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Grade Distribution at the Faculty of Education at Sultan Qaboos University

Dr. Abdulhamid S. Hassan
College of Education
Sultan Qaboos University

Dr. Abdulqawi S. Alzubaidi
College of Education
Sultan Qaboos University

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether there was a difference between the actual and the expected distribution of grades at the faculty of education in Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) and to find out whether the distribution of grades differ according to the academic department, sex, nationality of the staff member, and sex of the students. The aim of the study was also to identify the relationship between students total final exam. Score, and their course work, mid and final exam.

The study used grades of 1437 Students in 50 different courses of different levels, delivered by 5 departments of the college of education.

The findings indicated that the distribution of grades, both at the departmental and college levels, is higher than expected distribution as well as the normal distribution. This suggests grade inflation as Grades A and B and their sub branches were dominant.

Also the results showed that relationship between mid-term exams. And final term and the total grade were negatively significant while the relationship between final and total grade were positively significant. The results were discussed and interpreted in terms of previous studies. Several recommendations were put forward.

Key words: grade distribution, grade inflation.

توزيع تقديرات درجات الطلبة بكلية التربية في جامعة السلطان قابوس

د. عبدالحميد سعيد حسن

قسم علم النفس

كلية التربية- جامعة السلطان قابوس

د. عبدالقوي سالم الزبيدي

قسم علم النفس

كلية التربية- جامعة السلطان قابوس

الملخص

هدفت الدراسة تعرف الشكل العام لتوزيع التقديرات في كلية التربية بجامعة السلطان قابوس، وتوزيع التقديرات بالنسبة لمتغير (القسم العلمي، وجنس المدرس، وجنسية المدرس، وجنس الطالب، والمرحلة، ومستوى المساق، ومدرس المساق)، وهل يختلف توزيع هذه التقديرات مع التوزيع الاعتدالي للدرجات؟ وما نوع ودرجة العلاقة بين المجموع الكلي لدرجة الطالب وكل من درجة امتحان النصف وأعمال الفصل والامتحان النهائي؟ واستخدمت الدراسة درجات الطلبة وتقديراتها للفصل الدراسي الخريف ٢٠٠٠/٢٠٠١ وقد شملت العينة درجات (١٤٣٧) طالبا وطالبة، و(٥٠) مساقاً موزعا حسب متغيرات الدراسة.

وقد توصلت نتائج الدراسة إلى عدم تطابق منحنيات التوزيع الفعلي للدرجات ومنحنى التوزيع المتوقع لها، وهناك فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين التوزيعين على مستوى العينة الكلية أو وفقا لمتغيرات الدراسة، وأن نسبة التقديرات المعتمدة في الكلية في معظمها لا تقترب مع النسب المتوقعة لها، وهناك تضخم في التقديرات في نسبة التقديرات العليا (أ، ب) وترتفع عن النسبة المتوقعة لها. وتوجد علاقة موجبة وذات دلالة إحصائية بين المجموع الكلي ودرجة أعمال الطالب وسالبة ودالة بين المجموع الكلي وكل من امتحان نصف الفصل ونهايته.

الكلمات المفتاحية: توزيع الدرجات، تضخم الدرجات.

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Introduction

University academics, administrators and other authorities concerned with outcome assessment in higher educational have argued about the phenomenon of the increase in students grades. This phenomenon is known as grade inflation (Stone, 1995).

One definition of grade inflations is an upward shift in the GPA of students over an extended period of time without a similar rise in student a achievement (Rosovsky & Hartley, 2002, p.4). Grade inflation was also defined as "when a grade is viewed as being less rigorous than it ought to be" (Mullen, 1995, p.2) "A third definition suggests that" grade patterns change so that the overwhelming majority of students in a class, college, or university receive higher grades for the same quantity and quality of work. (Schiming, 2004, p.1). Another type well known version of grade inflation is "content deflation" where students receive the same grades as students in the past but with less work required and less work "(Cohen, 1984). A distillation of these definitions is that grade inflation can be defined is a distribution of students' grades has gone up significantly (e.g. high percentage of As and Bs with very few Cs Ds, and Fs) without a correlative distribution of their aptitude scores.

