

Plymouth Marjon University

Degree Outcome Statement

Institutional Degree Classification Profile

Overall trends

The trends for degree classifications at Plymouth Marjon University between 2018/19 and 2022/23 are presented below:

- An overall increase in good degrees (a first class or an upper second class classification) of 2.1% (from 74.1% to 76.2%). There was a decrease of 0.3% between 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- An increase in first class degrees awarded to students, with this increasing by 4% from 27.1% in 2018/19 to 31.1% in 2022/23. The number of upper second class degrees awarded have decreased over the five year period by 1.9%, lower second class have decreased by 1.7% and the number of third class degrees awarded have decreased by 0.4% (decrease 2.3% on 2021/22 figures). The number of good degrees are almost in line with pre-pandemic levels (currently 2.1% higher) following the slight increase in 2019-20 due to the application of the University's Safety Net Policy. The downward trend continued during 2022/23 and it is anticipated that this will continue during 2023/24.
- Due to issues with the Data Futures data collection sector comparison is not possible at this time.
- When comparing results for taught students versus collaborative partner students, the percentage of first class and good degrees was higher for students studying via our collaborative partners. The percentage of partner students receiving a first class increased from 25.7% to 33.6% (increase of 7.9%) compared to the percentage of taught students receiving a first class which increased from 27.7% to 30.4% (increase of 2.7%). The percentage of partner students receiving a good degree increased from 74.3% to 81.7% whereas the percentage of home students receiving a good degree decreased from 74.1% to 74.5%. The student body is predominately taught, however 24% of students completing in 2022/23 were collaborative partner students (31% in 2018/19).
- The University is committed to ensuring that the value of its degrees over time is protected and there are robust quality assurance and academic governance processes in place to ensure this.

Table 1: Degree classification profiles for Level 6 degree programmes at Plymouth Marjon University between 2018/19 and 2022/23

Year of Award	Total Awards	First Class	Upper Second Class	Lower Second Class	Third Class
2018/19	576	27.1%	47.0%	23.3%	2.6%
2019/20	596	31.7%	49.3%	17.1%	1.8%
2020/21	614	33.1%	46.7%	17.6%	2.6%
2021/22	561	33.0%	43.5%	19.1%	4.5%
2022/23	546	31.1%	45.1%	21.6%	2.2%

Chart 1: Degree classification profiles for Level 6 degree programmes at Plymouth Marjon University between 2018/19 and 2022/23

