

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

S.78.52

To Senate

From Senate Committee on Undergraduate
Studies

Subject Proposed Revisions in the
Grading System

Date 78-04-21

Actions concluded by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies at its meeting of 78-04-11 gives rise to the following motion:

MOTION 1 (Letter grades, other transcript notations, definitions and numerical equivalents)

That the accompanying table replace the Grading Table on page 69 of the 1977/78 calendar. This involves the following specific recommendations:

1. That for the computation of grade point average (semester, cumulative and graduation GPA) each '+' be considered .33 higher than the grade on which it is based and each '-' grade be considered .33 lower than the grade on which it is based.
2. That the definitions of A, B, C, D, and F grades (as recorded in Table 1) be approved.
3. That the definition of P (as recorded in Table 1) be approved.
4. That the Course Challenge (CC) entry be retained with the present terms (cf. p.70 of the 1977-78 Calendar).
5. That the category 'Aegrotat standing' (AE) be established with the following terms:
Aegrotat standing (AE) in an incomplete course may be awarded on medical or compassionate grounds by the Registrar on the recommendation of the Chairman of the Department concerned when written evidence is submitted to substantiate a request for such standing and that the course requirements for credit have been substantially fulfilled. This evidence normally must be received by the Registrar or Department within 96 hours of a scheduled final examination or within 96 hours of the last day of lectures of the semester for which such standing is requested. Courses for which Aegrotat standing is awarded are not included in the general calculation of Grade Point Average.

6. That the Deferred Grade (DE) entry be retained with the present terms (cf. p.70 of the 1977-78 calendar).
7. That the designation 'N' be retained with the present terms (cf. p.70 of the 1977-78 calendar).
8. That the designation 'W' be retained with the following terms:
The designation 'W' will be given when a student withdraws (or is withdrawn) after the course drop period for a course graded on a Pass (P) or WITHDRAWN (W) basis (the course drop period is the period in which no entries are made on transcripts). This form of grading is only used in courses of the practicum type in which a student is working with human subjects, e.g. Education, Criminology,
9. That the Audit (AU) entry be retained with the present terms (cf. p.69 of the 1977-78 calendar).
10. That the Credit Without Grade (CR) entry be retained with the present terms (cf. p.70 of the 1977-78 calendar and Table 1)."

MOTION 2 (Procedure for Computing Cumulative Grade Point Averages if the same course is repeated)

That the procedures for computing cumulative grade point averages be modified so that only the higher grade of a repeated course be included in the computation.

Rationale:

Under the present system, a failed course is like an albatross about the student's neck. For example, if a student fails a four credit course and later repeats the course, expends a great deal of effort, and earns an A, the net effect is equivalent to earning a C in an eight hour course as far as the student's cumulative grade point average is concerned. Once a course has been mastered, the student's cumulative grade point average ought to reflect the level of mastery that has been achieved.

Note - the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies is recommending very modest changes in the present system of grades. Over a five year period a series of sub-committees and the main committee have examined proposals for far more extensive change, for example, limitation of the transcript to a record of courses for which credit was actually granted, a provision of the option of taking an ungraded degree, provision for taking courses outside ones major field on a pass/no entry basis. Perhaps the most publicised issue has been consideration of further liberalizing or limiting the course drop provision. During these years proposals brought before SCUS have reflected some of the general trends which have effected practices in higher education throughout North America. Perhaps the most persistent theme in proposed changes was the observation that grading has a major effect on what is learned and how well it is learned and that the effects of grading are often negative, i.e. grading impedes the learning of the mature, self-directed student and contributes to reducing a "test passer or teacher pleaser" rather than an educated person. None of the recommendations reflecting this orientation has survived consideration by the most recent sub-committee and by SCUS. The recommendations forwarded for Senate consideration represent "fine tuning" of the existing grading system and reflect a concern for fairness, consistency and credibility. It is the position of SCUS that students will be best served by actions which will increase the overall credibility of the credentials they receive from the University. Last year SCUS considered the report of its latest Sub-Committee on Grading and in July, 1977, the amended report was circulated to the Student Society and to faculties for consideration and comment. Detailed responses were received last fall and there is a measure of agreement approaching consensus on the proposals now forwarded by SCUS for Senate approval. The sub-committee proposals rejected by SCUS are reflected in the SCUS motions noted on the last page of this submission.

SCUS is now considering the report from its Ad Hoc Sub-Committee on Grading Practices. That report addresses the question of the relative responsibility of student, instructor and departmental chairman in relation to specifying course requirements, establishing the basis for grading, evaluating work submitted, awarding grades, communicating concerns about marking or grades, and reconsidering a grade already awarded. We hope to forward a set of recommendations for Senate approval in the very near future.

