

Student Guide to the University's Rules for Progression and Award¹ in Bachelor's Undergraduate Programmes 2023/4

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 also see the full [Guide to Assessment](#) and University's [examinations](#) web pages.

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

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 is made up of 'Stages', which usually means a year at a given level of study.

In each Stage (year) you will be registered on 120 credits' worth of modules, usually 20 credits each, which will cover a variety of topics.

In order to progress to the next Stage of study, you need to be awarded the credit for each of the modules you undertake. You achieve credit by passing assessments and therefore passing the module.

If you don't pass a module, you can still gain the credit either by 'compensation' or reassessment.

At undergraduate level, 'compensation' means that you can get credit for up to 40 credits of material with marks above 30, so long as you don't have any other failing modules.

If you fail a module with a mark lower than the compensation threshold (below 30) you will have to be reassessed. You will be given the credit for the module if you are able to pass it at your resit.

Please be aware, there is a limit to the amount of reassessment and compensation which is allowed.

Note: *If you are taking Master's-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.*

For Bachelor's programmes, classification of degree is based on your module marks, but those module marks will be capped at the pass mark if you needed to resit them to get the credit. The total award mark will be calculated using the stage averages for Stages 2 and 3, weighted in the ratio 2:3. The classification is determined by the position of this award mark, rounded to the nearest whole number, on the classification scale.

This summary is explained further through the following pages. These should be read thoroughly and in the order they are presented to fully understand the progression and award system.

Progressing Through Your Programme

1. What are Stages?

An undergraduate programme of study is divided into Stages. Each Stage is the equivalent to one year of full-time study and usually comprises 120 credits.

Bachelor's (e.g. BA/BSc)	Credit Level	Credits
Stage 1	Certificate (C)	120
Stage 2	Intermediate (I)	120
Stage 3	Honours (H)	120

Progression from Stages 1 or 2 to the next Stage requires all 120 credits specified for that Stage of the

programme to have been awarded.

2. How do modules and module credits relate to Stages?

Each Stage of your degree is made up of modules. Each of the modules you undertake will have a credit value² (usually 20 credits) and a credit level³. 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, you must achieve a total of 120 credits.

² 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.

³ 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](#).

3. What do module marks mean?

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

Mark range	Classification band
70-100	First-class Honours
60-69	Upper second-class Honours
50-59	Lower second-class Honours
40-49	Third-class Honours
30-39	Marginal fail/compensated pass (where eligible, see the compensation section)
0-29	Fail

If you pass modules on the first attempt or sit as if for the first time, the whole marks will be used towards your degree classification. If you need to resit any assessment to pass a module, the module mark will be capped at the pass mark.

NOTE: 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. If you are studying on an Integrated Masters (IM), please refer to IM Guidance which can be found on the Student Guide's section of [this web page](#).

4. What does weighting mean?

Module marks will be weighted in two different ways to reflect the notional workload and relative intellectual demand: 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. After completion of a stage, credit weighting is used to provide a Stage average also referred to as a Stage mark that will eventually be used to calculate the final

classification. Add your module marks up, including the mark one time for each 20 credits attached to the module.

The below table provides an example of how to work out a weighted average. Most standard modules are 20 credits, but as capstone project modules (dissertation) can be more than 20 credits, this has been included to where a larger capstone project module is also taken.

Calculating a credit-weighted yearly average for a student in the third year.	Mark x Credits. Then divide the total of the marks by the total credits used.
Module A (20 credits) Mark 55	$55 \times 20 = 1100$
Module B (20 credits) Mark 62	$62 \times 20 = 1240$
Module C (20 credits) Mark 60	$60 \times 20 = 1200$
Module D (20 credits) Mark 42	$42 \times 20 = 840$
Module E (40 credits) Mark 65	$65 \times 40 = 2600$
Total	$1100 + 1240 + 1200 + 840 + 2600 = 6980$
Divide the total by 6 to get an average	$6980 \div 120 = 58.17$
58.17 is the rounded credit-weighted mean mark for the Stage	

Stage weighting

The total award mark used for classification will be calculated using the Stage averages for Stages 2 and 3, weighted in the ratio 2:3. The classification is determined by the position of this award mark, rounded to the nearest integer, on the classification scale.

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, intellectual demand and are the culmination of your achievements and abilities.

