

TRACKED CHANGES TO THE GUIDE, MADE BETWEEN NOVEMBER 2013 AND FEBRUARY 2014, FROM VERSIONS 1.3 TO 1.4

Guide to the Taught Degree Regulations

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Purpose and Status

The purpose of this guide to the Taught Degree Regulations is to provide an explanation on the principles underpinning the ~~degree-Degree regulations-Regulations~~ and their implementation following discussions with the Degree Regulations Network Group (DRNG). Note that only the University of Manchester Degree Regulations have the status of having been approved by Senate whereas this guide and accompanying glossary are intended as an aid to their understanding and have not been subject to Senate approval.

Context

The Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations were approved by Senate on the 2nd May 2012 and implemented for all new students from September 2012.

All students commencing their studies from September 2012 ~~will beare~~ subject to the 2012 ~~degree~~ Taught Degree regulationsRegulations.

Progressing students will use the ~~degree-Degree regulations-Regulations~~ version current when they commenced their studies.

However, there are additional complexities with regards to students returning from interruption and the particular set of Regulations they should be working to. Please see the section 'Students returning after Interruption' (page 6 of this Guide).

Students may not self select the ~~degree-Degree regulations-Regulations~~ under which their work is assessed.

This accompanying guide should be read alongside the following documents, which are available on the TLSO website: <http://www.tlso.manchester.ac.uk/policies-and-procedures/>

- Work and attendance of students (Regulation XX)
<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=1895>
- Glossary of terms for ~~degree-Degree regulationsRegulations~~
<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=13146>
- Guidance on External Examiners Procedures
<http://www.tlso.manchester.ac.uk/externalexaminers/forms-and-guidance/>
- Examination Board Guidance
<http://www.tlso.manchester.ac.uk/map/teachinglearningassessment/assessment/sectionc-reachingdecisionsfromassessment/examinationboardprocedures/>

Further information is available at:

- Policy on Mitigating Circumstances

<http://www.tlso.manchester.ac.uk/map/teachinglearningassessment/assessment/section-reachingdecisionsfromassessment/policyonmitigatingcircumstances/>

- Records Retention Schedule
<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=6514>
- The Assessment Framework
<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=7333>

There have been two University wide consultations on the new ~~taught-Taught degree-Degree regulations~~Regulations. In addition, all of our External Examiners have been consulted and both sets of ~~R~~regulations have recently undergone modelling against existing UG/PGT results. Records of the consultation process can be found at:

- Draft principles for New Taught Degree Regulations – Consultation -
<http://www.tlso.manchester.ac.uk/policies-and-procedures/principles-new-taught-degree-regulations/>

General Overview

The ~~regulations-Regulations~~ have been revised to ensure consistency in practice across the institution. There is still a need for some programmes to modify the ~~regulations-Regulations~~ for example to satisfy the requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory bodies. Where this is a requirement students must be informed via Programme Handbooks and any variances must be approved by the relevant Faculty.

The marking schemes for undergraduate and postgraduate taught degrees including levels of compensation are provided in tables A, B and C at the end of this guide. Note that some programmes may adopt higher thresholds due to PSRB requirements, in which case these must be included in Programme Handbooks.

All variations from the standard University agreed Regulations must be approved by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

In addition there are areas where options exist and Schools are required to inform the Faculty and students of the regulation adopted across the school.

For UG, these are as follows:

- Schools must decide whether or not they wish to include level 4 (year 1) study in degree average calculations (see paragraphs K52 and L55);
- and whether mark review includes the use of a Viva Voce (see Appendix A).

For PG, the optional choice is as follows:

- School must decide whether or not the award of distinction is based on the overall average of the programme; or alternatively if it is based on the students achieving a level of distinction in both the taught and research elements of a programme. The reason for this choice is that there are a wide range of credit weightings applied to taught and research elements across the University. Because of this choice there are two approaches to the determination of those

students lying in the boundary zone for degree classification at the level of distinction (see PGT Degree Regulations Appendix A and table A1).

Throughout the ~~regulations~~ Regulations there is acceptance that these can be modified in light of special circumstances, (see Policy on Mitigating Circumstances):

- <http://www.tlso.manchester.ac.uk/map/teachinglearningassessment/assessment/sectionc-reachingdecisionsfromassessment/policyonmitigatingcircumstances/>

To aid communication with students an introduction to the Degree Regulations for students has been prepared for Schools/Faculties to use for inclusion in programme handbooks. This is available at

- <http://www.tlso.manchester.ac.uk/degree-regulations/>.

