

Examination Board guidance and resources 2023/24

Information for students

1. Introduction and contacts

The information and guidance given here and in the supplementary Appendices are for all those who are involved in the processing of examination results and recommendations for Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate Taught (PGT) cohorts in 2024.

The expectation is that both graduating and continuing students will be considered under standard regulations (section 7 of University regulations and the Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment and Feedback), it is however recognised that there will be a small number of students where, due to a long and/or complex academic history it may be more appropriate to consider them under one of the emergency frameworks, namely the 2022/23 UG Graduating Cohort Arrangements, the 2021/22 Assessment Framework, the 2020/21 Fair Assessment and Fair Outcomes Policy, or the 2019/20 Emergency Framework for Assessment and Progression.

*****Please read this pack carefully. Section 4 is particularly important as contains information related to operational processes taking place over End of Session including profiling arrangements for UG students*****

2. Calculation and Determination of Degree Classifications at the Board of Examiners and summary of process for mark calculations

UG: Calculation and Determination of Degree Classifications at the Board of Examiners

Students on 3 or 4 year Bachelors or Undergraduate Masters programmes graduating in 2023/24: Standard Regulations

Students on 5 year Undergraduate Masters programmes graduating in 2023/24: Calculate awards using the Graduating Cohort Arrangements 2022/23. The GCA will allow degrees to be calculated where partial credits exist (normally relating to year 1 study undertaken in 2019/20)

Students with a long and/or complex academic history who have studied while previous COVID frameworks were in operation may be considered under the most relevant framework so as to not be disadvantaged in comparison with their peers who have already graduated.

PGT: Calculation and Determination of Degree Classifications at the Board of Examiners

PGT students due to graduate this academic session: Standard Regulations

- Students in a multi year part time programme or with a long academic history where partial credits exist should have their degrees calculated using the 21/22 Assessment Framework functionality in BIRMS.
- Students with a complex academic history who have studied while previous frameworks were in operation may be considered under the most relevant framework so as to not be disadvantaged in comparison with their peers who have already graduated.

3. Operational information for End of Session processing in BIRMS

Profiling methods in operation for UG students in 2023/24

University Education Committee have confirmed a change to the approach to profiling for 2023/24 which affects the profiling methods used to uplift degree classifications for borderline students.

The changes for 2023/24 are to ensure that the methods which determine a degree classification uplift are as fair to students as possible. This means that students who have achieved an Overall Weighted Mean (OWM) within the borderline boundaries making them eligible for classification uplift should be considered under both of the profiling methodologies used in recent years as detailed in the **Code of Practice for Taught Programme and Module Assessment and Feedback, section 7.7**, which are:

- Simplified profiling method based only on Stage 3 credits: this has been in operation for degree classification calculation under the 2020/21 Fair Assessment Policy (FAP), the 2021/22 Assessment Framework (AF) and the 2022/23 Graduating Cohort Arrangements (GCA); and
- Distribution of Module Classes (DMC) profiling method using both Stages 2 and 3 credits, which utilises a multiplier (which differs between Bachelors and UG Masters programmes) to convert Stage 3 credits into 'units' to ensure that the Stage credits are weighted appropriately.

For ease of reference, with the implementation of this combined profiling, we have clarified some of the terms used to describe the profiling methods:

- the 'Simplified' method will be referred to as '**Credits**' profiling
- the 'DMC' method will be referred to as '**Units**' profiling

For students who are subject to FAP, AF and GCA calculations, the Simplified profiling method will be retained.

The borderline boundaries for the two profiling methods are:

Credits:

- ≥ 68.0 and < 69.5 – for consideration for Class I
- ≥ 58.0 and < 59.5 – for consideration for Class 2i
- ≥ 48.0 and < 49.5 – for consideration for Class 2ii

Units:

- ≥ 68.0 and < 69.5 – for consideration for Class I
- ≥ 58.0 and < 59.5 – for consideration for Class 2i

- ≥ 48.0 and < 49.5 – for consideration for Class 2ii
- ≥ 38.0 and < 39.5 – for consideration for Class 3

NB: The ≥ 38.0 and < 39.5 boundary is not included in 'Credits' profiling – where a student has obtained an OWM of at least 40%, they will be eligible for a Class III degree under 'Credits' profiling where all other conditions of this classification for their programme have been achieved.

