Early feedback to students and mid-semester grades
Data gathered by Rich Slatta and Tracey E. Ray


Nine of 16 NCSU Peer Institutions require early feedback and/or mid-semester grades (marked with 2 asterisks **). A 10th institution (UC-Davis) places responsibility on students to request mid-semester grades.

- Cornell University
- University of Florida
- **Georgia Institute of Technology**
- **Iowa State University**
- Michigan State University
- Ohio State University
- **Penn State University-Main Campus**
- **Purdue University-Main Campus**
- University of California - Davis [student-initiated process]
- University of Georgia
- **University of Illinois - Urbana / Champaign**
- **University of Maryland**
- **University of Minnesota**
- **Texas A & M University**
- **University of Wisconsin-Madison**
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute

Peer-Institution Examples:

Georgia Tech Progress report grades will be submitted to the Registrar on all classes numbered 1000 and 2000 each term. These grades will be used for the advisement of students, not for the calculation of any GPA. Progress report grades will be S or U (U indicates D or lower). They will be submitted after 40 percent of the term has been completed, as specified by the official calendar, and be available to students no later than the following Monday. http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/5a.php

Purdue: Four weeks into the semester have students complete at least one graded assignment, so that they have some early feedback. If they are doing poorly, let them know early in the term so they can seek assistance. http://www.purdue.edu/sats/learning_communities/instructors/curricularcohesi on/guidelines.html

Penn State 47-70 Online Student Progress Report
Between the start of the third week and at the end of the sixth week of classes during both fall and spring semesters, each instructor shall evaluate the performance of each 1. non-transfer degree candidates who are enrolled in their first or second semester 2.
provisional students and 3. nondegree regular students who have earned 27 or fewer credits, 4. first and second semester degree candidate, or provisional student. If any such student has a grade of less than C, the instructor will notify the Registrar who will, then, notify the student and his or her advisers that the performance is unsatisfactory.

http://www.psu.edu/dept/ufs/policies/47-00.html#47-70

University of Illinois-Urbana Midterm Grades for First-Year Students
Instructors are directed to submit grades for all freshmen at the end of the first eight weeks (midterm) of each semester. These grades are not used in calculating the GPA; rather, they are intended to help students evaluate their progress in each course and to assist college and departmental advisors in counseling students about their academic program. http://www.las.illinois.edu/students/standing/grades/

Iowa State University  Mid-semester Academic Report [see link for comprehensive document]
Supplemental Instruction:  Primary Goal(s) of Activity:
For students to evaluate their overall academic progress.
To prepare students to make changes in their academic effort and strategies. http://www.dso.iastate.edu/asc/supplemental/SIShowcaseMidtermReports.pdf

University of Maryland Early Warning (Mid-semester) Grades.
For transfer students, students on academic probation, and student athletes in your class you will receive requests for mid-semester (early warning) grades, as you would also if you by mistake had any sophomore students in your class. These mid-semester grades should be submitted promptly and should indicate the student’s current standing in your course. In order to give these grades some indicative value, it is advisable to have several graded assignments completed by the middle of the semester. Grading options do include "Satisfactory" and "Unsatisfactory" as well as the usual letter grades.

http://www.engl-pw.umd.edu/PoliciesandProcedures/CoursePolicies/Grading.htm

University of Minnesota: General College currently uses mid-semester grades and has had a positive experience with them.


Texas A&M Mid-semester grades are required
http://www.tamu.edu/admissions/catalogs/GRAD_catalog08_09/academic_cal/2007_fall_semester.htm

Wisconsin Placement Tests versus Mid-semester and other grades
There are a number of very good ways to assess how well a placement test works at its intended task. More appropriate criteria exist for assessing the validity of each of the placement tests than comparison of test score with final course grades. Mid-semester grades, grades on the first midterm, or even scores on a more authentic, performance-based assessment taken in the first week or two of the course provide a better criterion against which to compare the placement test.

http://testing.wisc.edu/proper%20use%20of%20placement%20tests.html
UC-David Mid-Term Grade Standing [not mandatory—initiated by students]
Students wishing to know their grade at the mid-quarter should ask the instructor. Those who have deficient grades (D, F or NP) are urged to confer with their advisers.
http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/UCDWebCatalog/academicinfo/grades.html

Other Institutions:

UC-Berkeley  Rationale and tools for early feedback and mid-semester evaluations
http://teaching.berkeley.edu/newsletters0809/earlyfeedback.html

Kansas State: The combination of early warning and midterm grades are involved in the growing practice known as “intrusive advising,” a pro-active approach to reaching students who would not normally seek help for academic issues. As Jennifer Varney notes (http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/AAT/NW30_3.htm#10 ), “Intrusive Advising is not ‘hand-holding’ or parenting, but rather active concern for students’ academic preparation; it is a willingness to assist students in exploring services and programs to improve skills and increase academic motivation” (Upcraft & Kramer, 1995). A series of articles on this approach may be found at the website of the National Academic Advising Association (http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/clearinghouse/advisingissues/Intrusive_advising.htm ).

