

Evaluating Candidates for “Superior Academic Achievement” from Schools with Non-Numerical Assessment Systems

The underlying principle for STTI student membership is to honor superior academic achievers in baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs who have demonstrated leadership potential. Some schools of nursing measure academic achievement using a pass/fail grading system, although there are many differences between schools in how this system is implemented. When an honor society or chapter from such a school applies for a chapter charter or charter amendment from STTI, it should indicate in its application to the International Governance Committee how it plans to define “superior academic achievement” when it chooses baccalaureate student members within the pass/fail system.

Several chapters have already been established that have successfully demonstrated a clear definition of “academic achievement” within a pass/fail grading system. In some cases, these definitions have been even more stringent than the current STTI baccalaureate criteria requiring at least a 3.0 grade point average or the equivalent and a ranking in the top 35% of the graduating class.

Different examples of grading systems from around the world include:

- **Grading System:** Highly competent, competent, and non-competent.
Level Equivalent to STTI Baccalaureate Membership Criteria: Highly Competent
- **Grading System:** Honors degree classification: 70% and over is a first-class honors degree; 60-69% is a upper second-class honors degree (2:1); 50-59% is a lower second-class honors degree; 40-49% is a third-class honors degree. Pass mark is 40%.
Level Equivalent to STTI Baccalaureate Membership Criteria: First class and upper second-class honors degree
- **Grading System:** VG - Väl godkänd (Passed with distinction); G - Godkänd (Passed); U - Underkänd (Fail)
Level Equivalent to STTI Baccalaureate Membership Criteria: VG - Väl godkänd (Passed with distinction)

The following are possible strategies that honor societies or chapters may use to identify student candidates for membership who have “superior academic achievement” when non-numerical assessment systems are used.

- Get feedback from teachers on students who had achievements beyond those required for a passing grade (e.g. high pass versus low pass)
- Request that teachers identify the top third of a class or group of students on the basis of advanced skills or aptitudes and/or demonstration of an integrated understanding of knowledge and skills
- Have teachers assess students for those qualities that demonstrate leadership potential and scholarly ability In areas such as:

- Participation in class and labs
- Student awards
- Clinical practice reports
- Publications
- Community service
- Voluntary work – local, national, international
- Teacher and clinical mentor/preceptor reports

Evidence for superior academic achievement could be provided in candidate portfolios, teacher and clinical mentor/preceptor reports, competency based assessments, or solicited references from teachers.

Honor societies who are applying for charter or chapters who are applying for charter amendments should explain the school's assessment system, describe how "superior academic achievement" will be defined, and explain the mechanisms the honor society or chapter will use to identify students who are "superior academic achievers". For additional information or assistance, please contact Teresa Ransdell, global chapter and community manager and Governance Committee staff liaison at Sigma Theta Tau International or the Chair of the International Governance Committee.