

Marking & classing criteria in examinations for the Engineering Tripos and the Manufacturing Engineering Tripos

The Faculty Board of Engineering recommends to the Examiners for the 2025 Tripos examinations the following assessment criteria:

1. Marking criteria for questions

Marks of 70% to 100% to be given for an answer which is substantially complete and correct, and which displays an excellent understanding and analytical ability.

Marks of 60% to 69% to be given for an answer which, although moderately incomplete or incorrect, displays a good understanding and analytical ability.

Marks of 50% to 59% to be given for an answer which, although significantly incomplete or incorrect, displays a sound understanding and analytical ability.

Marks of 40% to 49% to be given for an answer which, although seriously incomplete or incorrect, displays a basic understanding and analytical ability.

2. Marking criteria for essay-based questions

Answers to essay questions should be clear, accurate, relevant to the question set and supported by appropriate use of evidence and examples. Additional credit is given where the following qualities are displayed:

- effective organisation and prioritisation of material, usually on the basis of a theme or argument. A collage of information with no coherent argument should be avoided;
- clear and logical analysis with theory used to advance the analysis;
- knowledge of relevant lecture material and related literature;
- effective and appropriate use of personal experience;
- originality in discussion and analysis.

Marks of 70% to 100% to be given for an essay which demonstrates excellent knowledge and understanding of the material and displays most of the requirements referred to above.

Marks of 60% to 69% to be given for an essay which shows a good grasp of the material, and an ability to detect underlying assumptions, adopt a critical stance and see interconnections between different ideas.

Marks of 50% to 59% to be given for an essay which is for the most part an accurate but descriptive account. Rehearsed material may be reproduced that is only partly relevant or poorly organised or unclear. If there is originality or insight it is not sufficient to compensate for incomplete, superficial or erroneous features of the answer.

Marks of 40% to 49% to be given for an essay which displays a basic familiarity with the material, but is seriously incomplete and shows errors of understanding.

3. Classing criteria for the whole examination

Marks may be scaled by the Examiners or Assessors as approved by the Chairman of Examiners for the Tripos examination in question. Further details are given in the Faculty Board Guidelines to Examiners and Assessors.

The orders of merit on which the class boundaries are drawn identify candidates by number only. Class divisions are drawn according to the Examiners' judgement on the candidates' performance, but with regards to the proportions in each division over the preceding years.

Classed Tripos examinations (Parts IA, IB and IIA)

Candidates are placed in order of merit according to the aggregate mark for written papers, coursework and project work.

The list of those awarded Honours is divided into classes I, II.1, II.2 and III. The baseline level is the **II.1**. A II.1 piece of work demonstrates good understanding of the material. The major aspects of the exercise are addressed but there may be minor omissions and some lack of depth or clarity. There is evidence of a critical and analytical approach, as well as knowledge and understanding of the underlying assumptions. Interconnections between different strands of the work are made clear.

A **first class** piece of work goes beyond the II.1 standard by demonstrating an excellent understanding of the source material and the ability to apply it analytically. Arguments follow a logical structure, material is organised and prioritised appropriately. All of the required information is provided and is presented clearly. There is a full and insightful discussion of the relevant issues.

A **II.2** piece of work falls below the II.1 standard. Most of the material is covered, but there are gaps in knowledge and understanding, leading to (i) incomplete or partially incorrect solutions and/or (ii) misinterpretation of data or material. There will be a more extensive lack of depth or clarity, but enough to demonstrate a reasonable understanding.

A **third class** piece of work demonstrates basic familiarity with the material, and enough to warrant contributing towards an undergraduate degree with honours. There will be significant gaps in knowledge and understanding. The analysis is incomplete and lacks clarity, and the work may contain inconsistencies. This standard, across the board, is not acceptable at Masters level.

It is expected that the proportions of classes awarded for the Engineering Tripos* will **approximately** follow the following percentages of the total number of candidates:

Class	Part IA	Part IB	Part IIA*	Part IIB (modules)
I	40%	40%	40%	40%
II.1	45%	45%	45%	45%
II.2 and below	15%	15%	15%	15%

* Because of the small cohort size the Faculty Board does not specify proportions for Part IIA Manufacturing Engineering, but expects examiners to have due regard for comparability with Engineering Part IIA.

