

Faculty of Science Guidelines

Guidelines Title	Marking and grading
Parent Policy/Procedure	Assessment in Coursework Units Policy Assessment in Coursework Units: Grading and Marking Procedures
Date Effective	
Review Date	
Guidelines Owner	Associate Dean (Education)
Category	Academic Quality and Standards
Version Number	1.0
Content Enquiries	sci-education@monash.edu
Scope	
Purpose	
GUIDELINES STATEMENT	

Marking of coursework

1. All failed coursework components should be verified by a second examiner.

Marking of seminars, oral presentations and defence

2. Assessment of oral presentations contributing 5% or more towards the final Honours mark should be determined by the average mark assigned by a school/department panel of at least two examiners. The examiners should be asked to consider the presentation according to specific criteria that should be advised to students in advance.

Marking of literature reviews, essays and major written assessment tasks other than the thesis

3. All written assessment tasks contributing 12% or more to the final Honours mark should be marked by at least two members of academic staff. The discrepancies between marks should be resolved according to the procedures referred to below, under "Reconciling mark discrepancies".

Marking of the research project thesis

4. The research project thesis must be marked in accordance with the Honours grade descriptors in the Appendix by at least two examiners, one of whom would normally be external to the immediate research group.
5. Supervisors should be ineligible to examine their students' research project theses. Exception to this rule must be approved by the Associate Dean (Education) on a student-by-student basis.
6. Supervisors, however, can contribute up to 20% towards the overall research project mark. In awarding this mark, the supervisor should be limited to assessing the research process and not the research product (i.e. the thesis itself). This is because examiners read a research thesis but do not see the work being done. Supervisors are the only ones who can comment on the project

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development and the quality of the students' research work (diligence, skill, degree of help from postgraduate students or postdocs in their lab, etc.)

Reconciling mark discrepancies

7. As noted above, all Honours research theses should be examined by at least two examiners, both of whom should return a recommended mark. Schools/departments should make known the procedures by which they reconcile marking disagreements. One possible model is suggested below (when two examiners are used):
 - If the difference between the two examiners' marks is less than 10% of the maximum mark available, the final mark will be the mean of the two marks.
 - If the difference is larger than 10% but less than 20%, the markers will seek to reduce the difference to less than 10% by discussing their reasons for awarding their marks and comparing their examiners' reports. If this succeeds, the mark awarded shall be the average of the two. If the procedure does not result in sufficient agreement, a third marker shall be appointed. Resolution of the final mark should occur through discussion between the third marker and the original markers.
 - If the difference is greater than 20%, then the Honours Coordinator will appoint a third marker. The three markers will then discuss their reasons for awarding their marks. As one outcome may be two similar marks and an outlier, it is important to allow for input from the outlying marker rather than taking a simple average or ignoring the outlier. This may entail:
 - examining the written comments for fairness and accuracy and/or
 - considering the experience and tendency of the markers for "hard" or "easy" marking at other times, and/or
 - using any other information (eg. from the supervisor) that may assist in determining the reason for the unacceptably large difference.

Submission of Honours results and grades

8. The recommendations for the results and grades for all individual assessable units for the Honours Program must be submitted to the Board of Examiners of the teaching faculty, in accordance with the university requirements for the release of results in each semester.
9. The recommendation for the final Honours mark and grade for each student must be submitted to the Faculty of Science Honours Board of Examiners, according to the timelines for the submission of results for the final semester of enrolment, unless the Associate Dean (Education) has approved an extension due to special consideration.
10. Marks that are not returned will be recorded as withheld (WH) until the end of the fourth week of the following semester, after which they will be amended to a fail result (0 N) if no further communication has been received from the school/department.

Overall Honours mark and grade

11. In addition to the results for the individual Honours component units, students receive an overall Honours mark and grade upon completion of the program. This overall mark and grade is recorded against a zero-point 'dummy unit' on each student's academic transcript.
12. The overall mark is normally determined by the points-weighted average of the marks for the component units, with a variation of up to two discretionary marks upon the recommendation of the relevant Chief Examiner. Typically, the discretionary marks might be equivalent to a slightly higher weighting to the mark for the project unit, in reflection of the overall objectives of the Science Honours Program. However, schools/departments may seek approval from the Faculty Honours Committee and Science Board of Studies to use an alternative formula for calculating the final Honours mark in terms of the marks for the component units, for example based on the objectives

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rather than the relative workload (credit points) involved. If this request is approved by the Faculty Honours Committee and Science Board of Studies, then all students to which they are applied must be notified of this formula prior to the commencement of any assessment tasks for their Honours Program.

