

7. Assessment and Examination

7.1 Assessment of academic performance

Assessment of a student's academic performance may take various forms: class work, written work, laboratory performance, field work, research papers, assignments, tests, oral defence and any other method of academic assessment. A combination of assessment methods may be used in one course. The specific course and assessment method(s) and the relative weight of these methods (e.g., written assignment X%, mid-term test Y%, final course examination Z%) should be spelt out in the course assessment scheme as designed by the teacher responsible and approved by the Assessment Panel of each Graduate Division. The course assessment methods should be announced to students as part of the course outline at an early stage of the academic term.

7.2 Course grades

The University adopts the 4-point grade point system for grading students' performance. Course grades, their standards and converted points to be used in reporting are as follows:

Grade and Standard		Sub-division (if needed)	Converted Points
A	Excellent	A	4.0
A-	Very Good	A-	3.7
B	Good	B+	3.3
		B	3.0
		B-	2.7
C	Pass	C+	2.3
		C	2.0
		C-	1.7
D	Pass	D+	1.3
		D	1.0
F	Failure	F	0.0
P	Ungraded Pass	Not counted in the calculation of the grade point average (GPA)	
U	Failure		

"P"/"U" grades are for specified courses adopting a pass/fail grading basis where other grades are not applicable.

GPA of a student's course work is computed by dividing the total weighted converted points for courses taken by the total number of units attempted inclusive of courses failed, where the weighted converted points are converted points multiplied by the number of units of the course concerned. Courses graded by "P" and "U" are not counted in the calculation of GPA.

A student who has gained a grade of "D" or above or "P" in a course will earn the unit(s) of that course. The units of courses repeated/retaken shall count only once towards the fulfilment of course units for graduation. A student receiving a failure grade in a required course must repeat the course or take an approved substitute course.

7.3 Assessment Panel

Each Graduate Division should establish an Assessment Panel which is chaired by the Head of the Graduate Division and comprises at least two members from the Graduate Division, apart from the Graduate Division Head himself/herself. The membership may overlap with that of the Graduate Panel of the Graduate Division. When handling grade appeals, the Assessment Panel may co-opt other teachers or form ad-hoc panels if necessary.

The terms of reference for the Assessment Panel include:

- (a) To propose policies on the matters contained in this policy paper (e.g., peer assessment) for approval by the Department/Programme Committee.
- (b) To monitor and ensure fairness and honesty in all assessment work.
- (c) To review comments provided by Visiting Committee and programme review panels.
- (d) To review and define grade descriptors as and when necessary.
- (e) To endorse course assessment schemes.
- (f) Be responsible for the quality of examination/test papers. For example, for each course, a colleague within the department/ programme could be appointed as an internal reviewer to independently check the paper and model answer/marking scheme.
- (g) To approve grade boundaries and the assignment of grades recommended by teachers.
- (h) To arrange make-up examination/assessment for students who have been given approval to be absent from examination/assessment.
- (i) To endorse requests submitted by teachers for change of marks or grades upon appeal by students, and to help resolve any informal complaints thereon.
- (j) To ensure that reasonable effort is undertaken to monitor and uphold academic honesty in all assessments.
- (k) Any other duties as determined by individual Departments/Divisions/Programmes.

7.4 Examination administration

Course examinations are administered either by the Registration and Examinations Section of the Registry or Graduate Divisions. The former is responsible for administration of examinations for undergraduate courses in some of which postgraduate students could have enrolled. The latter is responsible for administration of examinations for postgraduate courses.

Students who are unable to sit any examination due to illness or other compelling reasons should apply in writing with documentary evidence to the Graduate School as early as possible but in any case not later than five working days from the examination. The Graduate School will determine in consultation with the Graduate Division the required follow-up action. An application for absence from examination on medical ground shall be accompanied by a medical certificate signed by a registered medical practitioner. A student who is absent from any examination without permission will be given a failure grade in that examination. No supplementary examination is allowed for students failing an examination in this case. However, under special circumstances, the Graduate Council may on the recommendation of the Graduate Division approve an exceptional assessment arrangement.

For rules to be observed by candidates during examinations please refer to the *Postgraduate Student*

Handbook available on the Graduate School website and additional/specific rules to be prescribed by the Graduate Divisions/course teachers. A student who violates any of the rules regarding examinations shall be disciplined in accordance with the nature and gravity of the offence.

7.5 Grade appeal process

Grade appeals are handled by the Assessment Panel of each Graduate Division. However, it is advisable that students who wish to initiate a grade appeal should first approach the teacher responsible and discuss with him/her the expectations of both parties. This will provide a chance for both parties to review the examination script, or any other form of student work which has been assessed, together with the relevant course assessment scheme and other rules and regimes. If a resolution acceptable to both parties cannot be achieved through this informal process, the student may submit a formal grade appeal to the Assessment Panel through the Graduate Division or Head of the Graduate Division within two weeks from the grade release date of the course concerned. No appeal for grade review will be accepted after this period.

7.6 Unsatisfactory performance

A student is required to discontinue studies if his/her performance is unsatisfactory. The definition of unsatisfactory performance is as follows:

- (a) The cumulative grade point average is 1.0 or below; or
- (b) The student fails to have probation lifted after being put on academic probation for two consecutive terms of attendance; or
- (c) Additional requirements laid down by the Graduate Division are not satisfied.

A student shall be put on academic probation if he/she has obtained a cumulative GPA below 2.0 in the preceding term or upon receiving a failure grade in a thesis monitoring course unless he/she is required to discontinue studies. A student on academic probation shall be reviewed by the Graduate Division at the end of the term in which he/she is put on probation, at which time if he/she has obtained a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or above or attained satisfactory progress, probation shall be lifted, otherwise probation shall continue to apply in his/her next term.

If at any time the Supervisor is of the opinion that a student is not making satisfactory progress or is unlikely to attain the standard required for the degree, and the assessment result is endorsed by the Head of the Graduate Division and Graduate Council, the student shall be required to discontinue studies or may be advised to transfer to a course of study for a master's degree in the case of a doctoral student.