

Protocol for UG Boards of Examiners, 2022/23

1. Introduction

- 1.1 For 2022/23, there is no longer the need for a detailed ‘assessment framework’ for graduating and continuing students in the same way as there has been over the past three years. There is, however, still a need to take account of the previous disruption where appropriate to ensure that students are not disadvantaged in any way. This guidance is based on the arrangements agreed to take account of this disruption for undergraduate students graduating in 2022/23.
- 1.2 As in 2021/22, normal regulatory requirements remain in place for 2022/23 in light of the reduced disruption experienced in comparison with previous years. The principles adopted for determining degree/programme classifications in light of disruption in previous years have been adapted appropriately from current Regulations in order to be relevant to the current situation. These amendments will be applied where possible, but it may not be possible to do so where there are specific professional requirements determined by the University and/or professional bodies.
- 1.3 The arrangements regarding credits, reassessment and degree classifications that apply to **all graduating UG students in 2023** are set out in [PART A](#) of this document.
- 1.4 For UG students on a programme **with a year abroad who are graduating in 2023**, please refer to [PART B](#).
- 1.5 For **UG continuing students** (i.e. all those not in their final year in 2022/3), the marks they take forward from each year relate to the Regulations in place at the time. The Regulations in place in each year of study will be taken into account at final award Boards when calculating the student’s degree. Further guidance on Boards of Examiners relevant to the year of graduation will be provided in future years, as appropriate, taking into account of the circumstances in place at the time.

2. Timing and Deadlines

MAIN PERIOD

For graduating student cohorts (and note reference to BIA September start progressing cohort*):

End of Exam period as confirmed by Timetabling and Examinations	Sat 10 June
Unconfirmed Marks into BIRMS deadline	Wed 14 June
Exam Boards take place from	Thu 15 June
Deadline for confirmed marks/awards release and for return of Board paperwork to TSA <i>EXCEPT confirmed marks and awards release for Dubai students</i>	Mon 26 June, 12 noon (UK time) Mon 3 July
* BIA Certificate and CAS processing period from	Tue 27 June
Meeting of PAB	Wed 28 June
Assessment Listings deadline	Fri 30 June
Edgbaston Degree Congregations start	Tue 11 July
Dubai Degree Congregation	Thu 20 July

For continuing students:

Colleges can hold Boards to consider both graduating and continuing students at the same time, providing the release deadlines for each group can be met.

End of Exam period as confirmed by Timetabling and Examinations	Sat 10 June
Unconfirmed Marks into BIRMS deadline	Wed 21 June
Exam Boards take place from	Thu 22 June
Deadline for confirmed marks/awards release and for return of Board paperwork to TSA	Mon 3 July
Meeting of PAB <i>Any cases that don't go to the meeting will be heard by Chairs Action</i>	Wed 28 June
Assessment Listings deadline	Fri 30 June

BIA January start progressing cohort:

End of Exam period as confirmed by Timetabling and Examinations	Fri 14 July
Unconfirmed Marks into BIRMS deadline	Wed 19 July
Exam Board and Progression Board	Thu 20 July
Deadline for confirmed marks and awards release and for return of Board paperwork to TSA	Mon 24 July
* BIA Certificate and CAS processing period from	Tue 25 July

3. Role of Boards of Examiners

- 3.1 As normal, the role of UG Boards of Examiners meetings in 2023 will be to oversee and confirm all marks, progress decisions and (where applicable) awards.
- 3.2 **Extenuating circumstances (ECs):** The impact of ECs should be considered as normal by Boards of Examiners for all students. The requirement for students to provide evidence when submitting ECs was reinstated in 2021/22, and this remains the case for 2022/23. EC Panels will have made their recommendations to the Board of Examiners on this basis.
- 3.3 **Degree classifications:** For 2022/23, there is no longer the need to consider a student's full profile of marks (i.e. including year 1) when determining the degree classification. However, in individual cases, it is still possible to make an award 'Notwithstanding Regulations' based on the full profile of marks across all years of study, as long as the external examiner is supportive and subject to approval by the Progress and Awards Board (PAB). For all students, the Board will assure itself, as normal, that each student has met their programme learning outcomes and gained any core competencies required for professional accreditation. See Part A for further detail regarding the calculation and determination of degree classifications.
- 3.4 **Recommendations 'Notwithstanding Regulations':** As noted in 3.3, the principle of Notwithstanding Regulations can be used where appropriate, and this includes any cases that do not fall within the approach agreed for 2022/23. Advice on individual cases can be sought from Registry as normal.
- 3.5 **Chair's Statement:** The Chair (and external examiner) will need to sign off a statement as normal to confirm that the Board has operated appropriately and all degree classifications have been agreed by the external examiner. A template statement will be provided by Registry to reflect the current arrangements.

