



Academic Policy

Policy on Honours Degrees and their Classification

Policy on honours degrees

Approved on: 4th November 2010
Approved by: Academic Board
Contact person: Registrar

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out the guidelines regarding awarding Honours degrees. The Maldives National Qualifications Framework (MNQF) permits the awarding of Honours degrees for those qualifications which have at least 480 credit points.

There are several important reasons to complete an Honours degree at undergraduate level. Many employers are known to favour Honours graduates and are remunerated preferentially both in terms of benefits and career progression. General undergraduate classes introduce a student to a wide range of topics and problems in a discipline, and an Honours project enables the graduate to explore an area of personal interest in greater depth. From the employers' perspective, an Honours qualification demonstrates a higher cognitive, and other skills including working with supervisors, meeting deadlines, investigating independently, and writing coherently. For these reasons, in many disciplines, a good Honours degree provides a direct path to doctorate studies in some universities.

Sometimes, the requirement to complete a bachelor degree in three years restricts reasonable exploration of the issues in the major area of study. Where the nominal course length is four years, the assessment for Honours is usually carried out automatically; a higher classification of the degree Honours higher educational achievement. Having completed an Honours degree, only one year of studies would remain for the student to achieve a master degree.

As implied above, there are normally two paths for completing Honours degrees. Students in some four-year degrees courses (e.g., Bachelor of Laws) who take relevant subjects will be automatically assessed for Honours, without needing to complete an additional year of study. In this case, the Honours studies are integrated into the four-year bachelor degree curriculum.

The second path, as stipulated by MNQF, is to complete one additional year of study following successful completion of a three-year undergraduate degree. In this case, the student is required to complete at least 120 credit points especially in relation to work of a research nature.

2. Definitions

Honours Degree An Honours degree is a bachelor's degree which requires advanced study either as part of a one-year course following a three-year degree or by completing a research component and/or other additional requirements in the final year of a four-year degree.

End-on Honours Degree

An Honours degree that constitutes a discrete 120-credit degree following a Bachelor Degree.

Integrated Honours Degree

A Bachelor Degree with Honours is a 480-credit degree that requires a particular level of achievement.

3. Four-Year Integrated Honours Degrees

Four year integrated Honours degrees are offered to students of outstanding merit.

- (a) For a four-year degree course to qualify as an Honours degree, it may include provision for training in research methods and ethics. This may or may not be in the form of a separate subject.
- (b) Classification of four-year Honours degrees will be as follows:

First Class Honours:	GPA 3.500 to 4.000
Second Class, Division 1	GPA 3.000 to 3.499
Second Class, Division 2	GPA 2.500 to 2.999
Third Class	GPA 2.000 to 2.499
Ordinary Degree (no Honours)	Less than GPA 1.999

4. End-on Honours Degrees

End-on Honours degrees are Honour degrees completed after a 3-year bachelor degree.

- (a) Each Faculty/Centre is expected to produce a separate comprehensive Honours Booklet containing information on the following: content and structure of course; selection and admission requirements; assessment, examination and grading processes, including appeals procedures; time penalties; and

supervision. Further information, such as a guide to thesis writing, staff research interests may also be included.

- (b) To be admitted to the Honours year, students must have a CGPA of at least 2.000 or may be required to sit Honours qualifier assessments administered by the Faculty/Centre.
- (c) To qualify for the Honours degree, the student must complete a research project, the dissertation of which is between 10,000 to 12,000 words, in an approved field of study under supervision. If there is a fear that the MNQF standards of Level 8 are not met by the project, then the project should be supplemented by additional studies taken to cover the criteria of the relevant Level.
- (d) All Faculties/Centres should require honours students to give an oral presentation on research related to their honours dissertation to the staff and/or students in the discipline.
- (e) The dissertation must be examined by at least two persons who shall be required to write a report on the dissertation. There shall be criteria developed to guide the examination and how the marks would be moderated in the cases where the two examiners give disparate marks.

- (f) The dissertation shall be marked as follows:

First Class Honours:	85% and above
Second Class Division 1:	75% to 84%
Second Class Division 2:	65% to 74%
Third Class:	50% to 64%

- (g) A copy of the dissertation must be deposited in the Central Library after corrections have been made.

6. Effective Date

This policy will become effective on 1st December 2010