

## An analysis of standard of degrees awarded by Sri Lankan universities

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Sri Lankan universities categorise first degree graduates with academic distinction (classes) as in most countries. The objective of the paper is to investigate the extent to which different universities award first degrees with distinction among their first degree graduates.

There are three levels of academic distinction (First class; Second class upper division; Second class lower division) in the country and these three categories are combined together and compared with those graduated without a class. The data from old universities for the period 1975/76 to 1994/95 was used in most cases.

The new universities were excluded since the graduate output is small compared to that of old universities. The analysis was confined up to 1994/95 due to the non availability of data in the recent annual publications of "Sri Lanka University Statistics" which replaced the Statistical Hand Book of the University Grants Commission.

The number of graduates during this period is 80,100 and a three way table was computed with the result (class or no class) as the respondent variable with university and sex as the explanatory variables. A logistic model was used to find out whether the awarding of classes is dependent on the university after adjusting for sex effects. The Colombo university and male graduate was used as the base level for university and sex respectively. It was found that the association between the result and university was statistically significant after adjusting for sex, since the confidence intervals for the odds ratios did not include one for all universities. Moreover the odds ratio was greater than one for Moratuwa university, Eastern university, Jaffna university and Sri Jayewardenepura university while it was less than one for Peradeniya, Kelaniya and Ruhuna universities. This shows that an undergraduate in the first set of universities had a better chance of graduating with a class compared to a student in the Colombo university while a student in the second set of universities had less chance of graduating with a class compared to a graduate in Colombo university when adjusted for sex. The association of the result and sex was statistically significant with an odds ratio less than one which suggests that a male student had a better chance of graduating with a class compared to a female student.