

COVID-19:

Classification in Taught Postgraduate Programmes in 2019/20

This document sets out the University approach to classifying taught postgraduate degrees in the academic year 2019-20 only. Separate rules will apply to programmes in Law and may for those individual programmes that have existing specific regulations that cover classification.

The Taught Component Mark

1. Schools will determine how to calculate unit marks. For example, an individual assessment element might be waived because of extenuating circumstances or for other reasons in determining the unit mark. Normally, the threshold for awarding a unit mark will be that the student has completed at least 50% of the assessment which applied to the unit in the year in which it ran. Exceptions to this principle must be approved by the Faculty Education Director.
2. The taught component mark is calculated by averaging the available unit marks¹, weighted by their credit point value. The result of the calculation should then be rounded to the nearest integer.
3. Where a programme has established a quantitative safety net mark (QSN) for the taught component, the section on 'Calculating the safety net' within the '[Awards and classification in undergraduate modular programmes](#)' regulations will apply.

The Dissertation

4. Students must achieve the pass mark for the dissertation to be awarded the associated credit; by reaching a satisfactory standard, students thereby acquire the necessary credit points to complete the programme of study.
5. Where a student has failed the dissertation the relevant Board of Examiners will permit the student to re-submit the dissertation, or equivalent. The recorded mark for a re-submitted dissertation will be uncapped. Where an exam board permitted a student to re-submit their dissertation prior to the 2019/20 academic year, the mark for the re-submitted dissertation will remain capped.
6. Re-submission of the dissertation must normally be made within 3 months of the student being notified by the faculty Board of Examiners of its decision (and within 6 months for part-time students and 12 months for part-time variable students).

Submission

7. Schools, with oversight from the faculty, should establish and communicate the means by which its students should electronically submit their dissertation by the below deadline.
8. The University deadline for submission of the dissertation is Monday 14th September 2020. In many schools, the dissertation must be submitted by 12.00 noon on the deadline date. Dissertation submission deadline dates for some programmes may differ from the above deadline, but they must be clearly stated in school handbooks.

¹ Students will have achieved at least 60 credit points since that threshold is a condition of progression from the taught component.

Classification

9. Where a programme has established a quantitative safety net for the taught component, the Exam Board will compare the taught component mark and the safety net mark for each candidate and the higher of the two will be used in combination with the dissertation mark for classification.
10. Where a programme has not established a quantitative safety net for the taught component, the Exam Board should first consider the student's taught marks profile to determine if there has been any detrimental change to their taught component outcome due to missing or affected marks in units impacted by COVID-19 or any other accepted extenuating circumstance. If the exam board judges that the impact of the missed or affected unit marks has brought the student's taught component mark to below the threshold for the classification of either merit or distinction, it has discretion to adjust the outcome of the taught component so as to enable the award of the higher classification in the event that the research component also meets the required standard for that classification. It should also ensure that any penalties resulting from the application of the University's regulations on academic misconduct are appropriately reflected in the classification.
11. There is no compensation between the taught component and the dissertation (i.e. a mark in the taught component cannot compensate for a lower mark in the dissertation, and vice versa).

Classification method

12. The classification of the award in relation to the overall taught component mark and the dissertation mark is as follows:

Award with Distinction: at least 65 out of 100 for the taught component overall and, for masters awards, at least 70 out of 100 for the dissertation. Faculties retain discretion to increase these thresholds*.

Award with Merit: at least 60 out of 100 for the taught component overall and, for masters awards, at least 60 out of 100 for the dissertation. Faculties retain discretion to increase these thresholds*.

Pass: at least 50 out of 100 for the taught component overall and, for masters awards, at least 50 out of 100 for the dissertation.

Fail: 49 or below out of 100 for the taught component overall or, where relevant, 49 or below out of 100 for the dissertation.

* Any higher threshold for classification should be detailed in the relevant student handbook

13. Where applicable, the classification of the award for programmes using the 5-point (A-E) scale should be reached by using a fixed mid-point for each grade where A = 75, B = 65 and C = 55. The same boundaries as in 12 will apply. See Annex 2 in the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes for the classification of degrees in the MA in Law.

*Approved by the Chair of the Board of Trustees
28 April 2020*