



Dutch grading system and grading culture

When studying at European institutions, one will notice immediately the difference in grading scales but also different ways of using them in different subject areas. There are many different grading systems such as (from lowest to highest grade) 1 to 5, 1 to 10, 1 to 20, 1 to 100, 5 to 1, F to A. In the Netherlands, a ten point system is often used in both secondary and higher education. A grade of 10 is the highest and 6 is the minimum pass grade. The grade 5.5 will often be rounded up to "6". At the Amsterdam University of the Arts (AHK), different grading systems are applied depending on the subject area such as music, theatre, dance, cultural heritage or architecture. This could be a ten-point-system, a system with letters or description; a four-point-system is for instance applied for architecture.

The grading culture of Conservatorium van Amsterdam

The Conservatorium van Amsterdam (CVA) applies a ten points grading system from Fail (1) to Excellent (10). The grade 10 is for exceptional achievements and rarely given. The CVA applies an so-called absolute system; the grade reflects the individual score of the student and unlike the US system, the grade is not given in relation to the level of the entire group in the same course.

Distribution of grades for Doubt or less (< 5.5) is rare, partly due to the fact that regular and exchange students must pass a demanding selection audition before they can admit to the course. Exchange students are in most cases placed in the third study year of CVA's Bachelor's program or in the Master's program.

Grade distribution table Conservatorium van Amsterdam

	Grade	Bachelor Frequency %	Percentage range BA (accumulated frequency)	Master Frequency %	Percentage range MA (accumulated frequency)
Excellent	10	3.6%	0.0 – 3.6%	2.7%	0.0 – 2.7%
Very good	9	24.1%	3.7 – 27.7%	28.2%	2.8 – 30.9%
Good	8	42.4%	27.7 – 70.2%	39.9%	31 – 70.8%
More than satisfied	7	23.9%	70.3 – 94.1%	21.3%	70.9 – 92.1%
Satisfactory	6	5.5%	94.2 – 99.6%	6.4%	92.2 – 98.5%
Doubt	5	0.4%	99.7 – 100%	1.5%	98.6 – 100%

The distribution table is based on a calculation of grades from the final two years of the four-year bachelor program and the two-year master program CVA (2013-2015)

BA level EQF and NLQF: 6

MA level EQF and NLQF: 7

P = Passed*

The Dutch educational credit system is 60 ECTS per year. An academic year consists of two semesters of 30 ECTS.

*If pass requirements have been laid down for a particular examination, test or proficiency assessment, the requirement shall be met when the student achieves a grade of higher than 5.5 or the assessment "Passed".

For more information about the grading system in the Netherlands, please visit this link to Study in Holland website of the Dutch expertise center for internationalization (EP-Nuffic):

<https://www.studyinholland.nl/education-system/dutch-grading-system>