

CODE OF PRACTICE ON ASSESSMENT:
FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS WHO ENTERED AN HONOURS PROGRAMME IN SEPTEMBER 2019

Contents

Section 1: Introduction

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

Section 2: Marking

Common Grading Scale (CGS)
Determination of Overall Course Grade
Internal Examiners/Markers
“Blind” / Anonymous Marking
Moderation Procedures
Return of Grades
Data Protection

Section 3: Determining Degree Classification

Section 4: Borderline Candidates

Section 5: Mitigating Circumstances / Impaired Performance

Section 6: Resits: Reassessment & Award of Compensatory Credit

Section 7: Students who take extra credits at levels 3, 4 and 5

Section 8: Students who undertake Study Abroad

Please note: All, or specific sections, of this Code of Practice on Assessment may not apply to Candidates undertaking healthcare programmes (i.e. BDS, MBChB) and professionally accredited programmes in Counselling and Initial Teacher Training (including the BMusEd). The Schools of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition and Education can further advise on Assessment regulations for these cohorts of students.

All Candidates should also consult course and programme handbooks, which will provide assessment information specific to the courses and programme they are undertaking.

Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1 Assessment is the central element of the process by which the University is able to make awards to candidates who have completed courses and programmes. The purpose of this Code of Practice on Assessment is to ensure that the processes of assessment are conducted in a **fair, consistent, and transparent** manner across the University. This common approach is especially important due to the inter-disciplinary nature of many of the University's programmes which means that candidates are studying courses offered by a number of Schools and these courses are then combined together in determining the overall award.
- 1.2 This Code of Practice on Assessment applies to **undergraduate students**, who entered Honours in **September 2019**, whose studies were impacted, during the second half session of the 2019/20 academic year and the 2020/21 academic year, by Covid-19.

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

- 1.3 The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework¹ has developed a set of [SCQF Levels Descriptors](#) which illustrate the generic expectations for each **level** of study. Level of study refers to the level of the course, not necessarily programme year. For example, a Level 3 course will have been designed to fit to the SCQF descriptors for level 3 and that does not change, regardless of whether that course is taken in programme year 3 (PY3) or in programme year 4 (PY4). These descriptors, which set out the general characteristic outcomes, are important in terms of providing a reference point of expectations for each level of study.
- 1.4 The University's awards must comply with the SCQF framework. In broad terms, candidates must therefore achieve the minimum number of credit points to be eligible to receive their award. These requirements are detailed in [Minimum Credit Requirements for Awards](#).
- 1.5 The [University Calendar](#) entry will state the requirements for each programme and award. This should include:
 - (a) The courses required to be undertaken for the programme, including courses that do not carry any credit weighting (i.e. zero²credit-rated courses),
 - (b) The details of the **compulsory** requirements. These are courses that must be passed for the achievement of the award. Such compulsory requirements may be set by the requirements of a Professional, Regulatory or Statutory Body (PSRB) which accredits the award or may be set by the Examiners (e.g. a requirement that a candidate achieve a pass in the thesis/ project).
 - (c) The number of remaining credits required for achievement of the programme award.
- 1.6 The **criteria** for courses and their relative weightings which will contribute to the determination of the overall programme award, must be made explicit to all candidates at the outset of their programme.
- 1.7 This information should be provided in a single document to ensure transparency and ease of reference regardless of whether the degree programme is delivered by a single discipline or is a degree programme delivered by more than one discipline (i.e. joint honours).

¹ The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework is a common national framework for all awards in Scotland. It makes clear the relationship between qualifications, levels, entry and exit points, and routes for progression between awards. Further information is available at www.scqf.org.uk

² In the case of zero credit rated courses the relative weighting of this towards the overall determination of the award must be clearly stated to (i) students and (ii) Registry (via academicervices@abdn.ac.uk); the latter is to ensure the Student Record Systems' Degree Classification screens and algorithms are accurate.

