



MEMO

ATTENTION Senate	TEL
FROM Zareen Naqvi, Director, Institutional Research and Planning (IRP)	
RE IRP Reports for Information	
DATE August 20, 2019	TIME

At a meeting of Senate held on March 7, 2011, Senator Paul Percival requested that relevant IRP reports, such as the annual Grades Report, be brought to Senate for information.

Attached are two reports for information:

- 2018/19 Grades Report:** This report is prepared once a year and it summarizes student course grades at the University over a ten year period. The 2018/19 Grades Report covers the period from 2009/10 to 2018/19. Attached is the Summary Report. More detailed information is available on IRP's website: <http://www.sfu.ca/irp/students/grades-report.html>
- 2018 Undergraduate Student Survey (UGSS) Report:** The UGSS survey is conducted every fall term. The attached Highlights Report presents a summary of key findings from the Fall 2018 survey. Topics covered are selected in consultation with Faculties, Student Services and other administrative units of the University. The topics included: course availability, credential completion time, teaching and curriculum, services, and university culture and environment. The full report is located at: <http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/irp/surveys/ugss/ugss2018.pdf>

If you have trouble accessing files on IRP's website, please contact [askIRP@sfu.ca](mailto:askIRP@sfu.ca).

Enclosure



**Simon Fraser University**  
Institutional Research and Planning

**2018/19 Grades Report:**  
**Historical Distribution of**  
**Undergraduate and Graduate Course Grades**  
**2009/10 to 2018/19**

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## I – Introduction

This report summarizes student course grades at Simon Fraser University over the ten year period from 2009/10 to 2018/19<sup>1</sup>. SFU faculty and staff can access more detailed information at the SFU Institutional Research and Planning website (<http://www.sfu.ca/irp/students/grades-report.html>).

## II – Definitions and Notes

To calculate the average course grades, each grade is assigned a numeric value, defined in Table 1. These values are weighted by the number of students who received each particular grade, to produce an overall average.

**Table 1: Simon Fraser University's Grade Scale**

A+ = 4.33	B+ = 3.33	C+ = 2.33	D = 1.00	N = 0.00
A = 4.00	B = 3.00	C = 2.00	F = 0.00	
A- = 3.67	B- = 2.67	C- = 1.67	FD = 0.00	

Table 2 lists the grades that have no numerical equivalent, and are therefore omitted from the calculation of average grades, and from this report. Although they are not included in the averages, credit is granted for the following grades: "AE", "CC", "CO", "CR", "P", and "S".

**Table 2: Grades with No Numerical Equivalent**

Grade	Definition
AE	aegrotat standing, compassionate pass
AU	audit
CC	course challenge
CF	course challenge failed
CN	did not complete challenge
CO	complete
CR	credit without grade
DE	deferred grade
FX	formal exchange
GN	grade not reported
IP	in progress
P	pass, ungraded
S	satisfactory
U	unsatisfactory
W	withdrawn
WD	withdrawal
WE	withdrawal under extenuating circumstances

Among undergraduate courses, "lower division" courses are those numbered from XX1 to 299, inclusive. "Upper division" courses are numbered 300 to 499, inclusive.

Data reported on a yearly basis refers to fiscal year. For example, 2018/19 grades are the grades accumulated over the 2018 Summer term (SFU term code: 1184), the 2018 Fall term (SFU term code:

<sup>1</sup> Effective April 1, 2011, the Department of Archaeology moved from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences to the Faculty of Environment. Further, the Semester in Dialogue courses moved from the Faculty of Science to the Faculty of Environment in Spring 2017, and then moved to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in Spring 2018. All data in this report reflect the current faculty structure.

1187), and the 2019 Spring term (SFU term code: 1191). The grades data for each fiscal year are taken as of the middle of the following summer term, to allow time for grade challenges and deferred grades to be resolved.

To protect student privacy, grade distributions based on five grades or fewer are not reported. Co-op courses, work-terms, and practicums are excluded from this report. Where they could be identified, courses graded as Pass/Fail are also excluded.