The recording of results is based upon course unit final mark calculated as a whole number; whereas weighted degree averages for the determination of classification are calculated to one decimal place (see appendix A in the PGT and UG ~~R~~Regulations).

A student's final results after graduation will not indicate any special circumstances, but will have annotated course unit marks which have been compensated (c) and/or subject to referral (r). Undergraduate students marks will be reported by the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).

The following headings accord with those used in the ~~degree~~ Degree ~~regulations~~ Regulations and are best read alongside the ~~regulations~~ Regulations.

Credit and Award Framework

Table 1 in both UG and PGT Degree Regulations is intended to be used for exit awards, not for deciding progression

For UG programmes the credit required to progress automatically from year 1 to year 2 is 120 credits. Standard University practice should be that ordinary degrees are intended as an exit awards only and students are not normally expected to progress onto an ordinary degree, for example due to course unit failure. However, students can progress onto an ordinary degree on the basis of decisions made by a School or Faculty misconduct committee.

It follows that the opportunities for both UG and PGT students to exit before the end of the programme must be made clear, most notably where a student has failed the requirements of a professionally accredited programme. Updates to exit awards can normally be handled through the programme amendment process via the Faculty.

FEHQ levels have been used rather than year e.g. FEHQ level 4 is equivalent to year 1 because of possible confusion for students on part time degrees or non accredited study such as year abroad.

FEHQ level 7 is equivalent to postgraduate study because of possible confusion for students on part time degrees or non accredited study such as year abroad who are taking course units from lower FHEQ levels.

Title of Taught Awards

The authority to approve titles of degree awards lies with Senate.

The title of a programmes or an award will normally follow the following conventions:

The title “X” signifies that at least two thirds of the credits of the programme relate directly to the subject X.

The title “X and Y” signifies that the distinct subjects X and Y each comprise more than one third of the credits of the programme and of the credits in the final year.

The title “X with Y” signifies **either**

(i) that subject X is studied with subject Y, where Y comprises at least one quarter but no more than one third of the credits of the programme and of the credits in the final year; **or**

(ii) that subject X is combined with a substantial period of study Y (typically one academic year) away from the University.

The titles “X (with Y)” or “X (Y)” may be used to signify that subject X is studied with subject Y where Y is another subject or pathway that comprises less than one quarter but at least one sixth of the credits of the programme and of the credits in the final year.

Titles of awards will not normally include more than two subjects, to which “with Y” for a period of study Y as above may be added where applicable.

Duration of Postgraduate Taught Programmes

A Degree of Master will normally be a one-year programme and the date for the end of the programme and submission of the dissertation (or equivalent) will be published in the programme handbook.

A part-time Degree of Master student will complete the programme over a more extended period of time which will be published in the programme handbook, but will not exceed five academic years.

Students returning after Interruption

Students commencing their studies from September 2012 will be subject to the new Degree Regulations. Students who are returning after a period of interruption should return to the set of Degree Regulations they were originally registered upon if they have undertaken work or achieved credits which are counted towards their final degree classification.

In the case of a first year student who is returning after interruption and the work they have already undertaken is not counted in the final degree classification, they would return on the New Regulations if they agree to this. It is important that the student agrees to the transfer to the new set of Regulations as a condition of their return and that this is carefully documented with a transparent audit trail which would need to be available in the case of an appeal or complaint.

A second year student would normally return on the original Regulations under which they registered. However, if their first year does not count towards their final classification, they can agree to transfer to

the New Regulations. Again, there would need to be agreement from the student and a clear paper trail regarding their agreement to the transfer.

Students applying to take an interruption should be given details of how their interruption is likely to affect the set of Regulations they would return on, taking into account the fact that there could be advantages or disadvantages of transferring to a different set of Regulations.

Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning (AP(E)L)

While we wish to acknowledge prior learning, it is a principle that at least half of the programme should be assessed at the University of Manchester, for UG programmes, unless (see C6 of the Undergraduate Regulations) exceptional circumstances apply.

