



**University of
East London**

Pioneering Futures Since 1898

Degree Outcomes Statement 2022

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University of East London

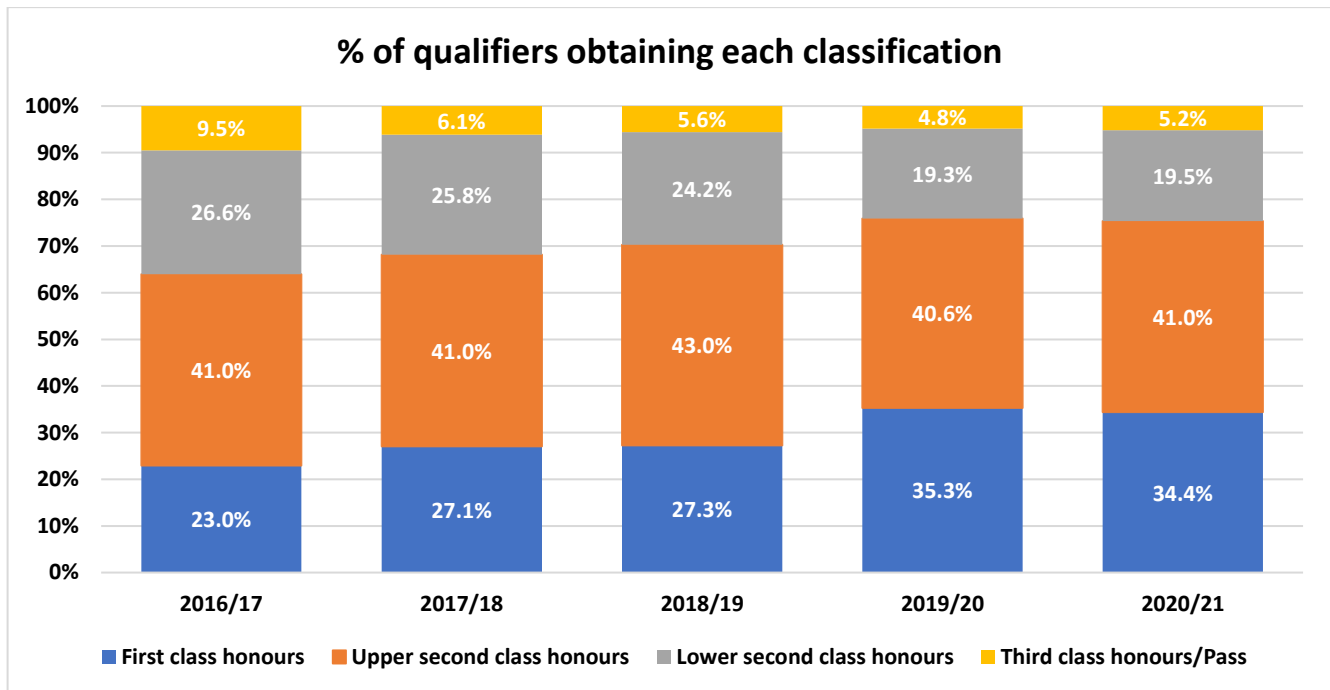
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1. Institutional degree classification profile

The University of East London (UEL) degree classification profile is shown in the table below. For consistency and transparency UEL uses a universal classification system across all subjects.



Source: HeidiPlus HESA Student Qualifiers FPE v1, all students

UEL has seen an improvement in 'good honours' outcomes (upper second and first class) over the last 5 years. 2020/21 data shows the award of good honours degrees to be 75.4% with 34.4% at First class. This is lower than the sector average of 82.1% with 36% at First Class. Trends at subject level are largely in line with those at institutional level. The continued improvements in outcomes are driven through the ambitious and transformational Vision 2028, our 10-year strategic plan, and include improvements in standards, academic support for students and enhancements in learning and teaching and our work to close awarding gaps.

The degree awarding gap between our White and Global Ethnic Majority (GEM) identifying students stands at 11.4% at the end of 2022 (from 21.1% in 2018/19). It is a strategic goal to eliminate this gap entirely by 2028. Gender data has converged for the last 5 years though in 2020/21 a small gap of 4.2% opened, with men awarded more good honours degrees. Age data shows that for students aged 21 or over, the gap has closed to the point where there is no statistical difference in outcomes data for the last 3 years. Our entry tariffs have risen over this period, and we have seen students with higher entry points go on to better degree outcomes.

