

## Student Guide to the University's Rules for Progression and Award<sup>1</sup> in Bachelor's Undergraduate Programmes 2021/2

This guide sets out the University rules relating to assessment, progression and award for undergraduate students. Details of how your work will be assessed and how you will receive feedback are included in your handbook and departmental web pages. If you are ever in any doubt, please speak to your academic supervisor.

Please see the full guide to assessment linked [here](#) and university exams web pages linked [here](#).

### SUMMARY

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

- undertake an approved programme of study (course),
- obtain a specified number of credits at specified levels, and
- meet any other requirements of the award as set out in the Award and programme specifications and other University regulations (such as payment of fees).

Your programme of study (course) is made up of stages. Each stage is made up of modules covering different topics. Modules differ in size and shape. In each stage (year) you will be registered on 120 credits worth of modules. Every module is assessed and if you pass each module you will progress to the next stage of your programme.

If you fail a module with a mark lower than the compensation threshold (below 30, except in your award year when marks below 10 are considered a bad fail) you will have to be reassessed. If you get a mark on a module that's between the compensation threshold and the pass mark (30 – 39, except in your award year when marks above 10 can be compensated) you may not need to be reassessed if your overall performance is good enough to compensate. Please be aware, there is a limit to the amount of reassessment and compensation which is allowed. (Note: If you are taking Masters level modules, which have an M as the last letter of a module code, the pass mark is 50, and the compensation threshold is 40.)

When on a Bachelor's programme, your degree classification (1st; 2:1; 2:2; 3rd) will be calculated by the overall mark for the modules in Stages 2 and 3. The overall mark will be calculated from your first attempt marks, or sit-as-if-for-the-first-time marks where applicable. Resit marks are not used in calculating degree classifications. It will take into account the size of the modules (through credit weighting) and the stage (through stage weighting).

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.

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<sup>1</sup> By award, we mean Master's, pre-Master's, Bachelor's or Foundation degrees, Diplomas and Certificates.

## PROGRESSING THROUGH YOUR PROGRAMME

### 1. What are stages?

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

Bachelor's (e.g. BA / BSc)
Stage 1
Stage 2
Stage 3

You must satisfy the requirements for each stage of your programme before being able to progress to the next stage. For a Bachelor's degree, you need to get a credit-weighted average mark (mean) of 40 for each stage.

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, you cannot continue your studies. You may not retake modules in this situation, although students in stage 1 may repeat that one stage of study should they meet the criteria qualifying them to do so. **See Question 11.**

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

Each stage is made up of modules. Each of the modules you undertake will have a credit value<sup>2</sup> (e.g. 10 credits, 20 credits and so on) and a credit level<sup>3</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 mark out of 100, or a pass/fail grade.

To satisfy the requirements for each stage (year), you must achieve a total of 120 credits.

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<sup>2</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 (contact time), private study, work required during vacations, the preparation for assessment and assessment tasks.

<sup>3</sup> The credit level indicates the module's relative intellectual demand, complexity and depth of learning and of learner autonomy. See the relevant Framework for Programme Design:

<https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/quality-assurance/design/>

### 3. What do module marks mean?

The University applies the following mark scale to overall achievement when studying for an Bachelor's degree:

Mark range	Module Level	Classification band
70-100	C, I, H, M	First-class Honours
60-69	C, I, H, M	Upper second-class Honours
50-59	C, I, H, M	Lower second-class Honours
40-49	C, I, H	Third class honours
30-39	C, I, H	Marginal Fail/Compensated pass (where eligible, see COMPENSATION section p9)
0-29	C, I, H	Fail

A different mark scale is used for **Master's-level** modules, including any taken as part of an undergraduate programme. The pass mark for Master's-level modules is 50. Some modules at this level may also be available as Bachelor options. 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?

Module marks will be weighted in two different ways: credit weighting and stage weighting.

#### Credit-weighting

Each module mark is given more or less weighting according to the volume of credit (i.e. workload) that is associated with it. The credit weighted average (mean) for each stage can be worked out by multiplying each of your module marks by the credits associated with the module. Then total the result and divide by 120 as seen below.

