

## **Degree outcomes statement**

July 2020

### **Institutional degree classification profile**

Following a significant period of consultation and review, our Academic Progression and Award Regulations (APAR) were updated in 2015/16. This included changes to borderlines and standardised criteria for consideration for promotion. Considerable work was undertaken in terms of modelling the implications of the new criteria.

As a result of the review borderlines changed from an overall average of \*9 (\*8/\*9 2:1/1<sup>st</sup>) to \*8/\*9 at all borderlines except that between fail and 3<sup>rd</sup> class. Introduced standardised borderline criteria for promotion, with promotion occurring if either of the below is met:  
Half or more of the final stage credits are in the higher class;  
Half or more of the final and penultimate stage credits are in the higher class.

Information produced by Planning, Performance and Strategic Change suggests that from 2013-15 to 2016-18 UoN has moved from a position of awarding fewer first class degrees than expected to awarding more than expected when compared to 'all universities' and a greater divergence when compared to the Russell Group. The same is true of first/upper second class degrees but the numbers are a much smaller proportion of the total and closer to the expected position.

In academic year 2018/19 the Quality and Standards Committee created a working group to review the impact of the APAR regulations and to report the findings via the University governance structure.

This work is ongoing but expects to produce a set of recommendations during academic year 2019/20 for implementation in 2020/21.

In March 2020 and in response to the COVID 19 pandemic a range of Exceptional Regulations were developed and implemented and can be found on this link:

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/academicservices/qualitymanual/exceptional-regulations-covid-19.aspx>

### **Assessment and marking practices**

Assessment is regulated by the Assessment Regulations. Policies stipulate that the volume, timing and nature of assessment should enable students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes. The Marking and Grading policy covers areas including internal and external examination; marking criteria; moderation of marks, marks calculations and the process for feeding back to students; including turnaround times. Policies have been developed with reference to QAA Subject Benchmarks and to Professional Sector Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) requirements. Reasonable adjustments for students with academic or disability support requirements are made in assessments. In 2018/19 a significant piece of work commenced which has expanded into a wholesale review of programme design, with focus on the area of assessment. It is expected that the outcomes from this work will inform new policy for 2020/21.

### **Academic governance**

The University aims to maintain the highest standards of excellence in learning and teaching across all programmes. Education and Student Experience Committee (ESEC) has primary responsibility for maintaining academic standards on behalf of Senate, with direction from

the University strategy, supported by policies and procedures in the Quality Manual. Quality and Standards Committee (QSC) assists ESEC in overseeing the application of all university regulations, policies and procedures in respect of quality and standards. External assistance is sought at several points in the assurance process; in the development of new programmes, through the role of external examiners and their reports, and through other external reference points including reports from PSRBs and via the inclusion of an external panel member in our periodic review process.

### **Classification algorithms**

Our classification algorithm for UG and PGT can be found via this link:

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/academicservices/qualitymanual/academic-regulations/academic-regulation.aspx>

### **Enhancement of teaching and curriculum**

The University is committed to continually enhancing the quality of our teaching and of the curriculum. In 2013 a wide-ranging Transforming Teaching Programme (TTP) was initiated, with substantial funding in terms of expert people resource and enabling tools and technologies. This was overseen by the PVC for Education and Student Experience. The TTP included a number of key initiatives, including an assessment review at programme level (noted above), attainment gap projects relating to Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BME), Widening Participation (WP) and Mature students and consideration of mental health and wellbeing in the curriculum.

Since 2016, our investment in libraries has been substantial and has led to increased student use. Lecture capture, including video and audio recording of lectures for students to refer to later, is widespread and growing. We have the largest deployment of Echo Classroom in Europe and the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest globally. All students are allocated a personal tutor and each School has a senior tutor overseeing the work of personal tutors; the senior tutors come together in the Senior Tutors' Network that is coordinated by the University Senior Tutor. This community acts to ensure our personal tutoring programmes are constantly improved in line with best practice.

These are a few of the enhancement initiatives in place that have contributed to improved student outcomes.

### **Identifying good practice, and actions**

Significant work is underway across the University around programme assessment and design. The outcome of this work will be clear at some point in the future.. However, work to explain marking rubrics to students has enabled students to clearly understand their assessment and this has had a positive effect on their outcomes.

### **Risks and challenges**

As an institution we work with over 100 accrediting bodies and there are often complex rules/parameters that need to be built into programmes to meet the PSRB requirements. These accreditations are often critical to our operations but don't come without their challenges.