

FINAL COURSE GRADES, GRADING PROCEDURES, AND FINAL ASSESSMENTS

(This policy statement incorporates and supersedes Policy Statements 73-11, 77-23, 78-25, 78-36, 80-02, 80-08, 83-07, 85-16, 95-09 Revised, 96-11, 98-07, 99-19, and 02-12. Reference: Executive Orders 268, 320, and 792.)

This policy was revised by the Academic Senate on March 17, 2005 and approved by the President on June 10, 2005.

Part One: Definitions

The following definitions apply to final course grades assigned in all undergraduate and graduate courses:

“A” - Performance of the student has been at the highest level, showing sustained excellence in meeting all course requirements and exhibiting an unusual degree of intellectual initiative.

“B” - Performance of the student has been at a high level, showing consistent and effective achievement in meeting course requirements.

“C” - Performance of the student has been at an adequate level, meeting the basic requirements of the course.

“D” - Performance of the student has been less than adequate, meeting only the minimum course requirements.

“F” - Performance of the student has been such that minimal course requirements have not been met.

“CR/NC” - In some courses, the University permits students to select evaluation on a “Credit” or “No Credit” basis. These grades are defined as follows:

“CR” is equivalent to an “A,” “B,” or “C,” and “NC” is equivalent to a “D,” “F,” or “WU” (defined below). In two circumstances a final course grade of “CR” reflects work at the level of “B” or better, and a final course grade of “NC” reflects work at the level of “C,” “D,” “F,” or “WU.” Those two circumstances are:

- 1) in certain professional preparation courses, providing that the students are notified of such a policy both in class materials and in the catalog course description; and
- 2) for graduate students in all courses at the 300, 400, 500, and 600 levels.

Special regulations and procedures governing the “CR/NC” grading system are described below in Part Two.

The following definitions apply to administrative grading symbols assigned in all undergraduate and graduate courses:

“AU” - “Audit.” Enrollment as an auditor is subject to permission of the instructor, provided that enrollment in a course as an auditor shall be permitted only after students otherwise eligible to enroll on a credit basis have had an opportunity to do so. Auditors are subject to the same fee structure as credit students and regular class attendance is expected. It is the responsibility of the student to request from the instructor what is meant by regular class attendance. The symbol “AU” is posted to the student’s permanent academic record unless the student fails to attend a sufficient number of class meetings. In these cases, the instructor will request that the student be administratively withdrawn from the course. Once enrolled as an auditor, a student may not change to credit status unless such a change is requested prior to the last day to add classes. A student who is enrolled for credit may not change to “Audit” after the last day to add classes.

“I” - “Incomplete”. The symbol “I” indicates that a portion of required course work (normally not more than one-third) has not been completed and evaluated in the prescribed time period due to unforeseen, but fully justified, reasons and that there is still a possibility of earning credit. It is the responsibility of the student to bring pertinent information to the attention of the instructor and to determine from the instructor the remaining course requirements that must be satisfied to remove the “Incomplete.” A final course grade is assigned when that work has been completed and evaluated.

An “I” must normally be made up within one calendar year immediately following the end of the term during which it was assigned. This limitation prevails whether or not the student maintains continuous enrollment. Failure to complete the assigned work will result in an “I” being converted to an “F,” except as noted in item 3) below.

An extension of time may be granted for contingencies such as military service or documented, serious health or personal problems.

The conditions for removal of the “Incomplete” shall be reduced to writing by the instructor on an “Assignment of Incomplete Grade” form. This form shall include a statement of:

1. all work completed in the course, the grades assigned for that work, and the percentages of the final course grade accounted for by each item;
2. the work not completed and the percentage that each uncompleted assignment will count toward the final course grade; and
3. the final course grade the instructor will assign if the course requirements are not completed within one calendar year, or a shorter period as specified on the form, immediately following the term in which the “I” was assigned, without respect to continuous enrollment of the student during this period.

If clear percentages for assignments cannot be delineated, instructors shall explain any special conditions for determining final course grades for work wholly or partially made up.