### III – Analysis

#### **III.A – Undergraduate Course Grades**

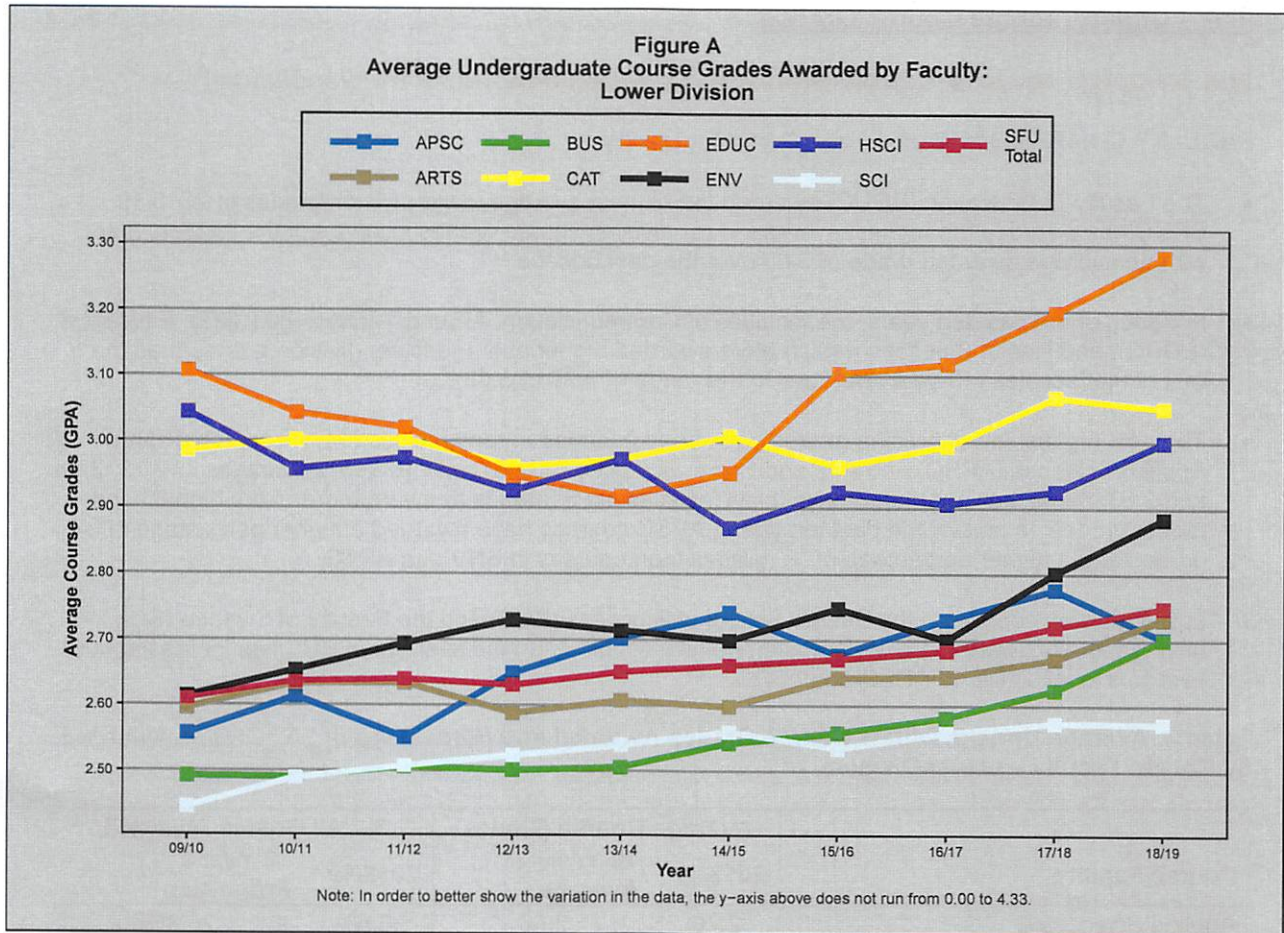
##### ***III.A.1 – Lower Division Course Grades (Courses Numbered XX1-299 Inclusive)***

#### **FACULTY COMPARISONS (see Table 3 and Figure A):**

- The Faculty of Education (EDUC) awarded the highest average lower division grades in 2018/19. EDUC has awarded the highest average lower division course grades in seven of the last ten years, with an average awarded grade of 3.08 over the past decade.
- For each of the past ten years, the faculties of Communication, Art and Technology (CAT), Education (EDUC), and Health Sciences (HSCI) have awarded higher average lower division grades than the rest of the faculties (10-year averages in the range of 2.95 to 3.08).
- The next highest lower division grades have been awarded in the faculties of Environment (ENV), Applied Sciences (APSC) and Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS), with 10-years averages of 2.73, 2.68 and 2.63, respectively. Among these three faculties, APSC tends to award more of the highest and lowest grades: in nine of the past ten years, APSC courses have awarded a higher percentage of "A" grades and a higher percentage of "F" grades than courses in ENV and ARTS.
- Lower division courses in the Beedie School of Business (BUS) and the Faculty of Science (SCI) have generally awarded the lowest average grades, although the average in BUS has increased this year to a level similar to APSC and ARTS.