Section 2: Marking

Common Grading Scale (CGS)

- 2.1 The [University of Aberdeen Common Grading Scale \(CGS\)](#) provides a common marking scale which is used across the University. This enables candidates to compare their performance in different disciplines and courses and ensures consistency in assessment.
- 2.2 The CGS is an alphanumeric scale comprising 23 discrete **Grades** grouped into seven **Bands** with an associated **Grade Point** for each grade. These Grade Points are used for the purposes of (i) determining the overall course mark from a number of components (e.g. end of course exam and essay mark) and (ii) determining overall honours degree classification or progression and award within a taught postgraduate award. Each band has two associated **Descriptors** (one for essay-based courses and one for more numerical-based courses). These descriptors should be appropriate for most assessments. There will be some forms of assessment (e.g. practical exams) where it may be necessary for these to be tailored to meet the specific learning outcomes of the assessment.
- 2.3 It is University policy that an overall grade for each course must be awarded. As well as releasing the alphanumeric CGS for the course, the associated overall course grade point (to two decimal places) will also be given to students. If grading is carried out in percentages, or in another scale, these must first be converted to the CGS prior to release to students. If a School or Discipline wishes to use a grading scale other than the CGS, this must be mapped to the CGS and approval given by the University Committee on Teaching & Learning (UCTL) via the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC).
- 2.4 Band descriptors should be read in conjunction with the [SCQF Levels Descriptors](#) which detail the expected level of attainment at each level of study.
- 2.5 The Band Descriptors should be used to inform the judgement as to which grade should be awarded for a piece of assessment. In doing so, it is important that this is done in the context that the top band represents the best that a candidate at that level could be expected to achieve. Students should be made aware of the band descriptors for each assessment. It should be noted that this means a grade obtained at one level is not equivalent to the same grade awarded at a different level.
- 2.6 Normally in awarding a grade, Examiners should use the band descriptor to determine which band is appropriate and should then select the middle grade within that band (i.e. Grade B2 from within the Band B1, B2 and B3). Adjustment upwards or downwards to a higher or lower grade (i.e. B1 or B3) within that band can then be determined, if appropriate, based on how well the candidate's performance meets the band descriptor. Where an assessment is more quantitative in nature, it may be possible to map directly onto the grade.
- 2.7 A Grade should be awarded for each component of assessment (i.e. each essay or examination question). Course grades are calculated from a weighted average of all contributing assessments. From this weighted average (to two decimal places) the overall alphanumeric Grade for the course should be determined. In some cases, it may not be considered appropriate to award a Grade directly (for example in a multiple-choice test or quantitative type test). In these cases, taking account of the band descriptors, Schools should determine the appropriate percentage (or other) scale that would be used to convert the mark to a grade on the Common Grading Scale. This information should be approved by the QAC, made readily available to all students and such conversions should be published in course handbooks and made available to all Examiners.

Determination of Overall Course Grade

- 2.8 Most courses involve more than one component of assessment. Course grades are calculated from a weighted average of all contributing assessments. From this weighted average (to two decimal places) the overall alphanumeric Grade for the course should be determined. Candidates must be made aware of the relative weightings of each component at the outset of the course.

2.9 Each Grade on the Common Grading Scale is associated with a numerical **Grade Point** (0-22). These Grade Points are used for the purposes of determining overall course Grades.

Prior to the 2020/21 academic year: Course grades were calculated from a weighted average of all contributing assessments. From this weighted average the overall alphanumeric Grade for a course was determined.

In academic year 2020/21 and beyond: Course grades are calculated from a weighted average of all contributing assessments. From this weighted average (to two decimal places) the overall alphanumeric Grade for the course should be determined.

For example: A course has two essays each weighted 20% and one exam weighted 60%, the Grades for which are B2, A3 and C1 respectively. The overall Grade for the course would be determined as follows:

Grade	Grade Point	Weighting	Calculation
B2	16	20%	$(20\% \times 16) + (20\% \times 20) + (60\% \times 14)$ = 3.2 + 4 + 8.4
A3	20	20%	
C1	14	60%	= 15.60 = B3

Internal Examiners/Markers

Please note: Undergraduate students, on five-year degree programmes, graduating in 2021/22, will have both rounded and unrounded grades on their Student Record. Unrounded grades (to two decimal places) whether achieved in 2020/21, 2021/22 or earlier, should be used for GPA calculations.