A copy of the form is to be given to the student, a copy is to be retained in the department office, and a copy is to be filed with the Office of Enrollment Services at the time final course grades are submitted. Normally, the student should sign the "Assignment of Incomplete Grade" form. If the student is eligible for an "Incomplete", a faculty member may assign an "I" even when the student cannot be present to sign the form. In such a case, the instructor will forward to the student a copy of the form via the department office. When the work agreed upon has been completed and evaluated, a final course grade will be assigned by the instructor. If an "Incomplete" is assigned without an "Assignment of Incomplete Grade" form attached, or with a form that is not filled in acceptably, the symbol of "RD" will be assigned to the student. The "Assignment of Incomplete Grade" form will be considered unacceptable if:

1. more than one-third of the work remains to be completed, and no justification has been provided;
2. the work required to complete the course has not been specified;
3. the faculty member failed to sign the form; or
4. the percentage fields have not been filled in and a justification for their absence has not been supplied.

The appropriate associate dean of the college shall determine whether or not the justification is adequate. Notice of the missing form, or a copy of the unacceptable form will be sent to the department chair with the request that the chair work with the faculty member to provide the information necessary to assign the final course grade of "Incomplete."

"RD" - "Report Delayed". This symbol is used exclusively by Enrollment Services to permit processing of all final course grades when the final course grades for an entire course section have not been reported by the instructor. The symbol does not imply any academic evaluation. If an instructor fails to report a grade for an individual student, Enrollment Services will assume that an "I" could not be assigned and so will enter a symbol "WU," discussed below.

"RP" - "Report in Progress". The "RP" symbol is used in connection with courses requiring multiple enrollment, i.e., that extend beyond one academic term. It indicates that work is in progress but that assignment of a final course grade must await completion of additional work. Re-enrollment is permitted prior to assignment of a final course grade provided the cumulative units attempted do not exceed the total number applicable to the student's educational objective. Work is to be completed within one (1) calendar year immediately following the end of the term during which it was assigned except for graduate degree theses. If the "RP" symbol is not replaced by a final course grade within the specified time period or prior to the student's declared graduation date, it will be changed to a "W." An "RP" symbol cannot be replaced by an "I" (Incomplete) symbol; an "I" is not a final course grade.

“W” - “Withdrawal”. Withdrawal from classes is discussed in a separate policy statement. The symbol “W” is used to signify that a student formally withdrew from the course; no reference or implication of passing or failing progress at the time of withdrawal is made or implied. The symbol “W” is not a grade and does not alter a student’s grade point average.

“WU” - “Unauthorized Withdrawal”. The symbol “WU” indicates that an enrolled student did not complete course requirements but did not withdraw from the course. It is used when, in the opinion of the instructor, completed assignments or course activities or both were insufficient to make normal evaluation of academic performance possible (letter grades “A” - “F” or an “Incomplete”). For purposes of grade point average this symbol is equivalent to an “F.” A student who receives a “WU” may not complete additional work and have the “WU” changed to a letter grade. In courses that are graded “Credit/No Credit” or in cases where the student has elected “Credit/No Credit” evaluation, use of the symbol “WU” is inappropriate and “NC” will be used instead. A student who receives the symbol “WU” in the first semester of enrollment at CSULB will have that symbol automatically changed to a “W”. In such cases the student will be notified that this policy applies for that first semester at CSULB only.

Part Two: Course Grading Option

The faculty determine in advance which courses may be taken for “A” - “F” grade only, “CR/NC” only, or either. When a course is designated for “CR/NC” grading only or for “A” - “F” grading only, mention of this fact shall be incorporated in the catalog course description. Any undergraduate course may be designated for or closed to the option of “CR/NC” grading whether or not the course is a requirement for an undergraduate degree major, minor, certificate, credential, or concentration.

No course in which a final course grade of “CR” has been assigned may be used to fulfill the requirements for a master’s degree, except that the final course grade of “CR” may be permitted for master’s theses or projects (to a maximum of six [6] units) when the individual department has specifically designated “CR/NC” grading for the thesis/project course in the department, and for fieldwork, practicum, and/or internship courses (also to a maximum of six [6] units). The option of “CR/NC” grading for graduate students in undergraduate courses is subject to specific regulations of the individual departments regarding their graduate students and regarding the authorization for this option intrinsic to the approved course. Otherwise, no limitation exists as to the number of courses taken by graduate students under this policy. An undergraduate student may elect “CR/NC” grading in no more than a total of 24 units, of which no more than twelve (12) may be upper division units. No more than eight (8) units per semester may be taken for “CR/NC” grades. Exemptions from these limitations are:

1. courses graded “CR/NC” taken at another institution,

2. course credit earned by examination, and
3. courses in which “CR/NC” grading is the only form of grading.

