

How should a letter grade from Sam Staley be interpreted?

Grades for presentations and papers generally represent my determination of their quality based on what I would expect as an employer based on two scenarios:

1. Undergraduate students. An exit interview upon the completion of an internship.
2. Graduate students. At the 6 month performance review of a full-time job for entry-level professional employment as an analyst.

At these points, our conversation would go something like this based on your grade:

- **Grade = A.** “Great job. You’ve done what we asked for you, and you’ve gone beyond. You have really added value to our work. Let’s talk about your career path with our organization (e.g., a promotion, full time employment).”
- **Grade = B.** “Thank you for working with us. You have done what we asked you to do, and you have really helped us move forward. Let me know if I can be of any help in your continuing job search.”
- **Grade = C.** “We think we may have made a hiring mistake, but we see potential to get you back on track. Let’s set a few goals and provide more direction so we can get the project to a level where we can really use your work to move our organization forward.” [NOTE: This would usually happen within a month or two of employment.]
- **Grade = D.** “I am sorry. We have made a hiring mistake. This is clearly not a good fit, and I’m sorry we weren’t better at matching your skills and needs with the requirements of this position. Let’s work on an exit strategy that makes sense for both of us.” [NOTE: This would happen after an early intervention based on Grade C work in the enterprise.]

Bottom line: Employers hire only people capable of producing A level work. They can’t afford to hire people producing at lower levels of productivity and output.