For PGT programmes, C6 of the PGT Regulations confirms the maximum amount of credits which are permitted for each programme for AP(E)L, ranging from 15 credits for a PG Certificate to 60 credits for a Masters award.

There should be a time limit on the period between prior learning and award normally set at five years but Faculties may wish to take into account part time study. The principle is that prior learning is relevant and current to the award.

With regards to exit awards, students on both UG and PGT programmes are permitted to receive exit awards if they have AP(E)L credits in their profile, as long as at least half of their total credits have been awarded by the University of Manchester.

Assessment and Progression

For undergraduate Programmes, progression is based upon obtaining sufficient credit e.g. 120c to progress from level 4 to level 5, 240c to progress from level 5 to level 6. Students who fail more than two thirds i.e. 80 credits are deemed to have failed the level and paragraph D11 sets out the options available to Examinations Boards.

Excluding the requirements of programmes with Professional accreditation, progression in postgraduate programmes is often determined at the transition from taught to research element. Given the variation in forms and timing of the research element the requirement for this progression should be determined by the programme and stated in the Programme Handbook.

Compensation

Compensation of failed course units is a measure to reduce the need for referral assessment where the student has demonstrated academic ability.

Some programmes e.g. due to professional accreditation requirements may wish to adopt higher standards such as not allowing compensation. In such cases these must be agreed by the Faculty and included in Programme Handbooks.

Unless the unit has been defined as non-compensatable, compensation is automatic; however, under Paragraphs E19 of the Undergraduate Degree Regulations and E15 of the Postgraduate Taught Regulations, the decision on how to apply compensation is at the discretion of the Examination Board.

Undergraduate

Compensation of failed course units is a measure to reduce the need for referral assessment where the student has demonstrated academic ability through passing at least two thirds i.e. 80 credits at levels 4 and 5. In the final year a different process applies and is referred to as 'Special Compensation' (see section J).

Compensation for undergraduates applies to marks between 30 and 39 (see appendix A of the UG Degree Regulations and Table A in this guide).

Please see the following example.

Box 1 An example of end of year compensation and referral decisions for a 120 credit undergraduate programme

Course unit	credit	mark%	(P pass, C compensatable fail, R uncompensatable fail)
A	20	55	P
B	20	38	C
C	20	60	P
D	20	40	P
E	10	70	P
F	10	65	P
G	10	25	R
H	10	35	C

In this example the student has passed 80 credits, they have gained a compensatable fail in course unit B and course unit H but have failed course unit G. The student would normally be compensated in course units B and H, to a total of 30 credits which is within the maximum allowable of 40 credits, (assuming the compensated course units are not compulsory and that additional accreditation rules do not apply- if there are such additional requirements e.g. for professional degree programmes they will be explained in the programme handbook).

The student in this case has failed course unit G and will have to resit this examination known as a referral. If the mark gained after the resit examination is 45% the student will have gained sufficient credits i.e. 120 to progress to the next year of study. The mark recorded for this student in course unit G will be 30 as this is the maximum allowable for a referral when the first sitting mark was an uncompensatable fail.

In the event of a student failing a course unit with a mark less than 30, and then obtaining a compensatable fail in the resit where there is compensation available, the student would receive the credit and pass the year overall. The student's mark would be capped at 30R.

Postgraduate

At postgraduate level it is felt we should increase standards and require students to only be compensated up to 30 credits for PG Diploma/Masters or 15c for PG certificate.

Compensation for postgraduates applies to marks between 40 and 49 for Masters programmes and between 30 and 39 for PGDip/ PGCert programmes (see tables B and C in this guide)

Note that postgraduate dissertations are normally not compensatable because of their high credit weighting, but a failed dissertation can be resubmitted (see paragraph F23 and F24 of the PGT Degree Regulations).

Reassessment

Undergraduate

Reassessment is available for undergraduate course units with marks below compensation i.e. 29 or less; or where more than 40 credits are in the compensation zone. Note that reassessment is not available for improving marks. The Examination Board should decide which course units should be referred e.g. when more than the maximum allowable are in the compensation zone.

In order to record student achievement rather than failure the uncompensatable fail mark can be replaced in final degree classification with the mark gained in referral to a maximum of the lower limit of compensation, which is 30%. This will show on a student's transcript as 30R. The reason for capping a referral mark is not to disadvantage students who have already been compensated hence not allowed to resit such courses for a higher mark.

