UCQ UNIVERSITY CENTRE QUAYSIDE

Degree Outcomes Statement

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1. University Centre Quayside (UCQ)

Established in 1994, UCQ is a privately owned, financially robust, independent, boutique provider of further and higher education with approximately 35 staff and many years' experience delivering work-based learning provision. UCQ is a registered Higher Education Provider (HEP) with the Office for Students, a Department for Education contract holder, a Combined Authority devolved adult skills budget holder and a registered provider of apprenticeship training.

UCQ's vision is to be a leading provider of further and higher education in England. Its mission is to enable all students, staff and organisations with whom it works to achieve their potential.

2. Institutional degree classification profile

BA (Hons) Professional Management

Working with the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), employers and educators, UCQ was a participant on the management Trailblazer standards development groups and one of the first organisations to deliver the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA) Trailblazer. UCQ currently delivers one undergraduate programme: the Level 6 CMDA to levy and non-levy paying employers across England. The CMDA programme incorporates the BA (Hons) in Professional Management which was validated by The Open University on 1st December 2016 and revalidated on 1st December 2021 for a further five years.

UCQ does not exercise programme admissions based on UCAS points and instead considers the job role and experience of the applicant, typically in conjunction with their employer. UCQ believes recruitment efforts should encompass all types of learners from all types of backgrounds and should not be restricted to those who have chosen a traditionally academic route into higher education. UCQ believe in giving equal consideration to knowledge, skills and behaviours is the most effective and inclusive way of assessing students, and of the importance of reflective practice in the development of higher education work-based learning (HEWBL).

The BA (Hons) in Professional Management has been specifically designed to facilitate flexible, contextualised delivery with experiential learning. UCQ is employer and learner responsive, showing flexibility in delivery scheduling, location and course start dates. The organisation's commitment to flexible delivery has grown over the previous 5 years with further investment in the remote delivery model, initially in response to Covid-19. The OU validated programme is now delivered as a hybrid model, with online lectures, face-to-face induction and annual learning fair.

Graduate data

Table 1 Number of undergraduate student degree classifications awarded by year

Honours Classification					
	1st	**2.1**	**2.2**	**3rd**	**Total**
2025/26 (to date)	**5**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**
2024/25	19	18	10	2	49
2023-24	7	10	6	2	25
2022-23	2	7	2	0	11
2021-22	7	3	1	0	11
2020-21	5	4	1	0	10

Table 2 Graduate characteristic data

Year	**Number of graduates**	**Highest prior qual on entry**	**Disability (LLDD)**	**Ethnicity**
2025/26 graduates (to date)	**6**	**50% - Level 6** **17% - Level 5** **33% - Level 3**	**17% declared**	**17% Ethnic Minorities**
2024/25 graduates	49	4% - Level 7 10% - Level 6 14% - Level 5 14% - Level 4 33% - Level 3 25% - Other	6% declared	20% Ethnic Minorities
2023/24 graduates	25	8% - Level 7 20% - Level 6 12% - Level 5 4% - Level 4 28% - Level 3 28% - Other	8% declared	16% Ethnic Minorities
2022-23 graduates	11	9% - Level 7 36% - Level 6 18% - Level 5 9% - Level 4 27% - Level 3	18% declared	9% Ethnic Minorities
2021-22 graduates	11	36% - Level 7 36% - Level 6 18% - Level 5 10% - Level 3	0% declared	10% Ethnic Minorities
2020-21 graduates	10	10% - Level 7 10% - Level 6 10% - Level 4 60% - Level 3 10% - Other	0% declared	0% Ethnic Minorities

The first cohort of students graduated with the BA (Hons) Professional Management in 2020/21. The data in **Table 1** has been entered based on examination board data. This differs to data reported to the Higher Education Statistics Authority which is based on the higher education instance period end (the end of active structured learning and assessment for the degree component of the apprenticeship), as opposed to the formal ratification of awards during the exam board or the completion of the wider Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship.