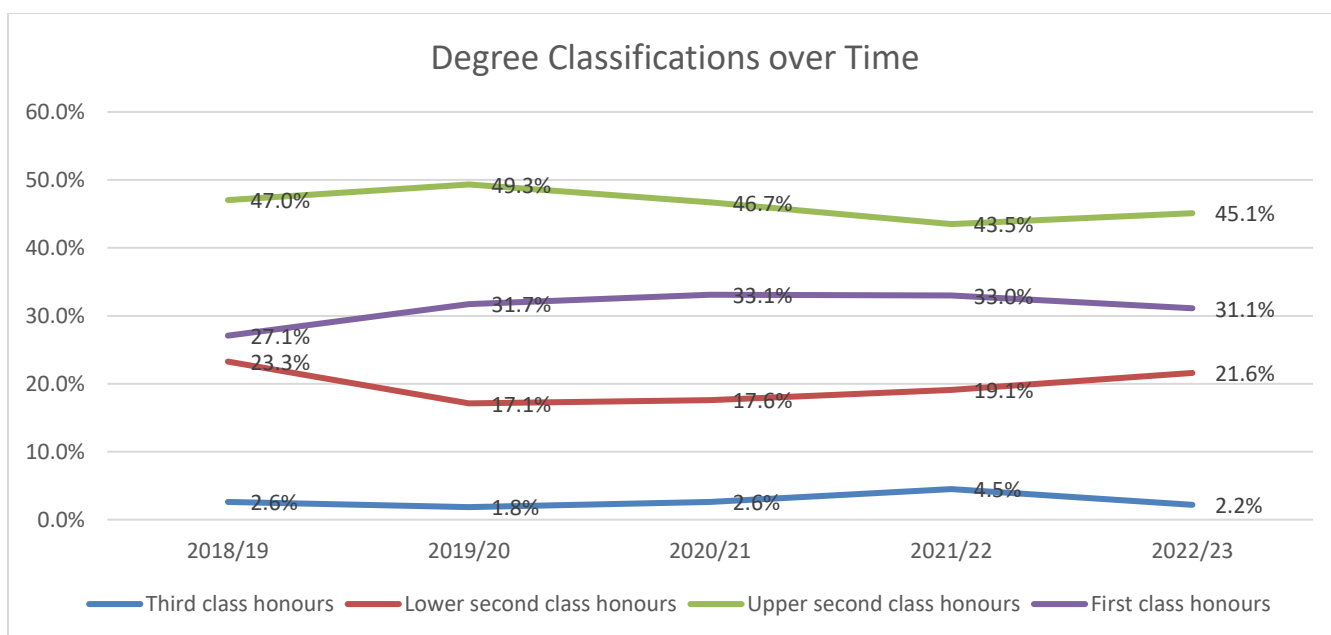
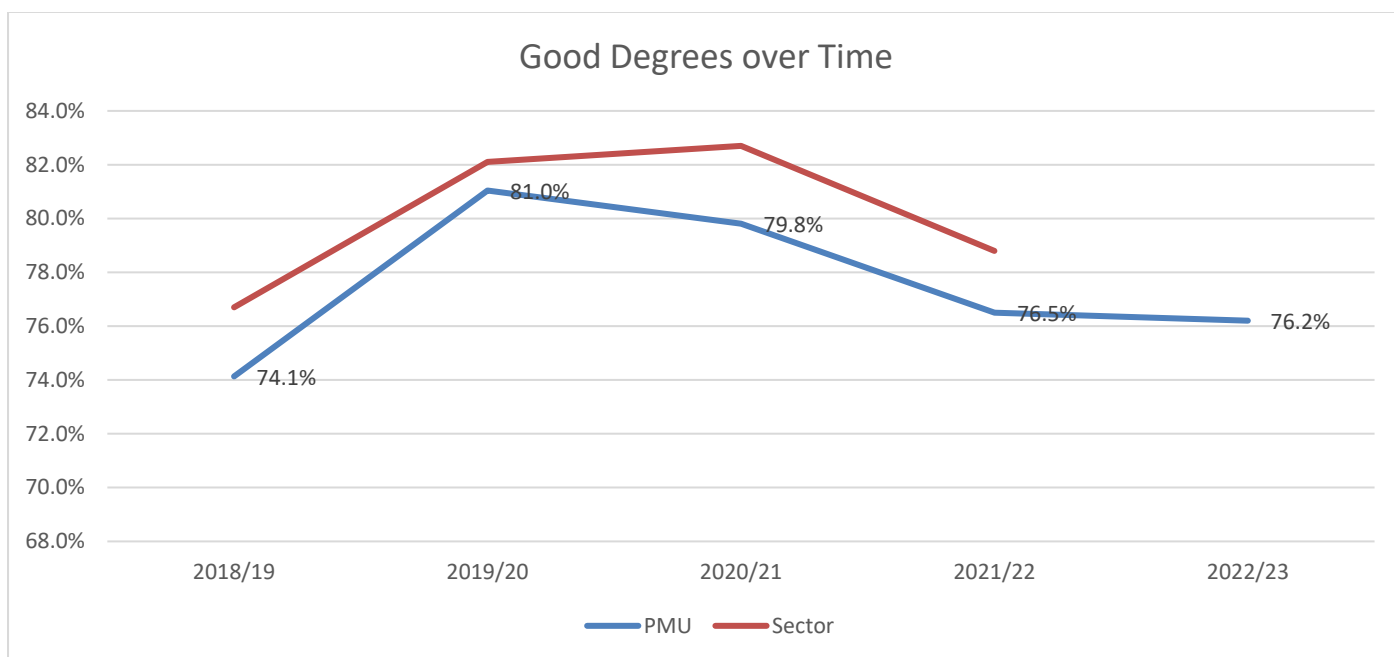


Chart 2: Good degrees profile for Level 6 degree programmes at Plymouth Marjon University between 2018/19 and 2022/23.



Students Characteristics

An analysis of student characteristics follows, additional information can be found in the appendix.

Gender

- The percentage of males over the five-year period receiving a first class increased by 0.7% from 25.1% to 25.8%. However, there was a decrease of 3.1% on previous year.
- The percentage of females over the five-year period receiving a first class increased by 6.4% from 29% to 35.4%. A decrease of 1.6% on previous year.
- The percentage of males awarded a good degree (first class or upper second) decreased by 1% from 70.3% to 69.3%. A decrease of 4.6% on previous year.
- The percentage of females awarded a good degree (first class or upper second) increased by 4% from 77.8% to 81.8%. An increase of 2.4% on previous year.
- Females are consistently more likely to be awarded a first or good degree than male students. However, the gap in attainment for 2022/23 (12.5%) was the highest over the five-year period and significantly higher than the previous year (5.8% 2021/22). This is mainly down to partner provision where the majority of students (78% during 2022/23) were male, female partner students achieved significantly higher (good degrees for female students were 19.4% higher than male students).

Additionally, only 63.6% of male home students achieved a good degree, compared to 80.1% of female home students.

Age

- The percentage of students under 21 at the start of their programme receiving a first class decreased by 2.7% from 28.3% to 25.6% over the five-year period. A decrease of 1.6% on the previous year.
- The percentage of students over 21 at the start of their programme receiving a first class increased by 17.3% from 25.3% to 42.5% over the five-year period and remains the same as 2021/22.
- The percentage of students under 21 at the start of their programme receiving a good degree (first class or upper second class) increased by 0.3% from 73.5% in 2018/19 to 73.8% in 2022/23. A decrease of 0.1% on the previous year.
- The percentage of students over 21 at the start of their programme receiving a good degree (first class or upper second class) increased by 5.9% from 75.1% in 2018/19 to 81% in 2022/23. An increase of 0.3% on the previous year.
- Mature students are consistently more likely to receive a first or a good degree than those students under 21 at the start of their course. The attainment gap has increased for the second year and currently sits at 7.2% for good degrees and 16.9% for first class degrees.

