

UNIVERSITY OF THE  
WEST of SCOTLAND

**UWS**

COURT AND SENATE OFFICE

# GRADE POINT AVERAGE AT UWS: INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

**DREAMING,  
BELIEVING,  
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# GRADE POINT AVERAGE AT UWS: INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

## WHAT IS A GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)?

Grade Point Average (GPA) is a way of calculating your average mark over your degree. It is a way of showing your overall level of achievement on your programme. It originated in North America and is now used in many countries. Following a report from the UK Higher Education Academy (HEA) in May 2015, a growing number of UK universities are now implementing GPA, and UWS is one of these.

The GPA is simply your average attainment over all the modules you take. The average is calculated by attaching a number to the grade you achieve for each module, and using that number to work out an average; hence the title GPA.

- The **grade** is the measure of achievement on your module
- The **grade point** is the number attached to each grade
- The **grade point average** is the average of all of your grade points

This is how your UWS grade relates to your grade point:

UWS Grade	UWS Grade Point
A1	4.0
A2	3.5
A3	3.0
B1	2.5
B2	2.0
C	1.5
D	1.0
E	0.5
NS	0

Table 1. UWS grades and grade points

## WHY IS UWS INTRODUCING GPA?

At the moment, when you graduate with an Honours degree, you are awarded one of just four categories of Honours: 1st, 2i, 2ii or 3rd class. These broad categories don't tell people much about your performance. For example, two students might both get 2i classifications, but one of those students might only just have scraped their 2i, whilst the other might have narrowly missed out on a 1st. Not all of your study is taken into account when calculating an Honours classification, which means that it doesn't give a complete picture of how you did at university. You won't know what classification of Honours you are on track to receive until quite late on in your degree, but GPA lets you know how you are doing from the start, will be updated on a rolling basis, and lets you see how you are improving year on year.

Some students wait until the final stages of their degree before trying to get their best grades. GPA encourages students to do the best they can from the beginning.

GPA is also better understood overseas which should help you if you want to study or work abroad.

The GPA also works well with the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR), which is a way of recognising wider student achievement, and which UWS is implementing in academic year 2016/17. Together, the HEAR and GPA will help future employers get a better understanding of what you have done during your time at university, and how you have performed.

## IS GPA REPLACING THE DEGREE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM?

No. Because the two systems are different they have complementary strengths and so work well together. To make sure you benefit from the best of both systems, you will receive both a degree classification and a GPA. The different strengths of the two systems include:

- The GPA system takes account of all the modules you study, while the classification system takes into account key modules that you will study towards the end of your programme;
- The GPA system is widely understood around the world, and the honours classification system is widely understood in the UK;
- The GPA system provides a very precise overall judgement of your achievement, while the honours classification system offers a broad statement in one of four classes.

## HOW WILL MY GPA BE WORKED OUT?

When you get an assignment back, it will have been assigned a UWS grade as in Table 1 above (e.g. A1, B2, C, NS etc.). Banner (our student record system) will also record the grade point which corresponds with that UWS grade (e.g. 4.0, 2.0, 1.5, 0 etc.). Both the UWS grade and the grade point will appear in Banner and on your HEAR for each module.

The GPA is the average of all of your grade points, with each module counting equally according to its credit value, irrespective of the level of the module, the subject, when it was taken etc. So for example, a 40 credit module will carry twice the weight of a 20 credit module, but modules in later stages of your programme are given no additional weight over modules from earlier in your programme. Your GPA will be automatically calculated in Banner on a rolling basis and you will be able to view your current GPA there at any time.

## CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT HOW GPA IS CALCULATED?

Yes. The table below shows the grades that an imaginary first year student receives for each module they have studied at level 7.

Module name	Credits	UWS Grade	Grade Point
Introduction to small boat sailing	20	A1	4.0
Exploring inland waterways	20	A2	3.5
Motor cruising for beginners	40	B1	2.5
Theory of navigation	10	C	1.5
Introductory seamanship	10	B2	2.0
Sail cruising	20	E	0.5

Table 2.

This student's current GPA is: 2.46

This is worked out by:

- Step 1: adding all of the grade points together (40 credit modules are worth twice as much as 20 credit modules and so are counted twice; 60 credit modules are counted three times; 10 credit modules are counted 0.5 times etc.);
- Step 2: adding up the number of modules taken (again, 40 credit modules are counted twice, 10 credit modules are counted 0.5 times etc.);
- Step 3: dividing the number generated in Step 1 by the number in Step 2;
- Step 4: rounding to two decimal places.

