

## Chemistry and Biochemistry Department Grading Policy

1. The assigned grades for graduate and undergraduate students shall follow the policy outlined by the University Senate (described below):
  - 1.1. Undergraduate grades shall be: A, outstanding achievement; B, praiseworthy performance; C, satisfactory performance, the most common undergraduate grade; D, minimally passing; and F, failing.
  - 1.2. Graduate grades shall be: A, superior performance; B, satisfactory performance; C, minimally passing; D, unacceptable for graduate degree credit; and F, failing.
  - 1.3. Faculty may assign plus and minus grades
2. The grading policy for a course shall be set by the instructor of record for the course.
  - 2.1. Grading policy set by prior instructors, or used in prior semesters do not need to be used in subsequent semesters.
  - 2.2. Previous grading policy should be considered when developing the grading policy for a given course.
  - 2.3. In instances when there are multiple instructors teaching the same course in the same semester (e.g. CHEM 100, CHEM 200...) it is anticipated that the instructors will agree upon and follow a single grading standard for all sections of the course unless:
    - 2.3.1. there are substantive differences in the course materials covered, or required assignments in the different sections,
    - 2.3.2. or the exams are different for each instructor/section,
    - 2.3.3. or the instructors identify some other factor(s) unique to one or more sections which have an unanticipated impact on the grading policy.
3. The grading policy for each course, including any laboratory component, must be clearly described in the course syllabus and available to the students on the first day of the class.
  - 3.1. This should include the number of points and/or percentage of the grade allocated to the respective course components (e.g. assignments, lab reports, participation, exams...)
  - 3.2. The grading policy should also include a tentative scale representing how many points, or what percentage equates to which letter grade.
  - 3.3. The grading policy should clearly describe if there are variables in the calculation of the final grade (e.g. best X out of Y assignments, dropped lowest exam score...)
  - 3.4. The grading policy and syllabus shall also address how the policy will change in the instances of missed course items (e.g. exams, assignments,...) for both valid and invalid reasons.
  - 3.5. Grading policies shall not include punitive calculations, whereby a poor performance on a single measure (e.g. exam, assignment...) has a retroactive impact on other graded course components.
  - 3.6. The grading policy should not change after the first day of the class unless:
    - 3.6.1. The instructor of record identifies a problem with the grading policy,

- 3.6.2. Or there is a compelling reason for the instructor to institute a policy modification beneficial to the students (e.g. dropping lowest exam score),
    - 3.6.3. Or there is insufficient time to complete the intended course material.
  - 3.7. In instances where the grading policy is modified it cannot be done in a manner that negatively impacts student grade trajectories.
- 4. Instructors should follow the same grading policy for all students in the course. If the grade policy is modified for a single student the modifications should be applied to all other students unless:
  - 4.1. The instructor identifies a deficiency, or bias in the grading policy which negatively impacts one student, or a subset of students (e.g. overly strict lab TA grades for a section),
  - 4.2. There is a known factor which negatively influenced a student's performance to be below what they had demonstrated as their normal potential.
- 5. Ideally the distribution of grades in the course should follow a normal distribution, with the average grade being near the "satisfactory performance" grade (C for undergrad, B for grad).
  - 5.1. Deviations from the normal distribution are anticipated to occur periodically, particularly in instances where there is a relatively small number of students in the course, making a normal distribution unlikely.
  - 5.2. Other periodic deviations from a normal distribution are possible, in such cases the instructor is encouraged to attempt to identify a source for such deviations, as they may hint at needed curricular change, or an unanticipated impact of an adopted curricular change.
  - 5.3. If deviations from a normal deviation are persistent over several semesters the instructor of the course is advised to review the grading policy for the course with the department curriculum committee.