Maldives College of Higher Education

Academic Policy

Policy Title: UNIFORM GRADING SYSTEM

This policy is approved by the Interim College Council on 6th July 2000.

1. Rationale

1.1 The institutes comprising the College follow different grading systems for student achievement. For example, the grade boundaries of IMA and ITE are different although both institutes use A, B, C, D and E. MITE awards grades relative to a maximum score of 6. A uniform grading system across the College will serve to reduce misconceptions and promote credit transfer and understanding of different levels of student achievement across institutes. This paper outlines a proposal for a uniform grading system.

2. Grading systems generally used at institutes of higher learning

2.1. The grade awarded to a student in a particular subject / module can serve at least two distinct purposes:

   a. Performance "Marking"
      To provide a "mark" as a record of the student's performance on that individual subject / module.

   b. Classification "Scoring"
      To provide a "score" which combined with scores from other modules yield (by means of some suitable calculation) an overall certificate classification.

2.2 There are two systems, American and British that are commonly used in universities and Colleges. The American grading system has a maximum score of 4. The British

system uses High Distinction, Distinction, Credit, Pass and so on. Some American and British systems use letter grades such as A, B, C, D, etc. sometimes with Grade Points or with other name-based grades. Almost all universities use a raw score of 100. These scores are then converted to the prevalent system using a look-up table.

2.3 The pass mark is considered 50% in almost all universities. The 50 percentage points beyond 50% are then divided into four different grades, either A, B, C and D or High Distinction (HD), Distinction (D), Credit (C), and Pass (P). In some universities, especially American universities, these 50 percentage points may be divided into ten or eleven intervals and labelled A+, A, A-, B+, etc. In all cases, the motivation to convert the percentage points to letter grades is to lessen the inherent uncertainty in assessment schemes, in cases where decisions have to be made on a comparison of two near percent values, 90% and 92%, for example.

3. Proposal

3.1 As primary and secondary schools use A, B, C, etc. grades, it may be confusing for the public if College also use this kind of letter grade system. There are variations in the grade boundaries at certain grades of schools. For example, A is 70% and above for Grade-8 and above, 75% and above for Grades 6 and 7. These differences create further confusion.

3.2 For the above reason, a descriptive term for different levels of achievement may be worth considering. Such a system may be HD, DN, CR, PP, etc, or Superior, Above Average, Average, etc, or Outstanding, Excellent, Superior, Average, etc. Such a system enables one to coin descriptive words in Dhivehi as well.

3.3 A single letter may not be appropriate to be included in transcripts because they are more prone to forgery and illegitimate amendments. For this reason, two letters may be more secure, irrespective of what the final "grade" descriptors may be; for example, DN, or AA instead of D or A.

3.4 As College graduates may seek admission for further study in universities where Grade Points (GP) are used, a conversion system between descriptive grades and GP may facilitate admission to these universities. Such conversions using look-up tables are already   in use in some institutions. If GP Averages (GPA) are required for a course then this may be also calculated.

3.5 It may be necessary to assign descriptors for all assessment events. These may be needed only in some institutes but a common scheme needs to be agreed upon.

3.6 The following grading scale shall be used in reporting grade to students as well as the management.

Level of Achievement	Equivalent Marks Range	Grade point	Meaning
HD	85-100	4	High Distinction: Denotes work of outstanding quality. This grade may be awarded to recognize particular originality or creativity in performance.
DN	75-84	3	Distinction: Denotes work of predominantly excellent quality, demonstrating a sound grasp of content together with efficient organization, selectivity and use of techniques.
CR	65-74	2	Credit: Denotes a clear pass and satisfactory achievement of unit objectives.
PP	50-64	1	Pass: Denotes a clear pass.
FC	45-49	0	Fail Conditional: Denotes a student has failed to achieve sufficient knowledge of learning, but after further study and tuition may be reassessed.
FF	0-44	0	Denotes that the candidate has failed to complete the unit satisfactorily
I	0-100	-	Incomplete: Denotes that due to unusual circumstances or ill health a small portion of a course, such as a term paper or final examination, has not been completed.
DF	Deferred 0-100	-	Assessment task(s) have been deferred
S	Equal to and above 65	-	Satisfactory: This grade is assigned for subjects that are usually marked as either "pass" or "fail". Satisfactory refers to a passing level achievement.
U	Equal to and below 64	-	Unsatisfactory: This grade is assigned for subjects that are usually marked as either "pass" or "fail". Unsatisfactory refers to a failing achievement.

