Classification policy

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Purpose	This policy explains which degrees are classified and the classification algorithm used for each classified degree.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.2	Clarification of section 5.1 regarding decimal place used in calculation. Reverted language of policy to 'only one decimal place' as per existing practice.	Approved	Catriona Young Administrative Officer Education Policy and Quality	10/12/2024

1 Purpose

The University offers classified awards for General Degrees, Honours Degrees, Integrated Masters Degrees, Postgraduate Certificate Awards, Postgraduate Diploma Awards, and Taught Postgraduate Masters degrees.

Some collaborative programmes use a classification policy which differs for what is set out in this policy. In such cases, the School must make this clear to students at the start of their programme and in their programme handbooks.

This policy does not apply to the Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma as these are unclassified awards.

2 General Degree Classifications

The Senate Regulations specify that the General Degree may be awarded on the basis of 360 credits including at least 80 at 2000 level and at least 60 at 3000 level or above, calculated based on the credit-weighted mean of all modules taken. For students who have taken additional credits above the minimum requirement, all credits will be included in the degree classification. General Degree can be awarded with the following outcomes:

Classification outcome	Criteria
Distinction	Achieving a credit-weighted mean of 16.5 or above in 120 credits **Or** Achieving a credit-weighted mean of 13.5 or above in modules totalling 180 credits of which 40 credits at 2000 or 3000 level must be at a grade of 13.5 or above and 20 credits must be at a grade of 16.5 or above.
Merit	Achieving a credit-weighted mean between 13.5 and 16.4 in 120 credits
Pass	Achieving a credit-weighted mean between 7.0 and 13.4
Fail	Achieving a credit-weighted mean of 6.9 or less

3 Honours Degree Classifications and Integrated Masters

The honours classification algorithm uses the credit-weighted mean and median of all Honours-level grades awarded in the Honours years to determine the degree classification.

The Senate Regulations specify that at least 240 credits should be gained during an approved two-year Honours programme, at least 210 of which are at 3000 level or above, and at least 90 are at 4000 level. For students on an Integrated Masters programme, the requirement is 360 credits gained across the Honours and Integrated Masters years, of which at least 330 are at 3000 level or above, and at

least 120 are at 5000 level. For students who have taken extra modules, the calculation of mean and median must include all modules (allowing for the exceptions noted below). A student cannot take an extra module to replace a poorer grade although special provision may be made for students who move from an Integrated Masters degree to a BSc.

Only grades from 3000-level, 4000-level and (where applicable) 5000-level modules are entered into the algorithm. Grades achieved for "dip down" modules taken at 1000 and 2000-level during the Honours programme do not enter the algorithmic calculation for the Honours degree classification unless they are required language training for the programme.

If students are advised into 3000-level, 4000-level or (where applicable) 5000-level modules prior to the normal start of their Honours years, then these results should not count as part of the Honours classification calculation except where the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching) has given approval to the modules counting as part of a student's approved Honours programme.

Classification outcome	Mean	Median
First (I)	16.5 or more	any value
First (I)	16.0-16.4	16.5 or more
Upper Second (II.1)		16.4 or less
Upper Second (II.1)	13.5-15.9	any value
Upper Second (II.1)	13.0-13.4	13.5 or more
Lower Second (II.2)		13.4 or less
Lower Second (II.2)	10.5-12.9	any value
Lower Second (II.2)	10.0-10.4	10.5 or more
Third (III)		10.4 or less
Third (III)	7.0-9.9	any value
Not of Honours standard	6.9 or less	any value

An additional classification of distinction in a spoken language may be awarded by the School of Modern Languages to students who receive a mark of 16.5 or above in their final oral examination. Further details are provided in the School Handbook.

4   Taught Postgraduate Classification

The taught postgraduate (PGT) algorithm uses the St Andrews grade point average (GPA) to determine a final degree classification. The St Andrews GPA is the credit-weighted mean of all grades, including the taught component and any dissertation or final project. The St Andrews GPA is calculated during classification and is displayed at the same time as the degree classification and/or degree award.

The Senate Regulations define postgraduate taught degrees as follows:

- Postgraduate Certificate - 60 credits, including at least 40 at 5000 level
- Postgraduate Diploma – 120 credits, including at least 90 at 5000 level
- MLitt, MSc or MRes – 180 credits, including at least 150 at 5000 level

Students are permitted to 'dip-down' for the credits beyond the 5000 level requirements defined above. The grades achieved for dip-down modules taken at 1000 and 2000-level as part of a PGT degree are incorporated into the degree only when the subject of the module is required language training. In all other cases, only grades received for 3000 and 4000-level dip-down modules are incorporated into the St Andrews GPA.

Classification outcome	St Andrews GPA
Distinction	16.5 or more
Merit	13.5-16.4
Pass	7.0 to 13.4
Fail	6.9 or less

5   Calculation protocols

5.1   Rounding

Only one decimal place is used in the calculation of means and medians. When determining classification outcomes, values that are equidistant from two possible rounded values are rounded up.

For example, 16.449 is rounded to 16.4; 16.450 and 16.451 are both rounded to 16.5.