**Table 3: Average Undergraduate Course Grades Awarded and Percentage of "A" Grades Awarded, by Course Faculty – Lower Division**

Course Faculty	Average Course Grades		% "A" Grades Awarded	
	2018/19	10-Year Average	2018/19	10-Year Proportion
Applied Sciences	2.70	2.68	26.5%	26.3%
Arts and Social Sciences	2.73	2.63	21.5%	18.1%
Business	2.70	2.55	18.0%	14.3%
Communication, Art and Technology	3.05	3.00	29.5%	28.0%
Education	3.28	3.08	45.8%	36.2%
Environment	2.88	2.73	26.8%	22.4%
Health Sciences	3.00	2.95	32.5%	28.7%
Science	2.57	2.53	21.9%	20.9%
University Total	2.75	2.66	23.9%	21.2%



## LONG-TERM COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>2</sup>:

Comparing the average lower division grades awarded over the last ten years<sup>3</sup>:

- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - Courses in Chinese (CHIN) have awarded the highest average lower division grades. Note that 2013/14 was the first year that this subject was offered by APSC.
  - Mathematics and Computing Science (MACM) courses have awarded grades considerably below the APSC average.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - The six subjects in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences to award the highest average grades in the last ten years are all language subjects (Language, First Nations Languages, Persian, Chinese, Arabic, and Italian). Note that averages in several of these subjects are based on less than ten years of data: Arabic (ARAB), First Nations Languages (FNLG), Language (LANG), and Persian (PERS). Furthermore, the averages for ARAB, LANG, and PERS are based on a relatively small number of grades.
  - Economics (ECON) courses have awarded the lowest average lower division grades.
- Business (BUS):
  - Over the last ten years, lower division courses in Business Administration and Economics (BUEC) and Business Administration (BUS) have awarded similar average grades.
- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - Publishing (PUB) and Contemporary Arts (CA) courses have awarded the highest lower division course grades over the last ten years. Note that the average lower division PUB course grade is based on seven years of grades data.
  - Communication (CMNS) and Interactive Arts and Technology (IAT) course have awarded the lowest average lower division grades.
- Education (EDUC):
  - On average, Education (EDUC) courses have awarded higher lower division grades than Foundations of Academic Literacy (FAL) courses.
- Environment (ENV):
  - Courses in the Environment (ENV) subject have awarded the highest average lower division grades. Note that this average is based on only six years of grades data and four of these years had very few grades.
  - Archaeology (ARCH) has awarded the lowest average lower division grades.
- Science (SCI):
  - Other than courses with the DATA and SCI subject codes (which awarded few grades each year), the highest average lower division grades were awarded in Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology (BPK) courses.
  - The lowest average lower division grades were awarded in Actuarial Mathematics (ACMA), Mathematics (MATH) and Mathematics and Computing Science (MACM).

<sup>2</sup> Faculties with only one subject at the lower division level are not discussed in this section since there are no comparisons to make.  
<sup>3</sup> excluding subjects that awarded five or fewer grades in the most recent fiscal year, or awarded five or fewer grades in all previous fiscal years combined

## **CURRENT COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>2</sup>:**

### ***2018/19 Average Lower Division Course Grades:***

- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - The highest average lower division grades awarded in 2018/19 were in Chinese (CHIN) courses.
  - The lowest average lower division grades awarded in 2018/19 were in Mathematics and Computing Science (MACM) courses.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - The nine subjects in this faculty to award the highest average lower division grades in 2018/19 are all language subjects (Language, First Nations Languages, Punjabi, Japanese, Arabic, German, Chinese, Spanish, and Italian). Note that the averages for Arabic (ARAB), Language (LANG), and Punjabi (PUNJ) are based on a relatively small number of grades.
  - The lowest average lower division grades awarded in 2018/19 were in Economics (ECON).
- Business (BUS):
  - Lower division courses in Business Administration and Economics (BUEC) and Business Administration (BUS) awarded similar average grades in 2018/19.
- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - The highest average lower division grades awarded in 2018/19 were in Publishing (PUB) courses.
  - The lowest average lower division grades awarded in 2018/19 were in Interactive Arts and Technology (IAT).
- Education (EDUC):
  - In 2018/19, Education (EDUC) courses awarded higher average lower division grades than Foundations of Academic Literacy (FAL) courses.
- Environment (ENV):
  - The highest average lower division grades awarded in 2018/19 were in courses with the Environment (ENV) subject code. However, note that few grades were awarded in ENV. Among the subjects that awarded at least 50 grades in 2018/19, Environmental Science (EVSC) awarded the highest average lower division grades.
  - The lowest average lower division grades awarded in 2018/19 were in courses with the Archaeology (ARCH) subject code.
- Science (SCI):
  - Other than courses with the DATA and SCI subject codes (which awarded few grades in 2018/19), the highest average lower division grades in 2018/19 were awarded in Actuarial Mathematics (ACMA).
  - The lowest average lower division grades in 2018/19 were awarded in Mathematics (MATH).



### **Large Changes in 2017/18 to 2018/19 Average Lower Division Course Grades:**

- The following subjects have seen large changes (of at least 0.25) in the average lower division grade awarded from last year to this year:
  - Increases: Actuarial Mathematics (ACMA: 2.09 to 3.10), Environment (ENV: 3.14 to 3.78), First Nations Languages (FNLG: 3.09 to 3.61), Sustainable Development (SD: 3.07 to 3.57), Japanese (JAPN: 2.85 to 3.30), and Environmental Science (2.69 to 3.05). Regarding the large change in ACMA: last year's average was based on a single 200-level course; this year, a new 100-level course that produced a higher average grade accounted for 80% of the 2018/19 lower division ACMA grades. Note that few grades were awarded in ENV and SD.
  - Decreases: Persian (PERS: 3.44 to 2.97), Italian (ITAL: 3.47 to 3.18), and Spanish (SPAN: 3.45 to 3.19). Note that few grades were awarded in PERS.