Final year sits/resits

****Please note that this process should be followed both for students with Extenuating Circumstances who are offered the opportunity to take first sits and students taking capped resit(s) of failed modules****

Students are directed to contact Taught Student Administration in Registry by submitting the online Final Year Reassessment form if they wish to retrieve failure and defer their July degree congregation, and contact TSA via finalyearresit@contacts.bham.ac.uk with any queries**

Registry staff are working with the Student Communications and Engagement Team in Student Services to publicise the policy to students via appropriate channels including the Brum Bulletin.

The student-facing [Defer Graduation - Final Year Reassessments](#) web page has a set of FAQs for students to provide advice and guidance and will be updated for the 23/24 graduating cohort ahead of communications being sent to students.

Students can also access a link to the web page and a link to the online Final Year Reassessments form via the online results page of the student gateway where an award has been released.

Students who elect to take their reassessments and therefore wish to opt out of July graduation have a deadline of **5.00pm** (UK time) on **Friday 21 June** to submit their online Final Year Reassessments form. It would be appreciated if this could also be highlighted.

Once submitted, the form will be received by:

- Registry
- Funding, Graduation and Awards
- Colleges

so that all parties can take required action. Students will receive an automatic confirmation that their form has been received.

Students are directed to an email address owned by Registry for any queries relating to final year resits (finalyearresit@contacts.bham.ac.uk). This inbox will be monitored daily by Registry staff.

Dubai Campus students and observance of Eid al-Adha during June 2024

It is anticipated that this will fall on 16 and 17 June, meaning that the Dubai campus is likely to be closed from the 17 June to 21 June inclusive.

In order to publish end of year results to Dubai students at a point that they can seek advice and guidance promptly should they need to, Colleges have agreed to release results from BIRMS on Monday 24 June for all Dubai students (graduating and continuing cohorts).

Please note that the Dubai campus Degree congregation takes place on 11 July. TSA will need to post certificates and transcripts to Dubai by 1 July. Therefore, it is essential please that Exam Board paperwork is submitted to both TSA and the Dubai Team for graduating students promptly so as not to delay the audit and document production processes.

Students on a programme with a Year Abroad

Students on a programme with a **non-integrated** Year Abroad who have an admit term of 2020/21 or later are subject to the change in Regulations, which means that their Year Abroad modules should have an alphabetic mark recorded and do not contribute to the degree classification.

Students on a programme with an **integrated** Year Abroad are not subject to the change in Regulations, which means that their Year Abroad modules should have a numeric mark recorded and do contribute to the degree classification.

NB: Year Abroad models are detailed in University Regulation 7.3.1 e, points vi and vii.

Year Abroad programmes – students with an admit term of 2020/21 or later

- 4-year Bachelors with a **non-integrated** Year Abroad (480 credits)
 - The Year Abroad is an extra year and not integral to the programme
 - Year Abroad modules = Level I / Stage 2
 - Year Aboard modules = **alpha mark matching recommendation**
 - Year Abroad counted in the Attempted and Achieved Credits, but is not utilised in degree classification calculation
- 4-year UG Masters with an **integrated** Year Abroad (480 credits)
 - UG Masters programmes only; the Year Abroad is an integral part of the programme (Year 3)
 - Year Abroad modules = Level H / Stage 3
 - Year Abroad modules = **numeric mark**
 - Year Abroad counted in the Attempted and Achieved Credits, and utilised in degree classification calculation
- 5-year UG Masters with an **integrated** Year Abroad and a non-integrated Year in Industry/placement year (480 credits)
 - UG Masters programmes only; the Year Abroad is an integral part of the programme (Year 3), but the industrial/placement year is not