The decision to elect the “CR/NC” grading option for a course must be made by the last day to add classes. To elect “CR/NC” grading, the student must obtain the signature of the student’s major advisor and a stamp from the department/program in which the course is offered on the appropriate form. The student must then file the signed form with the Office of Enrollment Services. The decision to register for a course on a “CR/NC” basis remains in effect unless a change is requested prior to or on the last day to add classes.

The only exception to this rule is for students who declare new majors after the last day to add classes. If the newly declared major requires letter grading for the course in question and the student has elected “CR/NC” grading, then the student may request that “A” - “F” grading be used. Such a change must be requested no later than the last day of instruction. The grading option may not be changed after the end of the semester.

Part Three: Final Assessments

1. Every course except Distance Learning Courses shall meet at the time listed in the Final Examination Schedule. The College Dean must approve any exception to this requirement.
2. Every course shall have a final assessment appropriate to the course that shall cover a significant proportion of the course. The College Dean must approve any exception to this requirement.

Part Four: Assignment of Final Course Grades

1. The faculty member of record in a course section (i.e., the faculty member officially assigned to teach that section) has the exclusive responsibility and authority to assign final course grades to all students in that section, subject only to the following exceptions:
 - A. should the faculty member of record be unable or unwilling to complete this task because of death, disability, separation of employment, or prolonged absence from campus during a regular academic term, the Department Chair or Program Director, following notification of the faculty member of record where appropriate and with the approval of the College Dean, may appoint another instructor with the most appropriate qualifications in the discipline to complete the assignment of final course grades; or

B. in the event of a successful grade appeal (detailed below in Part Five: Change of Final Course Grades).

2. Final course grades shall be based on at least three (3), and preferably four (4) or more, demonstrations of competence by the student.
3. In no case shall the grade on any single demonstration of competence count for more than one-third of the final course grade. This provision does not abridge a faculty member's right to assign a course grade of "F" for a single act of cheating.
4. At the start of the course, instructors shall provide to their students in writing the grading policies and practices to be employed in the class and the rules that will apply to withdrawals.
5. Instructors shall keep a record of students' scores on each of the demonstrations of competence on which the final course grade is based.
6. Instructors are expected to provide students with an opportunity for demonstration of competence, relevant to the determination of their final course grade in the course, as early as is reasonable and no later than the midpoint of the term.
7. Students have a right to be informed promptly of their scores and to review each of their demonstrations of competence with their instructors.
8. If materials submitted for a demonstration of competence are not returned, these materials will be retained for at least two (2) subsequent semesters by the instructor. The materials shall be accessible to the department office. In the absence of the original instructor, an instructor with appropriate qualifications may be appointed by the Chair to review the demonstration of competence with the student.
9. Grades reported to the Office of Enrollment Services are considered to be official and final course grades.

Part Five: Change of Final Course Grades

1. Changes of final course grades or grading symbols can be made only on the basis of an error, a successful grade appeal (detailed in the separate policy statement on Grade Appeals), or resolution of an "Incomplete" ("I"). A final course grade or grading symbol shall not be changed on the basis of additional work submitted, except where an "I" was recorded.
2. Original final course grades are replaced only when the change is due to an error, the grade change is the result of a grade appeal, or Enrollment Services receives a late report of final course grades for which the symbol "RD" was substituted pending receipt. Original final course grades or grading symbols are not replaced when the change of grade is the result of the

resolution of an "Incomplete" or the repetition of a course. Final course grades or administrative grading symbols must be recorded for all enrollments beyond the census date.

3. Except for changes of final course grades resulting from grade appeals, all changes of final course grades must be filed within one year from the date of the filing of the first final course grade, without respect to continuous enrollment of the student. Only as the result of a successful grade appeal or the correction of an error will a final course grade be changed after the award of a degree or credential or certificate.

4. All requests for change of a final course grade shall carry the recommendation of the instructor (except as provided for in the Grade Appeals Procedures) and the Department Chair and the approval of the College Dean.

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