



## Liverpool Hope University Degree Outcomes Statement Summer 2024

Liverpool Hope is a smaller institution with Ecumenical foundations that values its distinctive mission and values. We are an inclusive and diverse community that consistently exceeds its benchmarks for recruiting students with a disability, or from areas of high deprivation and low participation.

This statement provides assurance to all stakeholders of the maintenance of standards and of the value of Liverpool Hope qualifications. Liverpool Hope has a robust, devolved system of governance for [Quality Assurance](#), overseen by the University Academic Committee and including procedures for annual review and enhancement of programs within a five-yearly revalidation of provision. The achievement of our students is an important marker of these processes. Table 1 summarises the key metrics over the past five years; Hope delivers its awards at both our own campuses and in a small number of partner Further Education Colleges.

A more detailed summary of the institutional degree profile analysed for all students at Bachelors level since 2017/18 by subject, sex, ethnicity, and disability [is available](#).

**Table 1: Summary of Student Achievement (Undergraduate) 2019/23**

Student Group	% Students Achieving a First- or Upper Second-Class Award				
	18/9	19/20	20/21	2021/22	2022/23
All Liverpool Hope	71.5 (836)	77.2 (838)	79.0 (875)	71.6 (787)	71.65 (873)
Studying at Hope campuses	71.9 (769)	77.2 (759)	79.5 (814)	72.6 (712)	71.51 (832)
Studying at Partner Colleges	67.7 (67)	76.7 (79)	72.6 (61)	65.5 (75)	74.5 (41)
<a href="#">National Data</a>	76 (313,220)	82 (329,730)	82 (353,300)	78 (327,840)	Not Available

The avoidance of degree inflation continues to be a considerable concern sector-wide and we consider the production of our Degree Outcomes Statement to be an important opportunity for Liverpool Hope to demonstrate its obligations in relation to [Condition B4](#) of the Office for Students (OfS) ongoing conditions of registration. Condition B4 requires that the provider 'ensure that qualifications awarded to students hold their value at the point of qualification and over time, in line with sector recognised standards'. In line with the sector, we noted with some concern a marked increase in the proportion of first-class degrees awarded in 2019/20; alongside a further, albeit much smaller, increase observed in 2020/21.

At Liverpool Hope there are no concerns about degree inflation based on our 2021/22 and now 2022/23 outcomes. Whilst this has remained a significant issue across the Sector, at Hope we have seen our good degrees clearly return to pre-pandemic levels. Arguably some concerns remain around first-class awards which remain 6.3% higher than in the last pre-pandemic year (2018/19). However, upper-second class awards have fallen by 6.1% compared to 2018/9 and therefore the overall rate of awarding good degrees is stable pre- and post-pandemic.

Table 1 highlights an awarding gap between the outcomes for our students in 2022/3 and the National Benchmark published by The Higher Education Statistics Agency [HESA](#) for 2021/22 (note this cannot be a direct comparison because of the delayed release of HESA data for 2022/3). Given the stability of our data we

expect that this gap will remain when National data is finally published. We are mindful that we must understand the factors that contribute to this gap and address them. Significant contributing factors that we are working to address include students: undertaking combined honours awards, entering without traditional A level qualifications and with protected characteristics including poorer/low participation backgrounds.

A particularly significant contributor to this gap is the achievement of students at Hope campuses who enter the University with more vocationally focused BTEC and non-A Level qualifications, 37% of the cohort. In 2022/23 completing students who entered with A levels qualifications achieved more good degrees than those without (74% with compared to 67% without). More complex analysis, over seven years' worth of data, shows that 81% of students from areas of low deprivation entering with A levels achieve good degrees compared to 68% without A levels. 73% of students from areas of high deprivation entering with A levels achieve good degrees compared to only 63% without A levels. There is therefore an 18% gap in awarding outcomes for students from areas of low deprivation with A levels compared to those from areas of high deprivation without A levels. This intersectional analysis highlights areas in which our teaching, learning and assessment strategy will focus going forwards. Our Access and Participation Plan, currently being prepared for implementation from 2025, sets out to address these gaps and therefore ensure any risk to equality of opportunity is resolved.

