

Grading

Letter grading with a grade point average (GPA) is the equivalent official grading system in Canada, the U.S., and Europe (European Credit Transfer System). In some institutions, instructors enter grades as percentages or as letter grades and the official reported is letter. There is some variation among universities in the conversion equivalencies for percentage and letter grades, which are determined by individual universities but consistent across programs. Queen's currently does not calculate a GPA, and a great many requests are received each year to provide a calculation for the purpose of applying for advanced study, either by the student or the university considering the applicant, but there is no standard methodology for calculating a "Queen's GPA" and therefore, no way to assure fairness or equity for Queen's students. Other non-evaluative grades are also used at the majority of universities researched, normally Pass (P), Fail (F), Audit (AU) and Transfer Credit (TR).

Proposals and research were presented by SCAP Units' Faculty Boards and Academic Councils for discussion. Extensive consultation of stakeholders was completed in the Winter Term of 2009 by the Chair of SCAP, Dr. Charles Beach, and the University Registrar, Jo-Anne Brady, and feedback was brought to SCAP for discussion at its March 17 and April 20, 2009 meetings. The Chair and Registrar attended meetings with the following bodies in addition to one-on-one or small group consultations with faculty, staff, and students:

- Vice-Principal (Academic) and Deans
- Faculty of Arts and Science Undergraduate Chairs
- Faculty of Arts and Science Faculty Board
- School of Business Faculty Forum and Faculty Board
- School of Graduate Studies Graduate Council
- Faculty of Applied Science Operations Committee
- Faculty of Applied Science Faculty Board
- School of Nursing Academic Council
- School of Medicine Associate Dean
- School of Theology Faculty Board
- Student Senate Caucus
- Queen's Career Services and the School of Business Career Centre

Feedback received from faculty members and administrators was generally positive and in favour of the proposal. Faculty members who have taught students using the proposed standards support the assertion that credit units and letter grading schemes increased clarity to students, faculty, and staff at institutions of higher learning across North America and Europe, as well as employed

presentation of letter grades and GPA. There is considerable evidence that the letter grade system is likely to be advantageous to students and, given that a reporting system is prohibitively expensive, SCAP recommends it as Queen's official grading system.

Conclusion/Recommendations

The proposal regarding credit weighting and grading practices and all feedback received was reviewed by members of SCAP at its meeting of April 2009. After an extensive discussion, members of SCAP decided in favour of the proposal for Queen's University to adopt a 3/6 credit unit weighting scheme and a letter grading scheme with GPA. The new practices will take effect in May 2011 with the effective date of the new student information system.

SCAP will be reviewing the options for the reproduction of historical transcripts and 'in-progress' students in the new student information system and report on the options and its determination at a later date.

Summary

The Senate Committee on Academic Procedures recommends the following two motions be considered for action at the May 20, 2009 meeting of Senate:

Be it resolved that Queen's adopt a credit unit system that assigns weights in a scale where normally a 0.5 credit course translates to a weight of 3.0 credits and a 1.0 credit course translates to a weight of 6.0 credit units, with provision for variation of assigned weights (e.g., 0 through 12.0) within the scale.

Be it resolved that Queen's adopt an official grading system of letter grades with Grade Point Average (GPA,) as depicted in Appendix 1. Faculties and Schools may choose not to assign all of the grades in the full scale which will be so noted in the legend of the official transcript. A top GPA of 4.0 will correspond to the highest achievable grade of A+, with the accompanying descriptor that A+ denotes exceptional academic achievement.

Senate Committee on Academic Procedures
Report to Senate – May 20, 2009

OFFICIAL CREDIT UNIT WEIGHTING AND GRADING
AT QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

Proposed Official Grading System

	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Percentage (%)	Descriptor
Queen's	A+	4.0	90-100	Exceptional; significantly exceeds the highest expectations for course work.
	A	4.0	85-89	Outstanding; meets the highest standards for the assignment or course.
	A-	3.7	80-84	Excellent; meets very high standards for the assignment or course.
	B+	3.3	77-79	Very good; meets high standards for the assignment or course.
	B	3.0	73-76	Good; meets most standards for the assignment or course.
	B-	2.7	70-72	More than adequate; shows some reasonable command of material.
	C+	2.3	67-69	Acceptable; meets basic standards for the assignment or course.
	C	2.0	63-66	Acceptable; meets some of the basic standards for the assignment or course.
	C-	1.7	60-62	Acceptable; while falling short of meeting basic standards in several ways.
	D+	1.3	57-59	Minimally acceptable.
	D	1.0	53-56	Minimally acceptable; passing grade.
	D-	0.7	50-52	Minimally acceptable; lowest passing grade.
	F	0.0	0 -49	Failure
	P			Pass; no grade assigned
H			Pass with honours; meets the highest standards for the assignment or course.	
AUD			Audit	
TR			Transfer Credit; no grade assigned	