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**MEMORANDUM**

<b>ATTENTION:</b>	Senate	<b>DATE:</b>	August 26, 2021
<b>FROM:</b>	Zareen Naqvi, Institutional Research and Planning (IRP)	<b>PAGES:</b>	1 of 1
<b>RE:</b>	IRP Reports for Information		

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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:

- **2020/21 Grades Report:** This report is prepared once a year and it summarizes course grades at the University over a ten-year period. The 2020/21 Grades Report covers the period from 2011/12 to 2020/21. Attached is the Summary Report. More detailed information is available on IRP's website: <https://www.sfu.ca/irp/students/grades-report.html>
- **2020 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 2020 survey. Topics covered are selected in consultation with faculties, Student Services and other administrative units of the University. This year's topics included: course availability, credential completion times, teaching and curriculum, services, SFU's COVID-19 response, and university culture and environment. The full report is located at: <https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/irp/surveys/ugss/UGSS%202020%20Report.pdf>

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

Enclosure

**2020/21 Grades Report:**  
**Historical Distribution of**  
**Undergraduate and Graduate Course Grades**  
**2011/12 to 2020/21**

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Summer 2021

## Table of Contents

I – Introduction.....	4
II – Definitions and Notes.....	4
III – Analysis.....	6
III.A – Undergraduate Course Grades.....	6
III.A.1 – Lower Division Course Grades .....	6
III.A.2 – Upper Division Course Grades .....	14
III.A.3 – General Observations .....	21
III.B – Undergraduate Course Grades by Student Faculty .....	21
III.C – Graduate Course Grades.....	24

## I – Introduction

This report summarizes student course grades at Simon Fraser University over the ten-year period from 2011/12 to 2020/21<sup>1</sup>. SFU faculty and staff can access more detailed information at the SFU Institutional Research and Planning website (<https://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: Grades with a Numerical Equivalent**

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. 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
AN	audit, incomplete
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
NC	no credit
P	pass, ungraded
S	satisfactory
U	unsatisfactory
W	withdrawn
WD	withdrawal
WE	withdrawal under extenuating circumstances

<sup>1</sup> All data in this report reflect the current faculty structure.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, for the Spring 2020 term only, students were given the following grading options: (i) keep their assigned grade; (ii) for undergraduate courses, change their grade to "P" (Pass, if they were awarded a grade of "D" or higher); (iii) for graduate courses, choose a designation of "S/U" (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory) or "AE" (Compassionate Pass, with the instructor's permission). Due to this grading policy, grades from 2019/20 may not be comparable to grades from other years.

Grades for 2020/21 may not be comparable to grades from other years for two reasons. First, the entire 2020/21 fiscal year was during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the majority of courses this year were offered completely online. This mode of delivery, combined with the various other impacts of the pandemic on students and instructors, could have had an influence on grades. Second, Spring 2021 was the first term of a pilot grading policy for elective courses. This elective grading policy allowed students in undergraduate programs to take a P/CR/NC grade instead of a standard letter grade for elective courses.

The grades listed in Table 2 are not included in any of the datasets used for this report, with the exception of (i) P grades due to the one-time Spring 2020 grading policy and (ii) P, CR, and NC grades due to the elective grading policy in Spring 2021<sup>2</sup>.

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, 2020/21 grades are the grades accumulated over the 2020 Summer term (SFU term code: 1204), the 2020 Fall term (SFU term code: 1207), and the 2021 Spring term (SFU term code: 1211). The grades data are as of August 10, 2021.

To protect student privacy, statistics based on fewer than five grades are not reported.

Percentages in tables are rounded to the nearest integer, so a "0%" may represent either (i) a true 0% or (ii) a percentage greater than 0% but less than 0.5%. Similarly, a "100%" may represent either (i) a true 100% or (ii) a percentage less than 100% but greater than or equal to 99.5%.

Co-op courses are excluded from this report. Where they could be identified, courses graded as Pass/Fail are also excluded.

Some of the undergraduate statistics in this report are based on student faculty. For these statistics, a detailed algorithm was used to assign each student to a single faculty in each term they took courses, based on factors such as the credential level (e.g. degrees prioritized over certificates) and when the student first had a faculty appear on their record.

This report uses abbreviations for faculties (e.g. APSC for the Faculty of Applied Sciences) and subjects (e.g. PSYC for Psychology). The full names represented by these abbreviations are listed in Appendix A. Note that sometimes a faculty has the same abbreviation as a subject code (e.g. BUS, EDUC, HSCI). The context should clarify which is being referred to; for example, in a section discussing faculty comparisons, "EDUC" would refer to the Faculty of Education rather than the "EDUC" subject code.

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<sup>2</sup> For Spring 2020, it was not always possible to differentiate regular P grades from P grades that resulted due to the one-time grading policy, but this should have minimal effect on the P statistics. For Spring 2021, it was possible to differentiate regular P/CR/NC grades from P/CR/NC grades due to the elective grading policy.

