Grading: faculty discusses alternate proposals

By Alex Makowski
Friday's issue of The Tech contained a discussion of MIT's new grading policy. More important perhaps than where we have been, is where we are heading. Consideration of the important grading philosophies current around the Institute, and at other educational institutions, is important. As Undergraduate Planning Professor Richard Held pointed out, "There is a broad range of approaches to grading, and they are all trying to accomplish something." The new grading policy at MIT is being developed in response to these various approaches and concerns. It is not a supplanting of grading on a pass-fail basis, but rather an extension of the current grading system that has been in use at MIT for the past forty years. The new grading system is designed to provide a more effective assessment of a student's ability to work independently, to evaluate the impact of the student's previous education and experience on his or her performance, and to give the student an opportunity to study a course at the level that is appropriate for his or her ability.

The new grading system is based on a combination of letter grades and written evaluations. Letter grades will continue to be assigned, but they will be accompanied by written evaluations that will provide more detailed information about a student's performance. These evaluations will be written by the student's advisor, who will be provided with specific guidelines for writing them. The advisor will meet with each student at least twice a year to discuss the student's progress and to provide feedback on their work. The advisor will also provide a letter grade for each course, and these grades will be included in the student's transcript.

The new grading system is designed to be more flexible and responsive to the needs of individual students. It will allow students to choose the level of grading that is most appropriate for them, based on their abilities and needs. This flexibility will enable students to take courses at a level that is challenging but not too difficult, and to work at their own pace.

One of the key components of the new grading system is the written evaluation. These evaluations will provide students with feedback on their performance, and will help them to understand what they need to do to improve. The written evaluations will also provide a basis for discussions between students and their advisors, and will help to ensure that students are aware of the standards that are expected of them.

The new grading system is designed to be used across the entire Institute, and will be phased in over the next few years. The grading system at MIT is a complex one, and it is important to continue to evaluate its effectiveness and to make adjustments as necessary. The new grading system is a step forward in providing a more effective assessment of a student's ability to work independently, and it is an important part of the ongoing effort to improve the quality of education at MIT.

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Pass Fail: First results and evaluation

By Charles M. Fix

Ed. note: This article is based on extended discussions with teachers, advisors, and administrators. It is meant to be a formal report on the grading system that was adopted byMIT last year.

The first term of the pass-fail experiment is over and the first indication is that both the students and the faculty are pleased with the new grading system. The students feel that they are better able to focus on their work and that they are receiving more individualized attention. The faculty are pleased with the increased flexibility in grading and the ability to make better judgments about student performance.

The pass-fail system is intended to provide students with a greater sense of control over their education. The system allows students to choose whether they want a grade or a pass-fail designation, and it provides them with more flexibility in choosing courses that match their interests and abilities.

The faculty are pleased with the increased flexibility in grading and the ability to make better judgments about student performance. The system allows for a more individualized approach to grading, and it provides a way for students to demonstrate their progress in a variety of ways.

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