



A Smith
By email

Reference: FOI-2021-655

13 September 2021

Dear Ms Smith,

Your request was received on 14 August 2021 and I am dealing with it under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act').

You asked:

[1] First, I would like to know why the cut off mark for a distinction at the MPhil level was raised from 70% to 75%. An official statement or minutes taken during the official meeting where this policy was decided would be much appreciated.

[2] Secondly, I would also like to know whether these grades are objective i.e. whether students with a score of 70 - 74 at Cambridge, are likely to receive the same numerical scores at other universities, where this grade range might be the equivalent of a distinction.

1. The Faculty has checked its records for the past ten years and established that 75% has been the requirement for a distinction throughout this period. From 2014-15 an additional category of high distinction was added for students who had achieved 85% or above. Grade boundaries on this programme have always been descriptive rather than numerical. In other words, a distinction is awarded against descriptors that are in the marking scheme. This scheme is published in the course handbook each year and does not vary for the duration of any particular cohort. If a piece of work was felt to be of distinction level, then a distinction mark was given. If it was a strong distinction, then a higher mark would be given to indicate this.

2. We do not hold recorded information to answer this question: each university has its own way of denoting whether a piece of work gets a distinction or not.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request an internal review of this decision, you should contact us quoting the reference number above. The University would normally expect to receive your request for an internal review

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within 40 working days of the date of this letter and reserves the right not to review a decision where there has been undue delay in raising a complaint. If you are not content with the outcome of your review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the University. The Information Commissioner may be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF (<https://ico.org.uk/>).

Yours sincerely,

Zoe Allwood