## III – Analysis

### III.A – Undergraduate Course Grades<sup>3</sup>

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

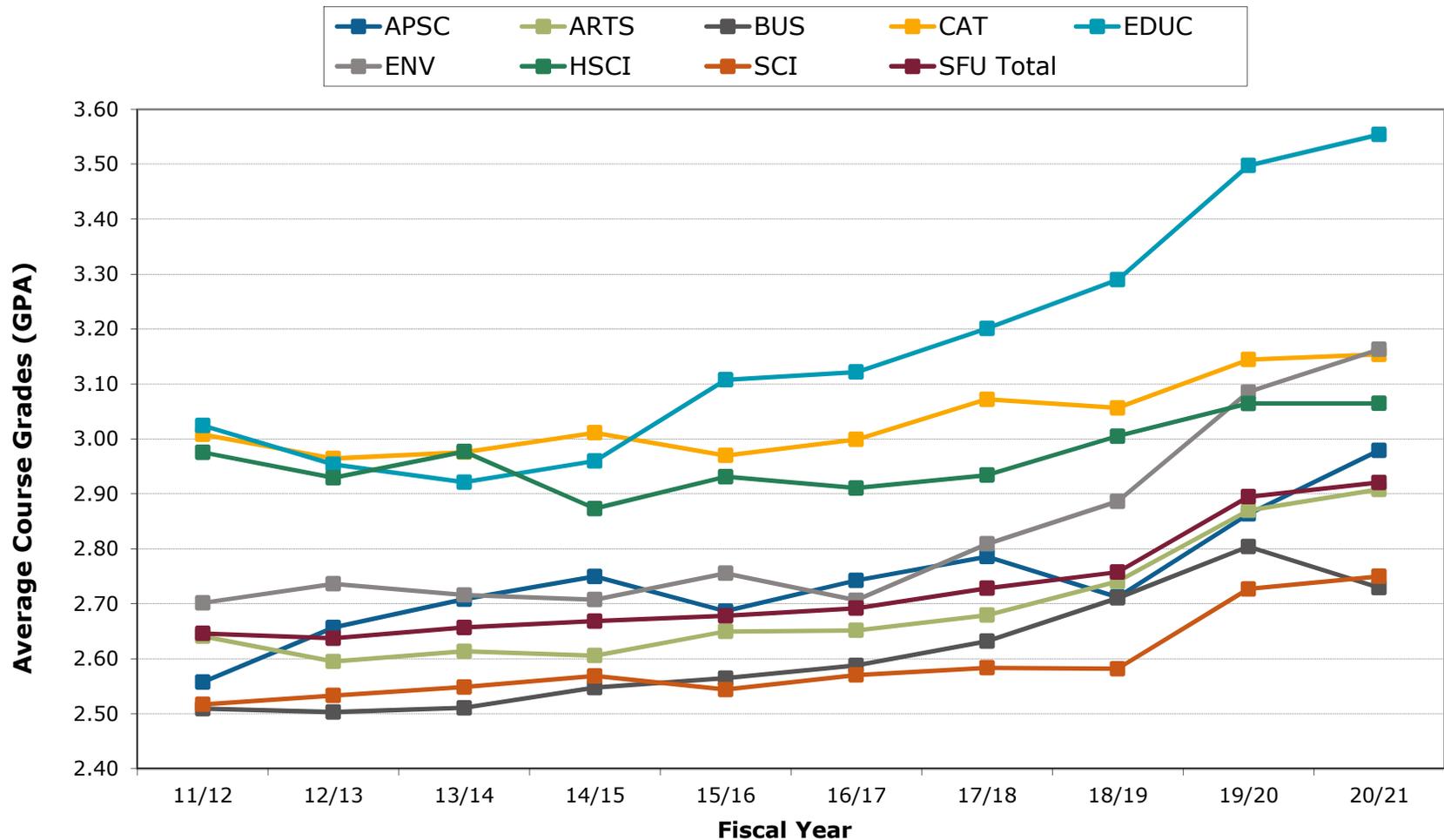
##### FACULTY COMPARISONS (see Table 3 and Figure A)

- EDUC awarded the highest average lower division grade in 2020/21. EDUC has awarded the highest average lower division course grades in seven of the last ten years, with an average awarded grade of 3.18 over the past decade.
- EDUC has awarded the highest percent of lower division “A” grades in nine of the past ten years (10-year proportion of 41%). Conversely, in all of the past ten years, APSC and SCI have awarded the highest percent of “F” grades.
- From 2011/12 through 2018/19, CAT, EDUC, and HSCI awarded higher average lower division grades than the other faculties (10-year averages in the range of 2.96 to 3.18).
- From 2011/12 through 2018/19, the next highest average lower division grades have been awarded in ENV, APSC, and ARTS, with 10-year averages of 2.83, 2.75, and 2.69, respectively. Since 2016/17, the average lower division grade awarded in ENV has been on an upward trend, and in 2020/21, ENV awarded the second highest average lower division grades.
- Lower division courses in BUS and SCI have generally awarded the lowest average grades. The average lower division grade awarded in BUS has been on a general upward trend since 2012/13.
- Average lower division course grades increased in every faculty from 2018/19 to 2019/20. This is the expected pattern, in light of the Spring 2020 grading policy (see Definitions and Notes section for details).
- Average lower division course grades in 2020/21 were also higher in every faculty compared to 2018/19 (i.e. the last full fiscal year prior to the COVID-19 pandemic). This may be due in part to the Spring 2021 elective grading policy (see Definitions and Notes section for details).

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<sup>3</sup> Keep in mind that 2019/20 and 2020/21 grades may not be comparable to grades from other years; see the Definitions and Notes section for details.

**Figure A**  
**Average Undergraduate Course Grades Awarded by Course Faculty:**  
**Lower Division**



Notes: In order to better show the variation in the data, the y-axis above does not run from 0.00 to 4.33. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, grades from 2019/20 and 2020/21 may not be comparable to grades from other years.

**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	
	2020/21	10-Year Average	2020/21	10-Year Proportion
Applied Sciences	2.98	2.75	37%	28%
Arts and Social Sciences	2.91	2.69	27%	20%
Beedie School of Business	2.73	2.62	17%	15%
Communication, Art and Technology	3.15	3.04	36%	29%
Education	3.55	3.18	61%	41%
Environment	3.16	2.83	42%	26%
Health Sciences	3.06	2.96	30%	29%
Science	2.75	2.59	26%	22%
University Total	2.92	2.73	30%	23%

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

Comparing the average lower division grades awarded over the last ten years:

- Applied Sciences:
  - TEKX courses awarded the highest 10-year average lower division grade, but this is based on only two years of data and relatively few grades. Other than TEKX, CHIN has awarded the highest 10-year average lower division grade.
  - MACM awarded grades considerably below the 10-year faculty average.
- Arts and Social Sciences:
  - A new subject, SDA, was offered for the first time in 2020/21. As no SDA courses were offered prior to this year, the 10-year average is not discussed.
  - The eight subjects in ARTS that awarded the highest average grades in the last ten years are all language subjects: PUNJ, LANG, INLG, PERS, ARAB, GRK, ITAL, and CHIN. Note that averages in several of these subjects are based on less than ten years of data: ARAB, GRK, INLG, LANG, and PUNJ. Furthermore, the averages for LANG, PERS, and PUNJ are based on a relatively small number of grades.
  - ECON courses have awarded the lowest average lower division grade.
- Communication, Art and Technology:
  - PUB awarded the highest average lower division grade over the last 10 years.
  - CMNS and IAT courses have awarded the lowest average lower division grades.

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

- Education:
  - On average, EDUC courses have awarded considerably higher lower division grades than FAL courses.
- Environment:
  - PLAN courses awarded the highest 10-year average lower division grade, but this is based on only two years of data and relatively few grades. Other than PLAN, SD has awarded the highest 10-year average lower division grade.
  - ARCH awarded the lowest average lower division grade.
- Science:
  - Other than courses with the DATA and SCI subject codes (which generally award few grades each year), the highest average lower division grade was awarded in BPK courses.
  - The lowest average lower division grade was awarded in MATH.

### **CURRENT COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>5</sup>**

- Applied Sciences:
  - Other than TEKX (which had very few grades awarded in 2020/21), the highest average lower division grade awarded in 2020/21 was in CHIN courses.
  - The lowest average lower division course grade awarded in 2020/21 was in MACM.
- Arts and Social Sciences:
  - Other than PERS and PUNJ (which had very few grades awarded in 2020/21), the highest average lower division grade awarded in 2020/21 was in INLG.
  - The top eight highest average lower division grades awarded in 2020/21 were all in language subjects: PERS, PUNJ, INLG, ARAB, ITAL, JAPN, GRK, and GERM.
  - The lowest average lower division grade awarded in 2020/21 was in ECON.
- Communication, Art and Technology:
  - The highest average lower division grade awarded in 2020/21 was in PUB.
  - The lowest average lower division grade awarded in 2020/21 was in IAT.
- Education:
  - In 2020/21, the average lower division grade awarded in courses with the EDUC subject code were considerably higher than those in FAL.
- Environment:
  - The highest average lower division grade awarded in 2020/21 was in EVSC.
  - The lowest average lower division grade awarded in 2020/21 was in REM.

