FAQs About module marks and undergraduate degree classification

For students studying for a Bachelor’s or Integrated master’s degree who began their studies before the 2025/26 academic year

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# Understanding module marks

## Q: How is my module mark calculated?

**A:** Your module mark is calculated from the marks you achieve in the assessments for that module. To pass a module outright, your overall module mark must be at or above the pass mark and you must meet any additional requirements of individual assessments.

Senate Regulation 5.25 sets the standard pass mark for assessments at 40.00%. This increases to 50.00% for assessments in the final year of an integrated master’s programme.

For modules with multiple assessments, each assessment has a percentage weighting. This weighting determines how much that assessment contributes to your overall module mark.

### Example:

The essay in this module makes a 40% contribution to the module mark and the exam contributes the remaining 60%. The marks achieved in the associated assessments lead to a module mark of 60.80%.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessment** | **Weight %** | **Mark** | **Mark x weight** |
| Essay | 40 | 65.00 P | 2600.00 |
| Exam | 60 | 58.00 P | 3480.00 |
|  | | |  |
| Total | | | 6080.00 |
| / 100 | | | **60.80%** |

## Q: Can a high mark in one assessment compensate for a low mark in another?

**A:** Yes, high achievement in one assessment can potentially compensate for a lower mark in another within the same module when the module mark is over the pass mark. However, this compensation does not apply if an assessment has a qualifying mark (see *Q: What is a qualifying mark and how does it affect passing?*).

## Q: What is a qualifying mark and how does it affect passing?

**A:** A qualifying mark is a specific minimum mark required for a particular assessment. If a qualifying mark applies, you must achieve that mark or higher in that assessment, in addition to meeting the overall module pass mark, to pass the module.

### Example

There is a qualifying mark of 40.00 attached to the exam for this module. In order to pass the module, a mark of 40.00 or above is needed in the exam, **in addition to** an overall module mark of at least 40.00%. Without any qualifying mark, however, a high mark for one assessment will compensate for a lower mark providing the module is passed overall.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Assessment description** | **Ass’t Type** | **Weight %** | **Qual Mark** |
| 001 | Essay | Coursework | 40 |  |
| 002 | Exam | Examination | 60 | 40 |

**Detailed information about the requirements of each module can be found in its module specification. Search the module specification database.**

# Understanding module credits and credit weighted averages (CWA)

## Q: What is the credit value of a module and why is it important?

**A:** Each programme is broken down into modules. Each module has a credit value. The most common sizes are 15 credits and 30 credits, but some programmes include larger modules. An undergraduate degree has modules totalling 120 credits in each year.

A few programmes include compulsory zero-weighted modules or competency-based components that are assessed on a pass/fail basis. These do not contribute to your degree classification but are required for other purposes.

The credit value of a module determines its contribution to your **credit-weighted average (CWA)** and CWA is, in turn, important to degree classification.

## Q: When are module credits awarded?

**A:** You will be awarded credit for a module when your performance across its assessments mean you have met all the conditions to pass it.

If any individual assessments within a module have a qualifying mark, you will also need to have achieved or exceeded that mark in those assessments to qualify for the award of module credit.

Partial credits cannot be awarded; you get all of the module’s credits or none of them – nothing in between.

## Q: What is a Credit Weighted Average (CWA)?

**A:** Credit Weighted Average (CWA) is a calculation that reflects your academic performance across a particular part of your programme. CWAs help towards determining your degree classification.

There are two different types of CWA calculations:

1. **Year CWA** (see *Q: How is a Year Credit Weighted Average (CWA) calculated*?)
2. **Overall or programme CWA (**See *Q: How is overall Credit Weighted Average (CWA) calculated?*)

## Q:How is a Year Credit Weighted Average (CWA) calculated?

**A:** A Year CWA reflects your academic performance over a single year of your programme. The calculation takes into account each module’s credit size and the mark you achieve for it. Modules with bigger credit values have more impact on your CWA because they represent a greater portion of your studies.

A year CWA is calculated by performing the steps below:

1. multiply the module mark by the module’s credit size and repeat for each module within the year. Then add these values together;
2. divide the answer returned in Step 2 by 120  
   (120 is the total number of credits of each year of an undergraduate degree).

