University of Westminster Degree Outcome Statement

Institutional Degree Classification Profile

The University has utilised data from HESA table 16 to produce these data profiles.

FIRST AND UPPER SECOND CLASS

First and upper second class classification rate by year of graduation
- First degree graduates exiting with a classified degree
- Significance: A +/- indicates that the rate for the later year is significantly above/below the equivalent rate in 2019/20

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Difference (2021/22 - 2019/20)	Sig.	Difference (2023/24 - 2019/20)	Sig.
All	74.0%	75.2%	71.1%	68.6%	67.7%	-2.9	-	-6.3	-

First and upper second class classification rate by year of graduation and sex
- First degree graduates exiting with a classified degree
- Students declaring legal sex of 'other' are included with 'female'
- Significance: A +/- indicates that the rate for the later year is significantly above/below the equivalent rate in 2019/20 or that the rate for female graduates in the stated year is significantly above/below the rate for male graduates

Sex	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Difference (2021/22 - 2019/20)	Sig.	Difference (2023/24 - 2019/20)	Sig.
Male	69.2%	68.3%	65.5%	62.4%	62.0%	-3.7	-	-7.2	-
Female	77.0%	79.6%	74.5%	72.5%	71.9%	-2.5		-5.1	-
Difference	+7.9	+11.3	+9.0	+10.1	+9.9				
Sig.	+	+	+	+	+				

First and upper second class classification rate by year of graduation and ethnicity

- UK-domiciled first degree graduates exiting with a classified degree
- Students where ethnicity is not known / refused are included with white
- Significance: A +/- indicates that the rate for the later year is significantly above/below the equivalent rate in 2019/20 or that the rate for white graduates in the stated year is significantly above/below the rate for BAME graduates

Ethnicity	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Difference (2021/22 - 2019/20)	Sig.	Difference (2023/24 - 2019/20)	Sig.
BAME	68.9%	70.3%	67.6%	63.7%	64.1%	-1.4		-4.9	-
White	82.2%	84.1%	82.7%	79.3%	76.1%	+0.5		-6.1	-
Difference	+13.2	+13.8	+15.1	+15.6	+12.0				
Sig.	+	+	+	+	+				

First and upper second class classification rate by year of graduation and relative disadvantage (IMD)

- UK-domiciled first degree graduates exiting with a classified degree
- Students where domicile is not known are excluded
- Significance: A +/- indicates that the rate for the later year is significantly above/below the equivalent rate in 2019/20 or that the rate for less disadvantaged graduates (Q3-Q5) in the stated year is significantly above/below the rate for more disadvantaged graduates (Q1-Q2)

Relative disadvantage (IMD)	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Difference (2021/22 - 2019/20)	Sig.	Difference (2023/24 - 2019/20)	Sig.
IMD Q1-Q2	69.4%	70.5%	68.1%	64.4%	64.4%	-1.3		-5.0	-
IMD Q3-Q5	79.6%	81.5%	78.5%	74.4%	73.4%	-1.1		-6.2	-
Difference	+10.2	+11.0	+10.3	+10.0	+9.0				
Sig.	+	+	+	+	+				

First and upper second class classification rate by year of graduation and disability

- First degree graduates exiting with a classified degree
- Significance: A +/- indicates that the rate for the later year is significantly above/below the equivalent rate in 2019/20 or that the rate for non-disabled graduates in the stated year is significantly above/below the rate for disabled graduates

Disability	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Difference (2021/22 - 2019/20)	Sig.	Difference (2023/24 - 2019/20)	Sig.
Disabled	75.7%	75.5%	74.9%	74.9%	69.4%	-0.9		-6.4	
No known disability	73.8%	75.2%	70.6%	68.0%	67.5%	-3.2	-	-6.3	-
Difference	-1.9	-0.4	-4.2	-6.8	-1.8				
Sig.				-					

First and upper second class classification rate by year of graduation and age

- First degree graduates exiting with a classified degree
- Students aged 20 or younger on entry to the course are considered as young
- Significance: A +/- indicates that the rate for the later year is significantly above/below the equivalent rate in 2019/20 or that the rate for young graduates in the stated year is significantly above/below the rate for mature graduates