In 2024/25, 49 students achieved the full BA (Hons) award. Of these, 39% achieved a First Class Honours, 37% an Upper Second Class Honours, 20% a Lower Second Class Honours and 4% a Third Class Honours. This is an increase in achievement from 2023/24, where 28% achieved First Class Honours, 40% achieved an Upper Second. Class Honours and 18% achieved a Lower Second Class Honours. The number of graduates in 2024/25 has increased two-fold . An Upper Second Class Honours continues to be the most frequently awarded grading classification.

The number of graduates from an ethnic minority background has increased from 16% in 2023/24 to 20% in 2024/25.

3. Assessment and marking practices

Meeting sector standards

The design, development and implementation of the BA (Hons) Professional Management has the intention of developing individuals and encouraging skills, knowledge and behaviours in keeping with both the typical expectations of a higher education student and that of a professional employee within their job role. Upon graduating with the BA (Hons) Professional Management award, and wider CMDA if applicable, UCQ students will have demonstrated that they exceed the threshold benchmark standards for Business and Management. The use of a robust modular assessment framework measures student performance against the programme academic standards by providing an opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes. Students are assessed against module learning outcomes for the award of credit, and programme learning outcomes for the award of a qualification.

External and independent expertise is sought at key stages of the process for setting and maintaining threshold standards; from the beginning of course approval and throughout on-programme monitoring and review exercises. During the programme approval stage, an External Reviewer is engaged and works with the Programme Approval Panel to conduct a rigorous review of the programme proposal. The External Examiner, as a member of the Board of Examiners, provides impartial advice on whether programme assessment demonstrates the achievement of threshold standards and whether these thresholds are calibrated against the academic standards framework. Input from the External Examiner over the previous 5 years continues to confirm that the current programme is of high quality and continues to exceed threshold standards.

The programme aligns to national reference points, including the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and qualification descriptors for level 6, Higher Education Credit Framework, Subject Benchmark Statements, CMDA Standard Assessment Plan and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies where required.

A number of teams contribute to the ongoing maintenance of quality and standards within UCQ, including the Board of Examiners, Curriculum Review Board and Marking, Grading and Moderation Team. All of these teams include members who work at other English higher education institutions,

thereby assisting in the process for ensuring the programme remains comparable with equivalent level qualifications.

Marking, grading and moderation

The Marking, Grading and Moderation Team ensures the effective and standardised approach to marking, grading and moderation of all assessment for the programme. All members of the programme teaching team are involved in the Marking, Grading and Moderation Team meetings which are conducted on a quarterly basis and used to ensure the fair and efficient awarding of marks in line with TLA-009 Marking, Grading and Moderation Procedures. This Team provides a mechanism for which staff can discuss sampled assessed work and develop shared understandings of good marking practice.

The Marking, Grading and Moderation Procedures provide staff with clear arrangements for the use of first and second markers and internal and external moderators. The circumstances for which blind marking is utilised is clearly stipulated in these Procedures.

The internal moderation strategy exists to ensure fair and consistent marking, with clear actions to follow depending on differences in the marks awarded. The use of the moderation process, including all firsts, all fails and a selection of elements from all other categories (the sample), ensures that first marking is scrutinised appropriately, and students and staff can be confident of the assessment process. Following internal moderation, all assessment that contributes towards an award undergoes an external moderation by the External Examiner. To date, there has been no formal eligible student appeals of academic grade.

During UCQ's internal 2024/25 student survey (the QSS), 94.4% of students agreed that marking and assessment had been fair. Similarly, 100% of UCQ students who undertook the NSS (National Student Survey) agreed marking and assessment had been fair. This NSS score was above the OfS-assigned benchmark of 88.9% and English teaching provider business and management apprenticeship sector average of 86.3% (referred to in this report as 'sector average').

Feedback on assessment

Student and staff expectations for submitting assessment and receiving feedback are managed through the Assignment Submission and Feedback Policy. Turnaround times take account of staff workloads, whilst still ensuring students are provided with robust feedback on their work. Feedback is expected to be provided in a timely manner in line with this Policy and should help students understand the indicative mark they have received and how their performance might be improved in future (feedforward). Tutors and Professional Development Assessors are expected to reinforce the feedback mechanisms that exist and allow opportunity for students to clarify their understanding of the purpose of feedback.

