



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

LSE DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT

2 DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT

Executive Summary Heading

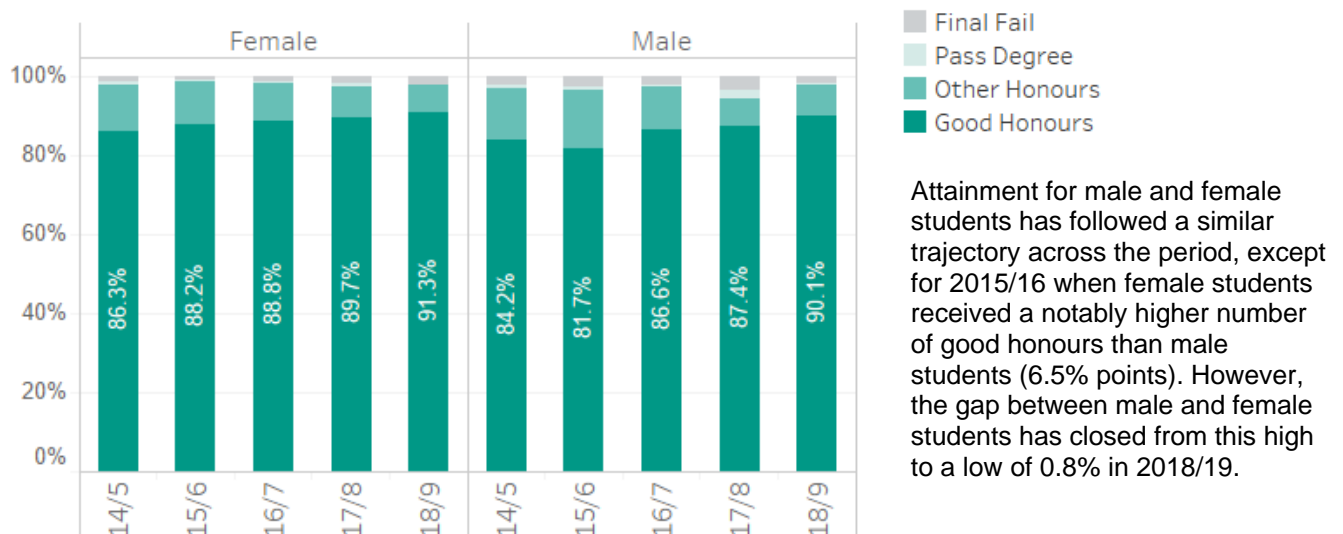
The purpose of this statement is to articulate how the London School of Economics and Political Science meets the Expectations of the [Quality Code for Higher Education](#) that relate to protecting the value of qualifications and the Office for Students' ongoing [conditions of registration](#) on academic standards (B4 and B5). The statement covers final classifications for graduates on Level 6 of the [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#) for the academic years 2014/15 to 2018/19.

1 Institutional Degree Classification Profile

LSE recruits students with the very best academic merit and potential, irrespective of their background, to a range of highly selective undergraduate degree programmes. The last five years has seen an average of 21.5% of applicants receiving an offer, with just under 9% of applicants taking up a place at LSE. With high entry requirements (typically ranging from A*AA to AAB as expressed in A Level qualifications) LSE aims to equip already high performing students with the insights and skills they need to become independent thinkers, critical investigators, and the thought-leaders of tomorrow. Over the period in question LSE has awarded an average of 87.4% good honours (First class or Upper Second class).

