

Guidance on Assessment for 100-300 level subjects

The Undergraduate Studies Committee 27th July 2000 Minutes stated “the objective of developing guidelines on assessment was to achieve consistency in undergraduate results distribution across the Faculty regardless of subject or department”. The methodology used was to collect the subject statistics for the previous three years and to identify the overall distribution and differences between departments. The guidelines were to provide a range of percentages for the award of fail and honours grades rather than an absolute figure and it was seen to be as a mechanism by which examiners could defend results that fell outside these ranges. The grade distributions were prepared by removing the top and bottom two percentages from the actual distributions across level 100/200/300 subjects.

At a further meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee 02/2001 it was argued that the failure rate for level 200 and 300 subjects should be less than level 100 with the provision for 0% fails at the higher level. The grade distribution guidelines below were approved at Faculty Executive 08/2001.

It would be expected that subjects with large enrolments will have grade distributions that conform quite closely to these historic averages. It is not the intention of these guidelines to suggest that a certain percentage of students must fail in a particular subject. Rather, the failure rates below have been the historical average failure rates.

Year level	%N	%P	%H3	%H2B	%H2A	%H1	Average mark
100	4-11	27-34	13-20	13-23	12-14	10-16	65.32
200	5-13	31-37	15-19	15-18	10-14	10-17	65.46
300	4-10	21-33	14-19	17-20	13-20	9-20	66.60

Notes:

- It is realistic to have a lower failure rate at level 200/300 than at level 100.
- Major differences between achieved grades and these historical grades should be explained to Heads of Departments.
- If in doubt, staff are to refer to their Head of Department for guidance.
- Classes with 15 or less students are exempted from the above.
- Where adjustments are to be made to raw scores, lecturers in charge should ensure that all students are treated equally.
- Whatever scaling method is used, the ranking of students should not be altered
- The intention is that where an adjustment is made to grades to more closely 'fit' the above distribution, it is the final mark that is to be adjusted, rather than the mark awarded in one or more components of the final grade.
- Scaling down that results in a student's grade being altered from a pass to a fail should be carefully considered.
- Where a subject has a 'hurdle' requirement (such as that to achieve an overall pass grade students must achieve 50% or more on the final exam), then
 1. where a student had failed the hurdle requirement but has a mark above 50%, the mark is scaled down to 48%
 2. to maintain rankings all marks of 49% are scaled down to 48%