Understanding Grades for Computer Science

Notional Grade Boundaries

You will find the Notional Grade Boundaries at the end of this short document – however it is useful to understand why they are different to previous component grade boundary values in the qualification models that are no longer prevalent.

Why was UMS used?

For some qualifications, components or units can be taken at different times throughout the course and banked. For example, some of our Edexcel A level Mathematics exams can be completed in the first or second year of study. These qualifications are referred to as modular qualifications.

To make sure that any differences in the difficulty of exams or assessments are taken into account when adding up your marks to give an overall grade, we convert the 'raw' or exam paper mark onto a standardised scale (commonly called a uniform mark scale).

UMS grade boundaries are fixed so they are the same for each exam session. Raw mark grade boundaries may change for each exam session.

So what is happening to modular qualifications?

Modular qualifications are being phased out in favour of linear qualifications. These require all components of the qualification to be sat and submitted in the final examination series. This means that 'banking' of components is no longer possible.

Is there an example of a linear qualification?

The GCSE Computer Science 2013 is linear. The grade boundaries for the 2015 series look very simple compared to those which can be seen for previous modular qualifications.

The specification for this qualification is available on our website. It has a section called Awarding and Reporting on page 16. The contents of this section is shown below.

Prepared by Tim Brady

Pearson

Awarding and reporting

The grading, awarding and certification of this qualification will comply with the requirements of the current GCSE/GCE Code of Practice, which is published by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual).

The two assessed components of GCSE Computer Science are scaled as follows to create a total subject mark:

Assessed component	Percentage weighting	Raw mark × scaling factor	Subject mark
Paper 1	75%	90 × 1.6	150
Controlled assessment	25%	50 × 1	50
		Total subject mark	200

The GCSE qualification will be graded and certificated on an eight-grade scale from A* to G using the total subject mark. Individual components are not graded.

The first certification opportunity for the Pearson Edexcel Level 1/ Level 2 GCSE in Computer Science will be 2015.

Students whose level of achievement is below the minimum judged by Pearson to be of sufficient standard to be recorded on a certificate will receive an unclassified U result.

How are the grade boundaries shown?

Given the above description it is now possible to see that the grade boundaries are only shown at qualification level as was the case in the grade boundaries document for 2015. See below:

Computer Science												
Overall grade boundaries			**Max Mark**	**A***	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**	**U**
1CP0	Computer Science	Raw	200	158	131	104	77	63	50	37	24	0

How can grade boundaries be provided to students doing mocks?

When practice components, either a mock exam or a practise controlled assessment is done, assessment is performed and it is very important that students get feedback on their efforts. This inevitably results in students demanding to know the ‘grade’ that they achieved. But individual components do not now have grade boundaries.

Notional Grade Boundaries

The ‘notional’ grade boundaries shown here can be used to give students and teachers a guide as to the performance of a student when attempting a past paper in a mock or practise situation. Notional grade boundaries can be used to communicate that the result would be considered around a ‘B’ grade performance, based on grade boundaries in previous series.

GCSE Computer Science 1CP0

June 2015

1CP0		Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
01	Exam	**90**	67	55	43	31	25	19	14	9	0
2A/2B/2C	Coursework	**50**	46	39	32	25	21	17	14	11	0

Please note that the marks in the above table are purely indicative boundaries to be used for mock exams and are not necessarily indicative of grade boundaries in the summer 2016 exam session.

2IT01	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
	200	158	131	104	77	63	50	37	24	0

Grade boundaries are set by examiners for the whole qualification at A, C and F and the intermediate grades are calculated arithmetically. The weighting between the two components is 60 / 40.