Surveys of undergraduate student's grades conducted by Levine and Cureton (Levine & Cureton, 1998) showed that in 1969, 7% of students reported earned A - or higher and 25% earned C grades or below. The 1993 study for example showed 26 % of students reported earned A- or higher and 9% earned C grades or below. Similarly, Stone (1995) has surveyed some of the U.S colleges and universities finding that grade point averages (GPA's) of students receiving Bachelor's degrees rising from 3 to 5 points from the mid 1960's to the 1980's.

A report by Wilson (1999) showed that at Princeton the median GPA for the class of 1997 was 3.42; while the median for the class of 1973 was 3.08. At Dartmouth, median GPA between 1968 and 1994 went from 3.06 to 3.23. At Harvard in the year of 1996-97, 46% of undergraduates received As compared to 22% in 1966.

Sonner (2000) and as a result of his empirical studies has found that only 10 to 20 percent of all college students receive grades lower than B, implying that 80 to 90 percent of all college students receive grades of either A or B.

Similarly Freedman (2000) found that at Columbia University teachers College the percentage of as given to an undergraduate has gone from 7% in 1969 to 26% in 1994. Conversely, the percentage of Cs, Ds, and Fs collectively, fell from 25% in 1969 to 9% in 1994.

Grade inflation can cause different problems. One problem is that gifted students are discouraged from doing their best. Why should they when other students doing half as much work and get the same grades they do? At the same time, professors have no way of encouraging their best students because they can not give than an A. The result is a general dumping down of achievement and quality of higher education system, while students and their potential employers are deluded into thinking that everything is okay (Bartlett, 2003).

Secondly, grade inflation compresses all grades at the top, making it difficult to discriminate the best from the very good, the very good from the good, and the good from the mediocre (Mansfield, 2001) Furthermore, there is currently a high rate of college remediation for students who thought they were prepared for college (because of their relatively high GPA), but obviously were not. Another problem of grade inflation is the loss of faculty morale. It seems to signify that teachers care less about their teaching. Anyone who cares a lot about something is very critical in making judgements about it. It is very difficult to motivate students to work hard when they know that their chances of getting an A are 50-50 (Wall, 2004).

Researchers have provided a wide range of factors contributing to grade inflation. Levine and Cureton, (Levine & Cureton, 1998) Suggest that today's students - non traditional age students- are taking their studies very seriously and earning higher grades). Administrative policy and practices

such as reductions in rigorous core requirements, movements toward more electives, removal of first attempted grades from transcripts, and pass/fail options all tend to inflate performance as measured by grades (Edward, 2000). The current practice of student evaluation of faculty is frequently cited as a cause.

Faculty members realize that giving poor grades is not in their economic best interest. They believe that low grades lead to low faculty ratings by students, reduction in class sizes, and eventual loss of their jobs (Edward, 2000). Sonner's research indicates that increasing use of adjunct instructors is at fault. The most likely explanation for adjunct faculty giving higher grades than do full-time faculty is that adjuncts, employed on a term basis, are hesitant to give lower grades as it could create student complaints resulting in the adjunct's not receiving an offer to teach in subsequent quarters (Sonner, 2000).

Inflating grades could be due to the fact that the faculty have developed more effective teaching methods and are more effectively motivating students to learn the material. Falkenberg (2003) suggests that in this case the students will learn more and hence grades will be higher. Surely, more effective methods of teaching than were available half a century ago. The increased use of internships, contract have been developed grading, individual study courses, group work within courses, a liberal withdrawal policy, generous use of the incomplete grade ,and the ability to repeat courses to improve a grade student persistence class attendance, can all contribute to grade inflation (Schiming, 2004).

Grade inflation could arise if there have been changes in measurement techniques and methods. Something as simple as switching from what psychologists call "recall" items to "recognition" items will result in higher scores on exams designed to test the same material (Falkenberg, 2003).

It is also possible that, as some institutions de-emphasize the teaching mission in favor of the research or service component, some faculty may be unwilling or unable to spend their time on grading and evaluation. This lack of attention to grading and evaluation could result in a weakening of standards (Schiming, 2004). Also many universities begin acting like businesses. They treated students as the clients they wanted to keep content.

In this regard Kohn (2002) points out that higher education appears to have become a business or at least evidences many of the characteristics of today's business. We have seen enrollments level and the number of colleges and universities increase resulting in increased competition for students.

Finally, because grade inflation has become systematic within institutions of higher education, students have come to expect higher grades. Professors respond to the pressures brought on them by their students.

