

UMS Guidance: Helping you to understand your Edexcel GCSE History results

Raw Marks

What are raw marks?

When we refer to raw marks we mean the actual marks on a paper which have not yet been converted to UMS marks. This is the mark that the examiner will give a script when it is marked.

Edexcel's new GCSE History specifications are made up of four units, each worth 25%. Look at the total raw marks for each unit - you can find these in the specification on pages 4 and 5 but they are also summarised in the table below.

Modern World Specification

Unit	Weighting	Total raw marks
1	25%	60
2	25%	50
3	25%	50
4	25%	50

SHP Specification

Unit	Weighting	Total raw marks
1	25%	50
2	25%	50
3	25%	50
4	25%	50

Raw Marks to Grades

Once all the scripts have been marked, a team of senior examiners will carefully review the quality of students' responses on a range of different marks.

Using their professional judgement, and the statistical evidence available to them, the senior examiners will recommend where to set the raw mark grade boundaries for each unit.

Until the first exams have been sat and awarded we do not know what the grade boundaries will be.

However, we do know that in GCSE History, different units (and options within units) are likely to perform differently from year to year, depending on the tasks 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 the grade boundaries, ensuring that the standard on each option is comparable.

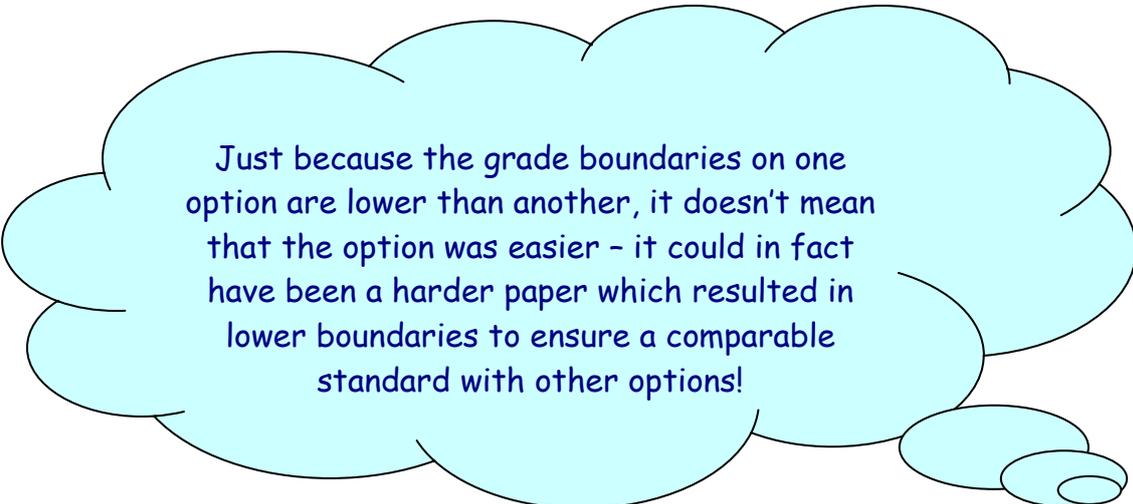
So, for example the raw mark grade boundaries COULD look like this...

Unit 1	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	49	43	37	32	26	21	16	11
Unit 2	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Option X	42	37	32	28	22	17	12	7
Option Y	43	38	33	28	22	16	11	6
Option Z	42	36	30	25	20	15	10	5

NB...these boundaries are imaginary because no paper has been sat yet! The table shows the imaginary raw mark boundary required to obtain each grade.

Have you noticed that these grade boundaries vary between units? In imaginary Unit 2 they even vary between different options, even though they are marked out of the same total mark.

In fact...this difference in grade boundaries can also occur on the same option from year to year.



