

PLUS/MINUS GRADES GUIDELINES

1. Use of Plus/Minus Grading

Plus/Minus Grading is required for all undergraduate, graduate, and professional courses using the A through F letter grading system. The letter grades A, B, C, and D have the suffix plus (+) or minus (-) included to distinguish higher and lower performances within each of these letter grades. The letter grade F does not include the plus/minus distinction.

2. Grades Awarded Prior To the 2015 Fall Semester

Grades prior to the implementation date (Fall Semester 2015) remain as they are recorded using the regular A, B, C, D, F grading scale and their respective numerical value (quality points) at that time.

3. Grade Changes

Grade changes will be based on the grading system in effect at the time the original grade was awarded.

4. Grade-Point Average

The formula for calculation of a grade-point average (GPA) does not change. The GPA is the average performance across two or more courses based on quality points earned divided by hours attempted.

5. LSU Transcript

The plus (+) and minus (-) symbols will be listed on the LSU transcript when assigned by the instructor of record in reporting the final grades for a course.

6. Grade-Point Average Requirements

The use of the plus/minus system does not change any departmental, college or university GPA requirement, nor the method by which GPAs are computed, nor the interpretations of other grades awarded such as F, I, P, S, U, and W.

7. Regulations Applicable on a Course-by-Course Basis

All regulations currently applicable on a course-by-course basis and tied to a specific letter grade are interpreted to mean a specific letter grade range. Therefore, if a student must achieve a C or better in one course to proceed to another course, under the plus/minus grading system, that student must achieve a final grade in the C range (i.e., C+, C or C-) or better.

8. Financial Aid and Scholarships

The use of the plus/minus system does not change the awarding of financial aid or scholarships because the primary criterion is the student's GPA.

LOSFA has informed the university with respect to TOPS, that they will accept whatever grading scale the university uses. They will accept the grade-point averages computed using plus/minus grades.

9. Grades, Quality Points and GPAs

Table 1 below shows the relationship between the letter grade assigned in an individual course to the quality points earned per hour credit for the course (see "COURSE ONE" and "COURSE TWO" columns). In Table 2, an example is provided of the Grade-Point Average (GPA) when a student's performances across 4 courses are averaged (see item 4 above). Note that a GPA can be any value across the range of all scores used in the grading system and unlike quality points cannot be

directly assigned to a specific letter grade. For example, the possible quality points for a C are 1.7, 2.0, and 2.3, with minus and plus being the lower and higher quality points for a grade of C. But a GPA could be any point value between 1.7 and 2.3 and those GPAs between 2.3 and 2.7 would be above a C+ and below a B- (in much the same way, for example, as a GPA of 2.6 is above a 2.0 for a C but below a 3.0 for a B, in the current grading system). A GPA is not interpreted as a “grade” but represents the relative level of performance across two or more courses.

Table 1

COURSE ONE			COURSE TWO		
GRADE	HOURS CARRIED	QUALITY POINTS	GRADE	HOURS CARRIED	QUALITY POINTS
A+	1	4.3	A+	3	12.9
A	1	4.0	A	3	12.0
A-	1	3.7	A-	3	11.1
B+	1	3.3	B+	3	9.9
B	1	3.0	B	3	9.0
B-	1	2.7	B-	3	8.1
C+	1	2.3	C+	3	6.9
C	1	2.0	C	3	6.0
C-	1	1.7	C-	3	5.1
D+	1	1.3	D+	3	3.9
D	1	1.0	D	3	3.0
D-	1	0.7	D-	3	2.1
F	1	0.0	F	3	0.0

Table 2

Course	1	2	3	4	Totals	GPA
Grade	B+	C	C-	A-		
Hours Attempted	4	2	3	3	12	
Quality Points	13.2	4.0	5.1	11.1	33.4	2.78

The definitions for the letter grades when used in undergraduate courses are presented below.

- The letter grade A, including A+ and A-, denotes distinguished mastery of the course material.
- The letter grade B, including B+ and B-, denotes good mastery of the course material.
- The letter grade C, including C+ and C-, denotes acceptable mastery of the course material.
- The letter grade D, including D+ and D-, denotes minimally acceptable achievement.
- F denotes failure.

