# Degree Outcomes Statement 2018-19

In May 2019, the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA) published a Statement of Intent. It proposed that providers should publish a degree outcomes statement analysing their institutional degree classification profile and articulating the results of an internal institutional review. This review should help assure providers that they meet the Expectations of the Quality Code for Higher Education that relate to protecting the value of qualifications and, for providers in England, the Office for Students' ongoing conditions of registration on academic standards (B4 and B5).

In line with the UKSCQA guidance this Statement presents data on SOAS degree outcomes over the last five years, along with an overview of developments during that period in learning and teaching. The Statement was formally approved in December 2020 by the Board of Trustees, having been recommended to them by Academic Board. Both groups include student representation. The statement has also been shared with SOAS' Chief Visiting Examiner.

Institutional degree classification profile 2014/15-2018/19
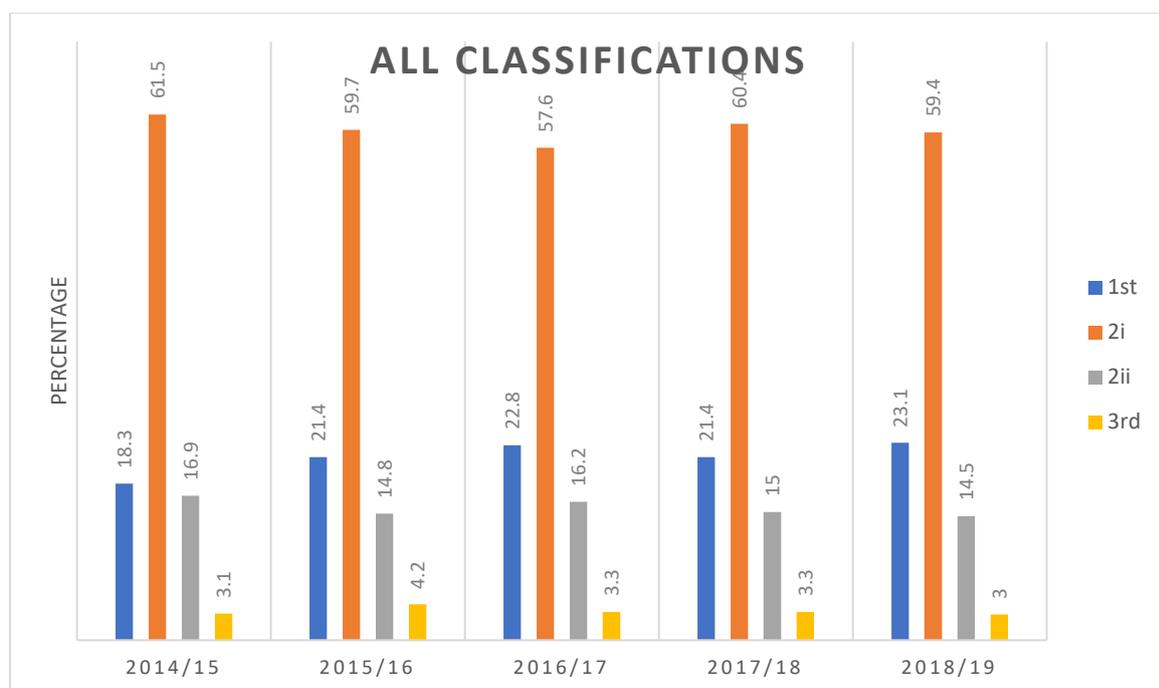
A further breakdown by student characteristics can be found at Appendix 1.

Assessment and marking practices

As part of SOAS' approval process for programmes and their constituent modules, the appropriateness of the proposed assessment and alignment to the appropriate level of the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) is considered by those involved in validation and explicitly commented on by external subject specialists, along with compliance with Subject Benchmark Statements and PSRB expectations where relevant (the latter is applicable to SOAS degrees in Law and in Accounting & Finance).

Common assessment criteria are used for all SOAS modules and are published along with marking procedures and other assessment and feedback policy at https://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/degreeregulations/. These procedures include those relating to the submission and consideration of mitigating circumstances, and the procedure for Academic Appeals. The latter was revised in 2019-20 in light of recommendations made by an external review of student complaints, appeals and disciplinary procedures. An annual summary of appeals and other student cases is reported to Academic Board, highlighting trends and making recommendations for enhancement.

From 2018/19 the use of anonymous marking was extended to all coursework following recommendations from the working group tasked with reducing gaps in attainment between BAME and white students. This builds upon the anonymization for many years of data considered at examination boards. External examiners are appointed to each assessment board, in line with the expectations of the QAA Quality Code, and are involved in the scrutiny of examination papers. External examiners consider samples of assessed student work to assesses whether marking has been fair, consistent, rigorous and in line with relevant marking criteria. External examiners are required to make a written report each year (which may include observations on teaching, course structure and course content) on a standard template.