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<sup>5</sup> Faculties with only one subject at the lower division level are not discussed in this section since there are no comparisons to make. Subjects that awarded fewer than five grades in the most recent fiscal year are also excluded from this section.

- Science:
  - Other than DATA (which, in 2020/21, consisted of a single 1-unit seminar course), the highest average lower division grade awarded in 2020/21 was in MBB.
  - The lowest average lower division grades awarded in 2020/21 were in MACM and MATH.

### LARGE CHANGES IN 2019/20 TO 2020/21 AVERAGE GRADES<sup>6</sup> (see Table 4)

Keeping in mind that 2019/20 and 2020/21 grades may not be comparable (see the Definitions and Notes section for details), 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.

**Table 4: Large Changes in Average Lower Division Course Grades**

Subject	2019/20 Average Grade	2020/21 Average Grade	Difference in Average Grade
EVSC	3.07	3.53	+ 0.47
TEKX *	3.55	3.95	+ 0.40
GERO *	2.60	3.00	+ 0.40
MBB	2.89	3.27	+ 0.38
FASS	2.78	3.15	+ 0.37
PERS *	3.59	3.92	+ 0.33
GA	2.60	2.91	+ 0.32
CMPT	2.70	3.00	+ 0.30
ACMA	2.57	2.85	+ 0.28
ARAB	3.39	3.66	+ 0.27
ITAL	3.39	3.65	+ 0.26
SEE	3.36	3.07	- 0.29
PLAN *	3.48	3.17	- 0.31
SD	3.58	3.13	- 0.45

\* These averages are based on relatively few grades.

<sup>6</sup> Subjects that awarded fewer than five grades in either of the two most recent fiscal years are excluded from this section.

## USE OF TEMPORARY GRADING POLICIES (see Table 5, Table 6)

Temporary grading policies were in place for Spring 2020 and Spring 2021 (see the Definitions and Notes section for details). This section of the report looks at what proportion of the lower division grades awarded in the Spring terms were changed according to these policies (i.e. grades converted to P in Spring 2020, or grades converted to P, CR, or NC in Spring 2021<sup>7</sup>).

### ***Spring 2020 Grading Policy***

- SFU level:
  - Overall, 20% of the lower division grades in Spring 2020 used the temporary grading policy.
- Faculty level:
  - Among the faculties, courses in BUS had the highest usage of the policy (37%). SCI and APSC had the next highest usage (24% and 23%, respectively).
  - Courses in EDUC had the lowest usage of the policy (7%).
- Subject level:
  - 17 of the 60 subjects with lower division grades in Spring 2020 had more than 20% of their grades converted to P's.
  - The subjects with the highest usage of the policy were: EVSC (45%), BUS (37%), MACM (34%), and ECON (32%).
  - The subjects with the lowest usage of the policy were: TEKX (0%), SCI (0%), ENV (0%), and LBST (1%). All of these subjects awarded relatively few grades in Spring 2020 (see Table 6).

### ***Spring 2021 Grading Policy***

- SFU level:
  - Overall, 4% of the lower division grades in Spring 2021 used the temporary grading policy.
- Faculty level:
  - The faculties with the highest usage were ENV and ARTS (6% and 5%, respectively), which may be related to the number of courses in these faculties that are used as electives (since the Spring 2021 grading policy applies to elective courses).
  - Courses in BUS had the lowest percentage of grades awarded which used the policy (1%).
- Subject level:
  - 38 of the 58 subjects with lower division grades in Spring 2021 had 5% or less of their grades converted to P, CR, or NC.
  - The highest usage of the policy was in ARAB (25%), EASC (15%), GA (15%), and GRK (14%). Note that ARAB and GRK awarded relatively few grades in Spring 2021 (see Table 6).
  - There were 6 subjects which had nobody use the policy: ENSC, FAL, FAN, INLG, MBB, and SDA (note that FAL and FAN are not eligible for the elective grading system).

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<sup>7</sup> For Spring 2020, it was not always possible to differentiate regular P grades from P grades that resulted due to the one-time grading policy, but this should have minimal effect on the P statistics. For Spring 2021, it was possible to differentiate regular P/CR/NC grades from P/CR/NC grades due to the elective grading policy.

**Table 5: Use of Temporary Grading Policies by Course Faculty – Lower Division**

<b>Course Faculty</b>	<b>Spring 2020</b>		<b>Spring 2021</b>	
	<b>% Used</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% Used</b>	<b>N</b>
Applied Sciences	23%	3,155	3%	3,166
Arts and Social Sciences	18%	14,407	5%	14,301
Beedie School of Business	37%	3,412	1%	3,391
Communication, Art and Technology	11%	4,517	4%	4,230
Education	7%	1,109	3%	1,218
Environment	15%	2,613	6%	2,451
Health Sciences	10%	1,029	4%	1,206
Science	24%	10,255	4%	10,557
University Total	20%	40,497	4%	40,520

**Table 6: Use of Temporary Grading Policies by Subject – Lower Division**

Subject	Spring 2020		Spring 2021	
	% Used	N	% Used	N
ACMA	-	0	7%	14
ARAB	4%	25	25%	20
ARCH	15%	935	10%	826
BISC	20%	925	1%	982
BPK	20%	1,659	9%	1,378
BUS	37%	3,412	1%	3,391
CA	8%	1,332	5%	1,435
CHEM	24%	1,651	2%	1,817
CHIN	16%	116	4%	95
CMNS	8%	1,530	1%	1,305
CMPT	26%	1,960	4%	1,858
COGS	23%	383	9%	404
CRIM	14%	1,931	2%	2,009
EASC	26%	280	15%	263
ECON	32%	1,709	5%	1,878
EDUC	6%	967	3%	1,101
ENGL	12%	935	4%	1,102
ENSC	20%	98	0%	114
ENV	0%	17	-	0
EVSC	45%	143	2%	224
FAL	11%	142	0%	117
FAN	16%	91	0%	64
FASS	-	3	-	0
FREN	19%	278	9%	286
GA	22%	58	15%	73
GEOG	12%	1,167	5%	1,046
GERM	5%	85	7%	56
GERO	-	0	10%	29
GRK	14%	14	14%	7
GSWS	6%	350	1%	212
HIST	12%	696	7%	734
HS	8%	36	-	0

