

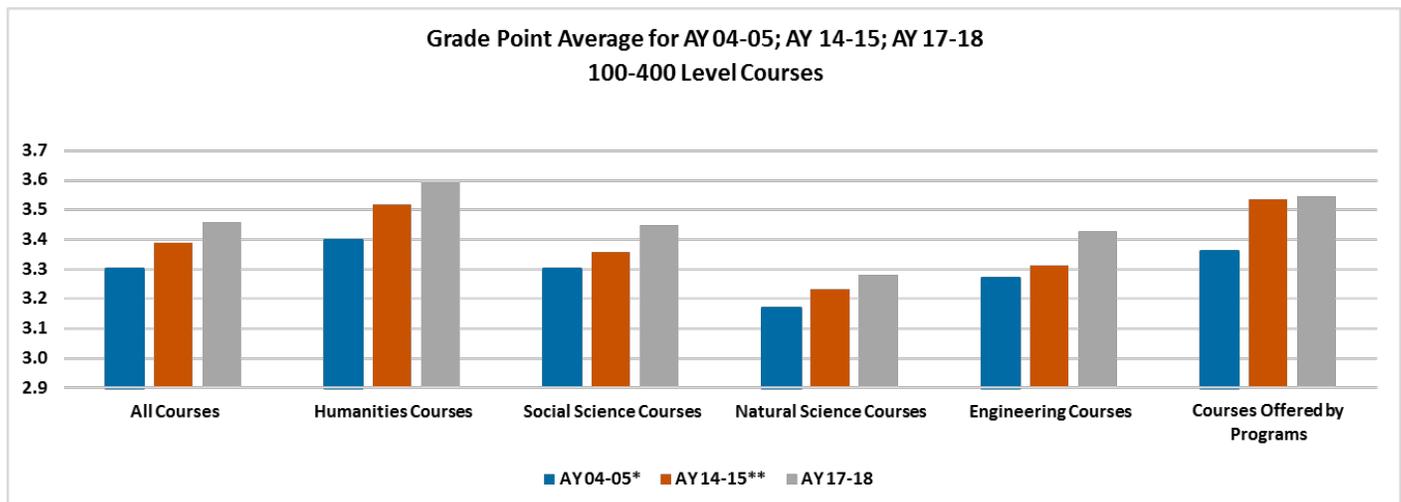
For release September 17, 2018

### Grading Results for AY 2017-18

To promote fairness and transparency in the assessment of students' work and grading practices, the University grading policy, approved by the faculty in October 2014, charges each department with articulating and upholding its own well-defined and meaningful grading standards for work within its discipline. This policy calls for the Faculty Committee on Examinations and Standing to report to the faculty each fall on the grading record of the previous year.

