

Honours Programs in New Generation Degrees

A. Structural and administrative arrangements

Following wide consultation, the University's Academic Board has approved the implementation of the following twelve general principles governing Honours in New Generation bachelor degrees, developed to provide consistency across the University:

1. The decision to propose an Honours program in a field of study should be made by the department or school offering the field of study and should have the support of the faculty in which the department or school is located. Where several departments or schools collaborate to offer an Honours program, support should be obtained from all relevant departments and schools and the faculties in which they are located.
2. If a decision is made to offer Honours in a field of study for which an NGD major serves as a qualifying pre-requisite, then Honours should be offered in the field of study in all of the NGDs in which the qualifying major is offered.
3. Students should complete the Honours program in the NGD in which they complete the qualifying major.
4. If Honours is offered in a field of study in more than one NGD, the selection criteria and program requirements should be the same in each of the NGDs in which the program is offered.
5. Lateral transfer into Honours programs should be permitted, and should be based on the same criteria as entry from the NGD. It is not necessary that students have completed a Bachelors program in a degree with nomenclature identical to that of the NGD, but the admitting custodial faculty, acting on the advice of the NGD's Course Standing Committee, needs to be satisfied that it is appropriate to grant 300 points of credit.
6. It is recommended that, where required, academic ranking of candidates for selection into Honours be based on the Standard Grade Point Average (SGPA), though it is recognised that a threshold average (e.g., of 70% or 75%) in certain pre-requisite subjects (e.g., all subjects in the discipline of study, or in the identified major) may also be set. It is also noted that where selection into Honours requires completion of a major, then all subjects comprising the major will contribute to the SGPA.
7. It is recommended that the minimum requirement for entry into an Honours program be an SGPA of 65%, though disciplines may set a higher minimum requirement.
8. Entry into an Honours program is subject to the capacity of the department(s) or schools(s) offering the program to provide adequate supervision, as set out in the policy on Coursework Thesis Enrolment, Supervision and Examination.
9. Although the structure of Honours programs may vary by field of study, all programs should have a research project component of between 25 and 75 points inclusive.
10. All Honours programs should provide the necessary preparation, where relevant, in research ethics, codes of conduct for research, and research methods. All programs should also offer advanced coursework in the field of study at fourth year level.
11. Where both Honours and research-track Masters coursework degrees are offered in a field of study, prospective students in each program should be made aware in advance of any opportunities and processes for transfer between programs.
12. The teaching period for the honours research project subject should be accurately specified.

B. Selection and quality assurance arrangements

The Board has also approved the following seven selection and quality assurance arrangements for New Generation Honours programs:

1. A Selection Committee for each Degree with Honours should be appointed by the relevant custodial Dean for each intake period.
2. The Selection Committee chair should normally be an Associate Dean and has final sign-off responsibility for honours offers.
3. Each honours discipline in a Degree with Honours should have at least three representatives on the Selection Committee, a majority of whom should be academic staff. These discipline representatives have primary responsibility for selection of Honours entrants in that discipline. Each application should be assessed by at least two people, at least one of whom must be an academic staff member. In any case where a consensus is not possible, the final decision is referred to the Selection Committee chair.
4. Records should be kept of selection meetings, including attendance, a summary of outcomes, and information that may be of assistance to selection committees in subsequent rounds. Where applications are processed serially rather than at committee meetings, decisions made, the reasons for the decision, and who made the decision, must be recorded. For the purposes of review, these documents must be kept in a suitable form.
5. Entry to honours is not guaranteed, is competitive on academic merit within each discipline, and is subject to quotas that may be applied for that discipline and to availability of supervisors and resources. The admission standards may vary across disciplines for these reasons. The Selection Committee Chair is responsible for ensuring that such variations in admission standards are reasonable and that no student below prescribed minimum standards for the Degree with Honours receives an offer, except with the permission of the President of the Academic Board.
6. Unsuccessful applicants for honours who query their rejection and are not satisfied with feedback from the Faculty should be directed to the Selection Appeals Officer for the University, and in the event of continuing concerns, advised to appeal to the Academic Board.
7. Advice to unsuccessful applicants should be carefully worded. Inaccurate or misleading feedback can provoke appeals even when the selection process has been appropriate.

Approved by Academic Board 1/7/10