

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

AC09/294

Guidelines for Grade Distributions

Information for students enrolled in papers offered by the College of Business

1. Rationale for these guidelines

The main reason for having guidelines and a system for approval of exam results by College Examinations Committees is equity. Students are in competition with each other in many respects: especially for jobs, but also for scholarships (for the top few percent of students) and for selection for courses with limited entry. The College must ensure students do not gain from or be penalised by their choice of papers, or differing practices within the College.

Students are therefore advised that all grades received as part of the assessment for a paper will be subject to moderation by the Chief Examiner (Head of School), and may be adjusted in accordance with the guidelines for the distribution of final grades approved by the College Board.

2. Management of Final Grades:

- **Marks are not scaled. However, the College does not recognise a fixed relationship between marks and grades.**
- First, the minimum for a C grade is set, normally at 50%. Then the minimum marks for grades above C are selected to give a distribution of grades that recognises different levels of student achievement, and that conforms to College guidelines.
- The guidelines which have been approved by the College Board are as follows:

	100-Level	200-Level	300-Level
Calculation Basis	Percentage of Passes	Percentage of Passes	Percentage of Passes
A grades	5 – 20%	5 – 25%	5 – 30%
B grades	30 – 50%	30 – 50%	30 – 50%

It is reasonable for the proportion of passing students who are awarded A- or higher grades to increase at higher levels, and the proportion who are awarded C or C+ grades to decrease. Consequently the guidelines allow for upward movement in the ranges at later years of a programme.

Note also that there are no guidelines with respect to the percentage of passes (out of total enrolments) expected. Papers with 100% pass rates are acceptable to the College Examinations Committees.

3. Departures from the Guidelines

Sometimes, especially in papers with small enrolments (less than 20 students), the students in one semester may form a particularly good class, or a particularly weak class, and examiners may recommend distributions outside the guidelines. College Examinations Committees have no desire to penalise students in a good class or favour students in a weak class by forcing the grade distribution within the guidelines. Grade distributions outside the guidelines will be accepted if the Paper Coordinator provides evidence for an unusual class, either via comparison with the same paper in previous semesters, or from the past records of the students in the class.