Subject	Spring 2020		Spring 2021	
	% Used	N	% Used	N
HSCI	10%	1,029	4%	1,206
HUM	12%	400	6%	284
IAT	17%	1,534	5%	1,379
INDG	7%	297	3%	336
INLG	13%	94	0%	125
IS	17%	406	7%	283
ITAL	7%	57	5%	43
JAPN	7%	216	4%	239
LBST	1%	105	5%	44
LING	27%	612	5%	534
MACM	34%	716	3%	683
MATH	28%	2,565	4%	2,621
MBB	23%	404	0%	329
MSE	16%	682	0%	652
PERS	8%	13	-	0
PHIL	13%	1,181	10%	1,084
PHYS	19%	1,250	2%	1,409
PLAN	5%	21	-	0
POL	15%	931	5%	903
PSYC	24%	2,620	4%	2,650
PUB	8%	121	4%	111
REM	20%	297	3%	317
SA	11%	675	6%	671
SCI	0%	24	3%	33
SD	3%	33	8%	38
SDA	-	0	0%	47
SEE	16%	113	0%	217
SPAN	6%	102	5%	75
STAT	19%	935	8%	1,241
TEKX	0%	20	7%	14
WL	9%	116	9%	112

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

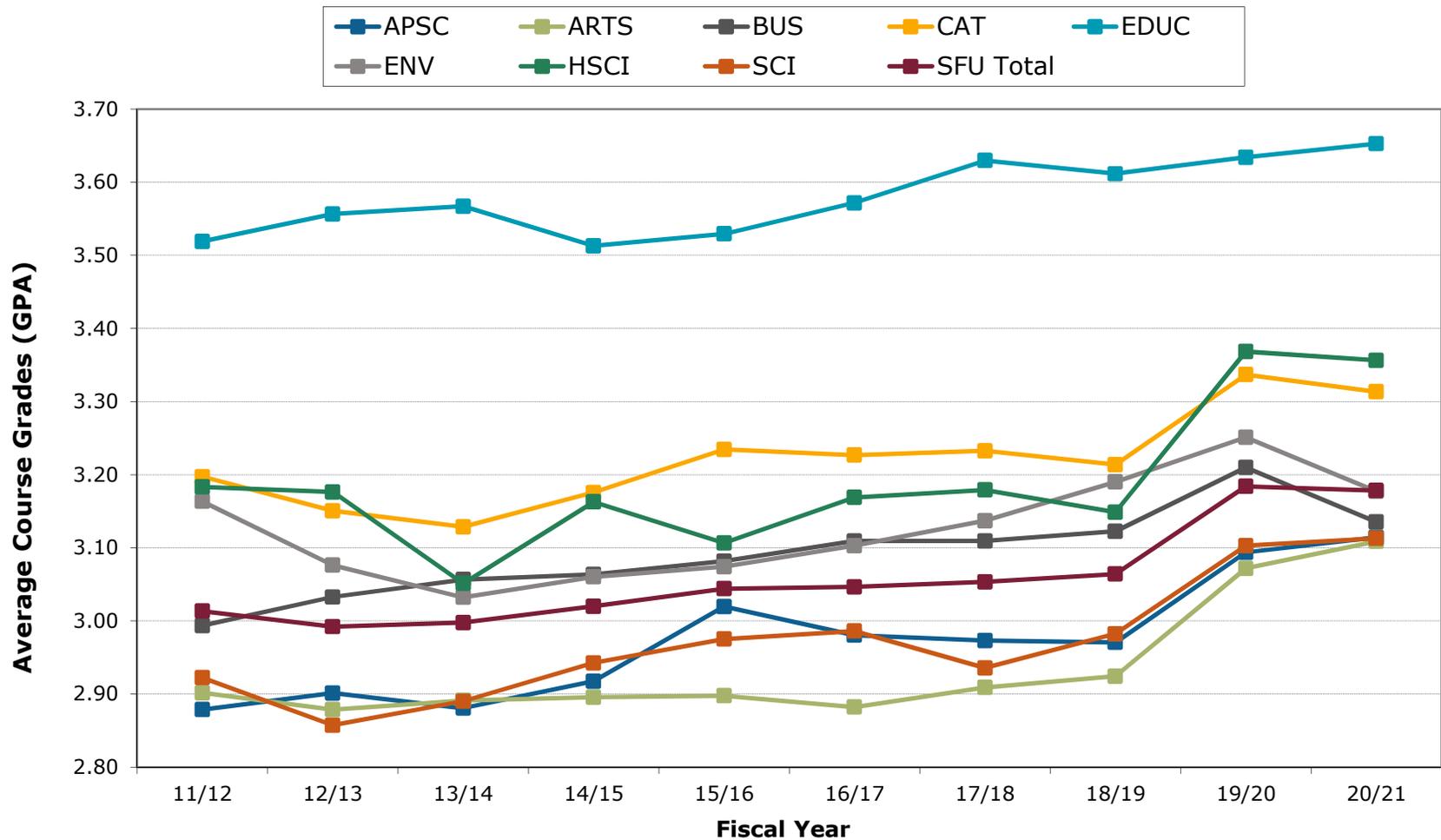
#### FACULTY COMPARISONS (see Table 7 and Figure B)

- EDUC awarded the highest average upper division course grades in each of the last ten years (10-year average grade: 3.58).
- The next highest average upper division grades awarded over the past ten years were in CAT, HSCI, ENV, and BUS (10-year averages in the range of 3.09 to 3.22).
- The remaining faculties have consistently awarded lower average upper division grades (10-year averages in the range of 2.94 to 2.99).
- EDUC has awarded the highest percent of “A” grades in each of the last ten years (10-year proportion: 65%).
- EDUC and HSCI have awarded the lowest percent of “F” grades in nine of the past ten years.
- Average upper division course grades increased in every faculty from 2018/19 to 2019/20. This is the expected pattern, in light of the Spring 2020 grading policy (see Definitions and Notes section for details).
- Average upper division course grades in 2020/21 were also higher in every faculty except for ENV, when compared to 2018/19 (i.e. the last full fiscal year prior to the COVID-19 pandemic). This may be due in part to the Spring 2021 elective grading policy (see Definitions and Notes section for details).

**Table 7: Average Undergraduate Course Grades Awarded and Percentage of “A” Grades Awarded, by Course Faculty – Upper Division**

Course Faculty	Average Course Grades		% "A" Grades Awarded	
	2020/21	10-Year Average	2020/21	10-Year Proportion
Applied Sciences	3.11	2.99	39%	34%
Arts and Social Sciences	3.11	2.94	35%	28%
Beedie School of Business	3.14	3.09	32%	32%
Communication, Art and Technology	3.31	3.22	44%	38%
Education	3.65	3.58	71%	65%
Environment	3.18	3.13	40%	37%
Health Sciences	3.36	3.19	48%	39%
Science	3.11	2.97	37%	33%
University Total	3.18	3.06	39%	34%

**Figure B**  
**Average Undergraduate Course Grades Awarded by Course Faculty:**  
**Upper Division**



Notes: In order to better show the variation in the data, the y-axis above does not run from 0.00 to 4.33. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, grades from 2019/20 and 2020/21 may not be comparable to grades from other years.