Calculating a credit weighted yearly average.
Module A (20 credits) Mark 55 x 20 = 1100
Module B (20 credits) Mark 62 x 20 = 1240
Module C (30 credits) Mark 60 x 30 = 1800
Module D (30 credits) Mark 42 x 30 = 1260
Module E (10 credits) Mark 70 x 10 = 700

Module F (10 credits) Mark 75 x 10 = 750
Total 6850 ÷ 120 = 57.08 (mark used for award calculation)
<b>57 is the rounded credit-weighted mean mark for the stage</b>

### Stage-weighting

Later stages of your programme are usually given more importance in terms of the final classification than earlier stages. This is because the later stages represent higher levels of work and are the culmination of your achievements and abilities. See Question 6 below for an explanation of stage weighting.

## AWARD REQUIREMENTS

### 5. How many credits do I need for a degree?

A degree is awarded on the basis of credit acquired during your programme of study. If you do not achieve the full requirements, you may be eligible for an early exit or lower exit award. 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 Master's degree	480	At least 120 Master's-level credits over stages 3 and 4
Bachelor's 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)
University Certificate *	60	60 credits at Certificate-level or higher (Stage 1)
Foundation Certificate *	80 or 120	At least 70 credits at level 3 (pre-University level) *

\*Not available as an early exit award.

In some programmes you may have to achieve more than the number of credits above, for example, where there is an additional year abroad or on an industrial placement. Students who complete a foundation year before starting their Bachelor's will have achieved an additional 120 credits.

## DEGREE CLASSIFICATION

### 6. How is my degree class calculated?

Bachelor Honours awards are classified degrees (see Question 3 for the different classes). Your degree classification is calculated using the stage mark from each of stages 2 and above.

The stage mark is the average of your first attempt module marks, with each module weighted according to the number of credits. If you are allowed a 'sit-as-if-for-the-first-time', this mark will replace your first attempt mark. However resit marks are only used to allow you to progress (see Questions 1 and 2) – they are not used to calculate your degree classification. Pass/fail modules do not contribute to your degree classification (although you must pass them). Stage marks are calculated to three decimal places.

#### Example: Stage 2

	1 <sup>st</sup> attempt mark	Resit mark	Weighted mark
Module A (20 credits)	50		1000
Module B (10 credits)	40		400
Module C (30 credits)	20	45	600
Module D (20 credits)	60		1200
Module E (20 credits)	60		1200
Module F (20 credits)	50		1000
TOTAL	120		5400
Stage mark = Weighted mark total/number of credits			45

#### Example: Stage 3

	1 <sup>st</sup> attempt mark	Resit mark	Weighted mark
Module A (20 credits) Pass/fail	Pass		N/A
Module B (10 credits)	60		600
Module C (10 credits)	50		500
Module D (20 credits)	60		1200
Module E (20 credits)	50		1000
Module F (40 credits)	60		2400
TOTAL	100 (excluding A)		5700
Stage mark = Weighted mark total/number of credits			57

Stage marks from the 2nd and 3rd stage are combined to calculate the award mark. In standard years a ratio of 2:3 is used.

**Award Calculation 2021/22 - Covid-19 Affected Cohorts:**

**For students graduating in 2021/22:** An additional ratio of 1:3 will be implemented if their second year of study was completed and contributed to their award<sup>4</sup> in 2020/1. The higher outcome of both ratios will be used as the overall award mark as part of the University's Covid response.

**2019/0 study - Safety net:** If you were eligible for a safety net score in 2019/0, that will be applied to your award calculation (where higher than the completed stage average). It is possible for both the additional ratio and safety net score to be applied to your award calculation.

