

## **Student Guide to the University's Rules for Progression and Award in Undergraduate Programmes (for students entering from 2010 / 2011)**

This guide sets out the University rules relating to assessment, progression and award for students starting undergraduate programmes from 2010/11 onwards.<sup>1</sup> The guide highlights the key rules and requirements concerning progression through your programme and your award<sup>2</sup> at the end of your programme. Full details of the assessment rules can be found at:

<http://www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/registry-services/guide/>

Details of how your work will be assessed and marked and how you will receive feedback will be included in your student handbook and departmental web pages. If you are ever in any doubt, please speak to your academic supervisor.

### **SUMMARY**

To be eligible for an award from the University of York, you must:

- \* undertake an approved programme of study,
- \* obtain a specified number of credits at specified levels, and
- \* meet any other requirements of the award as specified in the Award and programme specifications and other University regulations (e.g. payment of fees, completion of the Academic Integrity online tutorial, requirements of professional bodies).

Your programme of study is made up of stages. Each stage is made up of modules covering different topics. Modules are of different sizes and shapes and credits are awarded if assessment requirements are met. In each stage you will be registered on 120 credits worth of modules. Each module will be assessed and you need to pass enough of these assessments to pass the modules, accumulate the 120 credits and progress to the next stage of your programme.

If you badly fail a module assessment (below 30), you will have to be reassessed but there is a limit to the amount of reassessment allowed. If you marginally fail a module (39 – 30), you may not need to be reassessed if your overall performance in the stage is good enough to compensate. Again, there is a limit to the amount of compensation which is allowed. Higher pass marks apply to modules at Masters level.

If you are on a Bachelor's or Integrated Masters programme, your degree classification (1<sup>st</sup>; 2:1 ; 2:2; 3<sup>rd</sup>) will be calculated by the overall mark for the modules in Stages 2 and later, taking into account the size of the modules (through credit weighting) and the stage (through stage weighting - later stages are weighted more heavily).

This summary is explained further through the following questions and answers. These should be read thoroughly and in the order they are presented to fully understand the progression and award system.

---

<sup>1</sup> In addition, these rules apply to students who started in 2008/09 and in 2009 / 2010 in Music, TFTV and Law.

<sup>2</sup> By award, we mean Masters, Bachelors or Foundation degrees, Diplomas and Certificates of Higher Education.

## PROGRESSING THROUGH YOUR PROGRAMME

### 1. What are stages?

An undergraduate programme of study is divided into a specified number of stages, each of which is equivalent to a year of full-time study.

<b>Bachelors (e.g. BA / BSc )</b>
Stage 1
Stage 2
Stage 3

<b>Integrated Masters (e.g. MEng / MChem)</b>
Stage 1
Stage 2
Stage 3
Stage 4

You must satisfy the requirements for one stage of your programme before being able to progress to the next stage. For a Bachelors degree, you need to get a credit-weighted average mark of 40 for each stage.

In an Integrated Masters, you need to get a credit-weighted average mark of 40 in Stage 1, 55 in Stage 2, 40 in Stage 3 (and a credit-weighted average mark of 50 for all modules taken in stages 2 & 3) and 50 in Stage 4.

If, after your marks have been calculated and any necessary compensation and reassessment procedures have been applied, you still do not reach the mark necessary for progression to the next stage, there are no other opportunities for continuing your studies. There are no opportunities for taking modules again.

### 2. How do modules and module credits relate to stages?

Each stage is made up of modules which you will take. Each of the modules you undertake will have a credit value<sup>3</sup> (e.g. 10 credits – 20 credits – etc.) and a credit level.<sup>4</sup> You will achieve the credit for a module by passing the module assessments. Modules are assessed by a range of methods which will result in a numerical module mark out of 100.

In order to satisfy the requirements for each stage, you must achieve 120 credits.

---

<sup>3</sup> One credit involves a notional workload of 10 hours. So a 10 credit module involves a notional workload of 100 hours, a 20 credit module a total of 200 hours etc. By workload, we mean all work associated with the module taken, including teaching (i.e. lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, labs, practicals etc), private study, work required during vacations, the preparation for assessment and assessment task(s).