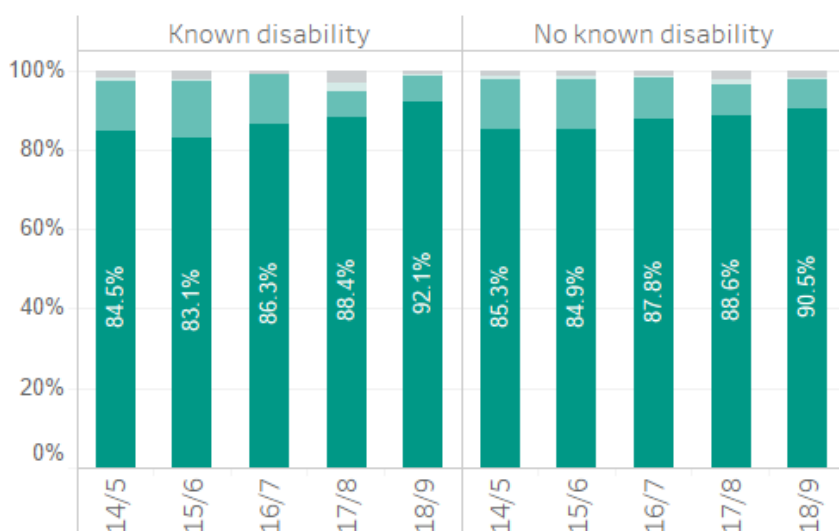
Year	Headcount	Final Fail	Pass degree	Other Honours	Good Honours
2014/15	1,243	1.7%	0.8%	12.3%	85.2%
2015/16	1,389	1.6%	0.6%	13.0%	84.7%
2016/17	1,535	1.4%	0.5%	10.4%	87.7%
2017/18	1,496	2.3%	1.5%	7.6%	88.6%
2018/19	1,541	1.7%	0.2%	7.4%	90.7%

The degree classification profile by student characteristic displays some wider variation in outcomes.





LSE's [Access and Participation Plan](#) sets out how LSE will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education. This plan, combined with a newly launched [Inclusive Education Action Plan](#), demonstrates LSE's commitment to close grade awarding gaps that have been identified for different student groups, in particular Black and minority ethnic (BME) students. However, as can be seen here, progress has already been made in terms of students achieving good honours, with the gap closing to 4.4% in 2018/19 from a high of 10.3% in 2016/17. BME good honours attainment in 2018/19 (89.0%) exceeded the average for the past five years for all students (87.4%).



With expertise in dealing with long term health conditions, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, mental health and specific learning difficulties, LSE's Disability and Wellbeing Service has helped bolster support for students with disabilities over the period in question. Alongside work in academic departments and other divisions, this support has contributed to improved outcomes for disabled students as can be seen by LSE closing of the attainment gap in 2018/19.

LSE's institutional degree classification profile by subject, below, displays a range for good honours from 75.2% for business and management (2015/16) to 98.2% for politics (2018/19). Business and management (80.7%), economics (83.8%) and mathematical sciences (78.0%) are the only subject areas below 90% good honours on average over the five-year period, with mathematical sciences surpassing 82% in 2018/19.

Subject (CAH2)	Year	Good Honours		Other Honours		Pass Degree		Final Fail	
		FPE	% FPE	FPE	% FPE	FPE	% FPE	FPE	% FPE
business and management	2014/15	145	79.0%	33	18.1%	<5	1.6%	<5	1.3%
	2015/16	155	75.2%	47	22.7%	<5	0.3%	<5	1.8%
	2016/17	182	80.9%	37	16.4%	<5	0.7%	<5	1.9%
	2017/18	171	82.9%	31	14.9%	<5	0.8%	<5	1.3%
	2018/19	197	85.3%	31	13.3%			<5	1.4%
economics	2014/15	292	81.2%	58	16.1%	<5	0.8%	7	1.9%
	2015/16	315	80.1%	68	17.3%	<5	1.0%	6	1.6%

