

University Medal Determination: A Discussion

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The following arose during recent discussion on Software Engineering medal candidates.

Currently the medal candidate is chosen using the CSE stage weighted mean, which is also used for determining the grade of honours.

The only thing I can find on the University Medal is:

On the recommendation of a faculty or board of studies assessment committee, the University Medal Committee may award a University Medal to a student in an undergraduate course who has shown highly distinguished merit and, where Honours are awarded, has performed at a level significantly above the minimum required for honours Class 1.

This appears to have two criteria: *shown highly distinguished merit* and *performed at a level significantly above the minimum required for honours Class 1*. It is reasonable to expect that University Medals are awarded to outstanding students.

The following table may be instructive.

Student	CSE WAM	UOC WAM	Mean	Median	Mode	Max	No of Max
A	92.1	91.14	89.81	91	90	98	2
B	89.9	90.26	89.29	93	100	100	6
C	85.8	84.88	84	85	83	97	1

Using only the CSE WAM, student A appears to be significantly ahead of student B. The UOC weighted mean shows a smaller gap and the simple (unweighted) mean shows an even smaller gap.

The median, mode, max and number of max are introduced to try to get some insight on the actual distribution of marks. When this is done it appears that student B is even more outstanding than student A. The CSE WAM appears to be an inadequate discriminator between medal candidates.

The above analysis is based on data from 3 actual students. Student A has already received a medal, student C has been nominated for a medal, and it is possible that student B will not received a medal.