Academic governance

SOAS monitors degree classification trends, including across groups of students with different characteristics, as part of annual reporting processes through the academic governance structure. Data on student outcomes is reviewed by Academic Board annually, with reporting to Board of Trustees.

Visiting examiners are asked to comment each year on the academic standards of SOAS awards, and this requirement applies equally to programmes managed in partnership with others. Visiting examiners also report to exam boards on the conduct of assessment and marking processes to confirm that these have been carried out correctly. Their reports are reviewed by the School's Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committee, and actions taken as a result are reported to the same committee via Annual Programme Reviews.

Classification algorithms

The SOAS classification algorithms have been consistent over the period between 2014-15 and 2018-19, and are contained within the Degree regulations, to be found at https://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/degreeregulations/. A student-friendly explanatory guide is published at the same location. SOAS uses the standard classification bands used across the sector, with classification of undergraduate degrees based on assessments taken in the final and penultimate years of study.

Teaching practices and learning resources

SOAS aims to make continuous improvements to teaching practices, learning resources, student support and curriculum and assessment design. Over the period reported on, SOAS has seen the introduction of increased use of learning technologies, including our 'BLE' virtual learning environment. The period has seen significant improvements to the learning environment, including the opening of the Paul Webley Wing with technology-enhanced classrooms and study space. In the NSS and other student feedback, SOAS consistently receives approval ahead of the sector average in the quality of teaching and of Library resources.

Identifying good practice and actions

SOAS appoints Chief External Examiners each year to provide an overview of the School's approach to assessment and academic standards.

