

Resolution 2011-3. On Reporting Contextual Grade Information on Undergraduate Student Transcripts

The Faculty Council enacts:

Section 1. Definitions. As used in this Resolution, the following terms have the meaning indicated:

1. “Reportable course section” is a course section in which at least ten (10) students received quality points.
2. “Median grade” is the mid-point of an array from highest to lowest of grades awarded in a course section to students receiving quality points. When the number of students in the course section is not an even number, the grade immediately below the mid-point shall be deemed the median.
3. “Percentile range” is a function of the relative rank of a particular grade within the distribution of grades in the course section. The relative rank shall be calculated by dividing the grade's rank in the set of grades awarded in a course section by one less than the number of such students in the course section:

$$\left(1 - \left(\frac{n-r}{n-1}\right)\right) * 100$$

where n is the number of students earning quality points in the course section and r is the rank of the grade within the course section. The percentile range shall be derived by calculating this relative rank for the top and the bottom of each grade within the course section and expressing it as a percentage.

4. “Schedule point average” is the mean of the median grades for the reportable course sections taken by the student, weighted by the number of credit hours for which each course section was taken.

Section 2. Contextual grade information to be recorded on transcripts. Transcripts for students beginning undergraduate study at the University during or after the Fall, 2012 semester shall include the following contextual grade information:

1. For each reportable course section, a notation of the median grade attained by students receiving quality points in that section.
2. For each reportable course section, a notation of the percentile range in which the student's earned grade falls.
3. For all course sections, a notation of the total number of students taking the course section, or size.
4. For each term, a schedule point average reported for each term separately and cumulatively across terms.
5. For each term, a count of the number of course sections in which the student achieved below, at, and above the course section median. The count shall be reported for each term separately and cumulatively across terms.

Section 3. Explanatory material on transcripts. The explanatory material provided with transcripts shall include this or similar explanation of the enhanced grade reporting provisions: “The transcript provides contextual grade information for each course section in which at least 10 students receive quality points (a grade for GPA credit). The median grade attained in the course section is provided in square brackets after the earned grade. The percentile range in which the student's earned grade falls is reported in square brackets after the quality points. The course section size is reported to the right of the percentile range. For each term, a Schedule Point Average (SPA) is provided. The SPA represents the average median grade for all students enrolled in the student's mix of course sections. For each term, a count of course sections in which the student achieved above, at, and below the course section median is provided. More information on interpreting contextual grades may be found at <http://regweb.unc.edu/contextual>.”

The registrar shall host and maintain a website containing information on the enhanced grade reporting provisions and any additional information appropriate for interpreting contextual grade information.

Section 4. Implementation.

1. Beginning for the Fall, 2012 semester, the registrar shall provide via electronic or paper reporting an

instructor grade report to each instructor of one or more undergraduate course sections during that term. The instructor grade report shall include, but is not limited to, the following information, provided via an easily interpretable graphic report:

- a. The mean grade issued for that instructor's course section in that semester.
 - b. Mean grades issued for other sections of the same course and for other courses in the instructor's department, division, school, and university.
 - c. Frequency of issuance of each letter grade range (A, B, C, D, F) across the same classifications as in b. above.
 - d. Historical trends in grades issued across the same classifications as in b. and c. above.
2. Beginning for the Fall, 2012 semester, the registrar shall provide an online facility providing full grade distribution information for course sections held in Fall, 2010 and later. This information shall include median and percentile range as well in order to provide comparability with official transcripts. The information shall be searchable by section, course, semester, instructor, department, and school, and shall include aggregate grade information across these categories.
 3. To the extent practicable, the registrar shall provide enhanced transcripts via secure electronic delivery that contain full distribution information as in 2.) above as an option available at students' discretion.
 4. To the extent that any element of this Resolution cannot be reasonably implemented by the date listed, it shall be implemented as soon as possible thereafter.
 5. To the extent that any element of this Resolution proves impracticable, the registrar shall report this situation to the Educational Policy Committee for consideration of amendment.
 6. To the extent that any part of this Resolution requires further clarification, the registrar shall consult first with the Enhanced Grade Reporting Implementation Committee, then with additional stakeholders if necessary to determine the appropriate course of action.
 7. The Educational Policy Committee shall design and implement an evaluation scheme for this Resolution, to include information about grading patterns as well as students', instructors', and transcript recipients' experiences with the program.
 8. In the Fall of 2017, or five years after implementation of the main body of this Resolution, whichever comes later, the Educational Policy Committee shall evaluate the provisions' success and provide its evaluation to Faculty Council. At its discretion, the Educational Policy Committee may make recommendations for changes at that point.
 9. The full text of this Resolution, including incorporated Exhibits, shall be published on the Registrar's website and made accessible for students, faculty, staff, and the public.

Comment: This resolution is presented by the Enhanced Grade Reporting Implementation Subcommittee of the Educational Policy Committee. Members of the subcommittee are Andrew J. Perrin (Sociology), chair; Donna Gilleskie (Economics); Christian Iliadis (Physics); and Holly Boardman (undergraduate student). The resolution implements Faculty Council Resolution 2010-3 On Enhanced Grade Reporting

Examples illustrating implementation of the resolution are contained in the attached Exhibits.