

To: Dr. Ahlquist's MET1010 class, fall 2006
From: Jon Ahlquist
Re: Exam 4 and grades
Date: 25 October 2006

Congratulations to the 4 students who scored 29 out of 30 on exam 4!

Several students have asked whether I "curve" grades. Following exam 3, I answered this question in an email to the entire class. Further, I posted my reply at the course Web site under the title "Adjusting the grading scale." If you did not read that email message or if you want to reread it, please refer to the copy posted at the course Web site, <http://ahlquist.met.fsu.edu/courses/met1010/index.html>

I also need to remind people that the test averages that you see posted at campus.fsu.edu are averages over every student enrolled in the course, including those who did not take the exams. For example, 18 students did not take exam 4 on Wednesday, so their scores are 0 for the moment, which lowers the class average significantly. A few of those students contacted me before the exam and were sick or had some other conflict that I feel entitles them to make up the exam, which they will do in the next few days.

To figure your grade at this point in the course, add together the best 3 out of 4 of exams so far and then convert that to a percentage. Because 3 exams contain 90 points, here is the formula:

Percentage = $100\% \times (\text{sum of best 3 out of 4})/90$

Then refer to grading scale below, which lowers the original grading scale by 4% for each grade category. Note that I will always determine your grade based on a sum of exam scores. I do not assign grades to individual exams.

Percent	Grade			
86-87.999	A-	88-100	A	(No A+ at FSU)
76-77.999	B-	78-83.999	B	84-85.999 B+
66-67.999	C-	68-73.999	C	74-75.999 C+
56-57.999	D-	58-63.999	D	64-65.999 D+
				0-55.999 F

After the 5-th exam, I will post the grading scale based on the best 4 out of 5 one-hour exams. There may be a slight adjustment from what is shown above, but:

- (1) It won't be large, and
- (2) I will not raise the scale higher than what has been posted above. That way you can always know what it takes to earn a certain grade, and there is the possibility that I may be a little more lenient later in the course.

Here is the range of scores for the best 3 out of 4 exams. At the high end, two people have 87 out of 90, which is 96.7%. At the low end, two people have 0 out of 90, because they have not taken even one of the 4 exams so far.

Finally, some of the emails I'm receiving sound like their authors have not read the essay on "How to Study" that is posted at the course Web site, <http://ahlquist.met.fsu.edu/courses/met1010/index.html>

Part of the message in that essay is that everyone should be attending every class, which is certainly not happening now. Remember how much more concentrated college courses are than high school courses. Also, not enough people are making use of office hours to ask questions about the chapters we are covering. Office hours are for more than looking at your past exams.

I will post a copy of this email at the course Web site under the title "Exam 4 and grades."

Jon Ahlquist