

## UMS Guidance: Helping you to understand your Edexcel GCE History results

### Raw Marks to Grades

Following the marking of scripts, a committee of senior examiners reviews the quality of the work submitted for each unit. Using their professional judgement, and statistical and technical evidence, they decide where to set the raw mark grade boundaries for each unit.

When we refer to raw marks we mean the actual marks on a paper which have not yet been converted to UMS marks.

Tables 1 and 2 show the actual raw mark grade boundaries for each option of the new AS History specification in the January 2009 examination series.

**Table 1**

The table below shows the raw mark boundaries for Unit 1 6HI01 in the January 2009 series.

Unit	Option	Maximum Raw Mark	Raw Mark Boundaries				
			A	B	C	D	E
6HI01	A	60	44	39	34	29	24
6HI01	B	60	41	36	31	26	22
6HI01	C	60	44	38	32	26	21
6HI01	D	60	41	36	31	27	23
6HI01	E	60	45	39	33	28	23
6HI01	F	60	45	39	33	28	23

**Table 2**

The table below shows the raw mark boundaries for Unit 2 6HI02 in the January 2009 series.

Unit	Option	Maximum Raw Mark	Raw Mark Boundaries				
			A	B	C	D	E
6HI02	A	60	45	40	36	32	28
6HI02	B	60	46	42	38	34	30
6HI02	C	60	41	36	31	27	23
6HI02	D	60	45	40	35	31	27
6HI02	E	60	45	39	33	28	23

Look at the raw mark boundaries for your option. It shows the minimum raw paper mark required to obtain each grade in the January 2009 examination series.

Have you noticed that the boundaries vary between units and even between different options in the same unit, even though they are marked out of the same total mark? This difference in grade boundaries also occurs on the same option but from series to series.

In GCE History, different units (and options within units) can perform differently from series to series, depending on the task set. Each option is therefore marked by a different group of specialist examiners and the raw mark grade boundaries are awarded separately. This ensures that the senior examining team can take into account these differences when setting grades, ensuring that the standard on each option is comparable.

Just because the grade boundaries on one particular option are lower than another, it doesn't mean that that option was easier - it could in fact have been a less accessible paper which resulted in lower boundaries to ensure a comparable standard with other options.

## What are UMS and why do we need them?

You have already seen how the raw mark boundaries can vary between options and units, and from series to series. Even though different options can have different raw mark boundaries, we have to ensure that students who, for example, just achieve a grade A, on each option are rewarded equally. We also have to ensure that students who, for example, just achieve a grade E in the January 09 examination series achieve the same credit as students who just achieve a grade E in future examination series.

UMS stands for Uniform Mark Scale. The Uniform Mark Scale is used to convert students' raw paper marks to uniform marks. This is done to standardise the marks between options, between units and from year to year.

For example, in the January 2009 series, a student who just achieves a grade C in Unit 1 Option C will receive the same uniform mark as a student who just achieves a grade C in Unit 1 Option E, regardless of the difference in their raw paper marks.

In another example, a student who just achieves a grade A in Unit 1 in January 2009 will also receive the same uniform mark as a student who just achieves a grade A in the following series, regardless of the difference in their raw paper marks.

### Uniform Mark Totals

The new A Level History specification has a total of 400 UMS marks. This is made up of 200 uniform marks at AS and 200 uniform marks at A2. This is because the total AS is worth 50% of the A Level so the UMS available for AS is 50% of 400 ie 200. The total A2 is worth 50% of the total A Level so the UMS available for A2 is 50% of 400 ie 200.

As you can see these uniform marks totals are simply divided up according to the weighting of each part of the qualification. The same also applies to individual units (the Unit weighting can be found on pages 4-7 of the specification).

So for example...

At AS...

Unit 1 is weighted at 25% of the A Level, so the total UMS available for this unit is 25% of 400 ie 100.

Unit 2 is weighted at 25% of the A Level, so the total UMS available for this unit is 25% of 400 ie 100.

The total UMS for Unit 1 + Unit 2 is 200 which equals the total UMS for AS History.

At A2...

Examined Unit 3 is weighted at 30% of the A Level so the total UMS available for this unit is 30% of 400 ie 120.

A2 coursework Unit 4 is weighted at 20% of the A Level so the total UMS available for this unit is 20% of 400 ie 80.

The total UMS for Unit 3 + Unit 4 is 200 which equals the total UMS for A2 History.

The total UMS for the whole A Level is therefore...

**100 (Unit 1) + 100 (Unit 2) + 120 (Unit 3) + 80 (Unit 4) = 400**

## Uniform Mark Grade Boundaries

A key concept in a modular qualification such as GCE History is that the uniform mark grade boundaries for **each option, each unit** and at **qualification level** are always the same:

Grade A is always worth 80% of the total UMS available  
 Grade B is always worth 70% of the total UMS available  
 Grade C is always worth 60% of the total UMS available  
 Grade D is always worth 50% of the total UMS available  
 Grade E is always worth 40% of the total UMS available

So, in terms of the whole AS and A Level...

