The CUP reaffirms the current policy on the release of First Year Student Hidden Grades as articulated in March 2001 in *The Report and Recommendations on Grading, Advanced Placement Credit, and Prerequisites*.

The CUP also reaffirms the principles underlying the policy including those articulated in Professor Stewart’s January 3, 2001 memo, which responds to the CUP’s requests for further consideration its Subcommittee on Grading, Advanced Placement Credit and Prerequisites.

Specifically, the CUP agrees with the Subcommittee and with previous Faculty committees that advising is the only legitimate purpose for reporting hidden grades of a student.

The CUP acknowledges the long-standing discomfort of MIT faculty with the exception to the policy that allows student applying to medical schools to request that departmental letters with their hidden grades be sent to the Preprofessional Advising Office and forwarded to medical schools that they designate. The Committee is encouraged that this exception is no longer relevant based on revisions to medical school application requirement and proposes to modify the Institute’s policy to remove that exception.

At the same time, the CUP recognizes that some financial aid programs offered by the U.S. Department of Education require that MIT consider hidden grades in determining eligibility. In such cases, the Institute should not be put in the position of denying students access to these programs, which may significantly ameliorate the cost of an MIT education. That said, the Committee emphasizes that:

- hidden grades should be used by the Institute in determining eligibility only if authorized by the student;
- subject grades should not be released to any external organization — governmental or otherwise;
- use of hidden grades should not place any administrative burden on the student beyond authorization of release;
- use of the hidden grades should not place any administrative burden on the instructor providing the grade or the department in which the subject was taken; and
- implications of the financial aid programs should be communicated to students and advisors clearly and regularly throughout the first year of the undergraduate program.
Furthermore, the CUP avers the prerogative of individual institutions to establish educational policies that benefit an institution’s students and support its educational mission. The Committee asks the MIT Faculty to direct the administration to work with the U.S. Department of Education to modify financial aid programs so that their requirements do not compromise policies such as MIT’s first year grading policy, which was set by the MIT faculty with the mission in mind.
Policy on the Release of First Year Student Hidden Grades

Revised Policy Statement (February 2010)

The performance of freshmen in all subjects taken during their first term at MIT (as well as during the January Independent Activities Period) is communicated on a Pass/No External Record basis; in the second term, freshman performance is communicated on an A-B-C/No External Record basis. (Under special circumstances, a second term of grading under Pass/No External Record may be granted to a student through the Committee on Academic Performance.)

Instructors are expected to submit regular letter grades each term to the Registrar. In the first semester and in IAP, a passing grade for a freshman is permanently recorded as a P. The P appears on both the external transcript and the internal grade report. A, B, and C grades are only communicated to advisors and students at the end of the fall term and IAP in the form of two-part unofficial reports, which also include non-passing grades. These reports are retained in each student's advising folder.

Freshman non-passing grades (D, F, O, OX) appear on the internal grade report (they are followed by an N for No-Record). They do not appear on the external transcript.

Therefore, "hidden" grades include both A, B, C grades for first semester and IAP, and DN, FN, ON, OXN grades for first semester, IAP, and second semester.

As approved by the CUP, the Guidelines for the Use of Hidden Grades are as follows:

- Hidden grades exist to help student self-evaluation and academic advising at MIT.
- First-year hidden grades may not be used to prevent students from enrolling in an academic department.
- MIT recognizes a student’s right under Federal law to have access to information maintained about him or her, but MIT will not send copies of hidden grades to third parties. It is not consistent with the purpose of hidden grades for faculty or staff members to release them except to the student, or to take initiatives such as suggesting that students provide first-year hidden grades to third parties.
- No MIT office or individual should provide information directly to a graduate school, company, or any other third party concerning assigned hidden grades — by phone, in writing, or by transmitting the unofficial report of the student’s hidden grades. If the student requests it, a letter, addressed to the student, will be prepared by the department that gave the subject, informing him or her of the assigned grade that is in the file.
- The Registrar’s Office will retain a record of letter grades assigned to freshmen. Use of this record may be authorized by the Dean for Undergraduate Education for educational research purposes or to allow the Institute to determine eligibility for financial aid programs offered through the U.S. Department of Education where such reporting is mandated.

Hidden grades are used within MIT for advising functions; that is, helping students make academic choices. It is inappropriate to use hidden grades for "evaluating" students; that is, making comparisons leading to choices among students, such as selections for student
employment or UROP.

According to the *Rules and Regulations of the Faculty*, academic departments should keep the record of hidden letter grades assigned to freshmen for five years; they should then destroy the record. The Dean for Undergraduate Education is responsible for ensuring that hidden grades are used only as described above.

Revised February 3, 2010