

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

LATIN HONOURS

YALE-NUS COLLEGE

1. What is Latin Honours?

Latin Honours refers to the College's system of recognising our students' cumulative academic achievement. The system was proposed by the College's Teaching, Learning and Advising Committee (TLA) after extensive deliberations and has been endorsed by the Academic Committee, the Faculty, and the Governing Board.

Yale-NUS College offers a four-year undergraduate honours programme. All Yale-NUS students graduate with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) or a Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree. In addition, the College will award Latin Honours (*summa cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, and *cum laude*) to no more than 35 percent of each graduating class.

For more information on the rules concerning Latin Honours, please refer to Section 10 of the Yale-NUS Undergraduate Regulations:

<http://studentlife.yale-nus.edu.sg/policies/academic-regulations/>

2. What are the levels of Honours at Yale-NUS College?

The levels of Honours, including Latin Honours, are below:

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Honours - <i>summa cum laude</i> | To not more than the top 5 percent of the graduating class. |
| Honours - <i>magna cum laude</i> | To not more than the next 10 percent of the graduating class. |
| Honours - <i>cum laude</i> | To not more than the next 20 percent of the graduating class. |
| Honours | The rest of the graduating class. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Latin Honours will go to no more than 35 percent of a graduating class.• The graduating class is defined as graduates who entered the College at the same time unless the student has been tagged by the College to graduate with a later cohort due to promotion rules or other official reasons. | |

3. Why did the College introduce an Honours system?

Yale-NUS College, similar to other institutions of higher education in Singapore and around the world, is committed to recognising the academic achievement and excellence of our students.

A system of Honours with distinct levels enables the College to offer this recognition. This will, in turn, improve the ability of our students to communicate the extent of their academic achievement and excellence to potential employers, graduate programmes and scholarship providers.

Latin Honours provides recognition for a specific kind of achievement, which is academic achievement in coursework across all four years, including the common curriculum, electives and majors. The College will implement other modes of recognition, such as prizes and awards, to highlight other academic and non-academic accomplishments by students.

4. Why did the College adopt 'Latin' Honours?

The College adopted the 'Latin' Honours terminology for several reasons:

Latin Honours enables the College to distinguish its Honours system from that of the NUS Honours system. The College uses a different method of determining the levels of Honours due to our unique curriculum, smaller cohort and grading practices. The Latin Honours will help the College and students to highlight such distinguishing factors to potential employers, graduate programmes and scholarship providers.

The College also wanted to use terminology that was established and widely recognised so it would carry the appropriate gravity. While Latin Honours may not be as widespread in Singapore, it is well-known in the international education arena, used by such leading institutions such as Yale University, Princeton University, Columbia University and some European institutions, and is recognised by employers worldwide.

In addition, the College's common curriculum draws upon ancient cultures, languages, and traditions, which makes the use of Latin fitting for our context.

5. How will the College determine the levels of Latin Honours for recipients?

The Latin Honours are based on the Cumulative Average Point (CAP), which is the weighted average of individual course grades (or the sum of course grade points multiplied by the number of MCs for the corresponding course, divided by the total number of MCs).

The percentiles recommended by the TLA Committee for the three levels of Latin Honours (*summa cum laude*, *magna cum laude* and *cum laude*) are similar to those used by liberal arts and sciences colleges/universities in North America and other countries, and have been endorsed by the College's faculty, administration and Governing Board as appropriate, both in terms of representing the academic standards of the College and recognising student academic achievement.

No more than 60 percent or 6 of the students (whichever is larger) in any one major will receive honours at the *cum laude* level or above, and no more than 40 percent or 4 of the students (whichever is larger) will receive honours at the *magna cum laude* level or above. In cases where the number of students might exceed these limits, only the top students down to the designated limits will receive the relevant honour.

For example, a student whose CAP is within the top 5 percent of his/her graduating class and is among the top 40 percent or 4 students (whichever is larger) in his/her major will be awarded Bachelor of Arts or Science (Honours) degree with *summa cum laude*.

The above is intended to recognise academic achievement not only with respect to the overall CAP, but also academic excellence within the major. This mechanism is also applied to help control for potential differences in grading across majors, and shifts in the average CAP from one graduating class to another.

The College's Academic Committee is the authority for implementing the cut-offs for each Class based on the data available at the time of graduation of the majority of the Class. The same cut-offs will apply to students in any given Class who graduates later because of participation in the double degree programme or other programmes, or due to delays because of Leave of Absence (see FAQ9).

