

AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
Guidelines, Policies and Procedures

Policy Name	AKU Programme Grading and System for Calculating Grade Point Averages (GPA)
Policy Number	001
Approved by	Academic Council
Date of Original Approval	May 18, 2001
Date of Revisions	October 7, 2007; March 26, 2009; March 29, 2018; October 24, 2019; November 25, 2021.
Contact	Office of the Registrar

1.0 Principles

The purpose of the Assessment and Grading Practices Policy is to ensure:

- That assessment and grading practices across the University are consistent and reflect appropriate academic standards.
- That student performance is evaluated in a manner that is fair, accurate, consistent, and objective and in compliance with these academic standards.
- That the academic standing of every student can be accurately assessed even when conducted in different divisions of the University and evaluated according to different grading scales.

2.0 Applicability of the Policy

- 2.1 Unless there are contrary regulatory body requirements that must be mandatorily adopted in the countries where AKU offers programmes, the grading basis and requirements as provided in this policy will be applicable.
- 2.2 These policies are applicable for assignments that are written and/or made in the form of oral presentations, art pieces, videos, music, computer programmes and other such pieces of work.

3.0 Grading

- 3.1 Grades in any course, examination or other academic assessment shall not be mandated based on a curve or historic distribution of student grades. The distribution of grades shall not be predetermined by any system of quotas that requires a certain number or percentage of grades at a particular level.
- 3.2 The Programme Office/r, in consultation with the relevant instructor as approved by the curriculum committee/Dean is responsible for providing written guidelines to all students at the start of each course, outlining how the final grade for the course will be calculated, and including any related policies such as arrangements that may be made for students who are unable to complete a test or other graded work because of short term illness or for other reasons. (Please see section 7).

- 3.3 Except where approved by Academic Council, programmes of study are assessed on a numerical scale of 0 – 100%. Where applicable, a quantitative method of assessment would be adopted for each and would be approved by an Academic Unit’s Programme Committee.
- 3.4 In addition to the numeric grades, a letter grade would also be awarded in accordance with the following table. The weights attached to the letter grades will be used for computing the Grade Point Average (GPA) and Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA).

4.0 Grading Scheme

Unless otherwise approved by Academic Council, the following grading scheme and grade point scale will be applicable to all undergraduate and graduate programmes of study.

LETTER GRADE	PERCENTAGE EQUIVALENT	GRADE POINT	GRADE DESCRIPTOR
A+	95 – 100	4.0	Exceptional work significantly exceeding course expectations
A	90 – 94	4.0	Outstanding work
A-	85 – 89	3.7	Excellent work
B+	80 – 84	3.3	Very Good work
B	75 – 79	3.0	Sound quality, good work
B-	70 – 74	2.7	Satisfactory work
C+	65 – 69	2.3	Adequate for the course
C	60 – 64	2.0	Marginal Pass
C-	55 – 59	1.7	Marginal Fail Work below expectation A student will not receive credit for courses in which a final grade of ‘C-’ (C minus) is received. See further AKU policies on “Resit.”
F	< 55	0.0	Fail Provides no credit. The number of credits associated with the course are used in the calculation of the GPA and/or CGPA. See further AKU policy on “Repeats”.
P	Pass	Not applicable	Provides credit towards the student’s degree; number of credits associated with the course are not used in the calculation of the GPA and/or CGPA.

LETTER GRADE	PERCENTAGE EQUIVALENT	GRADE POINT	GRADE DESCRIPTOR
I	Incomplete	Not applicable	When an instructor assigns the grade of "I" at the end of a term / semester, this grade must be cleared within 90 days of the date that grades are released by the Office of the Registrar. The grade of "I" is not used in calculating the student's GPA and/or CGPA.
IP	In Progress	Not applicable	<i>This grade is applicable to graduate-level theses or dissertations only.</i> Instructors may assign the grade of "IP" to students whose thesis / dissertation work at the end of a term or semester is still in progress because, by permission, more than one term or semester is required to complete the required work. The grade of "IP" is not used in the calculation of a student's GPA and / or CGPA.
W	Withdrawn	Not applicable	The grade of "W" is not considered when calculating a student's GPA and/or CGPA.
AG	Aegrotat Standing	Not applicable	A grade of AG grants credit for a course, based on the course work already completed, when no further assessment is considered feasible because of illness or other extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control. Students may only be granted an AG grade with the approval of the Dean offering the course. The AG grade has no effect upon a student's GPA and/or CGPA.
AU	Audit	Not applicable	<i>Applicable to graduate-level courses only.</i> Graduate courses are not normally open to "auditors" who attend a course without the usual qualifications and without seeking academic credit. Auditors do not submit papers or assignments, nor do they write tests or examinations. Enrolment as an auditor requires the written permission of the course instructor, the department chair, and the appropriate academic entity head. Upon completion of the course, and subject to confirmation from the instructor that the student attended at least 80% of the instruction, the transcript notation "AU" will be recorded. No other grade will be assigned. Once a course is taken for audit the same course may not be taken for credit.