Other researchers dispute the claim of grade inflation and suggests this phenomenon does not exist at all and. Adelman (1995) speaks of the "folklore of grade inflation" and Kohn (2002) of the dangerous myth of Grade inflation and each presents data to support his claim. For example Adelman (1995) concludes that between "1972-1993 "the mean GPA for students earning more than 10 credits went from 2.8 to 2.66". Their central claim that grades have not risen since the early 1970 for the nation as a whole and may have declined slightly during this time.

Furthermore, it was argued that research in grade inflation, for the most part, was mainly based on observations made by institutions (e.g. Carney, Isakson and Ellsworth, 1978) or departments (e.g. Sabot and Wakeman - linn,1991) and at top tier institutions. Khon (2002) believes, self reports are notoriously unreliable, and the numbers become even more dubious when only a self selected and possibly unrepresentative, segment bothers to return the questionnaires.

In addition, however, even where grades are higher now as compared with then-which may well be true in the most selective institutions–that does not constitute proof that they are inflated. The burden rests with critics to demonstrate that those higher grades are undeserved, and one can cite any number of alternative explanations. May be students are turning in better assignments. May be instructors used to be stingy with their marks and have become more reasonable, or may be the concept of assessment itself has evolved, so that it becomes more a mean for allowing students to demonstrate what they know rather than for sorting them or "catching them out".

The real question, then, is why we spent so many years trying to make good students look bad. May be students aren't forced to take as many courses outside their primary areas of interest in which they didn't fare as

well. May be struggling students are now able to withdraw from a course before a poor grade appears on their transcripts. Say what you will about that practice, it challenges the hypothesis that the grades students receive in the courses they complete are inflated.

The bottom line, no one has ever demonstrated that students today get as for the same work that used to receive Bs or Cs. We simply do not have the data to support such a claim (Kohn, 2002) .Part of the problem may be in the evaluation method itself. Ideally, grades serve a dual function- they inform us of our academic mastery of a given subject, communicate students' efforts and work habits, and communicate students strengths and needs and provide feedback on how to improve, while offering a way for potential employers or graduate schools to see how we perform academically (Haggerty, 2003) As Blount (1997) points out, grades like money, have become a medium of exchange. Students can exchange grades for recognition, awards, scholarships, and admittance to prestigious universities and occupations.

Blount (1997) believes that if we were on a pass/fail system most students would do the bare minimum to pass. Haggerty (2003) suggests that the problem is not that grades are higher than we deserve, but that they do not reflect any thing consistently. Some grades are totally subjective, based on professors responses by written work, while others are entirely objective, based on our recitation of fact. For some professors, a B is a good grade, for others, it is nouveau C. Haggerty (2003) concludes that grades haven't much meaning for a while. At their best, they can be used to compare different students within one university, though not precisely. They cannot be used to compare a Georgetown student to a Cornell student – Is a Cornell A - equal to Georgetown A-? That could never be the case, nor should it ever b - that would be a sign that universities have totally abandoned their roles as places of learning and become professional training grounds similarly. Grades are also used to motivate students work hard and measure their efforts.

In addition, Birk (2003) believes that grades may create misunderstanding. Parents and students may read a student's A or a B as high achievement, when the teacher may mean solid effort and success relative to his low – achieving peers. As a result, that student may never get the help he or she needs.

In support of this argument, Wall (2004) believes that the notion that tests, being imperfect measure of student knowledge, can be used to rank students but cannot be used to accurately quantify a student's knowledge.

Statement of the problem

Grade inflation is an issue because university administration and other individuals at SQU have conducted a variety of statistical analysis and identified some alarming trends. The average grade in some courses in colleges like college of Arts and college education courses has gone up significantly. Along with this trend, students have come to expect higher grades. The average student expects to get A or B in the course. Students receiving grades of C or less feel the instructor has evaluated their performance as less than satisfactory.

The fear is that our courses have been "dumped down" or that the university is the universities are lowering their standards.

The primary concern is that the distribution of grades has changed. Technically, the concern is that the distribution is more negatively skewed, that is that there are too many A's and B's and not enough D's. Therefore the purpose of the present study was to determine the distribution of grades at the college of education and whether the grades are negatively skewed and the causes for this distribution.

Objectives of the study

The purposes of this study were to (1) investigate whether there is a difference between the actual and the expected distribution of grades at the faculty of education in Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), (2) to find out whether the distribution of grades differ according to the academic department, sex, and nationality of the staff member, and sex of the students and (3) attempts to study the relationship between students total final grade and mid exam score, and their course work.

