

UMS – uniform mark guidance: an example GCSE Psychology

What are uniform marks and why do we use them?

Grade boundaries are set using raw marks. For each unit, raw marks are mapped to uniform marks. A GCSE qualification grade is determined from the unit uniform mark scores.

Uniform marks are used to ensure that the standard required to gain a particular unit score is the same from exam series to exam series.

Below we have exemplified what the use of uniform marks mean in GCSE Psychology.

Karren & Julia are both re-taking GCSE Psychology Unit 1 this exam series.

Unit 1 (5PS01/01) is out of 60 raw marks and 80 UMS.

After they have sat the exam and their papers have been marked, senior examiners and Edexcel set the **raw mark** grade boundaries as follows:

Unit Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw Mark boundary this exam series	60	52*	46	40	34	28	22	16	10
Raw mark boundary last exam series	60	54	48	42	36	30	24	18	12
UMS Mark	80	72	64	56	48	40	32	24	16

IMPORTANT NOTE:

*The raw boundary marks listed above are fictional, used to exemplify how UMS works in this subject area and should not be taken as the actual grade boundaries for the unit.

Why are the raw marks boundaries different in this series compared to the last series?

You'll notice, for example, that at C the raw boundary mark was 36 last series; this series it is 34. However, you will also notice that C will always have a uniform mark of 48.

Why do raw mark boundaries change?

Raw mark boundaries change from series to series since examination papers can vary in difficulty. Even though the raw mark boundaries have changed, the uniform mark for each grade boundary remains the same for all series. In this example, the reason for the different raw mark boundaries is that, in the last series, the paper was less demanding.

Last exam series when Julia & Karren took the Unit 1 exam for the first time the raw mark boundaries were lower. Karren scored 42/60 and Julia scored 31/60 in raw marks.

This series, Karren scores a raw mark of 46/60 and Julia scores 35/60.

When cashing in GCSE Psychology, you get a total UMS score (the sum of the UMS for each of the 4 units). **Be aware of the 40% terminal rule.** For GCSE Psychology 2HS01 candidates must sit a minimum of 2 units when cashing in. If these are both re-sit units the UMS marks achieved in this series will count towards the overall grade (even if they are lower than in the first sitting).

Qualification results - GCSE in Psychology (2PS01)

Karren has 64 UMS from her Unit 1 resit. She has also taken Unit 2 this year.

Karren achieved:

Unit 2: 79 C

When this is put into the below boundary marks = 143 UMS. Grade B for GCSE Psychology.

Qualification Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Maximum UMS - 200	180	160	140	120	100	80	60	40