Student transcripts will only display grades up to one decimal place.

5.2   Grades between 4.0 and 6.9

In the case of a taught module at 3000-level or above failed with a grade of 4.0-6.9, there is normally a right to reassessment. If the reassessment is passed, the grade reported, recorded on the transcript, and entered into the algorithmic calculation will be capped at a grade of 7.0 (not the original failed grade).

In the case of a failed module for which no credit is subsequently obtained at reassessment, the original (failed) grade is entered into the algorithmic calculation even though no credits are obtained for the module.

5.2.1   Specific rules for Honours and Integrated Masters degrees

If a 3000-level, 4000-level or 5000-level module (as part of an Honours programme) is failed both at the first sitting and at re-assessment (if permitted), but the module is subsequently re-taken and passed, then (i) the original failed grade will be entered in the algorithm for the session in which the module was first taken, and (ii) the grade earned for the later session in which the module was re-taken and passed should be reported and entered into the algorithm. This may occur when a specified Honours module has to be passed in order to fulfil the stipulations of an Honours programme. In such cases two grades are entered into the algorithm for this module even though actual credit is only achieved at the second taking.

5.2.2 Specific rules for MLitt, MSc and MRes degrees

Postgraduate taught students are not permitted to retake modules or take additional modules to substitute for failed modules. This means that an MLitt, MSc, or MRes student who fails a module will not be able to earn the required number of credits for their intended degree and can, at best, only be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma. Students are permitted to attempt the PGT dissertation or final project in order to earn credits towards the award of a Postgraduate Diploma, even if they have failed a module and it is therefore impossible for them to earn enough credits for their originally intended degree.

Reassessment of the dissertation or final project in a MLitt, MSc or MRes is not permitted.

5.3 Grades of 3.9 or less

In the case of a taught module at 3000-level or above being failed with a grade of 3.9 or less, there is no right to reassessment and the original grade is reported and entered in the algorithmic calculation even though no credits are obtained for the module. The same will apply to 1000 and 2000-level dip down modules which are required language training for a particular programme.

5.4 "OX" grades

In the case of receiving a 0X in a taught module at 3000-level or above, a grade of "0" is entered into the algorithmic calculation (with the credit-weighting of the relevant module), even though no credits are obtained for the module with respect to meeting the requirements of the degree programme. Any properly authorised withdrawal from a module, however, would be ignored by the algorithm.

5.5 Pass/fail grades

In the case of modules graded on a pass/fail basis, credits obtained are included in the overall credit requirements for the intended degree award. However, credits and grades are excluded from the calculation of the St Andrews GPA and the overall degree classification.

5.6 Grades achieved outwith St Andrews

Grades that are achieved (after suitable translation) from modules taken outwith St Andrews (usually abroad) as part of an approved programme are entered into the algorithmic calculation. If ungraded credits are received from abroad or graded credits that are not formally approved as part of the degree programme, then these will not influence the algorithmic calculation, although such credits will normally appear on transcripts.

6 Consideration of special cases

6.1 S-coding

Students with S-coded results do not need to be brought to the attention of the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean Learning & Teaching) and Provost, so long as the S-coded results considered in the classification algorithm do not represent more than 25% of the total credits for Honours and Integrated Masters programmes or 50% of the taught component of a postgraduate taught programme.

Programme	Maximum S-coded credits
Honours Programme	60 credits
Integrated Year abroad	75 credits
Integrated Master programme	90 credits
Postgraduate Certificate	30 credits
Postgraduate Diploma	60 credits
Postgraduate MLitt/MSc/MRes	60 credits

For students with S-coded results due to be considered in classification, the classification algorithm will be run twice: once with the S-coded results included, and once without the S-coded results included. If the resulting degree classifications differ, the higher classification will be awarded. Further information on S coding is available in the Policy on S-coding.

6.2   Other special cases

Exceptional cases should be referred to the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching) or Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost). These exceptions include the following types of case:

- students who are marginally short of the required number of credits for a degree;
- students who have been S-coded for more than the maximum number of credits stated above;
- Postgraduate taught students who have failed a required taught module which is not the dissertation or final project;
- any other anomalies.

Where anomalies are referred to the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching) or Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost), the School must provide a minute of the discussion held at the School Examination Board, along with a recommendation from that Board.

7   Past algorithms

- Honours classification from 2007/08

- [PGT Masters classification 2014-2017](#)
- [PGT Masters classification 2017-2018](#)

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	New policy combining the Honours classification and Postgraduate Taught classification. Introducing classifications for General Degrees, PG Certificates and PG Diplomas from students matriculating from September 2023 onwards.	Approved	Emily Feamster, Deputy Head of Education Policy and Quality	03/09/2023
1.1	Minor typographical correction	Approved	Emily Feamster, Deputy Head of Education Policy and Quality	25/09/2023
1.2	Clarification of section 5.1 regarding decimal place used in calculation. Reverted language of policy to 'only one decimal place' as per existing practice.	Approved	Catriona Young Administrative Officer Education Policy and Quality	10/12/2024