

Linguistics Department Grading Policy

Undergraduate and graduate courses

- Marks distribution schema should be in the syllabus for each course. Instructors also submit a copy of each Marking Schema to the department files at the start of each semester.
- Instructors should include the following sentence on the syllabus: “The Department of Linguistics follows the *University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy*” and provide the link to this 10-pg. document:
<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>.
- The practice of adjusting raw scores to reflect students’ overall performance in the course is specified in the Faculty of Arts and Science guidelines given in the *Academic Handbook*:

A score is the raw number of points a student earns on an assessment; a mark is the result when that score has been calibrated to take into account the difficulty or ease of the testing instrument or the variation of marking standards among different TAs. Calibration is a perfectly acceptable – indeed, a responsible – practice, since it is totally unreasonable to expect an instructor to design test after test at precisely the same level of difficulty, and TAs vary in their experience and judgement. Calibration is the corrective process to ensure fairness in marking. See (§5.11, <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/faculty-staff/teacher-info/academic-handbook-for-instructors/sections-4-5#calibrating>).

For more details, please consult these guidelines and see some concrete examples:

<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/faculty-staff/teacher-info/academic-handbook-for-instructors/appendix-b>

Undergraduate courses

- At least one piece of term work worth at least 10% of the final grade must be returned to the student prior to the last date for withdrawal from the course without academic penalty.
- There are to be no tests worth >25% in the last two weeks of the term.
- No one essay, test, examination, etc. should have a value >80% of the course grade.
- “We expect that, in a larger first or second-year course, the proportion of As could reasonably vary from 15% to 35%, and the proportion of Fs should generally not exceed 10%. We expect student marks in upper year courses to shift towards the higher end of the scale (with more As and fewer failures), as students adapt to university-level work and consolidate their interests” (<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/faculty-staff/teacher-info/academic-handbook-for-instructors/sections-9-11#marks>). Therefore, for 1st and 2nd year undergraduate courses with enrolments of over 30 students, final grades are expected to fall within the distribution shown in the table below.
- Letter grades can be used for assigned work. These (cumulative) scores might not be directly identified with the final grade.

- For undergraduate courses, the refined letter grade scale is used:

Percent	Grade	GPA	Definition	Distribution Guidelines for 1 st /2 nd -year courses w/ >40 students		Grade Definition
90-100	A+	4.0	Excellent	15% - 35%	< 75%	Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
85-89	A	4.0				
80-84	A-	3.7				
77-79	B+	3.3	Good			Evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.
73-76	B	3.0				
70-72	B-	2.7				
67-69	C+	2.3	Adequate			Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject matter and ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.
63-66	C	2.0				
60-62	C-	1.7				
57-59	D+	1.3	Marginal			Some evidence of familiarity with the subject matter and some evidence that critical and analytic skills have been developed.
53-56	D	1.0				
50-52	D-	0.7				
0-49	F	0.0	Inadequate	≤ 10%		Little evidence of even superficial understanding of subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of literature.

- It is recommended practice not to assign final marks ending in '9'. The FAS guidelines in the Academic Handbook (§10.6) states:

On our grading scale, there are a number of percentage marks where one more percent would shift the student up to the next range. Some of the more significant ones are 49%, 59%, 69%, 79% and 84%. ... You may want to give special attention to marks just below these thresholds; they are often contentious and you may expect to hear from a number of students who receive such marks. [You may] decide intentionally whether to leave a mark just under one of these thresholds or to move it up or down

(<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/faculty-staff/teacher-info/academic-handbook-for-instructors/sections-9-11#marks>).

Graduate courses

- For graduate courses, we use the truncated refined letter grade scale:

Grade	Numerical Scale of Marks
A+	90 - 100%
A	85 - 89%
A-	80 - 84%
B+	77 - 79%
B	73 - 76%
B-	70 - 72%
FZ (fail)	0 - 69%

- Graduate students receive letter grades; a grade of C+ or lower is a failing grade for a graduate student.
- In graduate courses, department practice is to return some term work before the date for withdrawal.
- In mixed undergraduate/graduate courses, it is common (although not required) to replace a final exam with a term paper for graduate students.
- If participation forms part of the final grade it must not constitute more than 20%.

Instructors are reminded to check the “Back to Teaching” handout (available in Blackboard and from the Undergrad Coordinator or Secretary) for additional information.