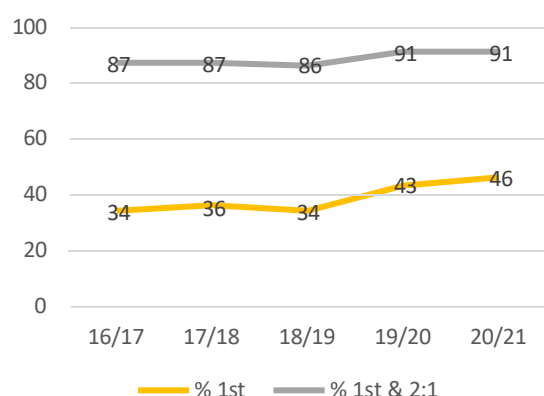# Degree Outcomes Statement 2022

Degree Outcomes Statement 2022
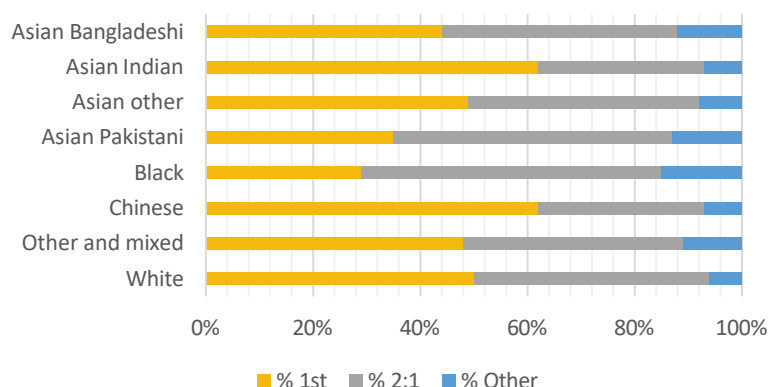
Undergraduate Student Numbers

Undergraduate student numbers at King's have increased from 17,700 in 2015/16 to 20,442 in 2020/21.

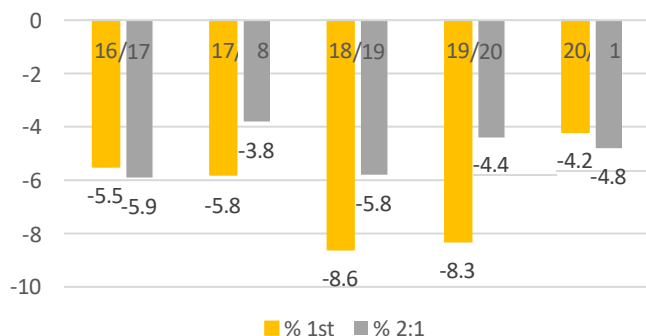## Institution Degree Classification Profiles
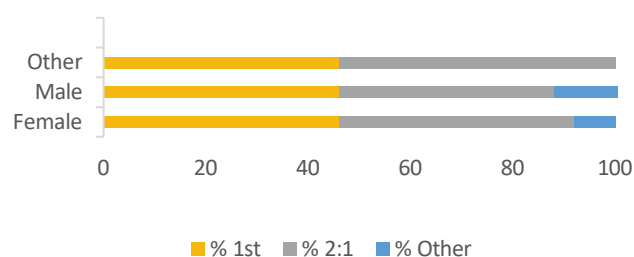
Undergraduate attainment

Awards - ethnicity (20/21)

BME attainment gap by academic year

Awards - male/female/other (20/21)

In 2020/21 the number of students achieving good honours remained the same as the previous year but there was an increase of 3% in 1st class honours. In the previous four years, the percentage of students achieving a good honours degree was consistent and remained within 4% although the number of 1st class honours increased by 9% between 2018/19 and 2019/20 and by a further 3% in 2020/21.

The College has been working on closing the attainment gap, and there was a sharp rise in the 1sts awarded to Black British students, from 16% in 2018/19 to 33% in 2019/20 but in 2020/21 this decreased to 29%. The College is undertaking further work on this.[1]

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[1] The College's approach to closing the attainment gap has been profiled by the Office for Students. The Attainment Workstream leads on this and has worked with faculties to commence a range of activities with the objective of closing differences in attainment, examples can be found below.

