

ACADEMIC STANDINGS

A department may require examinations (oral and/or written), from time to time, to evaluate the student's progress. Numeric grades must be assigned to indicate the student's standing in courses except where otherwise specified.

Grade Schedule and Interpretation

Course grades help to determine who may or may not continue in a program to completion, to recommend advancement to a subsequent degree, and to determine eligibility for in-program scholarships and possible consideration for awards upon graduation. However, graduate coursework represents a smaller fraction of the student's overall evaluation than do undergraduate course grades. Performance in research is a key component of evaluation at the graduate level.

Fall 2012 Onward

Percentage Grade	Letter Grade	Description
90-100	A+	Outstanding. The student demonstrated a mastery of the course material at a level of performance exceeding that of most scholarship students and warranting consideration for a graduation award.
80-89	A- to A	Very Good to Excellent. The student demonstrated a very good understanding of the material at a level of performance warranting scholarship consideration.
70-79	B	Acceptable to Good. The student demonstrated an adequate to good understanding of the course material at a level of performance sufficient to complete the program of study.
65-69	C	Minimally Acceptable. The student demonstrated an understanding of the material sufficient to pass the course but at a level of performance lower than expected from continuing graduate students.
0-64	F	An inadequate performance.

A graduate student who receives a grade of less than 65 per cent in any course (graduate or undergraduate, prescribed or additional) is deemed to have failed the course. The advisory committee must then take action. A student may not register for any course they have previously passed unless the course is a varying content course (such as a Special Topics course) or unless so directed by the Admissions & Progress Committee of the Board of Graduate Studies.

Unannounced evaluations or surprise assessments may not be used for course assessment purposes or to determine course grades.

Grade Interpretation prior to Fall 2012 may be referenced in prior graduate calendars or at: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/2011-2012/genreg/genreg-as-gradeint.shtml/>.

Other Grade Notations

Grade	Description
AUD	An "audited" course (additional courses only).
CR	Credit. Denotes a final passing grade of at least 65% in a course in which the student has requested and been approved for the Credit/No Credit grading option (additional courses only). There is no numeric value attached to a CR grade (i.e., it is not included in GPA calculation).
INC	Incomplete or course not completed. It is required that the INC be replaced by a grade or an INF (incomplete failure) within the next registered semester. ¹
INF	Incomplete: failure. Students not completing the course requirements within the prescribed time limit (see INC above) of receiving an INC will receive an INF grade for that course. ¹ A grade value of 0 (zero) is attached to an INF grade.
INP	In progress. Multi-semester courses that are in progress will receive the INP interim grade designation in each semester prior to the semester of completion. Students registered in multi-semester courses must register in each semester in which they are actively engaged in course requirements. A grade is recorded in the final semester of offering.
MNR	Mark not reported. Grade has not been reported to the Office of Registrarial Services by department or school by the last day for grade reports for the semester. It is required that the MNR be replaced by a grade or an INF (incomplete failure) within the next semester. ¹

NCR	No credit. Denotes a failure in a course in which the student has requested and been approved for the Credit/No Credit grading option (additional courses only). If a student fails the course and receives an NCR, the student can appeal to the department to change NCR to audit (AUD).
SAT	Satisfactory. Used for evaluation of certain seminar and practicum courses. There is no numeric value attached to a SAT grade (i.e., it is not included in GPA calculation).
UNS	Unsatisfactory (considered a failure). Used for evaluation of certain seminar and practicum courses. A grade value of 0 (zero) is attached to an UNS grade.
WDF	Withdrawn: failure. Identifies a course from which the student withdrew after the announced last date for dropping courses. A course dropped prior to this last date is not recorded. A grade value of 0 (zero) is attached to a WDF grade. Courses that are incomplete when a student is withdrawn or permanently withdraws from their program after the last date to drop courses will receive the WNP designation (see WNP below)
WNP	Withdrawn: no penalty. Identifies a course from which the student withdrew after the announced date for dropping courses. This grade may be assigned under special circumstances on appeal to the Admissions and Progress Committee. No grade value is attached to a WNP grade.