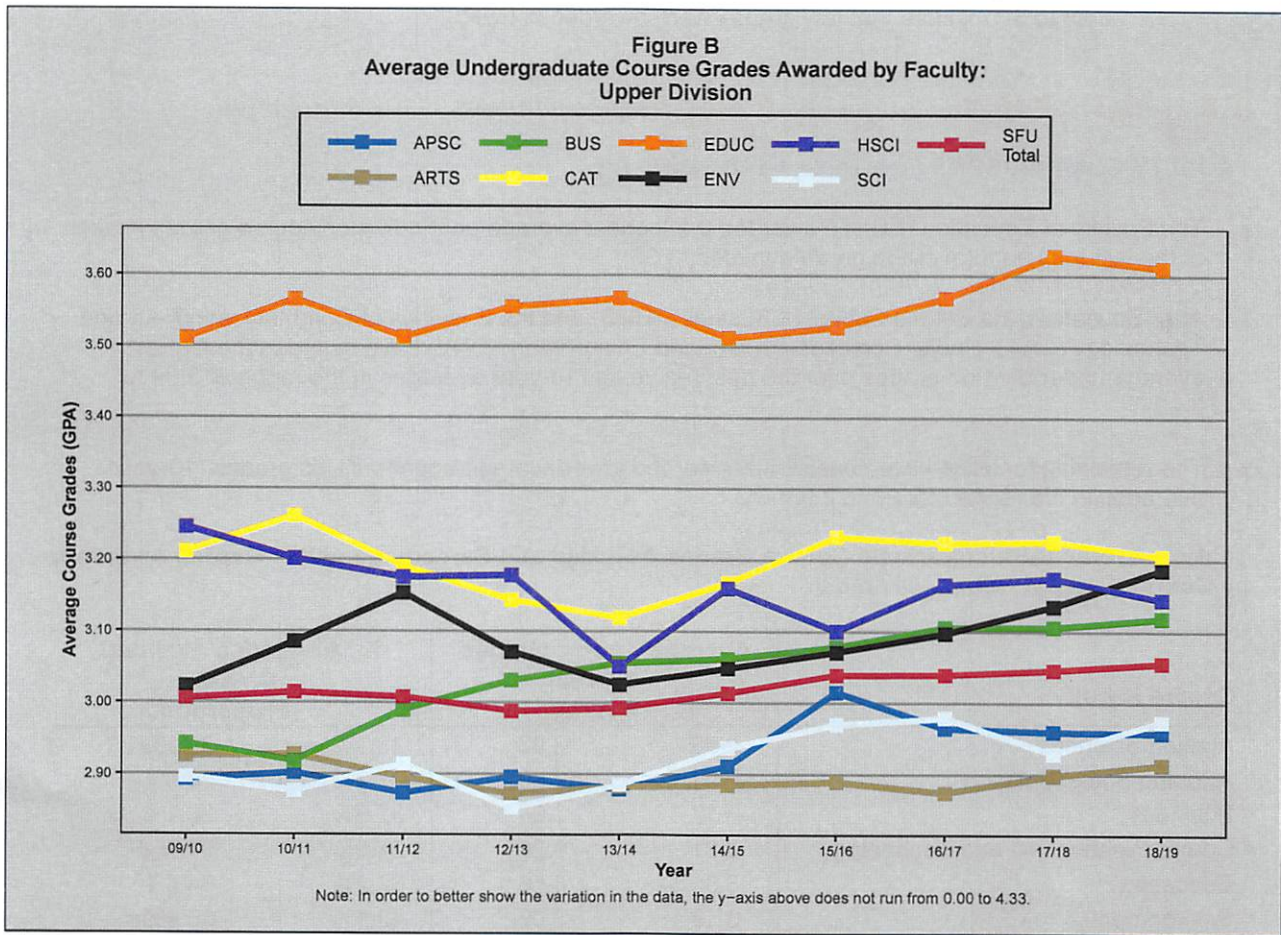
### **III.A.2 – Upper Division Course Grades (Courses Numbered 300-499 Inclusive)**

#### **FACULTY COMPARISONS (see Table 4 and Figure B):**

- The Faculty of Education (EDUC) awarded the highest average upper division course grades in each of the last ten years (average grade awarded: 3.56).
- After Education, the Beedie School of Business (BUS) and the Faculties of Communication, Art and Technology (CAT), Health Sciences (HSCI), and Environment (ENV) have awarded the highest average upper division grades over the past ten years (10-year averages in the range of 3.04 to 3.20).
- The remaining faculties have consistently awarded lower average upper division grades (10-year averages in the range of 2.90 to 2.93).

