

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
Undergraduate Grading Standards
September 2013

The grading standards described below, describe the criteria that instructors use to evaluate student learning in chemistry courses. Accurate assessment of student learning is important for demonstrating

- Satisfactory academic progress
- Completion of required pre-requisite courses
- Eligibility for a variety of student programs, scholarships and honors (e.g., athletics, financial aid and other government sponsored programs).
- Degree completion

Instructors strive to provide students with accurate and timely assessment to facilitate student learning and to enable them to meet their academic obligations. Failure to assess student performance in chemistry courses reduces the both the value of educational experience and impacts the safety of our laboratory-based activities.

The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry offer three types of courses (1) professional subject area lecture courses, (2) professional subject area laboratory and research experiences, and (3) courses designed for the general university/community audience.

Professional subject area courses and laboratory experiences examine specific domains of knowledge that are relevant to the chemical and biochemical enterprise. Grading methods vary according to course content, format and instructional methods. In general letter grades for courses that meet the professional subject area requirements indicate:

A: Outstanding work that goes beyond analysis of course material to synthesize concepts in a valid and/or novel or creative way. Consistently chooses appropriate models, uses correct techniques, and critically analyses data to draw experimental conclusions. Student consistently exceeds expectations.

B: Very good to excellent work that analyzes material explored in class and is a reasonable attempt to synthesize material. Usually chooses appropriate models, uses correct techniques when prompted, and critically analyses data to draw experimental conclusions when prompted. Student adequately meets expectations.

C: Adequate work that satisfies the assignment, a limited analysis of material explored in class. Capable of choosing appropriate models and correct techniques, but requires guidance to critically analyze data to draw experimental conclusions. Student usually meets expectations.

D: Passing work that is minimally adequate, raising serious concern about readiness to continue in the field. Limited ability to select appropriate models and correct techniques, and requires significant guidance to critically analyze data to draw experimental conclusions. Student seldom meets expectations.

F: Failing work that is clearly inadequate or unworthy of credit. Unable to select appropriate models and correct techniques, and is unable to critically analyze data to draw experimental conclusions. Student does not meet expectations.

Note: In the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, a grade of A+ is rare. The grade is given at the discretion of the instructor and generally reflects performance significantly beyond the requirements described for an A grade. An A+ denotes not only mastery of the subject, but also excellence meriting special distinction in all aspects of course material and performance.

Grade appeals: A student who believes that the instructor erred in the assignment of a grade, or who believes a grade recording error or omission has occurred must pursue resolution no later than the end of the following quarter (not including summer session). The process begins with a discussion with the instructor. If an adequate resolution is not possible, the student must submit a written appeal within 10 days to the Assistant Department Head.