
Graduate Grading Policy

Department Policy Number

130

Effective Date

September 1, 2005 Amendment
September 1, 2004

Purpose

In June 2001, Athabasca University's Academic Council approved a new grading system using an alpha system of grades. This new grading system is based on a recommendation from a provincial "Common Grading System Committee" (a subcommittee of the Alberta Universities Coordinating Council). This policy addresses the key issues for conversion to and implementation of this new grading system at Athabasca University for graduate courses.

Definitions

Grade Point

A grade point is a number between 0 and 4.00 that is assigned to a grade (alpha or percentage) and then used to calculate a grade point average (GPA).

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Graduate GPA is calculated on a program basis and only those AU courses used toward the graduate credential will be counted. For courses that have been repeated, only the most recent grade will be used. Courses graded on a pass/fail basis and transferred courses are not included. In cases where the student has completed more elective courses than what the program requires, the elective courses with the highest grade will be used. The grade point average is a weighted average calculated as follows: $\text{Sum of (grade point} \times \text{credit hours)} / (\text{sum of credit hours})$.

Minimum Passing Grade

The minimum passing grade has historically been 60%, except where specified otherwise in the detailed course descriptions. The passing grade will become C-. Some programs require more than the minimum passing grade for courses to be used toward the graduate credential.



Failing Grades

Failing grades are any grades less than a passing grade. At the Graduate level, no passing grade lower than a C- will be awarded. All exceptions to minimum passing grade and failing grade definitions must be specified in detailed course information.

Policy

1. The University will convert to the Alpha/4.0 graduate grading scale effective September 1, 2004. Graduate courses with start dates of September 1, 2004 or later will use the new scale. The new scale is as follows:

Alpha Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A+	95 – 100	4.0
A	90 – 94	4.0
A-	85 – 89	3.7
B+	80 – 84	3.3
B	75 – 79	3.0
B-	70 – 74	2.7
C+	66 – 69	2.3
C	63 – 65	2.0
C-	60 – 62	1.7
F	59 – 0	0.0

2. Students registered in courses with start dates before September 1, 2004 will be graded according to the applicable former alpha or percentage grade scale.
3. Effective for courses starting September 1, 2004, the Office of the Registrar will retain only the alpha grade in the official student record, (the Athabasca University Student Information Management System).
4. Student transcripts will display the alpha grades (and corresponding grade points) for all courses with start dates of September 1, 2004 or later.
5. Courses, which are currently graded on a pass/fail basis, will continue to be graded in this way. Grades for these courses will not have corresponding grade points and will not be used in GPA calculations. Grades for these courses will appear on transcripts as "P" for those successfully completed, and a "U" grade for failures.



6. No descriptive modifiers (excellent, satisfactory, etc.) apply to graduate grades.
7. All student grade point averages (GPAs) will be defined by and calculated using the 4.0 grading scale. Percentage grades in academic history (assigned under the old grading system) that form part of a grade point average calculation will be converted to the 4.0 scale before the GPA calculation, according to the following conversion scale.

Note: The following table will only be used for individual course conversion when a transcript is produced. It will only be used for courses started prior to September 1, 2004 with a percentage grade. It should not be used to compare averages or grade point averages.

Conversion Scale (percentage to grade point) for GPA Calculations for Historic Percentage Grades

(For the Masters of Business Administration, Health Studies, Nursing, and Science courses)

Percentage Range	Grade Points
85 – 100	4.0
80 – 84	3.7
77 – 79	3.3
74 – 76	3.0
70 – 73	2.7
67 – 69	2.3
64 – 66	2.0
60 – 63	1.7
57 – 59	0.0
54 – 56	0.0
50 – 53	0.0

Regulation

All existing exceptions to the current Athabasca University standard for passing grades (C- or higher) will be carried forward into the new Grading Standards.

Academic Planning, Policy, and Standards Committee must approve any additional exceptions to the new graduate grading system including the standards for passing grades and failing grades.



Any such exceptions must be implemented in a manner that provides adequate time for student advisement concerning the change.

Procedure

1. Following approval of this policy, Athabasca University will direct and implement a thorough communication process to notify the University community of the change in grading system. This communication will require updating all print and electronic information for graduate students, informing all partners in education, and informing all academic, administrative and support staff of this important change in grading standards.
2. The Office of the Registrar will review the transcript and will make any needed changes.
3. Information Technology Services, in consultation with the Office of the Registrar, will modify the transcript to display the new alpha grades, the percentage grades for start dates prior to September 1, 2004, and the grade point average calculated using the new 4.0 scale.
4. The Office of the Registrar will produce a new template for the back of the Athabasca University transcript that identifies the new graduate grading system, the former grading system and other transcript features that require definition or explanation.

Related References, Policies, and Procedures

The Universities Coordinating Council Common Grading System Committee, June 2001 Update Report
Approved Common Provincial Grading Scale (as per above committee)
Undergraduate Grading Policy

Applicable Legislation/Regulation

Responsible Position/Department

Office of the Registrar

Keywords

Graduate Grading scale, graduate grades, graduate marks, grades, marks, graduate grade point average, graduate GPA

History

Office of the Registrar, October 20, 2016 (revised)
Athabasca University Academic Council; January 19, 2005; Motion No. 186-8
Athabasca University Academic Council; March 10, 2004; Motion No. 181-6