

University of Birmingham
Clarifications to Profiling & Rounding Requirements

Topic and Purpose of the Paper

1. APRC is asked to **consider**, and if thought appropriate, **approve** amendments to the University Code of Practice clauses governing profiling and University policy on rounding.

Consultation

2. The amendments were requested by the Progress and Awards Board in order to clarify procedures.

Proposals/Recommendations

3. That, as found in Appendix 1,
 - additions be made to Code of Practice to ensure equivalent postgraduate taught provision as for undergraduate provision (additions underlined and deletions crossed through)¹;
 - clarifications be made to the Code of Practice on the Determination of Degree Class for Borderline Cases (highlighted text).
4. That any further amendments to the Code of Practice (specifically text found in Appendix 2) or to BIRMS be identified, based on the following practice:

(a) Calculation of Sub Component/ Component Marks

- i. Aggregated marks at component or subcomponent level should be calculated with the maximum available precision.
- ii. BIRMS should provide for the entry of aggregated component or subcomponent marks with up to *four* decimal places. Where a mark of greater precision is entered into BIRMS then it should be *rounded* to four decimal places. Marks of *less than n.nnnn5* (unrounded) should be rounded *down*.

(b) Calculation of the Module Mark

The module mark is an integer. It is achieved by *rounding* the result of the aggregation of component marks. A (module) mark of *less than n.5* (unrounded) is rounded *down*.

¹ BIRMS calculates module marks in the same way for UG and PGT students. However, there is no rounding of the overall weighted mean mark to the nearest whole mark if the mark is equal to or greater than 39.5, 49.5, 59.5 and 69.5 for students on PGT programmes. So currently a UG student with an overall weighted mean mark of 69.5 would be awarded a first class degree. A PGT student with an overall weighted mean mark of 69.5 would be awarded a degree with Merit, rather than Distinction, as the mark would not be rounded up to 70. This change to regulation will need therefore to be replicated in BIRMS.

(c) Calculation of the Stage Mark

- i. The stage mark is the mean mark, weighted for credits, for a stage of a student's degree programme. For UG programmes this applies to the stage 2 and stage 3 weighted mean marks. For PGT this applies to the taught weighted mean mark and the dissertation mark.
- ii. The stage mark is calculated with the maximum available precision.

(d) Calculation of the Overall Mark

- i. The overall mark is the mark calculated from the stage marks that contribute to the student's degree result using the appropriate stage weightings.
- ii. The overall mark is calculated with the maximum available precision and then rounded to an integer. An (overall) mark of *less than n.5* (unrounded) is rounded *down*.
- iii. Where a more precise mark is needed, a Display Overall Mark should be provided. This should be the overall mark before rounding, *truncated* (not rounded) to *three* decimal places. Truncation ensures that there is no visible discrepancy between the Display Overall Mark and the Overall Mark. Thus a mark of 59.4995 would *not* be displayed as 59.500 but as 59.499, as it is below the unrounded 59.50 required for rounding to 60.

5. Profiling Calculator

In addition to these proposals, APRC is asked to consider the merits, or otherwise, of hosting a Profiling Calculator for students. This is currently available at:

<http://www.education2.bham.ac.uk/performance.htm>