For all referred assessment, the original pass mark will stay the same; therefore for Undergraduate referred assessment, a student will have to achieve a mark of 40 to pass, but this mark will be capped at the lowest compensatable mark (30%). This includes dissertations.

Referrals are capped at the lowest compensatable mark (30%). The capped mark is applied to the unit level mark, not just the failed element.

In the event of a student failing a course unit with a mark less than 30, and then obtaining a compensatable fail in the resit where there is compensation available, the student would receive the credit and pass the year overall. The student's mark would be capped at 30R.

Where students are permitted a resubmission following the application of a penalty due to academic malpractice, the resubmission is capped at 30R.

Box 2 An example of end of year compensation and referral decisions for a 120 credit undergraduate programme

Course unit	credit	mark%	(P pass, C compensatable fail, R uncompensatable fail)
A	20	30	C
B	20	38	C
C	20	60	P
D	20	40	P
E	10	70	P
F	10	65	P
G	10	25	R
H	10	35	C

In this example the student has passed 60 credits, they have gained a compensatable fail in course unit-, A, B and course unit H but have an uncompensatable fail in course unit G, (assuming the compensated course units are not compulsory and that additional accreditation rules do not apply- if there are such additional requirements e.g. for professional degree programmes they will be explained in the programme handbook).

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Note that only the University's own degree regulations have the status of having been approved by statute with the guide and accompanying programme regulations. In these circumstances the Regulations require the Examination Board

to make the decision which course unit (s) should be compensated fails and which are uncompensatable fails. The reason for this is that the composition of the assessment might need to be taken into account, also the course unit credits along with the need to pass compulsory courses.

In this example let us assume the Examination Board concludes the 10 credit course H should not be compensated, the two 20 credit course units A and B are compensated and the student will resit

Postgraduate

Reassessment is available for course units with marks below compensation or where more than allowable number of course units have been compensated. Note that reassessment is not available for improving marks. The Examination Board should decide which course units should be referred e.g. when more than the maximum allowable are in the compensation zone.

In order to record student achievement rather than failure the fail mark can be replaced in final degree classification with the mark gained in referral to a maximum of the lower limit of compensation. The reason is not to disadvantage students who have already been compensated hence not allowed to resit such course units for a higher mark.

For all referred assessment, the original pass mark will stay the same; therefore for Postgraduate Taught referred assessment, a student will have to achieve a mark of 50 to pass, but this mark will be capped at the lowest compensatable mark (40%). This includes dissertations.

In theory a student could pass all course units e.g. with marks of 50 for a Masters programme with some at the level compensation and this would produce an overall average below 50%. For this reason the classification of pass degree at masters in table A1 (PGT Degree Regulations) is set at 59.9% or less providing the credit requirement from Table 1 in the degree regulations is satisfied; i.e. passing 180 credits for a Masters irrespective of the average programme weighting. It is key to remember that the award is based on the achievement of required amount of credit rather than the average mark.

Paragraph F25 of the PGT Regulations state that “Referrals are capped at the lowest compensatable fail mark and this is used in the weighted average mark for the final award. The capped mark is applied to the unit level mark, not just the failed element.” Some of the principles behind the way referrals are handled are as follows:

- If a student passes a course unit by resit, then they should not end up with a lower mark than they obtained at the first sit. So if a PGT student gets 45% in the first sit (which is a fail), and then they get 60% in the resit, then their final mark should be 45R and not 40R.
- A student who got a low mark in the first sit of an exam should not gain an advantage compared to a student who got a relatively good mark in the first sit. So, for example, if a PGT student got 23% in the first sit and then 60% in the resit, their final mark will be 40R. That is, their resit mark is capped at the compensation level. This final mark is lower than that of the student in the first example, above, as intended.

So the basic rule is that if the student **passes** the resit, then the resit mark is capped at the

compensation level. However, if the original first-sit mark was in the compensation range, then this original mark is retained. On the other hand, if a student **fails**, then the first-sit mark stands.

Carrying forward failed credit on Undergraduate Programmes

Significant discussion has concerned whether a student can carry forward fails and to study and resit these without attendance. Resit without attendance has resulted in complaints about student support and can place students in an invidious position with regards their unemployment status.

