

UMS

Awarding DiDA 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 moderation of portfolios, 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 hypothetical set of raw mark grade boundaries for DiDA units.

Table 1 *Hypothetical data only**

Unit	Maximum Raw Mark	Raw mark boundaries				
		Distinction	Merit	Credit	Pass	N
D101	42	30	24	18	12	6
D102	42	30	24	19	14	9
D103	42	30	24	18	13	8
D104	42	30	25	20	16	12
D201	42	36	28	20	13	6
D202	42	31	26	21	16	11
D203	42	34	28	22	16	10
D204	42	33	27	21	15	9

* This data is for illustrative purposes only. Refer to <http://dida.edexcel.org.uk/results> for grade boundary data relevant to each series.

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 It should be noted that N will not be published as a grade at any level; it is only used in the conversion of raw marks to uniform marks.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

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

Table 2

Unit	Maximum UMS	Uniform mark boundaries				
		D	M	C	P	N
Level 1 Units	42	36	30	24	18	12
Level 2 Units	84	72	60	48	36	24

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.

From the hypothetical data above, for unit D203 all candidates who obtain raw marks of 34 or above receive 72 or more uniform marks, up to a maximum of 84. Those scoring raw marks of 28-33 receive 60-71 uniform marks, and so on.

The Conversion to Uniform Marks Illustrated

The conversion is described below using the hypothetical D203 data as an example. Table 3 shows the raw marks and the uniform marks. These marks have been taken from Tables 1 and 2.

Table 3

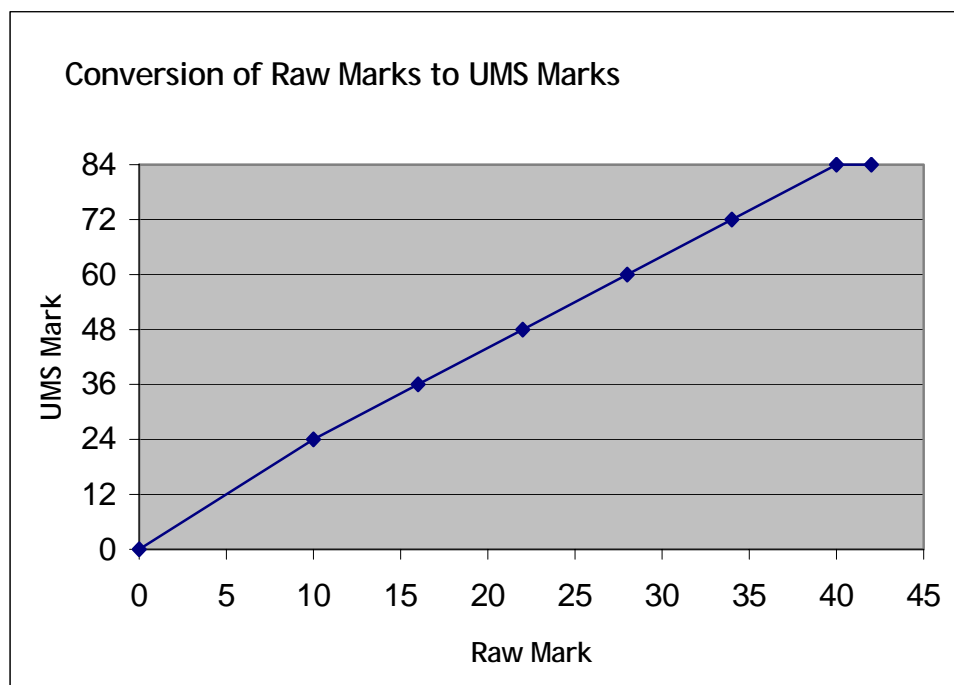
	Maximum Mark	Boundary at each grade				
		D	M	C	P	N
Raw Mark	42	34	28	22	16	10
UMS Mark	84	72	60	48	36	24

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 uniform mark 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 42. In fact, the raw mark is 40 when the maximum uniform mark is reached. All candidates who gain 40 or more raw marks will be awarded a uniform mark of 84.

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



MAKING THE AWARD

Cashing-in

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

Table 4

Grade	Uniform Mark Boundaries					
	Award Level 1	Award Level 2/ Certificate Level 1	Extended Certificate Level 1	Certificate Level 2/ Diploma Level 1	Extended Certificate Level 2	Diploma Level 2
Max UMS	42	84	126	168	252	336
D	36	72	108	144	216	288
M	30	60	90	120	180	240
C	24	48	72	96	144	192
P	18	36	54	72	108	144

When a candidate 'cashes-in' for a DiDA qualification, assuming eligibility rules are satisfied, the uniform marks from the contributing units are simply totalled to give a final subject mark.

Examples

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

Table 5 - Cashing-in for a Level 2 Diploma (GD2DA)

Unit	Raw Mark	UMS Mark
D201	23	53
D202	28	65
D203	21	46
D204	27	60
Total UMS		224

D201: A raw mark of 23 falls within the Credit range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are 48-59. 23 raw marks would convert to 53 uniform marks.

D202: A raw mark of 28 falls within the Merit range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are 60-71. 28 raw marks would convert to 65 uniform marks.

D203: A raw mark of 21 falls within the Pass range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are 36-47. 21 raw marks would convert to 46 uniform marks.

D204: A raw mark of 27 falls within the Merit range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are 60-71. 27 raw marks would convert to 60 uniform marks.

Totalling the uniform marks achieved in each unit gives 224 uniform marks. Reading off from Table 4, it can be seen that the candidate will be awarded a Credit for the qualification.

Table 6 - Cashing-in for a Level 2 Certificate (GC2DA)

Unit	Raw Mark	UMS Mark
D101	27	33
D202	22	50
Total UMS		83

D101: A raw mark of 27 falls within the Merit range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are 30-35. 27 raw marks would convert to 33 uniform marks.

D202: A raw mark of 22 falls within the Credit range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are 48-59. 22 raw marks would convert to 50 uniform marks.

Totalling the uniform marks achieved in each unit gives 83 uniform marks. Reading off from Table 4, it can be seen that the candidate will be awarded a Pass for the qualification.

Please note that by selecting this combination of units - a Level 1 and a Level 2 unit, the candidate cannot achieve more than 126 uniform marks (a Merit).

Table 7 - Cashing-in for a Level 1 Diploma (GD1DA)

Unit	Raw Mark	UMS Mark
D101	27	33
D102	23	29
D104	33	40
D203	32	68
Total UMS		170

D101: A raw mark of 27 falls within the Merit range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are 30-35. 27 raw marks would convert to 33 uniform marks.

D102: A raw mark of 23 falls within the Credit range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are 24-29. 23 raw marks would convert to 29 uniform marks.

D104: A raw mark of 33 falls within the Distinction range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are 36-42. 33 raw marks would convert to 40 uniform marks.

D203: A raw mark of 32 falls within the Merit range. The number of uniform marks available in this range are 60-71. 32 raw marks would convert to 68 uniform marks.

Totalling the uniform marks achieved in each unit gives 170 uniform marks. Reading off from Table 4, it can be seen that the candidate will be awarded a Distinction for the qualification.

Please note that by selecting this combination of units - three Level 1 units and one Level 2 unit, the candidate is able to exceed the maximum uniform mark of 168 for the qualification. In doing so the candidate is still only able to achieve the highest grade, distinction, for the qualification.