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| **Faculty of Humanities**  **Reduced Scale Stepped Marking FAQs for Postgraduate Taught Students** |



1. **What is reduced scale stepped marking?**

Marking that uses a restricted number of marks with the 0-100% range.

1. **Why has reduced scale stepped marking been introduced?**

Feedback from students suggests that they are not always sure about the difference between different percentage marks (e.g. what the difference is between a piece of work that is graded at 66% and one that is graded at 68%).

Reduced scale stepped marking will provide you with greater clarity about the quality of your work. It will allow clearer comparisons between marks attained in one course unit and another.

Reduced scale stepped marking is also intended to allow excellence to be appropriately rewarded. Markers are encouraged to reward the best quality work with the highest marks using the full mark range, but this doesn’t always happen. We hope that the introduction of reduced scale stepped marking will help markers to make greater use of the full range of marks at the upper and lower ends of the scale, thus ensuring that marks reflect the quality of the work presented.

1. **Will I be advantaged or disadvantaged by the introduction of reduced scale stepped marking?**

No. All assessments are moderated which means that the marking is reviewed. External Examiners also review marking. This ensures that you can be confident that the mark you receive reflects the quality of the work you have submitted.

The introduction of this marking scheme is intended to help you get greater clarity about the quality of that work and, in turn, this will improve the feedback you get on your work and provide you with ideas about how to improve your work.

1. **How does it work?**

Up to now, summative assessments on postgraduate course units have been marked using a scale that ranged from 0 to 100%, with marked work falling into different classes of performance, as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **%** | **Class** |
| 70-100 | Distinction |
| 60-69 | Merit |
| 50-59 | Pass |
| 40-49 | Compensatable fail |
| 39 or less | Non-compensatable fail |

On the reduced scale steppedmarking scale, a restricted number of marks or fixed percentages, which represent the lower, middle and upper ranges of the standard classification bands (Distinction, Merit, Pass, Fail), is used. For each of the above classification bands, work is deemed to meet the criteria minimally (lower range), well (mid range) or very well (upper range).

To facilitate the best spread of marks along this spectrum, the reduced scale uses percentage figures ending in 2, 5 and 8 in each band (with the exception of the very lowest band in the Fail class). So, for example, work that is considered to meet the criteria for a mid-range Distinction will be awarded either 82%, 85% or 88%. The same applies to work that meets the criteria for other classification bands.

Here is the full range of available marks or fixed percentages on the reduced scale:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Range / Class** | **Reduced scale stepped marking (fixed %)** |
| High Distinction | 100 |
| 95 |
| 92 |
| Mid- range Distinction | 88 |
| 85 |
| 82 |
| Lower-range Distinction | 78 |
| 75 |
| 72 |
| Merit | 68 |
| 65 |
| 62 |
| Pass | 58 |
| 55 |
| 52 |
| Compensatable Fail | 48 |
| 45 |
| 42 |
| Fail | 38 |
| 35 |
| 32 |
| 28 |
| 25 |
| 15 |
| 5 |
| 0 |

1. **How is the final mark for my course unit calculated?**

There will be no change in the way that final marks for course units are calculated.

If your course unit is assessed by one component of assessment only (e.g. an essay or dissertation) the fixed percentage point becomes the course unit mark.

If your course unit is assessed by more than one component of assessment, the fixed percentage points for each component of assessment will be averaged (with appropriate weighting) to produce the overall course unit mark. As the overall course unit mark is calculated by averaging the fixed percentage points, the final result for the course unit does not need to be one of the fixed percentage points on the scale.

For example, a course unit is assessed by a single exam with the paper made up of three questions (equally weighted). The questions have been awarded two mid-range Distinction and one upper-range Distinction marks with the following fixed percentage points: 82, 85 and 92. The average of 82, 85 and 92 is 86; 86% is the overall course unit mark.

If a course unit is assessed partly by exam and partly by essay the overall course unit mark is calculated by averaging (with appropriate weighting) the fixed percentage points for each question to produce the mark for the exam paper, and then averaging (again with appropriate weighting) the mark for the paper and the fixed percentage point for the essay. The overall course unit result will be the mathematical average and does not need to be one of the fixed percentage points on the scale.

1. **Can I challenge a mark?**

Should you wish to challenge a mark, academic decision (e.g. approval to progress) or classification result, you may only do so on one of the following four grounds:

* circumstances affecting your performance of which, for a credible and compelling reason, the Examination Board or equivalent body may not have been made aware when the decision was taken and which might have had a material effect on the decision (if you wish to appeal on such grounds, you must give credible and compelling reasons with supporting documentation explaining why this information was not made available prior to the decision being made);
* procedural irregularity;
* evidence of prejudice or bias or lack of proper assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners;
* that the supervision or training in respect of research for your dissertation or thesis or equivalent work was unsatisfactory to the point that your performance was seriously affected.

Appeals relating to matters of academic judgement are not permitted.

**Appendix 1: Postgraduate Taught reduced scale stepped marking points**

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| **Range / Class** | **%** | **School / discipline grade descriptor (to be inserted)** |
| High Distinction | 100 |  |
| 95 |  |
| 92 |  |
| Mid- range Distinction | 88 |  |
| 85 |  |
| 82 |  |
| Lower-range Distinction | 78 |  |
| 75 |  |
| 72 |  |
| Merit | 68 |  |
| 65 |  |
| 62 |  |
| Pass | 58 |  |
| 55 |  |
| 52 |  |
| Compensatory Fail | 48 |  |
| 45 |  |
| 42 |  |
| Fail | 38 |  |
| 35 |  |
| 32 |  |
| Fail | 28 |  |
| 25 |  |
| 15 |  |
| 5 |  |
| 0 |  |