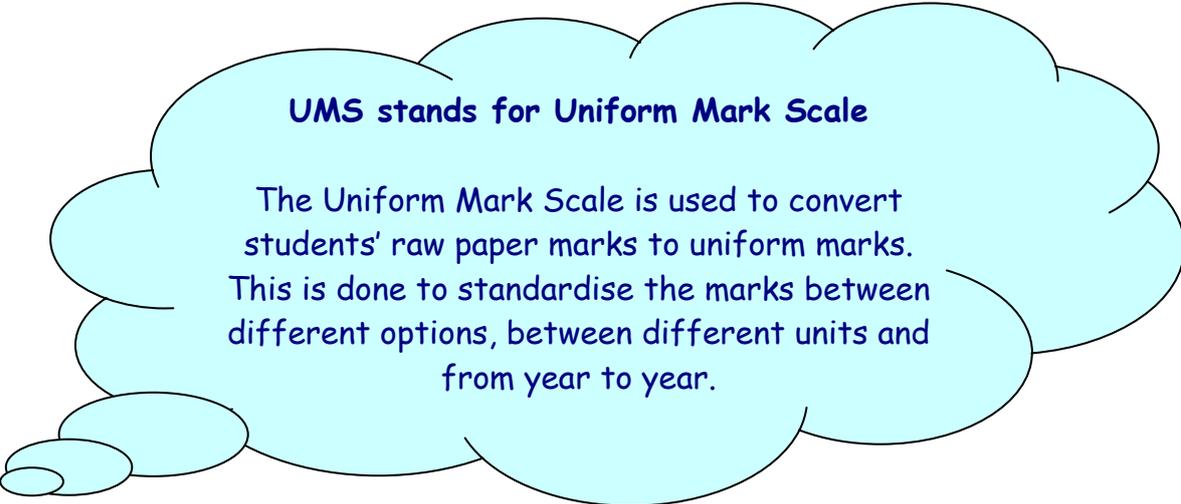
Just because the grade boundaries on one option are lower than another, it doesn't mean that the option was easier - it could in fact have been a harder paper which resulted in lower boundaries to ensure a comparable standard with other options!

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 year to year.

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 and each unit are rewarded equally.

We also have to ensure that students who, for example, just achieve a grade C in the January 2010 examination series achieve the same credit as students who just achieve a grade C 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 different options, between different units and from year to year.

For example, in our imaginary examination series below, a student who just achieves a grade C in Unit 1 (ie they get a raw mark of 32) will receive the same uniform mark as a student who just achieves a grade C in Unit 2 Option Z (ie they get a raw mark of 25), even though they are different units and regardless of the difference in raw marks on each paper.

Unit 1	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	49	43	37	32	26	21	16	11
Unit 2	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Option X	42	37	32	28	22	17	12	7
Option Y	43	38	33	28	22	16	11	6
Option Z	42	36	30	25	20	15	10	5

In another example, a student who just achieves a grade A in Unit 1 in our imaginary series above (ie they get a raw mark of 43) will also receive the same uniform mark as a student who just achieves a grade A the following year, regardless of the difference in their raw paper marks.

So...because the new GCSE History specifications are modular, and exams can be sat in January and June, and resat where necessary, uniform marks are the only way we can ensure that students' marks (and therefore grades) are standardised between the different options and units each year. This way an A is always an A, a B is always a B etc...



Uniform Mark Totals

The new GCSE History specifications have a total of 400 UMS marks.

This is made up of 100 uniform marks in each of the 4 units.

This is because each unit is worth 25% of the full GCSE so the UMS available for each unit is 25% of 400 ie 100.

The table below shows the total raw marks for each paper and the total UMS marks for each paper.

Modern World Specification

Unit	Weighting	Total raw marks	Total UMS marks
1	25%	60	100
2	25%	50	100
3	25%	50	100
4	25%	50	100

SHP Specification

Unit	Weighting	Total raw marks	Total UMS marks
1	25%	50	100
2	25%	50	100
3	25%	50	100
4	25%	50	100

Uniform Mark Grade Boundaries

You have already seen how the raw mark grade boundaries can vary between different options and units.

You also know that the uniform mark totals are simply divided up according to the weighting of each unit.

Did you know that the uniform mark grade boundaries are always the same?

A key concept in any modular qualification such as GCSE History is that the uniform mark grade boundaries for each option, each unit and at qualification level are always the same and are always worth the same proportion of total UMS marks.

