

**FHS Undergraduate and Graduate Student Grading Guidelines**  
Approved by Faculty Council, January 16, 2020 (revised March 16, 2020)

**Relationship of these Guidelines to SFU Policy**

If these grading guidelines are determined to be inconsistent with:

1. [Undergraduate grading systems and policies](#);
2. [Graduate Grading Systems and Policies](#);
3. [SFU policy T20.01](#) grading and the r reconsideration of grades; or other SFU policies, then SFU policy shall in all cases prevail.

**Reason for these guidelines:**

It is the purpose of this document promote consistency in procedures for giving grades and managing conflicts over grades in the FHS.

**Principles governing these guidelines:**

Grading should ideally provide an accurate, reliable and fair way of representing performance in a course, and it must be understood by students. Grade distributions should be consistent for the same course across terms, and generally consistent for courses offered at the same level across the Faculty. Students should have confidence that the instructor has been thorough and accurate in marking and recording at every stage of the evaluation process. Admissions committees, fellowship/scholarship committees, granting councils, financial aid offices, etc. must have the same level of confidence in grading that the student should have about accuracy, reliability, and fairness.

**Responsibilities of program director**

In FHS it is the responsibility of the Program Director to approve all grades before they are submitted to the Registrar. Final grades should not be released to students before these grades have been approved by the relevant Program Director.

If a grading distribution deviates significantly from the distributions in this document, the Director may consult with an instructor to discuss the distribution before issuing an approval. This discussion will aim to produce an agreement between the Director and the instructor with regard to the distribution of grades. If this discussion does not produce an agreement, and in accordance with SFU policy T 20.01, the Director may refuse to issue an approval. In this case the matter goes to the Dean for deliberation and final decision.

At the end of the semester, if the grade distribution does not conform to these guidelines the instructor may consider scaling, or rescaling grades before submitting the grades for approval.

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**Waiver of grade distribution targets**

Before the beginning of the semester (and prior to the publication of a course outline), instructors may apply in writing to the Program Director for a waiver of the grade distribution targets specified in this guideline for pedagogical or other reasons. The written application should state the rationale for the waiver and the proposed alternative grade distribution target for the course. The applicable committee will vote to approve or not approve such requests.

**Course requirements and evaluation/assessment procedures:**

As is noted in FHS' Syllabus Policy, and in SFU Policy T 20.01, instructors must be very clear about how they intend to assess student performance as part of the syllabus. At minimum, the following elements must be distributed to students prior to the beginning of a course:

- A statement of course objectives
- A linking of course objectives to relevant core competencies
- Identification of all course requirements that will be assessed, and how this assessment will be undertaken
- The manner in which marks will be used to determine the final grade (may be distributional, a fixed scale, or a combination of the two)
- A qualitative statement describing the key differences between, A, B, C, and etc., for major assessments or coursework
- Notice that grading will be in accordance with SFU and FHS policies and guidelines. For example, an instructor may sketch out what an A+, A, etc. grade would mean in their class with regard to specific assignments, in-class activities, etc. An instructor may also wish to indicate that "In accordance with SFU/FHS practice, I expect that the median grade given in this class will be....."

**The Faculty of Health Sciences grading system**

Consistent with SFU policy, FHS uses a letter grading system. We advise all instructors to release all marks as letter grades, unless the instructor is very confident that the course percentage marks will produce a distribution that is consistent with the FHS guidelines.

See [http://www.sfu.ca/irp/Students/grades\\_report/index.html](http://www.sfu.ca/irp/Students/grades_report/index.html) for the SFU Grades Report.

**The FHS distribution of grades**

In FHS we prefer to provide guidelines for the distribution of grades that are given in a particular class, taught at a particular level. These guidelines should not be interpreted as mandating the scaling of grades.

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The following rule of thumb accommodates diverse grade distributions but achieves the Faculty's objective.

**FHS undergraduate courses**

Lower division (100- and 200-level) undergraduate courses should, in general, have no more than 5% A+'s, and the median letter grade should be a B-/B.

Upper division (300- and 400-level) undergraduate courses should in general have no more than 8% A+'s, and the median letter grade should be a B/B+, or it might be a bit higher (B+/A-) for some 4<sup>th</sup> year seminars.

[See the SFU undergraduate standard grading table](#)

**FHS graduate courses**

A median grade of A- is expected in FHS graduate courses.

Note that there is no C- or D in graduate courses at SFU. Please refer to [SFU Graduate Grading Systems and Policies](#) for more detailed information regarding graduate student course grades.

Letter grade	GPA equivalent	Definition
A+	4.33	Excellent/superior performance
A	4.00	
A-	3.67	
B+	3.33	Good/satisfactory performance
B	3.00	
B-	2.67	Unsatisfactory performance
C+	2.33	
C	2.00	
F	0.00	Failure
N	0.00	Did not write final exam and/or complete course work