As a result resit without attendance is to be avoided unless exceptional e.g. mitigating circumstances apply. An alternative is to permit the student to repeat the year (see section H of the UG Degree Regulations).

It is agreed a student can take up to 20 failed credits in attendance, but this should be a decision of the Examination Board and not a right, and should be taken with due consideration of the burden on the student the availability of facilities. The intention is that the 20 credits would be taken **in addition to** the 120 credits required for the subsequent year so they would study 130/140 credits in a year, not just the 10/20. The Examination Board would have to make the decision based on whether the student is able to pass with a heavier load. This may not be in their best interests but there might be some students who are capable of redeeming themselves.

Undergraduate students permitted to carry 20 credits into a subsequent year will not be charged any additional tuition fee but will be required to cover any additional costs associated with the course unit(s) concerned, e.g. mandatory field trips. Consideration of fees payable will be subject to Planning and Resources Committee.

Exit Awards

See table 1 in the Degree Regulations. The opportunities for a student to exit before the end of the programme must be made clear, most notably where a student has failed the requirements of a professionally accredited programme. Updates can normally be handled through the degree amendment process.

Repeating the Level/Year (or part of a year)

This is a decision of the Examination Board and not a right on either UG or PGT programmes.

If a student has failed the level/year, the Examination Board can make the decision to permit the student to repeat the year (or part thereof).

If a student fails and is allowed to repeat, fees are payable for the repeated period of study:

Undergraduate students permitted to repeat a year of study are charged full tuition fees at the rate applicable for the academic year concerned. As mentioned above under 'Carrying forward failed credit on Undergraduate Programmes', Undergraduate students permitted to carry 20 credits into a subsequent year will not be charged any additional tuition fee but will be required to cover any additional costs associated with the course unit(s) concerned, e.g. mandatory field trips.

If there are proven mitigating circumstances and the School feels that they are serious enough, they can decide that a student shouldn't be charged fees to repeat the period of study, but the final decision would be a School one.

Classification

Classification in postgraduate taught programmes

As noted above, if a student gains the required credit listed in Table 1 of the ~~degree-Degree regulations-Regulations~~ they are eligible for that award e.g. 180 credits for 1 year masters programme.

Course unit marks are recorded as whole numbers; weighted averages are calculated to one decimal point.

Overall average is based upon course unit credit weighting.

In addition there is one regulation where an option exists and Schools are required to inform the Faculty and students of the regulation adopted across the school. This is whether the award of distinction (see paragraph H33 of the PGT ~~regulations-Degree Regulations~~) is based on the overall average across the programme; or alternatively the level of distinction must be obtained in both taught and research i.e. dissertation elements. The reason for this choice is that there are a wide range of credit weightings applied to taught and research elements across the University. Because of this choice there are two approaches to the determination of those students lying in the boundary zone for degree classification at the level of distinction (see PGT Degree Regulations Appendix A and table A1).

Appendix A of the PGT Regulations states that a student whose total mark at the first assessment is within the specified boundary zone found in table A1, must be considered for the higher award; this relates to students who fall within the boundary zones between pass/merit and merit/distinction.

Students who lie within the pass/merit boundary zone can be considered for the higher award if they have some compensation or resits within their profile, as long as they have achieved at least 120 out of 180 credits.

Students who lie within the merit/distinction boundary can only be considered for the award of distinction if they have no compensation or resits within their profile.

The Regulations state that students should be "considered" for the higher award. Award of the higher classification is automatic if the criterion are met.

Final Year of an Undergraduate (including Integrated Masters) programme

A student must be awarded 360 credits for a 3 year Bachelors degree and 480 credits for a four year Integrated Masters degree, hence allowance must be made for course unit failure in the final year(s) as there are no referrals. Paragraphs J46 to J 48 are based upon the existing ~~degree-Degree regulations-Regulations~~ and allow up to 40 credits to be failed for 2:2; 2:1 and 1st class degrees; and up to 60c for third class degrees. Note that there is no change in marks as this 'special' compensation is for credit only.

