

Student Assembly

Resolution 40: Clarifying Grading Systems on Course Syllabi

Abstract: Students benefit from knowing the grading system used in their courses and yet some course syllabi do not provide the exact grading scheme or an approximation. Thus, the grading system or an approximation shall be included on all course syllabi.

Sponsored by: Saad Razzak '26

Type of Action: Recommendation

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Current Status: Adopted by the Assembly, 16-3-6, 03/20/2025

Whereas, Cornell does not have a single grading system. In many cases, Professors are allowed to determine their own grading systems, sometimes guided by college-wide or department-wide guidelines.

Whereas, the New York State Education Department has certain requirements for course syllabi to ensure that the necessary information about the course is communicated to the students.

Whereas, one of these requirements is the “Basis of Grade Determination: This will likely include some mention of your grading scale”¹.

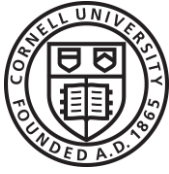
Whereas, not all course syllabi explicitly lay out the grading scale or scheme that will be used in the class.

Whereas, some courses do not have a grading scale determined at the beginning of the semester. For example, some courses set the average grade as a B-/B/B+, which means that the final grading scale is determined at the end of the semester.

Whereas, knowledge of compatibility between letter grades and percent grade, allows students to estimate their success in the class and whether they need to reassess their strategy for a particular course.

Be it therefore resolved, all course syllabi have to provide some guidance on the grading scale or grading scheme which is used.

¹ [Understanding the NYSED Requirements for Syllabi](#) - provided by Cornell University’s Center for Teaching Innovation



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27 **Be it further resolved**, if the grading system, scale, or scheme is pre-determined by the
28 beginning of the semester for a particular course, the course syllabi shall clearly lay this system
29 out.

30 **Be it further resolved**, if the grading system, scale, or scheme for a particular course is
31 determined at the end of the semester, the course syllabi shall provide a clear explanation of how
32 the final grading system is determined. Furthermore, if possible, the course syllabi shall include
33 either the final grading scheme from the last time the course was taught as a point of reference—
34 as long as the grading system's design is relatively similar—or an estimation of the final grading
35 system. In this case, the course syllabus shall clearly state that these are references or examples
36 of the grading system rather than the actual grading system used in that class.

37 Respectfully Submitted,

38 Saad Razzak '26

39 Representative of the College of Arts and Sciences, *Student Assembly*