The total UMS available at AS is 200	The total UMS for the A Level is 400
<p>At AS...</p> <p>Grade A is 80% of 200 = 160 UMS                      Grade B is 70% of 200 = 140 UMS                      Grade C is 60% of 200 = 120 UMS                      Grade D is 50% of 200 = 100 UMS                      Grade E is 40% of 200 = 80 UMS</p>	<p>For the whole A Level...</p> <p>Grade A is 80% of 400 = 320 UMS                      Grade B is 70% of 400 = 280 UMS                      Grade C is 60% of 400 = 240 UMS                      Grade D is 50% of 400 = 200 UMS                      Grade E is 40% of 400 = 160 UMS</p>

And in terms of each Unit...

AS	A2
<p><b>Unit 1</b></p> <p>Unit 1 has a total of 100 UMS                      Grade A is 80% of 100 = 80 UMS                      Grade B is 70% of 100 = 70 UMS                      Grade C is 60% of 100 = 60 UMS                      Grade D is 50% of 100 = 50 UMS                      Grade E is 40% of 100 = 40 UMS</p>	<p><b>Unit 3</b></p> <p>Unit 3 has a total of 120 UMS                      Grade A is 80% of 120 = 96 UMS                      Grade B is 70% of 120 = 84 UMS                      Grade C is 60% of 120 = 72 UMS                      Grade D is 50% of 120 = 60 UMS                      Grade E is 40% of 120 = 48 UMS</p>
<p><b>Unit 2</b></p> <p>Unit 2 has a total of 100 UMS                      Grade A is 80% of 100 = 80 UMS                      Grade B is 70% of 100 = 70 UMS                      Grade C is 60% of 100 = 60 UMS                      Grade D is 50% of 100 = 50 UMS                      Grade E is 40% of 100 = 40 UMS</p>	<p><b>Unit 4</b></p> <p>Unit 4 has a total of 80 UMS                      Grade A is 80% of 80 = 64 UMS                      Grade B is 70% of 80 = 56 UMS                      Grade C is 60% of 80 = 48 UMS                      Grade D is 50% of 80 = 40 UMS                      Grade E is 40% of 80 = 32 UMS</p>

**Table 3**

The table below summarises the UMS grade boundaries for each unit in the new GCE History specification.

Unit and % contribution		Maximum UMS	Uniform Mark Boundaries				
			A	B	C	D	E
6HI01	25%	100	80	70	60	50	40
6HI02	25%	100	80	70	60	50	40
6HI03	30%	120	96	84	72	60	48
6HI04	20%	80	64	56	48	40	32

**Uniform Marks: the conversion process**

The raw paper marks are entered into Edexcel’s computer. The computer converts the raw marks to uniform marks.

It is important to note that the scaling is not a single linear scale of maximum raw mark to maximum uniform mark. This is because the intervals between consecutive raw mark grade boundaries are not necessarily constant, however they are fixed for the uniform marks.

For example in Unit 2 Option A, we set the raw mark grade A boundary at 45/60, so all candidates who obtain raw marks of 45 or more will receive 80 or more UMS marks, up to a maximum of 100 UMS marks. We set the raw mark grade B boundary at 40, so all candidates who obtain raw marks of 40-44 will receive 70-79 UMS marks and so on.

**The Conversion to uniform marks illustrated**

The conversion below uses 6HI01 Option D from the January 2009 series as an example.

6HI01 Option D	Max. Mark	Boundary at each grade					
		A	B	C	D	E	N
Raw Mark	60	41	36	31	27	23	19
UMS Mark	100	80	70	60	50	40	30

Note that Grade N has been included in this table. Grade N is always calculated as 30% of the total UMS however it is never published as a Grade at any level. Grade N is only used by us, in the conversion of raw marks to UMS marks.

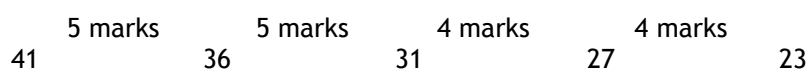
The senior examining team awarded the raw mark boundaries at Grade A and Grade E judgementally, by looking at a wide range of scripts and using their professional judgement, as well as the statistical and technical evidence available to them.

A computer then calculates the other raw mark grade boundaries by simply dividing the marks up equally...

eg  $41-23=18$  marks between A and E                       $18/4$  intervals = 4.5 marks per grade interval

This means we have two intervals of 5 marks and two of 4 marks between Grade A and E.

