feeds into level review and programme review.

Additionally, for the End Point Assessment (EPA) on integrated degree apprenticeships, the University set assessments informed by the relevant Assessment Plan, and guidance produced by the Institute for Apprentices and Technical Education (IfATE).

The University appoints External Examiners with reference to the criteria laid down in the [Code of Practice](#), to ensure they are suitably qualified and have relevant subject experience.

For each programme the University appoints both an academic and industry practitioner External Examiner which has the advantage of encouraging the symbiosis of theory and practice knowledge. The University's External Examiners consistently agree that the marking and classification criteria are set at the appropriate level, that marking/grading criteria are properly and consistently applied, and that marking and grading is fair and reliable. The University has reviewed its external examining practices to ensure that they align with the UK Standing Committee for Quality (UKSCQA) External Examiners Principles.

In 2023, the University established an Assessment Steering Group to provide oversight and strategic coherence to developing assessments. This group provides an opportunity to direct assessment approaches at programme level and ensure the approach remains authentic and relevant to all stakeholders including students, employers and PSRB competency frameworks.

### 3. Academic governance

The University governance structures provide assurance that the value of qualifications is protected over time and that marking practices are adhered to. The Board of Examiners, reporting into the Academic Board, manages the scrutiny of results, utilising External Examiner critical review. Academic Board receives annual reports summarising the feedback received from the University External Examiners. Academic Board is the guardian of the academic quality and standards of the University's awards and, through its subcommittees, oversees the programme review and approval processes and the wider review of [academic regulations](#), policies and procedures. Academic Board reports to the [Board of Trustees](#), which receives reports on the maintenance of academic quality and standards including data on student achievement. There are student members on the University's main deliberative committees including Academic Board and on the University's Board of Trustees.

The University participated in the Advance HE Academic Governance Benchmarking Collaborative Project in 2023 to provide assurance around its academic governance arrangements. This provided assurance that 100% of Academic Board members were in agreement that the annual reports provide the Academic Board with a high degree of confidence in the standards of its awards and in the quality of academic and service provision. To embed this the University undertook a further external review of both academic and corporate governance to ensure that governance systems and processes are efficient, appropriate to institutional scale, enable appropriate controls and support a culture of effective planning and decision making.

The University has made use of external assistance in assuring the validity of the degree outcomes statement through the external representatives on the deliberative committees at which the statement

has been reviewed and through the specific review by an External Examiner.

## 4. Classification algorithms

The University has a single algorithm to ensure fairness, consistency, and transparency which is made clear to students and other stakeholders within the [regulations](#). The University awards are classified based solely on Level 6 modules, supported by zones of consideration on borderline classifications where the candidate can demonstrate dominant quality at the higher classification. The University's rationale for this approach is driven by:

- a significant proportion of students joining the University with advanced standing at both Level 4 and Level 5;
- the current approach assessing exit velocity; and
- the University intending to continue to offer flexible study options.

The University is committed to undertaking a review of degree algorithms on a 5-yearly cycle with the latest review being undertaken in 2025. The review recommended that additional information is provided to students on how their degree classification is determined including the weighted average of their final degree classification.

The University offers students four attempts at a module except where required otherwise by apprenticeship standards assessment plans. Overall module marks achieved at resubmission or retake are capped at the module pass mark unless there are valid mitigating circumstances.

The University uses a zone of borderline consideration with marks only uplifted following Module Leader review where they have assessed that the student has met all learning outcomes.

## 5. Teaching practices and learning resources

The University continues to review and enhance its teaching practices and learning resources. These enhancements:

- enabled teaching and assessment approaches to be co-developed with learning designers and editors and student representatives. The impact has been that learning materials are more logically structured in learner friendly sections, using a range of accessible online resources, and more effectively support students within a structured student-centred online learning environment;
- strengthened module monitoring and evaluation, through analysis of performance against agreed module Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and weekly feedback from students reviewed by the Module Leader. This allows for more timely responses to student needs as they develop through the semester;
- promote the role of Academic Support Tutors (AST), facilitating a rigorous approach to monitoring engagement and providing targeted additional study skills support where needed.