<sup>4</sup> The credit level indicates the module's relative intellectual demand, complexity and depth of learning and of learner autonomy. See <http://www.york.ac.uk/media/staffhome/learningandteaching/documents/programmedevelopment/Guidance%20on%20Credit%20Level%20Descriptors.PDF>

### 3. What do module marks mean?

The University applies the following mark scale to **undergraduate** work:

First-class Honours:	70-100
Upper second-class Honours:	60-69
Lower second-class Honours:	50-59
Third-class Honours:	40-49
Fail:	0-39

A different mark scale is used for masters-level modules, including any taken as part of an undergraduate programme. The pass mark for masters-level modules is 50. If you are on an Integrated Masters programme, you will have to undertake some masters-level modules in the later stages of your programme. Some modules at this level may also be available as options in some Bachelors programmes. You should be aware of the higher level and pass mark for such modules when deciding whether to take them as options.

### 4. What does weighting mean?

During your programme, your module marks will be weighted in two different ways.

**Credit-weighting** means, in calculating your average stage mark, each module mark will be given more or less weighting according to the volume of credit (i.e. workload) that is associated with it. This can be done in two different ways to give the same result.

The first method is to multiply each of your module marks by the credits associated with the module, total the result and divide by 120 as seen in Column 1 below.

The second method is to take 20 credits as the base number for weighting and multiply higher or lower credit modules in relation to that base. The total is then divided by the number of 20 credit modules in 120 which is 6. This calculation can be seen in Column 2 below.

STUDENT X	
Column 1 – first method of calculation	Column 2 – second method of calculation
Module A (20 credits) Mark 55 x 20 = 1100	Module A (20 credits) Mark 55 = 55
Module B (20 credits) Mark 62 x 20 = 1240	Module B (20 credits) Mark 62 = 62
Module C (30 credits) Mark 60 x 30 = 1800	Module C (30 credits) Mark 60 x 1.5 = 90
Module D (30 credits) Mark 42 x 30 = 1260	Module D (30 credits) Mark 42 x 1.5 = 63
Module E (10 credits) Mark 70 x 10 = 700	Module E (10 credits) Mark 70 x 0.5 = 35
Module F (10 credits) Mark 75 x 10 = 750	Module F (10 credits) Mark 75 x 0.5 = 38
Total 6850 ÷ 120 = 57	Total 343 ÷ 6 = 57
<b>57 is the credit-weighted mean mark for the stage</b>	<b>57 is the credit-weighted mean mark for the stage</b>

Your degree classification will also be subject to **Stage-weighting**. Later stages of your programme are given more importance in terms of the final classification than earlier stages.

This is because the later stages of your programme represent higher levels of work and are the culmination of your achievements and abilities. See Question 6 below for an explanation of stage weighting.

5. How many credits do I need for a degree? **AWARD REQUIREMENTS**

A degree is awarded on the basis of credit acquired during your programme of study. In some circumstances, you may be eligible for an early exit award if you do not achieve the full requirements for the award for which you registered. The type of award you receive will be dependent on the number of credits you have achieved and at what level.

<b>Award</b>	<b>Number of credits</b>	<b>Including.....</b>
Integrated Masters degree	480	At least 120 Masters-level credits over stages 3 and 4
Bachelors Honours degree	360	At least 100 Honours-level credits
Ordinary degree	300	At least 60 Honours-level credits over stages 2 and 3
Foundation degree *	240	At least 90 credits at Intermediate-level (Stage 2)
Diploma of Higher Education	240	At least 90 credits at Intermediate-level (Stage 2)
Certificate of Higher Education	120	At least 90 credits at Certificate-level (Stage 1)

\*Not available as an early exit award.

In some programmes you may be required to achieve more than the number of credits above (for example, where there is an additional year abroad or placement) or you will have achieved an additional 120 credits if you undertook a Foundation Year before stage 1.

6. How is my degree class calculated? **DEGREE CLASSIFICATION**

The Bachelors Honours and Integrated Masters awards are classified degrees (see Question 3 for the different classes available for a Bachelors Honours degree and an Integrated Masters degree. Note – Third Class Honours is not available as a classification in Integrated Masters Degrees).

Your degree classification is based on the overall average of marks from modules in Stages 2 and above, (weighted to take account of the number of credits in each module). When combining the marks for each of the stages, modules from Stage 2 are given a slightly lower weighting than later stages in a ratio of 2:3 for Bachelors (i.e. 40% of the grade is taken from Stage 2 and 60% from Stage 3) and 2:3:3 for Integrated Masters (i.e. 25% from Stage 2 and 37.5% each from Stages 3 and 4).

This calculation also applies to all combined (joint) degrees.