**Table 4: Average Undergraduate Course Grades Awarded and Percentage of "A" Grades Awarded, by Course Faculty – Upper Division**

Course Faculty	Average Course Grades		% "A" Grades Awarded	
	2018/19	10-Year Average	2018/19	10-Year Proportion
Applied Sciences	2.96	2.93	33.3%	32.3%
Arts and Social Sciences	2.91	2.90	27.2%	26.9%
Business	3.12	3.04	32.8%	30.1%
Communication, Art and Technology	3.21	3.20	37.5%	37.7%
Education	3.61	3.56	67.2%	64.0%
Environment	3.19	3.09	42.1%	36.0%
Health Sciences	3.15	3.15	39.9%	37.4%
Science	2.97	2.92	33.6%	32.0%
University Total	3.06	3.02	34.6%	33.1%



### LONG-TERM COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>4</sup>:

Comparing the average upper division grades awarded over the last ten years<sup>5</sup>:

- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - Mechatronic Systems Engineering (MSE) courses have awarded the highest average upper division grades.
  - Computing Science (CMPT) courses have awarded the lowest average upper division grades.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - The highest average upper division grades have been awarded in Dialogue (DIAL).
  - Business Administration and Economics (BUEC) courses have awarded average upper division grades considerably below the faculty average.
- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - Contemporary Arts (CA) courses have awarded the highest average upper division grades.
  - Publishing (PUB) courses have awarded the lowest average upper division grades. Note that this is based on only nine years of grades data.
- Environment (ENV):
  - Environmental Science (EVSC) and Sustainable Development (SD) courses have awarded the highest average upper division grades. Note that the average in EVSC is based on only five years of data, and very few grades were awarded in three of these years.
  - Geography (GEOG) courses have awarded the lowest average upper division grades.
- Science (SCI):
  - The highest average upper division grades have been awarded in Marine Science (MASC). Note that MASC courses have generally awarded few upper division grades each year.
  - Mathematics and Computing Science (MACM) courses have awarded the lowest average upper division grades.

### CURRENT COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>4</sup>:

#### **2018/19 Average Upper Division Course Grades:**

- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - In 2018/19, Mechatronic Systems Engineering (MSE) courses awarded the highest average upper division grades.
  - Engineering Science (ENSC) and Computing Science (CMPT) courses awarded the lowest average upper division grades in 2018/19.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - In 2018/19, the highest average upper division grades were awarded in Japanese (JAPN). However, note that few grades were awarded in JAPN. Among the subjects which awarded at least 50 grades in 2018/19, Dialogue (DIAL) awarded the highest average upper division grades.
  - Business Administration and Economics (BUEC), Economics (ECON), and Labour Studies (LBST) courses awarded the lowest average upper division grades in 2018/19.

<sup>4</sup> Faculties with only one subject at the upper division level are not discussed in this section since there are no comparisons to make.  
<sup>5</sup> excluding subjects that awarded five or fewer grades in the most recent fiscal year, or awarded five or fewer grades in all previous fiscal years combined

- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - The highest average upper division grades awarded in 2018/19 were in Contemporary Arts (CA).
  - The lowest average upper division grades awarded in 2018/19 were in Interactive Arts and Technology (IAT).
- Environment (ENV):
  - In 2018/19, the highest average upper division grades were awarded in Environment (ENV). However, ENV awarded very few grades. Among subjects that awarded at least 50 grades in 2018/19, Sustainable Development (SD) awarded the highest average upper division grades.
  - The lowest average upper division grades awarded in 2018/19 were in Archaeology (ARCH), Geography (GEOG), and Resource and Environmental Management (REM).
- Science (SCI):
  - The highest average upper division grades awarded in 2018/19 were in Marine Science (MASC). However, very few grades were awarded in 2018/19 in MASC. Among subjects with at least 50 grades awarded, Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology (BPK) and Biological Sciences (BISC) awarded the highest average upper division grades in 2018/19.
  - The lowest average upper division grades were awarded in Mathematics (MATH) and Mathematics and Computing Science (MACM) in 2018/19.

***Large Changes in 2017/18 to 2018/19 Average Upper Division Course Grades:***

- The following subjects have seen large changes (of at least 0.25) in the average upper division grade awarded from last year to this year:
  - Increases: Japanese (JAPN: 3.20 to 4.06), Science (SCI: 2.23 to 2.85), Environment (ENV: 3.22 to 3.71), and Mathematics and Computing Science (MACM: 2.30 to 2.55). Note that few grades were awarded in JAPN.
  - Decreases: Marine Science (MASC: 3.77 to 3.51). Note that few grades were awarded in MASC.

***III.A.3 – General Observations (All Undergraduate Courses)***

- In 2018/19, the average undergraduate grade awarded was 2.88.
- The average undergraduate grade awarded over the past ten years is 2.81.
- In most faculties, average undergraduate grades have been slowly increasing over the past decade, particularly at the lower division level.
- Over the past ten years, upper division courses have consistently awarded higher average grades than lower division courses in all faculties.

