

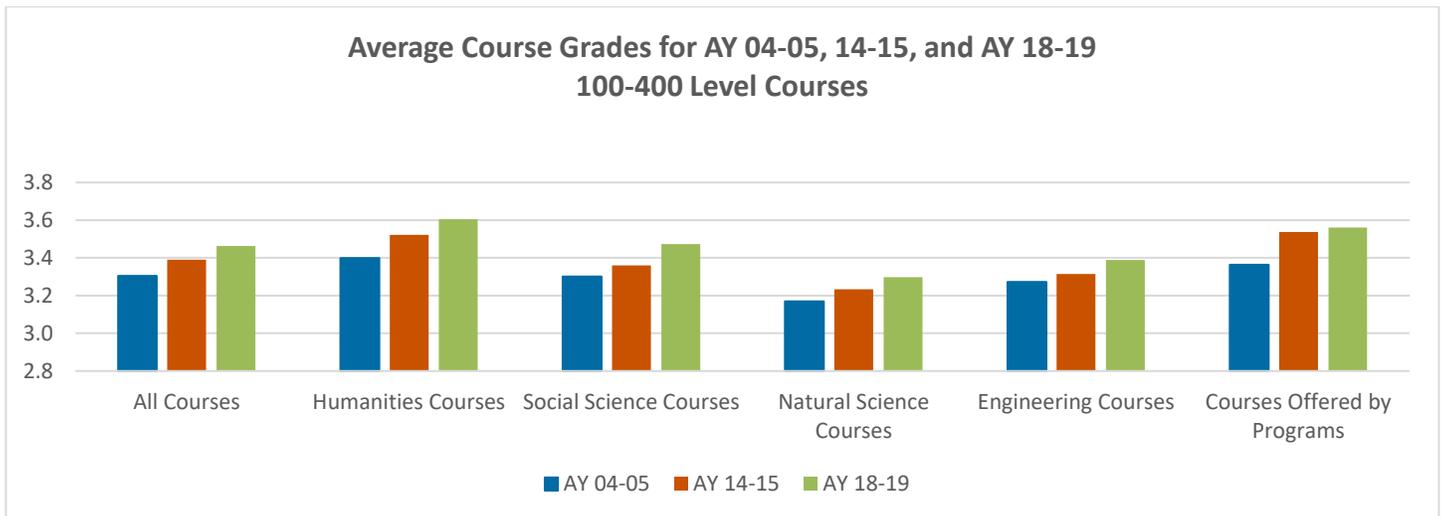
For release September 16, 2019

Grading Results for AY 2018-19

To promote fairness and transparency in the assessment of students' work, the University grading policy, approved by the faculty in October 2014, charges each department to articulate and uphold its own well-defined, 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.

