



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

LSE DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT

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Executive Summary Heading

The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) is an autonomous Higher Education provider holding university title and degree awarding powers under the [Higher Education and Research Act 2017](#). As an autonomous degree awarding body LSE is responsible for setting and maintaining the academic standards and quality of its academic provision in accordance with the Office for Students' ongoing [conditions of registration](#) and with reference to sector recognised standards and the Expectations of the [Quality Code for Higher Education](#) that relate to protecting the value of qualifications. The statement is about final degree classifications for UK-domiciled and international students at Level 6 of the [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#) (FHEQ) for the academic years 2016/17 to 2020/21.

Please note that this statement includes data up to and including the 2020/21 academic year. It therefore includes data that may have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and the implementation of a suite of emergency measures reflecting LSE's 'No Disadvantage' policy.

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. For the 2020/21 academic year LSE received 12.8 applications per undergraduate place. 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.

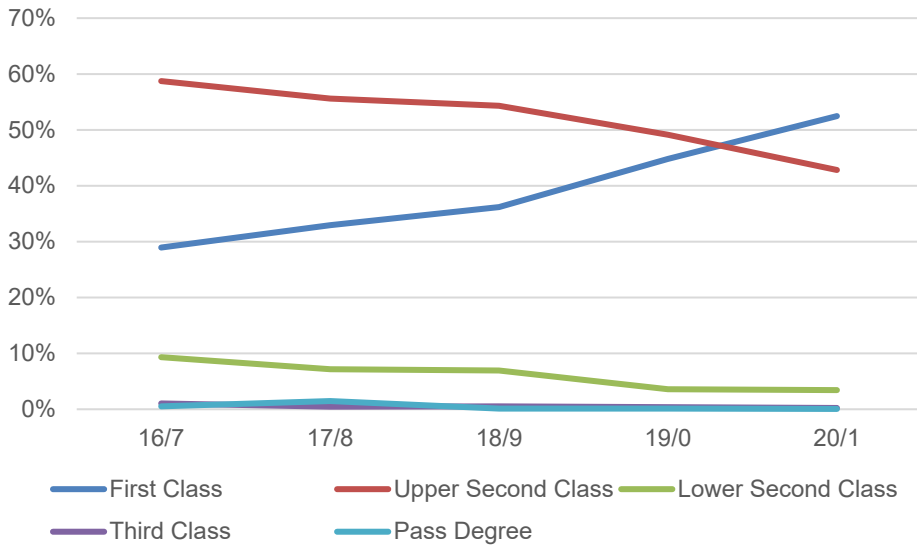
As shown in Table 1, over the period in question LSE has awarded an average of 91.2% 'good honours' (First Class or Upper Second Class).

Table 1: Degree awards for UK-domiciled and international students at Level 6 of the FHEQ – Honours

Year	Grand Total	Good Honours		Other Honours		Pass Degree		Final Fail	
	Headcount	Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
16/7	1,534	1,345	87.7%	159	10.4%	8	0.5%	22	1.4%
17/8	1,496	1,325	88.6%	114	7.6%	23	1.5%	34	2.3%
18/9	1,545	1,398	90.5%	115	7.4%	3	0.2%	29	1.9%
19/0	1,616	1,518	93.9%	64	4.0%	2	0.1%	32	2.0%
20/1	1,721	1,640	95.3%	63	3.7%	1	0.1%	17	1.0%

Chart 1 below displays the data by Honours group broken down to degree Class. Across the period in question the proportion of Second Class awards has declined, whilst the proportion of First Class awards has increased.

Chart 1: Degree outcomes for UK-domiciled and international students at Level 6 of the FHEQ - Degree Class



The degree classification profile by demographic groups displays some wider variation in outcomes.

