

University College Birmingham Classification Scheme
(Degrees from 2020/2021 cohort onwards)
(Foundation degrees from September 2025)

Approved by Academic Regulations Committee

3rd December 2020

Reviewed by Academic regulations Committee September 2025

1. Introduction

This classification scheme is applicable to Bachelors' cohorts with a first registration from September 2020/2021. Bachelors' cohorts with a first registration before September 2019 should refer to the relevant University Classification Scheme.

Foundation degree classifications are applicable to foundation degree cohorts with a first registration from September 2025 at level 4.

2. Degree Classifications and Calculations

(a) The University Classification Scheme operates under the following conditions:

- (i) The starting point of the system is the credit-weighted arithmetic mean mark, for each relevant stage of study, averaged with the same mark for other relevant stages of study in a prescribed proportion;
- (ii) When the final average falls within a prescribed band below the minimum for achieving a given classification on average alone (the 'borderline'), attention is given to the profile of the relevant marks. (This principle ensures that consideration can only be given to the median when the less successful module outcomes do not fall below an acceptable level.)
- (iii) Where there are marks available for all modules required to be attempted under the programme requirements.
- (iv) Where there is a greater proportion, after credit-weighting, of marks in the class above the relevant borderline. (The purpose of this scheme is to recognise the prevailing character of a candidate's performance on the basis of judgements of the class to which each module outcome belongs. In this way, recognition is given to the fact that a student may have more weighted module marks, which lie above the degree classification indicated by the arithmetic mean.)

b) Calculation of the Stage Mark

(i) The stage mark is the weighted mean mark, weighted for credits, for a stage of a degree programme. For UG programmes this applies to the stage 2 (level 5) and stage 3 (Level 6) weighted mean marks.

(c) Calculation of the Overall Mark

(i) The overall mark is the mark calculated from the stage marks that contribute to the student's degree result using the appropriate stage weightings.

(ii) The overall mark is calculated with the maximum available precision and then rounded to an integer. An (overall) mark of less than n.5 (unrounded) is rounded down.

2.1 Step One: The Arithmetic Mean

In accordance with Academic Regulations Part 2 (1.3.1 d). where candidates are eligible for the award of a classified first degree, the class will be determined initially on the basis of the weighted arithmetic mean (to take account of the credit rating of a module) using the weighting between stages:

70+ = 1st;

60-69 = 2i;

50-59 = 2ii;

40-49 = 3rd.

2.2 Step Two: Identifying Borderline Cases

(a) Those candidates with a weighted arithmetic mean, as shown below, will be 'borderline cases' and eligible for a classification as set out below.

68,69 = eligible for consideration as a borderline 1st;

58,59 = eligible for consideration as a borderline 2i;

48,49 = eligible for consideration as a borderline 2ii;

38,39 = eligible for consideration as a borderline 3rd.

2.2.1 First Class

The candidate shall normally be required to obtain either:

- a) An Overall mark of at least 70%, or
- b) Have attempted all credits on which the classification is based and have an Overall mark of at least 68% and a mark of at least 70% in modules with a combined value of at least 80 credits (from level 6) or
- c) An Overall mark of at least 68% and a mark of at least 70% in modules with a combined value of at least 60 credits (from all final year modules), and 60 credits from level 5.

2.2.2 Second Class, Upper Division

The candidate shall normally be required to obtain either:

- a) An Overall mark of at least 60%, or
- b) Have attempted all credits on which the classification is based and have an Overall mark of at least 58% and a mark of at least 60% in modules with a combined value of at least 80 credits (from all final year modules) or
- c) An Overall mark of at least 58% and a mark of at least 60% in modules with a combined value of at least 60 credits (from level 6), and 60 credits from level 5.

2.2.3 Second Class, Lower Division

The candidate shall normally be required to obtain either:

- a) An Overall mark of at least 50%, or
- b) Have attempted all credits on which the classification is based and have an Overall mark of at least 48% and a mark of at least 50% in modules with a combined value of at least 80 credits (from level 6) or
- c) An Overall mark of at least 48% and a mark of at least 50% in modules with a combined value of at least 60 credits (from level 6), and 60 credits from level 5.

2.2.4 Third Class

The candidate shall normally be required to obtain

- a) An Overall mark of at least 40% and have attempted all credits on which the classification is based.

Direct Entries/Top-Up Students

For students who start at level 5 or above, only those credits studied at UCB will be considered when calculating degree classifications or eligibility for fallback awards. Students who have not studied all credits from level 4 to 6 must achieve full 120 credits at level 6 in order to be awarded. If a student has studied 120 credits at both Level

5 and Level 6 at UCB, their Level 5 grades can be used for calculating their classification. Please see the grid below.

