



The Carleton University grading system is outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar, [Academic Regulation 5.4: The Grading System](#). It also stipulates that “standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean”.

The University does not formally provide a definition of the standard for each grade level. However, grades are a measure of a student’s academic performance. Most undergraduate students in FPGA are admitted to Honours programs in which the minimum Major CGPA (cumulative grade point average) for graduation is 6.5 (between a C+ and a B-).

In assessing student performance, standards and practices for grading should be comparable within and between units in the Faculty of Public and Global Affairs. Grades for each academic course should be assigned with reference to the following meanings:

A (80–100%) — GPA 10–12 — Excellent
<i>Bloom’s Taxonomy Levels: Analyzing, Evaluating, Creating¹</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates comprehensive understanding of the subject matter with strong command of theories and concepts• Consistently applies advanced critical thinking: analyzes, synthesizes, and evaluates ideas with sophistication• Shows originality and independence of thought; may generate new insights or approaches• Presents coherent, well-supported, evidence-based arguments drawing on academic and other credible sources• Work is exceptionally well-organized, accurate, and virtually error-free
B (70–79%) — GPA 7–9 — Good
<i>Bloom’s Taxonomy Levels: Applying, Analyzing</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates clear understanding of the subject matter and applies relevant theories and concepts accurately• Provides some evidence of critical thinking and analytic ability• Arguments are coherent and reasonably well-supported with appropriate sources• Work is well-organized, mostly accurate, and contains few errors

¹ Adapted from Carleton University Teaching and Learning Services – [Learning Outcomes](#)

C (60–69%) — GPA 4–6 — Satisfactory

Bloom’s Taxonomy Levels: Understanding, Applying

- Demonstrates basic understanding of the subject matter and limited ability to apply relevant theories and concepts
- Shows some analytical ability but limited or inconsistent critical thinking
- Arguments are generally coherent but may include gaps, misunderstandings, or inaccuracies
- Work meets the minimum expectations for the assignment or course

D (50–59%) — GPA 1–3 — Minimally Acceptable

Bloom’s Taxonomy Levels: Remembering, Understanding

- Demonstrates limited understanding of the subject matter with significant gaps in knowledge
- Shows little evidence of analytical ability or application of key concepts
- Arguments are weak, unclear, or inadequately supported
- Work contains frequent errors, lacks structure, and is poorly organized
- Meets only the minimal requirements to pass the assignment or course

F (<50%) — GPA 0 — Fail

Bloom’s Taxonomy Levels: Below expected proficiency in Remembering, Understanding

- Demonstrates inadequate understanding of the subject matter
- Shows little or no evidence of analytic thinking or accurate application of concepts
- Work is disorganized, lacks clarity and coherence
- Does not meet minimum requirements to pass the assignment or course

The data in Table 2 represent current FPGA practice, based on a 5-year average (data sourced from OIRP). There may be variation from year to year and between units.

Table 2: Average grade distributions by FPGA course level, % of enrolled students, from 2021-22 to 2024-25

	A-range	B-range	C-range	D-range	F/WDN
1000-level	37.9	25.3	13.7	6.0	17.1
2000-level	39.2	27.4	12.9	5.2	15.3
3000-level	44.1	28.8	10.5	3.7	13.0
4000-level	57.9	27.0	5.6	1.6	7.8

The Dean’s office will be concerned about courses that have an unusually high percentage of D, F, and WDN grades. If the combined D/F/WDN grades are above 30%, units should consider steps that might be taken to promote greater student engagement and improvement of student performance.

Further note that:

- Grades of A+ should be awarded where merited for outstanding work that goes beyond the excellence represented by an A.
- Senate Medals for Outstanding Academic Achievement by undergraduate students are awarded to the top 3% of the graduating class in each degree, subject to the requirement that the Overall GPA is at least 10.60
- University Medals at the undergraduate level are awarded to the top 1% of the graduating class in each Faculty, subject to the requirement that the Overall GPA is at least 10.60

When computing final grades, instructors should normally use the letter grade-percentage conversion table ([UG Academic Regulations, Section 5.4](#)). The practice of curving grades is strongly discouraged. If you calculate grades in a way that deviates from the University grading system, the alternative grading scheme must be carefully detailed in the course outline and clearly communicated to students at the beginning of the course. Instructors are also advised to confirm in advance with the Associate Dean (Academic) that any proposed alternative grading scheme is appropriate and consistent with University regulations.

Academic units are encouraged to take measures to increase the likelihood of consistent grading standards in multiple section courses. This may include the establishment of a grades review committee where the instructors of multiple sections would meet to develop common approaches to grading, and to review grades from multiple sections before they are submitted to the Dean's office for approval.

Final Grades must be approved by the relevant Chair/Director, and by the Dean's office before they become official. The Dean's office, in reviewing grades, is concerned about maintaining equity among students, whether in different sections of the same course, among students in similar courses in the same department, or among similar courses offered by different academic units. Where grades differ significantly from Faculty and departmental experience and expectations for similar courses, instructors should provide an explanation for the difference. Where significant differences are noted, Chairs and Directors and/or the Dean's office may request clarification, explanation or justification of the submitted grade distribution. In the absence of a satisfactory response and/or justification, the Chair, Director or Dean may request the instructor to modify the grading distribution.

*Reviewed by FPGA Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
March 10, 2026*