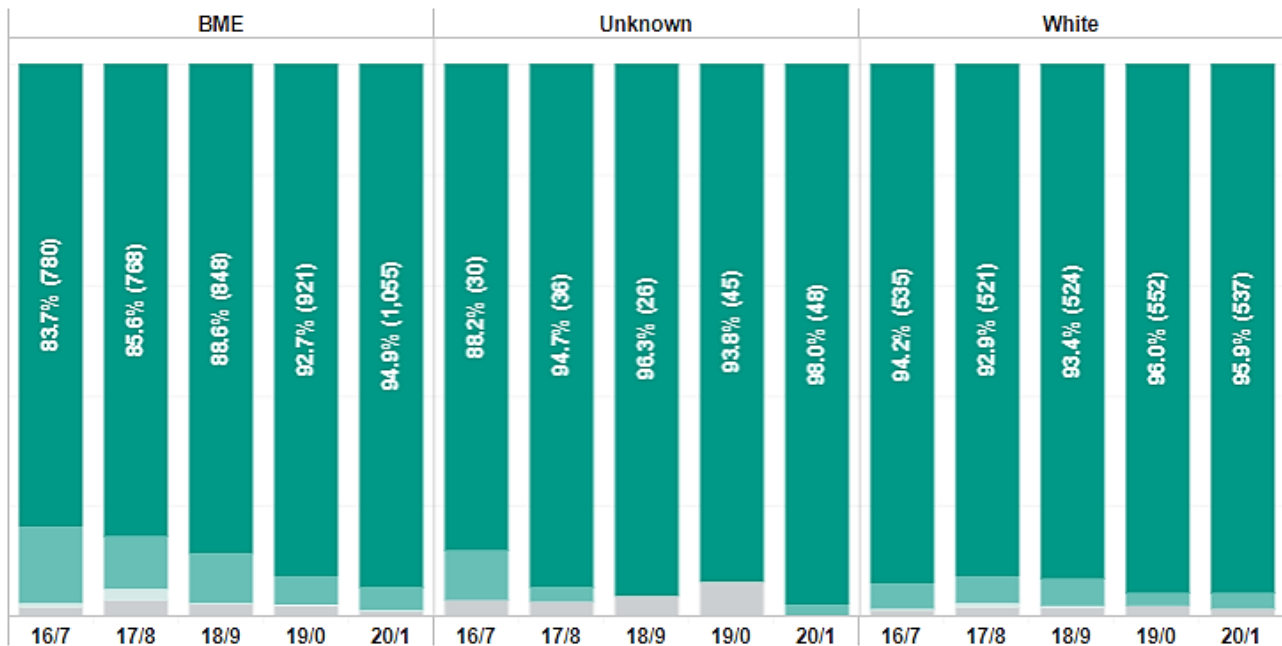
Chart 2: Degree awards by demographic groups - Gender



Attainment for female and male students has followed a similar trajectory across the period, with the proportion of good honours increasing by 7.7 and 7.6 percentage points respectively. However, the gap between female and male students remains at the same level in 2020/21 (2.2%) as in 2016/17, with more female students achieving good honours than their male counterparts. This is despite a low of a 1.3% gap in 2018/19.

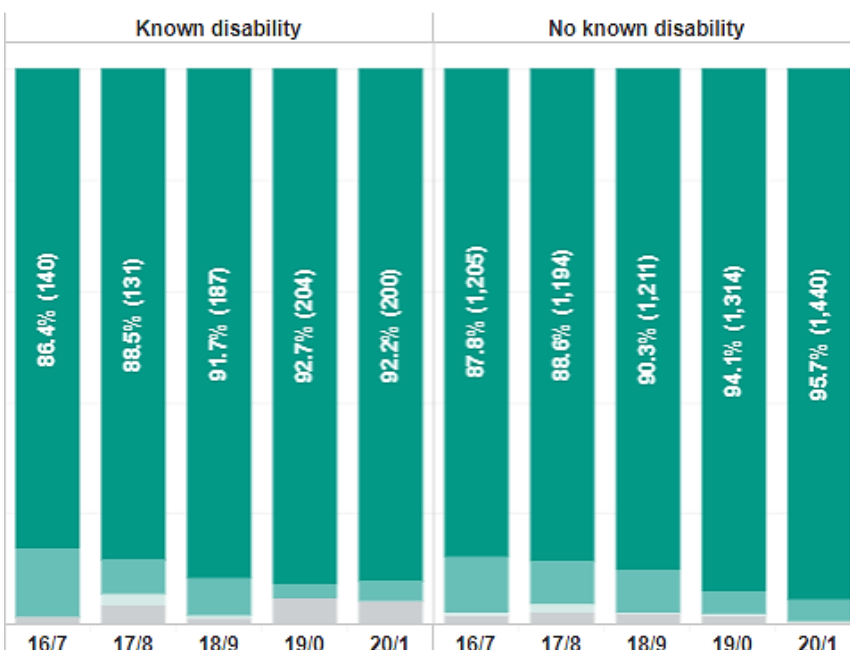
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Chart 3: Degree awards by demographic groups - **Ethnicity**



LSE's [Access and Participation Plan](#) for 2020/21 to 2024/25, including the 2023/24 Variation, 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 our [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. As can be seen here, good progress has been made in terms of students achieving good honours, with the gap closing to 1.0% in 2020/21 from a high of 10.5% in 2016/17. While good honours for White students has increased marginally across the period by 1.7 percentage points, BME students have seen a 11.2% increase over the same period.