Deferrals and Awards

Academic year	% of awards conferred *after* Assessment Period 3	% of these awards 1st and 2:1
2018/19	15.3	62.3
2019/20	14.3	76.5
2020/21	16	72.8

When reviewing the increase in good honours over the last two years (due to the context of Covid-19 and the mitigations put in place), consideration has been given to whether there has been any impact of students deferring assessments to Assessment Period 3, and therefore spreading out their assessment. The number of finalists deferring beyond Assessment Period 2 (the summer assessment period) has remained consistent. Of the awards conferred after Assessment Period 3, there has been an increase in the number of students achieving good honours. This is in line with the overall undergraduate attainment profile above.

The impact of Covid-19

Data suggests that the mitigations put in place for managing the Covid-19 pandemic have contributed to the increase in good honours in 2019/20 and 2020/21. For example:

- In 2019/20, 2% of students were upgraded to the next classification due to the safety net average;
- In 2020/21, 2% of students from across 16 programme cohorts benefited from cohort mitigation measures;
- In 2020/21, 1% of students benefitted from the combination of the safety net and cohort mitigation.

Whilst these measures benefitted a small percentage of students, it is thought that other changes related to assessment had a wider impact on student attainment and degree classification. Further information about the variety of mitigation measures put in place can be found below.

The rates of 1st and 2:1 degrees awarded will be kept under close review so that the College can continue to ensure the standards of its awards. The previous safety net and cohort mitigation measures are no longer applied to new cohorts and programme teams have been revising assessment methods for 2022/23.

Assessment and Marking Practices

The College Marking Framework gives guidance to markers on their marking practices and a choice of models to use. As part of their regular review cycle, an Academic Standards Sub-Committee (ASSC) working group was set up in 2018/19 to review the College marking models. The working group recommended a new Marking Framework which was approved by the College Education Committee (CEC) in 2021 and will be piloted in 2022/23. The new Marking Framework introduces a step-marking scheme which is recommended for all assessments where markers use their academic judgement. A number of departments will be piloting the scheme and we will review whether a move to banded grades results in a more consistent marking approach.

A number of mitigating measures and changes to the assessment landscape were put in place in 2019/20 and 2020/21 to ensure that no student was disadvantaged academically by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Examples of mitigation measures implemented in 2019/20 and 2020/21 include:

- A move from timed exams taken in a traditional exam hall setting to online exams taken within a 24-hour window. Some faculties reported that this contributed to an increase in marks.

- A redesign of assessment formats, including the consolidation of assessments so as to manage overall volume and alternative assessment formats to ensure suitability for remote assessment.
- An enhanced process for mitigating circumstances and assessment deferrals, including the removal of the requirement for evidence. In 2020/21, 9070 undergraduate students submitted requests for 24,715 elements of assessment, and the acceptance rate of requests was 91%.
- In 2019/20, the application of the 'Safety Net' to students whose average from 15 March 2020 was lower than the average of their summative grades from earlier in the academic year, or from the previous academic year if appropriate.
- In 2020/21, cohort outcomes for each programme were reviewed against the 3 academic years preceding the pandemic and where the 2020/21 average was found to be lower, grades were moderated upwards.
- [Modifications to the 2% upgrade rule.](#)

External Examiners were complimentary about the College's response to the Covid-19 pandemic in their annual reports, which they felt was fair and appropriate. The annual report template was revised to gather opinions from External Examiners, and assurance was given that the measures implemented had not impacted academic standards overall. For example, an External Examiner in Arts and Humanities commented 'even in these circumstances, the assessment process was rigorous and remained appropriate to the programme's overall learning aims and objectives'.

