

# THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

## PROCEDURES FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF DEGREES

This document sets out the University's procedures for the classification of degrees.

**Section A** covers the single system of degree classification which will apply to candidates who commenced Level 2 of a programme of study in or after September 2006. The first classifications under this system will therefore take place in June 2008.

**Section B** covers the two systems of degree classification which apply to candidates who commenced Level 2 of a programme of study between September 2000 and prior to September 2006.

### A. FOR CANDIDATES WHO COMMENCED LEVEL 2 OF A PROGRAMME OF STUDY IN OR AFTER SEPTEMBER 2006

#### 1. Weighting of grades and Levels

- 1.1 Grades will be weighted such that the weight given to the grade is proportionate to the number of credits assigned to the work to which it relates.
- 1.2 A grade awarded at Level 3 or Level 4 has twice the weight of a grade awarded at Level 2.
- 1.3 In the small number of cases where exceptions have been approved to the standard 1:2 weighting, programme regulations indicate the weighting which will apply.

#### 2. Calculations

- 2.1 The Examiners shall have regard to the outcome of the following Calculations, which shall in each case be either a class or a borderline to a higher class.
- 2.2 **Calculation 1** (the weighted mean grade) is made in accordance with the following principles
  - (a) where a candidate's weighted mean grade is of a value indicated in the first column, the outcome of Calculation 1 shall be the corresponding class indicated in the second column

69.5 or higher	Class I
59.5 or higher	Class II— Division 1
49.5 or higher	Class II— Division 2
44.5 or higher	Class III

39.5 or higher Pass

- (b) where a candidate's weighted mean grade falls within the band indicated in the first column, the outcome of Calculation 1 shall be the borderline to the corresponding class indicated in the second column

67.0-69.4	Class I
57.0-59.4	Class II— Division 1
47.0-49.4	Class II— Division 2
43.5-44.4	Class III
37.0-39.4	Pass

- 2.3 **Calculation 2** (the distribution of grades) is made in accordance with the following principles

- (a) where the best half of a candidate's weighted grades are of a value indicated in the first column, the outcome of Calculation 2 shall be the corresponding class indicated in the second column

69.5 or higher	Class I
59.5 or higher	Class II— Division 1
49.5 or higher	Class II— Division 2
44.5 or higher	Class III
39.5 or higher	Pass

- (b) where the best five twelfths of a candidate's weighted grades are of a value indicated in the first column, the outcome of Calculation 2 shall be the borderline to the corresponding class indicated in the second column above.

### 3. Classifications

- 3.1 In recommending the class of degree to be awarded to each candidate, the Examiners shall take into account the outcomes of Calculations 1 and 2 in accordance with the following principles

- (a) where one Calculation places the candidate in one class and the other Calculation places the candidate in either the same class or the borderline to the same class, the candidate shall normally be recommended for the award of a degree of that class;
- (b) where one Calculation places the candidate in one class, and the other Calculation places the candidate in the borderline to the class immediately above, the candidate shall normally be recommended for the award of a degree of the lower class;
- (c) where one Calculation places the candidate in one class, and the other Calculation places the candidate in the class immediately below, the candidate shall be considered as being in the borderline to the higher class, and the class of the degree to be recommended by the Examiners

shall normally correspond to the class indicated by the weighted mean of the grades at the final Level of study;

(d) where both Calculations place the candidate in the same borderline, the class of the degree to be recommended by the Examiners shall normally correspond to the class indicated by the weighted mean of the grades at the final Level of study;

(e) where one Calculation places the candidate in one class, or borderline to a class, and the other Calculation places the candidate in another class, or borderline to a class, neither immediately above nor below, the Examiners shall recommend the classification which, having regard to all the evidence before them, best reflects the overall performance of the candidate.

**4. Award of a Degree to a Candidate with fewer than 240 Credits at Levels 2 and 3 (or 360 credits where required by the relevant Regulations)**

4.1 The Examiners have the discretion, under the General Regulations for First Degrees, to recommend the award of a degree to a candidate with between 200 and 240 credits at Levels 2 and 3 (or between 320 and 360 credits where the relevant Regulations require 360 credits), and to whom the Regulation as to Aegrotat cases is inapplicable, provided that a weighted mean grade of 39.5 in the Examination as a whole has been achieved, and that not fewer than 90 credits are at the appropriate FHEQ level (H for Bachelors degrees; M for integrated Masters degrees). The Examiners may, having regard to the Regulations concerning degree classification, recommend the award of Honours to such a candidate.