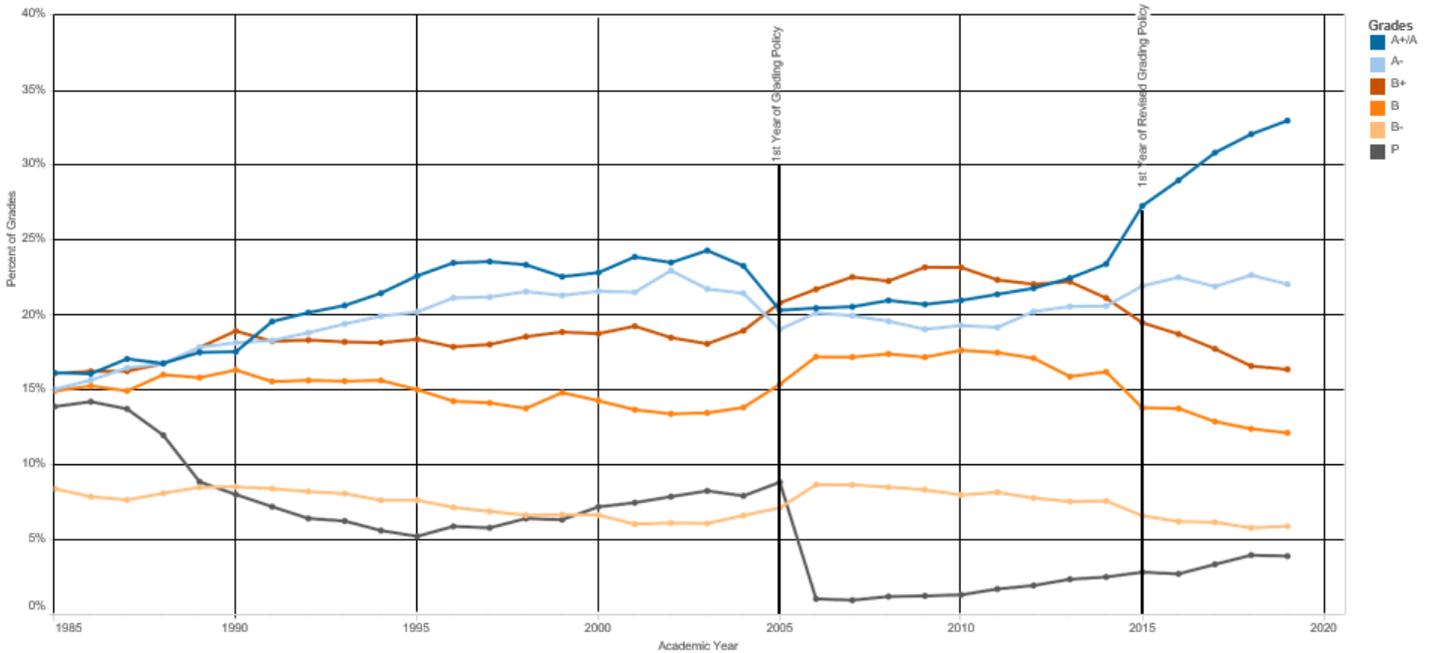
The Committee has reviewed the data for AY 2018-19 and notes the continued upward trend in average undergraduate course grades. Although the increase of .003 points for AY 18-19 is smaller than the previous year's increase of .026 points, the mean course grades across all departments and programs increased from 3.461 in AY 17-18 to 3.464 in AY 18-19.

The course grade point average for the University as a whole is now .074 higher than it was in AY 2015, the first year the revised grading policy was in effect, and .16 higher than in AY 2005, the first year following the last change to the grading policy. These increases appear in courses offered in all divisions except Engineering, which showed a decline in mean course grades in AY 18-19 as compared to AY 17-18.



Grading data for AY18-19 also shows a continuation of the upward trend in the number of A and A+ grades assigned, and a decline in the assignment of A-, B+, and B grades:

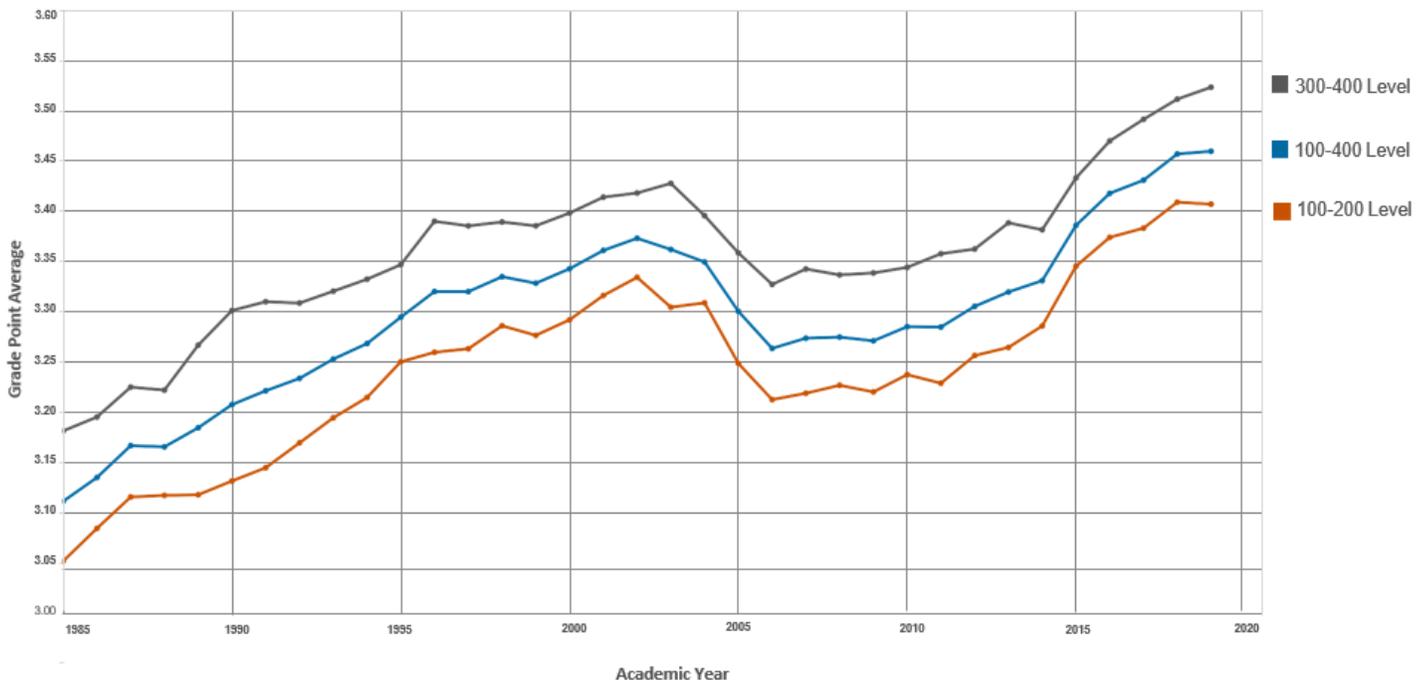
Academic Years: 1985-2019
 Distribution of A-Range, B-Range, and P-Grades
 All Departments & Programs
 100-400 Level Courses



