

**61.6 MARKING
AND GRADING
GUIDELINES**

**as approved by
General Faculties Council
May 27, 2002**

Updated: July 1, 2006



**UNIVERSITY OF
ALBERTA**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page Number
General Principles	3
Weighting of Term Work and Final Examinations	3
Course Requirements, Evaluation Procedures and Grading	3
The University of Alberta Grading System	4
Grading Charts (Undergraduate and Graduate)	4
Illustrative Sample Distribution of Grades	5
Distribution of Grades in Undergraduate Courses (shown in percentages)	5
Distribution of Grades in Graduate Courses (shown in percentages)	5
University of Alberta Grade Summary Sheet	6
Procedures for Registering Complaints About Marking	
Grading and Related Issues	6
Cheating and Plagiarism	6

General Principles

Both the insight provided by marking and the grades awarded are very important to students. Therefore, not only must grading provide a fair and accurate representation of performance, but it must also be understood to do so by the students receiving the grades. Grading systems should be made clear and marking should provide sufficient insight into the strengths and weaknesses of individual pieces of work to ensure that students understand the appropriateness of grades assigned. Students should feel that the instructor cares enough about them to be thorough and accurate in marking and recording at every stage of the evaluation process and that the instructor will be approachable if they have reason to believe that an error has been made.

Consistency in evaluation across sections of the same course and from year to year should be maintained.

Marks and grades must be treated with care and confidentiality. Posting of grades must be done by Student ID number rather than by name. Grades should not be posted in hardcopy format for classes with 25 or fewer students.

Weighting of Term Work and Final Examinations

In each course in which a final examination is held, a weight of not less than 30 percent and not more than 70 percent will be assigned to the final examination, except where a departure from this arrangement has been authorized by the council of the Faculty in which the Department offering the course is situated. The remaining weight for the course will be assigned to term work.

Course Requirements, Evaluation Procedures and Grading

The policies set out below are intended to provide instructors and their students with general course information. GFC, in approving these guidelines, expects that there will be a common sense approach to their application and understood that circumstances might develop, during a term, where a change to the course outline as set out in Section 61.6(a) of the GFC Policy Manual, made sense to all concerned. Such changes shall only occur with fair warning or general class content. (GFC 29 SEP 2003)

Students concerned about the application of these guidelines should consult, in turn, the instructor, the chair of the department by which the course is offered, and the dean of the faculty in which the course is offered.

- a. At the beginning of each course, instructors are required by GFC to provide a course outline which must include the following:
 - i. a statement of the course objectives and general content.
 - ii. a list of the required textbooks and other major course materials.
 - iii. an indication of how and when students have access to the instructor.
 - iv. the distribution of weight between term work and final examination.
 - v. identification of all course activities worth 10% or more of the overall course mark.
 - vi. whether marks are given for class participation and other in-class activities as well as the weight of such participation.
 - vii. dates of any examination and course assignments with a weight of 10% or more of the overall course mark.
 - viii. the manner in which the official University grading system is to be implemented in that particular course or section, i.e., whether a particular distribution is to be used to determine grades, or whether there are absolute measures or marks which will determine them, or whether a combination of the two will be used. (GFC 29 SEP 2003)
- b. Every course outline should contain the following statement:
"Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar." (GFC 29 SEP 2003)
- c. Every course outline should contain the following statement:
"The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University." (GFC 29 SEP 2003)
- d. Nothing in any course outline, syllabus or course web-site may override or contravene any Calendar regulation or GFC policy. In resolving any discrepancy, GFC policy and Calendar regulations will take precedence. (GFC 29 SEP 2003)
- e. Instructors may indicate in the course outline the date, time and place on which the deferred examination for the course will occur, should one be required. See §23.5.6, (GFC 29 SEP 2003)
- f. Instructors should discuss with the class their expectations with respect to academic honesty issues and outline both permitted and prohibited behaviour. (GFC 29 SEP 2003)
- g. Instructors must follow copyright regulations as established by the University from time to time in the duplication of course material. (GFC 29 SEP 2003)
- h. Instructors should allow students a reasonable time in which to complete an assignment, bearing in mind its weight.
- i. Instructors should mark and return to students with reasonable dispatch all term examinations and, provided the students submit them by the due date, all course projects, assignments, essays, etc.
- j. All projects, assignments, essays, etc. should be returned on or by the last day of classes in the course, with the exception of a final major assignment (which may be due on the last day of classes), which should be returned by the date of the scheduled final examination or, in non-examination courses, by the last day of the examination period.
- k. Upon request, instructors are required to provide the method which was used to translate final and, where appropriate, term marks into grades.

