

Main Campus Grade Guidelines

The 1997 Intellectual Life Report recommended that we adopt a campus-wide target grade distribution as well as a change in the qualitative definitions of grades. The report did not envisage this distribution applying to each individual course – “legitimate variation from course to course” was to be expected. In that regard, the target distribution was decidedly not a curve to be applied regardless of how a particular class performed. Instead, it was intended to guide the setting of expectations. Any one semester’s grades might be above or below the target distribution. If, however, a faculty member finds that, semester after semester, grades are higher than those suggested by the guidelines, the faculty member should conclude that more can be expected of the students.

Recommended Grade Distribution

| Grade | Qualitative Definition | Target | Status-Quo |
|-------|------------------------|--------|------------|
| A | Excellent | 30% | 42% |
| B | Good | 54% | 45% |
| C | Mediocre | 13% | 11% |
| D | Poor | 2% | 1% |
| F | Failing | 1% | 1% |

Source: *1996-1997 Intellectual Life Report*

"Status-Quo" in that table represents conditions at the time of the report.

The recommended grade distribution and the qualitative definition of grades was endorsed by the Main Campus Executive Faculty in May 1997.