### Example:

The CWA for the year calculates at 65.00%

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Module** | **Credits** | **Mark** | **Mark x credits** |
| XY1000 | 30 | 62.00 P | 1860 |
| XY1001 | 30 | 62.00 P | 1860 |
| XY1002 | 30 | 62.00 P | 1860 |
| XY1003 | 15 | 66.00 P | 990 |
| XY1004 | 15 | 66.00 P | 990 |
|  | | |  |
| Total | | | 7800 |
| / 120 | | | **65.00%** |

## **Q:** How is overall Credit Weighted Average (CWA) calculated?

**A**: Your overall/programme CWA represents your academic performance across the years that count toward degree classification for your programme. It is calculated by multiplying the CWA of each of those contributing years by an agreed percentage and then combining these. As for module marks, a CWA is always expressed to two decimal places.

**See the section *Understanding award eligibility and degree classification* for more detail about the importance of credit weighted average.**

# Understanding award eligibility and degree classification

## Q: When will I be eligible to be awarded my degree?

A: At the end of your programme, its Board of Examiners will meet to consider your profile of results. If you have gained enough credits in degree classification contributing years then the Board of Examiners will be able to award you your degree.

A general breakdown of the award eligibility requirements set out in Senate Regulation 5 is given below but please note that some programmes have additional award requirements\*:

* **studied modules** that total 360 credits(480 credits for an Integrated Master’s degree)
* **attempted every assessment**, unless otherwise agreed by a Panel of Examiners or a Board of Examiners, for example because accepted mitigating circumstances apply,
* **passed** at least 300 credits for a bachelor’s degree (420 credits for an Integrated Master’s degree)\*
* have **failed no more than 45 credits** with a module mark below the pass mark in degree classification contributing years\*

\* Programmes with professional body requirements may have stricter award conditions than those defined in Senate Regulation 5. Programmes of this sort typically have a significant practical or clinical element. For example, they may require *every* assessment and *every* module studied to be passed. Any additional award requirements will be stated in the programme specification and should also be explained in student handbooks.

## Q: How does each year affect my degree classification?

A: Each year of study has a different impact on degree classification. Year 1 is a qualifying year and does not affect your degree classification. The final year of your degree has the greatest influence on your degree classification. This reflects the growing complexity of study from one year to the next.

* **For a three-year degree,** the contributing years are typically Year 2 and Year 3, with percentage splits of 33:67
* **For an integrated master’s degree**, the contributing years are typically Year 2, Year 3, and Year 4. These have a 20:30:50 percentage split.
* **If you passed an experience year**, such as a Year abroad, you will need to check with your school or in your course’s programme specification to see if the year counts towards degree classification.

## Q: What are the degree classifications?

**A**: There are four classes of Honours degree classification: First Class Honours (1st), Second Class Honours: Upper Division (2:1), Second Class Honours: Lower Division (2:2), and Third Class Honours (3rd). There is also a Pass classification (also known as ordinary degree because it is without honours). Third class degree classification is not available for integrated master’s degrees.

## Q: How can I achieve my target degree classification?

**A:** Each degree classification has a set allowance for failed credit and Overall Credit Weighted Average requirement. The honours degree classifications also allow for a slightly lower Overall CWA requirement when a certain number of credits fall within particular class boundaries.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Degree class** | **Minimum credits at 40.00% or above\*** | **Overall CWA and credits within a grade boundary** | **Credits at levels 5 and 6 with a mark less than 40.00% \*** |
| First Class (1st) | 330 credits | 70.00% or above  or  68.00% or above and at least 120 credits at 70.00% or better, of which at least 30 credits must be from level 6 | Maximum of 30 credits with a mark less than 40.00%\* |
| Upper Second Class (2:1) | 300 credits | 60.00% or above  or  58.00% or above and at least 120 credits at 60.00% or better, of which at least 30 credits must be from level 6 | Maximum of 45 credits with a mark less than 40.00%\* |
| Lower Second Class (2:2) | 300 credits | 50.00% or above  or  48.00% or above and at least 120 credits at 50.00% or better, of which at least 30 credits must be from level 6 | Maximum of 45 credits with a mark less than 40.00%\* |
| Third Class (3rd) | 300 credits | 40.00% or above  or  48.00% or above and at least 120 credits at 50.00% or better, of which at least 30 credits must be from level 6 | Maximum of 45 credits with a mark less than 40.00%\* |
| Pass | 300 credits | 35.00% or above | Maximum of 45 credits with a mark less than 40.00%\* |

\* Some programmes have stricter award requirements. These may permit fewer failed credits or none at all.

