The marking of scripts is not the end of the story; those raw marks have then to be turned into a grade.

Here’s a six step guide to this process:

1. Once the scripts have been marked, the senior examiners come together once again to decide grade boundaries. This process is called ‘Awarding’. A grade boundary is the minimum mark that a student must attain to receive a particular grade. These are set each year so that there is consistency over time and between the units of each specification.

2. With modular assessments (where a student has taken different units at different times), the ‘raw marks’ from each unit are transferred to a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). The UMS balances out differences in difficulty between exams to ensure students get the correct grade, no matter when they took a particular unit. With linear exams that are taken at the same point at the end of a course, there is no need for raw marks to be converted onto a UMS.

3. Grade boundaries are decided using a combination of the examiners’ expert judgement and statistics. This includes comparing previous years’ papers to determine how the level of difficulty differs and looking at the students’ previous achievements.

4. On key grade boundaries, the work of students on and around the boundary is looked at. The examiners individually scrutinise this work using a tick sheet to record whether a student should receive the lower or higher grade being considered.

5. Once approved, the grade boundaries are applied to students’ marks to produce the grade.

6. Results are ready to be sent out to students.