Importance of Study

Studying the distribution of grades are very important for many reasons; first and most important, they can help faculty members to review their own grading practices. Grade inflation arose not by decree, but through an

accumulation of many decisions by many teachers. It can subside only in the same way.

Second, faculty members can encourage discussion of grade inflation--and what can be done about it-within their academic units. A good question for units to consider is "What will work for us?" The best approaches won't be everywhere the same and uniformity is not the object.

Third, if the staff members belong to committees concerned with pedagogical matters, they can ask those bodies to consider remedies for grade inflation.

Fourth, faculty members can state their grading practices publicly. One effective way to do this is to compute grade distribution using the linked grade calculator then asked for them to be posted on this site, alongside the grade poster of colleagues.

Fifth, members of the college of education and administration are invited to investigate the causes of grading distribution

Delimitations and limitation

This was limit tied to the students Grades in the educational courses offered by the departments (Psychology, Islamic Science, Art Education, Curriculum and instruction, Physical Education) in the college of education, at the SQU for the first semester of the academic year 2002-2003.

Definition of terms

Distribution of grades at SQU: The grading system in SQU University distributes achievement into 11 categories of grades: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, and C-, D+, D and F. This grading system is based on the probability theory of grading (Thorndike, 1977) that distributed achievement into five groups as follows:

Grades				Percentage Probability
A	+1.5	to	2.5 or more	7
B	+.5	to	1.5	24
C	+ .0	to	0.5	38
D	- 0.5	to	- 1.5	24
E	- 1.5	to	- 2.5 or less	

Methodology and Procedures
The sample

The sample consisted of 50 staff members (32 males and 18 females) from different departments (Psychology, Islamic Science, Art Education, Curriculum and instruction, Physical Education) in the college of education at SQU. The breakdown of the sample in terms of gender and academic rank are as follows. The number of courses taught by these instructors were 50, The number of students in each course ranged from 20 to 35 .In these courses the total student enrollment were 1437 students where male student were 471 and females student were 966. At the same time we have 1245 undergraduate students out of that total and 192 graduate student respective.

Instrument and procedures

Student's grades in different courses of the college of education for the fall 2002 semester were obtained. They were categorized according to course level, academic department, sex, and nationality of the staff member and sex of students.

Results

A comparison was made between the actual student grade distribution and the expected distribution in accordance to normal curve. Kolmogrov-Smirnov Test was used for this comparison. Separate analyses were employed for college and department as well as sex of instructor and student, and instructor's nationality, degree type (undergraduate vs. graduate) and course level. The results are shown in tables 1-11 and figures 1-14 (shown in attachment No.).

The tables illustrate differences between actual grade distribution and expected distribution in comparison to normal curve, whereas figures show the expected and actual distribution of the grades. Below is a summary analysis of each table and figure in accordance to college, department, sex and sex of instructor and student, and nationality of instructor, degree type (undergraduate vs. graduate) and course level.

1-College Grade Distribution

As Table (1) and figure (1) show, the actual and expected distribution

of the college grades are statistically significant different (K.S. Test=5.59, p<0.01) This means that college grades do not follow normal distribution.
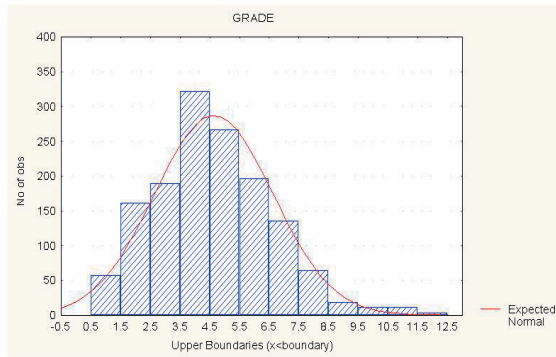
Figure 1
Actual and Expected Grade Distribution for the College

Table 1
Actual and Expected Grade Distribution for the College

Significance level	K.S Test	N
$P < 0.01$	5.59	1437

Grades are clustered more around classes "A, and B and less clustered around other classes in comparison to expected grade distribution according to normal curve distribution. Table (2) explains this difference.