Pass/fail modules will not contribute to the calculation of the final degree classification, though any credit achieved in these modules will contribute to credit total for a Stage or award.

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.

Award	Number of credits	Including
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, but these are below first-year University level, and can only be used towards the Foundation degree.

Compensation and Reassessment for Progression and Award

6. 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 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 C, I and H, the pass mark for module assessments is 40. However, if your mark for a module is in the 30-39 range, 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.⁴ However, you cannot have failed more than 40 credits and there can be no 'outright' fails (so, no marks below 30).

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, Standards, Marking and Feedback](#) and your programme's regulations for the exact rules that will apply to you.

Reassessment

Reassessment marks (resit marks) are used for students' degree classifications, capped at the pass mark for the module (40 for C, I and H modules, and 50 for M-level modules)

If you get a module mark below 30, this cannot be compensated and you will have to be reassessed. As long as the number of failed credits in the Stage does not exceed 80 for Stage 1 or 60 for Stages 2 or 3, you will be offered a reassessment opportunity. If you get a mark between 30 and 39 and you are not eligible for compensation because you have more than 40 credits of modules in this range, then you'll need to resit some or all of these as well.

NOTE: Though most modules are able to be reassessed, some may not be. If unsure, please check with your department/school.

You can only be reassessed in a module once, unless your programme allows repeat study of Stage 1 (see [Failure of Stage 1 section](#)). If you fail a module and its reassessment, you will not be able to

⁴ Some modules in your programme may be designated as pass/fail. These modules cannot be compensated for.

progress and will fail the programme. You may, however, be eligible to receive a lower award, [as described in section 5 of this guide](#).

The following are provided as examples of how the compensation and reassessment rules may be applied.

a) A first-year 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 80 credits or less of failed modules.</p> <p>In such cases, students should discuss their decision with their academic supervisor.</p> <p>It is possible that if modules A and B were passed on reassessment, then modules C and D could be compensated for.</p> <p>A student would need to be careful in this situation; if either of modules A and B were marked in the compensatable range at resit (fails of 30-39), compensation would no longer be available, as they would need to compensate more than the permitted 40 credits and would therefore fail the stage/ programme. In situations like this, the student should consider resitting modules C and D as well, as if these were passed they would no longer need compensation.</p> <p>Note: if any module were failed outright at resit, the student would not be able to continue.</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 (20 credits): 65 (P)	

In **Stage 1 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 80 credits' worth of failed modules provided that they have failed no more than 80 credits.

b) A second-year 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), totalling 40 credits of resits. They can choose whether or not to resit D (which would be the maximum of 60 credits of resits in the second and third year). See below:</p> <p>If the student chose NOT to resit module D then, should they pass modules A and B at resit, they will compensate module D. However, if they were to get marks below 30 for the modules at resit in A and B, they would have more than 40 credits of module</p>
Module B (20 credits): 28 (F)	
Module C (20 credits): 42 (P)	
Module D (20 credits): 38 (F)	
Module E (20 credits): 65 (P)	

	in the compensatable range, which would block compensation as they would not get another opportunity to resit D.
Module F (20 credits): 65 (P)	<p>In such cases, students should discuss their decision with their academic supervisor. It is possible that, if modules A and B were passed on reassessment, then module D could be compensated without a resit.</p> <p>Note: if any module were failed outright at resit, the student would not be able to continue.</p>

In **Stages 2 and 3 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 **60 credits'** worth of failed modules (per Stage) **provided** that they have failed no more than 60 credits in that Stage at outright fail. Students can use the 40 credits of compensation allowance in conjunction with this for fails within the compensatable range.

c) A second-year student has the following profile of module marks:

Module A (20 credits): 45 (P)	<p>This student has failed 60 credits. The 20 credits of module B represent an outright fail (marks between 0 and 29) and must be reassessed. Another 40 credits are in the compensatable range (30-39). The student can resit up to 60 credits of modules.</p> <p>This student is similar to the previous student in that they can choose to resit the full 60 credits (modules B, C and D). However, they could also resit just B and hope to pass as C and D are in the compensatable range.</p> <p>Note: if any module were failed outright at resit, the student would not be able to continue.</p>
Module B (20 credits): 20 (F)	
Module C (20 credits): 35 (F)	
Module D (20 credits): 35 (F)	
Module E (20 credits): 50 (P)	
Module F (20 credits): 55 (P)	

If you have a marginal fail (a mark between 30 and 39) in a non-compensatable module, 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 for a marginal fail in a compensatable module.