Age	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Difference (2021/22 - 2019/20)	Sig.	Difference (2023/24 - 2019/20)	Sig.
Mature	75.0%	75.7%	71.6%	73.9%	70.2%	-3.4		-4.8	-
Young	73.8%	75.1%	71.1%	67.4%	67.1%	-2.7	-	-6.7	-
Difference	-1.2	-0.6	-0.5	-6.4	-3.1				
Sig.				-					

First and upper second class classification rate by year of graduation and domicile

- First degree graduates exiting with a classified degree
- Significance: A +/- indicates that the rate for the later year is significantly above/below the equivalent rate in 2019/20 or that the rate for non-UK domiciled graduates in the stated year is significantly above/below the rate for UK graduates

Domicile	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Difference (2021/22 - 2019/20)	Sig.	Difference (2023/24 - 2019/20)	Sig.
UK	74.1%	75.7%	72.8%	69.0%	68.4%	-1.3		-5.7	-
Non-UK	73.9%	74.1%	67.2%	67.6%	65.8%	-6.7	-	-8.1	-
Difference	-0.2	-1.7	-5.5	-1.4	-2.6				
Sig.			-						

First and upper second class classification rate by year of graduation and mode

- First degree graduates exiting with a classified degree
- Significance: A +/- indicates that the rate for the later year is significantly above/below the equivalent rate in 2019/20 or that the rate for FT graduates in the stated year is significantly above/below the rate for PT graduates

Mode	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Difference (2021/22 - 2019/20)	Sig.	Difference (2023/24 - 2019/20)	Sig.
PT	40.8%	50.5%	40.5%	43.7%	46.5%	-0.3		+5.7	
FT	77.2%	77.6%	74.4%	71.0%	69.8%	-2.8	-	-7.4	-
Difference	+36.4	+27.1	+33.9	+27.4	+23.3				
Sig.	+	+	+	+	+				

YEAR

First and upper second class classification rate by entry qualifications and year of graduation
- First degree graduates exiting with a classified degree
- Percentage point differences are shown relative to 2019/20 rates
- Significance: A +/- indicates that the rate for the year and entry qualification group is significantly above/below the equivalent rate in 2019/20

Entry qualifications	2019/20 %	2021/22 %	Δ	Sig.	2023/24 %	Δ	Sig.
HE level qualifications	72.2%	63.4%	-8.8	-	62.7%	-9.5	-
A levels AAB+	100.0%	98.1%	-1.9		89.6%	-10.4	-
A levels AAC-BBC	88.1%	91.6%	+3.5		83.9%	-4.2	
A levels BCC-CCC	84.1%	81.0%	-3.2		79.6%	-4.6	
Baccalaureate	82.3%	74.6%	-7.7		73.7%	-8.6	
BTEC high graded	57.4%	58.7%	+1.2		60.2%	+2.8	
BTEC low graded	51.7%	51.2%	-0.5		48.0%	-3.7	
Other level 3 106+	85.1%	72.9%	-12.2		67.0%	-18.1	-
Other level 3 91-105	77.8%	56.3%	-21.5		55.6%	-22.2	
Other level 3 1-90	66.2%	70.1%	+3.9		62.9%	-3.3	
Other level 3 w/o tariff	75.5%	73.6%	-1.8		68.7%	-6.7	-
Other / no formal qualifications	66.7%	75.0%	+8.3		75.0%	+8.3	
TOTAL	74.0%	71.1%	-2.9	-	67.7%	-6.3	-

