Honours project marking guidelines

On the Honours project marking form, markers give ratings on individual marking criteria. From these ratings the form computes a mark range according to the published Guidance Notes (attached), and markers are encouraged to give a mark in this range.

The Guidance Notes have not been altered for years, but the computing of the mark range was new in 2013/14. This led to discovery of a few anomalies whereby a minor change in the ratings could lead to a leap in the mark range of 20-30 points. Specifically, the following ratings:

- Basic criteria: all Good or Excellent
- Additional criteria: all Good or Excellent
- Exception criteria: “some elements” but not “strong elements”

gives a mark range of 80-89, but:

1. lowering the rating on one of the additional criteria to Average gives a mark range of 60-69
2. lowering the rating on one of the basic criteria to Average gives a mark range of 50-59

A situation in which markers might need to select between these two options is where the project has some original research content but there are flaws in the report.

Changing one of the parts of the Guidance as follows:

- 70-79: Low I:
  The project is good or excellent on all the basic and additional criteria, or it almost achieves this and also has elements of the exceptional criteria.

would get rid of both of these anomalies, if “almost achieves this” is interpreted as “is average on only one of the basic or additional criteria”.

A change in the wording to allow average on only one of the additional criteria would get rid of only the first anomaly. The second anomaly could remain if we feel that a project that is not at least Good on each of the basic criteria does not deserve a first-class mark.

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NOTES FOR GUIDANCE

Note to moderators (and 1st and 2nd markers)

The project is marked on the basis of the dissertation, with clarification provided by the demonstration. Therefore considerations of how well the student worked and/or how nice the student's code was, cannot be used to alter the mark. This is particularly important for moderators to bear in mind - they must adjudicate without giving credit to considerations of this kind. It is acceptable to take into account (in the case of an unclear report, say) whether or not the code exists and/or particular tasks were completed (this is information which should be clear from the demo, or could in extreme cases be checked in the directory of supporting material submitted with the dissertation).

Notes for Guidance

Your ultimate aim is to allocate an overall numerical mark on the University-wide scale:

Ord. < 40% ≤ III < 50% ≤ II.2 < 60% ≤ II.1 < 70% ≤ I

To arrive at a mark, follow the guidelines given below. These refer to the criteria listed in the Assessment report Form.

0-19: Bad Fail:
The project is inadequate in each of the basic criteria.

20-29: Clear Fail:
The project is inadequate in more than one of the basic criteria, but not all.

30-39: Marginal Fail:
The project is inadequate in one of the basic criteria.

40:49: III:
The project is adequate on each of the basic criteria.

50-59: II.2:
The project is at least average on each of the basic criteria and is average on most of the additional criteria.

60-69: II.1:
The project is at least good on each of the basic criteria and is at least average and sometimes good or excellent on each of the additional criteria.

70-79: Low I:
The project is good or excellent on all the basic and additional criteria.

80-89: High I:
The project is good or excellent on all the basic and additional criteria and also has elements of the exceptional criteria.

90-100: Outstanding I:
The project is excellent on all the basic and additional criteria, and has strong elements of the exceptional criteria.

Interpreting the criteria

Many projects will not fit neatly into any category, e.g. strong on additional criteria, but weak on a basic one. In this case you are asked to trade one criterion off against another as best you can, bearing in mind that failure on a basic criterion is a serious fault.
The aim of the project is to teach sound scientific and engineering methodology. The project should be assessed on the evidence that these have been demonstrated. The criteria for assessing the work of the project are given separately and are divided into basic, additional and exceptional.

**Independent marking**

Your mark should be arrived at **without consultation** with the other marker. However, markers are at liberty to discuss their assessments **after recording their Independent Mark**. Where an agreed compromise is readily obtained an Agreed Mark can be recorded.