## LONG-TERM COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>8</sup>

Comparing the average upper division grades awarded over the last ten years:

- Applied Sciences:
  - SEE offered upper division courses for the first time in 2020/21. As no upper division SEE courses were offered prior to this year, the 10-year average is not discussed.
  - MSE courses awarded the highest average upper division grade.
  - CMPT courses awarded the lowest average upper division grade.
- Arts and Social Sciences:
  - DIAL courses awarded the highest average upper division grade.
  - ECON courses awarded an average upper division grade considerably below the faculty average.
- Communication, Art and Technology:
  - CA awarded the highest average upper division grade over the past ten years.
  - PUB and IAT awarded the lowest average upper division grades.
- Environment:
  - Over the past ten years, EVSC courses awarded the highest average upper division grade. Note that this average is based on only six years of data and two of those years have very few grades.
  - GEOG awarded the lowest average upper division grade.
- Science:
  - BPK and MBB have awarded the highest average upper division grades.
  - MACM awarded the lowest average upper division grade.

## CURRENT COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>9</sup>

- Applied Sciences:
  - MSE awarded the highest average upper division grade in 2020/21.
  - ENSC awarded the lowest average upper division grade in 2020/21.
- Arts and Social Sciences:
  - DIAL awarded the highest average upper division grade in 2020/21.
  - GA awarded the lowest average upper division grade in 2020/21.
- Communication, Art and Technology:
  - CA awarded the highest average upper division grade in 2020/21.
  - IAT awarded the lowest average upper division grade in 2020/21.

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<sup>8</sup> Faculties with only one subject at the upper division level are not discussed in this section since there are no comparisons to make. Subjects that awarded fewer than five grades in the most recent fiscal year, or awarded fewer than five grades in all previous fiscal years combined are also excluded from this section.

<sup>9</sup> Faculties with only one subject at the upper division level are not discussed in this section since there are no comparisons to make. Subjects that awarded fewer than five grades in the most recent fiscal year are also excluded from this section.

- Environment:
  - EVSC awarded the highest average upper division grade in 2020/21.
  - ENV awarded the lowest average upper division grade in 2020/21.
- Science:
  - ACMA and MBB awarded the highest average upper division grades in 2020/21.
  - SCI and MATH awarded the lowest average upper division grades in 2020/21.

### LARGE CHANGES IN 2019/20 TO 2020/21 AVERAGE GRADES<sup>10</sup> (see Table 8)

Keeping in mind that 2019/20 and 2020/21 grades may not be comparable (see the Definitions and Notes section for details), 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.

**Table 8: Large Changes in Average Upper Division Course Grades**

Subject	2019/20 Average Grade	2020/21 Average Grade	Difference in Average Grade
ITAL *	3.06	3.67	+ 0.61
MACM	2.53	2.97	+ 0.44
MATH	2.63	2.90	+ 0.27
JAPN *	3.85	3.59	- 0.26
EVSC	3.86	3.50	- 0.36
SD	3.61	3.14	- 0.47
ENV	3.39	2.82	- 0.57
COGS *	3.60	3.00	- 0.60

\* These averages are based on relatively few grades.

<sup>10</sup> Subjects that awarded fewer than five grades in either of the two most recent fiscal years are excluded from this section.

## USE OF TEMPORARY GRADING POLICIES (see Table 9, Table 10)

Temporary grading policies were in place for Spring 2020 and Spring 2021 (see the Definitions and Notes section for details). This section of the report looks at what proportion of the upper division grades awarded in the Spring terms were changed according to these policies (i.e. grades converted to P in Spring 2020, or grades converted to P, CR, or NC in Spring 2021<sup>11</sup>).

### **Spring 2020 Grading Policy**

- SFU level:
  - Overall, 16% of the upper division grades in Spring 2020 used the temporary grading policy.
- Faculty level:
  - Among the faculties, courses in APSC had the highest usage of the policy (25%). BUS and SCI had the next highest usage (20% and 18%, respectively).
  - Courses in EDUC and HSCI had the lowest usage of the policy (7% each).
- Subject level:
  - The subjects with the highest usage of the policy were: MACM (33%), ACMA (31%), ENSC (31%), MATH (25%), ECON (25%), and CMPT (25%).
  - GA, ITAL, and JAPN had no grades using this policy, but all of these subjects awarded relatively few upper division grades in Spring 2020 (see Table 10). Aside from these subjects, the lowest usage of the policy was 2% in each of INLG, DIAL, and EVSC.

### **Spring 2021 Grading Policy**

- SFU level:
  - Overall, 2% of the upper division grades in Spring 2021 used the temporary grading policy.
- Faculty level:
  - The faculty with the highest usage was ARTS (5%), which may be related to the number of courses in this faculty that are used as electives (since the Spring 2021 grading policy applies to elective courses).
  - Courses in BUS had the lowest percentage of grades awarded which used the policy (less than 0.5%, so it shows as 0% in Table 9).
- Subject level:
  - The subjects with the highest usage of the policy were: SCI (27%), NUSC (11%), WL (11%), PHIL (10%), and ECON (10%). Note that SCI and NUSC awarded relatively few grades in Spring 2021 (see Table 10).
  - There were 10 subjects which had nobody use the policy: ACMA, CHIN, COGS, DIAL, EASC, EVSC, GA, INLG, ITAL, and JAPN (some of these subjects awarded relatively few grades in Spring 2021; see Table 10). There were many other subjects which only had a few percent of the grades using the policy.

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<sup>11</sup> For Spring 2020, it was not always possible to differentiate regular P grades from P grades that resulted due to the one-time grading policy, but this should have minimal effect on the P statistics. For Spring 2021, it was possible to differentiate regular P/CR/NC grades from P/CR/NC grades due to the elective grading policy.

**Table 9: Use of Temporary Grading Policies by Course Faculty – Upper Division**

<b>Course Faculty</b>	<b>Spring 2020</b>		<b>Spring 2021</b>	
	<b>% Used</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% Used</b>	<b>N</b>
Applied Sciences	25%	3,813	2%	4,004
Arts and Social Sciences	15%	10,528	5%	10,891
Beedie School of Business	20%	4,934	0%	4,893
Communication, Art and Technology	9%	2,989	1%	2,885
Education	7%	1,258	2%	1,298
Environment	12%	1,516	2%	1,368
Health Sciences	7%	1,689	1%	1,680
Science	18%	4,904	1%	4,801
<b>University Total</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>31,631</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>31,820</b>