Table 2
Actual Grade Distribution for Different Department

Percentile												Grade	
Art Education		Curriculum		Physical Education		Islamic Edu.		Psychology		college			
20.5	7.3	23	7.3	9.7	2.3	13.3	5.00	13.6	1.9	15.2	4.00	A+	A
	13.2		15.7		7.4		8.3		11.7		11.2	A-	
49	7.9	66.3	31.3	53.4	7.6	49.2	10	49.9	8.7	54.2	13.2	B+	B
	21.9		21.3		24.9		19.2		22		22.4	B	
	19.2		13.7		20.9		20		19.2		18.6	B-	
27.8	9.9	10	4.3	33.8	19.6	30	10.8	32.8	16.5	27.6	13.6	C+	C
	11.9		4.7		8.1		12.5		12.1		9.5	C	
	6		1.00		6.1		6.7		4.2		4.5	C-	
2.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	2.8	1.00	7.5	1.7	3.3	1.9	2.8	1.2	D+	D
	2		0		1.8		5.8		1.4		1.6	D	
0	0	0	0	0.3	0.3	0	0	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2		E

2-Department Grade Distribution

concerning departmental differences figures (2-6) show significant differences between actual and expected distribution in only three departments (psychology: K.S.Test = 2.56, physical Education,: K.S= 2.51, and curriculum: K.S = 3.27)
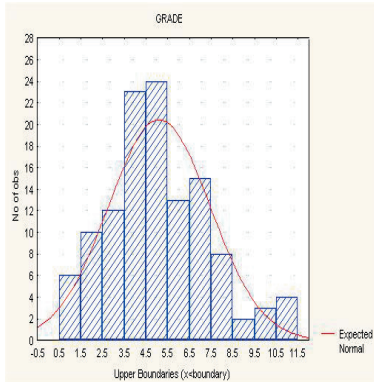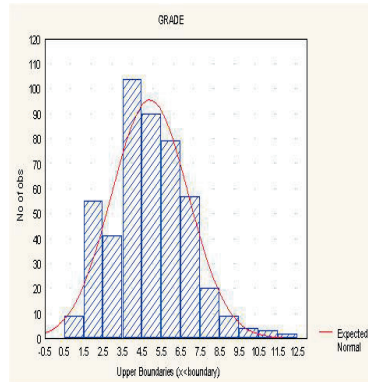

Figure 2

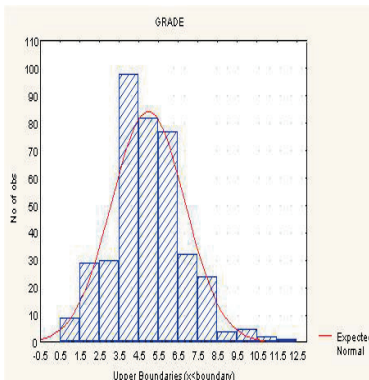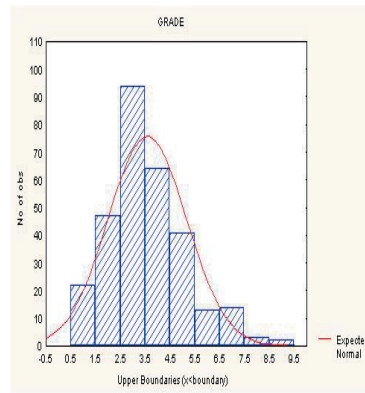Figure 3
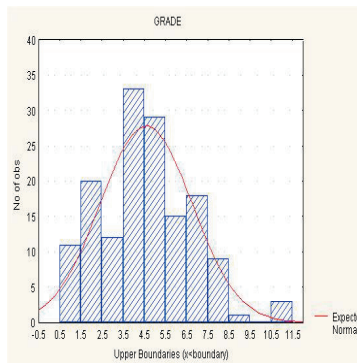

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

In these Departments most of the grades are grouped around class "A" and "B" with less distribution in C, D and F. (See table 3)

Table 3
Expected and Actual Grade Distribution

Dep.	N	K.S Test	Sig. Level
Psychology	473	2.56	0.000
Islamic Sciences	120	1.57	0.10
Physical Education	393	2.51	0.000
Curriculum	300	3.27	0.000
Arts Education	151	1,49	0.20