In 2019/20 we introduced a new Vision 2028 Academic Framework developed in partnership with key employers to enhance student outcomes. The framework includes a University-wide focus on equipping our students with future facing human skills including soft skills such as emotional intelligence and resilience, in addition to practical competencies, such as digital proficiency, and industry connectivity. We know from our wide-ranging research and consultation that these are the skills and attributes that every graduate will need, no matter what their onward career path is, to access, participate and flourish and thrive in a 4.0 and 5.0 economy. We have placed these skills at the heart of every one of our degrees, through the inclusion of a specialist [Mental Wealth & Professional Fitness module](#) at each level accompanied by integration of core

competency areas in every module to comprehensively embed the key skills and competencies our students will need to successfully engage with the graduate job market.

Our provision of teaching, learning and assessment through the pandemic resulted in the launch of a student-centred educational delivery framework:

- i. For the year 2020/21, our *Dual Delivery Educational Framework* was launched which ensured that all students had access to a rich educational experience, regardless of their location
- ii. This was developed further into Dual Delivery 2.0 for 2021/22 to incorporate a focus on on-campus collaborative learning and inquiry
- iii. Most recently, for 2022/23, this student-centred model was further enhanced into [Technology Enhanced Active Learning](#) (TEAL) which builds on our expertise in the use of technology in the face-to-face classroom, focusing on an active learning pedagogy.

2. Assessment and marking practices

We ensure that UEL assessment standards are in line with sector reference points. All learning outcomes on every module are assessed and students must meet the minimum threshold mark on every component of assessment. All module level learning outcomes map to programme level learning outcomes, and all components of assessment at all levels are subject to internal and external moderation.

The Assessment and Feedback Policy and associated Toolkit outline how assessment should be conducted, including marking, second marking, anonymity, resolving differences, tariffs and timescales. This is supported by assessment related policies and regulations such as the Extenuating Circumstances Policy, Academic Integrity Policy, Appeals Policy and Complaints Procedure. The Assessment and Feedback Policy and accompanying Assessment Toolkit are reviewed regularly. They are designed to operate within the inclusive culture of UEL, encourage and ensure fairness, consistency and clarity and support flexible, subject-specific authentic assessment.

Assessment practices that have an impact on degree outcomes have developed over time in line with sector norms. For instance, in response to external examiner feedback there is greater emphasis on the use of the full range of marks and marking rubrics that allow for marking in the full range.

All newly validated or revalidated courses must provide evidence that they meet the UEL Quality Criteria (Quality Manual Part 4) and meet external benchmarks such as QAA Subject Benchmark Statements, FHEQ and all relevant PSRBs. Internal scrutiny through the School Quality Committee and external scrutiny through External Advisors is always required where new learning outcomes are being approved.

External Examiners are appointed in line with the criteria in the Quality Manual Part 9 and provide assurance that assessment tasks measure learning outcomes and standards effectively. Academic Review processes, which include scrutiny by External Advisors, check periodically that the standards set within learning outcomes and the assessments meet internal and external expectations on an ongoing basis (Quality Manual Part 8).