From 2022/23, the following activities will be undertaken:

- An evaluation of the 2021/22 pilot with TeamCo, which offered a mixed model of online assessment and in-person invigilation, to assess for wider utilisation;
- As of 2021/22, evidence is now required for all mitigating circumstances and deferral requests. A working group under ASSC has been set up to review the existing College policy around mitigating circumstances;
- From 2022/23, [revised academic regulations](#) will be introduced that include new rules around undergraduate progression and award. These rules have been modelled and it is not anticipated that they will contribute to grade inflation, but this will be kept under review;
- A working group under ASSC has been set up to review the existing College policy and procedure around academic misconduct;
- Following the [pilot of the new Marking Framework](#), a revised, final policy will be developed, with the anticipation of a recommendation for college-wide implementation in 23/24.

External Examiners

External Examiners attend all Assessment Sub-Board (ASB) meetings where results and award classifications are reviewed, discussed, and ratified. A summary of the annual reports submitted by External Examiners, including their views on how the academic standards of our programmes compare with the wider sector, are submitted annually to the ASSC.

King's has participated in Advance HE's External Examiner professional development programme and, since 2017/18, 66 staff have attended External Examiner training.

For 2022/23, the following new roles have been appointed:

- College Chief External Examiner role
  The role will have a broad, strategic remit and will sit on ASSC. The role will review the College's award data and contribute to discussions on any perceived grade inflation, including providing advice on sector comparisons and offering external oversight.

- Faculty Chief External Examiner role
  The role will sit on the corresponding Faculty Assessment Board (this will be decided by the faculty and will be undergraduate, postgraduate or both). The role will have oversight of Assessment Sub-Board practices, review External Examiner reports, and contribute to discussions with external oversight.

Programme approval

All programmes are mapped against the [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#) at the point of programme approval. Additionally, programme approval procedures ensure that there is consideration of relevant [Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)](#) subject benchmark statements during the development of the programme. Subject benchmarks are also re-visited during the process of programme review. King's makes use of external expertise during the programme approval and review procedures, asking external specialists to review the programme and module documentation to confirm that sector reference points are/continue to be met.

Externally accredited programmes

King's has 64 undergraduate programmes accredited and/or registered by a range of external organisations and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRB).

Academic Integrity

King's has signed up to the [QAA's Academic Integrity Charter](#). The charter represents the collective commitment of the UK higher education sector to promote academic integrity and take action against academic misconduct.

From 2018/19 to 2020/21, the number of academic misconduct cases reported across the College increased by 35%. Discussions at Assessment Sub-Boards have noted their belief that the context of the Covid-19 pandemic contributed to this increase.

Academic Governance

The academic governance structure at King's is described [here.](#)

Within the structure, ASSC is responsible for overseeing the College's assessment process and advising on;

- the strategic development of assessment policy and regulation;
- the level of College compliance with the assessment framework;
- the extent to which assessment policies are transparent, fair impartial, and consistent.

Assessment Boards (ABs) scrutinise faculty, department and programme level award data and report their analysis to ASSC, with consideration of the attainment of BME or disabled students or other groups facing disparities in attainment. All issues identified in the report are discussed and actions assigned. ASSC also considers sector developments relating to assessment and academic standards and revises or develops assessment policy and practice accordingly. Subject level Assessment Sub-Boards (ASBs) scrutinise results and ratify awards. ASBs do not have discretion when deciding borderline awards, which are calculated according to a set of rules known as the 2% rule.

Where a programme is jointly awarded with a partner institution, the College ensures that there are satisfactory arrangements in place for the assessment of the student's performance whilst attending the partner institution. Regulations and External Examiner oversight are negotiated between the institutions involved, to ensure the academic standards of the programme remain robust.

Degree Algorithm

All undergraduate student awards are calculated using the [degree algorithm (C-score).](#) The [new 2022/23 academic regulations](#) stipulate that the undergraduate first year is removed from the degree algorithm. In 2019/20, this was accelerated as part of the Covid-19 mitigation measures and was continued in 2020/21 and 2021/22 before being implemented via the academic regulations in 2022/23. Checks were carried out during summer 2022 to ensure finalists who started their programme in 2019/20 were not disadvantaged by not including the first year marks, and where it was found that the inclusion of the marks would have meant a higher classification, the marks were then included.

