

**Faculty of Legal, Social and Educational Sciences**

Queen's University Belfast  
Belfast  
BT7 1NN  
Northern Ireland

Tel 028 9097 5197  
Fax 028 9023 2571  
sao@qub.ac.uk  
www.qub.ac.uk/flses

September 2004

## **Procedures for Classifying Degrees**

Dear Student

The University has introduced new arrangements for classifying honours degrees. These will take effect in the 2004-05 academic year for all students, including those of you who are now entering your second, third or fourth year. The University has decided to apply the new arrangements to all students because it believes that, in most cases, the changes will have a positive impact on marks and degree classifications. Special arrangements will apply to ensure that students who were enrolled in their courses before 2004-05 are not disadvantaged by the new procedures.

It is important that you understand how your degree will be classified, and the new arrangements in the Faculty of Legal, Social and Educational Sciences are therefore set out below.

1. The thresholds for classification have not changed, and remain as follows:

70+ First Class  
60 + Second Class, First Division  
50+ Second Class, Second Division  
40 + Third Class  
(Less than 40 = Fail)

2. Student performance often improves between Stage 2 and Stage 3. To recognize this, Stage 3 modules are weighted more heavily. In the Faculty of Legal, Social and Educational Sciences, modules are weighted as follows for all full-time and part-time degree pathways, unless otherwise specified below:

<u>Stage 2</u>	<u>Stage 3</u>
40%	60%

Exceptions to this rule, and their weightings, are as follows:

- **BA by part-time study** for students enrolled on Institute of Lifelong Learning pathways **only**:

<u>Stage 2</u>	<u>Stage 3</u>
50%	50%

- **BA European Studies**

<u>Stage 2</u>	<u>Year Abroad</u>	<u>Stage 4</u>
30%	10%	60%

- **BEd**

Stages 2: 3: 4

40 : 60 : 75 \*

\* Please note that these are not percentages but relative weightings.

- **LLB(Law and Accounting)**

Stages 2 and 3 Stage 4

40%      60%

The best 6 Level 2 / Level 3 modules taken in Stages 2 and 3 will count as 40% and the 6 Level 3 modules taken in Stage 4 will count as 60%.

- **BLegSci**

The average of the 6 highest marks above Level 1, at least three of which are above Level 2.

3. Under the predominance rule, you can be considered for a higher class of degree where your final mark (ie the mark arrived at once all the weighted individual module marks are brought together) falls slightly below the classification threshold. Under the new arrangements, the final mark must be within three percentage points of the higher classification and at least half the weighted module marks must be in the higher classification. This is more favourable than the old arrangements, and will allow more students to be considered for a higher class of degree.
4. Final marks containing a fraction of .5 or above will be rounded up (eg 59.7 will become 60) and final marks containing a fraction of less than .5 will be rounded down (eg 59.45 will become 59).
5. To increase flexibility for Boards of Examiners, provisional marks rather than confirmed marks will be released at the end of semester one each year. Boards of Examiners will consider provisional semester one module marks when they meet in the summer, and will have the discretion to revise them upwards but not downwards. You will still be informed, via the Student Records Office, of your provisional first semester results in January/February each year. The only possible change thereafter will be for the marks to move upwards. Your confirmed marks will be released in June through the Student Records Office.
6. Boards of Examiners will have increased discretion, including the option to discount one module for classification purposes. This will only be done where there is clear evidence that the module mark does not reflect the student's normal level of performance. Only the lowest module mark can be discounted, and only if the student has passed the module.

Students who were enrolled on their courses before 2004-05 will have their degree classifications calculated using both the old and the new systems if the weighting (see point 1 above) has changed, to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by the new arrangements. If the two systems produce a different result, the higher mark will be awarded.

I hope this explanation is helpful. If you have any further questions about the procedures for classifying your degree, you should contact your Adviser of Studies.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Jill Lyttle  
Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching)  
Faculty of Legal, Social and Educational Sciences