**Example of the 2:3 ratio** (40% of the mark is taken from Stage 2 and 60% from Stage 3). To calculate, multiply the Stage 2 mark by 2 and the Stage 3 mark by 3, then divide the total by 5:

Stage 2 mark of 45:  $(45 \times 2 = 90)$

Stage 3 mark of 57:  $(57 \times 3 = 171)$

$90 + 171 = 261$

$261 / 5 = 52.2$

**Award mark = 52.20 (rounded to 52), Lower second class (2:2)**

**Example of the 1:3 ratio** (25% of the grade is taken from Stage 2 and 75% from Stage 3). To calculate, multiply the Stage 3 mark by 3 and add the stage 2 mark, then divide the total by 4:

Stage 2 mark of 45:  $(45 \times 1 = 45)$

Stage 3 mark of 57:  $(57 \times 3 = 171)$

$45 + 171 = 216$

$216 / 4 = 54$

**Award mark = 54, Lower second class (2:2)**

In the examples above, the ratio of 1:3 would be utilised to calculate the award mark and degree classification as the outcome is higher.

These calculations also apply to 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.

**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 Bachelor's programme, the final degree classification will be based solely on module marks from Stage 3.

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<sup>4</sup> For example, if you completed a year abroad or placement in 2020/21 for additional credit towards your award - it would not count. A replacement year in 2020/21 does count towards the award so the 1:3 ratio should apply.

## BORDERLINE CASES

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

The award mark is rounded to the nearest integer, so if your final award mark is within 0.5 percentage points of the above class boundary it will be rounded up. For example, a mark of 59.6 will be rounded to 60 and you will be awarded an upper second class degree. A final award mark of 59.49 will be rounded down and you will be awarded a lower second class degree. If your award mark is more than 0.5 percentage points but fewer than 2 percentage points below the higher class boundary, the borderline rules come into effect and further calculations are performed to check whether you would have a higher classification if we apply the borderline ratios to the weighting of the stages.

For Bachelor's programmes, these borderline ratios are 1:1 and 1:2.

If, after applying these ratios, your mark exceeds the grade boundary, or is within 0.5 percentage points of the above class boundary, a higher degree classification will be awarded, although the award mark recorded on your transcript will be the one calculated using the standard 2:3 ratio. In the academic year 2021/2, where the additional ratio of 1:3 is used, the borderline calculation will still apply. See the example below.

#### **Bachelor's example**

Stage 2 mark = 65

Stage 3 mark = 55

Programme mark using 2:3 ratio = 59

Programme mark using 1:3 ratio = 57.5 (additional covid ratio as described above)

Programme mark using 1:1 ratio = 60 (borderline calculation)

Programme mark using 1:2 ratio = 58.33 (borderline calculation)

The mark of 59 (the mark from the 2:3 ratio) will appear on the transcript. However, as the 1:1 borderline ratio mark is 60, you will be awarded an Upper second-class Honours degree (2.1).

The borderline ratios are the only method by which a borderline mark could result in a higher degree classification. Being close to a grade boundary does not result in the right to take further attempts at assessment and your module marks will never be altered.

## COMPENSATION AND REASSESSMENT.

### 8. What happens if I fail one or more modules?

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

**Important:** in some programmes (for example, where professional / vocational requirements have to be met) compensation and reassessment may not be an option. Check the handbook for your programme but if you are not sure, speak to your department.

## 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 (or the 10-39 range in the final year of your programme), 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>5</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 (Bachelor’s, Integrated Master’s etc). The following are provided purely as examples. Please consult the [Guide to Assessment, Marking and Feedback](#) and your programme’s regulations for the exact rules that will apply to you.

## REASSESSMENT

Reassessment marks (resit marks) are not used in your degree classification. They are used only to meet the progression requirements or credit total requirements for your award. See sections 5 and 6.

If you get a module mark below 30 in stage 1 or 2 or 10 in stage 3 this cannot be compensated and you will have to be reassessed. However, there is a limit to the number of credits failed this way in which you can be reassessed.

If you get a mark between 30 and 39 in stage 1 or 2, or 10 and 39 in stage 3 and you are not eligible for compensation (for example, because you have too many modules in this range, or because your stage average is below 40), 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 than in the earlier stages. For details see the [Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback](#).

Though most modules can be reassessed, some can’t– check with your department

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.

Unless your programme allows repeat study of stage 1, 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.

