

Final Course Grades, Grading Procedures, and Final Assessments

(This policy statement supersedes PS 09-07 and complies with all relevant Executive Orders.)

This policy was recommended by the Academic Senate on April 12, 2012
and approved by the President on April 24, 2012.

I. 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 usually 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. No instructor may assign an Incomplete if the student must attend a major portion of the class when it is next offered. No student may re-enroll in any course in which he/she has received an “I” until that “I” has been converted to a grade other than “I,” i. e., “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” “F,” “CR,” or “NC.” In such cases, the instructor must assign a grade of “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” “F,” “CR,” or “NC” based on the available assessments of that student’s performance. It is the responsibility of the student with an “I” 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 documented 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 and a copy is to be filed with Enrollment Services within 30 calendar days after final course grades are submitted. When the work agreed upon has been completed and evaluated, a final course grade will be assigned by the instructor. If Enrollment Services does not receive an acceptable "Assignment of Incomplete Form" by 90 calendar days after the end of the semester, they will assign a grade of "WU" to the student instead of an "I." The "Assignment of Incomplete Grade" form will not be accepted 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 no justification for their absence has been provided.

"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. Individual instructors may not assign "RD." Students who remain on rolls but for whom the instructor has no assessments must receive a "WU."

"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 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." The symbol "W" indicates that the student was permitted to drop a course after the second week of instruction with the approval of the instructor and appropriate campus official. It carries no connotation of quality of student performance and is not used in calculating grade point average.

Students are held responsible for completion of every course in which they register or for withdrawing during the first two weeks of a regular semester (13% of non-standard session) of classes from courses that they do not intend to complete. Application for withdrawal from CSULB or from a class must be officially filed by the student with Enrollment Services whether the student has ever attended the class or not; otherwise, the student will receive a grade of "WU" (unauthorized withdrawal) in the course.

Regulations governing the refund of student fees in the California State University system are prescribed by the CSU Board of Trustees; see California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Education, Section 41802.

1. Withdrawal during the first two weeks of instruction:

Students may withdraw during this period and the course will not appear on their permanent records.

2. Withdrawal after the second week of instruction and prior to the final three weeks of the regular semester (20% of a non-standard session) of instruction:

Withdrawals during this period are permissible only for serious and compelling reasons. The approval signatures of the instructor and department chair are required. The request and approvals shall state the reasons for the withdrawal. Students should be aware that the definition of "serious and compelling reasons" as applied by faculty and administrators may become narrower as the semester progresses. Copies of such approvals are kept on file by Enrollment Services.

3. Withdrawal during the final three weeks of instruction:

Withdrawal during the final three weeks of instruction are not permitted except in cases such as accident or serious illness where the circumstances causing the withdrawal are clearly beyond the student's control and the assignment of an Incomplete is not practical. Ordinarily, withdrawal in this category will involve total withdrawal from the campus except that a Credit/No Credit grade or an Incomplete may be assigned for other courses in which sufficient work has been completed to permit an evaluation to be made. Request for permission to withdraw under these circumstances must be made in writing on forms available from Enrollment Services. The requests and approvals shall state the reasons for the withdrawal. These requests must be approved by the instructor of record, department chair (or designee), college dean (or designee), and the academic administrator appointed by the president to act in such matters. Copies of such approvals are kept on file by Enrollment Services.

4. Limits on Withdrawal

No undergraduate student may withdraw from more than a total of 18 units. This restriction extends throughout the entire undergraduate enrollment of a student at CSULB for a single graduation, including special sessions, enrollment by extension, and re-enrolling after separation from the university for any reason. The following exceptions apply:

a. Withdrawals prior to the end of the second week of a semester (13%) of instruction at CSULB,

- b. Withdrawals in terms prior to fall 2009 at CSULB,
- c. Withdrawals at institutions other than CSULB, and
- d. Withdrawals at CSULB for exceptional circumstances such as serious illness or accident (the permanent academic record will show these as a WE to indicate the basis for withdrawal).