Disability

- The percentage of students with a declared disability receiving a first class increased by 9.7% over the five-year period from 23.4% to 33.1%. An increase of 4.6% on 2021/22 figures.
- The percentage of students with no declared disability receiving a first class increased by 2.2% over the five-year period from 28.1% to 30.3%. A decrease of 4.3% on 2021/22 figures.
- The percentage of students with a declared disability receiving a good degree (first class or upper second class) increased by 3.7% over the five-year period from 73.4% to 77.1%. A decrease of 0.4% on 2021/22 figures.
- The percentage of students with no declared disability receiving a good degree (first class or upper second class) increased by 1.5% over the five-year period from 74.3% to 75.8%. A decrease of 0.3% on 2021/22 figures.
- For 2022/23 the percentage of students with a declared disability achieving a first or good degree was higher than those with no declared disability.

Ethnicity

- The percentage of students identifying as 'other ethnic group' receiving a first class increased by 20.5% over the five-year period from 9.5% to 30%. An increase of 4.5% on previous year.
- The percentage of students identifying as 'white' receiving a first class increased by 2.0% over the five-year period from 29.2% to 31.2%. A decrease of 2.5% on previous year.
- The percentage of students identifying as 'other ethnic group' receiving a good degree (first class or upper second class) increased by 10.9% over the five-year period from 52.4% to 63.3%. A decrease of 2.7% on previous year.
- The percentage of students identifying as 'white' receiving a good degree (first class or upper second class) increased by 0.1% over the five-year period from 76.8% to 76.9%. An increase of 0.5% on previous year.
- Students identifying as white are more likely to receive a first or good degree however the attainment gap for good degrees has decreased over the five-year period from 24.4% in 2018/19 to 13.6% in 2022/23. It should be noted that only 30 of the students included identified as 'other ethnic group'.

Assessment and Marking Practices

The University ensures that both student academic experience and student outcomes are central to the design, approval, and delivery of the University's programmes. Programme design and approval processes align to the requirements of the UK Quality Code, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and to relevant professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) requirements (where applicable) ensuring that all new programmes are of a high quality. Programme approval and reapproval include externality in the form of an External Panel Member. The panel scrutinise learning outcomes at programme and module level and fully review the assessment strategy of the programme to ensure that students can achieve the learning outcomes.

The University provides generic grade and level descriptors to ensure a consistency within marking practices, the use of a generic marking framework and internal verification template ensures that Module Leaders are consistent in the way they mark. This template is adapted per module and saved to the relevant module page on the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) so that students are clear on how they are being assessed.

Unless a particular module has approval by the University's Senate not to align all assessment at Level 5 and above is marked anonymously. Double marking is used by the University to ensure the accuracy and consistency of marking and to verify marks. A sample reflecting the range of marks and classifications enables the two markers to ensure that they are marking consistently and accurately against assessment criteria and grade descriptors. Following this rigorous moderation takes place within each programme and module team.

In addition to internal double marking and moderation all student summative assessment is subject to sampling by the appointed External Examiner. The University's External Examiners play a critical role in providing assurance about the reliability of degree standards, through confirming that the standards of the awards made are appropriate and reflect sector expectations.

Following the University's 2016 National Student Survey (NSS) results, from which Assessment and Feedback were identified as requiring attention and improvement, an internal project was established to review assessment and feedback practices. The aim of the project was to establish benchmarks for good practice and to address any issues. This project resulted in a more consistent University wide approach to assessment and marking.

One outcome from this project was the change to marking practices. The use of grade points was introduced for all assessment apart from those with an 'absolute' answer. Equating to pass, low, medium, and high where pass (0) aligns to threshold, they were introduced to enhance clarity and consistency across the marking process. In addition to this the University introduced a 'hanging nine' for module marks where a mark of nine would automatically be rounded up.

During this period the University also developed Generic Grade Descriptors, which inform assessment across its programmes in a non-prescriptive manner. The Descriptors focus on the development of knowledge and understanding, and intellectual skills and academic staff have been encouraged to mark across the full range of grades. The addition of enhanced feedback mechanisms with an emphasis on feed-forward ensure that students are aware of why a particular mark has been given and allows them to continually improve.

All new academic staff complete the PG Cert in Academic Practice¹ or obtain appropriate Higher Education Academy Fellowship via another route as a condition of their employment and as part of their induction. The PG Cert Academic Practice is also open for collaborative partner staff to attend, this facilitates their route to Higher Education Academy Fellowship and provides a standardised route to the training of both University and partner staff.

