Bachelor of Laws with Honours

An award of Honours signals that a student has achieved high order legal research competencies and a high standard of academic excellence in their LLB degree.

Completion of the LLB with Honours requires students to develop skills in legal research methodologies. These skills are highly relevant to a range of professional career options, including academic careers, research, policy and government advisory positions, as well as enhancing the range of legal research skills that can be applied to conventional forms of legal practice. In addition, employers in the legal profession tend to look favorably upon an Honours award as indicating that a student has achieved a high standard of excellence in their undergraduate law studies.

Entry to the LLB Honours program is open only to students who attain excellence in their LLB studies. The Honours program also involves the completion of two units of study: LAW10181 Legal Research: Context, Method and Perspective and LAW00524 Independent Legal Research. Together, the two Honours units require the preparation of a sound research methodology and proposal to support the completion of independent research and a research paper.

The School’s Honours program is comparable to the Honours programs which operate in other academic disciplines. This is important for LLB Honours graduates who may in future wish to apply for postgraduate scholarships and to enrol in postgraduate studies. This is because an Honours qualification is a pre-requisite to entry to some postgraduate programs and is relevant to eligibility for postgraduate scholarships.

Eligibility requirements
All students enrolled in an LLB program offered by the School of Law and Justice may be eligible to graduate with an LLB with Honours. However, attainment of Honours requires you to meet certain requirements during your LLB studies:

- Have a GPA of 5.3 or above to enter the Honours program;
- Complete two units of study: LAW10181 Legal Research: Context, Method and Perspective (Session 1) and LAW00524 Independent Legal Research (Session 2); and
- Achieve higher than a credit level Weighted Grade Point Average in your LLB units of study.

An Award of Honours is based on a student’s Weighted Grade Point Average (WGPA).

The Honours categories require the following levels of achievement:

- First Class Honours: midpoint of the distinction range or better (ie 6.5 to 7)
- Second Class Honours - Division I: distinction to, but not including the midpoint (ie 6 to 6.499)
- Second Class Honours - Division II: midpoint of the credit range to, but not including distinction (ie 5.5 to 5.999)

Under the WGPA system, the midpoint of the credit range is 5.5, a distinction is 6, and the midpoint of the distinction range is 6.5. More information and a working example are provided below to help you determine your WGPA.

Students who achieve First Class Honours may also be eligible for the award of the University Medal.
Teaching program in the LLB Honours Program

Each year, Southern Cross University holds an Honours Orientation Day for all students enrolled in the Honours programs. This Day includes a number of seminars that assist students to start and manage their Honours project, to explain the approval process applied to Research Ethics applications, and outline the services available to support Honours study. This day complements the School’s Honours teaching program (see below) and will also include an opportunity to meet with staff involved in the School’s Honours program. Though we encourage attendance at the Orientation Day, this is not compulsory. It is usually held in the Orientation week prior to commencement of Session 1.

As noted above, Honours students in law must complete two units of study in their Honours year. The first unit, LAW10181 Legal Research: Context, Method and Perspective, is offered only in Session 1 each year. Student learning is supported by a facilitated Blackboard site, online tutorials and a discussion board. It also requires attendance at a 1-day workshop which focuses on legal research methodologies. Attendance at this workshop is compulsory unless an exemption is granted by the School’s Director of the Honours program. The methodology workshop is usually held in conjunction with the University Orientation Day; dates for this and the University Orientation session will be published as soon as they are available. Students are also expected to attend the School for the purposes of the unit’s second assessment item (a presentation); students who reside outside the Far North coast/ Gold Coast region will be permitted to complete this assessment via an online tutorial if they are unable to attend in person. Ordinarily, presentations are held in Week 8. During this session, each student will be allocated a supervisor to work with them on their Honours project. Students and supervisors are expected to enter a Supervision Agreement to clarify mutual expectations and guide the supervision relationship.

The second unit, LAW00524 Independent Legal Research, is offered only in Session 2 each year. Student learning is largely self-directed, but will be supported by a Supervisor appointed by the School to work with the Honours student. The unit assessor is also available for individual support, and will lead optional work-in-progress seminars during the teaching session as well as facilitate discussion boards and online tutorials to support work-in-progress seminars.

