Grade Guidelines for Honours Project

Grades should be assigned in consideration of the following:

1. **Quality**: design, writing, appropriateness of data analysis and conclusions; sophistication of discussion
2. **Responsibility**: design of project, conducting project, developing explanations for results, responsivity to feedback
3. **Presentation**: understanding and integration of all aspects of the project; depth of thinking in response to questions

Grades will be assigned by the examining committee and submitted to the honours coordinator. Generally, the committee will determine whether the student meets the criteria for an A grade, and then adjust up or down per the grading criteria.

**A+ Grade**

All the qualities of an A grade (as denoted below) and in addition the following:

**Quality**
- The study design was creative and novel
- The writing of the thesis is elegant and nears the quality required for submission to a peer review journal (although the thesis may not be publishable for other reasons, and significant results are not a requirement for the A+ grade)
- The student demonstrated a sophisticated grasp of the significance and limitations of the study
- The student had refined explanations for the results of the study and outlined important implications of the work
- The student demonstrated ingenuity in their approach to the project

**Responsibility**
- The student required relatively little supervisory oversight, and used feedback to improve beyond supervisory suggestions
- The student demonstrated initiative to complete additional analyses, reading, or developed explanations that went beyond supervisor suggestions

**Presentation**
- The student demonstrated a sophisticated grasp of the study including methods, analyses, and theoretical/empirical issues
- The student could discuss new ideas and respond to questions that resulted in thinking about the research in new ways

**A Grade**

**Quality**
- Design of the project and analyses were appropriate and theoretically grounded
- Writing was clear, organized, parsimonious; with some revision, the thesis could be made ready for submission to a peer review journal
• The thesis demonstrated a strong understanding of methods, theoretical and empirical issues, and study significance

**Responsibility**

• The student assumed primary responsibility for developing hypotheses, conducting analyses, and interpreting findings. The student may or may not have collected the data
• The student wrote the honours thesis with appropriate feedback from the supervisor
• The student responded appropriately to supervisor feedback
• The student was industrious and conscientious in their approach to the project

**Presentation**

• The student demonstrated a good understanding of the methods employed, the theoretical and empirical issues involved, and the significance of the study, although there may have been some gaps in their knowledge or understanding

**A-** Quality of the project was high, but was limited in one or more significant ways. The student appreciated empirical and theoretical issues, but did not meet the standards of the A grade in terms of quality, responsibility, or presentation.

**B+** The quality of the honours project was reasonable, but had several significant limitations. The paper was not organized or parsimonious and the student did not demonstrate a good grasp of the relevant theoretical or empirical issues. There may have been a reasonable effort by the student, but the student did not take initiative nor develop the project beyond supervisory suggestions.

**B** The honours project was notably weak in one or more respects. The analyses, written report, or the oral presentation and defence reflected deficiencies in grasping basic theoretical and empirical issues.

**B-** The project reflects a poor grasp of the theoretical rationale, analyses, and interpretation. The written project may have required extensive feedback from the supervisor with minimal evidence of improvement on the part of the student. The student failed to demonstrate an understanding of the relevant empirical and theoretical issues. Although the project is acceptable for course credit, it does not meet the standards of the higher grades.