The assessment and feedback section of the 2024/25 QSS and NSS scored an average satisfaction of 93.9% (QSS) and 96.3% (NSS). This exceeded the 2025 NSS benchmark (87.2%) and sector average (82.9%). Satisfaction in this area has remained stable since 2021/22; the NSS has improved 3.2 percentage points in 2025 (NSS 2024 – 93.1%). Notably, 100% of NSS students agreed that marking and assessment has been fair (Q11) and they have received assessment feedback on time (Q13).

Ensuring secure assessment

UCQ ensure the secure authoring, distribution and security of assessments via the internal Operation Procedure OP04 Curriculum Management. Internal Operation Procedure OP08 CMDA details UCQ's secure and auditable arrangements for the submission, marking and moderation of student assessment. The Student Record System provides secure and auditable data related to student marks, assessment and related information. Strict permission controls are in place and monitored by the IT Manager on a regular basis.

4. Academic governance

Maintaining quality through the committee structure

Through the committee structure, the Academic Board continues to actively seek and receive assurance that academic standards and the integrity of academic qualifications are maintained. The Academic Board also receives assurance that specific academic risks (such as those involving conditions set by regulatory bodies, partnerships and collaboration, recruitment and retention, data provision, quality assurance, and research integrity) are being effectively identified and managed by the Senior Leadership Team.

The Board of Governors retains overall responsibility for institutional oversight and receives assurance from the Academic Board that academic governance is effective, robust, and aligned with regulatory expectations. This provides clear separation between academic oversight and corporate governance, ensuring that academic risk and performance are subject to independent scrutiny.

The Programme Approval Panel, a sub-committee of the Academic Board, is responsible for ensuring that all programme proposals are rigorously tested for academic fitness and strategic alignment prior to approval. Programmes are designed through subject and pedagogic expertise and are underpinned by relevant external reference points, including the Office for Students regulatory framework and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Quality Code. Lessons learned from monitoring, audit, and review activities are systematically incorporated into programme design and development to support continuous enhancement.

The Board of Examiners takes primary responsibility for the maintenance of academic standards across UCQ's higher education provision. The Board is formed by subject specialists, independent and organisational members and the External Examiner. The External Examiner is appointed through a robust application process. Expertise from the External Examiner, and the wider Board, ensures that student achievement processes remain reliable and fair over time. External Examiner reports and UCQ's responses provide evidence that external expertise continues to be used, considered and valued. Since the programme start in 2016/17, the External Examiner has reported very few issues. All recommendations raised by both the External Examiner and validating body have been reviewed and resolved within a short period of time.

A Student Representative is a member of the Academic Board, ensuring that the student voice is embedded within academic governance and decision-making. The representative contributes their perspective, offers informed advice, and supports the Academic Board in considering the impact of teaching, learning, assessment strategy, and programme development on the student experience. This strengthens the Board's ability to ensure that provision remains inclusive, relevant, and responsive to student needs.

The Board of Governors is composed of a majority of independent members, providing robust and objective institutional oversight. This includes an Independent Governor with designated responsibility as Student Champion, who provides additional scrutiny and assurance that student interests are considered at the highest level of governance. Through reporting from the Academic Board and engagement with the Senior Leadership Team, the Board of Governors receives assurance that the student voice is systematically captured, considered, and acted upon across academic and strategic decision-making, in line with expectations set by the Office for Students and guidance from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

The Staff/Student Liaison Committee provides an additional mechanism for students and staff to communicate and obtain feedback regarding all aspects of the learning experience. The Committee is chaired by the Student Representative and is responsible for engaging with students and considering their views on the quality and design of the programme.