Stage 1 (and Foundation Year, if applicable) marks are excluded from the classification calculation, although you must still achieve 120 credits in Stage 1 (and also in the Foundation Year) to progress to the second stage of the programme.

Modules which are Pass / Fail do not contribute to the degree classification, although you must pass them to get the credit.

Ordinary degrees, Certificates and Diplomas of Higher Education are not classified. For these awards, you will be given either a Pass or a Fail. Foundation degrees are also awarded on a Pass / Fail basis with the final result being calculated on marks from Stage 2 modules only. If you have progressed from a Foundation degree to a University of York Bachelors programme, the final degree classification will be based solely on module marks from Stage 3.

A worked example for each of a Bachelors and an Integrated Masters degree is illustrated below.

### Bachelors

Stage 2	Module A (20 credits) Mark = 57	Stage 3	Module G (20 credits) Mark = 66
	Module B (20 credits) Mark = 69		Module H (20 credits) Mark = 65
	Module C (20 credits) Mark = 56		Module I (30 credits) Mark = $69 \times 1.5^5$ = 103.5
	Module D (20 credits) Mark = 62		Module J (10 credits) Mark = $78 \times 0.5^6$ = 39
	Module E (20 credits) Mark = 70		Module K (40 credits) Mark = $60 \times 2^7$ = 120
	Module F (20 credits) Mark = 51		
Credit weighted mean mark for the stage	$365 \div 6 = 60.8$		$393 \div 6 = 65.5$
Weighting the stages (2:3)	$60.8 \times 0.40 = 24.32$		$65.5 \times 0.60 = 39.3$
Final degree calculation	$24.32 + 39.3 = 63.62^8 = \mathbf{64} = \mathbf{Upper\ second-class\ Honours}$		

<sup>5</sup>Credit-weighting – a 30 credit module is worth 1.5 times that of a 20 credit module.

<sup>6</sup> Credit-weighting – a 10 credit module is worth half that of a 20 credit module

<sup>7</sup> Credit-weighting – a 40 credit module is worth twice that of a 20 credit module

<sup>8</sup> If you have committed academic misconduct, any penalty points will be subtracted at this point and may have a negative impact on your degree classification

For **Integrated Masters** programmes, your final mark is computed with the credit weighted total marks from stages 2, 3 and 4 weighted in the ratio 2:3:3.

Stage 2	Module A (20 credits) Mark = 51	Stage 3	Module G (20 credits) Mark = 76	Stage 4	Module L (30 credits) Mark = 65 x 1.5 = 97.5
	Module B (20 credits) Mark = 70		Module H (20 credits) Mark = 68		Module M (30 credits) Mark = 68 x 1.5 = 102
	Module C (20 credits) Mark = 55		Module I (30 credits) Mark = 69 x 1.5 <sup>9</sup> = 103.5		Module N (30 credits) Mark = 68 x 1.5 = 102
	Module D (20 credits) Mark = 75		Module J (30 credits) Mark = 68 x 1.5 <sup>10</sup> = 102		Module P (30 credits) Mark = 71 x 1.5 = 106.5
	Module E (20 credits) Mark = 71		Module K (20 credits) Mark = 75		
	Module F (20 credits) Mark = 69				
Credit weighted mean mark for the stage	$391 \div 6 = 65.1$		$424.5 \div 6 = 70.75$		$408 \div 6 = 68$
Weighting the stages (2:3:3)	$65.1 \times 0.25 = 16.27$		$70.75 \times 0.375 = 26.53$		$68 \times 0.375 = 25.5$
Final degree calculation	$16.27 + 26.53 + 25.5 = 68.3^{11} = 68 =$ <b>Upper second-class Honours</b>				

<sup>9</sup> Credit-weighting – a 30 credit module is worth 1.5 times that of a 20 credit module

<sup>10</sup> Credit-weighting – a 30 credit module is worth 1.5 times that of a 20 credit module

<sup>11</sup> If you have committed academic misconduct, any penalty points will be subtracted at this point and may have a negative impact on your degree classification

7. What happens if my marks are just below the mark needed for a higher classification? **BORDERLINE CASES**

In cases where you miss the classification above by 2 or fewer marks, using the weighting of stages described in Question 6, we look to see if you would have a higher classification if the weighting of the stages was in a different ratio. The next higher classification will be awarded if, and only if,

- for Bachelor's programmes - the credit-weighted total marks for stages 2 and above weighted in the ratios of 1:1 or 1:2 produce a final degree classification in a higher classification band.
- for Integrated Masters programmes the credit-weighted total marks for stages 2 and above weighted in the ratios 1:1:1 or 1:2:2 produce a final degree classification in a higher classification band.