First class classification rate by entry qualifications and year of graduation

- First degree graduates exiting with a classified degree
- Percentage point differences are shown relative to 2019/20 rates
- Significance: A +/- indicates that the rate for the year and entry qualification group is significantly above/below the equivalent rate in 2019/20
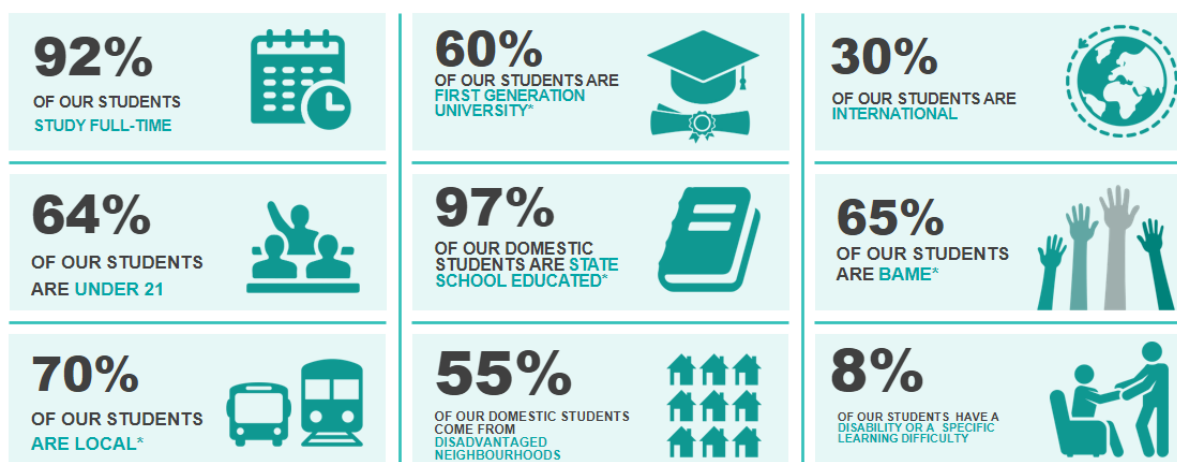
Entry qualifications	2019/20 %	2021/22 %	Δ	Sig.	2023/24 %	Δ	Sig.
HE level qualifications	25.7%	17.7%	-8.0	-	22.6%	-3.1	
A levels AAB+	69.8%	55.6%	-14.3		48.7%	-21.1	-
A levels AAC-BBC	40.4%	43.3%	+2.9		33.6%	-6.8	
A levels BCC-CCC	26.8%	26.3%	-0.5		27.1%	+0.4	
Baccalaureate	37.2%	29.8%	-7.3		24.2%	-13.0	-
BTEC high graded	13.4%	14.0%	+0.5		15.2%	+1.8	
BTEC low graded	14.7%	10.6%	-4.1		10.1%	-4.6	
Other level 3 106+	19.1%	15.3%	-3.9		23.0%	+3.9	
Other level 3 91-105	16.7%	15.6%	-1.0		3.7%	-13.0	
Other level 3 1-90	26.8%	21.7%	-5.1		16.6%	-10.2	
Other level 3 w/o tariff	25.4%	25.1%	-0.3		21.4%	-4.0	-
Other / no formal qualifications	16.7%	25.0%	+8.3		45.0%	+28.3	+
TOTAL	25.6%	23.4%	-2.2	-	22.2%	-3.4	-

Our Degree Outcomes

Our Degree Outcomes data detailed above demonstrates that our award of Firsts and upper-second class awards in 2023-24 has significantly decreased when compared to 2019-20 (from 74% to 67.7%). This can be attributed to the exceptional academic regulations in place during the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure no detriment to students who graduated in 2019-20 and 2020-21. The data shows that female graduates are more likely to achieve a First or Upper Second classification than male graduates. Although an attainment gap remains in Degree Outcomes between white graduates and Black, Asian and minority ethnic graduates and less disadvantaged (IMD Q3-5) and more disadvantaged graduates (IMD Q1-2), it is narrowing in the 2023-24 data. There is no significant difference in the attainment of disabled versus non-disabled graduates, mature versus young graduates or UK vs non-UK graduates in 2023-24. Full time graduates are significantly more likely to achieve a First or upper-second class award than part time graduates, although it is worth noting that most of our part time students are repeating part of their final year, rather than genuine part time students. We have seen a decrease in good honours regardless of entry qualifications.

Our Student Profile

Our student population during the 2022-23 academic year was 21,045. Of these 76% of our students were undergraduates; 22% taught postgraduates, 1% registered for postgraduate research degrees and 1% on apprenticeship programmes. The students had the following characteristics:

92% OF OUR STUDENTS STUDY FULL-TIME	**60%** OF OUR STUDENTS ARE FIRST GENERATION UNIVERSITY*	**30%** OF OUR STUDENTS ARE INTERNATIONAL
64% OF OUR STUDENTS ARE UNDER 21	**97%** OF OUR DOMESTIC STUDENTS ARE STATE SCHOOL EDUCATED*	**65%** OF OUR STUDENTS ARE BAME*
70% OF OUR STUDENTS ARE LOCAL*	**55%** OF OUR DOMESTIC STUDENTS COME FROM DISADVANTAGED NEIGHBOURHOODS	**8%** OF OUR STUDENTS HAVE A DISABILITY OR A SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTY

* UK domiciled only (also undergraduate only for First Generation University and State School Educated)

At the University of Westminster, we are progressive, responsible, and compassionate. We are passionate about enabling all our students, from diverse backgrounds, to achieve their true potential. This means that we will ensure that students receive the degree that accurately reflects their work, that we will work responsibly so that our students know that their degrees will hold value over time, and that we are determined to eliminate unjustified awarding gaps between different groups of students.

