

# A BRIEF STUDENT GUIDE TO ASSESSMENT and DEGREE CLASSIFICATION

(For students joining undergraduate honours degree programmes from 2021-22 onwards)

Approved by Education Committee, 2 March 2022

This guide explains, in overview form, some of the key features of the University's approach to assessment, the validation of assessment marks, and the awarding and classification of honours degrees<sup>1</sup>.

## 1. Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

- a. The academic attainments of your programme of study are expressed on the programme specification through programme learning outcomes (<https://programmes.bolton.ac.uk/>). The learning outcomes specify what you are expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate to complete the programme successfully and be awarded your degree.
- b. The modules on your programme also have intended learning outcomes (<https://modules.bolton.ac.uk/>), which aggregate to make up the programme learning outcomes. How well you meet the module learning outcomes is judged from your performance in module assessment tasks, against published assessment criteria and normally using a 0-100 marking scale (with no decimals) spread over several distinct bands, each with its own descriptor. If the final weighted average module mark results in a decimal, then 0.5 and above is rounded up whilst 0.4 and below is rounded down.
- c. The final mark for your programme is also expressed on a 0-100 scale, to two decimal places, and it is that mark, calculated as explained in section 2 below, that determines your final degree classification.
- d. The assessment tasks you are given, and the marking of your assessed work are both subject to internal and external moderation. This means that samples of assessed work submitted by you and your peers, covering the range of marks obtained, are subject to moderation.

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universally – 40 percent. If you do not pass, you must normally take the failed assessment/s again (a 'refer') and, if you pass, the University will record a mark capped at the pass mark, either for the individual assessment(s) or for the whole module, whichever gives the better outcome for you. A maximum of two attempts is normally allowed to pass a module, although assessment boards may permit a third attempt under certain circumstances, e.g., for core modules.

- f. You will need to achieve a total of 360 credits to be awarded a bachelor's degree with honours. The three years of a full-time degree typically entail 120 credits each, corresponding successively to Levels 4, 5 and 6 in terms of intellectual demand and complexity<sup>2</sup>. For part-time students these credits are typically distributed across 4.5 years.

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- b. In common with many institutions, your first year (Level 4) marks<sup>3</sup> in a three-year degree programme do not contribute to your honours classification. This recognises that for most students Level 4 entails a period of transition and adjustment to the demands of higher education and independent study, allowing you to come to terms with it without concern that potential variations in your performance will adversely influence your final honours classification.
- c. Your final honours classification is calculated using a weighted average of your marks from modules worth a total of 180 credits at Levels 5 and 6 combined<sup>4</sup>, including your marks from modules normally worth 60 credits at Level 5 (weighted 33 percent) and your marks from modules worth at least 120 credits at Level 6 (weighted 67 percent), which represent the best marks you achieved at those Levels<sup>5</sup>. This calculation discards the 60 credits with the lowest marks at Level 5 and uses an 'exit velocity' approach, which reflects the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.
- d. The University uses the classification bands for honours degrees that are standard across the higher education sector, i.e.: First Class 70-100%; Second Class Division I 60-69%; Second Class Division II 50-59%; Third Class 40-49%. You will be awarded an honours degree in the classification category one higher than that indicated by your average if:
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