3. Academic governance: maintaining the value of degrees over time

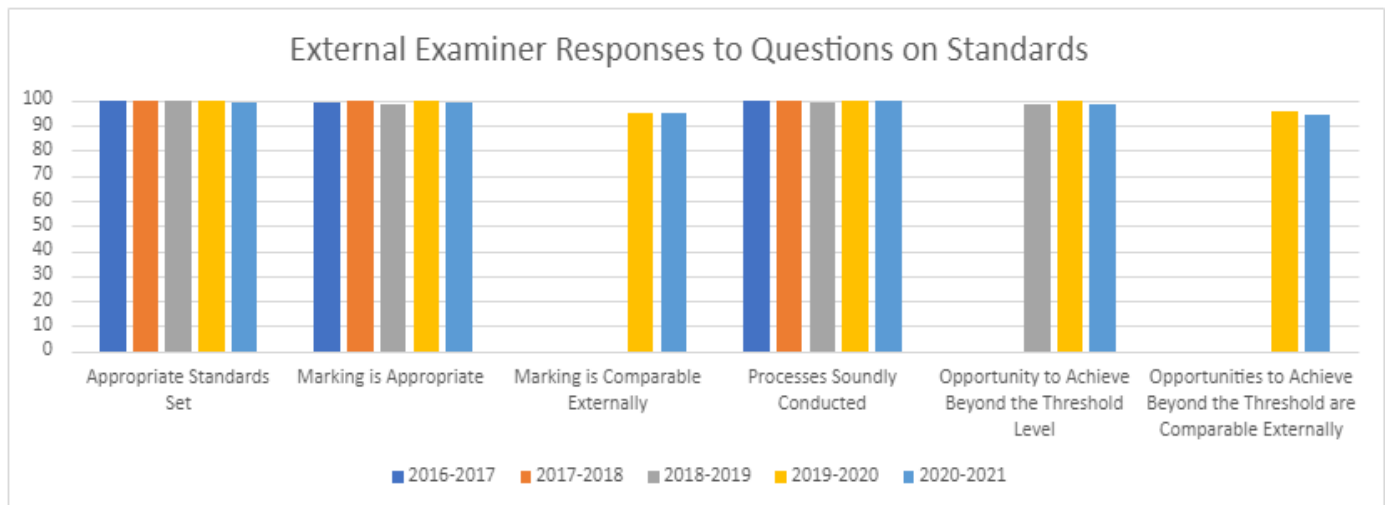
Assuring standards

Around 270 External Examiners appointed to UEL's External Examining System moderate every component of assessment at every level (Quality Manual Part 9 and the Assessment and Feedback Policy). Their reports demonstrate consistency of marking and assessment practice.

Lead Examiners are appointed to Assessment Boards to ensure processes and regulations are followed. This demonstrates that UEL has maintained consistently high assessment standards over an extensive period.

An annual overview report on External Examiners is submitted to the Education and Experience Committee (EEC) and ratified by Academic Board. A subsequent action plan is monitored by EEC throughout the year.

These processes apply equally to UEL and our collaborative academic partner organisations.



Monitoring and reviewing degree outcomes

Degree outcomes are monitored through the Continual Monitoring Process (Quality Manual Part 7). School level reports are summarised in an overview report submitted to EEC and ratified by Academic Board. Review of our Collaborative Partners includes the monitoring of degree outcomes as part of an annual reporting cycle equivalent to the on-campus process (Quality Manual Part 7).

Departments are periodically reviewed on a six yearly basis and partners on a five-yearly basis (Quality Manual Part 8 and 11). Reviews provide further scrutiny of standards over time and an opportunity for reflection and analysis regarding the outcomes of students. Students are engaged throughout these processes via the Course Committees and through student representation on university committees and review panels. We scrutinise feedback and comments from our External Examiners, PSRB Reviews, Periodic Departmental Academic Reviews, and students through surveys at module and course level, and regular Course Committees as part of our continuous improvement and enhancement process.

4. Classification algorithms

To avoid individual bias, we have taken subjective decision making out of the classification process; an algorithm combines marks into a classification. With our student entry profiles in mind, we measure attainment towards the end of the degree; more final year credit is counted toward the classification, and it is given more weight.

We use a 'best of' approach when selecting the credit for inclusion. This mitigates against the disproportionate impact of capping, where a student has only failed in one or two module components. Assessment Boards check the correct credit has been achieved for the award and in accordance with our regulations.

Regulations that impact on degree outcomes

Regulations are under constant review and published in our [Manual of General Regulations Part 3](#). Updates to the regulations in previous years which impact on degree outcomes are:

- **Progression rules:** From 2014/15, progression rules clarified expectations about how students pass through the levels of study toward their final award.
- **Combined Studies:** From 2014/15, UEL removed the Combined Studies framework, to focus students' studies on completing named degree awards.
- **Continuous Assessment:** From 2019/20, students on 20 credit modules would undertake their resit within 6 weeks of the release of their marks. This replaced the previous system of 'in-year retrieval' which was based on in-year resits for 15/30 credit modules under the old academic framework. Resit marks are capped.
- **Borderline Cases:** There is no consideration given to borderline cases; there is a policy of rounding up to the nearest whole number, ensuring there is at least a 1% difference between pass and fail.
- **Module and Component Capping:** From 2014/15 to 2018/19, a student who passed a component at resit would either be capped at module or component level depending on the best outcome, from 2019/20 only module capping applies.
- **Late submission of Coursework:** From 2014/15, coursework submitted up to 24 hours late is deducted 5 marks.
- **Extenuation:** Rules regarding extenuation have not changed radically over time. However, after the introduction of progression rules, extenuation panels are mindful that students are no longer automatically entitled to further opportunities.
- **Extensions:** From January 2022, an extensions policy has been in use, which allows students to extend the deadline for their assessment under limited circumstances.