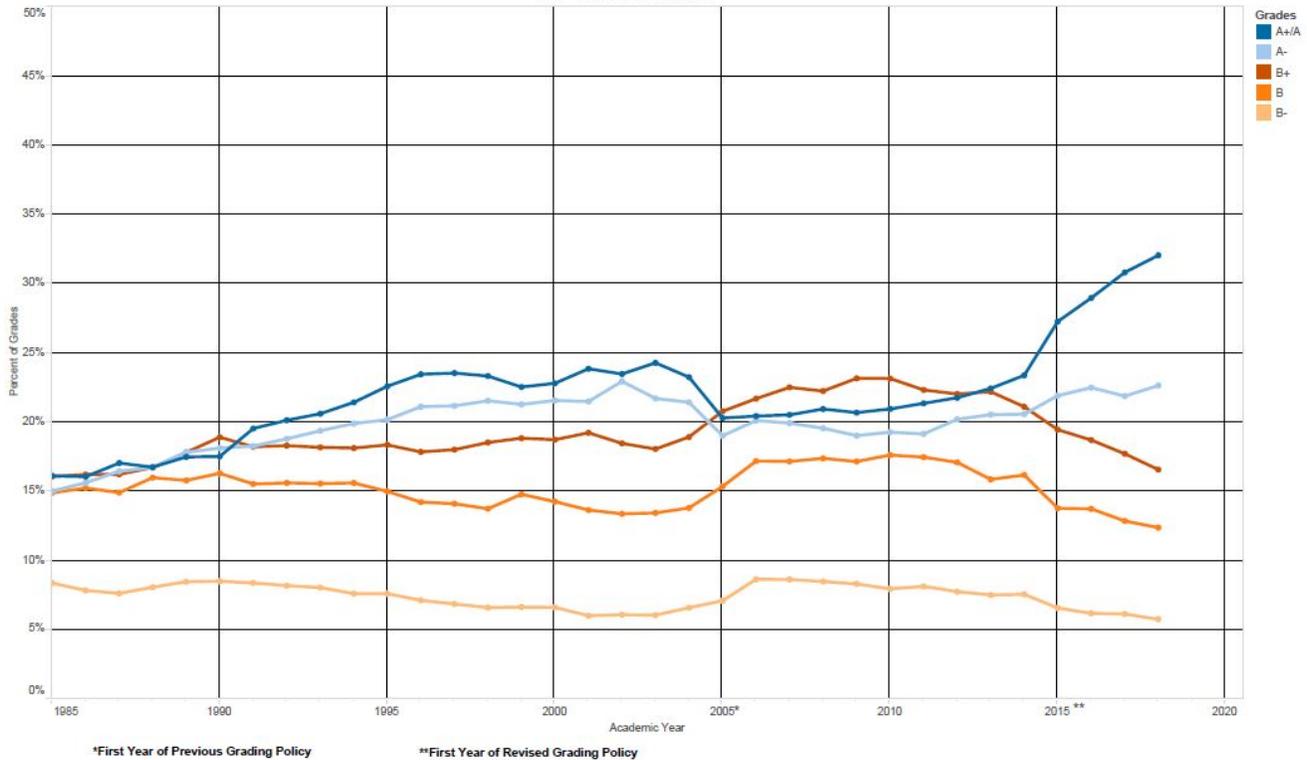
The Committee has reviewed grading data for AY 2017-18 and notes the continued upward trend in grade point average for undergraduate courses. The University-wide GPA in 100-400 level courses across all departments and programs increased .026 points over the past year, from 3.435 in AY 16-17 to 3.461 in AY 17-18. (This increase is exactly double last year's increase.)

The grade point average for the University as a whole is now .071 points higher than it was in AY 2014-2015, the first year the revised grading policy was in effect, and .157 points higher than in AY 2004-2005, the first year following the previous change to the grading policy.



A notable consequence of the upward trend in GPA has been increased grade compression at the top of the grading scale. This makes it challenging to distinguish among our best students when awarding honors and prizes at both the University and department levels. The following graph shows the continuing increase in A grades and decline in B grades.

Academic Years: 1985-2018  
 Distribution of A-Range and B-Range Grades  
 All Departments & Programs  
 100-400 Level Courses



This upward trend in the GPA has not diminished students' anxiety about grades. Indeed, grade appeals and requests for grade changes increased following the 2014 policy change. Faculty are advised that a clearly articulated course grading policy is the most effective way to manage students' expectations and to hold them accountable to your assessment standards.

We hope that faculty in departments and programs will meet periodically to review and refine their grading and assessment practices and that chairs and program directors will encourage ongoing discussion of these matters. The Office of the Dean of the College has informed new faculty of Princeton's grading policies. We also remind all faculty about the pedagogical importance of publishing a clear grading rubric and of providing students with meaningful and timely feedback. Faculty who prefer not to use a grading scale that differentiates student performance may elect to use a p/d/f only grading option. The Council on Teaching and Learning (the executive committee of the McGraw Center) is available to support the efforts of academic units to advance the pedagogy of assessing student work.

More detailed grading data for all divisions, departments, and programs will be made available shortly to all faculty through a secure server on the Office of the Dean of the College website. Individual faculty members will also receive a report on their own grading data from the Registrar. Chairs will receive department summary reports. We recommend that departments review their grading results to ensure they are consistent with articulated standards.

The *Faculty Committee on Examinations and Standing* is chaired by Jill Dolan, Dean of the College, and includes the following elected faculty members, representing all four divisions: Wendy Belcher, Comparative Literature and African American Studies; Sarah A. Chihaya, English; Michael S. Graziano, Psychology (fall 2018); Katherine Hill Reischl, Slavic Languages and Literatures (spring 2019); Alexei V. Korennykh, Molecular Biology; Yair Mintzker, History; Anna M. Shields, East Asian Studies; James C. Sturm, Electrical Engineering. Janet Rapelye, Dean of Admission; Polly Winfrey Griffin, Registrar; W. Rochelle Calhoun, Vice President for Campus Life; and Claire Fowler, Senior Associate Dean of the College, serve *ex officio*. The committee's charge from the faculty is to administer academic regulations concerning the program of study and scholastic standing of undergraduate students.