5. Medical Withdrawal:

CSULB may allow a student to withdraw without academic penalty from classes if the following criteria are met:

- a. A completed Medical Withdrawal Form, including any required documentation, is submitted to Enrollment Services before the end of the semester, and
- b. The student presents evidence to demonstrate that a severe medical or debilitating psychological condition prevented the student from attending and/or doing the required work of the courses to the extent that it was impossible to complete the courses.

Although students will normally withdraw from all courses, those with serious and compelling reasons may withdraw from only some of their courses; such instances will require additional justification.

The academic administrator appointed by the president to act in such matters will review the evidence presented and, in consultation with appropriate medical or psychological professionals as needed, determine whether the request for a medical withdrawal should be granted. Once granted, all such medical withdrawals will show on the permanent record as a WE to indicate the basis for withdrawal and will not count toward the limit described in 4 above.

Repeat Complete Medical Withdrawal:

If the student has received a complete medical withdrawal in the immediately preceding term, then an additional complete medical withdrawal request must consider the question of whether or not the student can complete appropriate educational objectives and must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. After a repeat medical withdrawal is granted, the student may be required to obtain a clearance from an appropriate medical or psychological professional that states the student is well enough to return to classes with the full expectation that the student will be able to complete the semester and intended educational objectives.

6. Instructor Withdrawal:

An instructor may withdraw a student who has never attended a class, if done before the end of the second week of classes. Because instructors are not required to do this, students should not rely on them and should officially withdraw from classes themselves to avoid assignment of a "WU" in the course.

An instructor may also withdraw a student during the first two weeks of classes who has enrolled in a course requiring "permission of the instructor", completion of prerequisites, or concurrent enrollment in co-requisites if the student has not properly secured this permission, satisfactorily completed the prerequisites before enrolling, or enrolled in the required co-requisites.

"WE" – "Withdrawal for Extenuating Circumstances." The symbol "WE" indicates the student withdrew for reasons, usually medical or psychological but not restricted to those, clearly beyond the student's control. Such cases will normally involve the withdrawal from all courses that semester. Withdrawals for extenuating circumstances will not count toward the limits on withdrawal. The symbol "WE" is not a grade and does not alter a student's grade point averages.

"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," "B," "C," "D," "F," or an "I"). Instructors of record must report the last known date of attendance for all students who receive a "WU." 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" must be used instead. For purposes of grade point averages a "WU" is equivalent to an "F."

II. Part Two: Course Grading Option

The faculty determines in advance which courses may be taken for "A," "B," "C," "D," or "F" grade only, "CR/NC" only, or either. When a course is designated for "CR/NC" grading only or for "A," "B," "C," "D," or "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 units) when the individual department has specifically designated "CR/NC" grading for the thesis/project course in the department, and for fieldwork, practicum, research, or internship courses (also to a maximum of six 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 may be upper division units. No more than eight 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 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," "B," "C," "D," or "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.

III. Part Three: Final Assessments

1. Every course shall have a final assessment appropriate to the course that shall cover a significant proportion of the course.
2. Every course except Distance Learning Courses shall meet and have an educational experience at the date and time listed in the Final Examination Schedule.
3. All instructors shall administer the final assessment (e.g., an exam or presentation) or have it due (e.g., a paper or project) at a specified time that falls within the date and time listed in the Final Examination Schedule, as part or all of an educational experience.
4. The college dean must approve any exception to these requirements.

IV. Part Four: Assignment of Final Course Grades

1. The instructor 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 instructor 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 instructor 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, and preferably more, demonstrations of competence by the student. Exceptions require the college dean's approval.
3. In no case shall the grade on any single demonstration of competence count for more than one-third of the final course grade. Exceptions require the college dean's approval. This provision does not abridge a faculty member's right to assign a course grade of "F" for a single act of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of information, or other form of academic dishonesty.
4. At the start of the course and in keeping with PS 11-07 (Course Syllabi and Standard Course Outlines), instructors shall provide to their students in writing:
 - a. The grading policies and practices to be employed in the class;
 - b. The rules that will apply to withdrawals; and
 - c. Any other rules governing attendance, class participation, in-class use of electronics, or other conduct-related policy that may affect a student's final grade in a course.
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 shall 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 must be retained for at least two 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 Enrollment Services are considered to be official and final course grades.

V. 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.

EFFECTIVE: Fall 2012