4.2 The Examiners may in their discretion, but only with the specific concurrence of the External Examiner, recommend that a candidate who is awarded not fewer than 180 credits at Levels 2 and 3 (or 280 credits where the relevant Regulations require 360 credits), and to whom the Regulation as to Aegrotat cases is inapplicable, be deemed to have passed the Final University Examination, but shall not recommend the award of Honours to such a candidate.

**5. Classification of Bachelors degrees awarded to unsuccessful candidates for integrated Masters degrees**

5.1 In the case of a candidate for an integrated Masters degree (MBiolSci, MBiomedSci, MChem, MComp, MEng, MEnvSci, MMath or MPhys) who fails to meet the requirements for the award of that degree, but is eligible for the award of a Bachelors degree, the class of degree to be awarded should be determined on the basis of performance across Levels 2 and 3.

5.2 This provision does not apply to the degrees of MArch, MLA and MPlan, which involve the award of a Bachelors degree on successful completion of Level 3, followed by an unclassified Master's level component.

**6. Discretion**

6.1 The General Regulations allow discretion in the operation of the procedures described above, in that it is always the duty of the Examiners to recommend the classification, which having regard to all the evidence before them, best reflects the overall performance of the candidate.

**B. FOR CANDIDATES WHO COMMENCED LEVEL 2 OF A PROGRAMME OF STUDY BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 2000 AND PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 2006**

**1. PRINCIPLES**

**1.1 Primary Determinants of Degree Classification**

1.1.1 The class of Degree to be awarded to each candidate shall be recommended to the Board by the Examiners. With the exception of some programmes of study in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, the recommendations shall take into account the performance of the candidate at Level 2 and Level 3.

1.1.2 For candidates commencing Level 2 of a programme of study in or after September 2000, departments will adopt either **Method A** or **Method B** as set out in section 2 below, as the primary determinant of the recommended classification. A summary of the Method used by each department is attached (APPENDIX 1). The method to be used should be documented clearly for staff and published in departmental student handbooks.

**1.2 Secondary Determinants of Degree Classification**

1.2.1 In adopting one of Methods A and B as the primary determinant of degree classification, the Examiners may also take into account the effect of adopting the other Method.

1.2.2 A number of Faculties have agreed objective examination conventions to guide the Examiners in their consideration of cases where the primary determinant places the candidate in a borderline band. These conventions are set out in APPENDIX 2 and are also published by the Taught Programmes Office on the Web. They should also be clearly referenced in departmental student handbooks.

**1.3 Dual Degree Programmes**

1.3.1 In the case of candidates taking dual degree programmes of study, where the partner departments use different primary determinants of degree classification, the Examiners should take into account the outcome using both methods. This requirement applies to all such candidates, and not only to those who are placed in a borderline band under the home department's primary determinant. The programmes of study which fall into this category are listed in APPENDIX 3 and should be clearly identified in Faculty examination conventions and in departmental student handbooks.

**1.4 Borderline Marks for Degree Classifications**

1.4.1 Formal borderline areas have been agreed, where the Examiners shall give consideration to placing the candidate in the higher class. These are set out in section 2 below.

## 1.5 Weighting of Grades and Levels

1.5.1 Under both Method A and Method B, unit grades will be weighted such that the weight given to the grade is proportionate to the number of credits assigned to the work to which it relates, and where a Faculty Board has so decided in respect of a programme of study, a grade awarded at Level 3 has twice or, as the case may be, three times the weight of a grade at Level 2.

1.5.2 Grades at Levels 2 and 3 will be evenly weighted. Where different arrangements have been agreed, these are set out in APPENDIX 4.

## 1.6 Presentation of Marks

1.6.1 The weighted mean of the unit grades under Method A will be expressed to one decimal place. The weighted mean of a candidate's grade points under Method B will be expressed to two decimal places.

## 2. METHODS FOR DETERMINING DEGREE CLASSIFICATIONS

### 2.1 Method A

The Examiners shall take into account the weighted mean grade in accordance with the following principles:

(a) where the weighted mean grade is of a value indicated in the first column, the candidate shall normally be placed in a class not lower than that indicated in the second column:

69.5 or higher	Class I
59.5 or higher	Class II Division 1
49.5 or higher	Class II Division 2
44.5 or higher	Class III
39.5 or higher	Pass

(b) where the weighted mean grade falls within the band indicated in the first column, the Examiners shall give consideration to placing the candidate in the class indicated in the second column:

68.0-69.4	Class I
58.0-59.4	Class II Division 1
48.0-49.4	Class II Division 2
44.0-44.4	Class III
38.0-39.4	Pass

### 2.2 Method B

The Examiners shall take into account the distribution of grades in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) The grades received for a candidate shall be converted so that a grade falling within the band indicated in the first column is represented by the number of points indicated in the second column:

70 or higher	5
60-69	4
50-59	3
45-49	2
40-44	1
0-39	0

- (b) where the weighted mean of the points so obtained is of a value indicated in the first column, the candidate shall normally be placed in a class not lower than that indicated in the second column:

4.5 or higher	Class I
3.5 or higher	Class II Division 1
2.5 or higher	Class II Division 2
1.5 or higher	Class III

- (c) where the weighted mean of the points so obtained falls within the band indicated in the first column, the Examiners shall give consideration to placing the candidate in the class indicated in the second column:

4.33-4.49	Class I
3.33-3.49	Class II Division 1
2.33-2.49	Class II Division 2
1.33-1.49	Class III

- (d) A candidate who is awarded the required number of credits at Levels 2 and 3, but to whom the Examiners do not recommend the award of Honours, shall be recommended for the award of a Pass degree.

### **2.3 Award of a Degree to a Candidate with fewer than 240 Credits at Levels 2 and 3 (or 360 credits where required by the relevant Regulations)**

2.3.1 The Examiners have the discretion, under the General Regulations for First Degrees, to recommend the award of a degree to a candidate with between 200 and 240 credits at Levels 2 and 3 (or between 320 and 360 credits where the relevant Regulations require 360 credits), and to whom the Regulation as to Aegrotat cases is inapplicable, provided that a weighted mean grade of 39.5 in the Examination as a whole has been achieved, and that not fewer than 90 credits are at the appropriate FHEQ level (H for Bachelors degrees; M for integrated Masters degrees). The Examiners may, having regard to the Regulations concerning degree classification, recommend the award of Honours to such a candidate.

2.3.2 The Examiners may in their discretion, but only with the specific concurrence of the External Examiner, recommend that a candidate who is awarded not fewer than 180 credits at Levels 2 and 3 (or 280 credits where the relevant Regulations require 360 credits), and to whom the Regulation as to Aegrotat cases is inapplicable, be deemed to have passed the Final University Examination, but shall not recommend the award of Honours to such a candidate.

### 3. DISCRETION

- 3.1 The General Regulations allow discretion in the operation of the procedures described above, in that it is always the duty of the Examiners to recommend the classification, which having regard to all the evidence before them, best reflects the overall performance of the candidate.

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## USE OF DEGREE CLASSIFICATION METHODS

### Method A

The following Faculties/Departments will use Method A as the primary determinant for degree classification:

- Faculty of Engineering
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Medicine (apart from the Department of Human Communication Sciences and the Section of Pharmacology and Pharmacogenetics)
- Faculty of Pure Science (Departments of Applied Mathematics, Chemistry, Computer Science, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, Physics and Astronomy, Probability and Statistics, Pure Mathematics)

### Method B

The following Faculties/Departments will use Method B as the primary determinant for degree classification:

- Faculty of Architectural Studies
- Faculty of Arts
- Faculty of Medicine (Department of Human Communication Sciences and Section of Pharmacology and Pharmacogenetics)
- Faculty of Social Sciences
- Faculty of Pure Science (Departments of Animal and Plant Sciences, Archaeology, Biomedical Sciences, Geography, Information Studies, Psychology and the Degree of BSc Environmental Science)

**SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION CONVENTIONS  
FOR CONSIDERING BORDERLINE CASES**

**1. Faculty of Architectural Studies**

In borderline cases, the Examiners will take into account the grades for specific key units, as follows:

ARCU01	Architectural Studies (BA): ARC325, ARC326
ARCU02	Architecture and Landscape: ARC326, ARC337, LSC308
GEO U09	Geography and Planning: either TRP353 or TRP354
LSCU02	Landscape Design with Planning (BA): LSC301, LSC304, LSC306, LSC307, LSC308, LSC309, LSC313
LSCU08	Landscape Design and Ecology (BSc): LSC301, LSC302, LSC303, LSC304, LSC305, LSC306, LSC307, LSC308
TRPU01	Urban Studies and Planning (BA): TRP320
TRPU02	Urban Environmental Studies (BA): TRP351, TRP353, TRP354
TRPU03	Urban Studies (BA): TRP234, TRP353, TRP354

**2. Faculty of Arts**

Where a student's Method B mark falls within the discretionary band for the award of a degree of class N, a degree of N will be awarded if, but (normally) only if, at least one of the following conditions applies:

- the overall (weighted) mean of the grades falls in class N;
- the mean of the grades at Level 3 falls in class N;
- the median of the grades at Level 3 falls in class N.