More recent enhancements impacting on 2023/24 outcomes include:

- further embedding of the HELP (Higher Engagement Lower Pressure) enhancements to improve module outcomes for students;
- more focused promotion of academic integrity including a focus on promoting good practice and offering more one- to-one support for students.
- closer alignment of modules to programme learning outcomes as part of the revalidation work. Although the work started in Spring 2024, following the successful revalidation, the impacts will not be seen until Autumn 2024; emerging technologies have been introduced to further support

student outcomes and authenticity;

- greater use has been made of real-life scenarios to help students contextualise their assignments;
- a greater focus on diversifying assessment types to better reflect authentic assessment. For example, more modules have adopted presentations, posters, and short answer questions;
- Improvements in the marking feedback, including the use of greater study support signposting, has helped students to gain better marks in subsequent assignments.

The University continues to capture and respond to student feedback via in-delivery weekly feedback and module evaluation surveys, to continually enhance its modules and programmes.

The University has a well-established delivery model to support apprentices to successful degree completion and onto completion of their EPA. This includes support from an Apprenticeship Outcomes Officer to support and monitor academic and work-based progress and development. Moreover, a minimum 20% of apprentices working hours are statutorily spent on off-the-job studies. Apprentices also have professional practice workshops delivered by the University and employers, providing wrap-around support.

Accordingly, apprentice students consistently out-perform non-apprentice peers at module level and are more likely to achieve good honours. The University is anticipating a further increase in good degree classifications linked to the numbers of apprentices on programme and their access to contextualised support and additional time to study. The University is also considering any good practice that can be learnt from the success of its apprenticeship programmes that could support students that are studying with the University on a standard part-time route.

## **6. Identifying good practice and actions**

Areas of good practice identified include:

- External Examiners continuing to express confidence in academic standards, noting the: alignment with national benchmarks; industry relevance of programmes and assessment; high standard of student work; and the structure and quality of assessments that reflect a commitment to maintaining high academic standards.
- (Re)-validation panels commending the: passion for excellent student outcomes; authentic understanding of a variety of student backgrounds and demographics through considered module and programme to inform a coherent student journey; industry responsive provision; and programme alignment to professional competencies to support student achievement.
- Positive feedback from the University's Higher Education Apprenticeship External Adviser, an experienced Ofsted inspector, following his reviews of the University's provision in 2023 and 2024. This included comments on a good range of student support systems, the well-resourced and structured VLE, effective Quality Assurance mechanisms and individualised student feedback.
- Ofsted's full inspection report of the University in November 2021 providing further validation of the quality of the provision for apprentices. Specific reference was made during the visit to the quality of learning.
- The University maintaining its status on the apprenticeship provider and assessment register (APAR), providing additional confirmation of the University's high quality provision.
- Very positive feedback from the assessor following the Matrix Continuous Improvement Check in February 2025. The University's Matrix accreditation was renewed for another year demonstrating a real and effective commitment to supporting students.
- Communities of Practice where academic staff discourse is focussed around six QAA themed

areas where a programme focus can be brought to support and develop student skills in each themed area.

- A proactive, cross-institutional approach to student support. Regular data-driven interventions coordinated centrally, delivered by student support teams, ensures referrals are made to appropriate resources and support staff.

The University has a culture of continuous improvement with all teams across the institution regularly reflecting on performance and acting upon student and stakeholder feedback. These actions are captured on the institutional scorecard and action plans, which are reviewed regularly by the deliberative committees or Senior Leadership Team and inform the annual review of the Degree Outcomes Statement.

## **7. Risks and challenges**

The UK higher education sector faces significant challenges, including risks to financial sustainability, regulatory changes, political uncertainty, technological advancements, and the UK mental health crisis.

The University's risks and challenges are divided into internal and external factors. Internally, the primary challenge is supporting our part-time student cohort, who balance full-time employment with their studies. This requires flexibility in the pace of study, which can impact timely completion and degree classifications. The University uses governance and operational improvement processes to monitor and address these risks, regularly reviewing and updating student support policies and procedures.

Externally, feedback received by External Examiners and students following the University's successful adaptation during the Covid-19 pandemic, positions us well to support students amid the ongoing mental health crisis. The cost-of-living crisis may lead to self-funding students taking on additional paid work, affecting study time and success rates. The University mitigates the impact of external factors on students, by monitoring student engagement and outcomes.

Policy developments post the 2024 General Election may bring changes affecting apprenticeships, impacting funding and admissions. The University will monitor these developments closely.

The emergence of generative AI presents new possibilities but also exacerbates assessment challenges. The University is addressing this by implementing multiple assessment types based on authentic learning and establishing a clear AI policy. Staff are actively monitoring this technology to harness it effectively and ethically.