On page 48 of the Modern World or page 61 of the SHP specification you will find the UMS grade boundaries. They are summarised in the table below.

The UMS grade boundaries for each unit are:

Unit Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Maximum UMS mark=100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

Grade A* is always worth 90% of the total UMS
Grade A is always worth 80% of the total UMS
Grade B is always worth 70% of the total UMS
Grade C is always worth 60% of the total UMS
Grade D is always worth 50% of the total UMS
Grade E is always worth 40% of the total UMS
Grade F is always worth 30% of the total UMS
Grade G is always worth 20% of the total UMS

So, for each unit...

<p>Total UMS available in Unit 1 is 100</p> <p>Grade A* is 90% of 100 = 90 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 Grade F is 30% of 100 = 30 UMS Grade G is 20% of 100 = 20 UMS</p>	<p>Total UMS available in Unit 2 is 100</p> <p>Grade A* is 90% of 100 = 90 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 Grade F is 30% of 100 = 30 UMS Grade G is 20% of 100 = 20 UMS</p>
<p>Total UMS available in Unit 3 is 100</p> <p>Grade A* is 90% of 100 = 90 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 Grade F is 30% of 100 = 30 UMS Grade G is 20% of 100 = 20 UMS</p>	<p>Total UMS available in Unit 4 is 100</p> <p>Grade A* is 90% of 100 = 90 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 Grade F is 30% of 100 = 30 UMS Grade G is 20% of 100 = 20 UMS</p>



What about at qualification level?

The UMS grade boundaries for the full GCSE qualification (ie all 4 units) are:

Qualification Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Maximum UMS mark=400	360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80

(NB students who do not achieve the standard required for grade G will receive a UMS mark in the range of 0-79.)

Notice how the UMS grade boundaries for the full GCSE follow the same pattern?

At full qualification level, as well as at unit level, A* is worth 90% of the total UMS, A is worth 80% of the total UMS etc...

So at qualification level...

Total UMS available in full GCSE is 400

Grade A* is 90% of 400 = 360 UMS

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

Grade F is 30% of 400 = 120 UMS

Grade G is 20% of 400 = 80 UMS

This is logical because if an imaginary candidate just achieved a grade A on every unit they would achieve 80 UMS on each unit...

$$80 + 80 + 80 + 80 = 320$$

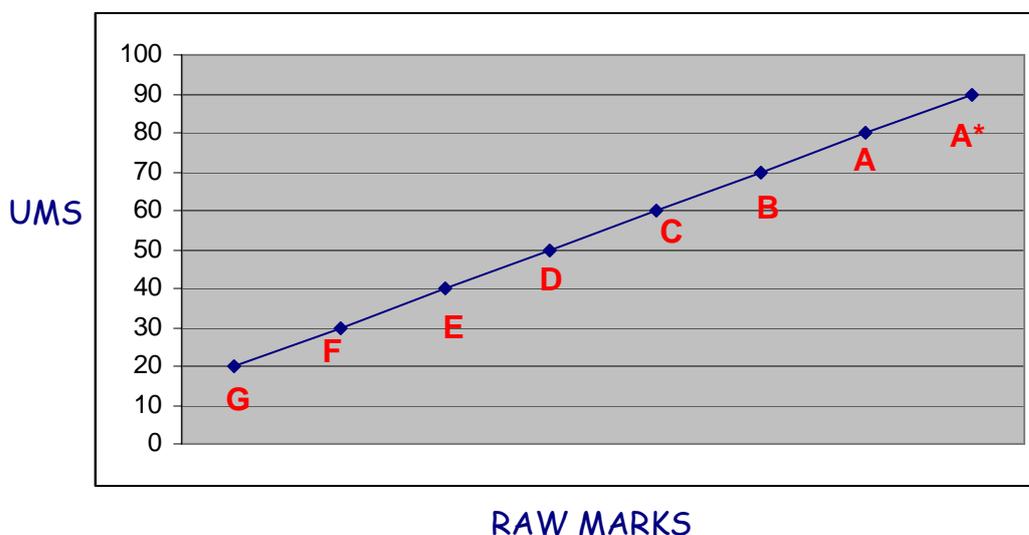
...which is the minimum UMS mark needed for A in the full GCSE.