~~There have been queries raised regarding Paragraph 47 of the Undergraduate Degree Regulations. This section includes a minor edit which will be updated in future revisions of the Regulations. Paragraph 47 states:~~

~~“When considering classifications for classes 1st, 2:1 or 2:2, an Examination Board may award special compensation for up to 60 credits at level 6 of a Bachelors degree programme or levels 6 or 7 of an integrated masters, for any failed unit, providing they meet the following criteria:~~

- ~~• Has passed at least 60 credits at the level of the award. However, there is a penalty applied due to the failure of 60 credits and the student will have the classification reduced to the classification below that which would have been awarded on the basis of the weighted average for the programme.”~~

The bullet point should read:

- ~~• Has passed at least 60 credits at the level of the award. However, there is a penalty applied due to the failure of **up to 60 credits.....”**~~

Undergraduate Degree Classification Scheme

In Appendix A of the Undergraduate Degree Regulations, the ‘Undergraduate Classification Scheme’, the boundary zone weighted average given for Third Class Bachelors degrees is incorrect. It should read “38.0 to 39.9” rather than “37.0 to 39.9”. This will be amended in future versions of the Undergraduate Degree Regulations.

Classification of Integrated Masters Programmes

The principle of level/year weightings is that early year(s):final year(s) of the Integrated Masters are weighed 1:2 e.g. 0; 0.2; 0.4; 0.4 (level 4 to 7).

Programmes may decide to include level 4 (year 1) performance in degree classification or not. This is a pedagogic decision based on the curriculum and/or professional requirements. This decision must be contained in Programme Handbooks and communicated to the Faculty.

Course unit marks are recorded as whole numbers; weighted averages are calculated to one decimal point.

Classification in Bachelors Programmes

The principle of level/year weightings is that earlier year(s): final year of the Bachelor degree are weighed 1:2 e.g. 0; 0.33; 0.67 (level 4 to 6).

Programmes may decide to include level 4 (year 1) performance in degree classification or not. This is a pedagogic decision based on the curriculum and/or professional requirements. This decision must be contained in Programme Handbooks and communicated to the Faculty.

Course unit marks are recorded as whole numbers; weighted averages are calculated to one decimal point.

Examination Board Arrangements

This note clarifies that when decisions are made over student progression this must be conducted by an Examinations Board. Often review of semester 1 results, e.g. in February, are for moderation and do not require decisions on progression. The role of the External Examiner is governed by the

External Examiner Code of Practice which is currently under review. This will clarify Year 1 and Year 2 progression decisions and the review of referral results.

Appendix A – Undergraduate Classification Scheme

The figure below presents the steps for calculation of programme average, determination of classification, consideration of students in the boundary zone through mark distribution followed by mark review. Two key considerations arise, firstly the use of External examiners in mark review, Secondly the use or not of a viva voce to determine degree classification of those in the boundary zone. Many programmes will not find the use of a viva voce suitable, those that do opt for viva to conclude mark review are required to gain prior Faculty approval (see guidance on use of viva voce below).

