# Cambridge University to abolish traditional exam rankings in focus on student well-being



The University of Cambridge is poised to make significant changes to its traditional examination ranking system as part of a broader initiative aimed at enhancing student well-being. The renowned institution has decided to discontinue the centuries-old practice of publishing "class lists," which have historically indicated students' exam rankings. This decision is anticipated to be fully implemented starting in the next academic year.

The "class lists," a tradition that traces back to 1748, provided a public display of students’ rankings within their cohort based on examination results. Over time, this practice became widespread across all academic departments within the university. The rankings were once prominently displayed on a board outside the university’s main administrative offices. However, in recent years, there has been increasing concern regarding the impact of this tradition on student mental health. A task force established by the university highlighted a “culture of overwork,” prompting senior officials to reevaluate long-standing practices.

Beginning in the upcoming academic year, students will no longer find their rankings readily available. Instead, undergraduates wishing to know their standing will have to request this information directly from their supervisors. While the public listing of average exam results is set to be abolished, the university will continue to recognise high-achieving students through awarding prizes for outstanding academic performance.

This shift forms part of a wider initiative aimed at fostering a "healthy work-life balance" within the university. Additional measures associated with this initiative include a ban on lectures during the weekends and restrictions on teaching hours to the timeframe between 8am and 8pm on weekdays.

The decision to abolish the class lists has garnered mixed reactions, particularly among academic staff. Some academics have expressed concerns that this move may undermine the legitimacy of academic qualifications and challenge the competitive spirit that has historically been a part of the university's ethos. The ongoing discourse surrounding these changes reflects a tension between the pressures of academic competition and the university’s commitment to improving student mental health.

As Cambridge navigates the balance between tradition and modern pedagogical practices, the forthcoming academic year will mark a significant turning point in how student achievement is measured and recognised within one of the world's oldest and most prestigious universities.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.varsity.co.uk/news/14292> - This article supports the claim that the University of Cambridge has faced significant debate over the public display of class lists, reflecting concerns about student well-being and the need for an opt-out system. The class lists saga highlights the university's efforts to transition away from traditional practices.
2. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/class-lists-tradition-cambridge-can-do-without> - This blog post discusses the historical context of class lists and the arguments from students and faculty on why they should be abolished, aligning with the university's move to prioritize student well-being over traditional practices.
3. <https://www.varsity.co.uk/news/21816> - This article details the University Council's recommendation to remove public class lists, which aligns with the broader initiative to enhance student well-being by abolishing the public display of rankings.
4. <https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/student-wellbeing> - Although not directly mentioned, this general page on student well-being at Cambridge University supports the broader initiative to enhance student well-being, which includes changes to academic practices like class lists.
5. <https://www.cam.ac.uk/about-the-university/how-the-university-and-colleges-work/structures-and-committees> - This page provides an overview of the university's structures and committees, which are involved in decision-making processes like those leading to the abolition of public class lists, although it does not specifically discuss class lists.
6. <https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/cambridge-in-the-21st-century> - While not directly addressing class lists, this page highlights Cambridge's efforts to adapt to modern challenges and embrace change, which aligns with the decision to discontinue the traditional practice of publishing class lists.
7. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2040085/Cambridge-University-scrap-tradition-exam-rankings-student-stress> - Please view link - unable to able to access data