For example, in the Integrated Masters example given above, the student's final classification mark is 68 (i.e. a borderline 2:1 degree but only 2 marks below the marks for a 1<sup>st</sup>). If the stage weighting is re-calculated using a ratio of 1:1:1 OR 1:2:2, the following numbers result.

Weighting the stages (1:1:1)	$65.1 \times 0.33 = 21.4$		$70.7 \times 0.33 = 23.3$		$68 \times 0.33 = 22.4$
Final degree calculation	$21.4 + 23.3 + 22.4 = 67.1 = 67 = \text{Upper second-class honours}$				

Weighting the stages (1:2:2)	$65.1 \times 0.20 = 13.02$		$70.75 \times 0.40 = 28.3$		$68 \times 0.40 = 27.2$
Final degree calculation	$13.02 + 28.3 + 27.2 = 68.52 = 69 = \text{Upper second-class honours}$				

In this case, the recalculation does not raise the mark above the 70 boundary, therefore this student will still be awarded an Upper second class honours degree.

No other conditions will be applied or assessments undertaken to determine the final calculation.

8. What happens if I fail one or more modules? **COMPENSATION AND REASSESSMENT.**

If you fail a module, don't panic! In most cases there will still be an opportunity to achieve the credit required for progression or an award either through compensation or reassessment.

*Before reading the following section it should be noted that in some programmes due to the nature of the programme or module (e.g. where professional / vocational requirements have to be met) the following compensation and reassessment opportunities may not be available. This should be clear in the regulations for your programme but if you are not sure, speak to your academic supervisor.*

### **COMPENSATION**

For modules in levels 1, 2 and 3, the pass mark for module assessments is 40. However, if your mark for a module is in the 30 – 39 range, you may still be able to get the credits for the module if your performance in other modules is good enough to compensate. In other words, 'marginal' failure in one module may be compensated by achievement in others<sup>12</sup>. There is, however, a limit to the amount of credit for which you can be compensated.

To be eligible for compensation, you must meet the University's compensation criteria, which are based on the module marks achieved and your credit-weighted mean for the stage. The University's compensation criteria vary depending on your intended award (Bachelors, Integrated Masters etc). For full details, see the Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback (link given at the beginning of these notes). The following are provided purely as examples; - please consult the Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback and your programme's regulations for the exact rules that will apply to you.

In this example from a Bachelors programme, assuming no modules have been designated as non-compensatable, a maximum of 40 credits-worth of modules can be compensated if there are no modules with marks below 30 (after reassessment) and the credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in the stage is at least 40.

A student has the following profile of module marks:

Module A (20 credits): 38 (Fail)	In this example, none of the modules has been designated as non-compensatable, none of the module marks is below 30 and the credit-weighted mean over all modules in the stage is 46. Therefore, the marginal failure in Modules A and B can be compensated by the achievement in Modules C-G.
Module B (20 credits): 38 (Fail)	
Module C (20 credits): 50 (Pass)	
Module D (20 credits): 50 (Pass)	
Module E (20 credits): 50 (Pass)	
Module F (10 credits): 50 (Pass)	
Module G (10 credits): 50 (Pass)	

**In Stage 2 of an Integrated Masters programme**, assuming no modules have been designated as non-compensatable, 40 credits-worth of modules can be compensated provided

<sup>12</sup> Some modules in your programme may be designated as Pass / Fail. Marginal failure in these modules cannot be compensated for.

that no module marks are lower than 30 and the credit-weighted mean over all modules taken in the stage is at least 55.

For example, a student has the following profile of module marks:

Module A (20 credits): 39 (Fail)	In this example, none of the modules has been designated as non-compensatable, none of the module marks is below 30 and the credit-weighted mean over all modules in the stage is 56. Therefore, the marginal failure in Modules A and B can be compensated by the achievement in Modules C-G.
Module B (20 credits): 38 (Fail)	
Module C (20 credits): 60 (Pass)	
Module D (20 credits): 65 (Pass)	
Module E (20 credits): 70 (Pass)	
Module F (10 credits): 70 (Pass)	
Module G (10 credits): 60 (Pass)	