Direct Entrants Progression/Classification, OMM calculation and Fallback awards

Direct Entrant Context	Exam Board Decisions
Direct Entrants to a UCB programme - progression	DE students studying less than 120 credits on any level of a UCB programme must pass all credits to progress. DE students studying 120 credits at Level 5 can progress on 100/120 (HNC/HND 105/120) credits as long as they are not 'must pass' modules and have achieved at least 15% in all assessments.
Direct Entrants to a UCB programme – credits for Level 6 awards	Reminder - RPL credits are used to determine the entry point of a DE onto a UCB programme and, therefore, are not factored into the awards at UCB. All DE students (regardless of the stage of the programme they join UCB) must achieve all 120 credits at Level 6 to be awarded.
Direct Entrants to a UCB programme - Level 6 OMM calculation	The OMM for DE students will be based on the following: • If a DE has studied all 120 credits at Level 5, the OMM will be calculated as normal (3:1 - Level 6:Level 5) • If a DE has studied less than 120 credits at Level 5, the OMM will only be based on Level 6 marks.
Direct Entrants to a UCB programme – borderline classifications	If a DE has achieved at least 60 credits on a Level 5 UCB programme, these credits can be considered within borderline classifications. Otherwise, only the credits at Level 6 will be considered.
Direct Entrants to a UCB programme – fallback awards	All awards must be based on the credits the DEs have achieved at UCB (no RPL credits will be considered). The only potential fallback awards for DEs (at undergraduate level) are: • Certificate of Higher Education – if they achieve at least 100 credits at Level 4+ (105 credits for HNC/HND students) and have at least 15% in all assessments contributing to the credits for the fallback award. • Diploma of Higher Education - if they achieve at least 200 credits at Level + (210 credits for HNC/HND students) and have at least 15% in all assessments contributing to the credits for the fallback award. • Note: Such students do not need to achieve at least 15% in assessments of failed modules, as these modules will not contribute to the fallback award.

3. Foundation Degree Classifications and Calculations

- a) Student must achieve at least **200 academic credits** (with a minimum of 100 credits at each level) and attempted all 240 credits (with a minimum of 15% in all assessments) . Where a course has PSRB requirements, or all modules are must pass, a student must achieve the full 240 credits.
- b) Weighted mean mark for Level 5 (75%) + Level 4 (25%) **OR** Weighted mean mark for Level 5 only [whichever is the higher]
- c) **Borderline** (where the OMM is within 2% points of a classification), a higher classification can be awarded if (a) 80 credits are at Level 5 in the higher band or (b) 60 credits at Level 5 + 60 credits at Level 4 are in the higher band.

3.1 Distinction

The candidate shall normally be required to obtain either:

- a) An Overall mark of at least 70%, or
- b) Have attempted all credits on which the classification is based and have an Overall mark of at least 68% and a mark of at least 70% in modules with a combined value of at least 80 credits (from level 5) or
- c

3.2 Merit

The candidate shall normally be required to obtain either:

- a) An Overall mark of at least 60%, or
- b) Have attempted all credits on which the classification is based and have an Overall mark of at least 58% and a mark of at least 60% in modules with a combined value of at least 80 credits (from all final year modules) or

3.3 Pass

The candidate shall normally be required to obtain

- a) An Overall mark of at least 40% and have attempted all credits on which the classification is based.

4. Higher Nationals (HND or HNC)

Marks	Classification
70-100%	Distinction
60-69%	Merit

40-59%	Pass
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Where UCB has permission from an awarding body to apply its assessment regulations the classifications of these awards will be based on:

1. Students must pass all modules
2. The classification will be applied based on the overall weighted mean mark as per the boundary settings in the table above based on the level relevant to the award.
3. Borderline higher classification considerations will not be considered.

4.1 HNC (Level 4 award)

Pass 105-120 Credits and or a weighted mean mark of 40-59%

Merit 120 Credits Plus a weighted mean mark of 60-69%

Distinction 120 Credits Plus a weighted Mean mark of 70-100%

4.2 HND (Level 5 award)

Pass 210 Credits (105 credits minimum at level 4 and 105 minimum credits at level 5) - 240 Credits with a weighted mean mark of 40-59%

Merit 120 Credits at level 5 Plus a weighted mean mark of 60-69%

Distinction 120 Credits at level 5 Plus a weighted Mean mark of 70-100%

Where a programme must meet professional body requirements and or the requisites on awards such as integrated apprenticeships requiring completion of all the required knowledge, skills and behaviours, all assessments must pass.

5. CertHE (Level 4 award)

- Achieved 120 credits at L4
- Weighted mean of 60-69 (Merit)
- Weighted mean of 70+ (Distinction)

6. DipHE (Level 5)

Student must achieve at least **200 academic credits** (with a minimum of 100 credits at each level) and attempted all 240 credits (with a minimum of 15% in all assessments) . Where a course has PSRB requirements, or all modules are must pass, a student must achieve the full 240 credits.

- d) Weighted mean mark for Level 5 (75%) + Level 4 (25%) **OR** Weighted mean mark for Level 5 only [whichever is the higher]
- e) **Borderline** (where the OMM is within 2% points of a classification), a higher classification can be awarded if (a) 80 credits are at Level 5 in the higher band or (b) 60 credits at Level 5 + 60 credits at Level 4 are in the higher band.

6.1 Distinction

The candidate shall normally be required to obtain either:

- a) An Overall mark of at least 70%, or
- b) Have attempted all credits on which the classification is based and have an Overall mark of at least 68% and a mark of at least 70% in modules with a combined value of at least 80 credits (from level 6) or
- c) An Overall mark of at least 68% and a mark of at least 70% in modules with a combined value of at least 60 credits (from all final year modules), and 60 credits from level 5.

6.2 Merit

The candidate shall normally be required to obtain either:

- a) An Overall mark of at least 60%, or
- b) Have attempted all credits on which the classification is based and have an Overall mark of at least 58% and a mark of at least 60% in modules with a combined value of at least 80 credits (from all final year modules) or
- c) An Overall mark of at least 58% and a mark of at least 60% in modules with a combined value of at least 60 credits (from level 6), and 60 credits from level 5.

6.3 Pass

The candidate shall normally be required to obtain

- a) An Overall mark of at least 40% and have attempted all credits on which the classification is based.