This year's increase, however, is confined primarily to upper-level courses and illustrates different grading trends in 100-200 and 300-400 classes. In particular:

- The percentage of A and A+ grades in introductory courses remains relatively unchanged. B-range grades, however, increased in 100-200 level courses, while A- grades declined.
- In upper-level courses, A and A+ grades increased slightly, while B-range grades declined. The number of A- grades awarded in 300 and 400 level courses remains constant.

Academic Years: 1985-2019 Grade Point Average
 All Departments and Programs
 100-400, 100-200, & 300-400 Level Courses



Increased compression at the top of the grading scale remains a challenge when we award honors and prizes at both University and department levels. The A+ grade, although computed as the equivalent of an A in the grading scale, is used very differently in departments across divisions. Even individual faculty within departments have very different practices in how they assign A+ grades.

Chairs and program directors should encourage ongoing discussion of assessment standards and grading practices among their faculty, who are expected to meet periodically to review and refine their approaches to assessment. In particular, the Committee encourages departments to:

- Review consistency of grading standards and practices across department courses
- Ensure consistency of grading standards within courses with multiple sections
- Develop a consistent response to student requests for grade changes

In addition, the Committee endorses the following revision to language in the *Undergraduate Announcement* to clarify the appropriate grounds for requesting a grade change:

Grade changes may be requested by course instructors to correct a computational grading error. A student who believes their course grade was assigned in error or in a manner not consistent with the stated grading rubric of the course should first discuss the grade with the course instructor. If necessary, the matter may then be pursued with the chair or Director of Undergraduate Studies of the department in which the course is offered. In exceptional cases, when the matter cannot be resolved at the department level, the student may bring an appeal to Senior Associate Dean of the College, Claire Fowler, who will act on behalf of the Faculty Committee on Examinations and Standing. The Committee will judge grade disputes only on the fairness or consistency of the instructor's grading process and will not make an independent assessment of the quality of the student's course work.

We also remind faculty about the pedagogical importance of the following:

- A clearly articulated course grading policy is the most effective way to manage students' expectations and to hold them accountable to your assessment standards. This includes publishing a clear grading rubric and providing students with meaningful and timely feedback.
- Faculty who prefer not to use a grading scale that differentiates student performance may elect to use the 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:

<https://odoc.princeton.edu/faculty-staff/grading-princeton>

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 Office of the Dean of the College has also informed new faculty of Princeton's grading policies.

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; Johann D. Frick, Philosophy and the Center for Human Values; Katherine Hill Reischl, Slavic Languages & Literatures; Ralph E. Kleiner, Chemistry; Alexei V. Korenykh, Molecular Biology; Rosina A. Lozano, History; James C. Sturm, Electrical Engineering. Karen Richardson, 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.