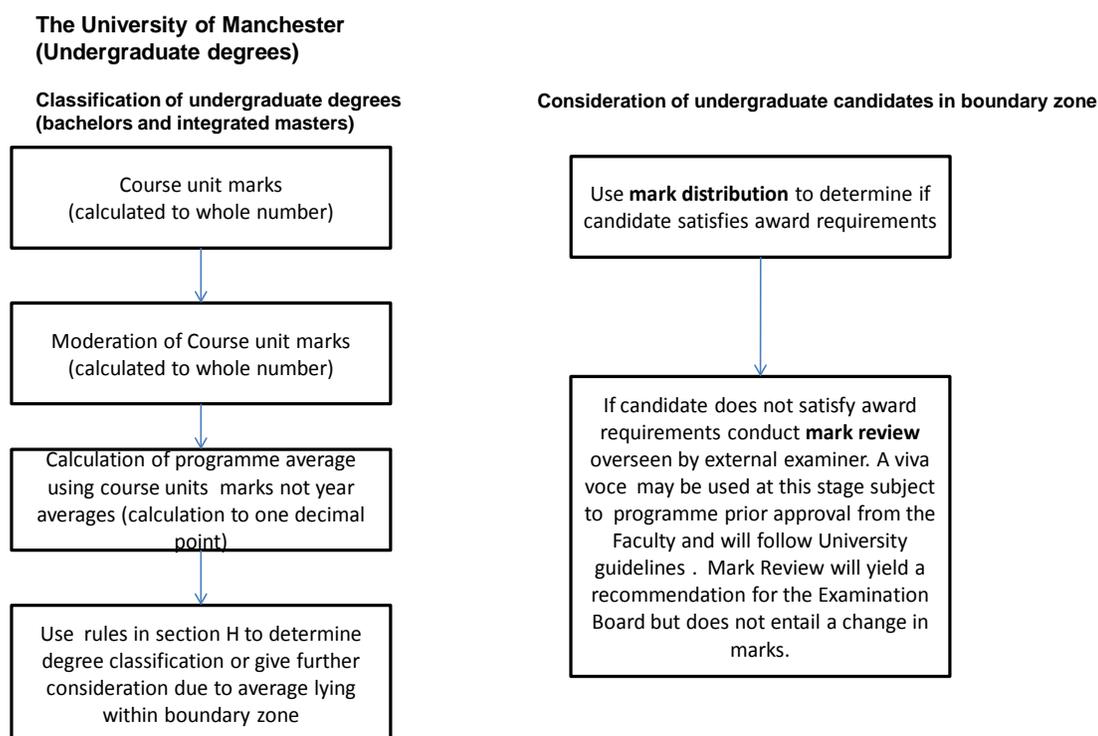


Figure 1 Flow chart for undergraduate degree classification

Mark distribution i.e. pattern of final year assessment is conducted before mark review and those students who gain a higher classification based on their mark distribution are not then subject to mark review. The use of 75 credits for Integrated Masters and 80 credits for bachelor degree in the [degree Regulations](#) is because the former can include level 7 courses taught as 15 credit course units whereas course units at levels 4, 5 and 6 are in multiples of 10 credits.

Mark review is based upon inspection of a final year student's work to determine whether there are any academic grounds for the award of a higher degree. Note that this does not involve changing marks and that External Examiners should support this process e.g. through advice on standards but they are not expected to act as a 'third examiner'. This holistic approach is to ensure that every

consideration has been given to marginal candidates. Mark review will make recommendation to the Examination Board, which will take the decision on degree classification.

University of Manchester course unit marking scheme for undergraduate students

Table A. Undergraduate course unit marking scheme

Mark (class) descriptor	Mark range (whole numbers)
First Class	70 to 100
Upper Second	60 to 69
Lower Second	50 to 59
Third	40 to 49
Compensatable fail	30 to 39
Non-compensatable fail	Less than 30

Use of *Viva Voce* for undergraduate students during mark review

1. The *viva voce* guidelines presented here are for mark review of borderline candidates. This does not preclude other meetings between external examiners and students nor programme nor course unit oral examinations.
2. Degree programmes wishing to use the a *viva voce* during mark review will need to obtain Faculty approval based upon,
 - Preparation of students for oral examination of their work as evidenced by programme intended learning outcomes.
 - Notification to students of use of *viva voce* in programme handbooks with advice on what to expect and how to prepare.
 - Arrangements for the prior notification to students on *viva* arrangements and date(s).
 - Suitable logistical arrangements for numbers of candidates and external examiner(s).

The rest of these guidelines apply only to programmes that are using a *viva voce* during mark review of borderline students.

3. A major role of the Preliminary Examination Board meeting will be to consider which borderline students should receive a *viva voce* examination.
4. Immediately following the Preliminary meeting of the Examination Board, a list of students for *viva voce* examination should be sent to External Examiner(s) along with the marks and any other information that the External Examiner may request.
5. Following the preliminary meeting of the Examination Board a list of all candidates selected for *viva* will be emailed to all students on the programme and a list will be made available in the School. The onus will be on the student to ascertain whether or not they are required for a *viva voce* examination. The programme Examination Officer will be responsible for informing students of the method by which they can obtain this information.
6. The *viva* will be conducted by one or more External Examiners. The Programme Director (or suitable deputy) will also be present as an observer and will take notes on the *viva* which may be used to assist the Examination Board in making a decision on final degree classifications.
7. The content of the *viva* will be decided by the External Examiner(s) who will make recommendations to the Examinations Board but these will not be conveyed to the student at the end of *Viva*.

