Degree Outcomes Statement 2024

Institutional degree classification profile

Category	Year	% 1 and 2:1	First class	Upper second class	Lower second class	Third class
Total	2019/20	(70%)	251	447	216	86
	2020/21	(79%)	261	477	177	22
	2021/22	(73%)	268	478	187	85
	2022/23	(72%)	280	452	204	87
	2023/24	(74%)	310	551	239	71
Specific learning difficulty	2019/20	(66%)	21	38	27	3
	2020/21	(78%)	10	42	13	2
	2021/22	(74%)	30	50	20	8
	2022/23	(70%)	32	57	24	15
	2023/24	(75%)	32	68	27	7
Other disability	2019/20	(69%)	25	48	25	8
	2020/21	(78%)	28	59	23	2
	2021/22	(73%)	34	63	23	12
	2022/23	(72%)	46	66	28	16
	2023/24	(68%)	55	88	49	18
No known disability/ unknown	2019/20	(70%)	205	361	164	75
	2020/21	(79%)	223	376	141	18
	2021/22	(73%)	204	365	144	65
	2022/23	(72%)	202	328	152	55
	2023/24	(75%)	223	395	163	46
Female	2019/20	(72%)	194	310	143	49
	2020/21	(82%)	201	327	103	13
	2021/22	(77%)	207	352	124	47
	2022/23	(74%)	221	306	139	51
	2023/24	(76%)	236	397	156	42
Male	2019/20	(64%)	52	136	71	37
	2020/21	(71%)	59	146	73	9
	2021/22	(65%)	57	116	58	34
	2022/23	(67%)	51	133	59	31
	2023/24	(68%)	68	130	70	25
BAME	2019/20	(53%)	16	32	33	9
	2020/21	(71%)	28	75	39	4
	2021/22	(60%)	16	43	30	9
	2022/23	(65%)	23	37	19	14
	2023/24	(60%)	20	45	34	10
White	2019/20	(75%)	200	354	141	41
	2020/21	(83%)	226	382	116	9
	2021/22	(77%)	206	347	124	40
	2022/23	(73%)	212	314	136	55
	2023/24	(78%)	235	393	152	30

Legend: First class ● | Upper second class ● | Lower second class ● | Third class ●

We have used whole-institution figures as 93% of our students fall within the Creative Arts and Design. The remaining students are in three subject categories but numbers are too small to be statistically reliable.

Latest data from the Office for Students (OfS) indicates that AUB has a small unexplained increase in the proportion of graduates receiving a degree at Upper Second Class or above. AUB has invested both in resources and in staff development, requiring a teaching qualification or fellowship of the Higher Education Academy for all academic staff. Given the consistent confirmation from external examiners that standards are secure, and that students achieve to an outstanding level, we are confident that this rise, including the rise in First Class honours degrees, can be explained. We recognise that there remains a gap in achievement for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students; and a smaller, but consistent, gap for Male students.

All courses underwent periodic review during 2023/24 to align them to our new Learning Teaching and Assessment Framework which includes a focus on industry-linked learning, with a commitment to sustainability and EDI (in both content, and approaches to delivery and assessment). This is an important step to providing a fully accessible curriculum, which we hope will narrow these gaps. The EDI Academic Adviser also undertook research with students from minority groups about their academic experience, and this will inform future actions to support these groups.

Assessment and marking practices

As part of validation and periodic review, the panel confirms that the course learning outcomes and assessment criteria meet sector reference points. Overall course outcomes are compared against the expectations of an Honours degree graduate. Panels also consider the relevant Subject Benchmark Statements, and our courses in Architecture respond to the PSRBs (ARB and RIBA). External advisers are appointed to support each validation or review, including both academic and relevant professional expertise. We appoint a Subject External Examiner to each course; we have clear selection criteria to ensure that examiners are knowledgeable in their subject and impartial, and they are asked to confirm on an annual basis that marking standards are in line with the sector-recognised standards, and that assessment is fair and rigorous. An Awards External Examiner is appointed to the Progression and Awards Board, which confirms all awards made by the University; this includes ensuring that the regulations have been applied fairly and consistently across all students. AUB staff also act as external examiners or panel members elsewhere, and contribute as part of subject associations, as well as undertaking relevant academic staff development.

The University has a comprehensive verification process for all work, with at least a sample of work reviewed for all units at Levels 5 and 6. We also hold a Verification Exercise each year where a panel of academic staff from across the University review selected work from each course, to confirm that standards are applied consistently. One partner institution participates in this Exercise; the other holds its own internal verification process.

IIn line with national norms, students are permitted to be reassessed on units they have failed (up to 60 credits per Level), with a maximum mark available of 40% (the minimum pass mark). Reassessment is not permitted on any unit which has been passed.

We operate a consistent policy for students with mitigating circumstances. Students who believe that their performance was affected by circumstances which they were unable to bring to the University's attention at the time, or who believe that there was a procedural error in assessment, can use the Appeals Policy for HE courses to request a review of their results.

Academic governance

Operational oversight of the University's quality management framework is devolved to LTQ. The same framework, and classification algorithm, apply to all awards of the University, including those delivered at partner institutions. LTQ prepares an annual report on the standards and quality of awards of the University, which includes a review of data and any trends over time, as well as the outcomes of any internal reviews, and the comments of external examiners. This enables a comprehensive review of practice, and enables any concerns about consistency of approach or outcomes to be identified and addressed. The annual report is presented to Academic Board and to the Board of Governors, to provide assurance that academic governance remains effective. Our Awards External Examiner has confirmed that this Degree Outcomes Statement is a valid representation of practice at AUB.

Classification algorithm *(how we determine a student's classification)*

The University operates one common classification algorithm, with two methods of determining the final award. The algorithm is published as part of our Undergraduate Assessment Regulations (page 24). Method A rewards consistency of performance throughout Levels 5 and 6, whereas Method B rewards 'exit velocity', with an emphasis on achievement at Level 6. These two Methods cover all classification decisions. There are no separate arrangements for borderline cases.

A revised algorithm, aligned to the Principles for effective algorithm design published by the UKSCQA, has been agreed for students entering the University in 2022/23 (graduating in 2024/25). All classifications will be determined using a single method, with the introduction of a borderline category. This is likely to result in slight drop in the proportion of upper degrees awarded.

Teaching practices and learning resources

The University has introduced a new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework (LTAF) which will ensure greater consistency and transparency to learning, teaching and assessment practices across all taught awards. This applies for all students entering AUB in 2024/25.

Identifying good practice and actions

The academic community designed the undergraduate regulations as a coherent and comprehensive framework which encourages and rewards certain good academic behaviours. Specific elements of the framework cannot be considered in isolation from each other. The decision was taken to adopt a notched marking scheme, to support greater consistency and reliability in assessment; and this scheme was selected by students as the fairest approach to assessment. This was approved by a University panel including two external advisers from the HE sector. We produce a summary of the academic regulations in accessible language for students; this document includes examples of how the algorithm works in practice. We have published guidance on the use of generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI), and we have a University-wide working group to identify good practice which can be shared.

The University is confident, based on the comments of external examiners and advisers, and on the consistency of outcomes, that this framework is effective in underpinning good academic practice, and valid and reliable awards. The Board reviews the Degree Outcomes Statement on an annual basis, considering in particular any changes to the degree classification profile, and the reasons for this.