

Grading Policy

1. Grading System

The grading system presently in use can be roughly divided into three major categories: letter grades, pass/fail grades, and auxiliary symbols.

- a. Letter Grades: Letter grades carry a quality point value and are used in the computation of semester and cumulative grade point averages (GPA).

Quality/ Characteristic	A – Honor – Outstanding	B – Excellent Above Average	C – Good – Average	D – Poor – Below Average	F – No credit Unsatisfactory
1. Interest and ability to communicate.	Almost always shows creativity, sound judgement, intellectual curiosity and communicates correctly and clearly	Frequently shows creativity, sound judgment, intellectual curiosity and communicates correctly and clearly	Shows sustained interest and is able to communicate well and understandably.	Exhibits interest. Marginal performance in communicating	Shows sub-minimal interest. Does not communicate clearly enough to get ideas across.
2. Performance skills of discipline.	Almost always analyzes critically, synthesizes creatively, uses facts in original thinking, and generalizes logically.	Frequently analyzes critically, synthesizes creatively, uses facts in original thinking, and generalizes logically.	Usually produces viable generalizations and satisfactorily organizes data.	Commits errors in fact and judgment when discussing material and has difficulty going beyond gathering and examining facts and data.	Does not comprehend the concepts and ideas which are a part of the course. Does not gather and examine facts and data satisfactorily.
3. Techniques of scholarship.	Shows sound techniques in all projects and uses knowledge effectively.	Shows sound techniques in most projects and uses knowledge effectively.	Good understanding of techniques in most projects.	Demonstrates minimal competence in the techniques of scholarship.	Does not use sound techniques of scholarship.
4. Meeting requirements of the course — in preparation, outside reading and class participation, etc.	Meets or exceeds stated course requirements with distinction in all aspects.	Meets or exceeds stated course requirements with excellence in most aspects.	Meets stated course requirements with adequate performance in all aspects.	Meets stated course requirements with adequate performance in some aspects.	Does not meet the standards and requirements.

Performance Level of Different Letter Grades

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Quality Point Value</u>
A	Honor-Outstanding	4.0
A-		3.7
B+		3.3
B	Excellent-Above Average	3.0
B-		2.7
C+		2.3
C	Good-Average	2.0
C-		1.7
D+		1.3
D	Poor-Below Average	1.0
F	Failure-No Credit	0.0

b. Pass/Fail Grades

P = Pass. Used only for a passing grade in a Pass/Fail course or when a student selects to register for a course on a Pass/Fail basis. The cutoff for pass shall be “C-”.

F = Failure. The grade of F is a failing grade and is included in the computation of both the semester and cumulative GPA. F applies under the following conditions:

- (1) The student has not done passing work for the term;
- (2) The student drops the course in the final third of the term;
- (3) The student does not do passing work (earning a D+ or less) in a course graded on a pass/fail basis;
- (4) The student fails to clear an Incomplete within the specified time frame;
- (5) The student unofficially withdraws from a course.

c. Auxiliary Symbols: Auxiliary symbols do not carry a quality point value and are not used in the computation of semester and cumulative grade point averages (GPA)

WP = Withdraw Passing. Given only to a student who withdraws from a course doing passing work in the middle third of the term. Does not count in the student’s GPA.

WF = Withdraw Failing. Given only to a student who withdraws from a course doing failing work in the middle third of the term. Does not count in the student’s GPA.

W = Withdrawal. Given only to a student who withdraws from all courses (i.e., withdraws from the College), or from specific courses in cases of emergency during the final third of the semester.

I = Incomplete. Used only when a student cannot, for emergency reasons, complete a course on schedule.

AU = Audit. Used only when a student wishes to attend a course but not receive college credit or a grade for the work in the course.

