Becoming eligible for an award with “Distinction” or “Merit”: 
*a guide for new postgraduate students*

CONTENTS

How do my marks relate to award classes? [slide 2]

I’m on a Masters degree: how will my class be calculated? [slides 3-5]

I’m on a Diploma or Certificate: how will my class be calculated? [slides 6-7]

What if………

- the examiners need to consider my profile in detail? [slides 8-9]
- I was given exemption via APL or Advanced Standing? [slide 10]
- I don’t pass all my assessments? [slides 11-14]

Where do I find more information? [slide 15]

► DOES THIS APPLY TO ME??

✓ This guidance applies to students on all taught postgraduate courses except PGCE, EdD and MEd who started their course in September 2015 or later.
How do my marks relate to award classes?

- Your marks and grades for individual assessments relate to award classes as shown opposite.
- If all your marks fall in the same class band, that is what you will get!
- However, most students aren’t quite so consistent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A++, A+, A</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+, B</td>
<td>Merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+, C</td>
<td>Merit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I’m on a Masters degree: how will my award class be calculated?

Your class will be based on the following 2 award marks.

A. Your rounded overall aggregate mark.
B. Your mark for the Dissertation or equivalent.

Aggregates are rounded to whole numbers as normal. For example:

- 69.5, 69.6, 69.7, 69.8 & 69.9 are rounded up to 70;
- 69.1, 69.2, 69.3 & 69.4 are rounded down to 69.

If both award marks are in the same class:
- that is what you will get.

If the 2 award marks are not in the same class:
- the Examiners will consider your profile before making a decision.
EXAMPLE ONE.
Student takes MA History.
A. Overall aggregate mark = 78.
B. Dissertation grade = A+.

BOTH AWARD MARKS ARE in the distinction class, so: Distinction

EXAMPLE TWO.
Student takes MA International Relations.
A. Overall aggregate = 69.
B. Dissertation grade = B+.

BOTH AWARD MARKS ARE merit class, so: Merit
EXAMPLE THREE.
Student takes MA Christian Theology.
A. Overall aggregate mark = 69.
B. Dissertation grade = A.
ONE AWARD MARK IS merit, but THE OTHER AWARD MARK IS distinction, so:
Examiners decide between Merit or Distinction.

EXAMPLE FOUR.
Student takes MSc Psychology.
A. Overall aggregate mark = 64.
B. Dissertation grade = C+.
ONE AWARD MARK IS MERIT, but THE OTHER AWARD MARK IS PASS, so:
Examiners decide between Merit or Pass.
I’m on a Postgraduate Diploma or a Postgraduate Certificate: how will my award class be calculated?

Your class will be based on your rounded overall aggregate mark.

Aggregates are **rounded** to whole numbers as normal. For example:
- 69.5, 69.6, 69.7, 69.8 & 69.9 are **rounded up to 70**;
- 69.1, 69.2, 69.3 & 69.4 are **rounded down to 69**.

If your rounded overall aggregate mark is more than 2 marks below the next class:
- you will get the class implied by your aggregate.

If your rounded **overall** aggregate mark is 2 marks or less below the next class:
- the Board of Examiners will consider whether to move you to the higher class.
EXAMPLE ONE.
Student takes PG Dip in History.
A. Overall aggregate mark = 67.
B. Threshold for Distinction = 70.
MORE THAN TWO MARKS FROM DISTINCTION, so:  **Merit**

EXAMPLE TWO.
Student takes PG Dip in International Relations.
A. Overall aggregate = 68.
B. Threshold for Distinction = 70.
ONLY TWO MARKS FROM DISTINCTION, so:  **Board decides whether to award a Merit or a Distinction.**
What if the Examiners need to consider my profile in detail [1]?

The Examiners will form a judgement about the most appropriate classification.

The Examiners will take into account whether your marks were in the “high” or “low” part of a classification band.