Awarding gaps for students with other protected characteristics, including age, gender, ethnicity and disability have been thoroughly analysed and are addressed through the ambitions detailed in the 2020-25 [Access and Participation Plan](#). We welcome a high proportion of disabled students at Hope (25% of our cohort in 2022/3), 75% of this cohort achieved a 'good degree', 5% ahead of non-disabled students. It is also worthy of note that the awarding gap for good degrees between white and global majority students closed in 2022/23, reducing 10 10% compared with 15% in the previous academic year.

The University has pledged to review its current dual algorithm in line with the recommendations of the 2019 UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment statement of intent in respect of [effective degree algorithm design](#). The clarity of decision making at Hope is informed by a [rule-based classification system](#) which ensures consistency of Board outcomes which is particularly important given the high proportion of students studying a combined honours award. After careful consideration Liverpool Hope will adopt a single algorithm for award calculation for students entering from 2024 onwards (0 Level C/25% Level I and 75% Level H). Other modifications have also been made to the rules governing borderline decisions.

In 2022/23 Liverpool Hope taught students at Holy Cross College Bury. Provision at both St Mary's College Blackburn and Carmel College, Knowsley came to an end. Between 2018/9 and 2021/2 the achievement in the Network of Hope had fallen below that of students studying at the Hope campuses; in 2022/23 that gap was closed with 74.5% of Holy Cross students achieving a 'good degree' compared to 71.5% of students overall.

All Liverpool Hope awards are aligned to the standards set by external reference points including the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#), The [Qualifications Framework](#), [Subject Benchmark Statements](#) and where appropriate the standards of [Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies](#). The academic governance of our degrees is ensured through the attention that is given to the outcomes that are summarised in the [Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy](#); 70.1% of our academic staff hold fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (23.6% above the sector average). demonstrating the commitment of the institution and its staff to the quality of learning and teaching. Staff, students and external stakeholders are part of our process of ensuring the maintenance of standards beginning at Student Voice Committee and moving ultimately through to Senate and Council. This begins with the rigorous processes of [Co-Design](#) before validation which confirms the details of the programme. Our processes of internal moderation and external examining ensure that marking is consistent and matched to assessment criteria. External Examiners are appointed after scrutiny beginning at School level and endorsed by Academic Committee and Senate. They are either highly experienced in this role, have engaged with the Advance HE professional development scheme or are required to undertake mentoring within a highly experienced team of Examiners. External Examiners are involved in all stages of our processes from curriculum and assessment design through to assuring the quality of final awards. Their feedback is considered carefully at School and University level in order to assure ourselves that awards are achieved through fair application of [Liverpool Hope Regulations and Conventions](#) and are aligned to national expectations

in line with other providers. Liverpool Hope has carefully reviewed its [Quality Handbook: External Examining](#) in light of the 2022 UKSCQA guidance document to ensure full compliance.

Liverpool Hope is confident of the standards of its awards. We continue to invest in physical and technical resources to ensure our campus offers a high-quality student experience. The i3 building, opening in 2024, reflects this commitment with state of the art teaching spaces and learning environments. As for other Institutions we are mindful of the risk posed to academic standards by misconduct and in particular the significant and emerging challenges posed by third party misconduct. The University has taken steps to revise assessment types focusing on authentic tasks where students are carefully advised on appropriate use/ or not of artificial intelligence. Our academic misconduct policy details the severity of penalties for third-party misconduct however we recognise the need to embrace artificial intelligence appropriately; simply stamping this out will not be possible.

Aside from the growth in artificial intelligence, the University recognises the need to ensure that students are supported in achieving a high-quality outcome following graduation. We continue to work closely with employers and professional bodies to ensure our portfolio meets the needs of the external arena in a challenging employment market. As a community with a high proportion of students from low participation and high deprivation areas we are also concerned by the challenges that the ongoing cost of living crisis presents. Our aim is to ensure that students experience and outcomes is not poorer because of the need to decide between engagement with their studies and taking paid employment. Support for students who find themselves in financial difficulty has therefore been increased and other schemes to ensure our students wellbeing at this time have been extended.

*The Degree Outcomes statement was first produced by Liverpool Hope in July 2020; this statement was updated in July 2024 to reflect current student achievement and to update on good practice and institutional risks as required.*