



University of
St Andrews

Honours classification

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| Key terms | Academic policies/Assessment, examination and award/Honours degree classification |
| Purpose | This policy explains the Honours Classification Algorithm used in calculating all Honours-level grades awarded in the Honours years. |

| Version number | Purpose / changes | Document status | Author of changes, role and school / unit | Date |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 01 | Changes to titles/contact details to reflect decanal restructuring | Updated | - | February 2021 |
| 02 | Minor revision to address an ambiguity relating to S-coding | Updated | Associate Deans Students | May 2021 |
| 03 | Updated link to new S-coding policy | Update | Associate Dean Students | Sept 2021 |

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

Honours classification

The Honours Classification Algorithm uses as the primary determinant of degree classification the credit-weighted mean and median of all Honours-level grades awarded in the Honours years.

There are no discretionary classification border zones.

Only one decimal place is used in calculations of means and medians. Values are rounded to the nearest one decimal place. Values that are equi-distant 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.

Means, medians and outcomes for Honours classification

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

Calculation protocols

The Senate Regulations specify that “at least 240 credits should be gained during an approved two year Honours programme” etc. For students who have taken extra modules, the calculation of mean and median must include all modules (allowing for the exceptions noted below). Thus a student cannot take an extra module with a view to disposing of another with a poorer grade. Special provision may, however, be made for students who “step back” 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. In other words, grades achieved for “dip down” modules taken during the Honours programme do not enter the algorithmic calculation for the Honours degree classification.

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 his/her approval to the modules counting as part of a student’s approved Honours programme.

In the case of a 3000-level, 4000-level or 5000-level module failed with a grade of 3.9 or less, there is no right to reassessment and the original grade is reported and entered into the algorithmic calculation even though no credits are obtained for the module.

In the case of a 3000-level, 4000-level or 5000-level module failed with a grade of 4-6.9, there is a right to reassessment. If the reassessment is passed, the grade reported, recorded on the transcript and entered into the algorithmic calculation is a “capped” grade of “7.0” (not the original failed grade).

In the case of a failed 3000-level, 4000-level or 5000-level 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.

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 is subsequently re-taken and passed, then (i) the original failed grade should 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.

In the case of receiving a 0X in a 3000-level, 4000-level or 5000-level module, 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 Honours degree programme. Any properly authorised withdrawal from a module, however, would be ignored by the algorithm.

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.

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

Consideration of special cases

Students with S-coded results do not need to be brought to the attention of the AVP Dean Learning & Teaching, so long as the S-coded results considered in the classification algorithm do not represent more than 25% of the total Honours credits for their degree programme. 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](#).

Exceptional cases should be referred to the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching). 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;
- Any other anomalies.

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

Past algorithms

- [Honours classification from 2007/08](#) (Word, 55 KB)

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