- 84-100 is a high Distinction, 70-83 is low Distinction;
- 65-69 is high Merit, 60-64 is low Merit;
- 55-59 is high Pass, 50-54 is low Pass.

The Examiners will focus on whether you reached the “high” or “low” part of a band:

- overall;
- for at least 50% of your marks;
- [if you are on a Masters degree] for your Dissertation [or equivalent].
What if the Examiners need to consider my profile in detail [2]?

The Examiners will consider whether you passed assessments at the first attempt.

- The examiners will NOT raise your Masters classification on the basis of reaching the higher classification in your Dissertation if you had initially failed the Dissertation but got a good mark on the resubmission.

The Examiners can exercise discretion in reaching their decision, but they will base their decisions ONLY on the quality of your work.

- They will NOT take into account any mitigating circumstances.
What if I was granted exemption from some modules via APL or Advanced Standing?

• If you were granted **exemption via the Accreditation of Prior Learning [APL]**:
  – this means that the exemption was based on work you had completed *in another institution*;
  – your award class will be calculated in the normal way, EXCEPT that
    • your aggregate mark will be based totally on assessments you did at this University.
    • If you were granted exemption from more than 60 credits, your classification will be a Pass.

• If you were granted **exemption via Advanced Standing**:
  – this means that the exemption was based on work you had completed *for an award of this University*;
  – your award class will be calculated in the normal way, EXCEPT that
    • your aggregate mark will take into account the marks for relevant assessments in your earlier award.
What if I don’t Pass all my assessments?

• If you **fail one or more assessments**… [slide 12]

• If you simply **don’t submit one or more assessments**… [slide 13]

• If you **aren’t fit** to do an assessment….. [slide 14]
If you fail one or more assessments... 

→ If you pass your module[s] on aggregate, & pass your Dissertation or equivalent, & all your marks are at least F+:
  😊 you will **normally** be deemed to have passed your degree. [You will NOT have a resit opportunity.]

→ If you get less than F+ for any assessment:
  😞 you will be deemed NOT to have passed your degree.
  ⇒ The Examiners will decide your options, which might include:
    • EITHER resubmitting the failed assessments;
    • OR retaking all or part of the degree with attendance;
    • OR finishing your studies without taking a Masters degree.

→ If you get less than Grade C for the Dissertation or other “Qualifying Component” specified for your degree:
  😞 you will be deemed NOT to have passed your degree.
  ⇒ The Examiners will decide your options, which might include:
    • EITHER resubmitting the failed assessments;
    • OR retaking all or part of the degree with attendance;
    • OR finishing your studies without taking a Masters degree.
If you simply don’t submit one or more assessments..

➔ You will NOT be eligible to graduate.
  ➔ The Examiners will decide your options, which might include:
    • EITHER “re”submitting the assessments;
    • OR retaking the relevant modules with attendance;
    • OR finishing your studies without completing your course.

➔ The marks you gain on any resits/retakes the Examiners require will NOT raise your aggregates any higher than a bare pass [any higher aggregate you already hold will not be lowered].

➔ Not submitting work is NEVER a good idea! If you aren’t fit to do an assessment, follow the advice in the next slide.
If you aren’t fit to do an assessment..

➔ If you miss an assessment due to approved mitigating circumstances [not necessarily ”medical”], you will normally be entitled to undertake the assessment later with no penalty.

➔ Therefore, it is essential to:
  ➔ submit evidence of mitigating circumstances to explain absence from an exam;
  ➔ seek an extension if you are not able, for good reasons, to submit work on time.

➔ If, without letting the University know why, you don’t do an assessment, or hand it in late, your degree is at risk!
Where do I find more information?

✓ This information is for Guidance Only.

✓ Further information about how merits and distinctions are calculated is available on: www.hope.ac.uk/gateway/students/

✓ If you have any queries, please contact your Faculty Office and ask for an appointment to talk to a Senior Academic Adviser.

✓ Please seek advice immediately if you think you have mitigating circumstances.