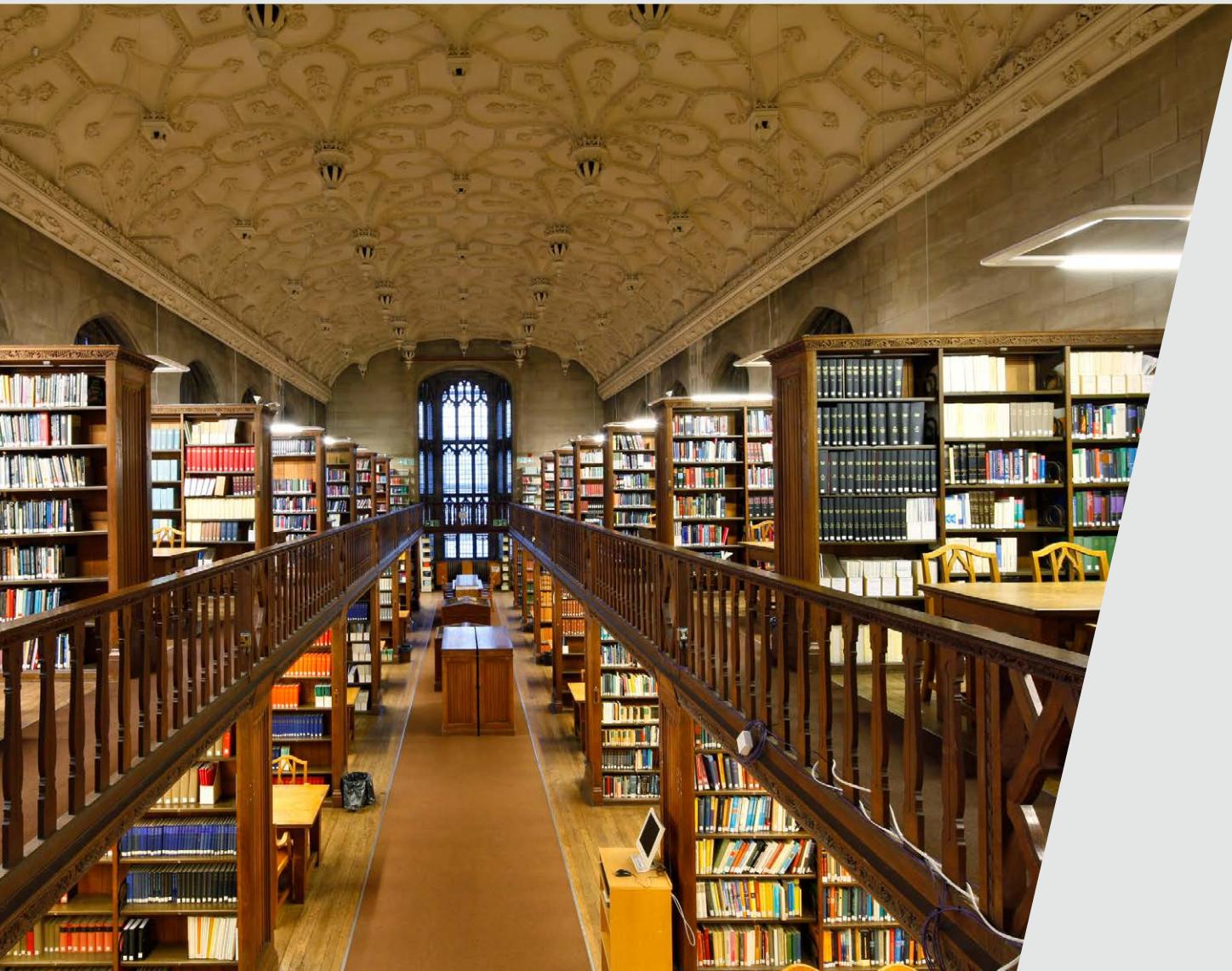


A guide to

# Degree Classification



# A guide to degree classification in undergraduate honours programmes

This guide has been produced, primarily for its students, to set out Bristol's approach to awarding undergraduate honours degrees, including how they are classified. It starts with the general features of how an honours degree is awarded at Bristol before moving onto its model for classification.

# General features of awarding an honours degree at Bristol

1. The academic requirements of a programme of study (sometimes known as ‘course’) are set out in its intended learning outcomes (ILOs). Each programme has a set of learning outcomes. These describe what you are expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after the process of learning, in order to fulfil the requirements of your degree programme.
2. All units/modules within your programme of study also have intended learning outcomes attached to them. When combined these correspond to the programme ILOs. How well you meet these outcomes at the unit level is assessed and measured against established marking criteria - normally on a 0-20 or 0-100 marking scale. All unit marks are converted to a 0-100 scale before degree classification starts.
3. Your final programme mark is also on a 0-100 scale and it is that mark that determines your final degree classification.
4. The marking of assessment is subject to internal and external review. External review is carried out by an ‘external examiner’, who makes sure that the assessment process is rigorous, and that the marks awarded across your cohort are a fair reflection of the work, before the mark is confirmed.
5. You must achieve the pass mark and fulfil any additional specified criteria to be awarded ‘credit’ for a unit. If you do not achieve the pass mark, you must take the failed assessment/s again for a capped unit mark (called a ‘re-sit’), so long as you have achieved at least 40 credit points. A maximum of three attempts is allowed to pass a unit.