Formal committee meetings are held by the Curriculum Review Board and Marking, Grading and Moderation Team to further ensure equality of student experience and monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum. Where amendments to the programme are required to ensure the programme continues to exceed thresholds for academic standards, this is conducted through a robust approval process involving the Curriculum Review Board, External Examiner and, currently, The Open University as the validating body.

Institutional and programme monitoring (IPM)

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for conducting IPM on the one taught higher education programme. This exercise is conducted in line with the IPM standard operating procedure and submitted to the Academic Board and validating body. Input is gathered from a number of key post holders of the programme, such as the Academic Programme Lead, HE Admissions Manager and Head of Data and Quality. An internal Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) Panel was implemented to review the submission presented by the Senior Leadership Team prior to wider Academic Board approval. The AMR Panel is formed by three Academic Board members, including one independent member.

The IPM process incorporates feedback gathered from staff, students and employers to support the maintenance of threshold standards for both the institution and the programme itself. Other stakeholder feedback and student progression, completion and achievement data is used and considered as part of Annual Monitoring and other data collection activities.

Higher education learning reviews

The internal Learning Reviews of Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Progress (LTAP) Policy was reviewed in August 2025 with a continued focus on “deep diving” into learner work scrutiny and feedback which enables a more effective overall evaluation of the quality of teaching practice. Learning Reviews are no longer graded with the clear emphasis on making improvements to teaching practice rather than focus on a grade. The overall Quality of Education for students is evaluated in the annual self-assessment process and there are still clear descriptors which provide clarity to all higher education academic staff on what UCQ are looking for in an effective learning session for students.

5. Classification algorithms

As a validated programme, the approach used to classify honours degrees are currently set by The Open University under section 19 of the Regulations for validated awards of The Open University.

Classification of bachelor degrees is based on the average mark across all modules within Stage 3 (credit level 6) and Stage 2 (credit level 5) at a ratio of 2:1 respectively.

Honours degrees are classified as follows:

First class	Aggregate mark of 70% or above
Upper Second class	Aggregate mark between 60% and 69%
Lower Second class	Aggregate mark between 50% and 59%
Third class	Aggregate mark between 40% and 49%

Where students have directly entered the programme at Level 6 (e.g. having previously received Recognition of Prior Learning for Stage 1 and 2), the calculation for the honours classification will be based solely on all credits at credit level 6. Performance in work for which an award of credit for prior learning has been made is not considered in the calculation of the final award.

Where the final result of the award classification calculation creates a mark of 0.5% or greater this will be rounded up to the next full percentage point (e.g. 69.5% is rounded to 70%; 59.5% to 60%; and so on). Where the calculation creates a mark below 0.5% this will be rounded down to the next full percentage point (e.g. 69.4% is rounded to 69%; 59.4% to 59%; and so on). For the purposes of rounding up or down, only the first decimal place is used.

To ensure that academic standards are upheld, there are consequences for failure in individual assessments and modules. Where eligible, provision exists for compensation, resit and retake allowances, however the maximum grades that may be achieved are capped at the pass mark of 40%. Students may, however, apply for extenuating circumstances, which if approved would permit them additional time or an additional opportunity to complete an assessment without penalty. Further information about extenuating circumstances can be found in TLA-006 Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

6. Teaching practices and learning resources

Learning, teaching and assessment expertise

UCQ believe that student learning is best supported through the recruitment, progression and development of appropriately skilled and experienced staff, whom have an understanding and appreciation of the work-based learning paradigm. Staff are empowered through CPD, scholarly activity and through the curriculum itself, to explore the value of individual and collaborative learning where learning is carved from interpretation, analysis and synthesis. Reflective practice, particularly for work-based learning provision, forms an essential tool in which the efficacy of teaching and support can be changed and improved whilst retaining a practical focus. This process is informed by various data sources and performed at all levels within the organisation, from teaching staff to senior leaders. Reflective practice forms an innate instrument for inspiring change within UCQ and will continue to do so in the years to come