5.0 Grade Descriptors

5.1 **GRADE 'A'** applies only to an exceptional piece of work where:

- The student has been able to develop a more advanced analytical and integrative command of the material and issues.
- Gives evidence of very wide reading and extensive knowledge; shows imaginative flair and insight.
- Is very well structured, putting forward cogent arguments; excellent use of documents; written or presented with justified confidence with no, or almost no technical errors (language or technique depending on the assignment).
- A+ significantly exceeds course expectations (A) outstanding work; (A-) Excellent

5.2 **GRADE 'B'** applies to work which:

- Goes beyond the foundation level to develop a more questioning and analytical approach.
- Goes beyond the basic reading, to study and discuss recommended texts and articles.
- Indicates an increasing ability to appreciate an extensive body of knowledge and to conceptualize the key theories, issues, debates, and criticisms.
- Demonstrates the skills to present a balanced and comprehensive discussion although some weaknesses are apparent.
- Has been completed with a thoroughness aimed to get the most learning out of the exercise; good attempt at documentation.
- May have some technical (language or technique depending on the assignment) or interpretive errors.
- (B+) sound quality, very good work (B) acceptable quality, good work (B-) reasonable, satisfactory quality but with some flaws.

5.3 **GRADE 'C'** applies to work which:

- Is basically competent, although undeveloped and superficial is considered a passing grade.
- Fulfills the requirements of the assignment at a foundation level, involving adequate coverage of the essential information specified and adequate grasp of subject. Work is dull but earnest; has the skill to present the material coherently.
- Selects relevant named references and quotations.
- Has numerous technical errors ((language or technique depending on the assignment)
- (C+) adequate for the course (C) marginal pass (C-) Work below expectation

Please note that a grade of 'C-' (C minus) does not carry credit. See AKU policies on "Resits" for further information.

5.4 **GRADE 'F'** is a failing grade and applies to:

- Non-submission of work or late work after an extension has been given.
- Work which is wholly irrelevant or does not respond to the assigned topic or question(s) asked.
- Work devoid of knowledge, unintelligible and/or is illegible.
- Work which may seem adequate but may use unattributed and/or verbatim (plagiarised) material.

Note: An 'F' grade requires the student to repeat the entire course. See AKU policy on "Repeats" for further information.

6.0 Grade Approval

6.1 The Dean or Dean's designate is responsible for administering the implementation of the Assessment and Grading Practices Policy at the Academic Unit level and overseeing the general consistency of grading procedures within the Academic Unit.

6.2 Final grades for undergraduate or graduate courses will be reviewed and approved by the Dean or Dean's designate according to the Academic Unit's review procedures. The Academic Unit review constitutes final approval of grades except where grades are changed on appeal.

6.3 Following the review and approval of grades, the grades shall be sent to the Office of the Registrar.

7.0 Grade Appeals: A student has the right to question the final grade or the assessment of performance in a course.

7.1 Every Academic Unit shall establish Grade Appeal procedures. Grade appeal procedures shall be clearly stated in the appropriate Student Handbook and shall be included in the course syllabus. (Cf., Policy # 026, *Board of Student Academic Appeals*)

7.2 In support of a student's right to appeal a grade, each instructor, to the extent possible for a course, will keep a record of either the raw scores or numerical grades achieved by students in each test, examination, or other assignment that will count towards the final grade and of the percentage weight assigned to each. The details contained in this documentation must enable the instructor (or the Academic Unit on the instructor's behalf) to reconstruct the student's final grade, to the extent possible where the necessity arises.

8.0 Grade Changes

8.1 Following the review and approval of grades, a grade may only be changed on the successful appeal of a final grade by a student or if an instructor reports a correction of a final grade to the Registrar's Office as a result of a clerical or procedural error that was made in assigning, transmitting, or recording the original final grade.

8.2 Following the review and approval of grades, a grade may not be changed as a result of re-evaluation, re-examination or the submission of additional work after the grades have been approved by the Dean and submitted to the Registrar's Office.

8.3 Where the submission of Grade Change exceeds 180 days beyond the end of the term / semester in which the grade was originally assigned, or if the Grade Change is for a reason other than a clerical or procedural error, the Grade Change must be approved, in writing, by the Dean of the Academic Unit offering the course.

9.0 Attendance and Late Submission

- 9.1 Instructors are not obliged to accept late work.
- 9.2 All extensions must be approved by the Head of Educational Programmes/or designate and may be considered only in circumstances beyond the students' control.
- 9.3 A late penalty is normally not appropriate. Where a programme intends to accept and apply penalties to late assignments, this must be set out clearly in the course syllabus/handbook and distributed before the course commences.
- 9.4 Extensions in extra ordinary circumstances may be provided for a period of 90 days (as allowed for Incomplete assignments) Where there are situations – particularly involving medical issues – where a student may have valid reasons for being unable to complete an assignment in the allotted time, and a further extension is required, such an approval may only be granted with approval from the dean of her/his representative.
- 9.2 Unless there are regulatory body requirements for minimum attendance, each Academic Unit should determine the minimum attendance requirement for either their programmes of study or for individual course offerings and communicate the same to the students.
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Other Related / Relevant AKU Policies

- Policy #002: Policy on Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
- Policy #004: Qualification Framework
- Policy #006: Policy on Assessment Involving Near Relatives and Colleagues
- Policy #026: Board of Student Academic Appeals
- Policy #031: Teaching and Learning Framework

References

University of Alberta, Assessment and Grading Policy

(<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Policies/Assessment-and-Grading-Policy.pdf>)

University of Toronto, Assessment and Grading Practices Policy

(<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/sites/default/files/import-files/grading8958.pdf>)

University of British Columbia, Grading Practices

(<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,42,96,0>)