



Centre for Quality Assurance

University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Ganggodawila, Nugegoda

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Location

Vice Chancellor's Lodge

Progress Report for Senate

(From 2nd half of October, 2020 to 1st half of November, 2020)

1. Determination of cut-off points for award of grades: The Sub-Committee Report of QAC, UGC on Standard Setting in Student Assessments

The above report of Quality Assurance Council (QAC) was presented at the Quality Assurance Meeting of USJ held on 27.08.2020 and was decided to share among the quality assurance coordinators of faculties to obtain the views and recommendations of respective faculties. This document is provided in Annex I.

The responses were received from all faculties of study (except of Faculty of Medical Sciences) and External Degrees and Extension Courses Unit. These responses are summarized and presented in the following table. This response report of USJ was submitted to the Director, QAC for further discussion.

Faculty	Response
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Option 1 is better as it is almost the same as the existing cut off mark ranges, we use in the Faculty
Faculty of Applied Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The GPA points seem to be fine. However, why A is given at 70. It is suggested to increase the mark given for A. Colombo University Science Faculty gives A at 80. When our students go abroad, they face lots of consequences as in these universities A grade is given at 85. So, when students apply for higher studies our degree is devalued.
Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">If the mark range for A and A- can be arranged as 75-84 and 66-74 respectively (Or any other manner), would be more consistent. At present the range for A is 15 whereas it is only 5 marks for A-.
Faculty of Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Suggest to have a separate GPA for Grade A as we need to reward the students that have obtained Grade A+ since they have obtained more than 85 marks (for instance, A+ = 4.00 and A= 3.70)."The following formula of the document is suggested to change as mentioned below. Cut off scores for A (minimum score for A grade), C (minimum score for C grade) and A+ are to be decided by the Board of Examiners. For this one can use this formula: $y = y_C + \frac{(y_A - y_C)(GPV - 2)}{2}$



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Faculty of Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of C-, D+, D, and E seems to have few additional benefits which were not available to the students previously. However, these grades are not available in our senate approved rules and regulations. <p>The Board of examiners can select the minimum (yD) and maximum (yA)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allowing the change of pass mark from 40 would need further discussion at both the department and faculty level. However, it must be confirmed if an engineering student needs to score more than 40 marks (which reflects the achievement of minimum knowledge/skill level) for accreditation and recognition purposes. 2. This recommendation may prevent the fine-tuning of marks to obtain bell-shaped mark distribution. It is not clear whether this is a step to force to get always a bell-shaped mark distribution and this will affect the students who are taking courses such as elective courses (students might be performing well interest let motivation) where the mark distribution may not always follow bell-shaped mark distribution. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it can be increased the mark allocation for CA (Continuous Assessments) component (and less for semester end exams) in the future, it may be useful to consider the adaptation of the recommended grading criteria. Thus, it is suggested to have more discussions to come up with a conclusion for points 3 and 4 and still prefer some freedom to the department to change grades. • As we already maintain the quality of semester-end exams by choosing outside peers as moderators and sometimes 2nd examiners, having an external examiner could be unnecessary pressure on the examination process since we have guidelines for the board of examiners which follows the university practices. • Including C- grade with limitations of the number of c- allowed, could be useful to avoid having a large number of students getting batch missed since c- is also given 1.7 GPA value.
Faculty of Allied Health Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with the applicability of the formula
External Degrees and Extension Courses Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seems that there is no consistency in grading. The difference between 1.3 and 1.7 is 0.4 but the difference between 2.00 and 2.03 is 0.3. Also, the A and A+ get same GPA value, which is not fair.



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2. Workshops conducted:

The Director/CQA, Senior Professor Samantha Senaratne conducted an Online Workshop on "Quality Assurance in Higher Education" on 06.11.2020, for the Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education(CTHE) participants, who are mainly the Probationary Assistant Lecturers and Senior Lecturers of the university system.

3. Evaluated Study Programs:

CQA evaluated the proposals of following study programs, before submitting for the approval of the QAC of UGC.

Diploma		
12.11.2020	Diploma in Polymer Processing Technology and Process Analysis (First Review)	Level 03
	Diploma in Cosmetic Technology (First Review)	
Bachelors Honours Degree		
21.10.2020	Bachelor of Arts Honours in Financial Economics (Second Review)	Level 06
22.10.2020	Bachelor of Arts Honours in Philosophy (Final Review after receiving the UGC comments)	
	Bachelor of Arts Honours in Psychology (Final Review after receiving the UGC comments)	
Doctoral Degree		
21.10.2020	Doctor of Business Administration (First Review)	Level 12
02.11.2020	Doctor of Business Administration (Final Review before submitting to the UGC)	

Senior Professor Samantha Senaratne
Director,
Centre for Quality Assurance
18.11.2020



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Annex I

Sub-committee Report to the QAC of the UGC on Standard Setting in Student Assessments (Original title: Determination of cut-off points for award of grades)

The Director /QAC/UGC tabled a paper at the 105th UGC Standing Committee on Quality Assurance held on 14 July 2020, based on the memo submitted by Dr. A.M Razmy of the Department of Mathematical Sciences of the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka on a "Scheme of Grading". Referring to the memo, the Director/QAC pointed out that that the UGC Circular 901 of 25th November 2008 recommends adoption of uniform guidelines for Grade Point Values and Grade Point Averages for Classes as follows.