4. Grade Reports

4.1 The above grading structure will apply for all courses for which the College / Institute awards certificates. Courses for which an overseas Institution through a formal link agremnet gives awards will abide by the grading structures of the link institution.

4.2 At the close of each semester, grades or grade reports shall be provided to students. Students are encouraged to keep grade reports and other records pertaining to their academic record.

4.3 At the end of the semester students who have not completed all of a course's requirements may, at the instructor's discretion, be given an (incomplete) "I" followed by a letter grade that indicates the earn grade to that point (e.g. I/C). The

instructor may then permit a student, within a period not to exceed the sixth week of the subsequent semester, to resolve the outstanding requirement (s) that led to the "I". Unless and until the "I" has been cleared the grade following it will be the grade of record.

4.4 The only grades which affect the GPA or cumulative grade point average (CGPA) are the grades HD through PP. The definition of a completed credit is a credit for which students earn a grade HD through PP.

4.5 If students receive a grade of PP in a class and elect to repeat the course, the new grade will replace the failing grade in computing the CGPA. The credits will count once and both grades will appear on the permanent academic record.

5. Reviewing Assessment Marks and Grades

5.1 If students have grievances concerning assessable work they should approach the subject instructor with their request for explanation and/or remarking. If the grievance is unresolved they should contact the subject co-ordinator, course co-ordinator, the Head of the Institution, in this order, the next person only after receiving an unsatisfactory resolution from the previous person on the list.

5.2 Any student who believes that the aggregate mark or grade awarded does not reflect their performance in the subject has the right to approach the subject co-ordinator and, if necessary, the Head of the Institution and the Dean and have the grading explained.

5.3 If a student believes there has been a lack of due process in the reassessment procedure mentioned under "Reviewing Assessment Marks and Grades", such students may formally appeal, within two weeks of receiving the response from the Head of Institution, to the Academic Review Committee to review the matter. The letter of appeal must state fully the reasons for the appeal and include any relevant documentary evidence to support such appeal. Please note, however, that the Committee's role is to ensure that the proper procedures have been followed in relation to the assessment of the subject-the Committee's role is not to reassess the academic quality of the work.

6. Grade Point Average

6.1 The Grade Point Average is a calculation which reflects the overall grades of a student. The grade point average is calculated by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of letter-graded units completed. It can be calculated at the end of each semester as well as progressively as a cumulative GPA Subjects with grades of I, DF, S, or U are excluded from grade point average calculations.

6.2 The following formula may be used to calculate the GPA.

$$\text{GPA} = \frac{4A + 3B + 2C + 1D}{E}$$

Where: A   is the number of credit points gained at HD grade
        B   is the number of credit points gained at DN grade
        C   is the number of credit points gained at CR grade
        D   is the number of credit points gained at PP grade
        E   is the sum of credit points for which the student has enrolled.

7. Change of Grades

Students who believe that a computational error occurred in grading must immediately contact the instructor of the course in question. Students must bring this matter to the attention of the instructor involved no later than 10 days after the marks of the subject have been given in order for a grade change to be considered. Administrative personnel of the College are not authorized to change an instructor's grade.

8. Repeating a Course

The total hours earned towards a certificate/degree are not increased if a student repeats a course in which a passing grade has already been earned, although both grades remain on the transcript. When a course is repeated, only the last grade earned is utilized in computing the grade point average. A student who repeats a course should notify the College Office for recomputation of cumulative grade point average.

9. Implementing the policy

This grading policy will come into affect for all new courses of the College. Courses that are currently (July 2000) continuing will apply their respective grading and assessment policies. Course that have begun in 2000 and have not undertaken any major assessment tasks and not reported any grades or marks shall also follow the grading structure outlined in this document.