13. The overall grade of Honours is determined by the overall mark awarded. Honours degrees are graded as first class, second class or third class, with the second class further divided into two sub-classes.
14. Such grades are referred to as:

<i>Class of Honours</i>	<i>Grade awarded</i>	<i>Range of overall mark achieved</i>
First Class Honours	H1	80+
Second Class Honours – Division I	H2A	70-79
Second Class Honours – Division II	H2B	60-69
Third Class Honours	H3	50-59

Repeating and failing Honours units

15. Honours candidates are not permitted to repeat any Honours component units for which they have received a fail mark and grade. Supplementary assessment is not available for any component unit of the Science Honours Program.
16. Students who do not pass all required component units for the Science Honours Program will not be awarded an Honours Degree or a degree with Honours, and will not receive an overall Honours mark and grade. In such cases all students will receive an academic statement of their results, and the following rules apply:
- Students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science Advanced – Global Challenges (Honours) will be awarded the Bachelor of Science
 - Students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science Advanced – Research (Honours)/ Bachelor of Science Advanced (Research)/ Bachelor of Science Advanced with Honours will be awarded the Bachelor of Science.
 - Students enrolled in the Bachelor of Environmental Science may complete further coursework units to be awarded a Bachelor of Environmental Science pass degree, or take an alternative exit award.
 - Students enrolled in the Bachelor of Biotechnology may complete further coursework units to be awarded a Bachelor of Biotechnology pass degree, or take an alternative exit award.

17. Appendix

H1 (80 – 100)

- 17.1. An H1 student (upper or lower) is obviously capable of undertaking postgraduate research and warrants strong scholarship support.
- 17.2. An 'upper H1' (90 - 100) student has strengths in all of the following areas:
- outstanding command of expression and logical argument in a skilfully structured manuscript;
 - superior evaluation and integration of existing literature;
 - evidence of significant insight and original thought in dealing with the critical issues;
 - sophisticated understanding of research methods, with evidence of careful attention to critical design issues in the execution of the project;
 - thoughtful and appropriate choice of data analysis (where appropriate) and outstanding presentation and reporting of results;
 - clear and coherent interpretation of the thesis data, and/or the results of other studies;
 - comprehensive understanding of the importance of the results in the context of the theoretical framework.

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- 17.3. A 'lower H1' (80 -90) student displays many of the above strengths but is less well-balanced in overall quality.

H2A (70 – 79)

- 17.4. An H2A student is capable of undertaking postgraduate research. The project is characterised by most of the following:
- the manuscript is well written, logically argued and generally well structured;
 - the evaluation and integration of the existing literature is very sound without being outstanding;
 - reasonable insight and some evidence of original thought in dealing with the critical issues
 - evidence of a solid understanding of research methods;
 - adequate design of the research project, although possibly containing minor but retrievable errors;
 - choice of data analysis that is appropriate for the design (although less well justified than might be expected of H1 standard), and clear presentation of results;
 - generally sound but pedestrian interpretation of results and their importance to the theoretical context.

H2B (60 – 69)

- 17.5. An H2B student may be capable of undertaking postgraduate research but would require close supervision. The project is characterised by most of the following:
- generally competently written, although some problems exist in the logical organisation of the text and the way it is expressed;
 - provides an adequate coverage of the literature, although it tends to be more descriptive than evaluative, and arguments are often disjointed;
 - occasional evidence of insight into the issues underlying the thesis or essay, but little evidence of original thinking;
 - basic but somewhat limited understanding of the research methods;
 - the design of the research project is generally adequate but is marred by some errors and oversights;
 - serviceable choice of data analysis, although other approaches may have been more appropriate;
 - the presentation of results lacks clarity;
 - interpretation of results or other studies is adequate but limited.