How are raw marks converted to UMS marks?

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

For example...in our **imaginary** Unit 1

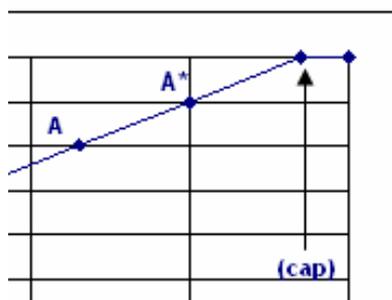
Unit Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw Mark Boundary	49	43	37	32	26	21	16	11
Maximum UMS mark=100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20



The computer plots a graph of UMS mark boundaries against raw paper mark boundaries. For any raw mark the UMS mark can then be read off the graph.

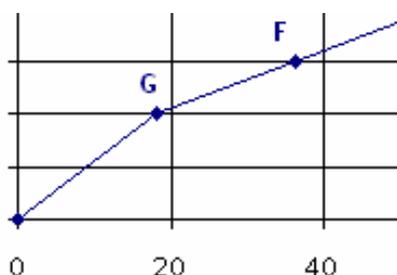
There are two more things to consider with the above graph...

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



This can result in students achieving maximum UMS marks, even though they haven't scored maximum raw marks.

2) Below grade G the line must connect to Zero - this can result in a change in the scale of conversion to UMS marks as shown in the example below.



It is therefore 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 raw mark grade boundaries are not necessarily constant, however they are fixed for the uniform marks.

For example in our imaginary Unit 2 Option X below...

Unit 2	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Option X	42	37	32	28	22	17	12	7
Option Y	43	38	33	28	22	16	11	6
Option Z	42	36	30	25	20	15	10	5

...we set the imaginary raw mark grade A* boundary at 42/50, so all candidates who obtain raw marks of **42-50** will receive 90 or more UMS marks, up to a maximum of 100 UMS marks.

...we set the imaginary raw mark grade A boundary at 37/50, so all candidates who obtain raw marks of **37-41** will receive 80-89 UMS marks.

...we set the raw mark grade D boundary at 22, so all candidates who obtain raw marks of **22-27** will receive 50-59 UMS marks and so on.

The number of raw marks available within each imaginary grade boundary above are different but the number of UMS marks available are always the same.

Resitting Units and Banking UMS

When a student sits a unit of GCSE 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 1 and 2. When Candidate Y enters for the full GCSE 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 GCSE.

Eg:

Unit 1	74 UMS
Unit 1 Resit	86 UMS (resit mark better)
Unit 2	61 UMS (original mark better)
Unit 2 Resit	59 UMS
Unit 3	66 UMS
Unit 4	78 UMS

Total UMS = 86 + 61 + 66 + 78 = 291

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

Overall Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
at GCSE Level	360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80

Please note...students are only allowed to resit each unit once!

Terminal Assessment

There is a new rule with modular GCSEs called the terminal assessment rule.

This states that students must take at least 40% (ie 2 units) of the assessment in the final examination series when they certificate and the results of these terminal assessments will contribute to the final grade.

This limits the flexibility in the way that students can sit and resit assessments.

In practice, it means that 2 units must be sat at the end of the course. However controlled assessment can be submitted as one of these terminal units, in which case students only need to sit one final exam.

With resits the best mark usually counts. However if a resit is being used as one of the two final terminal units then the resit mark will count, even if it is worse. For this reason it is safer not to rely on resits to make up the 40% terminal assessment.

Grade Boundaries

Once the first exams have been sat in Jan 2010 we will publish Principal Examiners' Reports which will be available on the Edexcel website. The actual grade boundaries for each unit will be published in the back of these documents which will be available from results day.

Do you need further guidance?

If you need any further advice please email the History Subject Advisor at HistorySubjectAdvisor@edexcelexperts.co.uk or call 0844 576 0034.