¹ Any student who receives an INC or MNR grade and for whom the final grade is not received in the Office of Registrarial Services prior to the first day of the next semester, must complete the course in the next registered semester, at the end of which it is required that the INC be replaced by a grade or an INF (incomplete: failure). If the student is not registered in the semester in which the course is completed, any submitted grade will not be accepted and the student will receive INF as a final grade. Note that the student does not register for the incomplete course again; when a grade is received, the grade will replace the INC or MNR grade originally recorded. Students who are registered may have, at the department/school graduate committee's discretion, up to the end of that subsequent semester to finish the course requirements before the grade of INF is automatically recorded. Exceptions to the above, for compassionate reasons, may be considered on appeal to the Admissions & Progress Committee of the Board of Graduate Studies.

Course Outlines

Course outlines provide students with a set of expectations regarding the intended course and learner experience. To support student learning and their academic achievement, course outlines should consistently and effectively communicate instructor and, where applicable, program expectations, content, learning outcomes, delivery and the timing and methods of assessments. Clearly established expectations provide students with the ability to manage their time, identify required accommodations proactively, and plan in conjunction with course requirements.

Because teaching activities and learning environments are informed by and interrelated to the course outline, instructors should consider pedagogical approaches that are attentive to accessibility, equity, diversity, inclusion, and Indigenization and make these efforts evident through specific and deliberate design elements to structure the learning for all students. When trying to create an inclusive classroom, instructors may want to communicate and model their commitments through statements, learning outcomes, course materials, activities, and assignments. Course outlines should communicate instructors' clear and visible commitments to considerations of accessibility, equity, diversity, inclusion, Indigenization and/or decolonization in their discipline and in their learning environments.

As soon as possible, and no later than one week prior to the commencement of classes, the course outline, approved by the Department Chair/School Director, must be posted on either the University's central repository or an institutionally supported department/school/college/program website. Where there are special topics courses, the department/school/program should consider posting a draft description of the offering at the start of the course selection period. The Chair/Director is responsible for reviewing and approving the course outlines for all courses offered by their department (see II. General Regulations: Academic Standings). The Chair/Director is responsible for ensuring the course outline adheres to all related University policies and procedures (see II. General Regulations: Grounds for Academic Consideration; Academic Accommodation of Religious Obligations; Student Accessibility Services and Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities; Academic Standings, Grade Schedule and Interpretation, Grading Procedures, Examinations, Thesis Assessment). This may be delegated to an Associate Chair/Associate Director or Graduate Program Coordinator.

Instructors must post the approved course outline, electronically via the Learning Management System or course website, by the first day of the semester. Course outlines must be developed in an accessible format in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. In support of the University's sustainability commitment, physical copies should be provided to students only in exceptional circumstances or in situations where a student requires a physical copy because of an accommodation.

Course Outline Components

To allow students to make informed course selection decisions and prepare for the course expectations, each course outline must include the following information:

- Name of Department, School, College, and/or Campus offering the course
- Course name, course code (including section), and credit weight
- Semester of offering

- Calendar description including any pre-requisites, co-requisites, and restrictions
- Detailed course description
- Instructor(s) name, email, and office hours information
- GTA name, email, and office hours information, if applicable
- Class schedule and location
- Final examination date and time, if applicable
- Course learning outcomes
- Statement of purpose, goals and/or objectives, if desired
- Required and recommended texts and course resources, [including individual costing of each text and resource](#)¹
- Delivery method
- The intended weekly schedule/syllabus, if applicable
- Assessment information including methods, breakdown (% of grade), specific due dates, and alignment to course learning outcomes
- Additional detailed information on assignments, midterms, and final exams
- Instructor or department policy on late or missed assignments, in alignment with academic consideration policies and processes
- Institutionally approved standard statements or a link to the statements.

Academic units may require additional information specific to the unit or program to be included on course outlines. Instructors should check with the Chair/Director in their unit for more information.

