

New Plus/Minus Grading System for Undergraduate Students

<http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/facultysenate/resolutions/07-03PlusMinusPolicy.pdf>

Samples of grading scales that demonstrate how pluses and minuses might be implemented on a 7-point or 10-point scale

<http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/committee/ad/SampleScales.pdf>

Rationale for Revising Plus/Minus Grading System

<http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/committee/ad/rationale.htm>

Correspondence on Implementation for the use of Plus/Minus grading system in Fall 2012

(Sent July 31, 2012)

MEMORANDUM

To: ECU Official Faculty

From: Marilyn Sheerer, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Phyllis Horns, Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences
Mark Sprague, Chair of the Faculty

Re: Implementation for the use of Plus/Minus grading system in Fall 2012

In October 2007, the Chancellor approved Faculty Senate resolution [#07-03](#) for the use of a plus/minus grading system for undergraduate students. The effective date for implementation of this new grading system is Fall 2012. This resolution contained revisions to the *ECU Undergraduate Catalog* relating to the new plus/minus grading system and relationship to: 1) Grade points and Grade point average, 2) Grade replacement policy, 3) Warning and Probation, and 4) Special Readmission (Forgiveness) Policy.

Rationale for implementing this change related to aligning the grading system with ECU's peer institutions and other UNC institutions, allowing a "more precise indication of student achievement," and to "more fairly reward higher-achieving students." The academic Admission and Retention Policies Committee website has a more detailed description of the [rationales](#) for this change.

To prepare for the 2012 implementation of this new plus/minus grading system, the Admission and Retention Policies Committee worked to make changes to the undergraduate catalog during the 2011-2012 academic year. Based on the committee recommendations, the Faculty Senate passed resolutions [#12-47 \(Grade Replacement\)](#) and [#12-48 \(Readmission\)](#), both of which were approved by the Chancellor.

As noted in Faculty Senate resolution [#07-03](#), this new grading system will change the grade (quality) point system used to calculate GPA, a measure of student scholarship. The new plus/minus system is based on the same four-point GPA scale as the old system with additional plus and minus grades represented by grade points between the basic letter grades. Please refer to this resolution for the actual numerical values assigned to the plus/minus letter grades.

While professors are not mandated to use plus/minus grades in their course(s), the Admission and Retention Policies Committee has provided a [sample of grading scales](#) that demonstrate how pluses and minuses might be implemented on a 7-point or 10-point scale. These grading

scales provide a sample of possibilities for use by the instructor. Every faculty member has the academic freedom and responsibility to determine grades according to any method that is professionally acceptable, applied equally to all students, and communicated clearly, per the Faculty Manual, in the course syllabus. If faculty within units desire, departments or units may decide what grading scale to implement.

Correspondence on Further Clarification of Plus/Minus Grade System

(Sent August 13, 2012)

Memorandum:

To: ECU Official Faculty

From: Marilyn Sheerer, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Phyllis Horns, Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences
Mark Sprague, Chair of the Faculty

Re: Further Clarification of Plus/Minus Grade System

- 1) Per Faculty Senate Resolution #07-03, the plus/minus grading system is in effect for all undergraduate courses at ECU.
- 2) Final grades assigned to students remain the prerogative of the instructor of record.
- 3) Grading criteria should be carefully articulated by the instructor of record in the course syllabus.
- 4) Students will rightfully expect the official grading scheme at ECU to be employed.

Additional Information on new policy

(Being sent from Professor Mark Sprague, Chair of the Faculty and Andrew Morehead, Vice Chair of the Faculty as a reply to inquiries following the two first emails.)

The plus/minus grading scale has been approved by the Faculty Senate and the Chancellor and is in effect for all undergraduate courses. We cannot tell faculty what grades to assign. I would hope that they use the full range of grades available to them. That said, we would like the faculty of each program to decide which grades are appropriate for their courses. We cannot mandate that plus and minus grades be assigned to students in all courses. Grade decisions are up to the faculty. We do expect that the grades assigned for all courses reflect the performance of the students in the courses. The seven and ten point scales are not the only options for implementing the plus/minus grading scale. They were just two common examples provided by the Admission and Retention Policies Committee.

It is best practice for multiple section courses to have the instructors meet and decide on a common grading scale to detail on the syllabus to help foil section shopping, but even that is not mandatory. Likewise, departments/programs should meet and try and decide on the appropriate (approximate) distribution they expect in each level of classes. The department/program can monitor easily what the grade distribution is in each class using a report setup already in ecuBIC.