UMS
Awarding GNVQ 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 a Distinction 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 unit. 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 a possible set of raw mark grade boundaries for selected GNVQ units.

Table 1

Unit	Maximum Raw Mark	Raw mark boundaries			
		Distinction	Merit	Pass	N
B201P	16	13	10	7	4
B202P	16	13	10	7	4
B203T	60	45	33	22	11
B204T	60	41	33	25	17
B205T	60	47	38	29	20
B208P	16	13	10	7	4

The 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. It should be noted that N will not be published as a grade at any level; it is only used in the conversion of raw marks to uniform marks.

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.

A GNVQ is out of 600 uniform marks with each unit contributing one sixth 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

Unit	Maximum UMS	Uniform mark boundaries			
		Distinction	Merit	Pass	N
All Units	100	80	60	40	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 B203T, all candidates who obtain raw marks of 45 or above receive 80 or more uniform marks, up to a maximum of 100. Those scoring raw marks of 33-44 receive 60-79 uniform marks, and so on.

The Conversion to Uniform Marks Illustrated

The conversion is described below using unit B203T as an example. Table 3 shows the raw marks and the uniform marks. These marks have been taken from Table 1 and Table 2.
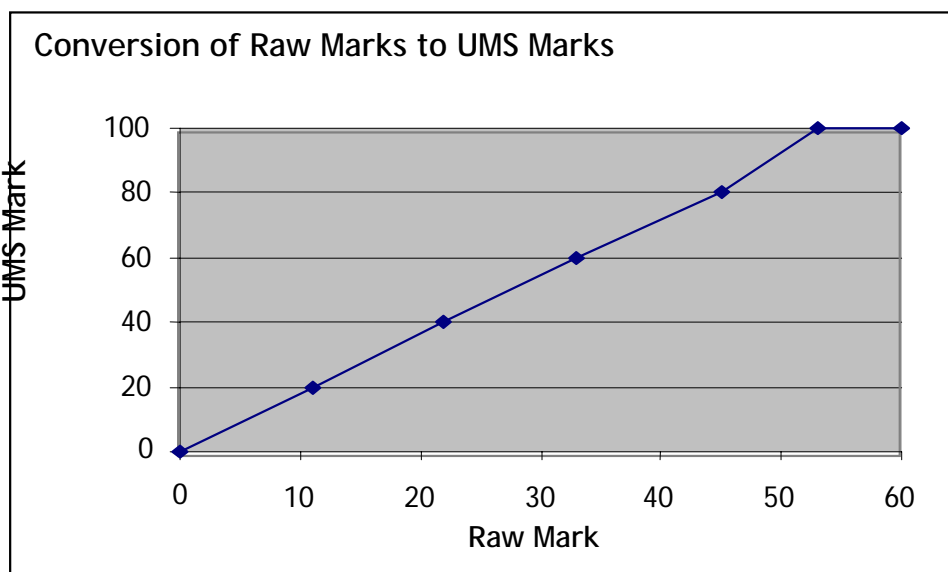
Table 3

	Maximum Mark	Boundary at each grade			
		Distinction	Merit	Pass	N
Raw Mark	60	45	33	22	11
UMS Mark	100	80	60	40	20

Graph 1 shows 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 Distinction and Merit 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 the Distinction and Merit 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 the Distinction to this point and the resulting line is used to read off the uniform marks in this range.

Graph 1

Conversion of Raw Marks to UMS Marks

MAKING THE AWARD

Cashing-in

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

Table 4

Grade	Uniform Mark Boundaries
D	480
M	360
P	240

When a candidate 'cashes-in' for a GNVQ award then, assuming eligibility rules are satisfied, the uniform marks from the contributing 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 a GNVQ

Unit	Raw Mark	UMS Mark
B201P	11	67
B202P	14	87
B203T	58	100
B204T	40	78
B205T	23	27
B208P	7	40
Total UMS		399

B201P: A raw mark of 11 falls within the Merit range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are 60-79. 11 raw marks would convert to 67 uniform marks.
B202P: A raw mark of 14 falls in the Distinction range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are 80-100. 14 raw marks would convert to 87 uniform marks.
B203T: The maximum uniform mark is achieved at 57 raw marks, therefore with 58 raw marks, this candidate would achieve 100 uniform marks.
B204T: A raw mark of 40 falls within the Merit range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are 60-79. 40 raw marks convert to 78 uniform marks.
B205T: A raw mark of 23 falls within the N range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are 20-39. 23 raw marks would convert to 27 uniform marks.
B208P: A raw mark of 7 falls within the Pass range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are 40-59. 7 raw marks would convert to 40 uniform marks.

Totalling the uniform marks achieved in each unit gives 399 uniform marks. Reading off from Table 4, it can be seen that the candidate will be awarded a Merit for the GNVQ.