Academic Governance

The University has a clear and robust academic governance structure, which applies to both home and collaborative partner provision. The ultimate responsibility for assuring the value of awards over time sits with the University's Senate which reports to the University's Board of Governors. An Annual Assurance Report is submitted to the Board of Governors in November which provides a detailed overview of the University's Quality Assurance Framework and alignment to the UK Quality Code and OfS Conditions. This report provides assurance to the University's Board of Governors that academic standards and quality are being maintained. An internal audit completed during 2021/22 by PWC awarded a low-risk rating to the University in relation to academic quality.

All new academic partnerships and programme approvals and reapprovals are approved by Senate. The Teaching, Learning and Academic Quality Committee (TLAQC) has delegated authority for the management of the University's quality assurance and regulatory frameworks and the maintenance of academic standards and quality of awards. The University's Quality Cycle, including annual monitoring, is embedded within the business of the University's committees. External Examiners are appointed by the Teaching, Learning and Academic Quality Committee, by delegated authority on behalf of Senate. The Teaching, Learning and Academic Quality Committee is also responsible, on behalf of and in consultation as appropriate with Senate, for the University's External Examination and Moderation functions as a whole.

The University has a two-tier assessment system consisting of the Module Assessment Board (MAB) and Progression and Awards Board (PAB). The MAB, confirms marks and awards credit at module level subject to the achievement of the learning outcomes of those modules. The PAB, makes decisions relating to the progression of students in programmes and the consequence of failure at any stage of a programme. They also make recommendations for the conferment and classification of awards to Senate. Senate delegates

¹ Previously the PG Cert in Learning and Teaching in HE. This was revalidated and reaccredited during 2021-22 with the title changing to PG Cert Academic Practice

the responsibility for approving the PAB outcomes to the University Secretary and Registrar in his role as secretary to Senate.

The University has established two distinct roles for External Examiners. The first is in relation to the duties of the MAB; the second is in relation to the duties of the PAB. Both the MAB and PAB External Examiners, through the annual reporting process, confirm that the University awards are sector consistent raising issues where applicable. The University responds to all External Examiner reports at both programme and Institutional level. Themes from these reports are discussed at the Teaching, Learning and Academic Quality Committee and Senate with actions for enhancement identified.

All programmes are reviewed annually through the annual monitoring process. Student achievement, graduate achievement, the results of student feedback, feedback from External Examiners and professional body representatives and the expectations placed on the University by the UK Quality Code all inform this process. Discussion of student outcomes are included in this process and reported through the University committee structure. This allows regular updates to be provided within the University and to the Board of Governors.

Classification Algorithms

The classification algorithm for all undergraduate students is made available and published on the University's website via the Student Regulations Framework. All marks at Level 5 and Level 6 are considered with the emphasis placed at Level 6. The algorithm was changed in 2013/14 to reflect sector practice and to place an increased emphasis on 'exit velocity' where the algorithm places greater weight on the final year. This reflects the expectation that as students' progress through the levels of their programme, their study becomes more difficult. Level 4 marks are only included in the University's algorithm for Foundation Degrees, where the best 60 credits are included. The description of the classification can be found [here](#).

During 2019-20 and as a response to the pandemic the University introduced a safety net policy to ensure that students were not disadvantaged. This meant that as long as students successfully achieved credit the end result for the year would not be negatively impacted and results would not go down. This was in line with the sector response to the pandemic. However, the University can be confident that there was no impact on the standard of the award as all Learning Outcomes continued to be met.

The University is committed to maintaining pre-pandemic degree classification levels in line with government expectations. All aspects of the safety net policy, where the main focus was extended condonement rather than algorithmic change, no longer applies. The University reverted to pre-pandemic grading during 2021-22.

Teaching Practices and Learning Resources

The University continually strives to enhance learning and teaching, and this can be seen from the positive increases in the NSS during this five-year period. The focus on assessment and feedback during 2016-17 resulted in the development of marking frameworks which reinforced the University's grade descriptors. This in turn has highlighted for students the importance of applying their knowledge when completing assessment. This increased application of knowledge by students has contributed to the increase in good degrees.

The University continues to review its Curriculum Model to ensure the best experience for students. During 2015-16 all existing provision was reviewed to include a work-based learning / placement module at Level 5 and to incorporate a generic module at Level 4 which incorporated academic, personal, social, and professional development linked to digital scholarship, global citizenship, employability, and academic skills. Due to staff and student feedback during 2016-17 the compulsory nature of the Level 4 module was removed from September 2017 onwards; however, this was contingent on programme teams ensuring that the elements of the module were embedded within the programme at Level 4. To assist with this the Personal Development Tutor (PDT) system was revised that same year to ensure a renewed focus on personalised, holistic, and empowering personal support for students which was to introduce a focus on development, coaching and mentoring as well as pastoral support. In addition to an enhanced PDT system the Curriculum Model requires Programme Teams to build into all levels of the programme spines of research, employability, and leadership, with a requirement at validation to provide a detailed breakdown of how these skills are embedded. A further change in 2019-20 to include an immersive module during the first semester at level 4 has resulted in improved retention figures and enhanced student satisfaction.