It is important to know that if you decide NOT to take a resit but later regret it (for example because you need the compensation for another resit mark), you can't go back. So be sure you've thought through the implications before you decide not to undertake a resit that is offered.

Please see your academic supervisor for further guidance.

Degree Classification

7. How is my degree class calculated?

Bachelor Honours awards are classified degrees:

- First-class 70-100
- Upper second-class 60-69
- Lower second-class 50-59
- Third-class 40-49

Your degree classification is calculated using the Stage mark from years 2 and 3.

Classification of degrees is based on your module marks, capped at the pass mark if they are achieved at resit.

Pass/fail modules do not contribute to your degree classification (although you must pass them).

Stage marks are calculated to two decimal places.

Example: Stage 2

	First-attempt mark	Resit mark	Credit-weighted mark
Module A (20 credits)	50		50x20 = 1000
Module B (20 credits)	40		40x20 = 800
Module C (20 credits)	20	45 (capped to the pass mark of 40)	40x20 = 800
Module D (20 credits)	60		60x20 = 1200
Module E (20 credits)	60		60x20 = 1200
Module F (20 credits)	50		50x20 = 1000

TOTAL			$1000 + 800 + 800 + 1200 + 1200 + 1000 = 7200$
Stage mark = Weighted mark total/number of credits			$6000 \div 120 = 50$

Example: Stage 3

	First-attempt mark	Resit mark	Credit-weighted mark
Module A (20 credits)	50		$50 \times 20 = 1000$
Module B (20 credits)	60		$60 \times 20 = 1200$
Module C (20 credits)	P		--
Module D (20 credits)	50		$50 \times 20 = 1000$
Module E (40 credits)	60		$60 \times 40 = 2400$
TOTAL (note that the total credits is 100 due to the pass/fail module not being included in calculations)			$1000 + 1200 + 1000 + 2400 = 5600$
Stage mark = Weighted mark total/number of credits			$5600 \div 100 = 56$

In standard years a ratio of 2:3 is used.

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 50: ($50 \times 2 = 100$)	Stage 3 mark of 56: ($56 \times 3 = 168$)
$100 + 168 = 268$	
$268 \div 5 = 53.6$	

Award mark = 54.00, Lower Second-class (2:2)

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 to progress to the second Stage of the programme.

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.

Ordinary degrees, Certificates and Diplomas of Higher Education are not classified. For these awards, you will be given either a pass or a fail.

Borderline Cases

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 unless the application of borderline ratios results in a higher classification. If your award mark falls two marks below a classification boundary, the borderline rules can come into effect and further calculations are performed to see whether you would have a higher classification if we apply a different ratio to the weighting of the Stages.

For Undergraduate programmes, the borderline ratios are 1:1 and 1:2 applied to stages 2 and 3.

If after applying these ratios, your programme mark exceeds the grade boundary, or falls 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.

Example

Stage 2 mark = 69

Stage 3 mark = 51

Programme mark using 2:3 ratio = 58.2

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

Programme mark using 1:2 ratio = 57 (borderline ratio)

The mark of 58 will appear on your transcript, as this is what the award mark would be using the 2:3 ratio. However, as the 1:1 ratio mark is 60, you will be awarded an Upper Second-class degree.

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 not be altered.

Failure and Early Exit

8. 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.

If you fail to meet the requirements for any Stage after the first, you will not be permitted to continue with or to be awarded your intended award, but will be awarded an exit award based on all of the credit you have achieved.

Award	Number of credits	Including
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
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)

Failure of Stage 1

In the case of failure of Stage 1, 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. This is subject to any student visa requirements, which will limit the number of times a student can undertake a first year in the UK overall, rather than just on one programme.

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.

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. Further guidance can be found in the [exceptional circumstances webpages](#), which covers details of self-certification and the exceptional circumstances framework.

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 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](#).

Students who undertake study abroad or a work placement as additional credit but do not achieve that credit will usually be permitted to transfer to the relevant variant of the programme.

Students who undertake study abroad or a work placement as replacement credit and do not achieve that credit are likely to be required to leave the University but may be eligible for a lower exit award.