

Heriot-Watt University

Policy for Undergraduate Degree-Classification Borderline Cases

Any award recommendation is a matter for the academic judgement of the Award Board and must be evidence based. The intention of this Policy is not to prescribe a formulaic methodology but to provide guidance on how Award Boards should deal with borderline cases. This Policy should be applied when an undergraduate degree candidate's overall average mark falls within the range of *8.5 to *9.9 (for example, 59.5%), as described below.

1. Average marks are to be presented to the Board to one decimal place. Averages that fall in the range *9.5 to *9.9% are to be rounded up to the next whole number. For example 59.5% would be rounded to 60%. Award recommendations are then to be based on the normal marks scale, viz.

70% average, or above	1 st Class (or Distinction)
60-69.4%	2(1)
50-59.4%	2(2)
40-49.4%	3
Less than 39.4%	No honours recommended

2. Paragraph 1 notwithstanding, the Award Board has the discretion to consider students falling just below these normal boundaries for receipt of the higher award. Specifically, students whose average lies in a discretion zone down to (and including) an average of *8.5% (but no lower) may be considered for the next higher level of award.
3. Students with an average in a discretion zone may be given the higher award based upon:
 - a) Performance in qualifying courses: if the student has 50% or more of qualifying credits at the higher grade, then the Board can recommend the higher level of award – for example, if a course has 180 credits from qualifying courses, and a student has an average of 68.5%, if 90 or more credits are at Grade A, then a 1st class degree may be recommended.
 - b) Where a discipline has additional key qualifying factors to consider, for example associated with PSRB accreditation, or common practise within the discipline nationally, then these factors should be included in the deliberations of the Board.