2. Grade Point Average (GPA):

- a. Semester GPA: The GPA for each semester is calculated from the graded courses attempted during that semester. Credit hours in which the student receives a “P” count toward total credits earned but not toward the GPA. Credit hours in which the student receives an “F” are calculated in the GPA.
- b. Cumulative GPA: This is the grade point average for all courses taken at Messiah College.
- c. Factors Affected by GPA:
 - (1) Graduation: 2.0 cumulative GPA for all work; 2.0 cumulative GPA in major requirements.
 - (2) Acceptance into specific programs: Engineering, Nursing, and Teacher Education programs have cumulative and/or major GPA requirements as part of admission into the program. Consult the College catalog for specific GPA requirements for each program.
 - (3) Graduation Honors:
 - (a) Summa Cum Laude: Cumulative GPA of 3.90 or above
 - (b) Magna Cum Laude: 3.60 but less than 3.90 cumulative GPA
 - (c) Cum Laude: 3.30 but less than 3.60 cumulative GPA
 - (4) Departmental Honors Courses: 3.50 cumulative GPA
 - (5) Dean’s List: 3.60 semester GPA or higher, based on twelve (12) or more graded hours.
 - (6) Academic Probation:
 - (a) First Year (0 - 23 credits): below 1.8 cumulative GPA.
 - (b) Sophomore (24 - 56 credits): below 1.9 cumulative GPA.
 - (c) Junior or Senior (57 credits or above): below 2.0 cumulative GPA.

3. Pass/Fail Option

- a. Certain courses are approved by faculty to be graded on the Pass/Fail Option only. Contact the Registrar Office for a complete list of Pass/Fail Courses.
- b. During a college career, students may take a maximum of four courses in addition to those listed under “a.” above on a Pass/Fail basis under the following conditions.
 - (1) The course may not be from any discipline required for the student’s major, minor or concentration. The course cannot be used to meet a General Education requirement. It must be a free elective.
 - (2) The cutoff for pass shall be “C-”.
- c. Procedure:
 - (1) Students must declare their intention to take a course under the Pass/Fail option when they register or within the first five class days at the beginning of the new term. Students may also elect to return to the letter grading system during this same time period. The selection on record after the first week of classes cannot be changed.

- (2) The Registrar's Office reviews all requests for the Pass/Fail option to be sure they comply with guidelines.
 - (3) Students are notified if their request is refused prior to the end of the drop/add period.
 - (4) Faculty members submit letter grades for all students registered for their classes. These are converted to the Pass/Fail system in the Registrar's Office for those students who have chosen the option.
 - (5) The grade of P does not affect the student's grade point average.
 - (6) The grade of F is a failing grade and is included in the computation of both the semester and cumulative grade point average.
- d. Rationale: Allows students to pursue courses taken purely for interest or "fun" without the pressure of achieving a high grade in competition with majors in that course. Guidelines are needed to regulate this option and preserve academic integrity in meeting graduation requirements.

4. Incomplete Grades

- a. Policy: A grade of incomplete is recorded for a student only when, for emergency reasons, the course cannot be completed on schedule. To receive credit for the course, the unfinished work must be completed within four (4) weeks of the close of the term.
- b. Procedure:
 - (1) When the student presents a legitimate emergency request to his instructor and the instructor agrees to it, the instructor records a grade of I (incomplete) in online grading. He/She will then be prompted by a dialogue box to submit the reason for the incomplete grade.
 - (2) When a student completes the course work, the instructor submits the change of grade information to the Registrar Office indicating the student's correct final grade.
 - (3) If a course is not completed within the extended timetable, the incomplete grade is converted to an "F". Any exceptions to the following timetable must be cleared in advance with the Registrar.
 - (a) Fall Semester: before the opening of Spring Term.
 - (b) All other terms: by the end of the fourth week following the close of the term.
- c. Rationale: This policy serves as a necessity of keeping grade records up-to-date, provides for student emergencies, and yet provides a reasonable deadline to help students avoid doing two (2) semesters' work at the same time. It also discourages procrastination.

5. Auditing

a. Policy

Students who wish to attend a course but not receive college credit or a grade for their work may audit the course. This option assumes students will attend the class on a regular basis but are not required to do any of the course work (though they may opt to do so) or take any tests in the course. A student must drop the course if he or she decides not to attend the course since it appears on the transcript as an audited course. The option of auditing courses is open to both full-time and part-time students. (Note: Students should be alerted to the fact that courses taken as audit cannot be included for Financial Aid purposes. Encourage those students to contact the Financial Aid Office.)

b. Procedure

- (1) Declaration of the audit is done at the time of registration through the Registrar's Office.
- (2) Students may change from credit to audit and vice versa when they register or within the first five class days at the beginning of the new term.
- (3) The Business Office bills audit credits at the published tuition rate for audits.
- (4) When the course is complete, the student's transcript indicates the symbol "AU" and the name of the course—no credit or letter grade is given.
- (5) If the student decides not to attend the course, he or she must drop the course within the drop/add deadline so it will not appear on the student's record.

c. Rationale

Accommodates degree program students who want to broaden their horizons into a field of interest or part-time students who wish to take a course purely for their own interest and do not need to work for college credit.

