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Heriot-Watt University

Policy for Postgraduate 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 a postgraduate 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	Postgraduate Masters with Distinction
60-69.4%	Postgraduate Masters with Merit
50-59.4%	Postgraduate Masters
40-49.4%	Postgraduate Diploma (refer to programme approval documentation)
Less than 40%	Refer to programme approval documentation

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. This Policy relates to the consideration of an award based on the overall programme performance average. Therefore, in discussion of a borderline case for award of Postgraduate Masters with Distinction, the Board should take into consideration whether the dissertation mark and the majority of taught courses are at the higher grade.

Approved by UCQS, 29 January 2020, for implementation from 1 March 2020

Last reviewed for accuracy January 2025