2.10 University Court Ordinance 404 and the [General Regulations for First Degrees](#) and for [Taught Postgraduate Awards](#) indicate that the Examiners for each degree shall be the “Professors, Readers and Lecturers in the University [including those holding such status on an honorary basis] whose courses qualify for that degree, and such External Examiners as may be appointed by the University Court”. Notwithstanding these Regulations, the Senate has agreed that Heads of School may also permit others without that status, such as Teaching Assistants, Teaching Fellows, Clinical Tutors or Recognised Teachers, (including those appointed as Relief Teachers and/or on a part-time basis) to mark prescribed degree assessments (in-course assignments and/or written examination scripts) where the Head of School is satisfied that the person concerned is sufficiently experienced to be a competent marker.

“Blind” / Anonymous Marking

2.11 Written Examination Scripts ³: All written examination scripts must be **anonymous**, i.e. students should only be identified by candidate number. The University’s examination booklets require candidates to write their student ID number on their scripts with their name being concealed in a sealable section.

2.12 Other Summative Assessments: Where appropriate, all other assessments should be marked anonymously. In determining the appropriateness of anonymous marking, the impact of this on the quality of the feedback subsequently available to students should be considered.

Moderation Procedures

2.13 The University’s [Moderation Policy](#) is a process intended to assure that an assessment outcome is fair and reliable and that assessment criteria have been applied consistently. The [Quality Assurance Agency \(QAA\)](#)

³ A script is defined as the totality of a student’s answers to a written examination paper i.e. the answers to the required number of questions per paper.

Quality Code for Higher Education stipulates that 'Processes for marking assessments and for moderating marks are clearly articulated and consistently operated by those involved in the assessment process'. Moderation must be carried out prior to the return of grades to students.

Return of Grades

- 2.14 Markers should provide timely feedback to students on all types of in-course assessment, including oral or clinical examinations, even when the grades are summative and contribute to the overall course grade.
- 2.15 The Senate has agreed that Schools must inform students of their CGS grade for individual elements of in-course assignments irrespective of whether the marks are to contribute to the overall course CGS grade. Thus, for example, for a course assessed entirely by three in-course essays, Schools should inform students of their individual essay CGS grade (usually via [MyAberdeen](#) Grade Centre) and the Student Record (or Student Record Card via the [Student Hub](#)) will inform students of their overall course CGS grade.
- 2.16 If a course is assessed by a combination of a written examination and continuous assessment Schools should inform students of their individual essay CGS grade (usually via [MyAberdeen](#) Grade Centre) and the Student Record (or Student Record Card via the [Student Hub](#)) will inform students of their overall course CGS grade. However, it is important for students to be able to see the grades awarded for individual questions in an exam; this gives them important feedback on which areas of the course they understand well and which they may need to work at. A breakdown of exam grades can be released to students via MyAberdeen if the MyAberdeen site is set up accordingly. If not, Schools should find an alternative way to give students this vital feedback on their exam performance.

Data Protection

- 2.17 Schools should be aware that data protection legislation gives students the right to request access to personal data held relating to them (including from 1 January 2005 such data held in manual datasets which are not structured by reference to individuals). This could include examination scripts and any written comments made by examiners on their assessments. Schools should therefore ensure that all Examiners, including External Examiners, are aware that their written comments on candidates' written examination scripts may be provided to students who make a formal application for disclosure of their personal data.