6. Change of Grade

- a. If after final grades have been assigned and submitted, and an error in a student's grade is discovered by the instructor, or brought to the attention of the instructor by the student, the instructor should submit change of grade information to the Registrar's Office. All changes of grades must be accompanied by a rationale and be approved by the Registrar by the end of the following semester.
- b. A student's final grade may not be raised by doing additional assignments after the course has concluded or by revising previously submitted assignments.

7. Repeating Courses

A student may only repeat any course in which a grade of D+, D, or F was received. With repeated courses, the second grade and credits count in the calculation of the student's cumulative GPA, but the original grade and course will remain on the student's transcript. All repeat courses must be taken at Messiah College, including Temple courses taken through the Philadelphia Campus and any other approved off-campus program, subject to the assessment of course equivalency. (Revised by action of the Curriculum Committee 2/27/98)

- a. It is the responsibility of the student and advisor to monitor the registration for repeated courses.
- b. Both occurrences of repeated courses will be marked on the transcript.
- c. The credits earned for the first grade remain in the term and cumulative calculations until completion of the repeated course. At the end of the term in which the course is repeated, only the credits earned for the second grade are used in the calculation of the student's cumulative GPA and total credits earned.
- d. Students need to be advised of possible financial aid or athletic eligibility consequences of repeating courses for which credits have been earned. A student must successfully complete 24 credits each academic year. Repeats of successfully completed (D or D+) courses may not count toward the 24 credits. Students should contact the Financial Aid Office for specific information.

8. Grade Appeal Procedures

If a student disagrees with a grade which has been given in a particular course, and it has been determined that the grade recorded was not in error, the student may initiate the grade appeal process.

a. **Informal discussion between student and instructor.**

If the discussion results in a grade change, a grade change request is submitted to the Registrar's Office by the instructor. If the matter is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student is referred to the department chair.

b. **Informal discussion between student and department chair.**

The student should informally discuss the matter with the department chair. The department chair should discuss the concern with the instructor. If the discussions result in a grade change, a grade change request is submitted by the instructor. If the matter is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student is informed that there is a formal appeal procedure. The first informal contact with the department chair must be before the end of the semester following the semester in which the grade was earned.

c. **Formal discussion between student, instructor, and department chair.**

The department chair should arrange a meeting to discuss the matter with the student and instructor together. If this discussion results in a grade change, a grade change form is submitted to the Registrar's Office by the instructor. The student should be informed in writing of this decision. If the matter is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student should be informed in writing of this decision, along with options available to the student.

d. **Student appeal in writing to department chair.**

This written appeal must be made within ten (10) working days of the written notification of the student by the department chair of the outcome of the formal discussions. Within ten (10) working days of the student's appeal, the department chair must inform the instructor of the appeal and provide a copy of the student's appeal. The instructor has ten (10) working days to provide a written explanation of the student's grade. The department chair has ten (10) working days to convene a departmental meeting (without the instructor or student present) to review the case and come to a decision based upon the student's written appeal and the instructor's written response. The department chair will inform the student of the departmental decision in writing, with copies to the instructor and the School Dean. If the decision results in a grade change, the department chair will submit a grade change request to the registrar with a copy of his or her response to the student attached.

e. **Student appeal in writing to the School Dean.**

If the decision of the department is not to the student's satisfaction, the student may appeal the decision to the dean. This appeal must be made in writing, within ten (10) working days of the department chair's letter to the student. The dean shall investigate carefully and render a decision in writing within thirty (30) days, which shall be final.

f. **Cases involving the department chair.**

In any case where the instructor is the department chair, another member of the department will serve in the role of the chair in these proceedings.

9. Transcripts

The student's permanent record of courses taken and grades achieved comprise the academic transcript. Courses taken by Philadelphia students at Temple University are so indicated on the transcript, as are courses taken as visiting students at other institutions or other Approved Off-campus Study Programs. Credits taken at all other colleges and universities are entered as transfer credits and are not computed in the student's grade point average.

a. Request for Transcript

(1) Policy: Academic transcripts are issued by the Registrar's Office upon a student's written request and, depending upon expediency of service requested, must be accompanied by payment (see messiah.edu/registrar/transcript). The student's financial account with the College must be cleared before any transcripts are issued.