### **III.B – Undergraduate Course Grades by Student Faculty (see Table 5 and Figure C)**

This section summarizes the 2018/19 undergraduate course grade distributions within each faculty, controlling for the faculty of undergraduate students enrolled in the courses.

**Table 5: 2018/19 Average Undergraduate Course Grades Awarded and Percentage of “A” Grades Awarded, by Faculty of Student**

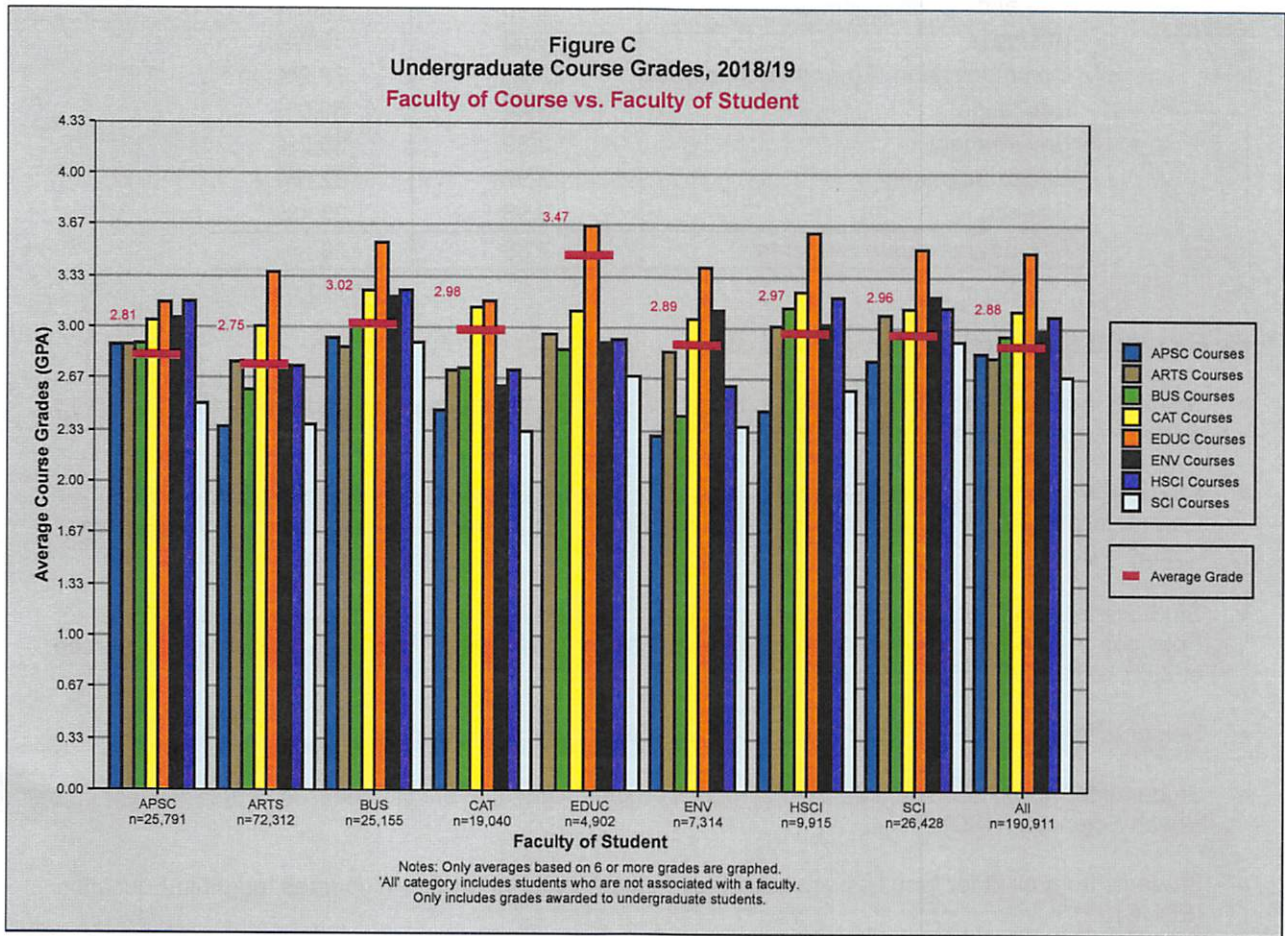
<b>Faculty of Student</b>	<b>Average Course Grades</b>	<b>% "A" Grades Awarded</b>
Applied Sciences	2.81	28.6%
Arts and Social Sciences	2.75	22.8%
Business	3.02	30.5%
Communication, Art and Technology	2.98	29.9%
Education	3.47	60.0%
Environment	2.89	30.2%
Health Sciences	2.97	32.6%
Science	2.96	33.1%
All Undergraduate Students	2.88	28.5%

#### ***By Faculty of Students:***

- Students from the Faculty of Education (EDUC) were awarded the highest grades overall in 2018/19, with an average course grade of 3.47.
- Students from the Beedie School of Business (BUS) and the Faculties of Health Sciences (HSCI), Communication, Art and Technology (CAT), and Science (SCI) were awarded average grades from 2.96 to 3.02.
- Students from the Faculties of Environment (ENV), Applied Sciences (APSC), and Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS) were awarded the lowest average grades in 2018/19, with an average course grade of 2.89, 2.81, and 2.75, respectively.
- Students from all faculties most frequently took courses from their own faculties.
- Students from Applied Sciences (APSC) achieved their highest average grades in courses taught in Health Sciences (HSCI).
- Students from all other faculties achieved their highest average grades in courses taught in Education (EDUC).