**Table 10: Use of Temporary Grading Policies by Subject – Upper Division**

Subject	Spring 2020		Spring 2021		Subject	Spring 2020		Spring 2021	
	% Used	N	% Used	N		% Used	N	% Used	N
ACMA	31%	54	0%	51	HUM	15%	162	6%	169
ARCH	8%	210	4%	233	IAT	15%	902	1%	892
BISC	14%	908	1%	944	INDG	20%	148	2%	138
BPK	20%	1,103	0%	1,050	INLG	2%	138	0%	114
BUS	20%	4,934	0%	4,893	IS	15%	246	6%	299
CA	4%	534	1%	484	ITAL	0%	7	0%	8
CHEM	12%	211	1%	187	JAPN	0%	22	0%	25
CHIN	12%	26	0%	24	LBST	12%	177	5%	129
CMNS	6%	1,249	1%	1,323	LING	17%	268	2%	295
CMPT	25%	2,365	2%	2,689	MACM	33%	193	2%	259
COGS	5%	21	0%	10	MATH	25%	474	5%	397
CRIM	12%	2,325	2%	2,739	MBB	14%	723	0%	736
DIAL	2%	62	0%	95	MSE	11%	452	1%	441
EASC	12%	77	0%	69	NUSC	13%	8	11%	9
ECON	25%	1,641	10%	1,713	PHIL	9%	308	10%	337
EDUC	7%	1,258	2%	1,298	PHYS	14%	178	1%	110
ENGL	6%	322	2%	477	PLAN	-	0	-	2
ENSC	31%	996	0%	874	POL	9%	521	5%	474
EVSC	2%	66	0%	108	PSYC	18%	2,304	7%	2,061
FREN	20%	241	1%	205	PUB	10%	304	2%	186
GA	0%	9	0%	8	REM	15%	339	5%	303
GEOG	12%	784	0%	657	SA	9%	593	3%	541
GERO	7%	135	6%	141	SCI	16%	44	27%	15
GSWS	6%	306	3%	383	SD	14%	117	5%	65
HIST	11%	456	2%	451	STAT	19%	931	2%	974
HS	19%	48	-	0	WL	17%	42	11%	55
HSCI	7%	1,689	1%	1,680					

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

- In 2020/21, the average undergraduate grade awarded was 3.03, which is very close to the 2019/20 average of 3.02. Both of these averages are notably higher than the average undergraduate grades in years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which ranged from 2.79 to 2.89.
- The average undergraduate grade awarded over the past ten years is 2.87.
- 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 11 and Figure C)

This section summarizes the 2020/21 undergraduate course grade distributions within each faculty, controlling for the faculty of undergraduate students enrolled in the courses.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 11: 2020/21 Average Undergraduate Course Grades Awarded and Percentage of “A” Grades Awarded, by Student Faculty**

Student Faculty	Average Course Grades	% "A" Grades Awarded
Applied Sciences	3.01	35%
Arts and Social Sciences	2.95	29%
Beedie School of Business	3.08	32%
Communication, Art and Technology	3.13	37%
Education	3.45	59%
Environment	2.99	33%
Health Sciences	3.09	36%
Science	3.07	37%
All Undergraduate Students	3.03	34%

#### **By Student Faculty**

- Students from all faculties most frequently took courses from their own faculties.
- Students from EDUC were awarded the highest average grade (3.45) in 2020/21.
- Students from SCI, BUS, HSCI, and CAT were awarded average grades from 3.07 to 3.13.
- Students from ARTS, ENV, and APSC were awarded the lowest average grades in 2020/21 (2.95, 2.99, and 3.01, respectively).

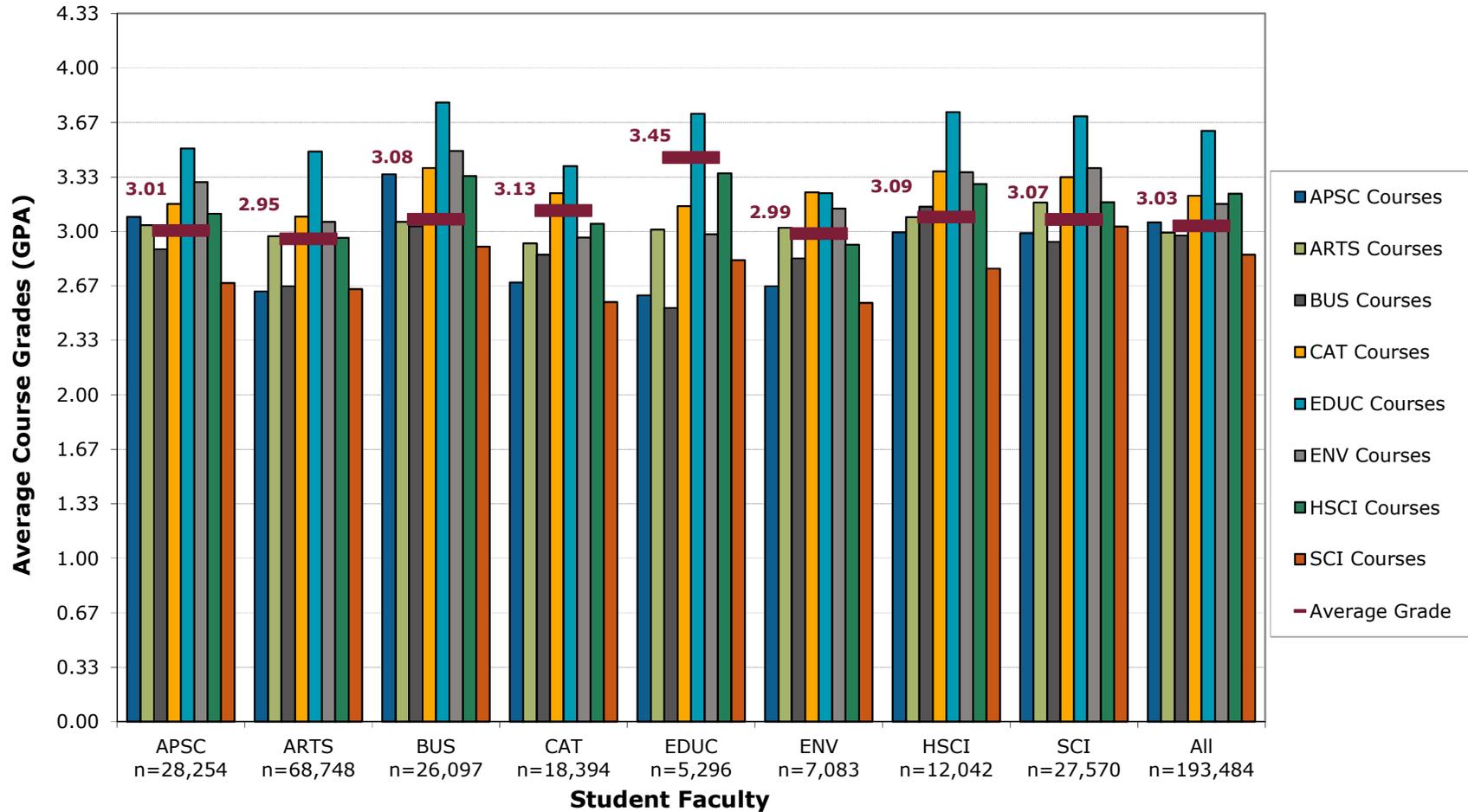
<sup>12</sup> Keep in mind that 2020/21 grades may not be comparable to grades from other years; see the Definitions and Notes section for details.

- Students in all faculties except ENV were awarded their highest average grades in courses taught in EDUC.
- Students from ARTS had the highest proportion of their Spring 2021 grades use the elective grading policy (5%).