Assessment and Marking Practices

Through its quality assurance process the University makes use of sector standards. When courses are validated and reviewed, panels ensure alignment to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, Subject Benchmark Statements and Qualifications Descriptors. The University requires all courses to set out clear learning outcomes for each level and requires modules to articulate how these contribute to the meeting of the course learning outcomes. Each module is required to detail

assessment criteria for each assessment component. In addition, the University has developed Grading Criteria to ensure marking aligns to external reference points.

The University utilises external expertise as part of its course validation and cyclical review processes. These external peers are drawn from other higher education institutions within the UK and help provide assurance that external reference points are appropriately utilised. Additionally, the University appoints External Examiners to oversee our assessment processes. The use of this external expertise aligns to the expectations set out in the Statement of Intent.

External Examiners, as part of their role, scrutinise samples of marked work to ensure that the assessment processes are fair, and that marking is consistent with other HE providers. External Examiners also ensure modules and courses align to external reference points. A number of our External Examiners have completed the Advance HE External Examiner professional development programme.

Our Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation offers staff development sessions on assessment and marking practices throughout the academic year. Our PRESTIGE scheme linked to our Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education allows for staff to participate and gain credit for modules specifically related to assessment. All new academic staff without teaching experience or a teaching qualification are required to complete our Postgraduate Certificate as part of their induction. In addition, all academic staff receive a School level induction into marking practices and are paired with an experienced member of staff to ensure they understand and uphold the standards and practices expected at our University.

Schools undertake assessment days to design and moderate assessment briefs to ensure all staff understand the assessment criteria and calibration of marking practices can be undertaken. Peer development schemes across the University also allow marking practices to be discussed between academics.

Authentic assessment is key to the University's commitment to adopting authentic learning, 'with a proactive course development, evaluation and review' as set out in the Education Strategy 2023-2029. Historically the University relied on formal examination as a key tool for assessment. The pandemic, and consequent move online, led to a move to other forms of assessment, notably online timed assessments. Authentic assessment requires students to use the same competencies, or combinations of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that they need to apply in professional life and can also be developed to minimise the risks associated with Generative AI use. It is apparent that awarding gaps have reduced since the move from examinations to authentic assessment and the long-term impact of these changes will continue to be considered alongside the outcomes for good degrees.

Academic Governance

Academic Council is the supreme academic body at the University and is responsible for, *inter alia*:

- *the appointment and removal of internal and external examiners*
- *policies and procedures for assessment and examination of the academic performance of students*
- *the content of the curriculum*
- *academic standards and the validation and review of courses and*
- *the procedures for the award of qualifications*

Teaching Committee helps Academic Council fulfil this responsibility by undertaking detailed scrutiny of External Examiners' reports before onward reporting. Teaching Committee, supported by the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee, considers the External Examiner reports from courses delivered through a collaborative partner. This scrutiny allows the University to be assured that the value of qualifications is protected. Teaching Committee and Academic Council also consider an annual report on the institutional degree classification profile.

The University utilises the expertise of our external member of the Teaching Committee to compile this Degree Outcome Statement and to contribute to monitoring and review of our assessment and classification practices.

Progression and Award Boards are sub-committees of Academic Council and ensure that assessment practices are consistent and in compliance with our regulations. External Examiners provide written and verbal reports to Progression and Award Boards on our assessment and marking practices. Through the annual External Examiners overview report, Teaching Committee and Academic Council receive external assurances that assessment and marking practices are carried out in line with sector expectations.

The Student Success Board reports to Teaching Committee and brings together key stakeholders in Personal Tutoring, Academic Support, and Student Wellbeing at university-level to ensure our Student Success work is delivered alongside the Education Strategy's objective of ensuring that students from different backgrounds fulfil their potential.

Classification Algorithm

Section 17 of the University's Academic Regulations sets out the classification algorithm for the award of undergraduate degrees. This section describes action that is taken with respect to borderline cases and outlines the opportunities for referrals and retakes.