The University of Alberta Grading System

The University of Alberta uses a letter grading system with a four-point scale of numerical equivalents for calculating grade point averages.

Grades reflect judgements of student achievement made by instructors. These judgements are based on a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class. Some instructors assign grades as intervals during the course and others assign marks (eg. percentages) throughout the term and then assign a letter grade at the end. Instructors must adapt their approaches to reflect the letter grading system. Grade distribution should reflect those shown in this document. (EXEC 03 FEB 2003)

Grading in Undergraduate Courses

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value
Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0
	A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0
	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	C+	2.3
	C	2.0
	C-	1.7
Poor	D+	1.3
Minimal Pass	D	1.0
Failure	F [or F4]*	0.0

*Note: F4 denotes eligibility of a student to apply for a reexamination in a course.

Grading in Graduate Courses

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value
Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0
	A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0
	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	C+	2.3
	C	2.0
	C-	1.7
Failure	D+	1.3
	D	1.0
	F	0.0

Illustrative Sample Distribution of Grades

These distributions are provided for guidance in your grading. It is not necessary for the grades in a particular class to follow any of the distributions exactly; rather, approximating the distribution for an appropriate level will ensure consistency in grading across fields of study and time. (EXEC 03 FEB 2003)

Distribution of Grades in Undergraduate Courses (shown in percentages)

Letter Grade	1st Year Courses	2nd Year Courses	3rd Year Courses	4th Year Courses
A+	4	5	6	8
A	7	7	9	12
A-	10	12	14	17
B+	11	15	16	16
B	15	16	18	16
B-	14	14	14	12
C+	11	11	9	7
C	9	8	6	5
C-	6	5	4	3
D+	4	3	2	2
D	3	2	1	1
F	6	2	1	1
Mean	2.62	2.83	3.00	3.11
Median	B-	B	B	B+

Distribution of Grades in Graduate Courses (shown in percentages)

Letter Grade	500-Level	600-Level
A+	10	15
A	14	15
A-	16	15
B+	17	17
B	16	16
B-	14	10
C+	8	7
C	2	2
C-	1	1
D+	0	0
D	1	1
F	1	1
Mean	3.2	3.3
Median	B+	B+

(EXEC 10 MAR 2003)

University of Alberta Grade Summary Sheet

GFC policy requires that instructors complete and submit to the Department chair with the final grades for each course section the grade summary sheet.

Note: Do not submit the grade summary sheet from these Guidelines. A separate grade summary sheet will be provided for this purpose.

Course Abbreviation: _____ Course Number: _____

Instructor: _____ Number of Students in Class: _____

Grade (G)	Number of Students (N)	% of Total
A+		
A, A-		
B+, B		
B-, C+		
C, C-		
D+, D		
F		
Total		
Class Median		

Procedures for Registering Complaints About Marking, Grading and Related Issues

- a. Where the above guidelines have not been followed or where students have concerns about the instructor's teaching, the student should make the concern known to the appropriate individual in the following sequence:
 - 1) Instructor
 - 2) Chair of the Department in which the course is taught
 - 3) Dean of the Faculty in which the course is taught (some Faculties have delegated this authority to Departments)
- b. A student needing advice on these matters should see the student advisors in the Office of the Dean of Students.
- c. These procedures do not constitute a mechanism for appeals and grievances regarding the academic standing or individual grades of a student. Appeals and grievances of that nature are dealt with in §23.8 of the *University Calendar*.

Cheating and Plagiarism

The University of Alberta considers plagiarism and cheating to be serious academic offences. Plagiarism and cheating can be avoided if students are told what plagiarism and cheating are and if possible sanctions are made clear at the outset. Instructors should understand that the principles embodied in the *Code of Student Behaviour* are essential to our academic purpose. For this reason, instructors will be fully supported by Departments, Faculties and the University in their endeavours to rightfully discover and pursue cases of academic dishonesty in accordance with the Code.

At the beginning of each term, instructors should review with their students the definitions of plagiarism and cheating which appear in the *Code of Student Behaviour* (§30.3.2 of the *GFC Policy Manual*). A sheet summarizing the appropriate sections of the Code is made available to all instructors at the beginning of each term.

Instructors are also requested to inform students that when cheating and/or plagiarism occurs, a number of penalties can be imposed, such as lowering a grade or expulsion from the University (outlined in §30.4.2 of the *GFC Policy Manual*).