Revisions to Assessment Methods and Due Dates in Approved Course Outlines

Instructors may find it necessary to change the timing and/or method of assessment provided in the approved, circulated course outline after the first class date. This may be due to unforeseen circumstances (not covered by the Academic Disruptions outlined in the policy on academic continuity – see Academic Policy 2.2), or when using an emerging course design approach. In such cases, the instructor must receive approval from the Chair/Director after consultation with students. The Chair/Director is responsible for ensuring meaningful consultation with students has occurred. In more complex cases, the Chair/Director should consult with the Associate Dean. Where the change is supported by the Chair/Director and is consistent with University policies and procedures, such change may be enacted. When a change is approved, students must normally be provided a minimum of two weeks' notice before the revised change is to be implemented. Instructors must consider students with identified accommodations. A revised course outline clearly indicating the change will be provided electronically to students. Instructors are encouraged to use multiple methods when communicating the revised course outline: e.g. email message to the class, announcement through the learning management system, message posted on a course website, etc.

Course Outline Retention and Archival

Starting with the courses offered in Fall 2023, course outlines are to be retained in a central institutional repository or by the department/school/college for at minimum ten years after the offering of a course. Acknowledging that each course offering may be different, students are encouraged to consult these outlines for course selection purposes. The University of Guelph recommends that students retain copies of their course outlines for future use.

¹ Directive on the Costs of Educational Materials (<https://api.livegconthub.uoguelph.dev/sites/default/files/2024-09/memo-educational-cost-directive.pdf>) under the *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act* (MTCU Act).

Grading Procedures Methods of Evaluation

Departments/schools must keep under continual review their grading procedures and matters that relate to academic standards to make sure the University's policies are being applied. Prior to one-week before the commencement of classes, the Chair/Director will review the course outline indicating the manner in which the instructor intends to conduct a course and to determine final grades. If the Chair/Director disagrees with the instructor's intention or subsequently with the implementation of the stated intentions, the Chair/Director will discuss their concerns with the instructor. If agreement cannot be reached, the matter will be referred to an appropriate department committee which will advise the Chair/Director in reaching a decision. The advice may include a recommendation on examination procedures.

Instructors must use evaluation criteria that measure quality of performance and not merely activity. Unannounced evaluations or surprise assessments may not be used for course assessment purposes or to determine course grades.

Instructors are not permitted to use predetermined, arbitrary distributions in the assignment of grades in individual courses.

Methods and/or timing of evaluation as indicated on the course outline should not be changed after the first class meeting except when they meet the conditions outlined in the Course Outline regulation (See II: General Regulations: Course Outlines).

Feedback to Students

Feedback to students on work completed or in progress is an integral part of teaching and learning in that it allows students to measure their understanding of material and their progress on learning objectives. Feedback often goes beyond grading—an indication of the standard achieved—to include comments on the particular strengths and weaknesses of a student's performance.

All term tests, assignments, evaluation of oral presentations, etc., should be returned to, or discussed with students, without undue delay and in any case before the last day of the examination period. If the material is necessary for the preparation of the final examination, it must be returned or discussed as soon as possible but no later than three days before the examination.

While the nature and frequency of such feedback will vary with the course, the University of Guelph is committed to providing students with appropriate and timely feedback on their work. Instructors must provide meaningful and constructive feedback, at minimum 20% of the final course grade, prior to the 40th class day. This may include but is not restricted to returning papers, assignments, quizzes, evaluation of oral presentations, or midterm examinations prior to the 40th class day.

In independent study courses, including major research paper or project courses, instructors must provide students with a realistic idea of their performance by discussing progress directly with the student and, if necessary, identify specific areas for improvement. This may include the

assessment of a research plan, literature review, annotated bibliography, oral presentation or other assessment tools.

Examinations

A Department/School may require examinations (oral and/or written) to evaluate the student's progress. Numeric grades must be assigned to indicate the student's standing in courses except where otherwise specified.

Students are advised to note the Schedule of Dates (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/schedule-dates/>). Students who encounter a conflict between a scheduled midterm or final examination and a religious obligation (see Academic Accommodation of Religious Obligations (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/academic-accommodation-religious-obligations/>)) must contact the course instructor or their graduate program coordinator to request that alternate arrangements be made. A listing of major religious holidays is available from The Office of Diversity and Human Rights.

Midterm Examinations

Term tests must not be scheduled during the last five class days prior to the final examination period. Exceptions may be granted by the Dean (or designates) for practical evaluations such as Laboratory or Studio tests, with the scheduling of such tests indicated in the course outline. Short quizzes, which have been a regularly scheduled part of the course and which are intended to review small amounts of material, are not considered term tests and may be held during the last five class days.