Section 3: Determining Degree Classification

- 3.1 There are four classes of Honours degree classification: First, Upper Second, Lower Second and Third. A candidate on a four-year programme who has not met the requirements for the award of a third-class Honours degree may, subject to meeting the requirements, be eligible for the award of a Designated Degree or non-Honours Degree.
- 3.2 Degree classification should be based on performance across the Honours programme as a whole, i.e. programme years 3 and 4 or years 3, 4 and 5.
- 3.3 Only courses coded at level 3 and above will count towards degree classification.
- 3.4 Students, on five-year degree programmes, graduating in 2021/22, whose studies during 2019/20 and 2020/21 were impacted by Covid-19, will have their degree classification based on both (i) the [Grade Spectrum](#) approach described in paragraphs 3.8 to 3.9 below and (ii) the Grade Point Average system as described in paragraphs 3.10 to 3.12 below. If the classifications differ, students will be awarded the higher of the two classifications.
- 3.5 An Element of assessment is defined as any component of assessment which contributes a specified percentage of the overall assessment for a course or programme. Three examples of elements of assessment are (i) a 30 credit point course may be deemed equivalent to two elements of assessment (with a 15 credit point course being one element and a 45 credit point course being three elements), (ii) in a course that is assessed entirely by written examination comprising three essay questions, it may be decided that each essay question should amount to one element of assessment in terms of the *Grade Spectrum*, (iii) an end-of-programme oral or summative written examination such as a general paper may be assigned a specified number of elements of assessment.
- 3.6 The overall grade for each course is used to determine overall degree classification with the credit values of each course determining their relative weightings. In the case of zero credit-rated courses the relative weighting of this towards the determination of the overall award must be clearly stated to students. Where a course is a compulsory part of a programme but does not contribute to honours degree classification this must also be clearly stated to students
- 3.7 If a student takes additional credits in PY3 and PY4 which are at level 3 or above, Schools will (i) have approved the extra credits and (ii) will have asked students to identify which of the 120 credits they wish to be included in their GPA calculation *at the point at which the extra credits were chosen*. Students cannot wait until they have their results to choose which courses can be included in the degree classification. However, if additional credits are taken in PY3 or PY4 to replace a failed non-compulsory course, both the fail grade from the non-compulsory course and the grade from the additional course will be used in the classification calculation. Students should be made aware of the implications of taking additional credit.
- 3.8 The *Grade Spectrum* is expressed in terms of the proportion of the CGS grades achieved in those *elements* of assessment that are defined by the sponsoring School as contributing to the determination of classification in a given Honours programme.
- 3.9 Degree classification based on the [Grade Spectrum](#) requires the following performance:

First: Marks at 18 or A5 or better in elements constituting $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total elements; and Marks at 15 / B3 or better in elements constituting $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total elements; and Normally marks at 12 or C3 or better in all elements.

2i: Marks at 15 or B3 or better in elements constituting $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total elements; and Marks at 12 or C3 or better in elements constituting $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total elements: and Normally marks at 9 or D3 or better in all elements.

2ii: Marks at 12 or C3 or better in elements constituting $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total elements; and Marks at 9 or D3 or better in elements constituting $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total elements.

Third: Marks at 9 or D3 or better in elements constituting $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total elements.

Example: A student achieves the following in elements contributing to honours classification:

Level 3 (12 elements): B1,A5,B2,A3,C1,B1,A5,A4,B2,A5,B1,B3

Level 4 (10 elements): A5,A5,B3,A5,B1,A5,A5,C3,A5,A5

Level 5 (8 elements): B2,B3,A5,A3,A4,B1,B1,C1

≥ A5: 15 / 30 elements = 50%

≥ B3: 27 / 30 elements = 90%

≥ C3: 30 / 30 elements = 100%

≥ D3: 30 / 30 elements = 100%

= First Class

3.10 The Grade Point Average (GPA) is determined by the CGS grades achieved in those elements of assessment that are defined by the sponsoring School(s) as contributing to the determination of classification in a given Honours programme.

3.11 Details of the GPA bands associated with each honours degree classification are provided below. For students, who entered an Honours programme in September 2019, whose studies during 2019/20 and 2020/21 were impacted by Covid-19, the University has agreed to **widen the borderlines from 0.5 to 0.99 of a GPA point**. This approach directly allows any student who might be eligible for an increase in classification to be considered at Examiners' Meetings.

Grade Point Average	Degree Classification
18.0-22.0	First Class
greater than 17.0, less than 18.0	<i>Borderline 2.1/1st</i>
15.0 – 17.0	Upper Second Class
greater than 14.0, less than 15.0	<i>Borderline 2.2/2.1</i>
12.0 – 14.0	Lower Second Class
greater than 11.0, less than 12.0	<i>Borderline 3rd/2.2</i>
9.0 – 11.0	Third Class
greater than 8.0, less than 9.0	<i>Borderline Fail/3rd</i>
0 – 8.0	Fail

3.12 The GPA, and hence the degree classification that should be awarded, is determined by aggregating the Grade Points for each course taking account of the relative weightings both in terms of credit and level of study, where appropriate.