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In submitting these recommendations there is no intent that they be applied retroactively in any fashion. To do so would seriously disturb the nature of official records and transcripts already released and to raise questions of credibility, variations in averages, values and similar matters. If they are approved it would be appropriate that the changes be reflected in the calendar for 1979-80, with changes to commence for September 1979.

It is expected also that the changes to Registrar's computer systems may be extensive. Technical review will be initiated if the recommendations receive Senate approval, on the understanding that report will be made to Senate if there is indication of significant costings or problems.


D.R. Birch

DRB/cg

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

SCUS 78-21

MEMORANDUM

SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE	From..... H. M. EVANS, SECRETARY
STUDIES	SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES
Subject..... REVISED REPORT ON GRADING	Date..... APRIL 17, 1978

Over a period of some five years a series of sub-committees and the main Committee have considered issues related to grading. The most recent report has been extensively reviewed and modified by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies following comments and responses received from each of the Faculties and the Student Society on a main report, SCUS 76-43, which was distributed to those bodies under covering memorandum July 8, 1977.

It is not anticipated that there will be a need to refer to earlier reports of the various committees but should this be required the main items would be SCUS 76-43, SCUS 76-43a, SCUS 76-43b and the recent SCUS 78-16 with minutes covering the periods April 4, April 11, 1978.

The items retained have been relettered and renumbered to provide consistency in the present report. There is attached "Extract from pages 69, 70, 71 of the 1977-78 Calendar" to show present terms.

REPORT ON GRADING

A. LETTER GRADES, OTHER TRANSCRIPT NOTATIONS, DEFINITIONS AND
NUMERICAL EQUIVALENTS

"That the accompanying table replace the Grading Table on Page 69 of the 1977-78 Calendar. This involves the following specific recommendations:

1. That for the computation of grade point average (semester, cumulative and graduation GPA) each '+' be considered .33 higher than the grade on which it is based and each '-' grade be considered .33 lower than the grade on which it is based.
2. That the definitions of A, B, C, D, and F grades (as recorded in Table 1) be approved.
3. That the definition of P (as recorded in Table 1) be approved.
4. That the Course Challenge (CC) entry be retained with the present terms (cf. p.70 of the 1977-78 Calendar).
5. That the category 'Aegrotat standing' (AE) be established with the following terms:
Aegrotat standing (AE) in an incomplete course may be awarded on medical or compassionate grounds by the Registrar on the recommendation of the Chairman of the Department concerned when written evidence is submitted to substantiate a request for such standing and that the course requirements for credit have been substantially fulfilled. This evidence normally must be received by the Registrar or Department within 96 hours of a scheduled final examination or within 96 hours of the last day of lectures of the semester for which such standing is requested. Courses for which Aegrotat standing is awarded are not included in the general calculation of Grade Point Average.
6. That the Deferred Grade (DE) entry be retained with the present terms (cf. p.70 of the 1977-78 calendar).
7. That the designation 'N' be retained with the present terms (cf. p.70 of the 1977-78 calendar).
8. That the designation 'W' be retained with the following terms:
The designation 'W' will be given when a student withdraws (or is withdrawn) after the course drop period for a course graded on a Pass (P) or WITHDRAWN (W) basis (the course drop period is the period in which no entries are made on transcripts). This form of grading is only used in courses of the practicum type in which a student is working with human subjects, e.g. Education, Criminology,
9. That the Audit (AU) entry be retained with the present terms (cf. p.69 of the 1977-78 calendar).

10. That the Credit Without Grade (CR) entry be retained with the present terms (cf. p.70 of the 1977-78 calendar and Table 1)."

B. PROCEDURE FOR COMPUTING CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGES (If the same course is repeated)

"That the procedures for computing cumulative grade point averages be modified so that only the higher grade of a repeated course be included in the computation."

Rationale:

Under the present system, a failed course is like an albatross about the student's neck. For example, if a student fails a four credit course and later repeats the course, expends a great deal of effort, and earns an A, the net effect is equivalent to earning a C in an eight hour course as far as the student's cumulative grade point average is concerned. Once a course has been mastered, the student's cumulative grade point average ought to reflect the level of mastery that has been achieved.

TABLE 1

GRADING SCALE -

Each credit course for which the student is registered is awarded a grade notation at the end of the semester. The grade for each course will be entered on the student's record by a letter grade and a numerical equivalent as follows. (See note below.)

Letter Grade	Definition	Numerical Equivalent
A+	Superior performance	4.33
A		4.00
A-		3.67
B+	Good performance	3.33
B		3.00
B-		2.67
C+	Satisfactory performance	2.33
C		2.00
C-		1.67
P	Satisfactory performance or better (Pass, ungraded)	No numerical equivalent
D	Marginal performance	1.00
F	Unsatisfactory performance (Fail)	0.00
CC	Course Challenge	No numerical equivalent
AE	Aegrotat standing, compassionate pass	No numerical equivalent
DE	Deferred grade	0.00 for specified purposes
N	Did not write final examination or otherwise complete course	0.00
W	Withdrawn	No numerical equivalent
AU	Audit	No numerical equivalent
CR	Credit without grade	No numerical equivalent

Note: Credit is granted for A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, P, D, CC, AE, CR. No credit is granted for F, DE, N, W, AU.