The use of plus and minus specifies those performance scores that represent the higher levels and lower levels of students’ performances *within* the letter grade, respectively. In the example below, the range of students’ performances (scores) for the grade of a C are between 70 and 79. Using the +/- suffixes doesn’t change the quality of the students’ performances to earn the grade of a C, but the +/-

indicate the levels of performances within the C grade range. The quality points associated with each possible performance score for both the current grading system and the suffix grading system are indicated.

Table 3 below shows the hypothetical example for performance scores, grade assigned, and quality points earned per credit hour for the letter grade “C” without (left) and with (right) use of plus/minus suffixes.

Table 3

SCORE	GRADE	Quality Points		SCORE	GRADE	Quality Points
79	C	2.0		79	C+	2.3
78	C	2.0		78	C+	2.3
77	C	2.0		77	C+	2.3
76	C	2.0		76	C	2.0
75	C	2.0		75	C	2.0
74	C	2.0		74	C	2.0
73	C	2.0		73	C	2.0
72	C	2.0		72	C-	1.7
71	C	2.0		71	C-	1.7
70	C	2.0		70	C-	1.7

10. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) Grades

(Note: S/U grades are awarded to only graduate students.)

- a. A grade of S is defined as equivalent to the letter grade of B- or higher.
- b. A grade of U is defined as equivalent to the letter grade of C+ or lower.

11. Pass/Fail (P/F) Grades

- a. PASS
 - (1) A grade of P is defined as equivalent to the letter grade of C- or higher for courses taken for undergraduate credit.
 - (2) A grade of P is defined as equivalent to the letter grade of B- or higher for courses taken for graduate credit.
- b. FAIL
 - (1) A grade of F is defined as equivalent to the letter grade of D+ or lower for courses taken for undergraduate credit.
 - (2) A grade of F is defined as equivalent to the letter grade of C+ or lower for courses taken for graduate credit.

12. University (Latin) Honors

To determine University Honors, two GPAs are computed for each student: (1) on all work completed and (2) on all work completed at LSU (all System campuses). These GPAs are inclusive of all grades, including those previously excluded through the Grade Exclusion Policy. All grades are used to determine University Honors. The **lower** of the averages are used to determine eligibility for University Honors. Implementation of plus/minus grading will not change how we determine University Honors.

13. University Medal

The University Medal is awarded to the undergraduate student (or students) graduating with the highest GPA, provided that more than 50 percent of the credits required for the degree has been earned at LSU A&M. Grade-point averages will be computed for (1) all work completed and (2) all work completed at LSU A&M with the **lower** of the two averages determining eligibility for the medal. Course grades that were excluded previously through the Grade Exclusion Policy will be included in determining the University Medalists. All grades will be used to determine medalists.

Since the University will be awarding A+ grades, plus/minus grading will impact the awarding of the University Medal. All students with the applicable GPA of 4.00 or higher will be awarded the medal. That is, a GPA above 4.0 will be truncated and considered as a 4.0 GPA for the selection of University Medalists. As a point of clarification, a student who has earned all A+ grades would have a GPA of 4.00 and another student who has all A grades including an A- grade and an A+ will have a GPA of 4.0 and would be eligible to receive the medal.

14. Good Standing

Students are in good standing if they are eligible to continue or to re-enroll at the university, even if on scholastic probation or on scholastic warning status. Implementation of plus/minus grading will not change this definition.

15. Acceptance of Undergraduate Transfer Credit

Undergraduate Admissions will apply the university's plus/minus grade policy with respect to incoming transfer credit.

16. Acceptance of Graduate Transfer Credit

The Graduate School will accept the plus/minus grades from other institutions and the calculated cumulative GPA provided in the student transcripts. For purposes of calculating the final two years or other variations on GPA, the Graduate School will apply the LSU plus/minus conversions of +/- 0.3 from the letter or whole number grade.

17. Moodle

To enable instructors to use plus/minus grades in Moodle, the university had to develop a plus/minus grades default scale. Please understand that this is **NOT A UNIVERSITY GRADING SCALE**. As an instructor, you will need to modify the default scale to meet your grading requirements.