

Degree Outcomes Statement

1. Institutional degree classification profile

The following tables demonstrate the progress in Good Honours (GH) attainment between 2014 and 2019. While in general Good Honours attainment has shown little discernible trends over the last five years (moving up and down between years), attainment for White students and those in the more advantaged groups by POLAR quintile have seen much steadier improvement. Given DMU's standing as a Widening Participation university, it is a cause for concern that our less advantaged and BAME students are not seeing the same improvements in outcomes. On the other hand, given our large proportion of disabled students, it is heartening to see a marked improvement in general in Good Honours for these students.

A general analysis comparing entry qualification ranges with the range of outcomes shows a statistically insignificant impact on overall GH if entrants with high or middle entry tariff scores had their outcomes reduced to DMU's average (drop of .8%) and a slightly heavier impact if those entering with low or no tariff score had their outcomes raised to DMU's average (rise of .9%). We intend further work in this area.

Table 1: Good honours, overall summary

Academic Session	Overall
2014/15	70.1%
2015/16	67.3%
2016/17	71.3%
2017/18	75.1%
2018/19 (latest year)	72.5%

Table 2: Good honours, levels of disadvantage

Category	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	One-year Change	Five-year Change
POLAR Q1-2	74.7	67.9	72.8	74.1	72.4	-1.7	-2.3
POLAR Q3-5	72.8	70.6	73.2	77.8	75.1	-2.7	2.3
GAP	1.9	-2.7	-0.4	-3.7	-2.7	1.0	-4.6

Table 3: Good honours, ethnicity

Category	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18/19	One-year Change	Five-year Change
BAME	66.0	60.9	65.4	70.9	65.5	-5.4	-0.5
WHITE	75.9	74.6	76.3	80.6	81.1	0.5	5.2
GAP	-9.9	-13.7	-10.9	-9.7	-15.6	-5.9	-5.7

Table 4: Good honours, age

Category	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18/19	One-year Change	Five-year Change
Mature	61.1	59.6	62.0	70.4	67.0	-3.4	5.9

Young	73.3	69.9	73.1	76.7	74.2	-2.5	0.9
GAP	-12.2	-10.3	-11.1	-6.3	-7.2	-0.9	5.0

Table 5: Good honours, disability

Category	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18/19	One-year Change	Five-year Change
Disabled	68.9	63.7	66.3	70.4	71.0	0.6	2.1
No Known Disability	72.0	69.1	72.4	77.1	73.6	-3.5	1.6
GAP	-3.1	-5.4	-6.1	-6.7	-2.6	4.1	0.5

2. Assessment and marking practices

The standard of assessment is assured by ensuring it is conducted according to the relevant sector reference points, primarily the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies (FHEQ) in terms of the threshold standards required for an honours degree; this is reflected in the university's [academic regulations](#). Where Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) expect different requirements these are approved centrally and held in faculty registers.

Marking consistency is supported by a university-wide [Assessment and Feedback Policy](#), and [mark descriptors](#) which can be adapted to suit individual subject areas. Any changes must be proposed and approved by the Academic Quality Committee and, ultimately, the Academic Board. Staff involved in marking students' work have access to faculty-based committees and forums which focus on learning and teaching issues, and academics new to teaching are supported by specific training and development offered through Learning and Organisational Development ([PgCert Academic Practice](#); [Effective Learning and Teaching at DMU](#))

Oversight of assessment rigor is supported by the recruitment of suitability qualified external examiners, using the criteria in the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) guidance on External Expertise. Examiners undertake a complete induction programme to understand marking rubrics, academic regulations and degree algorithms. Inexperienced examiners are assigned a more experienced mentor. ([Guide to External Examining](#))

DMU mandates annual and periodic reviews of its internal policies, processes and guidance documents, as well as scrutiny of all external examiners' reports, including those covering programmes offered by collaborative partners. All partners are expected to abide by DMU's quality assurance procedures, and this is monitored by our Educational Partnerships unit for UK provision and Global Partnerships Unit for overseas provision.

3. Academic governance

The University has appointed an independent external to support the development of this degree outcomes statement.

Academic regulations are considered annually through the academic committee structure, with final approval resting with the Academic Board. The same regulations are used for both internal and collaborative provision and where there are any deviations from standard practice (usually because of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body involvement) these are also approved through the committee structure and articulated in programme specific regulations.

