Dear Students,

(There was some trouble with the school’s e-mail system which prevented me from sending out letters for more than a week. Sorry for the delay.)

After the release of the final scores in the Calculus course, many students wrote to me and complained that the scores they received are much lower than what they had expected. This is mainly because there is a misunderstanding of the Evaluation and Grading Policy announced during the first week of our class. Let me explain this in further detail.

To give students better opportunities to get passed, we offered much more points in the tests and exams for you to grab. Consequently, there is a price you have to pay if you pass the threshold 60, and that is: your final scores will be lower than your raw scores, simply because some students worked very hard and got their raw scores way above 100 (see the samples listed below); for fairness, we have to compress all the scores back to within 100. We didn’t know the exact "compression factors" until we finished the grading of the Finals. (By the way, many students did poorly on the finals, with scores way below 60 (out of a 150 total); this pulled down their final scores significantly.)

Let

\[ T = \text{sum of the points you got in the 10 given tests (total 70 points)}, \]
\[ M = \text{the score of your mid-term exam (total 140 points)}, \]
\[ F = \text{the score of your final exam (total 150 points)}, \]
\[ R = \text{your raw score}, \]
\[ S = \text{your (normalized) final score}, \]
\[ TA = \text{score (assigned by the teaching assistant) which is based solely on your attendance rate of those given tests (total 20 points)}. \]

Then

\[ R = T + 0.3 \times M + 0.4 \times F \]

and

\[ S = \begin{cases} 60 + 0.8 \times (R - 60) & \text{if } 60 \leq R \leq 100; \\ 92 + 0.3 \times (R - 100) & \text{if } R \geq 100. \end{cases} \]

Note that if your \( R \) score is over 60, then the \( TA \) score is NOT involved because:

(a) it is a double count (since we already count \( T \));
(b) it is not based on test scores and almost everyone got a score between 17 and 20.

In fact, if we counted the \( TA \) score, then the compression factors (0.8 and 0.3 in the above formulas) would further be reduced and you might get a lower \( S \), not higher (because the raw scores \( R \) of good students’ would also become much higher).
However, the $TA$ score does play a role (to help you get passed) if your raw score $R$ is below 60:

$$R' = R + TA = T + 0.3 \times M + 0.4 \times F + TA,$$

$$S = \begin{cases} 
R' & \text{if } R' < 60; \\
60 & \text{if } R' \geq 60. 
\end{cases}$$

Let me outline a few samples of students’ performance in our class, ordered from high to low, their names withheld:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>$T$</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$TA$</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$S$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>52</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is regrettable that some of you feel disappointed with the final score. I’m not saying this grading rule is perfect; every rule has its drawbacks. With this method of evaluation, your performance is gauged only through in-class tests and exams, and I’m really sorry if the score makes you unhappy. I hope this explanation would somehow alleviate your hard feelings.

We are faced with a more competitive world ahead; we have to be better prepared and work harder to meet the challenge. Wish you have a fruitful and successful new year!

Best regards,
Your teacher, Tai-Lin Wang