University of Illinois Springfield: Pros and cons of mid-term grades
* Mid-term grades involve faculty time.
  + Figuring grades at mid-term will involve faculty time, but the benefits to the students are worth the time involved.
  + Posting grades takes little time through Web for Faculty.
  + A majority of public and private higher education institutions in the U.S. use mid-term grades.
  + Faculty play an important role in the persistence and academic success of students. Mid-term grades help provide services and assistance to students who might otherwise fall through the cracks.
* Mid-term grades change pedagogical strategies by making it necessary for faculty to provide graded assignments early in the semester.
  + Multiple early assignments providing graded feedback to students about their performance are considered a best practice in higher education. The Policy Center on the First Year of College finds that “Early feedback on academic performance is important during the first semester. Students are often unaware of their own levels of academic readiness and need the motivation that early grades can provide.”

Evidence from Australia:  Online assessment: The use of web based self assessment materials to support self directed learning by Mary Peat, School of Biological Sciences, University of Sydney, Teaching and Learning Forum 2000
“It has been accepted that well documented formative feedback for students, especially early on in a course, facilitates their learning.”

Law School, United Kingdom  Students said that getting early feedback, even if it included some negative comment, boosted their self-confidence and helped motivate them to improve. http://webjcli.ncl.ac.uk/2006/issue3/bone3.html

Summary of Universities Reporting Mid-term Grades

Western Carolina University: http://www.wcu.edu/10741.asp
Fifth Week Progress Reports (Mid-Term Grades)
Fifth-week progress (mid-term) grades should be reported to students through the web, for freshmen and sophomore level (100-299) courses during the fall and spring semester. Immediately upon submission of the grades, students may view their grade(s). Instructors are encouraged to advise students about their academic progress throughout the term, but especially prior to midterm. If students are making unsatisfactory progress, instructors should inform them of the reasons for the deficiency and advise them of the steps they could take to improve their academic performance or standing.

North Carolina A&T State University:

Queens University of Charlotte:
http://www.queens.edu/registrar/mid_term_entry_guidelines.asp
6. Access Grade Entry (this option is only available during the grade entry period)
BE SURE THE RADIO BUTTON IS CLICKED ON “MIDTERM”, NOT FINAL GRADE.
Click on the Go button.

7. Enter Grades
Important Reminders:
• Assign a grade of “D” or “F” only. ALL OTHER GRADES WILL BE CONSIDERED AN INCORRECT GRADE ENTRY AND WILL BE IGNORED.

University of Texas at Dallas:
http://www.utdallas.edu/student/catalog/ugcurrent/policies/grades.html
Mid-Term Grades
Students are issued mid-term grades to apprise them of their progress within the semester. These grades are not a part of the permanent record and will not appear on academic transcripts. Some classes will only issue a grade of credit or no credit at mid-term.

Ferris State University:
http://www.ferris.edu/admissions/registrar/schdbook/page17-18.htm
Mid-Term Grades
At mid-term (fall and spring terms only), faculty are encouraged to assign mid-term grades to all students but especially students in 200 level and below courses. Mid-term grades are available through MyFSU the ninth week of fall or spring term by using the internet.

George Mason University:  
http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/0203/apolicies/examsgrades.html

Grade Reports
Mid-term grades are reported for full semester, 100- and 200- level courses at the mid-point of each fall and spring semester. Students are notified through their university e-mail account that mid-term grades are available to them only through webGMU. Mid-term grades are intended to provide feedback to students on their academic progress. They do not become part of the student’s official record: they are not calculated in any grade point average and they do not appear on any official or unofficial transcript.

Wake Forest University: http://www.wfu.edu/academics/calendars/

The University of North Carolina at Pembroke:
University of North Carolina at Chapel-Hill-  
http://www.cs.unc.edu/Events/Calendar/  (First Year Undergraduates Mid-term Rolls)

Elizabeth City State University:

University of North Carolina at Charlotte:  
http://www.advising.uncc.edu/policies.htm

Midterm Unsatisfactory Grade Reports
Faculty are asked to report midterm grades for undergraduate students earning a “D” or “F” and graduate students earning a “C” or “U.” Subsequently, the Registrar mails a letter to students listing the specific courses and grades in which a midterm deficiency was reported. Be sure not to rely solely on this process, as there may be reason a faculty member is unable to submit grades. Learn about your academic progress and status by speaking with your faculty members early in the semester.

Fayetteville State University:  
http://testforms.uncfsu.edu/catalog/ug/academicregulations/grades.htm

Grades
Interim Grades
Interim grades serve as warnings to students that they are at risk of failing a course due to non-attendance if they do not take immediate corrective action. The interim grading period begins on the first day after the close of registration and continues until one week prior to the deadline for withdrawing from classes. Faculty members assign the interim grades of X and EA as soon as warranted by the student’s attendance.

Students are responsible for monitoring interim grades and taking actions in response to them. Interim grades are not permanent and have no effect on a student’s earned hours and grade point average.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Meaning – Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>No-Show - Student does not attend class during the first week of semester/term. Student must either begin attending class or withdraw from it. Students who fail to take actions in response to interim grade of X will receive a final grade of F. In online classes, an X grade is assigned to enrolled students who do not interact with the course website for the first week of the semester/term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Excessive Absences - Student’s class absences exceed 10% of their total contact hours. Student must resume class attendance or withdraw from it. Students who do not withdraw will receive a final grade based on evaluation criteria of the class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Midterm Grades**

Midterm grades provide an assessment of student progress in courses during the first half of the semester. Students earning a midterm grade of D or F in a class must take corrective action to improve their academic status. All faculty teaching undergraduate courses are required to post midterm grades for all students. All students are required to review their midterm grades using their on-line accounts.