6.2 Standing and Credit Grading Scale

EXTRACT FROM
PAGES 69, 70, 71
of the 1977-78 Calendar

Each credit course for which the student is registered is awarded a grade at the end of the semester. The grade for each course will be entered on the student's record by a letter grade and a numerical equivalent as follows:

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Class of Achievement
A+		
A	4	First Class
A-		
B+		
B	3	Second class
B-		
C+		
C	2	Pass
C-		
D	1	Pass
F	0	Failure
DE	0	Deferred Grade
N	0	Did not Write
CC	No numerical equivalent	Course Challenge
AU	No numerical equivalent	Audit
CR	No numerical equivalent	Credit Without Grade

Deferred Grades

The letter grade *DE* will be given when a physician's certificate or other document substantiating a request for deferment on medical or compassionate grounds is received by the Registrar or the Chairman of the department concerned within four days of the date from which the examination was to have been written, or when the instructor in the course wishes to defer submitting a final mark pending completion of further work from the student. The awarding of the letter grade *DE* will be subject to submission of such grade by the instructor, with approval by the Chairman. All unchanged deferred grades will be automatically converted to *F* after the fifth day of lectures of the semester immediately following the one in which the grade was awarded. In exceptional cases an extension may be granted on petition by the Chairman of the department concerned.

Grades of *N*

The letter grade *N* is given when a student registered for a course and did not write the examination, or otherwise complete the work in the course, and did not withdraw before the deadline date. An *N* is considered an *F* for purposes of scholastic standing.

Grades of *CC* (Course Challenge)

A student who has been registered for Course Challenge is subject to an assessment equivalent to the final examination for the course plus an interview which may include an oral and/or practical examination, all to be arranged and approved by the Chairman of the department involved. Departments are free to hold Course Challenge examinations any time during the semester after the formal period of registration for Course Challenge. A performance equivalent to a grade of *C* or better in the course is required for successful Course Challenge.

The statement from the department concerned indicating the final disposition of the Course Challenge in the semester must be submitted to the Registrar on or before the last day for submission of regular grades in the course for that semester. There is no provision for extension or deferrals. Results will be recorded by departments as *successful* or *unsuccessful* or *unattempted*. Successful results will appear on transcripts and statements of standing with the entry *CC* in the grade column and with credit shown. At the end of term, unsuccessful or unattempted results will not appear on transcripts or statements of standing but will be held in internal records by the Registrar's Office.

The grade of *CC* has no numerical equivalent and is not included in the calculation of Grade Point Average. The grade of *CC* cannot be applied in any way towards application for scholarships, bursaries or loans.

Grades of *CR*

The grade of *CR* has no numerical equivalent and is not included in the calculation of Grade Point Average. Students enrolled in English 010-3 are graded on a credit/no entry basis. The grade of *CR* may be assigned in certain other special cases.

Grades of *P* and *W*

The grades of *P* and *W* have no numerical equivalent and do not affect either Semester Grade Point Average or Cumulative Grade Point Average. Examples of courses graded on these bases are EDUC 401, 402, 405 and 406; CRIM 361, 461, 466; KIN 450.

Credit for the Semester

All credit earned will be granted, regardless of the Grade Point Average for the semester. Credit may be granted for a specific course once only. Where a student repeats the same course, the course(s) with the lower grade will be recorded on official records as a duplicate course. Duplicate courses remain on the permanent record and are included in the calculation of the Cumulative Grade Point Average; but are not counted in the calculation of the Cumulative Grade Point Average for graduation.

REPORT ON GRADING

Following the varied responses from the Student Society and each of the four Faculties, in its review of SCUS 78-16 (the Report on Grading and responses thereto) at meetings of April 4 and April 11, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies considered a number of main motions or motions in principle including the following (with some adjustments to wording), in addition to those directly reflected in the present report.

1. That the present nine-week course drop date regulations be retained without change. APPROVED
2. That no form of Pass/No Entry currently is desirable. APPROVED
3. That the item "That A+ be considered as equivalent to 4.0 except for scholarship purposes, in which case it will be considered as equivalent to 4.33 (as at present)" be deleted. APPROVED
(Similarly the recommendation which would have retained C- as 2.00 for all purposes was defeated.)
4. That there be grade notations of DE and I. FAILED
5. That there be no major change in the present course add, course drop, course change procedures. APPROVED