The calculation looks like this:

- Step 1:  $4 + 3.5 + (2.5 \times 2) + (1.5 \times 0.5) + (2 \times 0.5) + 0.5 = 14.75$
- Step 2:  $1 + 1 + (1 \times 2) + (1 \times 0.5) + (1 \times 0.5) + 1 = 6$
- Step 3:  $14.75 / 6 = 2.4583$
- Step 4: 2.46

## **WILL ALL STUDENTS START GETTING GPAs STRAIGHT AWAY?**

Students who enter UWS at Level 7 in 2016/17 academic year will be the first to receive grade points along with grades for the modules they study at UWS, and will be the first to receive GPAs throughout their studies. These students will also be the first to receive a GPA along with their Honours classification when they graduate. Grade points will then be applied to students at levels 7 and 8 in 2017/18, at levels 7, 8 and 9 in 2018/19 and at all undergraduate levels from 2019/20.

Grade points will only be applied to modules that you study at UWS. If you have transferred credit from modules studied at college before coming to UWS then these will appear on your transcript, but will not have a grade point assigned to them and will be excluded from GPA calculations.

If you are a continuing student at UWS – in other words, if you began your studies before 2016/17 – then nothing will change for you and you will continue to get just a UWS grade as you always have.

GPA is being introduced to supplement the existing Honours degree classification system, and so it is not applied at postgraduate level.

## **WILL MY GPA AFFECT MY DEGREE CLASSIFICATION?**

No. The calculation of the degree classification is entirely independent of the calculation of the GPA.

## **WILL MY FIRST YEAR (LEVEL 7) MODULES COUNT TOWARDS THE GPA?**

Yes. The modules you take in your first year will count towards your GPA.

## **ARE SOME MODULES GIVEN MORE WEIGHT IN THE GPA?**

No. Each module counts equally according to its credit value. Modules in later stages of your programme are given no additional weight over modules from earlier in your programme.

## WILL FAILED MODULES COUNT TOWARDS MY GPA?

Yes. All modules will count equally towards your GPA. Failed modules are those with UWS grades of D, E or NS, and will have corresponding grade points of 1.0, 0.5 or 0 respectively.

In the imaginary example given above you will notice that this student failed a module, receiving a UWS grade E for the 20 credit module 'Sail cruising', which gives a grade point of 0.5. The student is then re-assessed on this module and achieves a UWS grade A2, which gives them a grade point 3.5. Their modules now look like this:

Module name	Credits	UWS Grade	Grade Point
Introduction to small boat sailing	20	A1	4.0
Exploring inland waterways	20	A2	3.5
Motor cruising for beginners	40	B1	2.5
Theory of navigation	10	C	1.5
Introductory seamanship	10	B2	2.0
Sail cruising	20	E	0.5
Sail cruising (2nd attempt)	20	A2	3.5

Table 3.

This student's GPA will be recalculated following their second attempt at the module, and the calculation now looks like this:

- Step 1:  $4 + 3.5 + (2.5 \times 2) + (1.5 \times 0.5) + (2 \times 0.5) + 0.5 + 3.5 = 18.25$
- Step 2:  $1 + 1 + (1 \times 2) + (1 \times 0.5) + (1 \times 0.5) + 1 + 1 = 7$
- Step 3:  $18.25 / 7 = 2.6071$
- Step 4: 2.61

In this instance you will see that the student's GPA has gone up following their re-assessment, from 2.46 to 2.61.

## WILL ANY MODULES BE EXCLUDED FROM THE GPA CALCULATION?

Yes, but only in some very limited circumstances. For example, if you re-take assessments due to having been affected by extenuating circumstances (EC) then the attempt in the module for which EC was granted will be disregarded from your calculations and not included in your GPA.

Modules that are graded only pass/fail instead of being assigned a UWS grade are excluded from your GPA calculations. Modules that were not studied at UWS will also be excluded from your calculations.

## WHERE CAN I SEE MY GPA?

Your current GPA, based on the modules you've studied, will be available on Banner on a rolling basis. Your final GPA will be included on your HEAR when you graduate.

## **DO I NEED TO ACHIEVE A CERTAIN GPA IN ORDER TO PROGRESS WITHIN MY PROGRAMME OR TO GRADUATE?**

No. Eligibility to receive an award is not dependent in any way upon your GPA. You may graduate with any GPA up to and including 4.00. Likewise, the rules concerning progression are not linked to your GPA.

## **WHO SHOULD I SPEAK TO IF I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT MY GPA?**

In the first instance you should speak to your personal tutor.

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