

## **ASSESSMENT AND GRADING POLICY**

**Office of Accountability:** Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

**Office of Administrative Responsibility:** Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

**Approver:** General Faculties Council

**Scope:** Compliance with University policy extends to all members of the University community.

### **PURPOSE**

The University's Assessment and Grading policy sets out the fundamental principles and core elements which characterize and guide the assessment of student performance and achievement in for credit programming. The purpose of the policy is to promote both consistency in assessment and grading practices across the university and adherence to appropriate academic standards. It provides for the development of rules and processes that manage student assessment and related activities.

### **POLICY**

#### **ASSESSMENT**

Assessment is an integral part of the University's core mission of teaching and learning. It is undertaken in a formative manner to provide feedback to students and in summative form to measure the level of student achievement. Through the assignment of grades by instructors, in the exercise of their judgment, assessment serves as the means whereby the level of student knowledge and achievement is communicated to a variety of stakeholders in the broader world including prospective employers, other academic institutions and accrediting bodies. Given the variety of purposes served by assessment of student performance and achievement, it should be reliable, valid, fair, transparent and consistent with course or program goals and objectives. It must be capable of clear and timely communication to both students and other stakeholders.

Assessment at the University of Alberta is guided by the following principles:

1. Assessment should be integrated into and aligned with the learning experiences and stated objectives/ outcomes of a course and program;
2. While this policy sets out the minimum expectations concerning the design and delivery of assessments, it does not limit the development of other, additional, innovative forms of effective assessment provided they are compatible with the principles stated in this policy;
3. General assessment methods and grading standards must be communicated clearly to students at the beginning of the course or program of study;
4. Clear and transparent assessment criteria should be provided to students throughout the course;
5. In assessment, the University is committed to providing reliable and valid information in which students, prospective employers and accrediting bodies can have confidence;
6. Where possible, assessment should be multifaceted (varied) and timely. Student achievement and performance should be assessed in a formative manner during a course and in a summative manner both during and at the end of a course and program;
7. In the design, delivery and reporting of summative assessments, the University is committed to open, accountable and equitable processes.

#### **GRADING**

Grades in any course, examination or other academic assessment shall not be mandated on the basis of a curve or historic distribution of student grades. The distribution of grades shall not be predetermined by any system of quotas that requires a certain number or percentage of grades at a particular level. However, a Faculty, department or unit may develop and provide guidelines to instructors setting out a reasonable distribution of grades in the Faculty or department. Such (i.e., Faculty or department-specific) guidelines must be brought to the Academic Standards Committee for information and communicated to students through the University Calendar.

### **DEFINITIONS**

There are no definitions for this policy.

### **PUBLISHED PROCEDURES OF THIS POLICY**

Access to Evaluative Course Material Procedure

Grading Procedure

Grading Procedure (Appendix A): Historical Distribution of Grades

## **GRADING PROCEDURE**

**Office of Administrative Responsibility:** Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

**Approver:** General Faculties Council

**Scope:** Compliance with University procedure extends to all members of the University community.

### **PURPOSE**

- To explain acceptable methods of grading.
- To define the roles and responsibilities of instructors, Chairs, and Faculty Councils in matters concerning the assignment and approval of grades in courses.

### **PROCEDURE**

#### 1. GRADING

There will be no pre-determined quota of letter grades in a course. A student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade (i.e., A and "excellent", B and "good", C and "satisfactory", etc., as defined in the University Calendar section on Academic Regulations) must be aligned. Faculties may recommend grade distributions as approved by the Faculty Council. Such (i.e., Faculty or department-specific) guidelines must be brought to the Academic Standards Committee for information and communicated to students through the University Calendar.

#### 2. COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS

Course expectations regarding assignments, grading, and other course-related matters must be communicated clearly in the course syllabus. Regulations concerning matters related to the conduct of courses are contained in the University Calendar section on Academic Regulations.

#### 3. AUTHORITY TO ASSIGN GRADES

The assignment of final grades in a course will be the initial responsibility of the instructor(s). Under the Post-Secondary Learning Act of Alberta, the Faculty Council under whose auspices a course is offered has the ultimate authority to determine the examination grades and final grades in a course, "subject to any conditions or restrictions imposed by GFC" (section 29(1)). Faculty Councils may delegate this final authority over grades to Deans or Chairs of Departments. Final grades must be approved by Faculty Council or delegate before they are submitted to the Office of the Registrar and Student Awards.

#### 4. GRADING DISAGREEMENTS

Where a disagreement arises between an instructor of the course and the Faculty Council or delegate who approves the grades, the disagreement will be resolved by a process defined by the Faculty Council.

#### 5. DATA DISSEMINATION

The historical, University-wide mean grades by course level are included in Appendix A. The Office of the Registrar will provide grade distribution data to Faculties and Departments annually. These data allow monitoring of consistency in grading over time and between sections of multiple-section courses, and provide insight into comparative grading across the institution.

#### 6. RECORDS RETENTION

Each instructor will keep a record of either the raw scores or numerical grades achieved by students in each test, examination, or other assignment that will count towards the final grade and of the percentage weight assigned to each. The details contained in this documentation must enable the instructor (or the Department on the instructor's behalf) to reconstruct the student's final grade where the necessity arises.

Departments shall keep this documentation with the detailed record of the component marks for at least one year after the final examination.

Students' final examinations, and any unreturned term work, shall be retained and then shredded six months after the deadline for reappraisal and grade appeals (see §23.5.4(2)).

### **DEFINITIONS**

There are no definitions for this procedure.

### **FORMS**

There are no forms for this procedure.