6. Why is the College's Honours system based on the CAP?

The TLA Committee carefully considered a number of models for determining the levels of the College's Honours system. After much deliberation, the Committee decided on a computation based on the Cumulative Average Point (CAP), which is the weighted average of individual course grades (or the sum of course grade points multiplied by the number of MCs for the corresponding course, divided by the total number of MCs).

A CAP-based Honours system conveys the breadth of students' academic achievement and experience at the College including the common curriculum, electives, capstones, and majors. It takes into account the assessment of diverse faculty since the CAP reflects the assessment of interdisciplinary faculty across the divisions. It is relatively constant compared to majors-based nominations that are dependent on the leadership of the majors, which may change periodically. This system is also an objective and transparent measure of academic performance.

It is important to note that initiatives are planned to separately recognise students by way of prizes and awards that are not solely CAP-based and will include appreciation of achievement in capstones and other student activities.

7. Why is the College's Honours system not based on a fixed CAP like NUS?

Yale-NUS College has grading practices that are different from NUS. The College, which has a much smaller cohort, does not provide a normative (curve-based) grading system and therefore the CAP received at Yale-NUS would not correspond to percentiles within courses. The College's CAP-based percentile honours system provides these percentiles at the end of the Yale-NUS education. This allows for a measure of performance that averages together performance across all graded courses completed by the student in order to recognise excellence across the entire four years of their education.

8. How will the Latin Honours be applied to DDP students and other students who will graduate one or more years later?

DDP Law students will be considered for Latin Honours along with the other Yale-NUS students, and their CAP and placing in their intake Class will be computed in the same way.

The Liberal Arts B.A. (Hons) degree completed by DDP Law students will be considered as a 'major' for the purpose of the Latin Honours system, i.e., "No more than 60 percent or 6 of the students (whichever is larger) in any one major will receive honours at the *cum laude* level or above, and no more than 40 percent or 4 of the students (whichever is larger) will receive honours at the *magna cum laude* level or above. In cases where the number of students might exceed these limits, only the top students down to the designated limits will receive the relevant honour."

This will also apply to other students who need to graduate later than the majority of their class (for example, due to Leave of Absence) unless they are tagged by the College to graduate with a later cohort due to promotion rules or other official reasons.

9. Will Latin Honours promote competition among students?

Academic competition among students is sometimes part and parcel of being a student at an institution of higher education. However, since a student would not know whether they will receive Latin Honours until the end of their Yale-NUS experience, the College hopes that students will focus on learning and achievement in each course rather than divert valuable energy toward worrying about their percentile rank by cohort.

Since Latin Honours are reserved for the upper 35 percent of Yale-NUS graduates, it preserves the distinction for truly outstanding academic performance. However, not being a recipient of Latin Honours in no way undermines the intellectual commitment and curiosity that a student has demonstrated during their candidature at the College. All qualified Yale-NUS students will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) and Bachelor of Science (Honours), regardless of whether they receive Latin Honours.

10. How will the Latin Honours affect the employment prospects of students?

Yale-NUS College offers a four-year undergraduate honours programme. All qualified Yale-NUS students will graduate with an Honours degree.

Latin Honours is a distinctive recognition that enables outstanding students to communicate the extent of their academic achievement at the College to prospective employers, postgraduate institutions, and scholarship providers.

Notwithstanding Latin Honours, the College is very confident that students who perform reasonably well academically and in co-curricular activities, or who prepare for working life such as through internship or by engaging professional networks, will have successful careers. The College's Centre for International and Professional Experience (CIPE) will provide all students with the preparation and assistance they need to seek employment and productive careers.

Many employers and graduate programmes are interested in students' CAP rather than the terminology or level of Honours in order to standardise their candidates' academic achievement.

Starting salaries are generally determined based on an individual's calibre (educational qualifications, skills, personal qualities and any prior work experience); the demands of the job; and the prevailing labour market.

Given the College's selective intake, innovative curriculum and experiential learning opportunities, graduates of Yale-NUS will be strong contenders in the job market or for graduate programmes. The distinctiveness of our graduates and their achievements will be highlighted in the College's ongoing outreach efforts.

11. When will the College apply the Latin Honours?

The Latin Honours will apply to the inaugural Class of 2017 and successive classes.

12. Will there be a review of the Honours system at Yale-NUS College?

The College will conduct a review three years after the inaugural graduation in 2017.

13. How can I seek more information or information specific to me?

Please contact your Vice Rector or Faculty Advisor for more information.