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Award of Honours - Procedures

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[3.50.12 Bachelor Honours Degrees](#)

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All Staff

All Students

Document Web Links:

[PPL 3.10.05 Graduate Attributes](#)

[PPL 3.10.02 Assessment](#)

[General Award Rules](#)

Notes:

Document republished on 29 August 2012 with additional statement regarding inclusion of up to #4 of pass/fail coursework and grades for courses in postgraduate honours.

1. Purpose and Objectives

These procedures provide a University-wide framework for the structure and award of honours as part of the University's commitment to the assurance of teaching and learning quality.

2. Definitions, Terms, Acronyms

There are no entries for this document.

3. Procedures Scope/Coverage

These procedures apply to all staff and students at The University of Queensland.

4. Procedures Statement

As stated in [PPL 3.50.12a Award of Honours – Policy](#), the University recognises that honours can be awarded in two ways:

1. as postgraduate honours (on the basis of achievement in a year-long integrated intensive program with a significant research component, following the award of the pass degree); or
2. as on-course honours (on the basis of achievement across all or a subset of courses in the degree).

5. Purpose and structure of honours

5.1 Graduate Attributes

The University has adopted a set of [graduate attributes](#) reflecting the common purpose and intention of bachelor degrees with honours (postgraduate honours).

For on-course honours, the graduate attributes are those that have been specified for bachelor degrees, with the expectation that the on-course honours award indicates attainment of these attributes to a higher standard and/or greater depth than for students who graduate with a pass degree.

5.2 Entry into Honours

Standards for entry to honours programs will be consistent across comparable disciplines and within programs.

Entry into postgraduate honours is competitive and will be based on minimum grade point average (GPA) for an identified and published set of undergraduate courses.

In the case of on-course honours, where eligibility to enter an honours stream is determined mid-program, the criteria for eligibility to enter the honours stream must be published. No entry standard need be defined where honours is determined based solely upon performance over all or a sub-set of courses in the bachelor program.

5.3 Program Structure

Postgraduate honours will comprise #16 from a published list. A grade and, where appropriate, a percentage mark will be calculated for all courses contributing to postgraduate honours. Postgraduate honours programs may include up to four units (#4) of pass/fail

coursework. No credit for other study may be approved towards postgraduate honours. The duration of postgraduate honours will be one year full time or a maximum of two years part time. The time limit for postgraduate honours is consistent with the expectation that part of the program comprises a significant piece of original research which is undertaken in intensive mode. Interruption of a maximum of 1 year may be granted by the Associate Dean (Academic) in exceptional circumstances.

The structure of on-course honours will reflect either the bachelor degree or, in the cases where an honours stream is defined in the program rules, the bachelor degree modified to include specialised honours courses. The program rules may specify a minimum of #16 from a published list of courses that must be completed to be eligible for the award of honours.

In both postgraduate and on-course honours, to be considered for the award of honours students will be required to complete a substantial piece of research and/or research preparation that amounts to not less than the equivalent of #4. Research or research preparation may be in a whole course or courses or from parts of several courses, provided that the research-related content can be readily identified. It may include research methodology training, creative work or scholarly inquiry as appropriate for the discipline.

In submissions to the Committee for Academic Programs Policy (CAPP) to establish or modify honours requirements for their program rules, faculties are required to identify the #4 that provide research or research preparation in the courses that contribute to honours.

5.4 Award of Honours

In accordance with the [General Award Rules](#), an honours degree may be awarded in a field of study or subject area approved by the executive dean in one of these classes - honours class I; honours class II (A or B); honours class III.

In accordance with the statement on criterion-referenced assessment in [PPL 3.10.02b Assessment – Procedures](#), each class of honours must be associated with an appropriate set of criteria and standards. Where there are identical programs in on-course and postgraduate honours, the same method of awarding classes of honours should be used.

In postgraduate honours:

- a maximum of #2 may be repeated
- a #2 course failed may be substituted by another course in the program course list
- up to #4 of pass/fail coursework may be included
- the class of honours is calculated on the first #16 studied, that is, excluding substituted courses

In both modes the result achieved in the first attempt at a course will be the result that is used for calculation of the class of honours, including where supplementary assessment has been undertaken (for example result 2S4 means grade of 2 will be used for calculation of honours classification, grade of 4 used for purposes of completion of honours requirements).

Where a major component of postgraduate honours is one course (e.g. an #8 thesis) the weighted percentage for all graded courses contributing to honours should normally be used

to calculate the class of honours to provide a more accurate representation of overall level of achievement. Where the program is comprised of multiple low-unit value courses, the weighted GPA may be appropriate.

The standard percentage cutoffs for postgraduate honours are shown below. Where specific program requirements make cut-offs in these procedures impracticable, a case can be made to CAPP for a change to be made.

Weighted Percentage %	Class of Honours
80.00 and above	Class I
70.00 - 79.99	Class IIA
60.00 - 69.99	Class IIB
50.00 - 59.99	Class III
<50%	Fail

For on-course honours the weighted GPA should normally be used to calculate the class of honours. Standard cutoffs are recommended as follows:

GPA	Class of Honours
6.000 – 7.000	Class I
5.500 – 5.999	Class IIA
5.000 – 5.499	Class IIB

For all honours programs, the methods for determining the class of honours, including the associated descriptors (criteria and standards) and cutoffs for each class of honours must be publicly available via display on the [Courses and Programs website](#).

Transition arrangements are in place for students affected by the revised cut-offs. Transition arrangements are:

- for the revised cut-offs, calculate a student's class of honours using the cut-offs at the time of admission and according to the new cut-offs, and give the student the most favourable outcome. It is intended that no student will be disadvantaged under the revised cut-off arrangements.

The [Courses and Programs Database](#) contains the authoritative information on all University of Queensland award programs. Accordingly, the [Courses and Programs Database](#) holds detailed information about any specific qualifications and/or other requirements necessary to gain entry to honours programs and the list of the courses contributing to the award of honours.