SOAS continues to seek to address the learning needs of students with a wide range of previous educational backgrounds, qualifications and protected characteristics, supporting the development of excellence in learning and teaching to underpin maximum student success against national degree standards. To this end, ongoing work to review the curriculum prioritises inclusive assessment and programme structures which support undergraduate students. Ambitious targets for eliminating gaps in outcomes between different groups of students are set out in SOAS Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25.
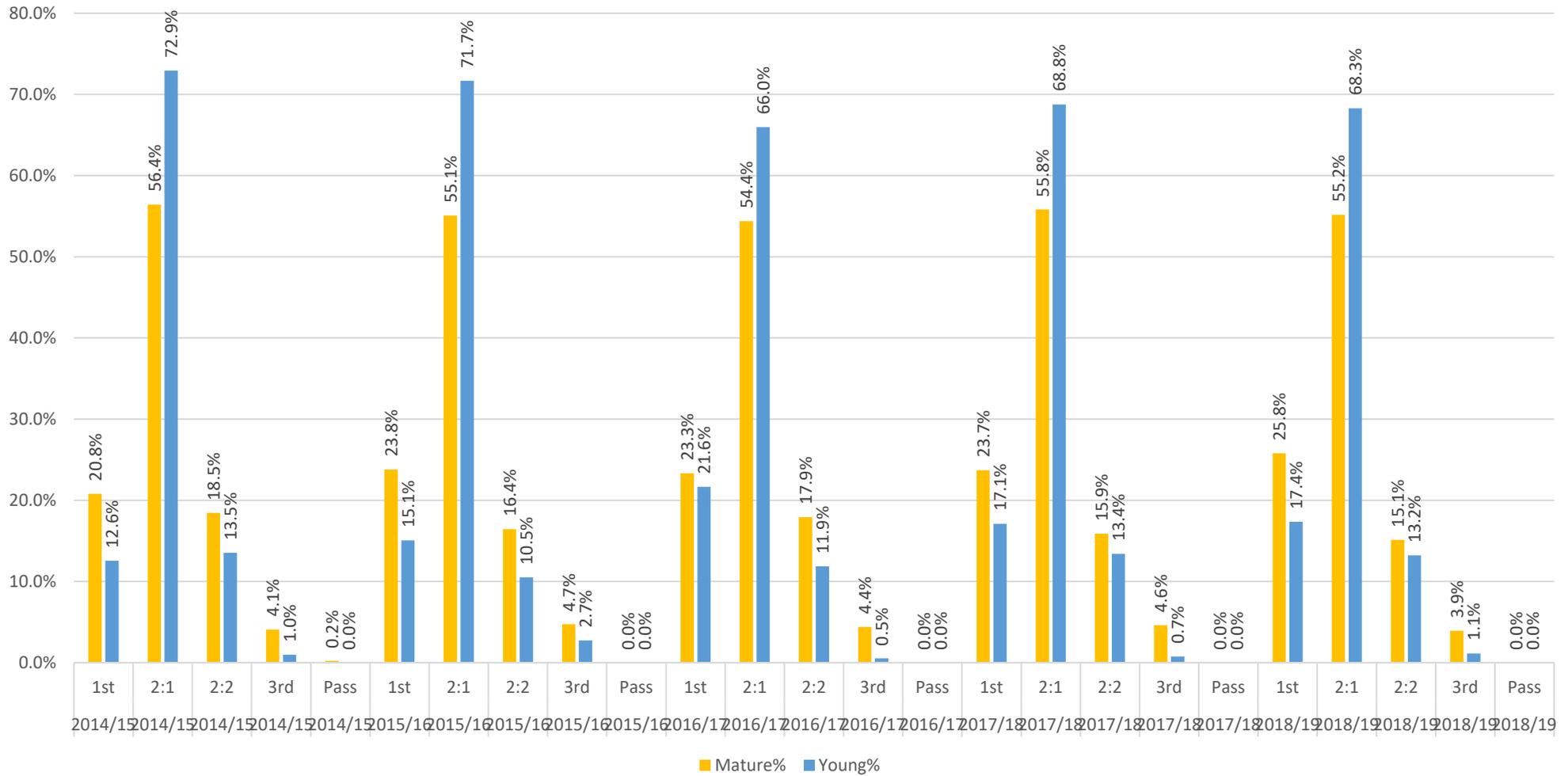
Classifications by Gender
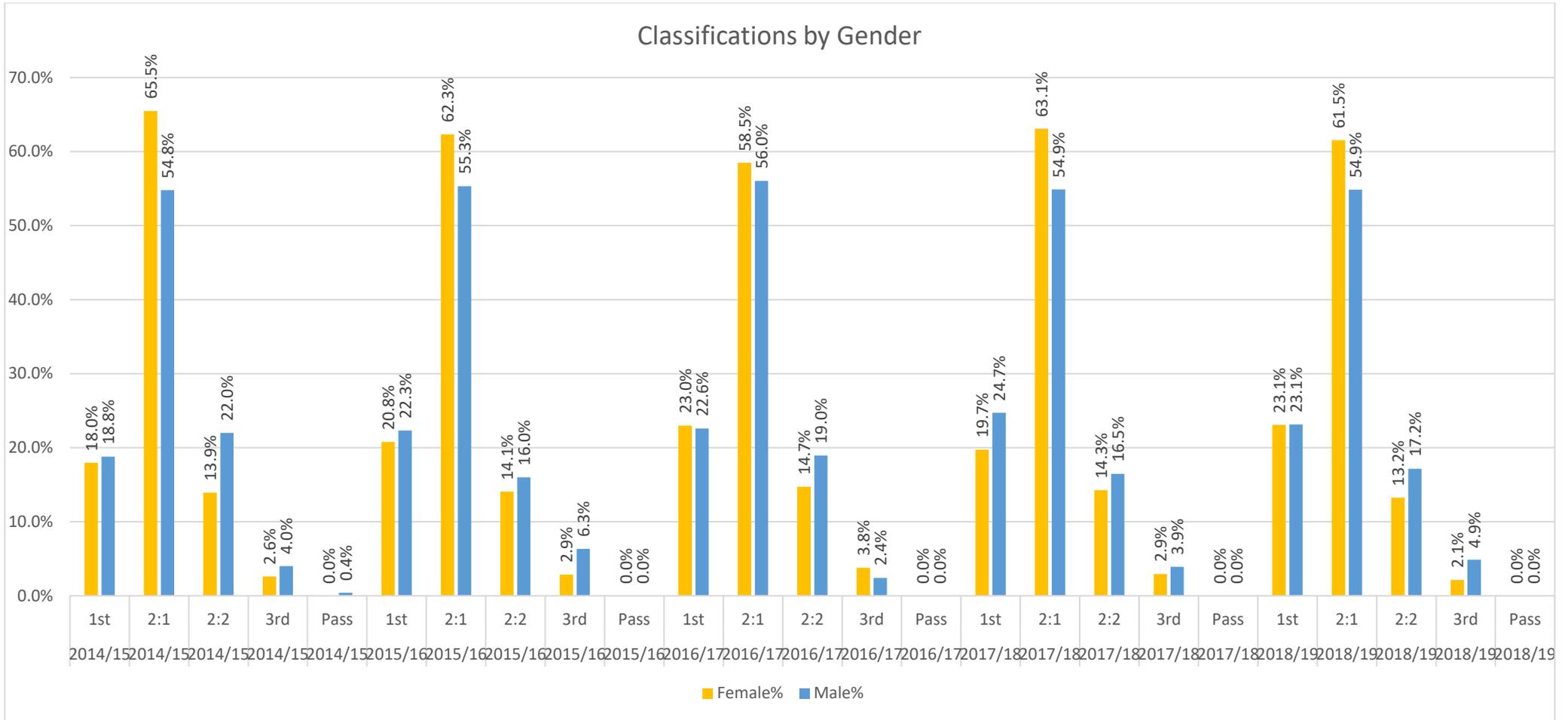