3-Distribution According to Sex of Instructor

Concerning Sex of instructor figures (7 and 8) show significant differences between actual and expected distribution in both sexes (K.S.Test = 4.21 for males, and 2.91 for females) (see table 4) Furthermore, there are significant between grade distribution of Instructor males and females (Chi Square = 13.25).
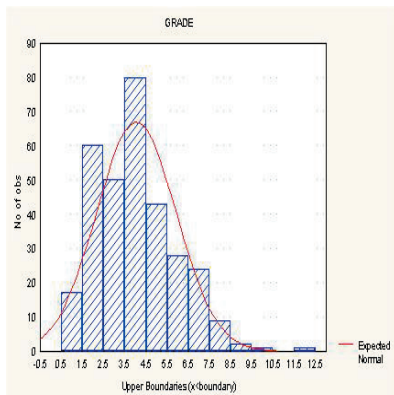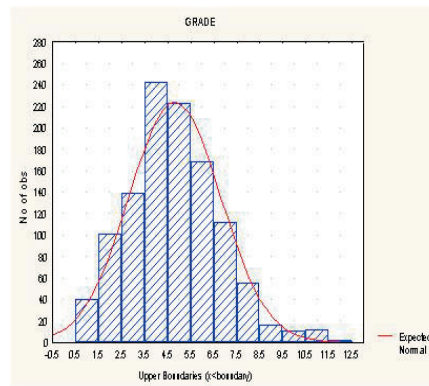

Figure 8   Figure 7

Table 4
Grade Distribution Differences According to Sex

Sig. level	N	K.S Test	Sex
0.000	1122	4.21	Males
0.000	315	2.91	Females

4-Distribution According to Instructor's Nationality

In Figures "9" and "10" the results of staff member nationality. Separate analysis for Omani and non Omani staff.

The results showed there is a significant difference between the two distributions: Omani and non Omani (K.S. Test == 3.16 and 3.89 respectively) See table "5". However, there is no significant difference between grade distribution of Omani and non Omani.
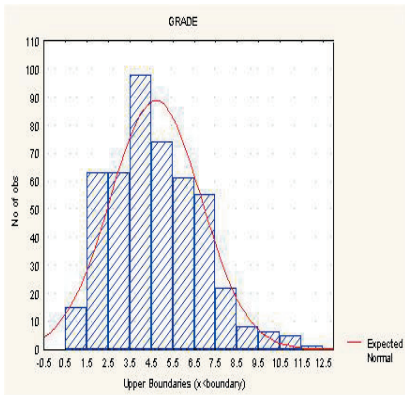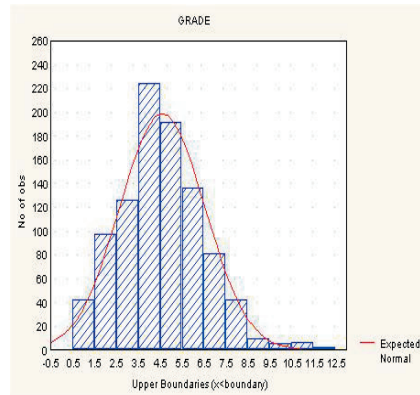

Figure 9

Figure 10

Table 5
Sex Differences in Actual and Expected Grade Distribution

Sig. level	N	K.S Test	Sex
0.000	565	3.16	Males
0.000	872	3.89	Females

5-Distribution According to" Sex "

Figure "11" and "12 "show that there is a significant differences between the expected and actual distribution of grades according to sex of student (K.S .Test = 4.15 for males and 4.82 for females respectively) (See Table "6"). In addition, there is no significant difference between grade distribution of student males and females.(see table 7).
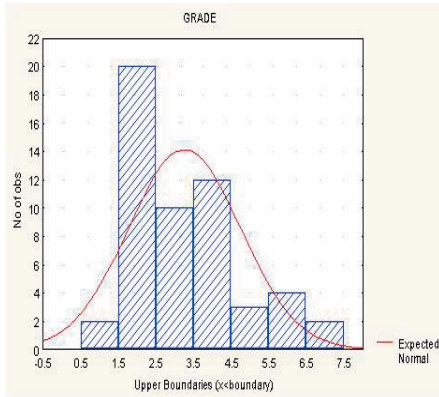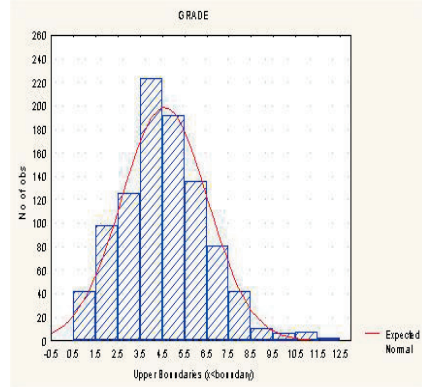
Figure 12

