

Proposed Amendment to the MIT Rules and Regulations of the Faculty to Create a Pass/D/Fail Option for Graduate Students

Students for Graduate Curriculum Options, GSC

Friday, October 19, 2007

- Clause 2.62.1 of the MIT Rules and Regulations of the Faculty currently reads as follows:

The grades to be awarded to students who satisfactorily complete the work of a subject by the end of a term and the definitions of these grades are:

- A Exceptionally good performance, demonstrating a superior understanding of the subject matter, a foundation of extensive knowledge, and a skillful use of concepts and/or materials.
- B Good performance, demonstrating capacity to use the appropriate concepts, a good understanding of the subject matter, and an ability to handle the problems and materials encountered in the subject.
- C Adequate performance, demonstrating an adequate understanding of the subject matter, an ability to handle relatively simple problems, and adequate preparation for moving on to more advanced work in the field.
- D Minimally acceptable performance, demonstrating at least partial familiarity with the subject matter and some capacity to deal with relatively simple problems, but also demonstrating deficiencies serious enough to make it inadvisable to proceed further in the field without additional work.
- P When the use of the grade P is authorized, it reflects performance at any of the levels A, B, or C, with grading to be done on a P/D/F basis.

Modifiers of + and - shall be allowed on the grades of A, B, and C. These modifiers are only for internal grade reports. Term and cumulative averages (internal and external) shall be calculated without modifiers.

The grade of P is authorized for use under the following circumstances:

- i. in any subject taken by a first-year undergraduate student in the first semester or during the January Independent Activities Period.
- ii. in any of the subjects designated by the Committee on Curricula, the Committee on the Undergraduate Program, the Committee on Graduate Programs, or by vote of the Faculty as subjects to be graded on a P/D/F basis for all students registered in them.

- iii. in special programs designated by the Committee on the Undergraduate Program or by vote of the Faculty.
- iv. in a total of no more than two subjects elected during the third and subsequent years in an undergraduate program. These subjects cannot be used to fulfill General Institute or Departmental Requirements, and must be elected and the Registrar notified before the end of the fifth week of the term.

The factors which determine the award of grades in any particular subject will necessarily be affected by the scope and level of that subject. In relatively elementary subjects the mastery of particular skills will often be of primary importance, whereas in more advanced subjects more complex considerations may enter into the evaluation.

The Faculty wishes to make it clear that in determining a student's grade consideration will be given for elegance of presentation, creativity, imagination, and originality, where these may appropriately be called for.

The transcript of the student's record shall contain the names of the subjects taken, the grades received, and a description of the grades in use at the time the student was enrolled. Transcripts shall not include any reference to the +/- modifiers.

- The clause shall be amended so that the following text is inserted after "iv":

- v. in a total of no more than one elected subject per term in a graduate program. These subjects cannot be used to fulfill Institute or Departmental Requirements, and must be elected and the Registrar notified before the end of the fifth week of the term. Pursuant to the educational goals of their respective programs and with the approval of the Committee on Graduate Programs, individual departments may implement policies that restrict how the P/D/F option is to be exercised by students in their programs. In addition, instructors may regulate the enrollment of students exercising the P/D/F option in their subjects.