The University's focus on continual enhancement is fully embedded within the [Learning and Teaching Strategy](#) and the University's Quality Assurance Framework. All new academic staff are required to complete the PG Certificate in Academic Practice, which is accredited by Advance HE, or complete another route to accreditation as appropriate to their experience and existing teaching qualifications. Those who complete the PGCert in Academic Practice also receive Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

Staff are encouraged to achieve further professional recognition (SFHEA and PFHEA) with this supported through the Academic Promotion and Career Development Procedure. CPD opportunities are focussed around the enhancement of learning and teaching in line with the University's values and Learning and Teaching Strategy. This increased focus on staff development has enhanced pedagogical practices and has placed an increased recognition of professionalism in learning and teaching.

Annual monitoring processes continue to be enhanced by the University. An increased emphasis on the use of University wide data broken down at student characteristic level allows programme teams to fully review programmes providing robust action planning. The University will ensure that degree outcomes at student characteristic level will continue to be discussed within programme and school reports.

The University plans to review its Degree Outcomes Statement on an annual basis with any risks and challenges identified and actions to mitigate these discussed via our internal processes.

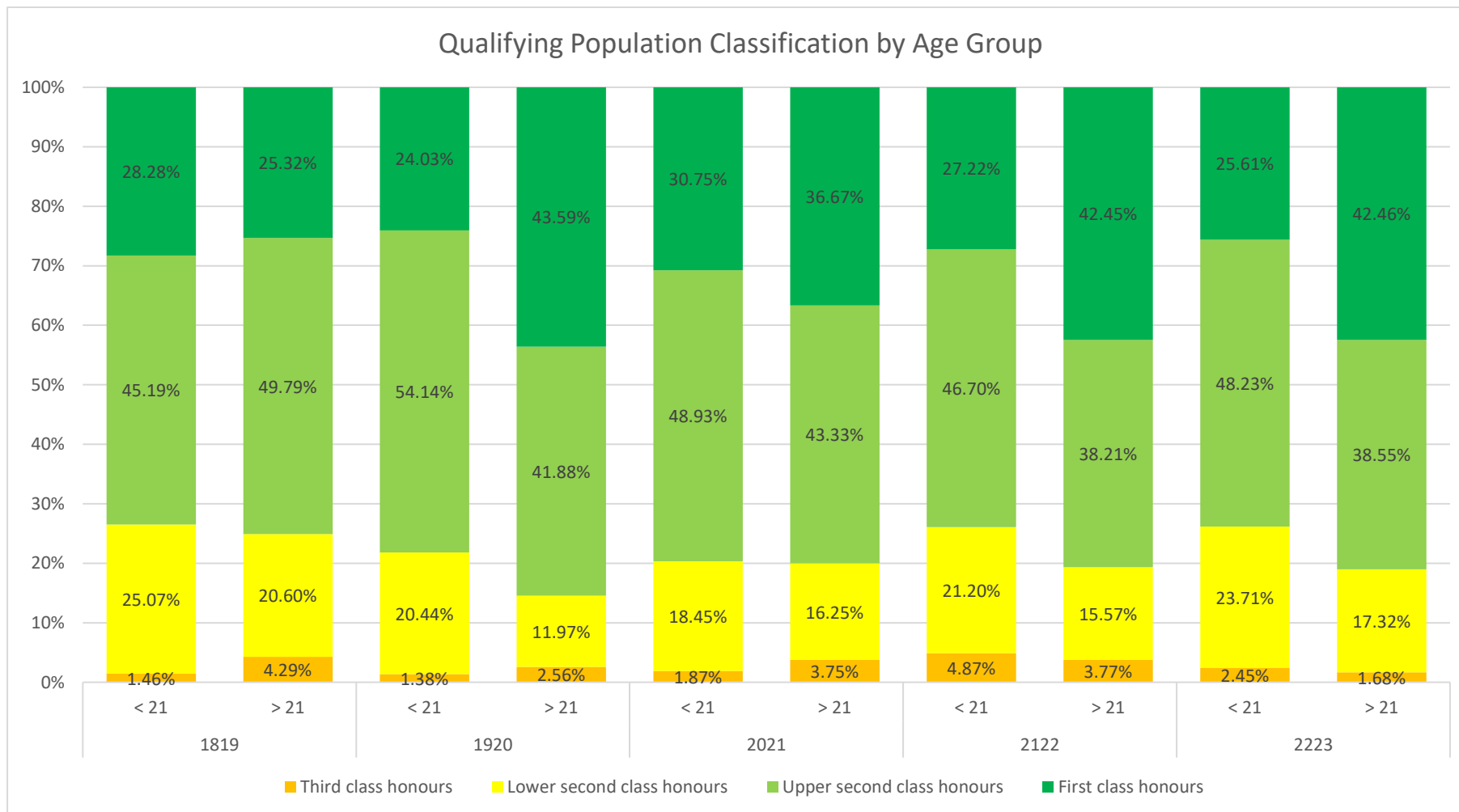
Appendix

Student Characteristics: Age

Table 2: Degree classification profiles for Level 6 degree programmes at Plymouth Marjon University between 2018/19 and 2022/23 by Age