In designing our degree algorithm, we considered the characteristics of our student body. Many of our students are the first in their family to participate in higher education, they undertake paid work to support their studies and often commute long distances to attend University. Our students do not always join us from traditional routes, and do not always have traditional entrance requirements.

Our degree algorithm includes marks gained at level 5 and level 6, recognising that for our students, level 4 provides an opportunity to adjust to higher education and develop their skills without the pressure of marks contributing to their final classification. The features of our degree algorithm are consistent with practice across the sector.

By double weighting level 6, we recognise the exit velocity of our students and can reflect their achievements within our algorithm. We also drop the worst 20 credits from the calculation; this allows our students to experiment with their module choices and take advantage of our interdisciplinary module offering without it impacting negatively on their performance.

Under our regulations the final aggregated degree score is rounded to the nearest integer. Boards of Examiners have no discretion to amend this score, or the resultant degree classification, as any individual student circumstance will have already been accounted for in determining the module mark. This approach therefore avoids any risk of 'double counting', eliminates any perception of favouritism or bias, and ensures consistency for all students across the University.

Our regulations permit four attempts at a module, except where required otherwise by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies. Following the publication of guiding [principles for effective algorithm design](#) by Universities UK and GuildHE in 2020, the University reviewed its practice and determined it aligns to all but one of the principles. The University, after consideration through its governance structures, agreed that it would not adopt all the principles related to discounting. Our students have repeatedly told us that they value choice within their courses. Our approach to curriculum design and philosophy of allowing students to experiment at all levels of study is penalised when only optional modules are discounted. It means that if a student achieved a high mark in an optional module, it would be discounted rather than a worst performing core module. We think it is important to allow opportunities for experimentation across all levels of our courses and so determined that we would continue to discount the worst-performing 20 credit module regardless of its level or core or optional status.

Pandemic Arrangements for the Degree Classification Algorithm

Exceptional Academic Regulations were approved by Academic Council in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The award classification algorithm was changed during 2019-20 and 2020-21 to mitigate against the adverse effects of the sudden changes to how teaching and assessments were delivered in line with measures taken across the sector to ensure no detriment to students. This meant that the classifications for students in Level 6 during 2019-20 and 2020-21 were based on the best 200 credits at level 5 and 6 rather than 220 credits. This typically resulted in an increase in the proportion of Good Honours awarded. From 2021-22 onwards, the amended award classification algorithm was discontinued, and awards were calculated using the standard degree algorithm.

Teaching Practices and Learning Resources

Our core education objective is to offer personalised and authentic education, underpinned by an inclusive curriculum, to enable all our students, from all backgrounds, to engage in transformative learning and to succeed in their studies and professional lives.

Teaching and learning practices within Schools allow students to engage in discipline specific activities. To help engage specific groups of students, Schools offer small group assessment surgeries, alongside academic office hours appointments, to help students understand assessment criteria. Schools also encourage students to set up informal peer learning groups and we offer a mentoring scheme for students. The mentoring scheme also pairs students with alumni and employers to help students understand the benefits of assessment and how it can be related to the workplace.

Our Learning and Teaching Symposium provides an opportunity for good practice in assessment and marking practices to be shared across the University.

Our Personal Tutoring scheme allows students to have individual conversations with academic staff about their assessments and progress across their course. Building on the approach within our School of Humanities, WeThrive, a structured group tutorial programme for Personal Tutoring at Level 4 was introduced across the University in 2023/24. Attendance and engagement are actively monitored, and supportive interventions put in place at key stages of the Level 4 journey to build belonging, deepen student engagement, and enable Student Success. It provides small groups of students with individualised learning and feedback opportunities and has facilitated peer-to-peer learning, improved attendance and allowed for interventions to be made for at risk students.

The Peer Support Programme is a partnership service between the University and Students' Union (UWSU), which was approved in 2023. The overarching aims of the Programme are to create a sense of belonging for students, increase continuation rates and reduce awarding gaps, particularly in those groups of students where there is a risk to equality of opportunity. Data from the first year of the Peer Call Centre shows that it has positively impacted continuation rates, particularly for students who are at greater risk of equality of opportunity, i.e. the withdrawal rate for students who have had a conversation with a student caller is below the rate of those students who did not.