Students receive an automatic upgrade to the higher classification if their C-score is within 2% of a higher classification boundary (68/58/48) and where at least 60 credits at level 6 (level 7 for Integrated Masters programmes) or above are in a higher classification, in a minimum of two modules (2% rule).

Academic year	% of awards that were upgraded to the higher classification due to the 2% rule
2017/18	10.2
2018/19	10.3
2019/20	12
2020/21	9.8

As part of the Covid-19 mitigation measures, this rule was extended as follows:

- In 2019/20, if a student's final C-score fell into a borderline zone between classifications and the existing rules did not result in an upgrade, an additional 'safety net' provision was put in place to see if the 60 credits required could be found at level 5 or above in a given year. 3.4% of students qualified for an upgrade via this modification;
- In 2020/21, the 2019/20 arrangements were maintained and the upgrade rule was extended to require 45 credits in the higher classification boundary rather than the usual 60 credits. 3.8% of students qualified for an upgrade via this modification.

Teaching Practices and Learning Resources

Supporting teaching practices

In 2017, an education and learning development team ([King's Academy](#)), was established to support all staff in:

- developing curriculum and assessment;
- developing and reflecting on teaching practice and gaining recognition;
- providing learning development opportunities to students;
- building communities, networks and disseminating innovation; *and*
- supporting inquiry into pedagogic scholarship and research.

At the core of this work is the Learning & Teaching Development programme, the GTA Development Programme and the HEA Recognition Scheme. Led by the goals of the Education Strategy, [King's Academy](#) is embedding assessment for learning and active learning at the heart of our teaching practices with a current project of supporting staff with designing Curriculum 2029 and our ambitions for an inclusive education providing research enhanced teaching and

service-learning opportunities.

The Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning and King's Online supports staff with digital education and the design of their online programmes.

Learning resources

The King's Education Strategy 2017–2022 makes a commitment to continue investment in formal and informal, innovative, and digitally-enabled learning spaces. Projects include:

- a £47m investment to develop accommodation for a new department of Engineering, which has now been completed for use in 2022/23;
- a clinical skills laboratory at our Denmark Hill campus;
- a £20m development undertaken with the Clinical Research Facility in Denmark Hill, along with King's Health Partners and the Wellcome Trust.

Over the period of this review, the Libraries & Collections Service has;

- introduced a new reading list system with improved operability, accessibility and list analytics, and continued to support academics in the pedagogical design of reading lists;
- expanded the 1-1 literature searching support service, offering both online and in person appointments to students;
- introduced new packages on the College's virtual learning environment (VLE), such as 'Using Archive material and Special Collections material in your studies' and 'Evaluating and Appraising Information Sources';
- increased e-book packages and film streaming services and developed the College's print book collection, with more focus on diversity of resources to support inclusive education.

Identifying good practice and actions

- The degree algorithm is applied consistently to all students. Marks cannot be changed because of mitigating circumstances or as the result of an appeal.
- The academic regulations and appendices are reviewed annually to ensure they remain fair and fit-for-purpose.
- Every undergraduate student is allocated a personal tutor on enrolment and are encouraged to meet them at least once a term. Each faculty also has a senior tutor, who a student can approach if their personal tutor is not available. A review of the personal tutoring system is being undertaken.
- The What Works Department was established in 2018, following a successful two-year project that demonstrated the power of the behavioural insights and what works approach in driving social mobility and student success at King's.
- The Race Equity & Inclusive Education Fund has awarded £96,386 to over 16 different projects that aim to address racial inequality or create a more inclusive student experience.
- The Student Success Department launched the Conversations about Race (CAR) project in 2019-20. CAR supports faculties to become more aware of students' experiences with race and informs faculty action plans to close the attainment gap. In 2020-21 12 sessions took place with 270 students and staff members.

The data included in the section 'Institutional Degree Classification Profile' will be revised annually. All other sections will be reviewed every 3 years or if there is a significant change to report.