

1. Introduction

Degree Outcomes Statements are part of a sector wide commitment to protect the value and ongoing credibility of Higher Education qualifications. This statement provides stakeholders with information about the way Keele University manages the academic standards of its awards and meets the Office for Students' ongoing conditions of registration (B4 and B5). The statement compares outcomes over the past five years.

2. The University's degrees classification profile

Chart 1 and Table 1 outline the overall percentage of good degrees (1st class and 2.i) awarded to UK first-degree students between 2016-17 and 2021-22 by Keele, and the sector as a whole. The percentage of good degrees awarded by Keele to UK First Degree Students remained broadly consistent from 2016-17 to 2019-20, typically within 2 percentage points of the sector average. At Keele, in common with the rest of the sector, the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on degree outcomes between 2019-20 and 2021-22. In 2019-20, the impact of COVID-19 mitigation measures led to a significant uptick in the sector average for good degrees awarded. Keele remained behind the sector in that year, increasing by only 2 percentage points on 2018-19, compared to the average sector increase of 5 percentage points. In 2020-21, good degrees awarded by Keele increased by four percentage points, remaining within two percentage points of the sector average. This increase is attributed to the impact of mitigations put in place to support students' attainment during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021-22 the percentage of Keele good degrees reduced by two percentage points to 81%, which is consistent with the previous averages prior to 2019-20.

The modest growth at Keele in first- and upper second-class degree awards over the five-year period can be accounted for through changes in a number of areas designed to improve student outcomes, including an enhancement in the effectiveness, timeliness and thoroughness of assessment and feedback achieved by redesign of assessments, better pre-submission support and more standardised electronic feedback. The current classification profile also reflects our efforts to enhance the attainment of students from historically lower achieving groups through measures set out in the University's Access and Participation Plan. The gaps in good degrees by sex, disability and ethnicity have all reduced during the five-year period. The University is committed to targeting further improvements in attainment gaps as part of its Access and Participation Plan.

Chart 1 - Percentage of Good Degrees Awarded to UK First Degree Students in years 2016/17 – 2021/22¹

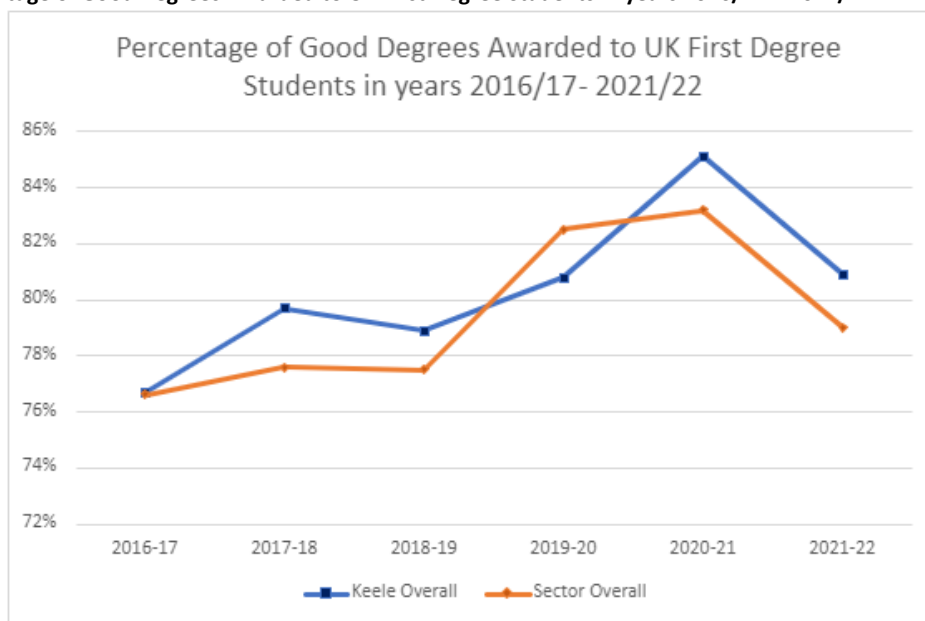


Table 1 - Percentage of Good Degrees Awarded to UK First Degree Students by Academic Year and Student Characteristic

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Keele Overall	77%	80%	79%	81%	85%	81%
<i>Sector Overall</i>	77%	78%	78%	83%	83%	79%
Sex						
Female	80%	81%	80%	81%	87%	83%
Male	73%	79%	77%	81%	83%	78%
Age						
Mature (21 & over)	61%	66%	72%	70%	73%	82%
Young (under 21)	79%	82%	80%	82%	87%	81%
Disability						
Disability Reported	72%	75%	76%	80%	84%	80%
No Disability Reported	78%	81%	80%	81%	85%	81%
Ethnicity						
Asian	67%	71%	73%	82%	85%	75%
Black	60%	67%	60%	75%	70%	67%
Mixed	65%	90%	72%	71%	88%	77%
Other	[Low]	[Low]	[Low]	[Low]	[Low]	64%

¹ The data in this Chart 1 (above) and Table 1 (below) relates to UK domicile students only. Age split is based on age on entry. Medicine students are not included in the data as medical degrees are not classified. Data is taken from the Office for Student (OfS) [Access & Participation \(APP\) dataset](#) and from [OfS sector analysis of degree classifications](#). The OfS APP dashboard provides further analysis of these data if required, including breakdown by disability and POLAR4/IMD participation quintiles. Data is provided an institution level only, in order to ensure sector comparability. Internal subject-level data is aligned to our organisational structure and not as meaningful to an external audience.

