

HONOURS CLASSIFICATION (Grade Spectrum)

A *Grade Spectrum* for determining degree classification has been in use since 1996/97. The details below were approved by the Senate on 16 June 2004 and were used to determine degree classification for all students commencing Honours programmes in or after 2004/05. Amends were made 2014-15 to incorporate the Common Grading Scale (CGS).

1. For every Honours programme the University Calendar will specify both the courses and summative examinations that contribute to the classification, and the School will specify the weighting given to each course and summative examination in deciding the classification. Where a course is a compulsory part of a programme but does not contribute to the classification, this should be stated. Classification should be based on performance across the programme as a whole. The criteria for the award of any CAS mark / CGS grade and class of degree should be made explicit to students at the outset of their Honours programme.
2. For degree programmes delivered by more than one Discipline, all marks for prescribed degree assessments contributing towards the Honours programme must be agreed by the relevant External Examiners before being considered by joint Examiners' meetings. In the case of courses ending in or before the final first half-session, all Schools should convey the relevant course marks to their partners in the Degree Programme by the start of the Summer Term.
3. In view of the different practices between Disciplines, the *Grade Spectrum* is expressed in terms of the proportion of the CAS marks / 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. Elements of assessment can be individual courses, sub-components of courses, or assessments that are not linked to a specific course. Elements may be weighted differentially. Some examples of elements of assessment are given in Note 3.
4. Where medical or other personal evidence is considered relevant by examiners it should normally be taken into account in deciding the marks for individual courses and summative assessments rather than in the process of reaching a decision on the final classification. It is recognised, however, that in some cases the evidence may be better assessed at the time of final classification.
5. Similarly, when an oral examination is used the result should normally be employed to modify marks for the relevant courses before they are conveyed to the Examiners' Meeting, rather than the overall classification, unless the oral examination is a separately-identifiable and separately-weighted summative examination taken by all candidates and is a stated element of assessment of the programme.
6. Where candidates are unable to complete an element of Honours degree assessment on account of illness or other good cause, General Regulation 21 applies. Where an element is returned as "no paper" without such good cause, a mark of zero / CGS G3 will be used in the process of classification for each such element. [See Note 1]

7. Examiners retain the final discretion in the award of Honours Classes. However, Honours classification will normally be based on performance on the following grade spectrum. To allow for different practices between Disciplines, the spectrum is expressed in terms of the proportion that each element of assessment constitutes as part of the overall total after it has been appropriately weighted. [See Note 3]
- First:** Marks at CAS **18 / CGS A5 or better** in elements constituting half of the total elements; **and** Marks at CAS **15/CGS B3 or better** in elements constituting three quarters of the total elements; **and** Normally marks at CAS **12/CGS C3 or better** in all elements.
- 2i:** Marks at CAS **15/CGS B3 or better** in elements constituting half of the total elements; **and** Marks at CAS **12/CGS C3 or better** in elements constituting three quarters of the total elements: and Normally marks at CAS **9/CGS D3 or better** in all elements.
- 2ii:** Marks at CAS **12/CGS C3 or better** in elements constituting half of the total elements; **and** Marks at CAS **9/CGS D3 or better** in elements constituting three quarters of the total elements.
- Third:** Marks at CAS **9/CGS D3 or better** in elements constituting three quarters of the total elements.
8. The *Grade Spectrum* defines the threshold standards against which the different classes of Honours degree are awarded. The Examiners, however, have discretion (in the circumstances defined in Note 2 below) to depart from this and may choose to award a higher degree than that indicated by the *Grade Spectrum*. Discretion may take account of actual marks/grades within bands. Where discretion is exercised, clear reasons must be identified for doing so and a record kept. Where clear majority agreement to exercise discretion cannot be reached, the degree indicated by the *Grade Spectrum* must stand. For Honours programmes delivered by more than one discipline, if clear majority agreement to exercise discretion between both disciplines cannot be reached, then the degree indicated by the *Grade Spectrum* must stand.
9. Provisional marks for the January diet of examinations are returned on the understanding that these may be altered up or down at the Final Examiners' Meetings in June. Schools must inform the Registry in June, on an exception basis, of those marks which have been altered at the Final Examiners' Meeting.
10. For Honours programmes delivered by more than one Discipline, the final decision on classification should be taken by an Examiners' Meeting consisting of up to three examiners from each of the participating Disciplines, plus appropriate External Examiners where available. Where External Examiners are not available, decisions will be subject to subsequent ratification by the relevant External Examiner(s). In the case of an Honours programme delivered by a single Discipline, more than three examiners from the relevant Discipline may be involved, along with the External Examiner or examiners, in the final decision on classification.
11. If students appeal against an Honours classification awarded by the Examiners, the Senate policy on academic appeals in force at that time will apply.

Notes

- 1 General Regulation 21 for First Degrees shall apply where candidates have been unable to complete an element of Honours degree assessment at the prescribed time on account of illness (which must be certified by a medical practitioner) or other good cause. [Good cause is defined as any reason outwith a candidate's control e.g. compassionate or unavoidable circumstances and does not include, for example, misreading of the examination timetable in regard to the date, time or venue of an examination].

- 2 There can be no undertaking that the Examiners choose to use discretion to depart from the class indicated by the *Grade Spectrum*. Where the examiners will choose to use their discretion to depart, in an upward direction, from the class indicated by the *Grade Spectrum*, it shall normally be as a consequence of (a) a candidate's overall performance and (b) the particular circumstances which have resulted in a candidate not satisfying the normal *Grade Spectrum* requirement for the higher class.

- 3 Element of assessment is defined as any component of assessment which contributes a specified percentage of the overall assessment for a course or programme. It is for the individual Heads of School to agree with the relevant Course Co-ordinator (and, where appropriate, the Programme, Phase or Interdisciplinary Co-ordinator) the elements of assessment that contribute to Honours classification and to ensure that the elements for each course, and where appropriate, for a programme are made clear to students in course/programme handbooks before or at the commencement of the course or Honours 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.

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