

Proposal to Reconcile Graduate and Undergraduate Grading Scales Spring 2009

Proposed: Effective fall term 2009, all non-candidate for degree and students enrolled in master's and educational specialist degree programs would receive final course grades that are offered on a plus/minus scale, as currently used in UW-W undergraduate courses. The two scales currently stand as indicated in Table 1 (at right).

UW-W Graduate Grading Scale (current)	UW-W Undergraduate Grading Scale (current)
A (4.000)	A (4.000)
AB (3.500)	A- (3.670)
B (3.000)	B+ (3.330)
BC (2.500)	B (3.000)
C (2.000)	B- (2.670)
D (1.000)	C+ (2.330)
F (0.000)	C (2.000)
	C- (1.670)
	D+ (1.330)
	D (1.000)
	D- (0.670)
	F (0.000)

Table 1. UW-W Graduate and Undergraduate Grading Scales

Rationale for Changing the Graduate Grading Scale

- Adoption of a plus/minus grading scale would allow for greater discrimination (and accuracy) in reporting the academic performance of graduate students (which has advantages and disadvantages).
- It would alleviate ambiguity and confusion for both students and instructors in those instances where graduate students enroll in courses at undergraduate-levels (typically, to address content-level deficiencies, or to complete licensure classes).
- Since UW-W graduate and undergraduate grading scales first separated in 1991, they have never been closer to being reconciled as they are now. The undergraduate grading system has evolved recently to accommodate more nuanced evaluations that full letter grades.
- It is common (normal?) to have the same grading scales at the graduate and undergraduate levels. UW-Stout and UW-River Falls are currently the only other UW System schools that do not employ the same grading scale at the graduate and undergraduate levels.
- Many graduate programs in the UW System currently use a plus/minus system. See the summary of grading schemes used in graduate programming in Table 2 (at right).

Grading Scheme	Used By...
A = 4 A- = 3.67 B+ = 3.33 B = 3 B- = 2.67 C+ = 2.33 C = 2 C- = 1.67 D+ = 1.33 D = 1 D- = .67 F = 0	UW- Eau Claire UW-Milwaukee UW-Oshkosh* UW-Parkside UW- Stevens Point UW-Superior *Oshkosh will eliminate in fall 2009 any grading option below a "C" (except for "F") in all graduate courses.
A = 4.0 AB = 3.5 B = 3.0 BC = 2.5 C = 2.0 D = 1.0 F = 0.0	UW-Green Bay UW-La Crosse UW-Madison
A = 4 A- = 3.67 B+ = 3.33 B = 3 B- = 2.67 C+ = 2.33 C = 2 D = 1 F = 0	UW-Stout
A= 4.0 B= 3.0 C= 2.0 D = 1.0 F= 0.0	UW-Platteville* UW-River Falls *Platteville faculty voted in Oct 08 to move to +/- system. Outcome unknown.

Table 2. Summary of Other UW-System Graduate Level Grading Schemes