

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to faculty as they consider how best to assign grades. The question of grading can be one of the most vexing challenges for the beginning or part-time instructor who is not familiar with the norms of the Department. Indeed, even senior faculty often struggle with issues such as grade inflation and policies regarding incomplete grades or justifications for dropping courses. While the assignment of grades is the responsibility of individual faculty, guidelines can help ensure that students experience a reasonable degree of consistency as they progress through the curriculum.

**The CU Grading System and The Meaning of a Grade:**

The University of Colorado at Boulder operates on the letter grade system. The table below gives the grading system as taken from the campus catalog. Based on this table, the average student should receive a grade of C, a B corresponds to above average performance, and an A to superior performance. However, grade inflation has raised the actual average grade to somewhere between a B- and slightly below a B (2.7 and 2.9 grade points) depending on the class level. Part of the purpose of developing guidelines is to establish agreement on the meaning of an average grade.

Standard Grade	GPA Credit
A = superior/excellent	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B = good/better than average	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C = competent/average	2.0
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D	1.0
D- = minimum passing grade	0.7
F = failing	0

In addition to the grades in the table, there are the following special grades:

- IF** = incomplete; changed to F if not completed within one year
- IW** = incomplete; changed to W if not completed within one year
- IP** = in progress; thesis at the graduate level or specified graduate-level courses
- P** = passing; under the pass/fail option, grades of D- and above convert to a P. Other specified courses may also be graded on a pass/fail basis.
- NC** = no credit
- W** = withdrawal or drop without discredit

An IF or IW is an incomplete grade. Policies with respect to IF/IW grades are available from the College.

**Average and Minimum Grades in Mechanical Engineering:**

As mentioned above, under the grading system described in the catalog, C+ represents the grade an average student should receive. Therefore, it is recommended that faculty use as a guideline the following table:

Nature of Course	Average GPA
Lower division	2.7
Upper division required	2.8
Upper division technical elective	3.0
Senior Design Project	3.0
Graduate	3.5

**Minimum “passing” grade requirements in order for a course to count towards a degree in Mechanical Engineering:**

Undergraduate Courses that are pre- or co-requisites for other MCEN courses:

C / 2.0 for students starting at CU Boulder since Fall 2015

C- / 1.7 for students who started at CU Boulder prior to Fall 2015

All other Undergraduate Courses: D- / 0.7

Masters: C / 2.0

PhD: B- / 2.7

If a student at each of these levels receives a grade lower than these cutoffs, he/she will not be able to count the course towards a degree in Mechanical Engineering.