Please note: For students who failed an honours course (as a first attempt) during the initial period of Covid-19 (defined as 16 March 2020 to the end of the 2019/20 academic year) and were successful at a subsequent resit attempt, the passing resit grade will be not be capped and instead the grade achieved will be used for GPA/Degree Classification purposes.

The steps involved in the process are as follows:

- **Step 1:** For each course, calculate Course contribution to GPA, i.e. Course GPA [grade point x course weight / total credits taken at that level, or in that programme year*]
- **Step 2:** Calculate GPA for each level of study/programme year i.e. sum total of course GPAs for level of study or for each programme year (Schools to advise students which is relevant to them)
- **Step 3:** Apply the appropriate weighting to the level of study or programme year GPAs (Schools to advise students which is relevant to them), and combine the weighted GPAs to gain overall GPA

With regards weighting, in May 2019, Senate approved the following:

- (i) that weightings of Honours years can be either 50:50 (L3:L4) or 30:70 (L3:L4) for four year programmes and 33:33:34 (L3:L4:L5) or 25:35:40 (L3:L4:L5) for five year programmes.
- (ii) that weighting is based on the level of the course not the programme year of study

Schools weight their Honours programmes as follows:

School	Weighting of Level 3: Level 4	Weighting of Level 3: Level 4: Level 5
Biological Sciences	50: 50	33: 33: 34
Business	50: 50	n/a
Divinity, History and Philosophy	50: 50	n/a
Education	50: 50	n/a
Engineering	50: 50	33: 33: 34
Geosciences	50: 50 (<i>Archaeology programmes</i>) 30: 70 (<i>Geography/Geology programmes</i>)	25: 35: 40
Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture	50: 50	n/a
Law	All L4 courses used in classification, weighted according to their credit weighting	n/a
Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition	30: 70 (<i>for intercalated degrees, Level 4 to be weighted at 100</i>)	30: 70: 0
Natural and Computing Sciences	50:50 (Computing Science, Maths and Physics programmes) 30:70 (Chemistry programmes)	25:35:40 (Chemistry programmes) 33:33:34 (Computing Science programmes)
Psychology	50: 50	n/a
Social Science	50: 50	n/a

Example 1: based on 30:70 weighting of level of course (not programme year they were studied in)

Step 1: Calculate course contribution to GPA (Note: two L3 courses have been taken in PY4 so the total number of L3 credits = 150 and total number of L4 credits = 90)

Programme Year 3	Course	Grade	Grade Pt	Credits	Step 1 Course GPA	Calculation
19/20	CS3017	D3	9.00	15	0.9	$9.00 \times 15 / 150$
19/20	CS3024	B3	15.40	30	3.08	$15.40 \times 30 / 150$
19/20	CS3025	B3	15.00	15	1.50	$15.00 \times 15 / 150$
19/20	CS3026	C1	13.70	15	1.37	$13.70 \times 15 / 150$
19/20	CS3518	A4	18.50	15	1.85	$18.50 \times 15 / 150$
19/20	CS3524	C1	14.00	15	1.40	$14.00 \times 15 / 150$
19/20	CS3525	B1	17.20	15	1.72	$17.20 \times 15 / 150$

Programme Year 4	Course	Grade	Grade Pt	Credits	Step 1 Course GPA	Calculation
20/21	CS4025	C1	14.00	15	2.33	$14.00 \times 15 / 90$
20/21	CS4028	D3	9.87	15	1.65	$9.87 \times 15 / 90$
20/21	CS4040	B3	15.00	15	2.50	$15.00 \times 15 / 90$
20/21	CS4520	B3	15.67	15	2.61	$15.67 \times 15 / 90$
20/21	CS4529	B2	16.67	30	5.56	$16.67 \times 30 / 90$
20/21	SX3009	C1	14.00	15	1.40	$14.00 \times 15 / 150$
20/21	SX3504	B1	17.00	15	1.70	$17.00 \times 15 / 150$