Students who fail and are reassessed in a module will not be allowed to gain an advantage over those who passed the module at first attempt. Your first attempt mark, not the mark obtained on the second attempt, is used when calculating your final programme mark. (If your award mark based on first attempt marks is too low to pass the degree, but you have obtained enough credits through reassessment, your award mark will be increased to the pass mark but no higher.)

The marks for all modules are included on students’ final transcripts. The following are provided as examples.

In **stages 1 and 2 of a Bachelor’s programme**, where a student fails modules and the progression requirement for the stage cannot be met by application of the compensation rules, the student is entitled to reassessment in a maximum of 90 credits-worth of failed modules (per stage) provided

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<sup>5</sup> 4 Some modules in your programme may be designated as Pass / Fail. These modules cannot be compensated for.

that they have failed no more than 90 credits in that stage with no more than 50 credits-worth of outright fail marks (i.e. module marks less than 30) in that stage.

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

Module A (20 credits): 29 (F)	<p>This student must be reassessed on Modules A, B and C (marks below 30), totaling 60 credits of resits. They can choose whether or not the resit D, see below:</p> <p>If the student chose NOT to resit module D then should they pass modules A, B and C at resit they will compensate module D. However, this is a gamble, if they were to get marks below 30 in any of their resits on A, B and C, or got marks below 40 in more than one of A, B or C then they would fail the year as they would not get another opportunity to resit D.</p> <p>In such cases, students should discuss their decision with their academic supervisor. It is possible that, if Modules A, B and C are passed on reassessment, then Module D could be compensated without a resit.</p>
Module B (20 credits): 28 (F)	
Module C (20 credits): 18 (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)	

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

Module A (20 credits): 29 (F)	<p>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 &amp; B are passed on reassessment, then Modules C &amp; D could be compensated for.</p>
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 Bachelor's 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): 9 (F)	<p>This student has failed 40 credits and therefore may choose to resit both failed modules. The student must be reassessed in Module A because the mark is below 10 and therefore cannot be compensated. This student should discuss their decision with their academic supervisor. In this case, as the credit-weighted average is above 40, the student may choose to only resit Module A in anticipation of achieving a compensatable or pass mark in Module A, but each case should be considered individually.</p>
Module B (20 credits): 35 (F)	
Module C (20 credits): 60 (P)	
Module D (20 credits): 60 (P)	
Module E (20 credits): 65 (P)	
Module F (20 credits): 55 (P)	

If you have a marginal fail in a module (a mark between 30 – 39 in a non-award year or 10-39 in your award year) 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 that can be compensated. Please see your academic supervisor for further guidance.

## **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING ASSESSMENT**

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

If something exceptional happens that hinders your academic progress (such as a serious illness or bereavement), communicate with your academic supervisor as soon as possible. It is important that applications for exceptional circumstances are submitted to the department before assessments or deadlines.

Such circumstances are considered by the appropriate departmental committee. Further general guidance can be found in the [exceptional circumstances webpages](#).

## **STUDY ABROAD OR A YEAR IN INDUSTRY?**

### **10. What if I have a year away to study abroad or in industry?**

Some programmes include study abroad and placements or years in an employment setting. This may be an additional year which will lengthen the normal period of study (e.g. resulting in a four year Bachelor's programme) or a year which replaces 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](#).

## **FAILURE AND EARLY EXIT**

### **What if I don't meet the progression or award requirements?**

If you do not meet the requirements for a stage, you will not be able to progress. At the end of stage 1 there may be an opportunity to repeat that one year of study, subject to certain conditions detailed below.

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. However, you may be eligible for an alternative lower award based on the credits that you have achieved. Similarly, if 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 Bachelor's 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).

#### **Failure of stage 1**

In the case of failure of stage 1, and taking into consideration any decision by a department to opt out from this policy, the University normally permits students to repeat the whole of stage 1, provided the student attained a minimum credit-weighted mean of 10 marks over all the modules completed. For most programmes this calculation will be performed at the end of stage 1, although some programmes will make this calculation at the point where reassessment opportunities have been exhausted. The marks for the failed stage will be included on the student's transcript, but will not be used in the calculation of any award. Each student has one opportunity only to repeat study. In all instances the whole year must be repeated, even if some modules have been passed, they will need to be taken again.