2012 Policy on Awarding of Honours

Summary

The honours award process is summarised as follows:

- Honours qualification: Students are selected for the honours stream at the start of their fourth year based on their results in their second and third year. Students in the honours stream enrol in the final year Honours Project course, while non-honours stream students enrol in the final year Design Project. Students in the non-honours stream are NOT eligible for honours, however those who do well in the first semester of their fourth year may apply to upgrade to the honours stream before the first day of the second semester of the project. For more information see Section 2.

- Honours classification: Students in the honours stream who have satisfied all the requirements for the award of a degree will have their degree classified as either Class I Honours, Class IIA Honours, Class IIB Honours or Pass (no honours). For more information see Section 3.

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1. Calculating Weighted Averages for Each Year Level

The honours calculation involves calculating a weighted average result for each year level of the course (not including Level 1). This consists of multiplying the result of each course by its unit weighting, adding this up for all the courses at a given level, and then dividing by the total number of units done at that level (usually 24).

For instance: 90% for 3 unit course and 60% for a 6 unit course gives a weighted average of

$$(90\% \times 3 \text{ units} + 60\% \times 6 \text{ units}) / (3 \text{ units} + 6 \text{ units}) = 70\%$$

Notes regarding weighted averages for each year:

- Year level classification: The year level at which a course is classified for the purposes of honours calculations is based on the level it is listed as in the Calendar for that program. Note for double or combined degree and articulation programs, the year level of a course is that for the corresponding single degree local student program. If the School allows a student to do a course which is not listed as a standard course in the Calendar, then it is at the School's discretion to allocate it an appropriate equivalent level for honours calculation.

- Courses which are counted: Only courses done at the University of Adelaide are considered in the honours calculation procedure. The exception to this are courses done through a twinning program.

- Effect of overloading on elective courses: In some year levels (particularly Level 4), students may elect to do more elective courses than the minimum required. This will result in those students having more than 24 units at that year level. In this case, the combination of electives yielding the highest average score for that level will be used. Compulsory (core) courses are always included in the honours calculation. Note that doing extra courses may not always improve one's honours result as the extra work involved can result in poorer marks in the remaining courses.

- Effect of repeating a course: Students who repeat a course (e.g. obtain a F, IF or WF in the first attempt), will be limited to a maximum mark of 50% for that course as far as the honours calculation is concerned. Thus for instance you may receive a distinction for the second attempt and this will be what appears on your academic transcript, however for honours calculation purposes it will be counted as 50.

- <u>Double or combined degrees</u>: For double or combined degree students, only the courses which form part of the corresponding single engineering degree program are taken into account for honours calculation. The year levels at which courses are counted are those of the corresponding single engineering degree. Otherwise the honours calculation procedure is similar to that for single degree students.

- <u>Exceptional variations to degree program</u>: Under exceptional circumstances, the Head of School may give permission for students to make variations to the standard degree program course structure. In such cases, how these changes are taken into account for the purposes of the honours calculation is at the discretion of the School.

- <u>Doing courses after finishing the degree requirements</u>: Once a student has completed sufficient courses to fulfil the academic requirements for their degree, they are unable to take further courses in later semesters in an attempt to improve their honours result.

- <u>Compulsory EAL course</u>: The 3 unit course *Engineering Communication* (*EAL*) is a compulsory course for international students but for honours calculation purposes only is considered to be an optional Level 3 course. Completing the *Engineering Communication* course can sometimes allow students to do 3 units less of fourth year electives. These students may choose to overload and do both the *Engineering Communication* (*EAL*) and the standard number of Level 4 electives. In this case, the student will be given the best honours result of the following two cases: Case 1, student allowed to have 3 units less than the standard number of units of Level 4 electives, and Case 2, student allowed to discard the *Engineering Communication* (*EAL*) result but must present the standard number of units of Level 4 electives.

2. Qualification for Honours

Level 4 students must be selected to enter the honours stream at the end of third year to be eligible for honours. For honours selection, they must achieve at least 60% calculated as a weighted average of their Level 2 and Level 3 results in the ratio 2:3. That is:

$$(2A_2 + 3A_3)/5 \geq 60\%$$

where

A_2 is the weighted average score obtained from all courses in the Calendar at Level 2,

A_3 is the weighted average for courses at Level 3.

In cases where students have not completed the standard 24 units at both Level 2 and 3 at the start of the project, then the above formula is adjusted to take into account the relative number of units taken at each level at the start of the project using a similar procedure to that shown in Section 3. Note however that students will not normally be allowed to start the project unless they have completed all of levels 1 and 2 and at least 18 units of level 3.

Students in the honours stream enrol in the final year Honours Project course, while non-honours stream students enrol in the final year Design Project. **Students in the non-honours stream are not eligible for honours no matter how well they perform**, however there is a means for students who are not selected for honours but who perform very well in the courses in their first semester of Level 4 to upgrade to the honours stream before the start of the second semester of their project. **It is the responsibility of the student to apply to upgrade. The upgrading process does not happen automatically.** In order to upgrade, it is necessary to meet all of the following conditions:

- have an overall honours average for courses already completed which is greater than 60%,

- have a weighted average for Level 4 courses already completed which is greater than 65%,

- have your project supervisor's agreement that it is feasible to assign you extra tasks that will allow your contribution to the final year project to be upgraded to Honours level, and

- your application must be received by the Honours Coordinator before the first day of the second semester of your project.

Note that being in the honours stream does not guarantee that a student will receive honours. The decision about the level of honours granted will be based on the honours average as indicated below.

The selection of students for the honours stream takes place when they start the final year project. The final year project is normally done in the last two semesters of their course to ensure that students have the best possible preparation for the technical work required.

3. Honours Classification

The honours classification is based on the honours average:

$$\text{Honours Average} = \frac{2 \times A_2 + 3 \times A_3 + 5 \times A_4}{10}$$

where

A_2 is the weighted average score obtained from all courses in the Calendar at Level 2,

A_3 is the weighted average for courses at Level 3, and

A_4 is the weighted average for courses at Level 4, comprising both core and optional courses.

The above formula is applied to students who have done the standard 24 units at each year level. The numbers of units at each year level may differ, for instance for articulation students or double/combined degree students.

For a student where the number of units at any year level is different from the standard 24 units, their weighted average for each year level is further weighted by the number of units they did at that year level. For example, if a student does 10 units of Level 2 courses, 14 units of Level 3 courses and 24 units of Level 4 courses then their honours average will be given by:

$$\text{Honours Average} = \frac{2 \times \dfrac{10\,\text{units}}{24\,\text{units}} \times A_2 + 3 \times \dfrac{14\,\text{units}}{24\,\text{units}} \times A_3 + 5 \times \dfrac{24\,\text{units}}{24\,\text{units}} \times A_4}{2 \times \dfrac{10\,\text{units}}{24\,\text{units}} + 3 \times \dfrac{14\,\text{units}}{24\,\text{units}} + 5 \times \dfrac{24\,\text{units}}{24\,\text{units}}}$$

The Board of Examiners will use the following table as a guide to decide on the honours classification for each student:

Honours Class	Honours Average
Class I	75% - 100%
Class IIA	70% - 75%
Class IIB	65% - 70%
Pass	$< 65\%$