



Grades and Grade Scale Conversions

AICE Phoenix Symposium – March 2016

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Understanding Grades



- In practice - grades provide a metric for performance measurements
- In practice - grade conversions provide a basis for some due diligence for student / applicant assessment
- Goal = Accurate, Consistent and Measurable Results
- Ideally - grades and grade conversions would actually predict future performance

Use Statistical Methods?



- **Statistical methods are already well-defined and provide mathematical precision. Can we use them for grade conversions?**
- **In order to use statistical methods, we need data.**
- **How much and what kind of data is available for international credentials evaluation?**

Big Data or Not So Big Data?



- Is our environment data-rich or data-poor?
- Examples of fields that have clearly become data-rich are:
 - Advertising (Print → Radio → TV → Internet → Mobile)
 - HR / Hiring (Resumes → Certifications → LinkedIn, Github, etc.)
- Data-enrichment is facilitated by the internet and other centralized collections of information.

Missing Data for Grade Conversions



- **Currently, our environment is relatively data-poor.**
- **Information necessary for data-driven grade conversion includes:**
 - **Detailed grade distributions for courses / programs worldwide**
 - **Matriculation and transfer data for students worldwide**
 - **Academic outcome data for each course and program**

Note: Individual institutions (universities, licensing boards, etc.) are in a good position to collect data for their own applicants, but globally-centralized data is not readily available as of now.

What Methods to Use?



- In a data-poor environment, it is important to:
 1. Focus on consistency rather than precision;
 2. Establish “broad parameters and paradigms”;
 3. Embrace transparency to encourage feedback and continuous improvement.
- Precedent-based legal systems are examples of established non-statistical methodology.

Existing Methods and Resources for Grade Conversions



- GRADE Database™ - www.gradedatabase.com
- Classbase™ - www.classbase.com
- AACRAO EDGE
- NAFSA Online Guides to Education Systems Around the World

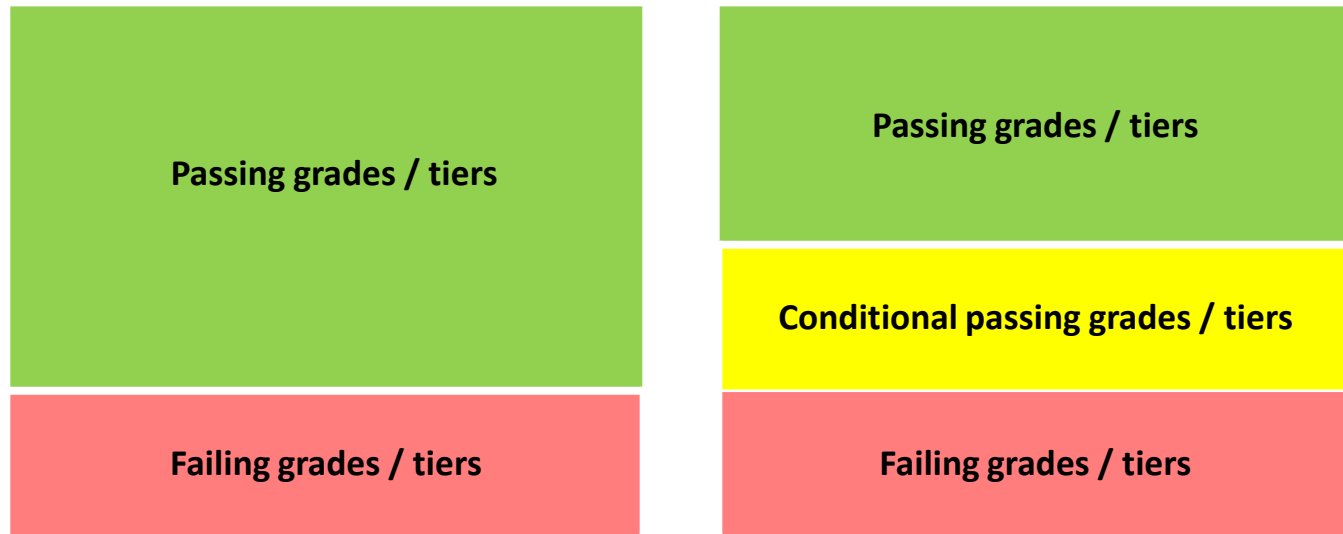
Major Concepts and Criteria for Grade Conversions

- **Institutional autonomy vs. prevailing norms**
 - **Philippines**
 - **Canada**
- **Vertical vs. pyramidal systems**
 - **Vertical – open admissions / non-selective**
 - **Pyramidal – selective admissions**

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GRADE™ Method for Assessing Grades Scales



1. Determine if a grade scale incorporates the concept of a "conditional passing grade" (if a grade is considered to be passing in some circumstances but not in others, then it meets the criteria for a "conditional pass");
2. Identify and describe the discrete grades/tiers used in a grading system and the hierarchy of those tiers. Specify the tiers that represent passing grades vs. failing grades;
3. If a grade scale utilizes conditional passing grades, identify and describe the discrete conditional passing grades/tiers and the specific conditions associated with them.