You will automatically be awarded the degree classification if you satisfy all its associated criteria. There is also an opportunity for promotion to a higher degree classification as a borderline candidate. To allow the Board of Examiners to consider you as a borderline candidate, your results have to fall within the defined borderline criteria. There is no guarantee of promotion to a higher degree classification.

**The degree classification scheme section of Senate Regulation 5 sets out the full criteria for each classification.**

## Q: What is a borderline candidate in degree classification?

**A:** A borderline candidate is a student whose final grade is deemed by the University to be close to the threshold between two degree classifications (e.g. between a 2:1 and a First). The University has a specific policy that Boards of Examiners have to follow when handling borderline cases to ensure fairness and consistency. When a student’s results fall into a borderline category, factors such as high achievement in final year assessments, performance in the dissertation/project or other key modules, and accepted mitigating circumstances can support an uplift in classification.

## Q: How do I know if I can be considered as a borderline candidate?

**A:** To qualify as a borderline candidate, your module results must meet all the criteria outlined in Senate Regulation 5.39, including achieving a specific credit weighted average and having the required number of credits at the right level.

If your results fall outside the mathematically defined borderline criteria then there is no allowance for the Board of Examiners to consider you for promotion to a higher degree classification. Even if you meet the criteria, award of the higher degree classification is not guaranteed.

The categories that allow for borderline consideration are:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Consideration for promotion to** | **Minimum credits at 40.00% or above\*** | **Overall CWA and credits within a grade boundary** | **Credits at levels 5 and 6 with a mark less than 40.00% \*** |
| First Class (1st) | 330 credits | 68.00% or above and at least 120 credits at 68.00% or better, including at least 90 credits at 70.00% or better, of which at least 30 credits must be from level 6 | Maximum of 30 credits with a mark less than 40.00%\* |
| Upper Second Class (2:1) | 300 credits | 58.00% or above and at least 120 credits at 58.00% or better, including at least 90 credits at 60.00% or better, of which at least 30 credits must be from level 6 | Maximum of 45 credits with a mark less than 40.00%\* |
| Lower Second Class (2:2) | 300 credits | 48.00% or above and at least 120 credits at 48.00% or better, including at least 90 credits at 50.00% or better, of which at least 30 credits must be from level 6 | Maximum of 45 credits with a mark less than 40.00%\* |

# Understanding how accepted mitigating circumstance can impact degree classification

## Q: Can I get a higher classification because of accepted mitigating circumstances?

**A:** In certain circumstances, accepted mitigating circumstances may contribute to a promotion to a higher degree classification—but only if your results fall within a defined borderline category. Boards of Examiners consider various factors when assessing borderline candidates, and the presence of accepted mitigating circumstances is one of them.

However, the acceptance of mitigating circumstances does not guarantee an uplift in classification. Other measures—such as the removal of lateness penalties—may have already accounted for the impact of those circumstances.

It’s important to note that accepted mitigating circumstances cannot result in any change to marks, as it is impossible to determine what mark would have been achieved if the mitigating circumstances had not occurred.

## Q: Can I resit failed assessments to improve my degree classification?

**A:** Yes, in certain circumstances, you may resit failed assessments to attempt to improve your degree classification. To be eligible, you must have a reassessment opportunity available for the failed assessment(s), and it must be mathematically possible for you to achieve the criteria for a higher classification—or its borderline category—upon passing.

However, it’s important to consider that choosing to resit assessments may delay your graduation. Additionally, there is no guarantee that your final results will improve sufficiently to reach the desired classification. Be sure to seek academic advice before making a decision.