

Operation of discretion under the No Detriment policy

[The following arrangements take effect in respect of decisions being made in the exam boards for final awards made in academic year 2019-20. Advice will follow on the position for future graduating cohorts whose assessment has in part been completed during the period impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic].

The Guide to the Code of Assessment sets out the discretionary criteria available in normal circumstances to exam boards when making borderline decisions for Honours and PGT masters awards. These criteria provide additional evidence that may support the promotion of a student from a borderline zone to the higher classification.

The No Detriment policy that has been introduced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic makes changes to the way that the results of assessment are treated when calculating a student's grade point average. The changes affect:

- the volume of completed assessment required for an award
- the selection of assessment results for inclusion in grade point average and the way that those results are aggregated
- the availability of reassessment opportunities.

In the context of the current pandemic, the information available to exam boards may be significantly different from usual, with gaps in assessment varying partly in relation to the way that programmes/courses schedule their assessments (by or after 15 March) as well as in relation to the particular circumstances being experienced by students.

In light of these factors, it has been decided that the guidelines for the operation of discretion are suspended,¹ as there is low confidence that applying the usual criteria would provide reliable and equitable additional evidence on which to base decisions. In their place the following amended rules will be applied:

Students whose grade point average puts them in the following bands will be promoted automatically to the classification indicated:

	Grade point average	Classification
Honours and integrated masters students	17.5 – 17.9	1st class
	14.5 – 14.9	2.1
	11.5 – 11.9	2.2
	8.5 – 8.9	3 rd class
PGT Masters combined grade point average (taught courses GPA + dissertation/project)	17.5 – 17.9	Distinction
	14.5 – 14.9	Merit
Note: In order to qualify for the award of merit and distinction, PGT masters students must also meet the minimum requirements in relation to the taught courses GPA and to the dissertation/project grade as specified in the relevant degree regulations.		
PGT Diploma/Certificate	17.5 – 17.9	Distinction
	14.5 – 14.9	Merit

¹ This is a temporary arrangement and has no relevance to the review of the future operation of discretion currently being conducted by Academic Standards Committee.

Referral of cases to the Clerk of Senate

Students whose grade point average does not fall within the above bands will not be automatically promoted. There may be a small number of cases identified by exam boards where there is concern that a student could be disadvantaged if not also considered for promotion. These cases will relate to students whose final GPA includes **all or almost all** results from assessment taking place within the period affected by Covid-19. These students will not have not benefited from the setting aside of poorer performances, and the available information may support promotion through application of the published discretionary criteria.

Cases where a student's GPA is in the lower half of the discretionary zone i.e. between .1 and .4 may be referred to the Clerk of Senate as follows:

- where a small amount, or none, of post-15 March assessment has been disregarded in the calculation of final GPA, up to a maximum of 10% of **weighted** programme assessment (see further below) or, in the case of PGT programmes, a maximum of 10% of taught courses assessment; **and**,
- where, on incorporating the disregarded component(s), the GPA would remain in the .1 - .4 discretionary range: **and**,
- where application of published discretionary criteria (such as course grade profile) would, under normal circumstances, have resulted in promotion to the next classification.

This applies to students with a grade point average in the following bands who meet all of the above criteria:

	Grade point average
Honours and integrated masters students	17.1 – 17.4
	14.1 – 14.4
	11.1 – 11.4
	8.1 – 8.4
PGT Masters combined grade point average (taught courses GPA + dissertation/project)	17.1 – 17.4
	14.1 – 14.4
Note: In order to qualify for the award of merit and distinction, PGT masters students must also meet the minimum requirements in relation to the taught courses GPA and to the dissertation/project grade as specified in the relevant degree regulations.	
PGT Diploma/Certificate	17.1 – 17.4
	14.1 – 14.4

10% Maximum weighted programme assessment

On honours programmes the weighting of junior and senior honours needs to be taken into account. For example, on an honours programme where JH and SH are equally weighted, each 20 credit course in senior honours carries 8.3% of programme assessment weighting. Therefore, say, two 50% components (from 20 credit courses) could have been disregarded from calculation of the final GPA.

On an honours programme where the years are weighted JH 25% SH 75%, each senior honours 20 credit course carries 12.5% of programme weighting. One component weighted at 75% (worth 9.4% of programme assessment) could therefore have been disregarded.

On a PGT course with 120 taught credits, each 20 credit course carries 16.7% of the assessment contributing to the taught GPA. One component weighted at 60% assessment for the course (worth 10% of the total taught course assessment) could have been disregarded.

Examples of cases to be referred:

Example 1: a senior honours student whose final GPA is 14.4:

- where their grade point average represents the aggregation of all actual assessment grades (in other words, all assessment after 15 March has been completed and none has been disregarded under the No Detriment policy), and
- where their course grade profile would, under normal circumstances, have resulted in promotion to the next classification.

Example 2: a senior honours student (junior honours and senior honours years equally weighted) whose final GPA is 14.3:

- the student's baseline GPA was 13.5. In one exam weighted 50% of a 20 credit course the student's result was C3 (12) and was therefore disregarded from calculation of final GPA. If that grade had been included in the calculation, the final GPA would have been 14.2, and,
- under normal circumstances, the course grade profile – including the C3 grade – would have resulted in promotion to the next classification.

Any such cases identified by boards should be referred for review by the Clerk of Senate at clerk-of-senate@glasgow.ac.uk. The Clerk of Senate will work with a small group of senior Academic Services staff to make a recommendation to the Exam Board using consistent criteria and ensuring equity of treatment for students across the University. Assistance can be provided in identifying relevant cases.