Student Characteristic	Year	Value	Total Awards	Third Class	Lower Second Class	Upper Second Class	First Class	Good Degrees
Age	2018/19	Total	576	2.6%	23.3%	47.0%	27.1%	74.1%
		Under 21	343	1.5%	25.1%	45.2%	28.3%	73.5%
		21 and over	233	4.3%	20.6%	49.8%	25.3%	75.1%
	2019/20	Total	596	1.8%	17.1%	49.3%	31.7%	81.0%
		Under 21	361	1.4%	20.5%	54.0%	24.1%	78.1%
		21 and over	235	2.6%	11.9%	42.1%	43.4%	85.5%
	2020/21	Total	614	2.6%	17.6%	46.7%	33.1%	79.8%
		Under 21	374	1.9%	18.4%	48.9%	30.7%	79.7%
		21 and over	240	3.8%	16.3%	43.3%	36.7%	80.0%
	2021/22	Total	561	4.5%	19.1%	43.5%	33.0%	76.5%
		Under 21	349	4.9%	21.2%	46.7%	27.2%	73.9%
		21 and over	212	3.8%	15.6%	38.2%	42.5%	80.7%
	2022/23	Total	546	2.20%	21.61%	45.05%	31.14%	76.2%
		Under 21	367	2.45%	23.71%	48.23%	25.61%	73.8%
		21 and over	179	1.68%	17.32%	38.55%	42.46%	81.0%

Chart 3: Degree classification profiles for Level 6 degree programmes at Plymouth Marjon University between 2018/19 and 2022/23 by Age

