

COVID-19:

Awards and Classification in Undergraduate Law Programmes in 2019/20

This document sets out the approach to calculating final year students' undergraduate degrees in the academic year 2019-20 in the School of Law. It applies to all students in the final year cohorts of all LLB degrees.

Calculating the unit mark

1. Where units are normally assessed by two pieces of coursework, only one piece needs to be completed. In such cases, the mark from the completed coursework constitutes the unit mark. Where both pieces are attempted, the unit mark is the higher of the two marks awarded.

Calculating the safety net

2. The composition of the safety net for awarding and classifying degrees in 2019/20 is based on the unit marks achieved prior to the 2019/20 academic year, excluding the first year, specifically:
 - the marks achieved in year 2 for the LLB;
 - the marks achieved in year 2 and year 3 (weighted 75/25) for Law and a language and Law with Study in Continental Europe/Study Abroad programmes;
 - any final year units completed before the 2019/2020 academic year.

Units studied in 2019/2020, even if concluded prior to COVID-19 disruption, do not contribute towards the safety net.

3. The value of the 'safety net mark' is calculated as the average of the marks from the units included within the safety net; each unit is weighted to give an equivalence to its normal weighting in the degree overall.
4. Boards of Examiners will apply the University's normal regulations on academic misconduct before they calculate the safety net for each student.

Awards

5. Students will be awarded 120 credit points for the final year of study and complete their programme if they have:

LLB

- a. achieved a pass mark in at least three law units from the final year (not including 'open units'); and
- b. achieved a pass mark in the final year Research Project unit, which may be one of those three law units.

Law and a language programme

- a. achieved a pass mark in at least two law units from the final year (not including 'open units');

- b. achieved a pass mark in the final year Research Project unit, which may be one of those two law units; and
 - c. achieved a pass mark in the final year language unit.
6. Any student who does not meet the standard set out in clause 5 will be permitted to undertake assessment in August/September in any units they have missed. Such assessment will be treated as a first attempt and marks uncapped. In the case of units which have been failed, assessment in August/September will be treated as a first attempt if extenuating circumstances are deemed to apply and a second attempt otherwise. However, in all cases, marks gained in August/September will be uncapped.
7. If a student is unable to complete their programme at the September exam board but is otherwise deemed by the exam board to be on track to fulfil the programme learning outcomes, the student may be permitted to take any outstanding assessment in the next academic year as part of a supplementary year.
8. Otherwise, and exceptionally, a Board of Examiners may permit a student to repeat an entire year of study without penalty.
9. A student may be permitted three attempts to meet the standard to complete their programme.

Year mark for the final year

10. The 'year mark' for the final year will be calculated on the basis of the highest unit marks during the 2019-20 academic year, weighted by credit point value, as follows:
 - Single honours LLB: the best three law units
 - Joint honours law/language programmes: the best two law units and the languages year mark (in proportions 2:1, unless a student is taking equal numbers of law and languages units in which case the ratio is 1:1). The languages year mark is calculated by the School of Modern Languages.

An open unit completed in the 2019/20 academic year will be added and contribute to the year mark where it would improve the year mark.

Classification

11. Boards will first consider each student's degree classification on the basis of the 'completed programme mark' (i.e. the final year 'year mark', combined with the marks achieved in previous years of study and weighted in accordance with the programme classification weightings¹).
12. Boards will then compare the completed programme mark and the safety net mark for each candidate, and classify by the primary rule on the basis of the higher of the two (the 'determining mark').
13. Where the determining mark is within the range in which the secondary rule for degree classification applies, the secondary rule should be calculated according to (i) the unit marks within the 'completed programme mark' and (ii) the unit marks within the safety net.

¹ For LLB students, second-year marks contribute 40% and the final-year 'year mark' contributes 60%. For students on 4-year degrees, the second-year mark contributes 30%, the year abroad 10%, and the final-year mark 60%.

Classification will be according to the higher of the two. The detail of these calculations is set out in Annex A.

14. Where an Exam Board makes an award to a student on the basis of an incomplete set of unit marks, the student will have the right to request an opportunity to take any assessment missed during the summer assessment period of 2020. Such new assessments will be in the same form as in summer 2020. Students will not need to appeal the decision of the Exam Board in order to access this right. Following such new assessments, the Board will review the new evidence and may award a higher classification but will not award a classification lower than that previously awarded.
15. Where an award is made in September to a student on the basis of a set of unit marks which does not meet the standards required for the academic stage of professional qualification, the student has the right to request a further opportunity to take any assessment to fulfil those standards as part of a supplementary year. Following such new assessments, the Board will review all the marks and may award a higher classification but will not award a classification lower than that previously awarded. The marks for such assessment will be uncapped, whether or not an attempt has already been made to pass the unit.

Annex A

The secondary rule and the overall programme mark

For students on a three-year LLB degree:

- The second year as a whole is weighted at 40%. Thus, each second-year 20cp unit effectively contributes 6.67% to the final class ($40\%/6 = 6.67\%$).
- The final year is weighted at 60%. In a normal year, each final-year 20cp unit contributes 10% towards the final class ($60\%/6 = 10\%$). For this year, in most cases, each of the three best units will simply be double-counted, so that each contributes 20% towards the final class. If a candidate sits more than three law units this year, only the best three can be used under the secondary rule. However, if an open unit has a mark better than the average of the three best law marks, it will contribute 10% towards the degree class in the normal way, and the three best law units will contribute 16.67% each instead ($50\%/3 = 16.67\%$).

For students on four-year programmes:

- The second year as a whole is weighted at 30%. Thus, each second-year 20cp unit effectively contributes 5% to the final class ($30\%/6 = 5\%$).
- The overall mark for the third year is weighted at 10%. The final year is weighted at 60%. In a normal year, each 20cp final-year unit contributes 10% towards the final class ($60\%/6 = 10\%$). For this year, in most cases, each of the three best units will simply be double-counted, so that each contributes 20% towards the final class. If a candidate sits more than three law units this year, only the best three can be used under the secondary rule. However, if an open unit has a mark better than the average of the three best law marks, it will contribute 10% towards the degree class in the normal way, and the three best law units will contribute 16.67% each instead ($50\%/3 = 16.67\%$).

The secondary rule and the safety net mark

Where the determining mark (see para 13 above) is within the boundary area the secondary rule also applies to the marks included within the calculation of the safety net class.

For students on the three-year LLB degree:

- If the determining mark is in the boundary area, at least three units at the higher class in the second year would qualify the student for the higher class overall.

For students on four-year programmes:

- Each second-year unit contributes $75\%/6 = 12.5\%$ of the safety net mark.
- The year abroad contributes the remaining 25%. If the determining mark is in the boundary area, at least four second year units, or two second year units and the year abroad, at the higher class would qualify the student for the higher class overall.

*Approved by the Vice-Chancellor
4 June 2020*