4. Role of External Examiners

- 4.1 As normal, external examiners are responsible for scrutinising and endorsing the outcomes of assessment processes, confirming results and progress decisions. Their role in moderating samples of work, meeting with students, attending Boards of Examiner meetings (virtually or in person) and submitting their annual report remains unchanged.
- 4.2 **Arrangements for Graduating and Continuing Students 2022/23:** External examiners are **not** asked to give retrospective approval to this year's arrangements. They will be informed of the broad approach, and their role this year, as in all years, is to quality assure the application of the Regulations/Policy and approach rather than approve this.
- 4.3 **Meetings with students:** External Examiners should be provided with the opportunity to meet with students, as normal. Meetings may be arranged virtually or in person.
- 4.4 **Attendance at Board of Examiners meetings:** As normal, an external examiner should attend all Board meetings (virtually or in person) or, if this is not possible, a consulting mechanism should be in place before marks and decisions are released. If there are any difficulties with securing external examiner input, please consult with the DPVC (Education) via Registry.

4.5 **Degree classifications:** The external examiner should be asked explicitly to review and endorse all degree classification decisions. This is essential in order to evidence the maintenance of academic standards and that students have been treated fairly and not disadvantaged by the continuing pandemic situation. We may need to produce this evidence in response to academic appeals or complaints from students.

4.6 **Annual report:** External examiners will be required to complete an annual report as normal.

5. Practical Arrangements for Board of Examiners Meetings

5.1 **Meetings:** Meetings may continue to be held virtually using Teams, Zoom or similar, in person, or in a hybrid format.

5.2 **Quoracy:** The normal quoracy arrangements apply, i.e. a minimum of three academic staff plus an external examiner. If this is not possible for any reason, please consult with the DPVC (Education) via Registry.

5.3 **Minutes:** It continues to be important to ensure that Board decisions are minuted clearly and accurately, and that minutes are returned to Registry to form part of the formal record of the arrangements this year. Minutes may need to be used as evidence should students appeal or complain, or should the OfS decide to scrutinise the University's arrangements.

6. Calculations in BIRMS

6.1 IT Services will build required amendments into the automated calculation of awards so that no manual calculations will be required. BIRMS will calculate UG degree classifications automatically, as set out in PARTS A-B.

7. Transcripts

7.1 Students who were studying in 2019/20 will continue to be provided with a letter to accompany their transcripts, which they can provide to potential employers or places of further study to explain how module marks and credits have been recorded in the context of the Emergency Framework.

7.2 GPA will be offered to students this year as normal, but Cum Laude awards will not be.

PART A: Arrangements applicable to all UG students graduating in 2023

Credit Requirements and Year Weightings

- A1.1 Credit requirements have returned to normal, with the exception of those required to qualify for an uplift in degree classification through the profiling system (see A1.10 below).
- A1.2 Second year marks from 2020/21 will only count towards the degree classification if they do not have a negative impact on the overall result¹.
- A1.3 Any students who were studying in 2019/20 and may therefore have completed fewer credits under the 2019/20 Emergency Framework will continue to be automatically treated in accordance with that Framework so that they are not disadvantaged.
- A1.4 See Part B for additional arrangements for Year Abroad students.

Reassessment

- A1.5 The following Regulation was suspended in 2019/20 under the Emergency Framework:

7.2.6 (i) *Registered Students may not normally be reassessed in or repeat any module for which they have obtained credit, except for Registered Students with extenuating circumstances. In such a circumstance, the mark used for calculating a Registered Student's weighted mean mark and progress decision or final degree classification and grade point average shall be the mark obtained in the repeat attempt. If a Registered Student fails at the repeat attempt, any previously gained credit in that module will not stand.*

- A1.6 This meant that, if a student achieved a lower mark in 2019/20 in the repeat attempt of a module, it was permissible to award the higher mark under the 'no detriment' principle. For any students in this situation who are graduating in 2022/23, the higher mark still stands and will contribute towards the overall mark and degree classification.
- A1.7 If a student is repeating or resitting their final year in 2022/23 as a result of ECs submitted in 2019/20, they will continue to be considered under the Emergency Framework.
- A1.8 With effect from 2021/22, students have been permitted to retrieve failure in the final stage of an undergraduate degree (which includes year three of a four-year UG Masters degree). This includes students who took a leave of absence in 2021/22 and have returned to their final year in 2022/23. Reassessment will normally be taken in the supplementary assessment period and will be capped at the pass mark (unless the student has ECs, as normal). Students who have already passed sufficient credits to be awarded their degree will continue to be required to complete an online form to defer their graduation in order to take any reassessments.