Impact of changes to regulations

In 2014/15 we introduced changes to our framework, moving to 30 credit year-long modules, away from multiple intakes and Combined Studies awards, and introducing progression rules. The intention was to build cohort identity, set clear expectations for progress, and facilitate additional formative assessment opportunities.

In 2019/20 we introduced changes to our 2014/15 academic framework, moving to 20 credit semester long modules. Alongside this, minor changes to the regulations and degree algorithm were made but key principles such as progression rules and early re-assessment have been maintained. An impact analysis using the 2018/19 outcome data showed no increase in student outcomes based on the algorithm alone, assuring us that any increase will be **via improvement rather than inflation**. Regulations will continue to be monitored to ensure outcomes for students are an accurate reflection of the standard they have achieved.

Regulations that help students avoid capped marks, such as late submission of coursework rules and the application of extenuating circumstances, may help to improve degree outcomes as it is less likely that capped modules will be counted in the overall average. Extenuation data shows that a greater proportion of claims are being accepted year on year with various factors contributing, such as interpretation of rules by extenuation panels, better advice given to students, higher quality claims provided by the students, and the impact of late submission rules. Extenuation is monitored through an annual overview report to Academic Board.

Both continuous assessment and the previous in-year retrieval system seek to respond to student demand for the opportunity to improve their assessment at the earliest available opportunity. Both systems result in capped marks so there is no direct difference in the impact on degree outcome as opposed to any other form of

reassessment, however our students have identified to us that the opportunity to focus on end of year assessments without the distraction of re-assessments will give them a better opportunity to focus on improving their first sit marks.

5. Teaching practices and learning resources

Factors impacting on improving outcomes for students

We have been focussing on continual improvement and outcomes for students, as embodied in Vision 2028. For instance, striving for continuous improvements in teaching quality and staff training, a greater move to assessment for learning together with engagement with developing pedagogy and research-informed teaching.

Investment in resources to support student learning, and curriculum development designed in partnership with employers and professional bodies provide a strong foundation for students' academic experience.

Supporting learning and teaching practices

- **The Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)** support and enhance technology enabled learning and blended learning so that academic colleagues can manage learning environments and respond to industry 4.0/5.0 demands. Through the transformational Flourishing Talent Framework, efforts focus on engaging academic staff in reflective discussions the UEL journey towards an inclusive and equitable University community. Reflective behaviour-led strategies feed into the culture that will enhance teaching, learning and assessment within the University and thus play a central role in improving UEL systems to guard against grade inflation.
- **The CREST Programme** is our CPD route to Fellowships of the Higher Education Academy. This allows staff to become part of a community of practice and to share and promote their innovative work. Reading groups encourage Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and reflective thinking, and a virtual writing circle provides a platform to share excellent practice and to peer review. Academic staff new to teaching are required to achieve HEA Fellowship which is incorporated into a PGCert in Learning and Teaching. Around 557 staff achieved HEA status through the scheme between 2015/16 and 2019/20 and more than 600 staff currently hold accreditation. Five of our staff have achieved National Teaching Fellow status illustrating sustained commitments to teaching excellence and highlights the expertise within the teaching team.

CELT also train Postgraduate Research Students to act as Teaching Assistants. Pre and post survey analysis shows that staff are likely or very likely to use knowledge gained from CELT workshops in their teaching and assessment.