For Part IIA Engineering the standard of a Distinction should be set at a high level and normally only the top 1 or 2% of candidates would be considered. Distinctions should be awarded to a continuous unbroken sequence of candidates at the top of the order of merit. The Part IIA Engineering class list is posted by engineering area. NB. Distinctions are not awarded for Part IIA Manufacturing Engineering.

Part IIB examinations

Part IIB Engineering and Manufacturing Engineering are not classed but candidates are awarded Honours, Honours with Merit, or Honours with Distinction depending on their performance.

Part IIB Engineering

In Part IIB Engineering, marks for the written papers are added to the normalised coursework marks (excluding the project) to produce an aggregate module mark for each candidate. The Examiners determine the award of grades based on this aggregate module mark, together with the separate grade for the project.

The pass criterion for the M.Eng degree requires candidates to achieve a II.2 standard or better in both their project and their modules. Candidates who achieve first-class standard in both their project and their modules will be awarded a Distinction. Candidates who have not obtained a Distinction, but who obtain at least a II.1 in both the project and the modules will be awarded a Merit. The Faculty Board have left the precise definition of first-class and upper and lower second-class to be determined by the Examiners. It is intended to be more difficult to achieve a distinction than a I, so it is expected that the proportion of distinctions will be marginally below 40%, and that of merits may be slightly more than 45%.

Part IIB Manufacturing Engineering

In Part IIB Manufacturing Engineering, separate orders of merit will be produced for examination credit (the aggregate mark of the two written papers and the module assessments), and coursework credit (the aggregate mark of the industrial assignments and robot lab). These results will be combined to form an aggregate order of merit.

Candidates who achieve a first-class standard in both examination and coursework credit will be awarded a Distinction. Candidates who have not obtained a Distinction but achieve at least a II.1 standard in both elements will be awarded a Merit. The pass standard for the award of the MEng degree will require at least a II.2 standard in both elements.

4. Overall Degree Classification

Engineering Tripos

The Examiners for Part IIA of the Engineering Tripos will determine an order of merit for the purposes of Overall Degree Classification based on a weighted sum of Part IB (30%) and Part IIA (70%) marks. The Examiners will then determine appropriate class boundaries following the Faculty Board's guidance on the proportion of students that should within each class and agree a class list.

In accordance with General Board guidance, Part IB (or equivalent) marks for candidates who have transferred into the Engineering Tripos will be provided to the Examiners to allow them to be placed within the Overall Degree Classification order of merit. Examiners will use the marks as provided and will not apply any form of weighting to these transferred marks. Such students will then be classed in the same way as the rest of the IIA Engineering cohort.

Manufacturing Engineering

The Examiners for Manufacturing Tripos Part IIA will calculate an Overall Degree Classification based 100% on performance in Part IIA. The Examiners will determine the classing boundaries which will normally be identical to those used for classing Part IIA

5. 'Pass' mark for Tripos examinations and alignment to AHEP 4 Learning Outcomes

Starting with Part IA examinations in 2022-23 academic year and Part IB examinations in 2023-24 academic year (with Parts IIA and IIB of the Tripos adopting the practice on a rolling annual basis) only students who meet the Engineering Council's compensation and condonement rules will be permitted to graduate with an MEng in a professionally accredited Engineering Area. These rules essentially require a nominal "pass" mark in every paper. Those not meeting this standard will be restricted to the non-accredited Engineering Science pathway in Part IIB for their MEng.

The "pass" mark is set annually by the relevant examiner(s) for each paper, using their expertise in determining the mark which will indicate that the desired AHEP 4 learning outcomes specified in the Department's AHEP 4 matrix for the module under examination have been met. Examiners must ensure that a mark at the pass level in an element is only awarded where they are satisfied that the relevant learning outcomes have been achieved.