Grading Policy

Policy on graded material in CS courses

Students have a right to be given assignments that are well-prepared and of appropriate length, and to have them graded in a timely fashion. Furthermore, knowing how the class will be graded, and where they stand, can reduce students’ anxiety and promote learning.

Students can expect the following grading policy to be followed, unless instructors explicitly say otherwise.

TIMELINESS

Grading of mid-term exams

- If at all possible, the first mid-term should be given, graded, and returned prior to the undergraduate drop date.
- Mid-term exams should be graded and returned within two weeks, or at the very least, prior to the next exam.
- Solutions to exams should be posted immediately after all students have taken the exam.

Grading of programming and written assignments

- Programs and written assignments should be graded and returned within two weeks, or less if subsequent assignments depend on them.

PREPARATION

- No assignment should be given without its having been thoroughly reviewed by an instructor or TA.
- Assignments should be of reasonable length, keeping in mind that the student is taking several other courses that require a comparable amount of time. For programming assignments, it is desirable to leave a weekend between assigning the homework and collecting it.
- Similarly, exams should always be taken by the TA's to determine, at the very least, how long it takes to write the answers.

COURSE GRADING

- Course grading policies should be announced in as much detail as possible at the start of the semester. If grades will be normalized to a curve, then the curve should be published. Since students may use this policy to determine how much effort to expend on different parts of the course, the grading policy should not be altered if it can be avoided. Once the semester is over, no changes in the policy are allowed: University policies on capricious grading require that the announced policy be followed in assigning course grades.
- Students should be given regular - if possible, continuous - access to information about their position in the class.
- When grading classes of mixed undergraduate and graduate students, the instructor should announce up front whether the same grading policy will be used both for graduates and for undergraduates, or a separate scale will be used. The policy should not penalize undergraduates in courses that are expected to be taken by a large number of undergraduates. Two methods that work well are: (1) determine the grading curve based only on the undergrads, and then fit the grads to that scale; (2) determine the grading curve based only on grads, and then fit the undergrads to it.