The impact of these new initiatives on our degree classifications will be monitored as the 2023/24 cohort progresses through their studies.

Review and Monitoring of Student Outcomes

Firsts and 2:1s rate by year
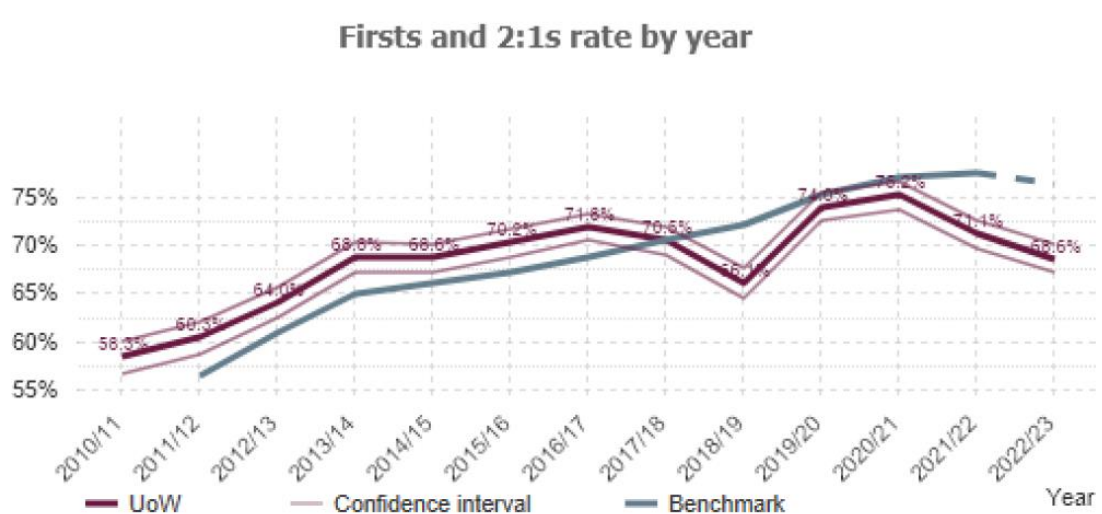
The University saw a correlation between an increase in its entrance qualifications and an increase in the number of good honours degrees awarded until the 2017/18 academic year. The University changed its degree algorithm for 2015/16 entrants, as part of a broader review of the curriculum and academic framework. When the new algorithm was introduced, the University undertook significant modelling to ensure that outcomes would not be significantly different from those produced by the previous algorithm.

The University kept the degree algorithm and the accompanying change programme ('Learning Futures') under review since its implementation and had determined that the pedagogic principles introduced had maintained our academic standards and that until we had more graduating Learning Futures cohorts, we would be unable to identify further trends.

During 2019/20 the University undertook a review of its marking and moderation practices to ensure the value of its awards were protected. As a result, Teaching Committee receives an annual update to consider trends in Good Honours data.

The ongoing review was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent introduction for 2019-20 and 2020-21 of the exceptional degree classification algorithm. This algorithm was discontinued in 2021-22; and decreases in the award of good degrees were seen in 2022-23 and 2023-24 and we are now below the benchmark. This is in line with the commitment by Universities UK members to return to pre-pandemic levels of good degree awards by 2023.

Data from graduating cohorts will continue to be monitored and any future review will take place in the context of the *Being Westminster Strategy 2022-29,* particularly the impact of authentic learning, authentic assessment and the actions related to closing the attainment gap. Our [Access and Participation Plan](#) also outlines interventions to reduce or close awarding gaps between different groups of students.

Identifying Good Practice and Actions

Several changes to academic support were developed for implementation from 2023/24 to facilitate interventions that support Student Success at Westminster. Areas to highlight include the peer support call centre and Student Success Action Plans meetings, which will continue to be monitored.

An Assessment Task and Finish Group reporting to Teaching Committee will convene in 2024/25 and 2025/26 to consider assessment load and tariff, assessment bunching and timing, Mitigating Circumstances, modules with high first sit failure rates and learning from the Abrahart Case.

Approval

This Degree Outcome Statement was considered and approved by the following committees prior to publication:

Teaching Committee	6 November 2024
Academic Council	4 December 2024
Court of Governors	6 February 2025

Future Review

The University commits to reviewing and updating its Degree Outcome Statement every two years. The next version will be published by the end of the 2026 calendar year.