Note, grades in 2019-2020 were rounded up to provide the course CGS but in 2020-21 course grades will be determined by the unrounded, to two decimal places, grade point

Step 2: Calculate GPA for each level of study

Total Level 3 course GPA	14.92
Total Level 4 course GPA	14.65

Step 3: Apply the appropriate weighting to the level of study GPAs, and combine the weighted GPAs to gain overall GPA

Assuming a 30/70 split between Level 3 and Level 4 courses	
Level 3 contribution to GPA	$14.92 \times 30\% = 4.48$
Level 4 contribution to GPA	$14.65 \times 70\% = 10.26$
Final GPA	$4.48 + 10.26 = 14.74$ [borderline (between 2:2 / 2:1 classification)]

Example 2: based on a 50:50 weighting of level 3 to level 4

Step 1: Calculate course contribution to GPA (Note: a zero credit-rated course has been assigned a weighting of 15 credits at L4 so the total number of L3 credits = 120 and total number of L4 credits =135)

Programme Year 3	Course	Grade	Grade Pt	Credits	Step 1 Course GPA	Calculation
19/20	XY3001	A3	20.00	15	2.5	20.00*15/120
19/20	XY3002	B2	15.99	15	2.00	15.99*15/120
19/20	BC3001	A1	21.60	30	5.4	21.60*30/120
19/20	BC3502	B2	16.40	30	4.1	16.40*30/120
19/20	XY3510	C1	14.00	30	3.5	14.00*30/120

Programme Year 4	Course	Grade	Grade Pt	Credits	Step 1 Course GPA	Calculation
20/21	XY4001	A3	20.57	30	4.57	20.57*30/135
20/21	XY4010	B3	15.99	30	3.55	15.99*30/135
20/21	BC4501	A2	21.60	30	4.80	21.60*30/135
20/21	BC4502	A3	20.00	30	4.44	20.00*30/135
20/21	ZZ4001**	A2	21.00	15	2.33	21.00*15/135

** 15 credit weighting given to zero credit rated ZZ4001

Note, grades in 2019-2020 were rounded up to provide the course CGS but in 2020-21 course grades will be determined by the unrounded, to two decimal places, grade point

Step 2: Calculate GPA for each level of study

Total Level 3 course GPA	17.50
Total Level 4 course GPA	19.69

Step 3: Apply the appropriate weighting to the level of study GPAs, and combine the weighted GPAs to gain overall GPA

Assuming a 50/50 split between Level 3 and Level 4 courses	
Level 3 contribution to GPA	17.50 x 50% = 8.75
Level 4 contribution to GPA	19.69 x 50% = 9.85
Final GPA	8.75 + 9.85 = 18.60 [First class classification]

- 3.13 In exceptional circumstances, where a candidate has been unable due to medical reasons or other good cause to complete the requirements for honours degree classification and, where medical advice indicates that it would be unreasonable to require a candidate to appear for assessment on a subsequent occasion, and if the candidate's past record provides sufficient evidence that they would have obtained Honours, the Examiners may recommend the award of an *Aegrotat* degree, but only after obtaining the consent of the candidate. The award of an *Aegrotat* degree will debar candidates from counting towards Honours degree assessment any result achieved thereafter.

Section 4: Borderline Candidates

- 4.1 Where a candidate is borderline for a higher class of degree, Examiners' Meetings will use discretion to determine whether it would be appropriate to award the higher degree outcome. For students, who entered an Honours programme in September 2019, whose studies during 2019/20 and 2020/21 were impacted by Covid-19, Examiners will, without further consideration, award students in the following borderline categories, the higher degree outcome as outlined below.

