

Uniform mark (UMS) guidance: an example GCSE Art & Design

What are uniform marks and why do we use them?

Grade boundaries are set using raw marks. For each unit, raw marks are mapped to uniform marks. A GCSE qualification grade is determined from the unit uniform mark scores.

Uniform marks are used to ensure that the standard required to gain a particular unit score is the same from exam series to exam series.

Below we have exemplified what the use of uniform marks mean in GCSE Art and Design.

Hannah and Anthony are both re-taking GCSE Art & Design Unit 1 in this exam series. Hannah is re-taking the Full Course (5AD01/01). Anthony is re-taking the Short Course (5FA03/01)

Unit 1 (5AD01/01) is out of 80 raw marks and has a total 120 UMS.

Unit 1 (5FA03/01) is out of 80 raw marks and has a total 120 UMS

After they have sat the examination and their papers have been marked, Edexcel senior examiners recommend the raw mark grade boundaries as follows:

Unit 1	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Mark boundary this exam series	80	76	65	54	44	34	24	15	6	0
Raw mark boundary last exam series	80	79	66	53	40	31	23	15	7	0
Uniform Mark boundary	120	108	96	84	72	60	48	36	24	0

IMPORTANT NOTE:

*The raw boundary marks listed above are for illustration only to show how raw marks map to uniform marks in this subject area and should not be taken as the actual grade boundaries for the unit.

Why are the raw marks boundaries different in this series compared to the last series?

You'll notice, for example, that at C on both the Full and Short Course, the raw boundary mark was 40 last series; this series it is 44. However, you will also notice that C will always have a uniform mark of 72.

Why do raw mark boundaries change?

Raw mark boundaries change from series to series since examination papers can vary in difficulty. Even though the raw mark boundaries have changed, the uniform mark for each grade boundary remains the same for all series. In this example, the reason for the different raw mark boundaries is that, in the last series, the paper was more demanding.

In the last examination series when Anthony & Hannah took the exam for the first time the raw mark boundaries were lower. Anthony scored 41/80 and Hannah scored 57/80 in raw marks.

This series, Anthony scores a raw mark of 46/80 and Hannah scores 61/80.

Calculating Results - GCSE Art & Design Cash in code: 2AD01

Hannah achieved 92 uniform marks in her unit 1 resit. She has also taken unit 2 in this series.

Hannah achieved:

Unit	Uniform Mark	
	This series	Last series
1	92	88
2	62	

Hannah's total score is $92 + 62 = 154$ uniform marks. With reference to the table below, she will achieve a grade B.

Qualification Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Uniform mark grade threshold	180	160	140	120	100	80	60	40

For the Short Course, as with the Full Course, the uniform marks are fixed but the raw mark boundaries are set in each examination series.

Unit 1	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Mark boundary this exam series	80	76	65	54	44	34	24	15	6	0
Raw mark boundary last exam series	80	79	66	53	40	31	23	15	7	0
Uniform Mark boundary	120	108	96	84	72	60	48	36	24	0

Calculating Results - GCSE Art & Design 3FA03

Anthony has 73 uniform marks from his original unit 1 result. For his resit he gained 74 uniform marks; a higher score. Since he has also taken unit 2, in this series, his better result can count as it is not needed to satisfy the 40% terminal requirement.

Anthony achieved:

Unit	Uniform Mark	
	This series	Last series
1	74 (Resit)	73
2	54	

Anthony's total score is $74 + 54 = 128$ uniform marks. With reference to the table below, he will achieve a grade C.

Qualification Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Uniform mark grade threshold	180	160	140	120	100	80	60	40

Consider a scenario where James is re-taking the Unit 2 (ESA) of the Full Course. In the last series James took both units 1 and Unit 2 and respectively scored raw marks of 56/80 and 43/80.

This series James scores a raw mark of 40/80 for the unit 2 .

Unit 2	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Mark boundary this exam series	80	76	65	54	44	34	24	15	6	0
Raw mark boundary last exam series	80	78	66	54	43	34	25	17	9	0
Uniform Mark boundary	80	72	64	56	48	40	32	24	16	0

Calculating Results - GCSE Art & Design Cash in code: 2AD01

James has 57 uniform marks from his original unit 1 result and 48 uniform marks for his original unit 2 result. For his Unit 2 resit he gained 45 uniform marks; a lower score. Since he has only taken unit 2, in this series, his lower result will count as it is needed to satisfy the 40% terminal requirement.

James achieved:

Unit	Uniform Mark	
	This series	Last series
1		57
2	45	48

James' total score is $57 + 45 = 102$ uniform marks. With reference to the table below, he will achieve a grade D.

Qualification Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Uniform mark grade threshold	180	160	140	120	100	80	60	40