- Year Abroad modules = Level H / Stage 3
 - Year Abroad modules = **numeric mark**
 - Year Abroad counted in the Attempted and Achieved Credits, and utilised in degree classification calculation
 - Industrial/placement year is neither counted in the Attempted and Achieved Credits, nor utilised in degree classification calculation
- 5-year UG Masters with a **non-integrated** Year Abroad (600 credits)
 - The Year Abroad is an extra year and not integral to the programme
 - Year Abroad modules = LI / Stage 2
 - Year Aboard modules = **alpha mark matching recommendation**
 - Year Abroad counted in the Attempted and Achieved Credits, but is not utilised in degree classification calculation

The BIRMS degree classification calculation functionality has been redeveloped to enable accurate calculation for students affected by this change in regulations from 2023/24 whilst also retaining existing calculation functionality for students who are not subject to this regulations change.

Students who have an admit term of 2020/21 and completed their Year Abroad in 2022/23 are the first cohort subject to these rules.

There will also be students with an admit term of 2019/20 or earlier who have repeated previous years of study or taken leave of absence, reached the point of taking their Year Abroad in 2022/23 and will be graduating in 2023/24 who will not be affected by the change in regulations due to their admit term.

4. Practical Arrangements for virtual Board of Examiners meetings

Meetings: Meetings may continue to be held virtually using Teams, Zoom or similar, in person, or in a hybrid format.

Quoracy: The normal quoracy arrangements apply, i.e. a minimum of three academic staff plus an 5.3 external examiner. If this is not possible for any reason, please consult with the DPVC (Education) via Registry.

Minutes: It continues to be important to ensure that Board decisions are minuted clearly and accurately, and that minutes are returned to Registry to form part of the formal record of the arrangements this year. Minutes may need to be used as evidence should students appeal or complain, or should the OfS decide to scrutinise the University's arrangements.

5. Extenuating Circumstances

Overall principles and framework

The overall principles and framework set out in the Regulations and [Code of Practice on Extenuating Circumstances \(ECs\)](#) continue to apply.

Evidence requirements

In 2021/22, the requirement for students to provide evidence when submitting ECs was reinstated (following a relaxation of requirements during the previous two years of the pandemic). This remains the case. If students wish to request a deferral of any assessments, they are also required to submit their reasons and supporting evidence. Deferred assessments will be scheduled for the Supplementary Assessment Period in August and they will usually take the same format as the original assessments.

Confidentiality

If continuing to use video conferencing facilities for EC Panel meetings, Panel members must ensure that they are able to work in a space which will allow for confidentiality when discussing student cases. This is due to the sensitive nature of the information which may be presented or discussed, to avoid any exposure to vulnerable members of the same household e.g. children, and because the information discussed may constitute special category personal data in accordance with GDPR if the student in question is identifiable.

6. Data protection, student debtors and feedback to students

1. Students excluded from the University due to outstanding tuition fee debt should not have marks or an award confirmed at a Board of Examiners meeting (although their work completed prior to the hold being applied may be assessed and given a provisional, unconfirmed mark).
2. If students have a financial hold, the validation within BIRMS will prevent these students' marks and progress and award decisions from being released to Banner.
3. If an excluded student has undertaken an assessment during the current academic year prior to their exclusion and requests feedback, this must be provided by the School, as this is personal information held under the Data Protection Act and therefore potentially liable to inclusion under a Subject Access Request. The student should be informed that any marks are not approved or ratified by the University until the tuition fee debt is cleared. Only Registry may produce transcripts for these students, which will have the words "Marks not approved" stamped across it.
4. Once the debt is cleared, Registry will ask the School to take Chair's Action and confirm the student's marks and progress or award decision. The marks and decision may then be released into the Student Gateway.
5. Students should not undertake assessment following a current hold being applied, in line with [Regulation 5.3.1.i](#) (PDF - 200Kb). Should this situation arise, a case should be submitted to the Progress and Awards Board of Senate (PAB) if the School feel there are grounds to request that the assessment should be counted, notwithstanding Regulations.