Staff communicate with enthusiasm and draw upon scholarship, reflection and professional practice to facilitate their delivery and strengthen linking theory to practice for students. Academic staff use a variety of techniques such as experiential learning, scaffolding, Socratic questioning, co-operative and peer assisted learning and group activities to support opportunities for learning, recognising the value of interpretation, analysis and synthesis underpinned by reflective practice. A number of methods are used to effectively ensure that students have understood the topic prior to moving on, such as targeted questioning, individual and group activities. Questioning is pitched at the right level for the students, for example Socratic methods are utilised to develop higher order and critical thinking skills. Students reflect regularly and effectively on their learning as part of achievement of the learning outcomes, and how they are applying this learning within their workplace. Professional Development Assessors measure this impact with students and their Employer Mentor at regular progress reviews. Staff are supported through ongoing CPD, appraisal activities and an effective committee structure that allows for thoughtful discussion, peer and managerial support and expertise from a diverse range of external and independent expertise.

Virtual learning environment

UCQ is solely responsible for funding all online resources and infrastructure. These facilities are routinely evaluated and additional resources commissioned throughout the academic year to meet student need. UCQ continue to develop the virtual learning environment and undertake systematic consultation with students and staff about the accessibility of these facilities and their effectiveness in catering for a wide range of students. UCQ have invested in the e-portfolio system Ecordia to support students throughout their work-based learning programme, allowing real-time capture and recording of evidence against their qualification. At the beginning of 2021/22, UCQ introduced a new subscription for all students to e-book learning resource centre Perlego. Feedback from students has been very positive and Perlego has now been rolled out to students across all years.

Reflection and evaluation of performance

Standardisation exercises, covering both content and pedagogy, are embedded within the Programme Team Meetings, Marking, Grading and Moderation Team and Curriculum Review Board. These activities enable staff to reflect on their practice and consider how it may be further developed. These opportunities for reflective practice are informed by student and employer feedback, both at modular and programme level, recommendations from the Board of Examiners where received, as well as feedback from the Learning Reviews Team. Each committee within the UCQ committee structure must complete an annual self-review of their functions to ensure they continue to remain effective in supporting UCQ's strategic aims.

Module Leads and Professional Development Assessors have demonstrated a sound understanding and current knowledge of their subject area, with excellent vocational experience that is used to support students to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours. During the 2024/25 UCQ Employer/Employer Mentor Survey, 100% of respondents agreed that the training delivered was up to date and reflective of current practices in their industry. This figure is consistent with the previous survey responses in 2023/24 and 2022/23. Furthermore, 100% of Employers/Employer Mentors agreed that the training delivered has effectively assessed their employees' skills, knowledge and behaviours, both at the start and throughout the programme.

Teaching and assessment in the classroom is good with observations that Module Leads are passionate about the subjects they teach and work hard to build very good rapport with students. This coupled with effective delivery and assessment strategies and a good balance of Module Lead input with student-led activities, ensures students are actively engaged, interested and motivated to learn.

There is effective targeted questioning to stretch students in the majority of sessions and good use of peer support, enabling students to learn from the experiences of their peers.

During the 2024/25 NSS, 100% of UCQ third year students agreed staff were good or very good at explaining things (+6.1% on NSS benchmark), 100% agreed staff have made the subject engaging fairly or very often (+12.1% on NSS benchmark), 96.3% agreed the course is intellectually stimulating fairly or very often (+8.9% on NSS benchmark) and 96.3% agreed their course has challenged them to achieve their best work fairly or very often (+7.6% on NSS benchmark). Students continue to be challenged to achieve beyond the threshold, which is evident in module grade profiles and feedback from QAA during the Quality and Standards Review in October 2019 and Ofsted during the Full Inspection in December 2021.

Overall, 94.4% of NSS students were satisfied with the student learning resources at UCQ. This has remained stable since 2021/22 (89%) and continues to remain above the 2025 benchmark (87.9%) and 2024 sector average (84.1%). Notably, Q19 'How well have the IT resources and facilities supported your learning?' achieved 100% satisfaction. At the beginning of 2021/22, UCQ introduced a new subscription for all students to e-book learning resource centre Perlego. Feedback from students has been very positive and Perlego has now been rolled out to students across all years.

