

# AAUP Works

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## Contract FAQs

### **Who has the authority to make grading policy? What rights do faculty have over assignment of student grades?**

Recently, three separate incidents have prompted faculty to contact the AAUP Chapter office for advice and clarification on the development of grading policy or faculty's right to assign grades without interference. These incidents occurred in 3 different colleges, indicating there's a need for a better understanding of these issues from the perspectives of shared governance, contractual rights, and university policy.

University-wide grading policy is developed by the Faculty Senate and implemented by the UC Registrar's Office. These policies can be reviewed at <http://www.uc.edu/registrar/gradehandbook.html>. (Hard copies of these policies can be obtained by contacting the Registrar's office.) Colleges, divisions, or departments may make grading policies that apply to courses within their purview, so long as those policies do not contravene the Faculty Senate grading policies or interfere with the right of faculty to assign grades based on academic judgment. "Local level" grading policies, however, must be approved by faculty in that unit through proper shared governance procedures (e.g.,

committee study and recommendation, followed by a vote by all faculty in the unit). Once these "local level" policies are appropriately established, faculty in that unit are bound by them.

No one, however, can interfere with a professor's right to make a fair and reasonable *academic judgment* about the appropriate grade a particular student will receive in a course taught by that professor. Likewise, no one can change that grade after it has been assigned except that professor. These rights are guaranteed by

Article 2 of the AAUP-UC contract ("Academic Freedom") and that contractual right is directly referenced by the UC Registrar: "Principles of academic freedom vest in class instructors the authority to evaluate individual student performances. Only instructors assigned to teach a class may award or change grades for that class. In exceptional cases, a grade may be changed by others if a grievance committee finds arbitrary and capricious evaluation."

If you have questions or concerns about these issues, please don't hesitate to contact the Chapter office. All conversations with AAUP staff are confidential.