4 DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT

Subject (CAH2)	Year	Good Honours		Other Honours		Pass Degree		Final Fail	
		FPE	% FPE	FPE	% FPE	FPE	% FPE	FPE	% FPE
economics	2016/17	352	83.5%	62	14.7%	<5	0.5%	5	1.3%
	2017/18	330	85.0%	41	10.6%	6	1.6%	11	2.8%
	2018/19	383	89.4%	40	9.4%			5	1.2%
geography, earth and environmental studies	2014/15	24	81.1%	<5	12.2%			<5	6.7%
	2015/16	51	93.3%	<5	6.7%				
	2016/17	47	90.6%	<5	8.4%			<5	1.0%
	2017/18	49	92.2%	<5	5.0%			<5	2.8%
	2018/19	47	97.6%	<5	2.4%				
history and archaeology	2014/15	89	94.8%	<5	3.4%			<5	1.8%
	2015/16	86	96.4%	<5	3.0%			<5	0.6%
	2016/17	145	94.5%	6	3.8%			<5	1.6%
	2017/18	121	94.8%	<5	1.2%	<5	0.5%	5	3.5%
	2018/19	126	94.6%	5	3.9%			<5	1.5%
law	2014/15	170	95.2%	9	4.8%				
	2015/16	155	92.5%	11	6.3%			<5	1.2%
	2016/17	176	96.4%	7	3.6%				
	2017/18	167	96.3%	5	2.9%			<5	0.9%
	2018/19	171	96.1%	6	3.1%			<5	0.8%
mathematical sciences	2014/15	110	75.4%	30	20.5%	<5	2.7%	<5	1.4%
	2015/16	144	78.7%	32	17.6%	<5	2.2%	<5	1.5%
	2016/17	137	76.2%	33	18.5%	<5	2.3%	5	3.0%
	2017/18	158	77.6%	24	11.6%	13	6.5%	9	4.3%
	2018/19	135	82.1%	22	13.3%	<5	1.2%	6	3.4%
philosophy and religious studies	2014/15	35	89.6%	<5	7.8%			<5	2.6%
	2015/16	41	88.0%	<5	8.7%	<5	1.1%	<5	2.2%
	2016/17	48	95.0%	<5	5.0%				
	2017/18	50	96.2%	<5	2.9%			<5	1.0%
	2018/19	44	95.0%	<5	2.8%			<5	2.1%
politics	2014/15	120	94.4%	5	3.8%			<5	1.8%
	2015/16	134	95.8%	<5	2.9%			<5	1.3%
	2016/17	158	97.3%	<5	2.0%			<5	0.6%
	2017/18	162	96.4%	<5	2.0%	<5	0.8%	<5	0.8%
	2018/19	186	98.2%	<5	1.1%			<5	0.8%
sociology, social policy and anthropology	2014/15	76	86.4%	9	10.1%			<5	3.4%
	2015/16	98	88.1%	9	8.3%			<5	3.6%
	2016/17	103	93.2%	5	4.1%			<5	2.7%
	2017/18	117	94.5%	<5	3.5%			<5	2.0%
	2018/19	108	89.3%	6	5.1%	<5	0.8%	6	4.8%

Grade Awarding Gap analysis has been undertaken in academic year 2018. This work is being undertaken again in 2019/20 with a view to it being updated annually. However, due to the high proportion of international students at LSE, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, we have insufficient data to permit meaningful analysis of the relationship between prior student attainment and degree outcomes across the full cohort of students. Work until now has been limited to Home UK students. We are currently exploring how we might map international Level 3 qualifications to a common framework to permit such analysis in future, alongside reviewing approaches to articulating prior attainment for postgraduate students. This will

help facilitate further analysis of degree outcomes for our whole undergraduate student population and not just Home UK students. Further analysis of outcomes by entry requirements will be included in this statement when completed.

2 Assessment and Marking Practices

LSE's organisational structure enables an institution-level approach to assessment and marking practices including common degree-level academic regulations, classification schemes, assessment scrutiny procedures, appeals and misconduct policies and student-focused assessment policies (deferral, extensions, exceptional circumstances and individual adjustments) for all Level 6 awards; the only exception being a separate classification scheme for LLB awards.