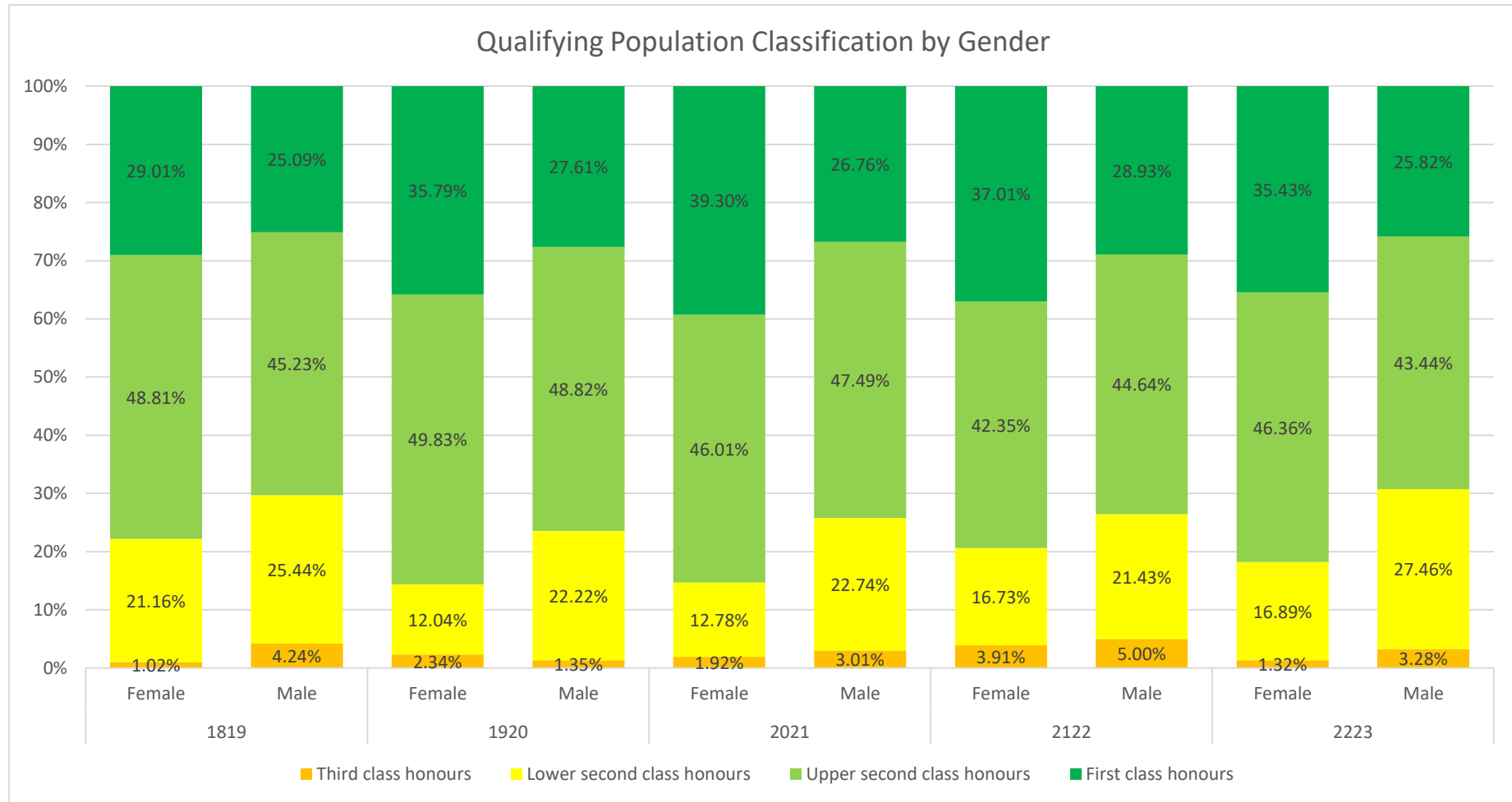


Student Characteristics: Gender

Table 3: Degree classification profiles for Level 6 degree programmes at Plymouth Marjon University between 2018/19 and 2022/23 by Gender

Student Characteristic	Year	Value	Total Awards	Third Class	Lower Second Class	Upper Second Class	First Class	Good Degrees
Gender	2018/19	Total	576	2.6%	23.3%	47.0%	27.1%	74.1%
		Female	293	1.0%	21.2%	48.8%	29.0%	77.8%
		Male	283	4.2%	25.4%	45.2%	25.1%	70.3%
	2019/20	Total	596	1.8%	17.1%	49.3%	31.7%	81.0%
		Female	299	2.3%	12.0%	49.8%	35.8%	85.6%
		Male	297	1.3%	22.2%	48.8%	27.6%	76.4%
	2020/21	Total	612	2.5%	17.6%	46.7%	33.2%	79.9%
		Female	313	1.9%	12.8%	46.0%	39.3%	85.3%
		Male	299	3.0%	22.7%	47.5%	26.8%	74.2%
	2021/22	Total	561	4.46%	19.07%	43.49%	32.98%	76.5%
		Female	281	3.91%	16.73%	42.35%	37.01%	79.4%
		Male	280	5.00%	21.43%	44.64%	28.93%	73.6%
	2022/23	Total	546	2.2%	21.6%	45.1%	31.1%	76.2%
		Female	302	1.3%	16.9%	46.4%	35.4%	81.8%
		Male	244	3.3%	27.5%	43.4%	25.8%	69.3%

Chart 4: Degree classification profiles for Level 6 degree programmes at Plymouth Marjon University between 2018/19 and 2022/23 by Gender