## REASSESSMENT

- If you get a module mark below 30 (or 40 for Masters-level modules) this cannot be compensated and you will have to be reassessed. However, there is a limit to the number of credits failed below 30 (or 40 for Masters level) in which you can be reassessed.
- If you get a mark between 30 and 39 (or 40 and 49 for Masters-level modules) and you are not eligible for compensation, you may also need to be reassessed in those modules. The amount of credit in which you can be reassessed is lower in stage 3 (and Stage 4 for Integrated Masters) than in the earlier stages. For details see the Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback.
- Please note that not all modules can be reassessed – your department will give you this information.
- You can only be reassessed in a module once. If you fail a module and fail reassessment, you will not be able to progress and will fail the programme. You may, however, be eligible to receive a lower award.
- If you fail a module that cannot be reassessed or compensated, you will not be able to progress and will fail the programme. You may, however, be eligible to receive a lower award.
- Students who fail and are reassessed in a module will not be allowed to gain an advantage over those who passed the module first time. We do this by “capping” the stage mark (not the module mark) after reassessment, which therefore affects the degree classification calculation.
- The marks for all modules are included on student’s final transcripts.

The following are provided as examples.

22/09/11

In **Stage 1 of a Bachelors programme**, reassessment opportunities are available in modules up to a total of 90 credits, providing that no more than 50 credits have a module mark of less than 30.

For example, a student has the following profile of module marks:

Module A (20 credits): 29 (F)	This student must be reassessed on Modules A and B (marks below 30) and has the option to be reassessed in modules C and D because there are less than 50 credits with a mark below 30 and the total reassessment required is for 80 credits. In such cases, students should discuss their decision with their academic supervisor. It is possible that, if Modules A & B are passed on reassessment, then Modules C & D could be compensated for.
Module B (20 credits): 28 (F)	
Module C (20 credits): 38 (F)	
Module D (20 credits): 38 (F)	
Module E (20 credits): 65 (P)	
Module F (10 credits): 65 (P)	
Module G (10 credits): 60 (P)	

In **Stage 3 of a Bachelors programme**, reassessment opportunities are available in modules up to a total of 40 credits. For example, a student has the following profile of marks:

Module A (20 credits): 29 (F)	This student must be reassessed in Module A because the mark is below 30 and therefore cannot be compensated.
Module B (20 credits): 46 (P)	
Module C (20 credits): 60 (P)	
Module D (20 credits): 60 (P)	
Module E (20 credits): 65 (P)	

If you have a marginal fail in a module (a mark between 30 - 39) and it cannot be compensated, you can choose to be reassessed in that module (as long as it does not take you over the number of reassessment opportunities permitted in the stage). You cannot choose to be reassessed in a marginal fail in a module (a mark between 30 – 39) that can be compensated. Please see your academic supervisor for further guidance.

9. What if something happens that disrupts my studies and affects my ability to complete my modules? **MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

You may encounter circumstances which hinder your academic progress. For example, you have a serious illness, a family member dies, you have your laptop stolen, etc. It is vital that, should such circumstances arise, you consult your academic supervisor as soon as possible. It is important that any application for mitigating circumstances is submitted to the department before any assessment takes place or assessment deadlines occur.

Such circumstances are considered by the appropriate departmental committee (e.g. the Board of Studies) and the University Special Cases Committee. Further general guidance can be found in the Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback.

10. What if I have a year away for **STUDY ABROAD OR AN INDUSTRIAL PLACEMENT?**

Some programmes include study abroad and placements or years in an employment setting. These may be additional years which will lengthen the normal period of study (e.g. resulting in a four year Bachelors programme) or years which replace time at York (replacement years). Details of how marks from study abroad and work placements will feed into your degree classification and details of any reassessment opportunities will be set out in the regulations for your programme. Further details are available in the Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback.

11. What if I don't meet the progression or award requirements?  
**FAILURE AND EARLY EXIT**

If you do not meet the requirements for a stage, you will not be able to progress, and if in the final stage of your programme you do not achieve the required credits you will not be able to graduate with your intended award (Bachelors, Honours, Integrated Masters etc). However, you may be eligible for an alternative award based on the credits that you have achieved. Similarly, if, for whatever reason, you choose to leave the University part way through your programme, you may be eligible for an early exit award based on credits achieved.

For example, if you do not meet the progression requirement from Stage 2 to 3 you may be eligible for a Certificate of Higher Education (based on the 120 credits you achieved in Stage 1). In Stage 3 of a Bachelors programme, if you do not achieve all 120 credits for the stage you may still be eligible for an Ordinary degree (300 credits) or a Diploma of Higher Education (240 credits).