Resources for learning and other types of focused support for students to achieve

- Our **Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle)** supports teaching with supplementary material such as quizzes and videos. It also embeds other platforms such as Microsoft Streams, our lecture and video capture platform; Kortext, an electronic core textbook per module; and LinkedIn Learning. These platforms and others are also utilised to induct and develop staff, and to support management systems that contribute to the development of teaching, learning, and assessment activities.
- Our **Careers & Student Enterprise** and **Student Engagement and Success** teams provide a service to all students but also target at risk students based on predictive analytics. They can identify initiatives that will improve outcomes, for example the 'MyFeedback' project: In 2020/21, My Feedback supported the majority of our students by providing with constructive feedback on their assignments. Student users of the service had an 11.5% uplift in continuation (source - Civitas analytics). Schemes such as Professional and Peer Mentoring, Internships, Career Coaching and Academic Tutoring in English and Math have seen

students who engage with these services show better progression rates than the institutional average, and the status within the predictive analytics system improved for 49% of the students. Overall the service is accessed by a higher proportion of younger (under 21) and BAME students compared to the overall student profile. Year on year the service has seen their engagement with the student population grow, for instance the academic writing team saw an 18% increase from 2017/18 to 2018/19 with 4,595 individual students seen. Students with better progression profiles are less likely to have to resit and have their marks capped or have the distraction of reassessment, leading to better overall outcomes.

- **Mental Wealth/Professional Fitness framework** – this is an innovative and holistic approach to embedded academic support that was introduced in 2019/2020 as part of the new academic framework which transformed the delivery model for academic support to foster student agency rather than dependency. Within this framework, to enhance each student’s career readiness, we have embedded our flagship Professional Fitness and Mental Wealth programme into our degrees, tailored to each subject discipline. This framework embeds modules developing eight core competencies into each year of every degree: Cognitive Intelligence, Community Connections, Cultural Intelligence, Digital Proficiency, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, Industry Connections, Physical Intelligence and Social and Emotional Intelligence.
- **The Student Engagement and Success team** also oversee the application of access funding (Access and Participation Plan). There were 26 funded initiatives in 2020/21, providing a range of holistic support for underrepresented groups including information, advice and guidance, mentoring, disability support, career coaching, bursaries, sports projects with local schools, academic tutoring, internships and work-based learning, and projects that develop the use of Technological Enhanced Learning across the University. During 2019-2020, their projects, initiatives and services engaged with over 35,000 students throughout the Access, Success and Progression phases of their student journey.
- **Library, Archives and Learning Services (LALS)** comprise two modern libraries, one at each campus, where students can choose when and how to engage with the facilities and services. Each library offers zoned spaces for collaborative, quiet and silent study. As many of the library services are delivered virtually as standard practice, such as, discovery (search), e-books, e-journals, databases, enquiries/chats, skills sessions, loans, renewals, account management, etc., there was a seamless pivot to fully online support when the library buildings closed in March 2020 due to the pandemic. Students continued to engage well with e-resources. In 2020/21, library users borrowed 15.3K physical items, significantly down from 47K the previous year due to the pandemic and full access to online teaching. Users downloaded 554K full-text journal articles, similar to the previous year, but accessed 1.4M e-book sections from 290K unique e-books. In addition, 79% of users engaged with their free e-textbook, an increase from 73% in the previous year. In 2019/20, the library team delivered 491 hours of information skills sessions to 7268 students with 290 one-to-one sessions. A key success measure is that 95% of those who attended the sessions (and provided feedback) were confident using their new skill after the sessions. Since 2018/19, however, there has been a 25% decrease in the number of students seen at one-to-ones, group training and inductions, with this demand impacted by student numbers. Conversely, there has been a marked increase in enquiries between 2018/19 to 2021/22, particularly due to the implementation of an online chat tool in 2020, with enquiry levels increasing 13% since 2020 / 21 specifically. This shift to online demand was impacted by the pivot to online teaching resulting from the pandemic. Student satisfaction with the library services between 2014/15 and 2019/20 scored between 85% and 90% on the NSS, with a decrease to 74% in 2020 due to sector-wide student concerns around moving to online teaching due to the pandemic.

- **The Student HUB** is a frontline service in operation since 2015/16 implemented to respond quickly and consistently to student enquiries. Internal surveys indicate that satisfaction with this service improved from 69% in 2015/16 to 93% in 2018/19. The HUB survey was paused after 2018/19 with the expectation of relaunching in 2022/23. The HUB handles 133,500 queries a year with 87% resolved at first touch. The team directs students to second line services, including making appointments and organising drop-in sessions. This service and second line services, such as Health and Wellbeing, Disability and Dyslexia, and the Student Money Advice and Rights Team, help student to resolve any difficulties, and their success means students are better equipped to progress to better degree outcomes.
- **UEL Sport**, since a major launch of Sporting facilities in 2012 UEL have grown our sporting provision. In 2020/21 there were 150 students studying with sports scholarships opposed to 28 in 2012/13. The university intends to conduct an analysis to ascertain whether the improvements in sporting provision has impacted on degree outcomes for the participants.