Chart 4: Degree awards by demographic groups - **Disability**



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 contributed to improved outcomes for disabled students as can be seen by LSE closing the attainment gap in 2018/19. However, as can be seen in Chart 4, the last two years have seen the gap widen to 3.5% in 2020/21, from a negative gap of -1.4% in 2018/19. Work is underway to understand the fluctuation in outcomes for disabled students.

LSE's institutional degree classification profile by subject can be seen in Table 2 below and displays a range of good honours from 76.7% for mathematical sciences (2016/17) to 99.0% for geography, earth and environmental studies (2020/21). Business and management (87.4%), economics (89.3%) and mathematical sciences (82.9%) are the only subject areas below 90% good honours on average over the five-year period, with all three subject areas surpassing 90% by 2020/21.

Table 2: Degree awards by **Subject**

Subject (CAH2)	Year	Good Honours		Other Honours		Pass Degree		Final Fail	
		FPE	% FPE	FPE	% FPE	FPE	% FPE	FPE	% FPE
Business and management	16/7	182	80.9%	37	16.4%	2	0.7%	4	1.9%
	17/8	171	82.9%	31	14.9%	2	0.8%	3	1.3%
	18/9	197	84.9%	31	13.2%			4	1.9%
	19/0	235	93.9%	10	4.1%			5	2.0%
	20/1	289	94.5%	16	5.1%			1	0.3%
Economics	16/7	350	83.4%	62	14.8%	2	0.5%	5	1.3%
	17/8	330	85.0%	41	10.6%	6	1.6%	11	2.8%
	18/9	383	89.4%	40	9.4%			5	1.2%
	19/0	413	93.6%	21	4.8%	0	0.1%	7	1.5%
	20/1	450	95.3%	20	4.2%			2	0.5%
Geography, earth and environmental studies	16/7	44	91.4%	4	7.6%			1	1.0%
	17/8	49	92.2%	3	5.0%			2	2.8%
	18/9	47	97.6%	1	2.4%				
	19/0	50	93.4%	3	4.7%			1	1.9%
	20/1	48	99.0%	1	1.0%				
History and archaeology	16/7	145	94.5%	6	3.8%			3	1.6%
	17/8	121	94.8%	2	1.2%	1	0.5%	5	3.5%
	18/9	126	94.2%	6	4.6%			2	1.1%
	19/0	127	95.0%	3	2.4%			4	2.6%
	20/1	119	95.6%	1	0.8%			5	3.6%
Law	16/7	175	96.4%	7	3.6%				
	17/8	167	96.3%	5	2.9%			2	0.9%
	18/9	171	96.1%	6	3.1%			2	0.8%
	19/0	159	96.1%	5	2.7%			2	1.2%
	20/1	171	98.3%	2	1.1%			1	0.6%
Mathematical sciences	16/7	143	76.7%	34	18.2%	4	2.2%	5	2.9%
	17/8	158	77.6%	24	11.6%	13	6.5%	9	4.3%
	18/9	135	81.3%	22	13.1%	2	1.2%	7	4.3%
	19/0	176	88.4%	15	7.6%	2	0.8%	6	3.2%
	20/1	186	90.4%	16	7.9%	1	0.5%	3	1.3%
Philosophy and religious studies	16/7	48	95.0%	3	5.0%				
	17/8	50	96.2%	2	2.9%			1	1.0%
	18/9	44	95.0%	1	2.8%			1	2.1%
	19/0	52	97.2%	2	2.8%				
	20/1	54	96.4%	1	0.9%			2	2.7%