Taken from the GRADE™ Method (www.gradedatabase.com/#/method)

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GRADE™ Method for Converting Grades into the U.S.: How Many Discrete Grades / Tiers?

A (4.00)
B (3.00)
C (2.00)
D (1.00)*
F (0.00)

A (4.00)
A- (3.67)
B+ (3.33)
B (3.00)
B- (2.67)
C+ (2.33)
C (2.00)
D (1.00)*
F (0.00)

Depending on the number of discrete grades/tiers in the source grade scale, use one of the above U.S. 4.0 grade scales (simple or expanded) as the grade scale to be converted into (the target grade scale). Remember, the D (1.00) grade is only applicable for conditional passing grades.

Taken from the GRADE™ Method (www.gradedatabase.com/#/method)

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GRADE™ Method for Converting Grades into the U.S.: Define the Boundaries



1. Convert the lowest possible (unconditional) passing grade tier in the grade scale being converted (the source grade scale) to "C / 2.00" in the U.S. 4.0 system;
2. Convert the highest possible grade tier in the source grade scale to "A / 4.00" in the U.S. 4.0 system;
3. If the source grade scale includes conditional passing grades, those grades should be converted to "D / 1.00" grades in the U.S. 4.0 system;
4. If the source grade scale does not include conditional passing grades, then there will be no conversions into the U.S. 4.00 system of "D / 1.00".

Taken from the GRADE™ Method (www.gradedatabase.com/#/method)

GRADE™ Method for Converting Grades into the U.S.: Be Aware of Bias Toward High / Low Boundaries



- 1. After converting the minimum passing grade and the highest possible grade (and the conditional passing grade if applicable), convert the remaining passing grade tiers in the source grade scale to the selected U.S. 4.0 grade tiers such that there are one-to-one relationships between the source and target grade tiers as much as possible and there is as little distortion / bias toward 4.0 or 2.0 as possible (unless sufficient evidence for bias is documented);**
- 2. In the event that a source grade scale has more grade tiers than the detailed U.S. 4.0 grade scale, source grade tiers must be grouped together when converting into the target grade tiers.**

Taken from the GRADE™ Method (www.gradedatabase.com/#/method)

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Sample Grade Scales

Indian Grade Scale:

70 - 100	First Division
50 - 69	Second Division
30 - 49	Pass
0 - 29	Fail

Norwegian Grade Scale:

6	saerdeles tukfredsstukkebede (s.tf.) / excellent
5	meget tilfredsstillenede (m.tf.) / very good
4	tilfredssillenede (tf.) / good
3	noenlunde tilfredsstillende (ng.tf.) / passable
2	måtelig (måt.) / barely passable
1	ikke tilfredsstillende (ik.tf.) / failure

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Sample Grade Scales

Serbian Grade Scales:

The Country Index v.I 2004		AACRAO EDGE		Pier Yugoslavia (1990)		Classbase.com		
						Scale	Grade Description	US Grade
10	A+	10	A	10	Excellent	10.00	Изузетан (Outstanding)	A+
9	A	9	B+	9	Very Good	9.00 - 9.99	Одличан (Excellent)	A
8	A	8	B	8	Good	8.50 - 8.99		B+
7	B	7	B-	8	Good	8.00 - 8.49	Врло добар (Very Good)	B
6	C	6	C	7-6	Fair	7.50 - 7.99		C+
5	F	5	F	5	Failed	7.00 - 7.49	Добар (Good)	C
						6.50 - 6.99		D+
						6.00 - 6.49	Довољан (Sufficient)	D
						5.00 - 5.99	Није положио (Insufficient)	F

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Sample Grade Scale Conversions

Source Grade Scale		4.0 Conversions			
70 - 100	First Division	4.00		A	
50 - 69	Second Division	3.00		B	
30 - 49	Pass	2.00		C	
0 - 29	Fail	0.00		F	
6	saerdekes tukfredsstukkebede (s.tf.) / excellent	4.00	A	4.00	A
5	meget tilfredsstillenede (m.tf.) / very good	3.67	A-	3.33	B+
4	tilfredssillenede (tf.) / good	3.00	B	3.00	B
3	noenlunde tilfredsstillende (ng.tf.) / passable	2.33	C+	2.67	B-
2	måtelig (måt.) / barely passable	2.00	C	2.00	C
1	ikke tilfredsstillende (ik.tf.) / failure	0.00	F	0.00	F

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The End

Thank you!