Grade Point Average	Undergraduate Degree Classification
greater than 17.49, less than 18.00	First Class
greater than 14.49, less than 15.00	Upper Second Class
greater than 11.49, less than 12.00	Lower Second Class

If a candidate's degree outcome falls within published borderlines, but they are not eligible for the automatic award of the higher degree classification/award, Examiners should consider **individual circumstances, on a case-by-case basis**, to determine the degree outcome which should be awarded. In doing so, Examiners' meetings will consider, where applicable:

- **Grade Profile:** across Honours courses (for example, if the majority of grades are in the higher classification, the examiners may consider this as grounds for upgrading);
- **Exit velocity** (NB: At *undergraduate* level, this can only be considered if equal weighting is adopted for the programme of study (e.g. programme year 3 counts for 50% and programme year 4 for 50%). Exit velocity does not apply where a programme has unequal weighting (e.g. programme year 3 counts for 30% and programme year 4 for 70%) as it is already built into that weighting. A candidate may be considered for upgrading to the higher classification if their GPA for level 4 courses (not courses taken in programme year 4) is sufficiently higher than their GPA for level 3 courses);
- **Mitigating circumstances:** Candidates are, through published procedures for doing so, invited to submit supporting statements and/or evidence to provide Examiners with information on the mitigating circumstances they have experienced.

- 4.2 *Viva voce* exams **are not permitted** for determining the final classification of borderline students.

- 4.3 In all borderline cases, the rationale for the final degree class given **must** be clearly recorded in the minutes of examiners' meetings.

Section 5: Mitigating Circumstances / Impaired Performance

5.1 Mitigating circumstances/good cause (MC/GC) indicate that a student has suffered some illness or other personal difficulties which have affected their performance in an assessment or prevented them submitting an assessment or sitting an exam. Students are required to inform the University in good time⁴.

5.2 MC/GC circumstances can impact on both course grades and overall degree classification. **It is not possible to adjust the grade awarded for an assessment that is thought to have been affected by mitigating circumstances.** For example, a student submits an assignment and is awarded a C2 by the marker. The School are aware that the student has submitted a medical certificate showing that they were unwell in the lead up to the assignment and are content that this is genuine and that the grade awarded is not representative of the student's normal work. Even having accepted this, it is not possible for the Examiners to make a judgement about the extent of the impact and thereby to determine the compensation which should be applied to the obtained grade, i.e. it is not possible to change the grade awarded; the work cannot be graded at B2, for example, as it is not of a standard that warrants a B2. How Schools should deal with MC/GC is outlined below.

5.3 At course level:

If the Examiners are confident that the assessments already completed by the candidate prior to the mitigating circumstances provide evidence that they have met ALL the learning outcomes of the course then, subject to at least 70% weighting of the assessments for the course having been completed, an overall grade for the course may be returned on the basis of the prior assessments. For example, if a student has failed to submit (or performs badly in) one essay or lab report counting for 20% of the overall course grade due to MC/GC but all the learning outcomes of the course have been met through other essays or lab reports, the examiners may set aside this assessment, i.e. the C2 above, and the overall course grade will be calculated on the 80% of the course that has been completed.

Where less than 70% weighting of the components of assessment for the course have been completed, the affected assessment(s) should be set aside and the candidate should (wherever possible) be given another opportunity to take the assessment(s) with the affected attempt(s) discounted. For example, if a student has long-term, intermittent health issues which have affected several assessments that contribute 50% of the course grade that student must be offered an opportunity to resit the affected assessments (or the entire course) with the first sitting(s) being discounted. In the case of candidates in the final year of an Honours programme, reference should also be made to Section 6: resits.

Where the Examiners do not consider the grounds presented to be sufficient good cause, the assessment should be treated in the same way as it would have been had no mitigating evidence been submitted. No partial compensation for good cause can be given.

5.4 At degree classification level:

For borderline students and non-borderline candidates whose grade profile during the initial period of Covid-19 (defined as 16 March 2020 to the end of the 2019/20 academic year) is markedly below that of other results only:

Where the Examiners agree that illness or other good cause has impacted on performance it is important to determine whether or not that has already been taken into account at course level. *MC/GC cannot be taken into account at both course level and degree classification level* and can only be considered for students who are at a borderline between one degree classification and another. If mitigating circumstances have not already been considered at course level the Examiners' meeting may consider this as justification for moving that student into the higher degree classification.

⁴ The University's Student Absence Policy is available [here](#).

