

UMS

Awarding Applied GCSE Qualifications

INTRODUCTION

UMS stands for Uniform Mark Scale. The Uniform Mark Scale is used to convert candidates' component 'raw' marks into uniform marks. This is done in order to standardise marks from year to year. For example, a candidate who just achieves an A in a unit one year will receive the same uniform mark as a candidate achieving that same level the following year, regardless of their raw marks.

THE CONVERSION PROCESS

Raw marks to Grades

Following the marking of scripts, a committee of senior examiners reviews the quality of the work submitted for each individual paper. Using their professional judgement, and statistical and technical evidence, they decide where to set the raw mark grade boundaries for each unit. Table 1 shows possible raw mark paper boundaries for selected Applied GCSE units.

Table 1

Unit	Maximum Raw Mark	Raw mark boundaries							
		A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
5331	100	90	77	64	51	43	35	28	21
5332	58	52	46	41	35	29	23	17	12
5333	58	49	44	38	32	26	20	15	9

This table shows that the minimum raw mark required to obtain each grade can vary between units, even when they are marked out of the same total.

Raw Marks to Uniform Marks

The raw mark grade boundaries and all the candidates raw marks are entered into Edexcel's computer. The computer converts the raw marks into uniform marks.

An Applied GCSE is out of 300 uniform marks, with each unit contributing one third of the overall qualification. Each unit is out of 100 uniform marks.

The uniform grade boundaries for each unit are fixed and are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

All Units	Maximum UMS	Uniform mark boundaries							
		A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

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 uniform marks.

In unit 5333, all candidates who obtain raw marks of 49 or above receive 90 or more uniform marks, up to a maximum of 100. Those scoring raw marks of 44-48 receive 80-89 uniform marks, and so on.

The Conversion to Uniform Marks Illustrated

The conversion below uses Unit 5333 as an example. Table 3 shows the raw marks and the uniform marks. These marks have been taken from Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 3

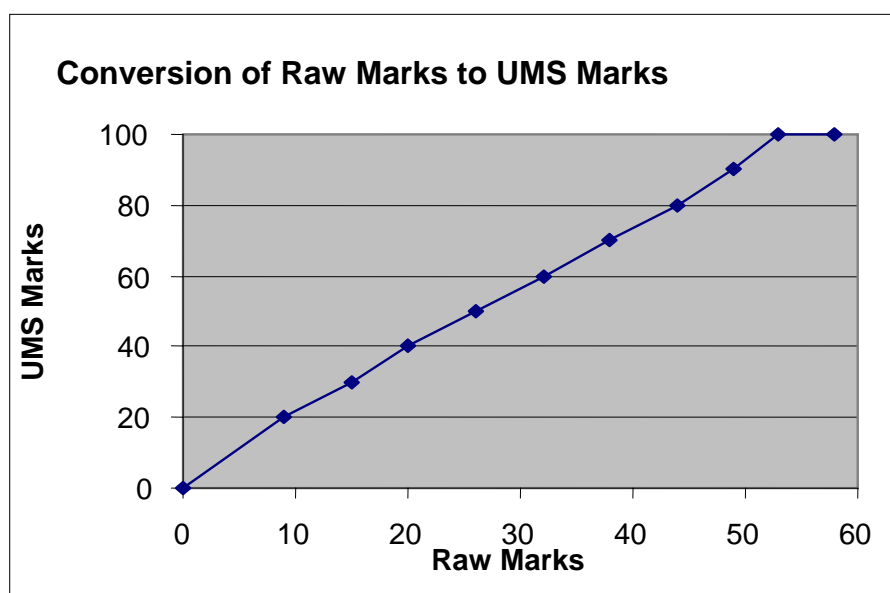
	Maximum Mark	Boundary at each grade							
		A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw Mark	58	49	44	38	32	26	20	15	9
UMS Mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

Graph 1 shows the pairs of marks plotted with the raw mark on the horizontal axis against the uniform mark on the vertical axis. Straight lines join adjacent points. The line connecting the points for Grade A* and Grade A is extended to give the raw mark at which the maximum of 100 uniform marks is reached.

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 53 when the maximum uniform mark is reached. All candidates who gain 53 or more raw marks will be awarded a uniform mark of 100.

If extending the line connecting Grade A and Grade A* 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.

Graph 1



MAKING THE AWARD

Cashing-in

Table 4 shows the number of uniform marks required to achieve each grade. Like the unit boundaries, these are also fixed.

Table 4

Grade	Uniform Mark Boundaries
A*A*	270
A*A	255
AA	240
AB	225
BB	210
BC	195
CC	180
CD	165
DD	150
DE	135
EE	120
EF	105
FF	90
FG	75
GG	60

When a candidate 'cashes-in' for an Applied GCSE award, assuming eligibility rules are satisfied, the uniform marks from each of the three units are simply totalled to give a final subject mark.

Example

Using the earlier examples of raw grade boundaries, this example shows how a candidate's raw marks for each unit convert to their overall qualification grade.

Table 5 - Cashing-in for an Applied GCSE

Unit	Raw Mark	UMS Mark
5331	79	82
5332	56	100
5333	38	70
Total UMS		252

5331: A raw mark of 79 falls within the A range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are: 80-89. 79 raw marks convert to 82 uniform marks.

5332: The maximum uniform is achieved at 54 raw marks, therefore with a raw mark of 56 this candidate would achieve 100 uniform marks.

5333: A raw mark of 38 falls within the B range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are: 70-79. 38 raw marks convert to 70 uniform marks.

Totalling the uniform marks achieved in each unit gives 252 uniform marks. Reading off from Table 4, it can be seen that the candidate will be awarded a Grade AA.