

# FACULTY GRADING GUIDELINES

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The Committee on Examinations and Standing has drawn up the following guidelines on grading. Additional information is available in both the undergraduate ([ga.rice.edu/undergraduate-students](http://ga.rice.edu/undergraduate-students)) and graduate ([ga.rice.edu/graduate-students](http://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students)) student sections under the heading of "Grades."

- The evaluation of the student's performance in a course and a decision on the appropriate grade is the responsibility of the designated instructor or instructors in the course.
- No student should be given an extension of time or opportunities to improve a grade that are not available to all members of the class, except for verified illness or justified absence from campus. No course assignments may be due between the last day of classes and the first day of the final examination period.
- Students in independent study courses are not to be allowed an extension beyond the time when grades are due. Faculty are to submit grades at the end of the semester for such students based on work completed during the semester. The instructor directing the independent study assumes responsibility with the student for ensuring that the work undertaken is appropriate to the span of a semester and for determining the degree credit to be received.
- The basis for grading and the expectations on all written assignments or tests should be clearly explained to the class in advance, preferably in writing at the beginning of the semester. The instructor should explain clearly which assignments or homework are covered by the honor system and which are not. To prevent allegations of plagiarism on written assignments, students should be warned that all direct and indirect quotations from other sources should be properly acknowledged. The instructor should explain the extent to which the student's paper is expected to be independent of the references and clearly distinguishable from them.
- Instructors should be willing to give any student an explanation of his or her grade as consistent with the grading for the rest of the class. For this reason, the committee urges the faculty to preserve all examinations and written material not returned to students, as well as grade records, for at least the following semester so that students may, if they wish, review with their instructor the basis for the grade received.
- Instructors may not change a semester grade after the grade has been submitted to the Office of the Registrar, except when there is a clerical error in calculating the grade. This is a long-standing university rule of which the faculty are reminded by the Office of the Registrar at the end of each semester. It is designed, in part, to protect the faculty from student pressure for grade changes. All other grade changes, including retroactive change to withdrawal, incomplete, or other, must be approved by the Committee on Examinations and Standing on the basis of a written petition from the student and on information from the instructor.
- There is no university requirement that a final examination be given in a course. It is university policy that final examinations that cover more than the material since the last examination, that are the only exam in the course, or that are comprehensive of the entire course may be given only during the final examination period. Such examinations may not, for example, be labeled "tests" and administered during the last week of classes. Final examinations normally are of three-hour duration. Faculty who, under exceptional

circumstances, wish to give longer examinations may do so only if the exam is scheduled as take-home. Under no circumstances may final exams exceed five hours.

- First-year undergraduate students receive mid-semester grades around the eighth week of the fall and spring semesters so that they can, if advisable, seek academic assistance or drop a class for which they may not be prepared. Faculty who teach first-year students in any of their classes will be asked to submit grades of standing for these students during the seventh week of the semester and should schedule the grading of tests, quizzes, or homework assignments accordingly. These grades are not recorded on the student's transcript nor calculated in the grade point average, but they are important indicators for students and their faculty advisors.
- Departments using teaching associates, adjunct professors, or visiting faculty of any kind should make sure these teachers are familiar with Rice grading procedures. A regular faculty member who is well-versed in the grading guidelines should be assigned to assist such instructors.

The chair of the Committee on Examinations and Standing, the Office of the Dean of Undergraduates, or the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will be glad to advise any faculty member faced with exceptional circumstances that may justify special consideration. Students may petition the committee or, for graduate students, their department chair concerning the application of these guidelines. Suspected or possible violations of the honor system should be submitted to the Honor Council.

## Academic Progress Reviews for Graduate Students

Graduate programs must establish mechanisms for tracking, reviewing, and documenting academic progress of graduate students on an ongoing basis and must provide graduate students a written assessment of their academic progress at least annually. In some graduate programs this ongoing progress review is carried out by a student's thesis committee, while in others it is carried out by a standing faculty committee. Although a student's supervisor plays an important role in reviewing the student's academic progress, the responsibility for conducting the review process lies with the program and requires the involvement of additional faculty members in the program. For graduate students who are primarily engaged in coursework, for example, professional master's students, the transcript is an adequate form of written assessment.