***By Course Faculty***

- Courses in all faculties were most frequently taken by students from that faculty.
- In courses offered by ARTS and SCI, students from SCI were awarded the highest average grades in 2020/21.
- In courses offered by BUS, students from HSCI were awarded the highest average grade in 2020/21.
- In courses offered by APSC, students from APSC were awarded the highest average grade in 2020/21.
- In courses offered by CAT, EDUC, and ENV, students from BUS were awarded the highest average grades in 2020/21.
- In courses offered by HSCI, students from EDUC were awarded the highest average grade in 2020/21. However, this was based on relatively few students. Students from BUS were awarded the next highest average grade in courses offered by HSCI in 2020/21.
- Courses offered by ARTS and ENV had the highest proportion of their Spring 2021 grades use the elective grading policy (5% each).

**Figure C**  
**Undergraduate Course Grades, 2020/21**  
**Course Faculty vs. Student Faculty**



Notes: Only averages based on 5 or more grades are graphed.  
 Only includes grades awarded to undergraduate students.  
 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, grades from 2020/21 may not be comparable to grades from other years.

### III.C – Graduate Course Grades<sup>13</sup>

#### FACULTY COMPARISONS (see Table 12 and Figure D)

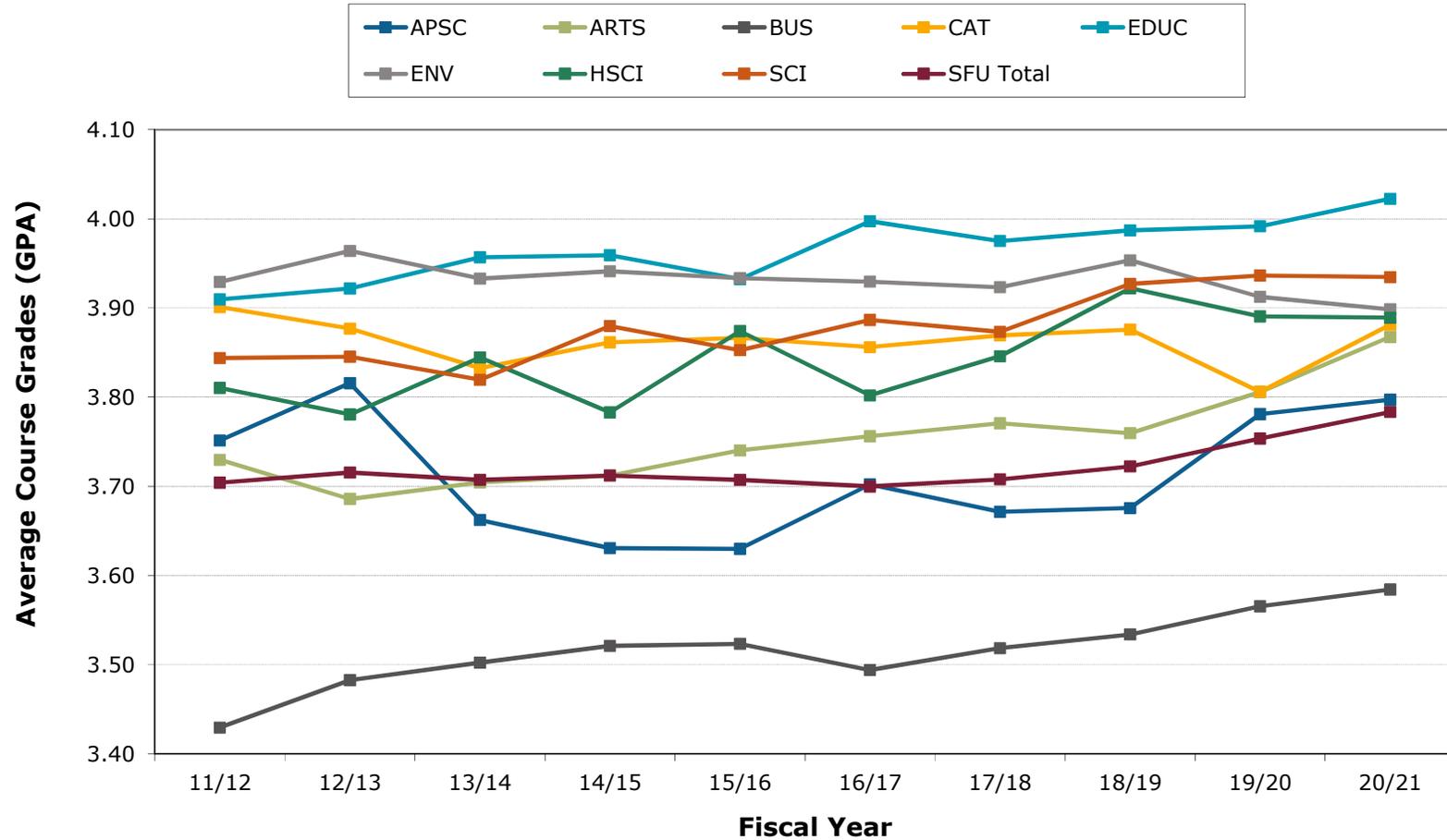
- EDUC and ENV awarded the highest average graduate course grades in eight of the past ten years. In 2019/20 and 2020/21, SCI surpassed ENV for the second highest average graduate-level course grade. The 10-year average graduate course grades for EDUC and ENV are 3.96 and 3.93, respectively.
- With the next highest average grades over the past decade, SCI, CAT, and HSCI awarded average graduate-level grades of 3.88, 3.86, and 3.84, respectively.
- ARTS and APSC have generally awarded lower average graduate grades than all other faculties except BUS (10-year averages of 3.76 and 3.71, respectively).
- BUS has awarded the lowest average graduate grades in each of the past ten years, with a 10-year average grade of 3.52.

**Table 12: Average Graduate Course Grades Awarded and Percentage of “A” Grades Awarded, by Course Faculty**

Course Faculty	Average Course Grades		% "A" Grades Awarded	
	2020/21	10-Year Average	2020/21	10-Year Proportion
Applied Sciences	3.80	3.71	81%	75%
Arts and Social Sciences	3.87	3.76	86%	78%
Beedie School of Business	3.58	3.52	56%	51%
Communication, Art and Technology	3.88	3.86	89%	88%
Education	4.02	3.96	95%	94%
Environment	3.90	3.93	91%	94%
Health Sciences	3.89	3.84	93%	88%
Science	3.93	3.88	90%	87%
University Total	3.78	3.72	77%	73%

<sup>13</sup> Keep in mind that 2019/20 and 2020/21 grades may not be comparable to grades from other years; see the Definitions and Notes section for details.

**Figure D**  
**Average Graduate Course Grades Awarded by Course Faculty**



Notes: In order to better show the variation in the data, the y-axis above does not run from 0.00 to 4.33. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, grades from 2019/20 and 2020/21 may not be comparable to grades from other years.