#### ***By Faculty of Courses:***

- In courses offered by the Faculties of Applied Sciences (APSC), Communication, Art and Technology (CAT), and Health Sciences (HSCI) students from the Beedie School of Business (BUS) received the highest average grades in 2018/19.
- In courses offered by the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS), Environment (ENV) and Science (SCI), students from the Faculty of Science (SCI) received the highest average grades in 2018/19.



- In courses offered by the Beedie School of Business (BUS), students from the Faculty of Health Sciences (HSCI) received the highest average grades in 2018/19.
- In courses offered by the Faculty of Education (EDUC), students from EDUC received the highest average grades in 2018/19.
- Courses in all faculties were most frequently taken by students from within those faculties.

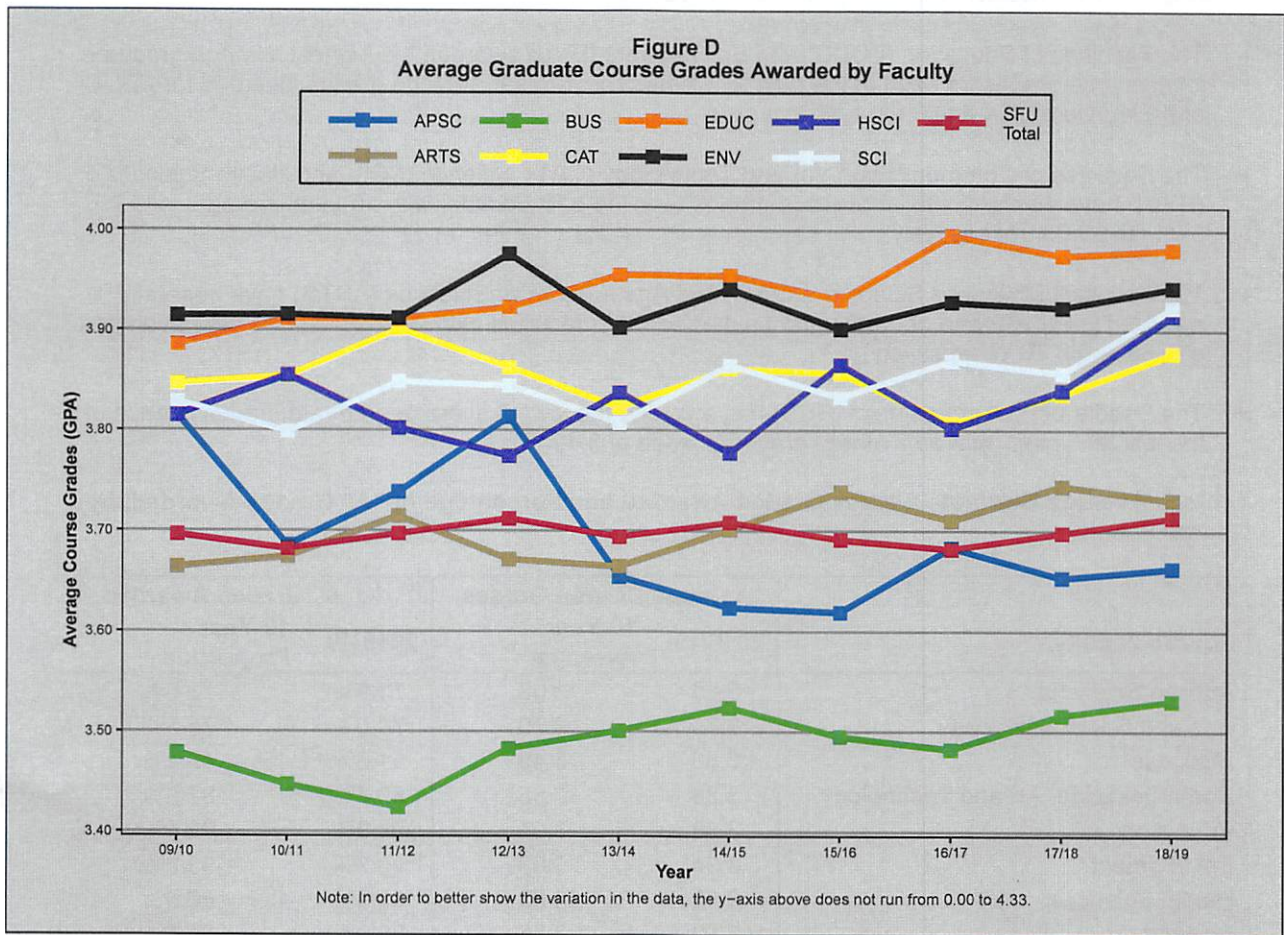
### **III.C – Graduate Course Grades**

#### **FACULTY COMPARISONS (see Table 6 and Figure D):**

- The Faculties of Education (EDUC) and Environment (ENV) awarded the highest average graduate level course grades for each of the past ten years. The 10-year average grades awarded for EDUC and ENV were 3.94 and 3.93, respectively.
- The Faculties of Communication, Art and Technology (CAT), Science (SCI), and Health Sciences (HSCI) have awarded similar average grades over the past decade, with 10-year averages of 3.85, 3.85, and 3.83, respectively.
- The Faculties of Applied Sciences (APSC) and Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS) have generally awarded lower average graduate grades than all other faculties except Business (10-year averages of 3.68 and 3.70, respectively).
- The Beedie School of Business (BUS) has awarded the lowest average graduate grades in each of the last ten years, with an average grade awarded of 3.49.

**Table 6: Average Graduate Course Grades Awarded and Percentage of “A” Grades Awarded, by Course Faculty**

Course Faculty	Average Course Grades		% "A" Grades Awarded	
	2018/19	10-Year Average	2018/19	10-Year Proportion
Applied Sciences	3.66	3.68	71.9%	73.6%
Arts and Social Sciences	3.73	3.70	78.0%	75.5%
Business	3.53	3.49	51.6%	49.4%
Communication, Art and Technology	3.88	3.85	89.4%	87.8%
Education	3.98	3.94	94.3%	92.4%
Environment	3.94	3.93	93.7%	93.9%
Health Sciences	3.92	3.83	93.9%	86.6%
Science	3.92	3.85	89.9%	84.7%
University Total	3.71	3.70	71.9%	71.4%





### LONG-TERM COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>6</sup>:

Comparing the average graduate course grades awarded over the last ten years<sup>7</sup>:

- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - Mechatronic Systems Engineering (MSE) has awarded the highest average graduate course grades over the past ten years.
  - Computing Science (CMPT) has awarded the lowest average graduate course grades.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - Psychology (PSYC) has awarded the highest average graduate course grades.
  - Over the past ten years, Applied Legal Studies (ALS) has awarded the lowest average graduate course grades.
- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - Over the past ten years, all CAT subjects have awarded similar average graduate course grades.
- Environment (ENV):
  - Over the past ten years, all ENV subjects have awarded similar average graduate course grades.
- Science (SCI):
  - Biological Sciences (BISC) awarded the highest average graduate course grades over the past ten years.
  - Physics (PHYS) awarded the lowest average graduate course grades.

### CURRENT COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>6</sup>:

#### **2018/19 Average Course Grades:**

- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - In 2018/19, all APSC subjects awarded similar average graduate course grades.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - The highest average graduate course grades awarded in 2018/19 were from Psychology (PSYC) courses.
  - The lowest average graduate course grades in 2018/19 were awarded in Applied Legal Studies (ALS) and International Studies (IS).
- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - Contemporary Arts (CA) awarded the highest average graduate course grades in 2018/19.
  - The lowest average graduate course grades in 2018/19 were awarded in Interactive Arts and Technology (IAT) and Communication (CMNS), which had similar average course grades.
- Environment (ENV):
  - Archaeology (ARCH) awarded the highest average graduate course grades in 2018/19.
  - Environment (ENV) awarded the lowest average graduate course grades in 2018/19.
  - Many ENV subjects awarded few graduate grades in 2018/19. All subjects with at least 50 grades in 2018/19 awarded similar average grades.

<sup>6</sup> Faculties with only one subject at the graduate level are not discussed in this section, since there are no comparisons to make.

<sup>7</sup> excluding subjects that awarded five or fewer grades in the most recent fiscal year, or awarded five or fewer grades in all previous fiscal years combined

- Science (SCI):
  - Molecular Biology and Biochemistry (MBB) and Biological Sciences (BISC) awarded the highest average graduate course grades in 2018/19, with similar average grades.
  - The lowest average graduate course grades were awarded in Earth Sciences (EASC), however, this is based on very few grades. Among those subjects with at least 50 course grades awarded in 2018/19, Physics (PHYS) awarded the lowest average graduate course grades.

***Large changes in 2017/18 to 2018/19 Average Graduate Course Grades:***

- The following subjects have seen large changes (of at least 0.25) in the average graduate course grade awarded from last year to this year:
  - Increases: No subjects experienced large changes in average course grades.
  - Decreases: No subjects experienced large changes in average course grades.

**GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:**

- In 2018/19, the average graduate grade awarded was 3.71, which is similar to last year. The average graduate grade awarded at the university has been fairly stable over the last ten years.
- The average graduate grade awarded over the past ten years is 3.70.