Departments/Schools are urged to schedule term tests and examinations in regularly scheduled class time and instructors must make every effort to accommodate students representing the University in extracurricular activities when there is a conflict between those activities and scheduled tests or examinations held outside regularly scheduled classes.

The University has reaffirmed the commitment to maintain the 17:20 to 19:00 time slot free of academic activities as much as possible. However, from time-to-time, approval may be given by the Dean (or designates) to schedule classes or labs in that time slot if necessary. Requests for scheduling out-of-class midterm examinations should also be restricted as much as possible to regular academic hours (8:30-17:20 and 19:00-22:00).

If there is a scheduling conflict between a scheduled class for another course and the proposed time for the midterm examination, the scheduled class takes priority and students with such a conflict must be accommodated.

Final Week of Classes

Final term assignments or papers may be due in the last five class days prior to the final examination period. Due dates for these evaluations must be stated in the course outline. Final assignments along with all necessary resource material should be available to students no later than the end of the 9th week of classes.

Term tests must not be scheduled during the last five class days prior to the final examination period. Exceptions may be granted by the Dean (or designates) for practical evaluations such as Laboratory or Studio tests, with the scheduling of such tests indicated in the course outline. Short quizzes, which have been a regularly scheduled part of the course and which are intended to review small amounts of material, are not considered term tests and may be held during the last five class days.

Final Examinations and Final Assignments

Under normal circumstances, changes to the published examination timetable are not permitted.

When regular final examinations are to be given, they must be given during the examination period. All regular final examinations will be two hours in duration.

When final examinations in either regular, take-home or other format are to be given, they must be given or due during the final examination period.

Instructors using take-home examinations will determine when the examination paper will be made available to students but must allow students at least 72 hours between the date of issue of the exam and the due date. The date of issue of the examination and the due date must be included in the course outline distributed at the first class meeting. The date of issue of the examination and its due date must be included in the course outline distributed at the first class meeting.

Final assignments or papers may be due either during the final examination period or in the last week of classes. In either case, the assignments along with all necessary resource material should be available to students no later than the end of the 9th week of classes and the due date and date of issue of the assignment must be included in the course outline distributed at the first class meeting.

Policy on Student Access to Final Examination Materials

Final examination papers and final assignments are to be retained by faculty members for a period of one semester.

Printed or written materials directly related to examinations conducted in the final examination time period published in the Graduate Calendar or related to final assignments will be made available to a student, upon submission of a written request to the Chair/Director. The request will be submitted by the fifth class day of the next semester.

Printed or written materials to be made available include the examination question paper, the marking scheme keyed to desired responses to questions, where appropriate; the student's response to the examination questions; and records taken by examiners during oral or any other examination. Faculty members are encouraged to discuss openly with the student any questions raised. The Chair/Director will make the necessary arrangements for student access to the material. When a large number of requests are received in connection with a specific course or when a faculty member is on leave it may be necessary for the Chair/Director to delay access and make special arrangements, e.g., the posting of the marking scheme on a bulletin board, the scheduling of a special meeting at which the faculty member will review the examination, etc.

Thesis Assessment

In the thesis, numeric grades are not required; instead the work is reported as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

Prescribed Studies

A graduate student must obtain an overall weighted average of 'B-' or better (at least 70%) in the prescribed studies, as set out in the approved program, in order to qualify for the degree or graduate diploma.

Additional Courses

In the courses that are identified as additional courses, standings will be reported according to the schedule of grades set out above, and will be

included in the calculation of the overall average described in Prescribed Studies. It is understood, that such additional courses are an integral part of the student's approved program.

Credit/No Credit Grading Options

The University of Guelph is committed to developing the whole student, providing a learning environment that encourages exploration. The credit/no credit course option will encourage student learning and participation in academic areas in which they have interest but perhaps not expertise. This policy allows graduate students to receive credit for courses outside their prescribed graduate coursework without impacting their grade point average. Non-degree students are not eligible for this grading option.