Section 6: Resits: Reassessment & Award of Compensatory Credit

- 6.1 With the exceptions listed in Section 5 above, candidates who fail, or who fail to attend or complete, a course for whatever reason and who wish to be awarded credit for the relevant course will be required to resit.
- 6.2 In order to be eligible to take a resit, a candidate must hold a valid class certificate. The validity of a class certificate is limited to the academic year in which it is awarded and to the academic year immediately following. In each academic year there are two assessment opportunities, the main diet in the relevant half-session and the summer resit diet. Candidates holding a valid class certificate are permitted a total of three opportunities of assessment within this period. Only in exceptional circumstances, in accordance with [General Regulation 7 for First Degrees](#), may the Senate extend the validity of a class certificate.
- 6.3 As approved by Senate, passing resit grades are to be included in Grade Point Average (GPA) calculations, capped at D3, for classification of degrees at UG and PGT. The actual resit grade achieved will be held in the Student Record System (SRS), but the SRS will carry forward D3 (not the actual grade achieved) into the Grade Point average calculation and classification. The actual grade achieved in the resit will be revealed in both the Student Record Card and Transcript.
- 6.4 If a student continues to fail at resit, the highest grade achieved for all attempts (first (original) attempt and any subsequent resit attempts) will be used for GPA and degree classification purposes.
- 6.5 For candidates in the final year of an Honours programme, there are three categories of exception:
- Candidates who achieve a Grade of E1, E2 or E3 in courses at level 4 or above taken as part of an Honours programme may be eligible for the award of an equivalent amount of compensatory level 1 credit to a maximum of 30 credit points. Such compensatory credit can only be awarded where the candidate has already achieved 90 Credit points at level 4. Candidates may not receive compensatory credit for courses defined as compulsory for their degree programme. Candidates who have failed to achieve 90 Credit points at Level 4 or who have failed to achieve a pass in a compulsory course must refer to sub-sections (b) or (c) below.
 - A pass at the first attempt in certain courses may be stipulated as a requirement for achieving the award in question. Such compulsory requirements (see paragraph 1.5 (b) will be detailed in the programme prescription. The compensation outlined in (a) above will not apply to such compulsory courses. Candidates who fail such a compulsory course will not be eligible to resit the course and would not be eligible to receive the Honours degree concerned. They would be eligible to receive a lower award if otherwise qualified, or where appropriate a non-accredited honours degree which does not require a pass in the compulsory course(s).
 - Where a candidate has achieved a Grade of F1 or below in a course at level 4 or above, they may elect, subject to having achieved 90 credit points at level 4, to take an alternative course or courses of the same credit value at a lower level to make up their credit shortfall rather than resitting the failed course(s).

During the initial period of Covid-19 (defined as 16 March 2020 to the end of the 2019/20 academic year) where a student failed to achieve a pass grade for a course or courses, provided it was their first attempt, they were eligible to undertake the required assessment at the next available opportunity. In normal circumstances, students would have their resit results capped, however, for students undertaking a resit as a consequence of the impact of Covid-19, this mark was **not capped**.

Section 7: Students who take extra credits at levels 3, 4 and 5

- 7.1 If a UG student wishes to take additional credits at level 3 or above, they must seek the permission of their School(s) to do so. If approval is given, Schools will ask students to nominate (*at the point of registration for extra courses*) which of their non-compulsory 240 credits they wish to contribute to the GPA calculation for degree classification purposes. Note, this does not apply if a UG student is taking extra credits as a result of a fail in a non-compulsory course.
- 7.2 Schools must ensure that students are made aware of the implications of taking additional credit.

Section 8: Students who undertake Study Abroad

- 8.1 Students who undertake to go abroad to study as part of Study Abroad or Erasmus programmes in PY3 should not have the marks they earn whilst abroad count towards classification; although the credits attained will count towards credit accumulation for SCQF purposes.
- 8.2 As such, for example, for students who study a full year abroad, their degrees will be classified on the basis of the 120 credits they undertake at during PY4 only. Students who study one semester abroad will have their degrees classified on the basis of 180 L3 and L4 credits.
- 8.3 Exceptions to this should apply where dictated by accrediting bodies.