Degree Classifications and Profiling

¹ For LANS students, the normal approach to Stage 2 will also apply, i.e. the best 120 credits from Stage 2 will be used. For MArt/MSci LANS students, the marks for the credits achieved in the 3rd year (i.e. in 2021-22) will be combined with the 4th year (2022-23) to contribute 75% to the final degree classification. Year 2 (2020/21) counts for 25%.

A1.9 As in 2021/22, the mark threshold and zone of discretion for each degree classification boundary remains in accordance with normal regulatory requirements. For example, an overall mark of 70% is required for the award of a first class degree; and all students who achieve an overall mark of 68 or 69 will be considered for a first class degree through the profiling system. The normal equivalent thresholds apply to 2.1 and 2.2 degrees, and normal regulatory requirements also apply for the award of a Pass degree.

A1.10 For 2022/23, it has been agreed to retain the simplified approach to the credits required to qualify for an uplift in degree classification through the profiling system. This means that, in order to qualify for the uplift in degree classification through the profiling system, students will need to have at least 50% (60 credits) of their modules in the final year (or the final two years, for UG Masters students) in the higher classification. Of the remainder, at least 40 credits must be in the category below. For example:

- For graduating cohorts on a 3-year degree (BSc, BA, BEng), in order to profile up to a 1st class degree, at least 60 credits (50% of the module marks) in the final year must normally be in the 1st class category and, of the remainder, at least 40 credits must be in the 2.1 category.
- For graduating cohorts on a 4-year degree (MSci, MEng) in order to profile up to a 1st class degree, at least 50% of the module marks at Stage 3 (i.e. year 3 and 4) must normally be in the 1st class category and a majority of the remainder of the module marks at Stage 3 must be in the 2.1 category.

A1.11 There might be situations in which a student has an overall mark of <70%, but is not awarded a 1st class degree because the above criteria are not fulfilled. In such cases, if the Board of Examiners decides that a student with <70% should be awarded a first class Honours, based on the full profile of marks across all years of study, an award can be made 'Notwithstanding Regulations/Fair Assessment Policy' without recourse to PAB as long as the External Examiner is supportive. The same principle also applies to 2.1, 2.2, third class and Pass degrees.

PART B: Determination of degree classifications for UG students on a programme with a year abroad

- B1.1 PART B applies to UG students who are on a four-year programme with a year of study abroad and who are graduating in 2023.
- B1.2 Marks will be calculated based on the arrangements set out in PART A and the process set out below to determine an overall weighted mean mark that will be used to determine the final degree classification.
- B1.3 For each student, in addition to the requirements below, there must be sufficient evidence that they have met the overall Programme Learning Outcomes and any core competencies required for professional accreditation.

Year weightings

For all students on four-year degrees (BA, BSc) with a Year Abroad in the third year (2021/22)

- B1.4 The marks for Stage 2 (the second year in 2020/21 and the year abroad in 2021/22) will only be used if they improve the overall mark for degree classification; if not, the Year 4 marks will count for 100% of the overall mark.
- B1.5 For students where year two contributes 18.75% and year three (year abroad) contributes 6.25% towards the final degree classification:
- If students have at least 20 credits worth of marks (7.5 ECTS or equivalent) for the Year Abroad, the mark will contribute 6.25% to the overall mark for degree classification.
 - For students with <20 credits from the Year Abroad, their mark from the year abroad will not be used for the overall mark for degree classification.
- B1.6 For students where year two contributes 12.5% and year three (year abroad) contributes 12.5%:
- If students have at least 20 credits' worth of marks (7.5 ECTS or equivalent) in the Year Abroad the mark will contribute 12.5% to the overall mark.
 - For students with <20 credits, their formal progression mark from the year abroad will not be used for the overall mark for degree classification.

For all students on four-year degrees (BA, BSc) with an inverted year of study abroad in the fourth year (2022/23)

- B1.7 The marks for Stage 2 (the second year in 2020/21 and the year abroad in 2022/23) will only be used if they improve the overall mark for degree classification; if not, the Year 3 marks will count for 100% of the overall mark.
- B1.8 For students where year two contributes 18.75% and year four (inverted year abroad) contributes 6.25% towards the final degree classification:
- If students have at least 20 credits worth of marks (7.5 ECTS or equivalent) for the Year Abroad, the mark will contribute 6.25% to the overall mark for degree classification.
 - For students with <20 credits from the Year Abroad, their mark from the year abroad will not be used for the overall mark for degree classification.

- For students where year two contributes 12.5% and year four (inverted year abroad) contributes 12.5%:
- If students have at least 20 credits' worth of marks (7.5 ECTS or equivalent) in the Year Abroad the mark will contribute 12.5% to the overall mark.

- For students with <20 credits, their mark from the year abroad will not be used for the overall mark for degree classification.