The terms of reference and constitution of assessment boards are included within the academic regulations for taught programmes and a standard agenda is used for all boards. This agenda includes an item explicitly seeking confirmation that moderation has taken place in line with the university's policy and regulations. If the appropriate internal and external moderation has not taken place, the results cannot be ratified until this has happened. The constitution of assessment boards includes a representative from the Directorate of Student and Academic Services and this role is included in the requirement for quoracy. This role provides an independent viewpoint and is intended to ensure consistent interpretation and implementation of the regulations.

4. Classification algorithms

Since 2011-12 DMU has used the following formula for the classification of the honours degree:

- Best 105 credits of the 120 studied at level 5, single-weighted, **and the:**
- Best 105 credits of the 120 studied at level 6, triple-weighted.

If the outcome of the above classification calculation is within two per cent of the next classification band, then the consideration band rules will be applied. The algorithm is outlined in the [academic regulations](#) alongside worked examples of how it operates to ensure that it is clearly understood by students and staff.

Students may be reassessed in up to 60 credits of the 120 studied at each level; overall module marks are capped at 40% when components are reassessed. Within this overall limit students may be reassessed more than once in a module.

As our degree classification algorithm has not changed since 2012, we intend a full review in the 2020-2021 academic year.

5. Teaching practices and learning resources

As section 6 shows, we have developed a number of enhancements to teaching over the last five years. We are confident that these have had a positive impact on our students' learning, and consequently on our Good Honours outcomes. However, we have not undertaken analyses to measure this impact.

6. Good practice and action

Across our Faculties, we have seen improved pedagogic practice and increased learning resources over recent years. Many programmes have developed and implemented a combination of different initiatives and these cumulative changes have served to enable student success and improvement of grade outcomes.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a keystone of DMU pedagogy. Its approach to inclusive learning underpins all curricular developments. Launched in 2015, UDL aims to provide an equitable learning experience for every DMU student. The principles of UDL are the product of decades of research about how people learn. At the heart of the UDL approach is the notion of embedding inclusivity and choice for both lecturers and students. UDL is based on three key principles: the provision of flexible ways of learning, the provision of flexible study resources and the provision of flexible ways of testing learning. For instance, many programmes offer freedom of choice for assessment methods and project topics which promotes better student engagement, leading to higher achievement. There is a greater use of flipped classrooms and an active learning approach which focuses on practical demonstrations, workshops, and life case studies which replicate industry practice. This approach has been commended by external examiners.

Freedom to Achieve project

DMU participated in the Freedom to Achieve project alongside six other UK universities. The project was funded by the Office for Students as a direct response to reducing the attainment gap. Forty programmes across the university took part in the project. Following a successful 2-year pilot, the Freedom to Achieve project has moved forward under the banner of Decolonising DMU to ensure that the university is a fully inclusive and socially progressive university.

Transitions workshops

With the support of Library and Learning Services, programmes have developed activities to support transition between all levels of study, including academic writing, understanding critical analysis and assignment and dissertation preparation. Sessions are provided by the Centre for Learning and Study Support (CLaSS) and have shown an increase in 'preparedness' for the student's next academic journey phase. In addition, in the Faculty of Business and Law a team of international tutors have developed a series of workshops to enable international students to transition academically and culturally; this includes a bespoke personal tutoring scheme.

Improvements in feedback

All four faculties have made positive changes to how feedback is offered to their students. Many of the positive changes have been brought about from internal and external student surveys and through annual external examiner reporting. Many programmes now use a variety of feedback mechanisms such as the use of video feedback or feedback rubrics and there is also an enhanced use of peer review across the University.

Industry engagement in the curriculum

Many programmes have a high level of industry engagement integrated into the curriculum. This includes guest speakers, industry professionals' tutorial support, bespoke projects with industry, industry competitions and enterprise projects that encourage first-year students to develop new business concepts which they pitch to industry experts. Business simulation activities are embedded in some programmes where students are required to make key business decisions through the use of simulation software. These activities serve to promote sustainable decision making. All of these experiences allow students to see and be part of 'real-life' experience through an industry standard context and enable them to develop working practices integral with academic learning outcomes.

7. Risks and challenges

DMU is confident that it follows sector good practice in its quality assurance mechanisms, and that its collaborative partners are fully part of our quality processes. Nonetheless, we recognise that our Good Honours outcomes are above the levels to be expected, as analysed by the Office for Students. We understand as well that our degree algorithm, which at the point of adoption mirrored sector practice, requires a review and we fully support the sector's commitment to protect the value of qualifications. We will therefore undertake a review that is fully informed by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment [Principles for Effective Degree Algorithm Design](#).