A common regulatory framework, coupled with consistent and equitable treatment of students via standard assessment policies, helps ensure robust academic quality and standards. This is further supported by a common set of requirements for the appointment of internal examiners and institution-level policy on all aspects of the scrutiny and marking process, including three forms of agreed marking practice for summative assessment: double-blind marking; sighted double marking; and moderated single marking, involving a second examiner. All credit-bearing courses count towards the final degree and all components of assessment at all levels are subject to internal and external moderation.

LSE provides assurance through a range of quality assurance mechanisms, using the QAA's [FHEQ](#) and [Subject Benchmark Statements](#) (SBS) as reference points for validation processes for all taught provision, embedding threshold standards from the outset in course and programme design, alongside the use of externality at validation and periodic review events for all educational provision. All taught courses have an associated Virtual Learning Environment page in Moodle, where students can access detailed course specifications and assessment criteria. The oversight of assessment criteria is devolved to Academic Departments, with Department Teaching Committees exercising delegated authority to manage assessment practice and design in line with sector reference points and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements.

The FHEQ and SBS are also used as reference points in assessment scrutiny and ratification processes through the work of Internal and External Examiners, departmental Sub-Boards and School Boards of Examiners. External Examiners are a cornerstone of the scrutiny and ratification processes for all summative assessments at levels 4 to 6 of the FHEQ. External Examiners have consistently rated student learning as "excellent" or "of a high standard" in 99-100% of annual reports between 2017 and 2019 since this measure was introduced. External Examiners help assure that threshold academic standards are consistent with the relevant level descriptor set in the FHEQ and that the academic standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions. Furthermore, External Examiners and Sub-Boards of Examiners assure the institution that assessments are reliable, consistent, fair, and valid, and measure student achievement against the aims and intended learning outcomes of each degree programme.

3 Academic Governance

LSE's governance structure¹ enables the institution to provide assurance that the value of qualifications it awards over time is protected. It does this through a range of annual and periodic review and monitoring processes and reporting mechanisms, facilitating opportunity for academic, student and professional services scrutiny and feedback on a range of education measures including degree outcomes. Oversight of academic matters is the responsibility of Academic Board, Chaired by the LSE Director, with Education Committee, Chaired by the Pro-Director for Education, and its sub-committees taking the lead on assuring

¹ <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Secretarys-Division/Assets/Documents/Governance/StructSchGov-1-Feb-2019.pdf>

6 DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT

academic standards and quality through centralised validation and review processes and annual reporting of course and degree programme awards, external examiner reports, and appeals and complaints, alongside policy and regulatory changes in all matters relating to education and student experience.

Department-level Sub-Boards of Examiners and Department Teaching Committees ensure School-approved marking practices are followed at course and programme level, with institution-wide processes described in the Instructions for Examiners, including the appointment of Internal Examiners, Sub-Board Chairs and External Examiners, plus detailed information about the roles and responsibilities for each. A School Board of Examiners and a specific LLB Board of Examiners ratify all awards at Level 6, including consideration of all decisions to award based on the application of our Exceptional Circumstances policy or to discount attempts for example through a suspension of regulations for individual students. LSE also has a centralised process for the consideration of all applications for repeat teaching. LSE is the awarding body for all undergraduate degrees and classification algorithms calculate awards using results for courses delivered and assessed by LSE. Whilst LSE offers a small number of collaborative programmes at undergraduate level, these do not include credit-bearing provision delivered at partner institutions that counts towards the classification of LSE awards.

Recent developments in the assurance of outcomes relating to Access and Participation Plan targets, including to combat grade awarding gaps, are not reflected in changes to the classification profile. Nevertheless, internal monitoring of grade improvement over time at both course- and programme-level has demonstrated that outcomes are consistent with sector benchmarks, with LSE below sector averages for increases in the proportion of both 'good' degrees and first-class awards.