(a) Grades and Grade Point Values

Degree Programme	Grades and Grade Point Values											
	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	E
All Degrees	4.00	4.00	3.70	3.30	3.00	2.70	2.30	2.00	1.70	1.30	1.00	0.00

(b) Cut-off levels of GPA for awarding Classes/Passes

Degree Programme	Grade Point Average (GPA) for Awarding Classes/Passes			
	First	Second Upper	Second Lower	Pass
All Degrees	3.70	3.30	3.00	2.00

However, the Director/QAC raised concern that although the above recommendations for determination of Grade Point Values and the cutoff GPA levels for the award of classes and passes has been adopted by all universities in the intervening period, there was no guidance on determination of the range of marks to be used for award of each grade in the Circular No 901 or in any other UGC circular.

Following a discussion, the Standing Committee appointed a subcommittee comprising Dr. Upali Mampitiya of the Open University of Sri Lanka, Dr. A.M. Razmy of the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, Mr. V. Sivahar of the University of Moratuwa and Prof Ranjith Pallegama of the University of Peradeniya to make recommendation to the QA Standing Committee on the matter.

The members of the committee have held an online meeting at 7.00pm on 23rd July 2020 and had a lengthy discussion. In addition, the committee members have exchanged ideas over email and phone. As a result of the continued discussion, the Director/QAC later on 26th July 2020 invited the committee to widen the scope and produce guidelines on standard setting in student assessments.

The sub-committee recommended the following to the 106th UGC Standing Committee on Quality Assurance held on 25 August 2020 for its perusal.



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A. Recommendation in relation to grading

- The following simplified formula proposed by Dr. Mampitiya (adopted from the formula proposed by Dr. Razmy) is useful to arrive at cut off points for different grades of a course unit and can be used across the entire system of higher education. This formula can be applied to both undergraduate and postgraduate course units (taught programs). This formula makes the assumption that the minimum percentage of marks (y) required to obtain a particular grade is linearly related to the respective Grade Point Value (GPV) assigned for that grade (except A+) as per the UGC Circular 901.

$$y = y_D + \frac{(y_A - y_D)(GPV - 1)}{3}$$

- Cut off scores for y_A (minimum score for A grade), y_D (minimum score for D grade) and A+ are to be decided by the Board of Examiners
- The minimum mark range derived by the formula (y) can be rounded by the Board of Examiners based on the following options
 - The range can either be rounded up or rounded down as illustrated in the worked example in Table 1, OR
 - by any other method acceptable to the Board of Examiners, such as by rounding to the closest major gap (to the border of a cluster) in the ordered marks. (E.g.: if the calculated y is 63.8 for C+, and
 - if ordered marks are69, 65, 64,64, 63, 63, 60, 59, then the cut off can be considered as 63, as a significant gap is found below 63
 - if the ordered marks are 66, 65, 64,64, 63, 63, 62, 62 ,60, 59,..... then the cut off is 64 as a distinct cluster cannot be found.)

Table 1: The worked example to illustrate the formula:

If $y_A = 70$ and $y_D = 25$:

UGC Circular 901		The proposed formula	Minimum mark and mark ranges based on $y_A = 70$ and $y_D = 25$		
Grade	GPV	Formula for Minimum Mark	Minimum Mark Required by the formula	Option 1: Mark range for the grade (#)	Option 2: Mark range for the grade (S)
A+	4.00	$y_{A+}^{(1)}$	85 (*)	85 - 100	85 - 100
A	4.00	y_A	70 (*)	70 - 84	70 - 84
A-	3.70	$y_D + \frac{2.7(y_A - y_D)}{3}$	65.5	66 - 69	65 - 69
B+	3.30	$y_D + \frac{2.3(y_A - y_D)}{3}$	59.5	60 - 65	59 - 64
B	3.00	$y_D + \frac{2(y_A - y_D)}{3}$	55	55 - 59	55 - 58
B-	2.70	$y_D + \frac{1.7(y_A - y_D)}{3}$	50.5	51 - 54	50 - 54
C+	2.30	$y_D + \frac{1.3(y_A - y_D)}{3}$	44.5	45 - 50	44 - 49
C	2.00	$y_D + \frac{(y_A - y_D)}{3}$	40	40 - 44	40 - 43
C-	1.70	$y_D + \frac{0.7(y_A - y_D)}{3}$	35.5	36 - 39	35 - 39
D+	1.30	$y_D + \frac{0.3(y_A - y_D)}{3}$	29.5	30 - 35	29 - 34
D	1.00	y_D	25 (*)	25 - 29	25 - 28
E	0.00	$< y_D$	-	00 - 24	00 - 24



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Notes:

** , Minimum mark for the grade A+, A, and D to be decided by the Board of Examiners*

, Option 1: the minimum mark given by the formula is rounded up.

§ , Option 2: the minimum mark given by the formula is rounded down

A. Recommendations in relation to the Composition of the Board of Examiners:

(<https://www.dundee.ac.uk/media/dundeewebsite/qualityframework/documents/Exam%20Board%20Guidance-final%20draft.pdf>)

a) The composition of the Board of Examiners.

- I. Chairperson: shall preferably be the Dean of the Faculty or Director of the Institute. In the absence of the aforesaid persons, a senior internal academic staff member shall be appointed by the Dean/Director from among the appointed examiners to chair the board of examiners.
- II. All examiners appointed by the Senate/Council as nominated by the Faculty Board for a respective course/module
- III. The External Examiner appointed by the Senate/Council as nominated by the Faculty Board
- IV. At the time of any given sitting, there shall be at least one appointed examiner (preferably the Chief Examiner of the course/module) to represent every course/module that is being considered by the Board of Examiners in that sitting.

b) The Board of Examiners shall have a secretary, preferably the SAR/AR of the Faculty/Institute and may obtain clerical assistance

c) The Board shall be convened by the Secretary