Appendix B – Postgraduate Degree Classification Scheme

The figure below presents the steps for calculation of programme average, determination of classification, consideration of students in the boundary zone through mark distribution followed by mark review. We have not approved the use of viva voce to determine postgraduate degree classification because of problems around equal treatment of students following the completion of the course i.e. a viva would normally take place at the time of the final Examinations Board when some students would not be available. This does not preclude the use of oral assessments as part of the programme but the principle of equal treatment for students must be upheld. A key consideration concerns the use of External Examiners in mark review.

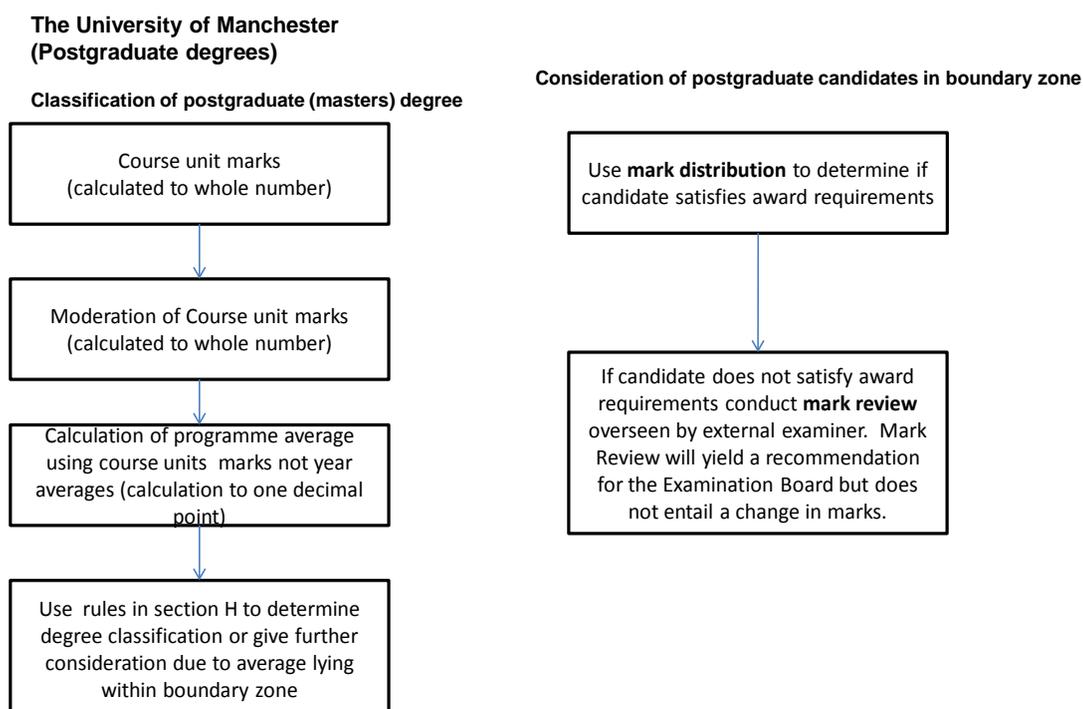


Figure 2 Flow chart for postgraduate degree classification

Mark distribution i.e. pattern of marks obtained is conducted before mark review and those students who gain a higher classification based on their mark distribution are not then subject to mark review. Note that boundary zone conditions are specified differently for those following the award of distinction based upon programme average as opposed the award of distinction based upon both taught and research elements.

Mark review is based upon inspection of the student's work to determine whether there are any academic grounds for the award of a higher degree. Note that this does not involve changing marks and that External Examiners should support this process e.g. through advice on standards but they are not expected to act as a 'third examiner'. This holistic approach is to ensure that every

consideration has been given to marginal candidates. Mark Review will make recommendation to the Examination Board, which will take the decision on degree classification. If a student's classification is raised as a result of mark review, this would not be noted on the student's transcript.

University of Manchester course unit marking scheme for postgraduate students

Table B Postgraduate (masters) course unit marking scheme

Mark (class) descriptor	Mark range (whole numbers)
Distinction	70 to 100
Merit	60 to 69
Pass	50 to 59
Compensatable fail	40 to 49
Non-compensatable fail	Less than 39 <u>or less</u>

Table C Postgraduate (Dip, Cert.) course unit marking scheme

Mark (class) descriptor	Mark range (whole numbers)
Pass	40 or more
Compensatable fail	30 to 39
Non-compensatable fail	Less than 29 <u>or less</u>

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