## LONG-TERM COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>14</sup>

Comparing the average graduate course grades awarded over the last ten years:

- Applied Sciences:
  - SEE awarded the highest average graduate course grade but this is based on only two years of data and relatively few grades. Other than SEE, MSE awarded the highest average graduate course grade over the past 10 years.
  - CMPT and ENSC awarded the lowest average graduate course grades.
- Arts and Social Sciences:
  - PSYC awarded the highest average graduate course grade over the past ten years.
  - ALS awarded the lowest average graduate course grade.
- Communication, Art and Technology:
  - Over the past ten years, all subjects within CAT have awarded similar average graduate course grades.
- Environment:
  - EVSC offered graduate courses for the first time in 2020/21. Since it did not offer graduate courses prior to this year, the 10-year average is not discussed.
  - All subjects within ENV have awarded similar average graduate course grades. Note that GEOG and ARCH have awarded relatively few grades at the graduate level over the past ten years, and the average grade for ECO is based on only six years of data.
- Science:
  - BPK, BISC, NEUR, and MBB awarded the highest 10-year average grades in graduate-level courses. Note that BPK and NEUR awarded relatively few grades at the graduate level over the past ten years, and the average grade for NEUR is based on only two years of data.
  - PHYS and ACMA awarded the lowest average graduate course grades. Note that ACMA awarded relatively few grades in each of the past ten years.

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<sup>14</sup> Faculties with only one subject at the graduate level are not discussed in this section, since there are no comparisons to make. Subjects that awarded fewer than five grades in the most recent fiscal year, or awarded fewer than five grades in all previous fiscal years combined are also excluded from this section.

## **CURRENT COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>15</sup>**

- Applied Sciences:
  - SEE awarded the highest average graduate course grade in 2020/21.
  - ENSC awarded the lowest average graduate course grade in 2020/21.
- Arts and Social Sciences:
  - PSYC awarded the highest average graduate course grade in 2020/21.
  - Other than FREN which awarded very few graduate-level grades in 2020/21, the lowest average graduate course grade was awarded in ALS.
- Communication, Art and Technology:
  - PUB awarded the highest average graduate course grade in 2020/21.
  - The rest of the subjects in CAT awarded similar average graduate course grades (3.86 to 3.88) in 2020/21.
- Environment:
  - ECO awarded the highest average graduate course grade in 2020/21.
  - ARCH awarded the lowest average graduate course grade in 2020/21.
- Science:
  - The highest average graduate course grades in 2020/21 were in BPK, BISC, NEUR, and APMA. Note that all of these subjects except for BISC awarded relatively few grades in 2020/21.
  - The lowest average graduate course grades in 2020/21 were in CHEM, MATH, ACMA, and PHYS. Note that CHEM and ACMA awarded relatively few grades in 2020/21.

## **LARGE CHANGES IN 2019/20 TO 2020/21 AVERAGE GRADES<sup>16</sup> (see Table 13)**

Keeping in mind that 2019/20 and 2020/21 grades may not be comparable (see the Definitions and Notes section for details), 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.

**Table 13: Large Changes in Average Graduate Course Grades**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>2019/20 Average Grade</b>	<b>2020/21 Average Grade</b>	<b>Difference in Average Grade</b>
ACMA *	3.00	3.86	+ 0.86
MSE	3.60	3.98	+ 0.38
PUB	3.67	3.94	+ 0.27

\* These averages are based on relatively few grades.

<sup>15</sup> Faculties with only one subject at the graduate level are not discussed in this section, since there are no comparisons to make. Subjects that awarded fewer than five grades in the most recent fiscal year are also excluded from this section.

<sup>16</sup> Subjects that awarded fewer than five grades in either of the two most recent fiscal years are excluded from this section.

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- In 2020/21, the average graduate grade awarded was 3.78, which is slightly higher than last year. The average graduate grade awarded at the university was relatively stable from 2011/12 to 2018/19 (between 3.70 and 3.72) but has increased slightly in each of the past two years.
- The average graduate grade awarded over the past ten years is 3.72.

## APPENDIX A: FACULTY AND SUBJECT ABBREVIATIONS

### Faculty Abbreviations

APSC	Applied Sciences
ARTS	Arts and Social Sciences
BUS	Beedie School of Business
CAT	Communication, Art and Technology
EDUC	Education
ENV	Environment
HSCI	Health Sciences
SCI	Science

### Subject Abbreviations

#### Applied Sciences

CHIN	Chinese
CMPT	Computing Science
ENSC	Engineering Science
MACM	Mathematics and Computing Science
MSE	Mechatronic Systems Engineering
SEE	Sustainable Energy Engineering
TEKX	Technology

#### Arts and Social Sciences

ALS	Applied Legal Studies
ARAB	Arabic
BUEC	Business Administration and Economics
CHIN	Chinese
COGS	Cognitive Science
CRIM	Criminology
DIAL	Dialogue
EAS	English for Academic Success
ECON	Economics
ENGL	English
EXPL	Explorations
FASS	Arts and Social Sciences
FREN	French
GA	Global Asia
GERM	German
GERO	Gerontology
GRK	Greek
GS	General Studies
GSWS	Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies
HIST	History
HS	Hellenic Studies
HUM	Humanities
INDG	Indigenous Studies

**Arts and Social Sciences (continued)**

INLG	Indigenous Languages
IS	International Studies
ISPO	International Studies and Political Science
ITAL	Italian
JAPN	Japanese
LANG	Language
LAS	Latin American Studies
LBST	Labour Studies
LING	Linguistics
LS	Liberal Studies
PERS	Persian
PHIL	Philosophy
PLCY	Public Policy
POL	Political Science
PSYC	Psychology
PUNJ	Punjabi
SA	Sociology and Anthropology
SDA	Social Data Analytics
SPAN	Spanish
TRSS	Terrorism, Risk, and Security Studies
URB	Urban Studies
WL	World Literature

**Beedie School of Business**

BUEC	Business Administration and Economics
BUS	Business Administration

**Communication, Art and Technology**

CA	Contemporary Arts
CMNS	Communication
IAT	Interactive Arts and Technology
PUB	Publishing

**Education**

EDUC	Education
FAL	Foundations of Academic Literacy

**Environment**

ARCH	Archaeology
ECO	Ecological Restoration
ENV	Environment
EVSC	Environmental Science
GEOG	Geography
PLAN	Planning
REM	Resource and Environmental Management
SD	Sustainable Development

**Health Sciences**

HSCI Health Sciences

**Science**

ACMA Actuarial Mathematics  
APMA Applied Mathematics  
BISC Biological Sciences  
BPK Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology  
CHEM Chemistry  
DATA Data Science  
EASC Earth Sciences  
FAN Foundations of Analytical and Quantitative Reasoning  
MACM Mathematics and Computing Science  
MASC Marine Science  
MATH Mathematics  
MBB Molecular Biology and Biochemistry  
NEUR Neuroscience  
NUSC Nuclear Science  
ONC Oncology  
PHYS Physics  
SCI Science  
STAT Statistics