4 Classification Algorithms

LSE has had the same two institution-level classification schemes for all three-year Level 6 awards throughout the period in question, with the only substantive addition being the introduction of a four-year scheme when LSE introduced its PPE programme in 2015-16². The algorithm used by the scheme covering 95% of three-year undergraduate programmes, as described below, has been in place since 1995. Changes made to the classification scheme in 2007/8 to change the Pass mark from 35% to 40% and remove 'plussing', and in 2018/19 due to the introduction of in-year resits for first year undergraduate students, do not impact outcomes considered by this statement. Longitudinal analysis of degree outcomes will be completed when the revisions to the scheme made in 2018/19 have been in place for a full cohort (3 years), with active monitoring arrangements in place for annual review. The implementation of in-year resits introduced capping at Pass (40%) for resits in line with sector norms and changed the algorithm to use classification marks rather than course units as the unit of calculation. However, the preponderance principle previously applied remains in use.

The algorithm for all [three-year BA and BSc programmes](#) is based on the following principles:

- A student will only be eligible for the award of a degree if they have attempted every component of assessment for all courses required by their Programme Regulations i.e. all summative assessments set out in the course guides must be completed.
- All years of an undergraduate degree count towards the final classification, which uses a preponderance principle to calculate final outcomes.
- Awards are calculated using an average of the best six out of eight classification marks (equivalent to 90 credits) in Year One (Level 4 of the FHEQ), plus all sixteen classification marks (equivalent to 240 credits) in Years Two and Three (Level 5 and 6 of the FHEQ)³.

² <http://www.lse.ac.uk/resources/calendar/undergraduate.htm> - see the four-year scheme for PPE awards.

³ LSE does not currently use a credit framework, although developing one is part of our [LSE 2030](#) strategy. The description of our algorithm includes reference to UK credits to facilitate comparison with [UK credit norms](#).

- Students have three available attempts in total for all courses taken in Year One, and two attempts in total for all courses taken in Years Two and Three. Only the first attempt is uncapped, with subsequent attempts at resit capped at Pass.
- LSE does not apply zones of consideration or automatic uplifts for borderline cases, although borderline cases with Exceptional Circumstances are reviewed by Sub-Boards, with proposals to suspend regulations to award a higher classification or additional attempts considered on a case by case basis by the School Board of Examiners. Exceptional Circumstances for finalists are normally considered only for candidates whose mark profile places them within a borderline range for the next classification threshold.

In addition to the main scheme described above, LSE has a specific scheme for the Bachelor of Laws (LLB) which applies to an average of 12.4% of students each year over the period in question and has been in place since 2007/8. The Bachelor of Laws programme is accredited by the Bar Standards Board for the purpose of a qualifying law degree, although this is in transition due to the introduction of the new post-degree Solicitors Qualifying Exam. For the period in question, the LLB algorithm⁴ is based on the following principles:

- A student will only be eligible for the award of a degree if they have attempted every component of assessment for all courses required by their Programme Regulations, i.e. all summative assessments set out in the course guides must be completed.
- For the purpose of determining classification marks only, the marks obtained for each pair of half-unit courses should be combined and averaged.
- Years Two and Three of an LLB degree count towards the final classification, which uses a preponderance principle to calculate final outcomes.
- Awards are calculated using all four marks of the full subjects taken for Year Two (equivalent to 120 credits at Level 5 of the FHEQ) and all four marks of the full subjects taken for Year Three of the Degree (equivalent to 120 credits at Level 6 of the FHEQ).
- Students have three available attempts in total for all courses taken in each year of study. For the purpose of classification resits are capped at Pass (40%).
- The same principles apply to the consideration of borderline cases with Exceptional Circumstances as described above.

5 Teaching Practices and Learning Resources

LSE has invested heavily in education and student experience in recent years, with consecutive institutional strategies, mostly recently [LSE 2030](#), focused on enhancing LSE's educational tradition, improving the experience our taught students and better preparing them for the increasingly complex and challenging world into which they will graduate.