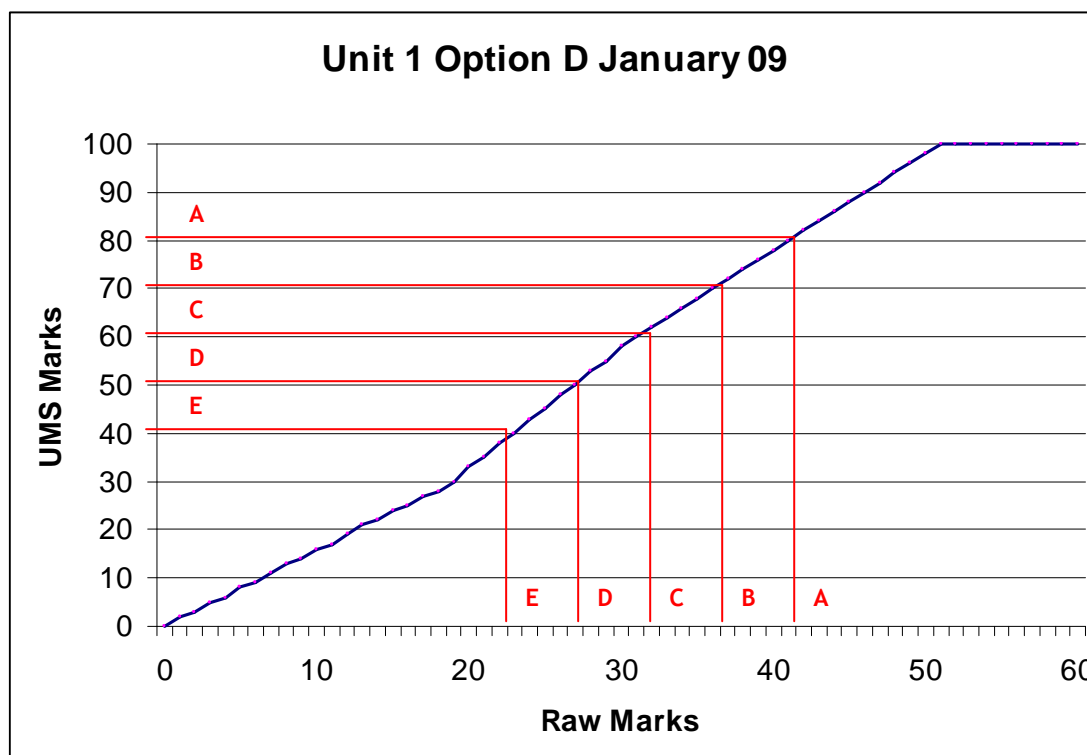
The computer then allocates the intervals evenly, ensuring the largest intervals are at the higher grades.



*Notional Grade N is always the same number of marks away from E, as E is from D.*

Once the computer has calculated the raw mark grade boundaries for each grade the computer plots a graph of raw mark against UMS mark.

Graph 1 below is for Unit 1 Option D in the January 2009 examination series. It shows pairs of marks plotted with the raw mark on the horizontal axis against the uniform mark on the vertical axis.



6HI01 Option D	Max. Mark	Boundary at each grade					
		A	B	C	D	E	N
Raw Mark	60	41	36	31	27	23	19
UMS Mark	100	80	70	60	50	40	30

The line connecting the points for Grade A and Grade B is extended to give the raw mark at which the maximum of 100 uniform marks is reached. This is to ensure that students who achieve more raw marks than the grade A boundary are not penalised by a change in the scale of conversion to uniform marks.

For any raw mark, the uniform mark can be read off the graph. In this example, the maximum uniform mark is awarded for a raw mark below the maximum of 60. In fact, the raw mark is 51 when the maximum uniform mark is reached. All candidates who gain between 51 and 60 raw marks will be awarded a uniform mark of 100.

If extending the line connecting Grade A and Grade B results in the maximum raw mark converting to less than the maximum uniform mark then this extension is not used. Instead, a point is plotted of maximum raw mark against maximum uniform mark. A straight line is drawn from Grade A to this point and the resulting line is used to read off the uniform marks in this range.

The Notional N boundary ensures that the line connecting Grade D and Grade E is extended slightly, to ensure that candidates who just miss out on an E Grade are not penalised by a change in the scale of conversion to uniform marks.

## Resitting Units and Banking UMS

When a student sits a unit of GCE History the UMS mark achieved will be stored in a unit bank.

If they resit a unit the best mark will be used towards their final grade.

### For example...

Candidate Y below has sat all 4 units and re-sat units 2 and 4. When Candidate Y enters for the A Level Cash-in in order to certificate, the best UMS mark will be taken for each unit and added together - this will then decide the overall grade at GCE.

Eg:

**Unit 1**            **73 UMS**

Unit 2            45 UMS

**Unit 2 Resit**    **85 UMS**

**Unit 3**            **78 UMS**

Unit 4            66 UMS

**Unit 4 Resit**    **69 UMS**

Total UMS = 73 + 85 + 78 + 69 = 305

The overall grade at A Level would therefore be Grade B, since...

Overall Grade	A	B	C	D	E
at A Level	320	280	240	200	160

**Do you need further guidance?**

If you need further guidance on uniform marks please call the History Subject Advisor line on 0844 576 0034 or email [HistorySubjectAdvisor@edexcelexperts.co.uk](mailto:HistorySubjectAdvisor@edexcelexperts.co.uk)