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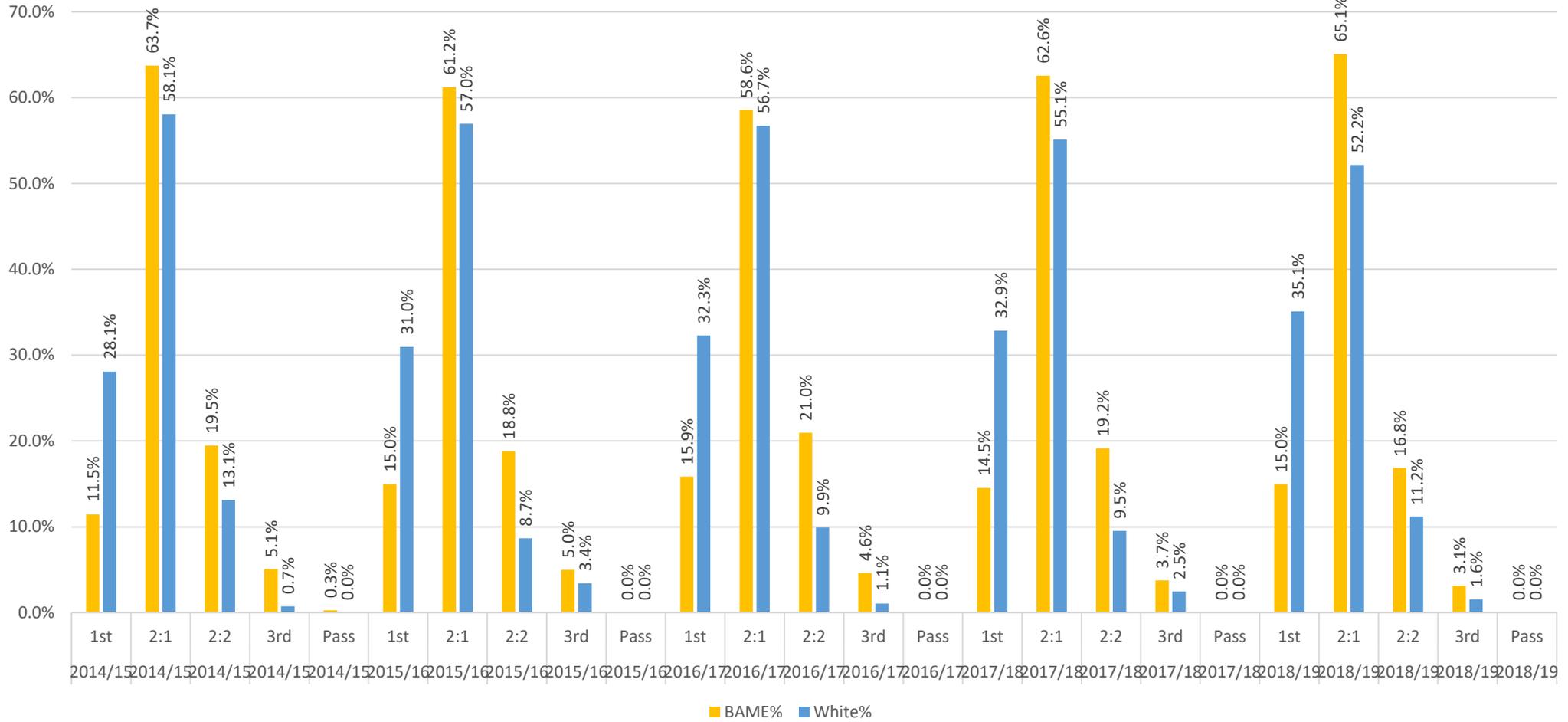
Classifications by Age

Classifications by Disability

■ Disabled%   ■ No known disability%

	1st	2:1	2:2	3rd	Pass
Disabled% 2014/15	13.8%	69.0%	16.1%	1.1%	0.0%
No known disability% 2014/15	18.9%	60.4%	17.1%	3.4%	0.2%
Disabled% 2015/16	14.8%	66.7%	14.8%	3.7%	0.0%
No known disability% 2015/16	22.4%	58.6%	14.8%	4.2%	0.0%
Disabled% 2016/17	22.0%	58.5%	15.4%	4.1%	0.0%
No known disability% 2016/17	23.0%	57.4%	16.4%	3.1%	0.0%
Disabled% 2017/18	18.3%	58.5%	19.0%	4.2%	0.0%
No known disability% 2017/18	22.1%	60.8%	14.1%	3.0%	0.0%
Disabled% 2018/19	20.2%	58.4%	15.6%	5.8%	0.0%
No known disability% 2018/19	23.9%	59.6%	14.2%	2.3%	0.0%

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