Students complete course work as usual and must achieve a final mark of at least 65%, to receive a Credit (CR) under this option. The course(s) are not included in the calculation of the student's overall cumulative or semester average.

Graduate students may elect to take up to **1.00 credits** (typically equal to two, one-semester courses) on the credit/no credit grading option in each degree taken. These courses will not count towards fulfillment of minimum program requirements, which must be listed as prescribed courses on the degree program form. However, they can be listed as additional courses. The choice of courses is not restricted as to year or level of course. The Graduate Program Coordinator of the student's program must approve the request.

If a student fails the course and receives a grade of No Credit (NCR), the student can appeal to the department to change NCR to audit (AUD) using the Graduate Grade Change Form. The Department Chair of the student's program must approve the request. This option is only available to students who have received approval for the CR option.

To qualify for this grading option, students must:

- be currently registered in the course;
- submit a request to opt for a credit/no credit status to the Registrar's Office by the last day of classes in the semester in which they are taking the course.
- apply the credit/no credit grading option only to additional courses that are not required to meet the minimum requirements of their graduate program.

Students may not use this grading option for the following categories of courses:

- courses that fulfill the minimum program requirements for the graduate degree;
- courses that are being taken to resolve provisional status;
- courses in which the student has been found guilty of academic misconduct and received a grade penalty.

Reversing a credit/no credit request

- The request to complete a course on a credit/no credit basis can be reversed by submitting a reversal request to the Office of Registrarial Services.

Departmental Review and Student Progress Report

At the end of each semester, each student's academic record and progress will be reviewed by the graduate faculty of the academic unit

in which the student is enrolled. In addition, the academic record and progress of each student who plans and conducts research toward a thesis or major research paper over two or more semesters will be reviewed by their Advisory Committee at the end of each semester, or no later than the 20th class day of the following semester. The Advisor, with comments from the Advisory Committee, will provide the student with a Progress Report for their response, after which it will be submitted to the Graduate Program Committee of the program in which the student is enrolled. The final report will be forwarded to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

When the progress of a student is evaluated as "Satisfactory with Some Concerns" or "Unsatisfactory," a plan of study, prepared by the Advisory Committee in consultation with the student and with the signed agreement of the student, shall be appended and submitted with the progress report.

If the student fails a course or a required examination, the Advisory Committee, through the academic unit, will recommend appropriate action to the Board of Graduate Studies. Only by authority of the Board may a further privilege of any kind be extended (see next section).

Failed Courses

A graduate student who receives a grade of less than 65% in any course (graduate or undergraduate, prescribed, or additional) is deemed to have failed the course.

The student's Advisory Committee shall as a minimum, note "Some Concerns" on the Student Progress Report for the semester during which the course was taken (see Chapter II General Regulations, Student Progress Reports). For students in course-based programs not requiring a semesterly report, the Graduate Program Coordinator will prepare a Progress Report.

Following a review of the Student Progress Report, the Graduate Program Committee will make one of the following recommendations to the Admissions & Progress Committee (A&P):

1. the student shall be required to replace the failed course as soon as possible with another course of equal relevance, rigour and credit value, preferably in the following semester;
2. the student shall be required to complete remedial studies by registering in a "directed study" course, created by the department, of equal credit value, and which has been tailored to meet the student's deficiencies from the failed course, preferably in the following semester;
3. repeat the failed course when it is next offered;
4. fulfil a Supplemental Condition

Regarding 1) and 2) above, students may not register for courses they have previously passed unless the course has different content (e.g. "Special Topics" courses), or unless expressly directed to do so in writing by A&P.

Regarding 4) above, recommendations for a Supplemental Condition are discouraged, but may be approved by A&P under exceptional circumstances. The following information must be supplied with the recommendation from the Graduate Program Committee:

- a breakdown of the evaluation and grading scheme for the failed course

- an indication of the student's performance in each component of the course as provided above
- an indication of the percentage of the course that the supplemental condition will include
- a signed statement from the instructor of the course indicating a willingness to provide such a supplemental condition
- a brief explanation of the reasons the supplemental condition option has been chosen

The student's Advisory Committee is responsible for informing the student once the decision on a course of action has been approved by either the Graduate Program Committee or A&P.