White	80%	81%	82%	82%	87%	86%
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3. Assessment and Marking Practices

All programmes delivered at Keele are subject to rigorous approval and review processes that are closely linked to the [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#). Assessment and Marking practices are underpinned by clear and robust regulations and policies which ensure consistency. [Regulation D1: Assessment](#) sets out a range of rules and considerations related to assessment, including assessment criteria, external examiners, and re-assessment. This regulation is supported by detailed guidance and accompanying documentation, which outline key information about [learning principles](#), [assessment criteria](#) and [marking and moderation](#). Strict anonymity is observed in the assessment and marking processes wherever possible, and all examination boards consider students anonymously when agreeing module, progression and award outcomes.

4. Academic Governance

Keele maintains a stringent set of regulations and policies which support academic governance across the university and are contained within the [Keele Academic Regulations and Policy Index](#). These regulations outline all processes and procedures for the awarding of academic degrees, including rules for Boards of Examiners, Codes of Conduct for students, and details on module condonement and compensation. A comprehensive bank of underpinning policies, procedures and codes of practice is held within the University's [Policy Zone](#).

Within Keele [Senate](#) is the University's supreme academic decision-making body. Senate is supported in its role by its sub-[committees](#), which include Education Committee and Quality and Academic Standards Sub Committee. The University Examination Board also reports to Senate. Senate and its sub-committees receive annual reports on student outcomes, student metrics linked to student attainment, and reports on the prevalence and outcomes of academic appeals and academic misconduct cases.

External examiners are appointed for each programme and are key to Keele's quality assurance process. External examiners are typically senior academics experienced in assessment, curriculum design, and enhancement of the student experience. The University provides central- and subject-based training for all external examiners. A summary and overview of external examiner reports is provided annually to Senate. All programmes have at least one external examiner who is a subject specialist and confirms that the assessments and the standards which students achieve reflect sector expectations and the relevant national reference points and professional body requirements (where applicable).

5. Classification Algorithms

Keele's degree algorithms and progression rules for taught programmes are published as part of the [University regulatory framework](#) and set out the way the University classifies its awards for taught programmes clearly for students and staff. In 2021, the University undertook a comprehensive review of its degree algorithm to ensure it remained in line with external reference points and reflected sector good practice. Following this review, a revised algorithm for undergraduate study was approved by Senate for all new undergraduate students who began their studies at Keele from September 2022 onwards. The impact of the changes to the degree algorithm will be seen from 2024-25 onwards.

6. Teaching Practices and Learning Resources

Keele closely monitors its education-related performance metrics at Programme and School level. The promotion of an evidence-based approach to improvements in education practice and improving student outcomes is firmly established and used particularly strongly in the monitoring of progress against the University's Access and Participation Plan. Keele has recently been awarded overall Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023, with a Gold rating for Student Experience and Silver for Student Outcomes.

Keele is committed to supporting the success of its students and has implemented a range of initiatives to support this. These include the Keele Institute for Innovation and Teaching Excellence (KIITE) which supports innovation and excellence in teaching and assessment; a Student Support Team which includes Student Experience and Support Officers allocated to each academic school; a newly established Academic Mentor Code of Practice; the 'My Keele Journey' student engagement dashboard; and ongoing capital investments in teaching space. In Summer 2023, Senate approved a revised set of Keele Graduate Attributes with aligned Curriculum Expectations which will underpin our ongoing programme of curriculum design and enhancement.

7. Identifying Good Practice and Actions

The University is confident that its thoughtful, reflective and self-critical approach to the setting and maintenance of academic standards is also reflected in the culture of continuous enhancement of its portfolio of programmes and their delivery. Many enhancements achieved over recent years have been the result of cross-faculty projects and initiatives, achieved by working in partnership with student bodies, professional services, external peers and statutory and regulatory organisations. During 2022-23, Keele has developed a Code of Practice for Assessment and Feedback which aims to further drive improvements in institutional practice. This complements the development of an Inclusive Education Code of Practice, which will form a key reference point for educational practice.

In Summer 2023 Keele worked with AdvanceHE to conduct an effectiveness review of Senate, scrutinising current procedures to support continuous improvement of Senate and dependent academic governance processes. The recommendations from this review were received by Senate in September 2023, with an action plan developed to implement recommendations arising from the review during the course of 2023-24.

An increasingly sophisticated approach to the use of metrics, such as that generated for the TEF, to understand student outcomes allows the University to continue to address the needs of an increasingly diverse student body and to continue to achieve excellence in learning and teaching resulting in excellent student outcomes, benchmarked appropriately against national degree standards.

8. Risks and Challenges

The University is confident that the standards of its academic awards are high and in line with national expectations. Keele's awarding practices are commended by external examiners and supported by robust and self-critical reflection at all levels of the University. As a result, Keele is confident that its graduates are emerging with an award which is fair and accurately reflects their academic achievement in preparation for employment and in line with sector expectations.