What do I need to do?
To be eligible for Honours, you must:

- Confirm you have a GPA of 5.3 or above at the time you wish to enter the Honours program;
- Discuss your potential enrolment with, and receive the approval of, the School’s Director of the Honours program;
- Enrol in the prescribed units by submitting a ‘unit approval request’ via MyEnrolment.

Ordinarily, students will not be considered for entry into the Honours program until they have completed 16 units of study.

I still have questions
If you require more information about our Honours program, please contact:

School Director of the Honours Program
Dr Alessandro Pelizzon
Email: alessandro.pelizzon@scu.edu.au
Phone (02) 6620 3369

School Student Support Team
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Eligibility for Honours in the LLB: working example

Honours rule
4.3 Law Degree with Honours

a. A candidate for the award of Bachelor of Laws with Honours shall fulfil the requirements of the Bachelor of Laws award, and in addition:
   i. shall achieve such standard of excellence as the School Board, School of Law and Justice, may from time to time determine;
   ii. shall complete the units LAW10181 Legal Research: Context, Perspective and Method and LAW00524 Independent Legal Research.

b. For the award of Honours, consideration shall be given to a candidate’s academic record throughout the course of study. A candidate who has reached the required standard of excellence referred to in Rule 4.3(a) may on the recommendation of the School Board in the School of Law and Justice, be awarded Honours in one of the following grades:
   First Class Honours
   Second Class Honours - Division I Second Class Honours - Division II

What must I do to be eligible to graduate with Honours?
To be admitted to the Honours program, you must have a current Grade Point Average of 5.3 or above.

To be eligible to graduate with Honours you must complete the following units:

- Session 1 LAW10181 Legal Research: Context, Perspective and Method;
- Session 2 LAW00524 Independent Legal Research And
- Achieve a WGPA of 5.5 or above.

How do I work out what level of Honours I have achieved?
The calculation of the WGPA is based on your results in LAW10181 Legal Research: Context, Perspective and Method and in LAW00524 Independent Legal Research plus your 18 highest 12-credit point law units (or equivalent) which form part of the law degree including units which were completed cross-institutionally. Units which are ‘double weighted’ based on workload (ie, 24-credit point units) will have their GPA doubled. Units which are given ungraded passes will not be counted.

To calculate your WGPA (Weighted Grade Point Average), make a note of your grades in LAW10181 Legal Research: Context, Perspective and Method and in LAW00524 Independent Legal Research and then select your highest 18 grades from the other LLB units you have completed.

Allocate the following points to each grade you have achieved as relevant:

- High Distinction 7 pts
- Distinction 6 pts
- Credit 5 pts
- Pass 4 pts
- XX 0 pts

Add up your points, and then divide by 20. This will give you your Weighted Grade Point Average, and allow you to determine the level of Honours to which you may be eligible.
**Working example**

Student A has completed 20 12-credit point units (which includes *LAW10181 Legal Research: Context, Perspective and Method* and *LAW00524 Independent Legal Research*) and two 24-credit point units (total equivalent of 24 units of study).

Student A was awarded a High Distinction for *LAW10181 Legal Research: Context, Perspective and Method* and a High Distinction for *LAW00524 Independent Legal Research*. This yields 14 points.

Student A’s 18 best 12-credit point units (or equivalent) were 14 12-credit point units and two 24-credit point units.

The 14 12-credit point units comprised:

- 5 Distinctions \((5 \times 6 = 30)\)
- 6 Credits \((6 \times 5 = 30)\)
- 3 Passes \((3 \times 4 = 12)\)

This yields 72 points.

The two 24-credit point units comprised 2 Distinctions \((2 \times 6 \text{ points} \times 2)\). This yields 24 points.

Total number of points \((14 + 72 + 24 = 110)\) divided by total number of units \((20 \text{ @12-credit point per unit})\) equals the Weighted Grade Point Average. Student A has 110 points divided by 20 units equals 5.50 and will therefore be awarded a Second Class Honours - Division II.

_Last updated: 1/05/2014_