6. Covid-19 – Impact of pandemic

During the Covid-19 pandemic, in common with the sector, the University implemented measures to support students whilst maintaining academic standards and quality.

Alternative Assessment Regime during Covid

The University's Academic Board invoked its Extraordinary Circumstances Regulations for Assessment to enable staff to assess students' progress by alternative means. A comprehensive alternative assessment framework was developed in full consultation with our professional and statutory bodies, external examiners, Students' Union and other universities through the PFHEA network to ensure that assessments met their requirements and achieved the overall learning outcomes of validated courses. Academic Board also approved the implementation of the Extraordinary Circumstances arrangements in view of the impact of the public health crisis. In summary:

- Emergency regulations were approved and invoked by Academic Board, PSRBs and the Board of Governors.
- Dual Delivery was established as the method for course delivery and adjusted based on a Covid-19 operational tier system depending on the external requirements for full or partial campus closures but student access to essential university resources were maintained.
- Extenuating circumstances processes were extended to allow for automatic acceptance for students impacted by the pandemic.
- Methods of engagement with library services changed during the pandemic but satisfaction remained high.
- Engagement with online services increased. Examples include more students using the Career Zone platform (up 51%) and more students keeping their appointments with the UEL Health and Wellbeing team. The successful accessible and inclusive approaches are being maintained beyond the pandemic.

7. Identifying Innovative practices

As demonstrated through this Statement:

- We conduct regular review of regulations and policies to safeguard fairness and accurately measure standards.
- We have developed an innovative and award-winning Mental Wealth & Professional Fitness Framework to integrate employability and skills development into all of our degrees.
- We have introduced an innovative *Dual Delivery Educational Framework* that enabled all students to have access to a rich educational experience, regardless of their location. This was developed further into Dual Delivery 2.0 for 2021/22 to incorporate a focus on on-campus collaborative learning and inquiry and this student-centred model was further enhanced into [Technology Enhanced Active Learning](#) (TEAL) which builds on our expertise in use of technology in the face-to-face classroom, focusing on an active learning pedagogy.
- We have developed the '[Track My Future](#)' on-line University portal, not only providing full on-line access to all University services and resources, but also providing real-time data back to students on their engagement, assessment outcomes and career-readiness.
- There is widespread use of the full range of marks.
- Our practice of identifying students with support needs and directing them to the appropriate support offerings.
- We have responded to the changing way that students interact with library facilities and online learning technology.
- We are building communities of practice for staff to develop authentic and equitable assessment.

8. Areas for further development

We plan to:

- Continue to implement latest pedagogical philosophies in education to harness the learner journey and overall learning outcomes.
- Explore how to make degree outcomes easier to monitor for students such as creating an online degree calculator.
- Explore the impact of sporting activity and sports scholarships on degree outcomes for students.

9. Our commitment

We have not changed our degree algorithms and we continue in partnership with quality assurance, robust internal controls, and our national external assessment benchmarking to ensure we are assessing our students in line with higher education institutions in the UK. The improvement in our degree outcomes has developed alongside our pedagogy strategy, continued focus on academic support and our long-term investment into; teaching and learning, the student experience and raising the quality of our academic community.

However, we are never complacent, and committed to investing, adapting and providing our students and staff communities with the skills, resources and investment to achieve good honours degree outcomes based on improved performance by our students.

We commit to progressing relevant areas for further development identified in our previous Degree Outcomes Statements where they were paused during the pandemic. In addition, we will continue to use the UKSCQA Principles, implement our External Examining arrangements using the UKSQA External Examining Principles and report on these through our robust governance framework.

10. Scrutiny of this statement

UEL's Degree Outcomes Statement is the product of collaborative working between University Executive Board, Quality Assurance and Enhancement, UEL Students' Union, Student and Academic Services, the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, Careers & Student Enterprise, Student Engagement and Success, and Academic Colleagues. It was scrutinised by our Lead Examiners and considered at our Education and Experience Committee, approved by our Academic Board and the Board of Governors, and first published in June 2020. The statement was refreshed in 2021 and 2022.