Figure 11

Table 6
Actual and Expected Grade Distribution for the College

Sig. level	N	K.S Test	Sex
0.000	471	3.16	Males
0.000	872	3.89	Females

Table 7
Grade Distribution According to Sex, Nationality of Staff Members and Sex of Student

Grade Distribution											
Sex of student				Nationality of staff				Sex of staff			Grade
Female		Male		Non Omani		Omani		Female		Male		
17.3	4.9	12.2	2.6	14.3	4.2	16.3	3.2	24.4	5.4	12.4	3.4	A+	A
	12.4		9.6		10.1		13.1		19		9.00	A	
53.6	12.8	54.8	13.6	56.4	13	50.1	13.4	55	15.9	54	12.4	B+	B
	22.6		22.1		23.3		20.8		25.4		21.6	B	
	18.2		19.1		19.9		15.9		13.7		20.0	B-	
26.2	13.1	29.5	14.5	26.8	14.1	29.1	12.7	19.4	8.9	29.9	15	C+	C
	8.1		11.5		8.4		11.7		7.6		10	C	
	5.00		3.5		4.3		4.7		2.9		4.9	C-	
2.6	1.5	3.5	0.9	2.3	1.00	4.3	1.7	0.9	0.6	3.5	1.4	D+	D
	1.1		2.6		1.3		2.6		0.3		2.1	D	
0.3	0.3	0.00	0.00	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2		E

6- Graduate Vs Undergraduate Distribution

In relation to degree type (under graduate Vs. graduate) Grade Distribution were shown Figures 13 – 14) the results showed there is a significant differences between the two distributions: (under graduate Vs. graduate) (K.S. Test == 4.56 and 2.12 respectively) See table "8". In addition, there is a significant difference between grade distribution of these groups (Chi Square= 6.78).
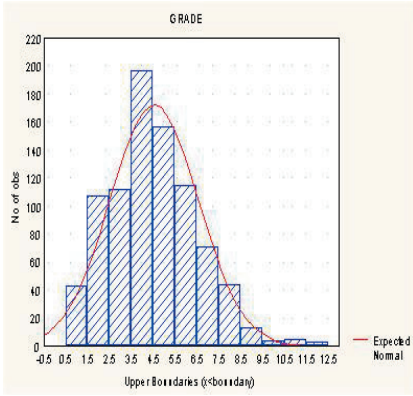
Figure 14
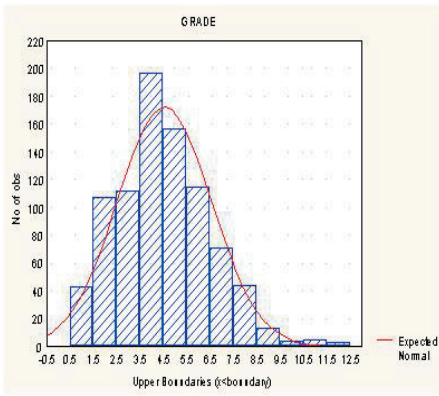
Figure 13

Table 8

Differences in Grade Distribution According toAcademic Class Level

Sex	K.S Test	N	Sig. level
Males	4.56	1245	0.000
Females	2.12	192	0.000

7-Distribution According to "Course level"

Concerning course level grade distribution the results exhibits a significant difference in all levels except first level (See table 9). Further comparison analysis between these six levels reveals no significant difference.

Table 9
K.S Value for the Expected and Actual Value for Class
Level Grade Distribution

Acad. level	N	K.S value	Sig. level
1	129	0.69	0.73
2	110	1.49	0.024
3	355	2.55	0.000
4	452	3.41	0.000
5	298	3.16	0.000
6	193	2.09	0.000

8-Distribution According to "Instructors"

Concerning staff member, the results show there are significant differences in 35 distributions of the total 50 staff members (see table 10).