Having completed a £25m award winning Student Centre in 2014, LSE has embarked on a major capital programme at a cost of over £350m to upgrade and remodel the public realm and existing space; and to create two new, state-of-the-art buildings for departments, teaching and extra-curricular activities, including additional sports facilities and arts rehearsal rooms. A new state of the art flexible and highly sustainable academic and teaching building opened in 2019. The School's [Library](#), the British Library of Political and Economic Science, is a unique asset for LSE students. It is one of the five national research libraries, providing students with virtually unlimited access to its collection of over 4 million items as well as the full range of its 79,000 electronic journals, 52,000 e-books and over 200 online datasets. It also provides a

⁴ See pages 35-39 of the School regulations document: <https://info.lse.ac.uk/Staff/Divisions/Academic-Registrars-Division/Teaching-Quality-Assurance-and-Review-Office/Assets/Documents/Calendar/SchoolRegs18-19.pdf>

8 DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT

separate collection of 40,000 books which are listed as essential reading on courses. The Library saw 2.48 million LSE student visits during 2018/19 alone. [LSE LIFE](#), which opened in October 2016, also offers students a single source of study support and brings educational and institutional research to bear on improving individual student learning.

Alongside vastly improved learning resources, student learning unfolds within an institutional culture that recognises and rewards effective teaching. Educational contribution is an integral part of consideration for academic promotion at LSE. The School's New Academic Career Track, introduced in 2013, requires promotion cases to demonstrate outstanding research, citizenship, and educational contributions. In addition, in 2016 we introduced an Education Career Track (ECT) with titles of equivalent esteem (Assistant Professorial Lecturer, Associate Professorial Lecturer, Professorial Lecturer) and the same pay scales as other academic staff. This career track allows departments to employ academics whose primary responsibility is for the delivery, management, and leadership of outstanding educational provision.

LSE's [Eden Centre](#) is a developmental centre of education expertise with a clear focus on academic staff development, curriculum enrichment and digital innovation. Created by the merger of the Teaching and Learning Centre and Learning, Technology, and Innovation in 2019, the Eden Centre works at both strategic and operational levels to enable education enhancement. The Eden Centre delivers a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education accredited by the UK Higher Education Academy which is available to both new members of faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistants, as well as the [Atlas programme](#) of events and opportunities for academic staff to develop their teaching. Alongside support for GTAs, academic mentors, and student research opportunities, the Eden Centre is at the forefront of educational development at LSE.

Educational research has demonstrated that the way students approach their studies is profoundly shaped by the approach to assessment on their courses and programmes. Research carried out by LSE Students' Union in 2016⁵ demonstrated strong support for assessment diversification and consequently LSE made a strategic decision to promote greater diversity of assessment methods and move away from closed book end-of-year exams. Since 2017 the % of taught UG and PGT courses featuring an exam has fallen from 68.8% to 46.6%. Alongside the more recent introduction of in-year resits and the aforementioned enhancement of learning resources and teaching practices, LSE's strategic approach to teaching, learning and assessment has evolved significantly during the period in question to create a more inclusive and diverse framework in which to enable students from all backgrounds and on all programmes of study to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

⁵ [https://www.lsesu.com/pageassets/campaigning/student-reps/Education-Covenant-paper-2016\(4\).pdf](https://www.lsesu.com/pageassets/campaigning/student-reps/Education-Covenant-paper-2016(4).pdf)



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Teaching Quality Assurance & Review Office
The London School of Economics
and Political Science
Houghton Street
London WC2A 2AE

Email: t.w.hewlett@lse.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7955 6387



lse.ac.uk/TQARO

The London School of Economics and Political Science is a School of the University of London. It is a charity and is incorporated in England as a company limited by guarantee under the Companies Acts (Reg no 70527).

The School seeks to ensure that people are treated equitably, regardless of age, disability, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation or personal circumstances.

Design: LSE Design Unit (lse.ac.uk/designunit)
Photography: Nigel Stead, LSE School Photographer.