

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

Meeting on Grading

8 March 2006

Present: Professor Rick Bigwood, Dr Doug Carrie, Professor Gregor Coster, Professor Raewyn Dalziel, Ms Nuala Gregory, Associate Professor Corinne Locke, Professor John Morrow, Professor David Ryan, Professor Lorraine Stefani

Apologies: Mr Graeme Aitken, Associate Professor Jennifer Weller

Purpose of meeting: To consider the recommendation (November 2005) from the Working Party on Grading

- (i) that a policy statement on the assignment of classes of honours 'include a clear definition of what students need to achieve in order to gain a First Class Honours Degree' and that other degree classifications follow from that definition
- (ii) that grades for each course be translated into a GPA
- (iii) that all grades be included to 'produce an overall GPA'
- (iv) that assignment of classes of Honours be based on standardised overall GPAs.

To consider also the standard required to gain distinction and merit in post-graduate qualifications that are eligible for these awards.

Scope: Only post-graduate qualifications are in scope; i.e. one-year Bachelors (Hons) degrees; Post-graduate Diplomas, Masters degrees.

Recommendations:

- (i) That Honours for Bachelors (Hons) postgraduate degrees and Masters degrees be awarded consistently across the University on the following basis
 - First Class Honours: GPA of 7.0 or above
 - Second Class Honours (first division): GPA of 5.5 - 6.9
 - Second Class Honours (second division): GPA of 4.0 – 5.4.
- (ii) Distinction and Merit for Post-graduate Diplomas and other qualifications eligible for the award of Distinction or Merit be awarded consistently across the University on the following basis
 - Distinction: GPA of 7.0 or above
 - Merit: GPA of 5.5 – 6.9.
- (iii) That rounding be permitted to one decimal place in determining the overall GPA of a qualification (e.g. 5.46 may be rounded to 5.5; 5.75 may not be rounded to 6.0).
- (iv) That Departments and Schools use either the generic set of descriptors to describe grades awarded at the post-graduate level (see memo DVC(A) to Deans, 16 December 2005) or develop descriptors which clearly indicate what is expected to achieve a particular class of Honours, Distinction or Merit.

Explanation: Following the report of the Working Party on Grading, the meeting considered that

- there should be consistency across the University 'in signalling the most significant outcome of an honours programme, that is, the class of honours with which the degree is awarded'
- it should be transparent to students how honours are awarded
- there should be consistency in the academic achievement required for honours to be fair to students pursuing different degree programmes in applying for scholarships
- the system of awards should be simple and easy to determine.