Table 10
K.S Value for the Expected and Actual Value for Each Staff
Member Grade Distribution

Staff No.	N	K.S value	Sig. level	Staff No.	N	K.S value	Sig. level
1	53	1.57	0.01	26	36	1.68	0.01
2	66	1.52	0.05	27	20	1.64	0.05
3	36	1.65	0.01	28	35	1.36	0.05
4	20	.964	0.31	29	33	0.78	0.58
5	43	1.49	0.05	30	22	1.59	0.05
6	96	1.93	0.00	31	44	1.67	0.00
7	27	1.71	0.05	32	26	1.60	0.05
8	21	1.69	0.05	33	26	0.93	0.35
9	20	1.77	0.01	34	22	1.49	0.05
10	29	0.69	0.77	35	27	1.67	0.05
11	23	1.94	0.00	36	55	1.91	0.00
12	28	1.96	0.01	37	20	1.49	0.05
13	31	0.99	2.75	38	23	1.61	0.05
14	30	1.67	0.01	39	21	1.71	0.05
15	36	1.15	1.42	40	22	0.66	0.79
16	33	1.69	0.05	41	29	1.73	0.05
17	28	1.80	0.05	42	16	0.66	0.78
18	20	1.73	0.05	43	14	0.95	0.32
19	28	1.63	0.05	44	18	0.65	0.81

Cont. of Table 10

Staff No.	N	K.S value	Sig. level	Staff No.	N	K.S value	Sig. level
20	24	1.62	0.01	45	28	0.71	0.71
21	30	1.58	0.05	46	43	0.92	0.37
22	27	1.57	0.00	47	25	0.96	0.32
23	33	2.17	0.66	48	27	1.63	0.01
24	27	0.73	0.05	49	27	0.95	0.32
25	22	1.52	0.01	50	26	1.36	0.05

Relationship between Students final score and Mid term and Semester work Scores:

To answer this question Bivariate correlation was employed as presented in Table 11.

As shown in Table 11 there is a positive significant correlation between the total score (Final tem + Mid tem + Semester work) and Semester work, while there is a significant negative relationship between the total score, and Mid term, and final score. Furthermore, the relationship between Semester work and total score, mid term and final term scores is positively significant. In addition, the relationship between mid term and final term is positive, although it is non significant.

Table 11
Correlation between Total, Mid, Final and Course Work

Course work	Final Term	Mid-term	Total	
0.152**	-0.577**	-0.292**	1.00	Total Score
0.244**	-0.023	1.00	-0.292 **	Mid-term Sore
0.580**	1.00	-0.023	-0.577**	Final Score
1.00	0.580**	0.244**	0.152**	Course work

** (p= 0.000)

Discussion

In general the findings of the present study indicate grade inflation at the departmental and college levels Grades (A and B) were dominant. Because grade distribution are higher than expected distribution as well as normal distribution.

These results may be due to several factors. Firstly admission to college

of education requires high secondary school percentage (at least 90%) This means that educational students at SQU have high aptitude achievement in comparison with their counterparts in many Arab universities. Secondly, studies by Kolevzon (1981) and Saddler (1983). most universities and institutions do not have specified grading policies and that grade distribution differ from one lecturer to another and from one institution to another institution reflecting their philosophy and their views about evaluation. Thirdly the grading system in SQU follows 12 points scale while in other universities follows only 5 points. The 12 point systems are more reliable. In addition, grade in Grade inflation in higher educational is a wide spread phenomenon (Levine and Cureton, 1998).

Also the results show that relationship between mid-term exams. And final term and the total grade are negatively significant while the relationship between final and total grade are positively significant. This is may be due to several factors as follows:

Firstly; staff regard university grades to be highly related with semester work and that tests and examination form significant part of these grades although it is not dependent wholly on it (Brookhart ,1991; Frary, Cross & Weber, 1993). Secondly, the negative relationship between mid-tem and final exam. And the total grade may reflect the rigorous procedures staff used in marking the two tests.

Although students grades are highly inflated towards grades "A and B" and sub-branches. In addition, the positive relationship between mid-term and final term and semester work may be due to fact that staff gives high marks to the semester work. This interpretation is consistent with the findings of Loyed, Naral & Hearn (1991).

Recommendations

1- encouraging the development of university standardized criteria in which university staff can use to decide whether their grades are inflated or not.

2-There should be a continuous analysis of grade distribution at the college of education in order to control the grade distribution.

3-the college of education should take steps to assure that grades reflect mastery standards of course contents rather than performance standards.

4- Further studies, using different courses given by different departments of

the SQU, can done to provide evidence of the generalizabilty of the present findings.

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