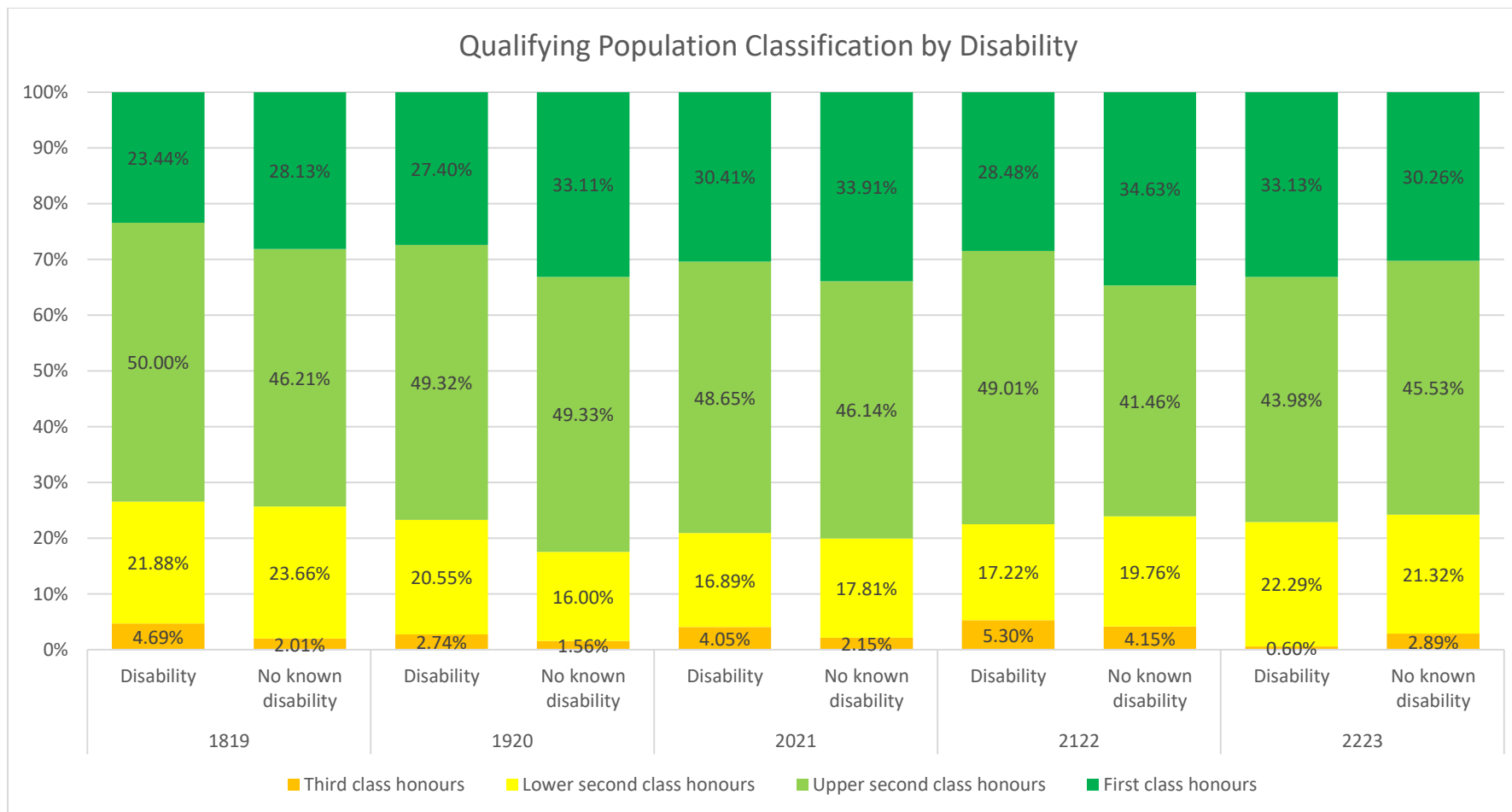


Student Characteristics: Disability

Table 4: Degree classification profiles for Level 6 degree programmes at Plymouth Marjon University between 2018/19 and 2022/23 by Disability

Student Characteristic	Year	Value	Total Awards	Third Class	Lower Second Class	Upper Second Class	First Class	Good Degrees
Disability	2018/19	Total	576	2.6%	23.3%	47.0%	27.1%	74.1%
		Disability	128	4.7%	21.9%	50.0%	23.4%	73.4%
		No known disability	448	2.0%	23.7%	46.2%	28.1%	74.3%
	2019/20	Total	596	1.8%	17.1%	49.3%	31.7%	81.0%
		Disability	146	2.7%	20.5%	49.3%	27.4%	76.7%
		No known disability	450	1.6%	16.0%	49.3%	33.1%	82.4%
	2020/21	Total	614	4.1%	16.9%	48.6%	30.4%	79.1%
		Disability	148	2.1%	17.8%	46.1%	33.9%	80.0%
		No known disability	466	4.1%	16.9%	48.6%	30.4%	79.1%
	2021/22	Total	561	4.5%	19.1%	43.5%	33.0%	76.5%
		Disability	151	5.30%	17.22%	49.01%	28.48%	77.5%
		No known disability	410	4.15%	19.76%	41.46%	34.63%	76.1%
	2022/23	Total	546	2.2%	21.6%	45.1%	31.1%	76.2%
		Disability	166	0.6%	22.3%	44.0%	33.1%	77.1%
		No known disability	380	2.9%	21.3%	45.5%	30.3%	75.8%

Chart 5: Degree classification profiles for Level 6 degree programmes at Plymouth Marjon University between 2018/19 and 2022/23 by Disability



Student Characteristic: Ethnicity

Table 5: Degree classification profiles for Level 6 degree programmes at Plymouth Marjon University between 2018/19 and 2022/23 by Ethnicity

Student Characteristic	Year	Value	Total Awards	Third Class	Lower Second Class	Upper Second Class	First Class	Good Degrees
Ethnicity	2018/19	Total	576	2.6%	23.3%	47.0%	27.1%	74.1%
		Other ethnic group	63	7.9%	39.7%	42.9%	9.5%	52.4%
		White	513	1.9%	21.2%	47.6%	29.2%	76.8%
	2019/20	Total	596	1.8%	17.1%	49.3%	31.7%	81.0%
		Other ethnic group	47	6.4%	23.4%	38.3%	31.9%	70.2%
		White	549	1.5%	16.6%	50.3%	31.7%	82.0%
	2020/21	Total	614	2.6%	17.6%	46.7%	33.1%	79.8%
		Other ethnic group	47	2.1%	19.1%	44.7%	34.0%	78.7%
		White	567	2.6%	17.5%	46.9%	33.0%	79.9%
	2021/22	Total	561	4.5%	19.1%	43.5%	33.0%	76.5%
		Other ethnic group	47	6.4%	27.7%	40.4%	25.5%	66.0%
		White	514	4.3%	18.3%	43.8%	33.7%	77.4%
	2022/23	Total	546	2.2%	21.6%	45.1%	31.1%	76.2%
		Other ethnic group	30	3.3%	33.3%	33.3%	30.0%	63.3%
		White	516	2.1%	20.9%	45.7%	31.2%	76.9%

Chart 6: Degree classification profiles for Level 6 degree programmes at Plymouth Marjon University between 2018/19 and 2022/23 by Ethnicity