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Subject (CAH2)	Year	Good Honours		Other Honours		Pass Degree		Final Fail	
		FPE	% FPE	FPE	% FPE	FPE	% FPE	FPE	% FPE
Politics	16/7	158	97.3%	3	2.0%			1	0.6%
	17/8	162	96.4%	3	2.0%	1	0.8%	1	0.8%
	18/9	186	98.2%	2	1.1%			2	0.8%
	19/0	195	97.6%	2	1.1%			3	1.3%
	20/1	196	96.7%	5	2.3%			2	1.0%
Sociology, social policy and anthropology	16/7	102	93.3%	4	4.0%			3	2.7%
	17/8	117	94.5%	4	3.5%			3	2.0%
	18/9	108	88.6%	6	5.0%	1	0.8%	7	5.6%
	19/0	111	93.2%	4	2.9%			5	3.9%
	20/1	127	96.5%	3	2.0%			2	1.5%

Analysis of degree outcomes at School, programme and course level, as well as for different demographic groups and subjects is conducted on a rolling basis as part of LSE's monitoring of academic quality and standards. Work is ongoing to understand the impact of the pandemic on degree outcomes, as well as to expand our understanding of unexplained increases in good honours and other longitudinal trends in grade awarding gaps for different groups of students.

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 2021 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.

LSE's response to COVID-19

The School adopted a '**No Disadvantage**' approach to setting fair, academically robust assessment for students which impacted 2019/20 and 2020/21 assessments, marking and awards. This holistic approach involved a review and revision of existing practices, procedures and assessment modes in Spring 2020 to provide an equitable, accessible assessment approach for students and included: a redesign of all closed book exams and a review of associated marking criteria; more flexible evidence requirements for extensions, Exceptional Circumstances and a move to self-certified deferrals; a review of course-level mark distributions against historical data, with Internal Examiners given the ability to adjust marks upwards where significant negative deviation from historical averages was identified; and expanded borderline criteria for classifications.

3 Academic Governance

LSE's governance structure 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 Vice President and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education), and its sub-committees taking the lead on assuring academic standards and quality through centralised validation and review processes and annual scrutiny 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.

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 recent addition being the introduction of a four-year scheme when LSE introduced its four-year BSc in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) programme in 2015-16¹. The algorithm used by the scheme covering 95% of three-year undergraduate programmes was adjusted in 2018/19 due to the introduction of in-year resits, the implementation of capping at Pass (40%) for resits in line with sector norms, and the use of classification marks rather than course units as the unit of calculation. However, the preponderance principle previously applied remained 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 nine 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)².
- Calculations for the award of our four-year PPE programme follow the same principles but use all twenty-four classification marks (equivalent to 360 credits) in Years Two, Three and Four.
- 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). The Bachelor of Laws programme is accredited by the Bar Standards Board for the purpose of a qualifying law degree. The LLB algorithm 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.

¹ <http://www.lse.ac.uk/resources/calendar/undergraduate.htm> - see the three-year, four-year and LLB schemes.

² 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](#).

- 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](#), focussed 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.

LSE has embarked on a major capital programme at a cost of over £350m to upgrade and remodel the public realm and existing space, building two new, state-of-the-art buildings for departments, teaching and extra-curricular activities, including additional sports facilities and arts rehearsal rooms. Two new state of the art flexible and highly sustainable academic and teaching buildings opened in 2019 and 2022. 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 separate collection of 40,000 books which are listed as essential reading on courses. [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. Bookings for all LSE LIFE workshops were 14,357 from 2,821 individual students during the 2020/21 academic year.

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 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

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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. LSE has undergone a transformational process of change within its assessment practices kickstarted by an undergraduate programme review in 2017 which initiated a new programme design approach to assessment and encouraged the diversification of assessment. The central objective has been to ensure that our students are developing a balanced and broad spectrum of skillsets in line with the disciplinary and professional skills learning outcomes on their degree programmes. Working in partnership with students, programme teams have been working to design an appropriate mix of methods of assessment across our degree programmes to ensure that our students develop the disciplinary knowledge and skills and had opportunities to apply these in different contexts alongside key employability attributes that equip them to enter the world of work. Students now experience a broader range of different assessments designed to develop and test a diverse range of skills and knowledges.

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 learn lessons from the adjustments made to teaching delivery and assessment during the pandemic, and to create a more inclusive and diverse framework to enable students from all backgrounds and on all programmes of study to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.



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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.

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