**3. Faculty of Law**

- (a) The median grade places the candidate in the higher class.
- (b) In the case of a Law with Language candidate, the performance in the year abroad justifies placing the candidate in the higher class.
- (c) There is evidence that the candidate was suffering from illness or serious personal problems during the semester or during the examination itself, which is likely to have had a serious adverse effect on the candidate's performance in the assessment, and the Personal Circumstances Committee accordingly recommends that the higher class be awarded

Other criteria would only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

#### 4. Faculty of Pure Science (Method B Departments)

Where a student's Method B mark falls within the discretionary band for the award of a degree of class N, a degree of N will be awarded if, but (normally) only if, at least one of the following conditions applies:

- the overall (weighted) mean of the grades falls in class N;
- the mean of the grades at Level 3 falls in class N.

The Faculty has also agreed that the Examiners will have regard to any exceptional performances, in the form of very high First Class marks, in the case of candidates who do not fall within the defined discretionary bands for degree classification.

#### 5. Faculty of Social Sciences

(a) Where a student's Method B mark falls within the discretionary band for the award of a degree of class N, a degree of N will be awarded if, but (normally) only if, at least one of the following conditions applies:

- the overall (weighted) mean of the grades falls in class N;
- the mean of the grades at Level 3 falls in class N.

(b) Reference may also be made to the overall median and to the median at Level 3 in borderline cases.

(c) In recommending the class of degree to be awarded, Examiners may wish to consider whether or not performance in core and approved units is consistent with the overall award.

**DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES OF STUDY WHERE PARTNER DEPARTMENTS USE  
DIFFERENT PRIMARY DETERMINANTS OF DEGREE CLASSIFICATION**

**1. Faculty of Engineering**

- CIVU12 Structural Engineering and Architecture (MEng)
- CIVU18 Structural Engineering and Architecture (BScTech)
- CIVU19 Structural Engineering with Architectural Studies (MEng)
- CIVU20 Structural Engineering with Architectural Studies (BEng)

**2. Faculty of Law**

- LAWU09 Social Policy and Criminology (BA)

**3. Faculty of Pure Science**

- COMU12 Computer Science and French (BSc)
- COMU13 Computer Science and German (BSc)
- GEOU03 Geography and Mathematics (BSc)
- PHYU14 Physics and Philosophy (BSc)
- PHYU17 Astronomy and Philosophy (BSc)
- SOMU03 Mathematics and Philosophy (BSc)

**4. Faculty of Social Sciences**

- ECNU16 Economics and Mathematics (BA)
- ECNU17 Economics and Statistics (BA)
- MGTU13 Management and Mathematics (BA)
- MGTU14 Accounting and Financial Management and Mathematics (BA)
- MGTU21 Economics with Mathematics and Statistics (BA)

## WEIGHTING OF GRADES BY LEVEL UNDER METHODS A AND B

Grades at Levels 2 and 3 will be evenly weighted. Where different arrangements have been agreed, these are set out below.

### 1. Faculty of Architectural Studies

In the School of Architecture, grades at Level 3 are weighted 3:1 compared with Level 2 grades. In the case of the degree in Landscape Architecture with Planning and Landscape Architecture with Ecology, grades at Level 3 are weighted 2:1 compared with Level 2 grades. In other cases there is no weighting.

### 2. Faculty of Engineering

The weighting for Levels 2 and 3 of BEng and BScTech programmes is 1:3. The weighting for MEng degrees (other than the MEng in Structural Engineering and Architecture) is 1:3:3 for Levels 2, 3 and 4, except that where there is a compulsory year abroad, the weighting is 1:1:3 (i.e. only Level 4 is weighted as 3). In the case of the MEng in Structural Engineering and Architecture, the weighting is 1:2:3 with units coded 2 (eg CIV210, ARC253) being weighted 1, units coded 3 being weighted 2 and units coded 4 being weighted 3.

### 3. Faculty of Law

The weighting for Levels 2 and 3 is 1:2

### 4. Faculty of Pure Science

In the case of BSc degrees Level 3 is weighted 2:1 compared with Level 2, except that (a) the following degrees are equally weighted at Levels 2 and 3: Archaeological Science; Archaeological Science and Geography; Geography; Information Management; and (b) Level 3 of Computer Science is weighted 3:1 compared with Level 2. The weighting for Masters degrees is 1:2:2, except for MComp, for which the weighting is 1:3:3, and MChem degrees involving a placement year outside Sheffield, for which the weighting is 1:1:2.

### 5. Faculty of Social Sciences

There is no weighting by level except for:

- the single degree of Psychology, in which Level 3 units are weighted 2:1 compared with Level 2;
- all dual degrees with Mathematics and the single degree of Economics with Mathematics and Statistics, in which Level 3 Mathematics units are weighted 2:1 compared with Level 2.