6. You must accumulate enough credit to progress from year to year and to be eligible for a degree. This is detailed in the University's credit framework for its programmes. A year of study is normally worth 120 credit points. So a student on a three-year degree programme will need to achieve 360 credit points to be awarded an honours bachelors degree.
7. In a degree programme, the final year of study is considered as a single block – you will be awarded 120 credit points if you have passed the year; this means that you do not need to re-sit a failed unit, unless it is designated as 'must-pass' (this will be highlighted in the specification for your programme if it is).
8. An initial board of examiners, either at the school or programme level, makes a recommendation to the faculty board of examiners about whether you qualify for progression or the award of a degree and its classification. This recommendation is based on your marks as well as any other factors such as extenuating circumstances.
9. A faculty board of examiners then receives and approves these recommendations, ensuring that proper procedures have been carried out and a consistent outcome has been achieved.
10. 'Exit awards' are lower awards attached to each degree programme and can be made if you do not obtain sufficient credit to progress or qualify for your intended award or you decide to withdraw from your studies but have obtained sufficient credit points, as detailed in the University's credit framework.



# Degree classification

The University has a common method for determining degree classification for its undergraduate programmes. This applies to all degree programmes apart from the professional programmes in Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Sciences.

Classification also takes into account any accepted extenuating circumstances – a board of examiners will determine whether your performance has been substantially affected and what action, if any, is required to make a fair and reasonable adjustment.

## **1. First year marks do not contribute to your degree classification.**

The first year of study is a time of transition for students both to higher education and to studying at Bristol: each student needs time to make the transition to independent study over the course of a year and so this provides students with the space to develop the skills for learning and to start building an understanding of the subject (whilst meeting a minimum standard for progression).

## **2. All other unit marks will count towards your classification.**

All units on a programme of study contribute to you achieving the learning outcomes for your programme and therefore such achievements should contribute to your degree classification.

## **3. Your final programme mark is calculated by averaging your weighted unit marks and rounding the outcome to the nearest integer.**

Classification is determined by how consistently you display the necessary standard of skills and understanding, and so the final programme mark reflects your average attainment across your programme of study (except for the first year).

Units do not contribute equally to the degree classification in that a weighting is applied, which corresponds to a) the credit point value of the unit and b) the year of study in which the unit is taught, as explained on the next page.

**3a. Unit marks are weighted by the credit point value of the unit.**

The number of credit points each unit is worth indicates the volume of learning within the unit. The mark for a unit is therefore weighted relative to its credit point value. For example, a mark for a 20 credit point unit corresponds to one-sixth of the mark for the year where 120 credit points are required.

**3b. Unit marks are then weighted by the year of study in which the unit is taught.**

Each year of study is weighted to reflect the nature and importance of your achievement through the course of your programme and each type of degree programme has one of two possible weightings to reflect the nature of the subject. Find out the year weighting for your particular programme here.

If you are studying away from the University for an academic year, that year will have a weighting of 10% with the weighting of the second year reduced by the same amount. This percentage figure is a balance between wishing to recognise your effort and achievement during this year in your classification with a view that the learning experience, and sometimes assessment, is being provided by an institution or organisation other than Bristol.

**4. Classification is then determined by your final programme mark, as judged against designated bands. These bands are standard for degree classification within the higher education sector in the UK.**

<b>First class</b>	<b>70 and above</b>
<b>Second class, first division (a 2.i)</b>	<b>60-69</b>
<b>Second class, second division (a 2.ii)</b>	<b>50-59</b>
<b>Third class</b>	<b>40-49</b>
<b>Fail</b>	<b>39 and below</b>

...unless the final programme mark is just below a classification boundary (see part 5)

**5. If your final programme mark falls within two marks of a higher classification boundary, it will be subject to review.**

This means that if you achieve a final programme mark on the 'borderline' of a higher class, further scrutiny of your mark profile is required. In Bristol, the boundary is defined as two marks below the classification threshold (e.g. 58-59 for an upper second class).

**6. If your final programme mark falls within a boundary, you will be awarded the higher class if 50% or more of your weighted unit marks fall within that higher classification.**

Looking at your mark profile, a higher class is awarded if 50% or more of the unit marks, once they have been weighted by credit point and year of study, fall within the higher classification. This means that a higher class of degree can be awarded where, despite a final programme mark just below the threshold, there is sufficient evidence that the higher classification is a fair and reasonable reflection of your standard of work.