H3 (50 – 59)

- 17.6. Although a student's undergraduate performance merited eligibility for Honours, the student showed considerable difficulty in mastering the higher-order skills required at Honours level and would not be able to undertake postgraduate research. The project is characterised by most of the following:
- the work is not well written and shows flaws in the structuring of logical arguments;
 - coverage of the necessary literature is weak, with insufficient information provided to support the arguments made, or conclusions drawn, within the thesis or essay;
 - little evidence of insight and ideas tend to be highly derivative;
 - knowledge of research methods is deficient;
 - serious flaws exist in the design of the research project making it difficult for the research to meet its aims;
 - data analysis techniques are arbitrary or inappropriate;
 - the results are poorly presented;
 - interpretations are superficial, demonstrating a weak understanding of the results and their relevance to the theoretical framework.

Fail (0 – 50)

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- 17.7. Think carefully before awarding this grade - it casts doubt on the student's admission in the first place. The project is characterised by most of the following:
- the work is very poorly written and shows a serious inability to structure and present a logical argument;
 - coverage of the necessary literature is inadequate, with little information provided relevant to the claims made, or conclusions drawn, within the thesis;
 - serious misunderstanding of key concepts and issues;
 - knowledge of research methods is lacking;
 - serious flaws exist in the design of the research project making it difficult or impossible for the research to meet its aims;
 - data analysis techniques are inappropriate and the results are presented inadequately;
 - an inability to show how the results of the research project relate to the theoretical framework; serious misinterpretations of results.

Responsibility for implementation	Associate Dean (Education) Honours Coordinators
Status	New
Approval Body	Name: Meeting: Date: Agenda item:
Endorsement Body	Name: Meeting: Date: Agenda item:
Definitions	
Related Policies	
Related Documents	

**Faculty of Science Project Assessment Guidelines
Bachelor of Science (Honours) (S3701)**

Hons Mark	Hons Class	Grade	Comments
96-100	H1	HD	A truly outstanding thesis: <i>The student is one of the best that the university has seen and should be nominated for a medal within the University or/and with the relevant professional learned society.</i>
91-95	H1	HD	An outstanding thesis: Consistent evidence of substantial originality and critical insight in identifying, generating and communicating compelling arguments, perspectives or problem solving approaches; critically evaluates problems, their solutions and implications; integrates findings in the big picture of the research area with relevant theories and previous research. <i>No significant weaknesses.</i>
85-90	H1	HD	An excellent thesis: General features as for 91-95% above. <i>Only minor weaknesses that are offset by excellence in almost all other areas.</i>
80-84	H1	HD	A very good thesis: Frequent evidence of originality in defining and analysing issues or problems and in creating solutions; uses a level, style and means of communication appropriate to the discipline and the audience. <i>With excellence in a number of areas and only a few weaknesses.</i>
75-79	H2A	D	A good thesis: Evidence of originality in defining and analysing issues or problems and in creating solutions. <i>The thesis has a number of areas of strengths and some weaknesses, for example limited depth of discussion or insight into the significance of results.</i>
70-74	H2A	D	A better than competent & sound thesis: Substantial understanding of fundamental concepts of the field of study and ability to apply these concepts in a variety of contexts; develops or adapts convincing arguments and provides coherent justification; communicates information and ideas clearly and fluently in terms of the conventions of the discipline.
65-69	H2B	C	A sound, but competent thesis: Sound understanding and application of the fundamental concepts of the field of study; develops routine arguments or decisions and provides acceptable justification; communicates information and ideas adequately in terms of the conventions of the discipline.
60-64	H2B	C	A competent thesis: Adequate understanding and application of the fundamental concepts of the field of study; develops routine arguments or decisions and provides acceptable justification; communicates information and ideas adequately in terms of the conventions of the discipline.
50-59	H3	P	A competent thesis with minimum pass requirement. General features as for 60-64% above.
0-49	Fail	N	Demonstrates superficial or partial or faulty understanding of the fundamental concepts of the field of study and limited ability to apply these concepts; presents undeveloped or inappropriate or unsupported arguments; communicates information or ideas with lack of clarity and inconsistent adherence to the conventions of the discipline.