7. Identifying good practice and actions

Regular feedback is gathered and used to enhance student development and achievement. The support provided to students is scrutinised through regular monitoring and evaluation processes, such as Annual Monitoring, student and employer feedback, committee feedback and observations of teaching and learning. Any actions identified through this scrutiny process feeds into the Master Improvement Plan, with actions, progress and outcomes considered quarterly by the Senior Leadership Team and wider Academic Board.

The Senior Leadership Team will undertake an annual review of this Degree Outcome Statement. Any actions as a result of this review will also feed into the Master Improvement Plan and be reported to the Academic Board during their meetings.

Complaints and appeals

UCQ have not received any formal complaints or eligible appeals to date. UCQ feel this is due to the student-centric nature of the organisation with the consistent and rolling collection of student feedback and swift action taken to alleviate concerns as they arise. UCQ students are working, professional adults, existing and developing managers. As such they tend to be quick to provide feedback and to raise any concerns, which enables UCQ to take swift action.

To further mitigate any risk of appeal or complaint and in line with consumer law obligations, all students and employers are made aware of their individual responsibilities for the duration of the course. Terms and conditions are published on the UCQ website and students and employers are made aware of these prior to programme start. All changes to programme undergo strict approval and student consent processes. Changes are also published on our website.

Assessment and feedback practices

A variety of modes of assessment are utilised both within the academic and work-based components of modules, to enable academic staff to engage in constructive peer dialogue and opportunities for reflection of sound assessment and marking practice. This includes reflection around assessment for learning and assessment of learning. The nature of the programme allows for professional input into assessment, such as through witness testimonies, peer feedback and workplace observations. A fundamental component of the programme is the alignment of assessment activities with real-world situations. These assessment components provide staff rich opportunity for reflection and consideration of professional practice when providing feedback to students.

All students are progressively challenged as they move through the levels of the degree ensuring stretch and challenge throughout, particularly through reflection on their professional practice as they apply theory within their workplace. Module Leads provide encouraging feedback to students, both in class and on marked work, with 96.3% student satisfaction achieved across the Assessment and Feedback section of the 2025 NSS. Students self-assess themselves against the required knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSB) throughout the programme, where they reflect regularly on the new skills and knowledge gained, and how they are applying this in their workplace. Module Leads and Professional Development Assessors challenge more experienced students to develop broader perspectives. The e-portfolio system Ecordia, the KSB matrix and the Individual Learning Plans enable both staff and students to track student progress throughout the programme. UCQ have recently recruited a HE Academic Support Tutor to provide additional support for new students who are struggling with the complexities of the academic skills required at degree level.

Survey results

Once again, both the UCQ NSS and 2024/25 QSS collected exceptionally positive results against the organisational benchmark assigned by the Office for Students (OfS) and against the English teaching provider business and management apprenticeship average (referred to in this report as ‘sector average’). For this year, the ‘sector average’ has been further filtered down by subject (business and management) to ensure the most comparable results.

For the 2025 UCQ NSS, all core questions have exceeded both the 2025 benchmark and 2025 sector average. When comparing the 2025 NSS to the 2024 NSS results, over three-quarters (85.1% - 23/27) of questions remained the same or increased in satisfaction in 2025.

The QSS 3-year trend shows consistent results for ‘Teaching on my course’, ‘Learning opportunities’, ‘Assessment and Feedback’, ‘Academic Support’, ‘Organisation and management’, ‘Learning resources’,

‘Student voice’ and ‘Overall Satisfaction’. On average, all themes scored 90% or more satisfaction. Analysis of the 2025 NSS and the 2024/25 QSS demonstrates that student satisfaction at UCQ remains consistently above both the Office for Students benchmark and the sector average for higher education business and management apprenticeships.

Actions

Ongoing institutional KPIs:

1) Increase the proportion of Higher Education SEND students recruited and graduating to 10%.
2) Increase the proportion of Higher Education Ethic Minority students recruited and graduating to 21%.