

# GRADING INFORMATION AND SYSTEMS

## Grading Information

### I. Grading Information: Dissemination and Adherence

Policies concerning the evaluation of academic performance evidenced by student work (grading) are subject to change. Department chairs are responsible for informing department members of this grading policy and relevant procedures and for ensuring adherence to these policies and procedures.

It is the responsibility of the instructor to describe to each class the methods of evaluation. Students should feel free to ask for an explanation of the grading practices in any course.

Final course grades or administrative grading symbols must be recorded for all students who are enrolled beyond the census date.

Additional definitions which are applicable to special circumstances for graduate programs can be found in the Graduate Studies section, Registration and Grading Procedures for Culminating Experience Courses (<http://bulletin.sfsu.edu/graduate-education/academic-policies-procedures/>).

### II. Grading Symbol Definitions

The following letter grades/grading symbols shall be used in evaluating student performance, which will be interpreted to reflect the quality of the student's accomplishment relative to the standards set for each course:

**A:** Performance of the student has been at the highest level, showing sustained excellence in meeting course requirements.

**B:** Performance of the student has been good, though not at the highest level.

**C:** Performance of the student has been adequate, satisfactorily meeting the course requirements.

**D:** Performance of the student has been less than adequate.

**F:** Performance of the student has been such that course requirements have not been met.

**+/-:** The letter grades B, C, and D may have the suffix plus (+) or minus (-) included to distinguish higher and lower performances within each of these letter grades. The letter grade A may use the minus (-) symbol. The grade of A+ is not used.

**CR:** (Credit) Performance of the student in an undergraduate-level course has been equivalent to grades A through C-; performance of the student in a graduate level course has been equivalent to grades A through B-.

**NC:** (No Credit) Performance of the student has been less than that of CR level.

**I:** (Incomplete Authorized) Indicates that a portion of required coursework has not been completed and evaluated in the prescribed 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 which must be satisfied to remove the Incomplete. A final grade is assigned when the work agreed upon 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, however upon consultation with the student, the course instructor does have the discretion to shorten this period of time to less than one calendar year. 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 "IC" symbol, unless the faculty member assigns a specific letter grade at the time the Incomplete is assigned, which would replace the "I" in the student's record after the calendar year deadline. If the instructor of record is not available, the department chair or designee will review the work and submit the grade change.

**IC:** (Incomplete Charged) Indicates that a student who received an authorized incomplete "I" has not completed the required coursework within the allowed time limit. The "IC" replaces the "I" and for the purposes of grade point average and progress point computation, this symbol is equivalent to an F.

**W:** (Withdrawal) Indicates that the student was permitted to withdraw from the course after the third week of instruction with the approval of the instructor and appropriate campus officials. It carries no connotation of quality of student performance and is not used in calculating grade point average or progress points. Undergraduate students may withdraw from no more than 18-units of courses taken in matriculated status at SF State. From the thirteenth week through the last week of instruction, students may only request to withdraw in cases, such as an accident or serious illness, where the cause of withdrawal is due to circumstances clearly beyond the student's control and the assignment of an Incomplete is not practicable. Requests to withdraw approved under this criterion during the final three weeks of the term will not count against the undergraduate withdrawal limit of 18 units.

**WU:** (Withdrawal Unauthorized) Indicates that an enrolled student did not withdraw from the course and also failed to complete course requirements. 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. When assigning the "WU", the instructor shall report the last known date of attendance by the student. For purposes of grade point average and progress point computation, this symbol is equivalent to an F.

**AU:** (Audit) Indicates that the student was enrolled on a non-credit basis. Enrollment as an auditor is subject to the permission of the instructor and shall be permitted only after students otherwise eligible to enroll in the course 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. 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 third week of instruction.

**RP:** (Report in Progress) Used in connection with courses that extend beyond one academic term. It indicates that work is in progress, but that assignment of a final grade must await completion of additional work. Work is to be completed within one year except for graduate degree Culminating Experience courses.

A grade of RP is given for a Culminating Experience course until completed. Upon completion, the Culminating Experience course grade will be changed to CR or letter grade (source: Policy on Requirements for Graduate Students, #S21-295).

**RD:** (Report Delayed) Indicates no grade was turned in by the professor. It is used where a delay in the reporting of a grade is due to circumstances beyond the control of the student. The symbol may be assigned by the registrar only and, if assigned, shall be replaced by a substantive grading symbol as soon as possible. Instructors are expected to assign a substantive grading symbol no later than two weeks after the grading deadline. The registrar will share reports of RD grades that have not been changed with department chairs and college leadership after two weeks after the grading deadline have passed.

### III. Grading Systems

The basic grading system to be used at San Francisco State University is the A–F system (see definitions above). Some courses are offered with multiple grading options, including Credit/No Credit (CR/NC). The Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) system may be used under the following conditions:

- In courses where the CR/NC option is permitted, but not mandatory, students must take appropriate action to change to CR/NC grading;
- No more than 24 of the units earned at this University, and applied toward an undergraduate degree, may be taken for CR grades;
- Departments may limit the number of courses in a major that can be graded CR/NC.
- All students in a given class, whether being evaluated on the A–F or CR/NC basis, are to be treated in the same manner on assignments, methods of evaluation, and standards of performance. The only difference is the symbol entered on the student's official grade record;
- Undergraduate students who select CR/NC grading should be informed that CR grades may be interpreted as a C- and NC grades may be interpreted as an F when considered by other institutions;
- For students working toward a master's degree, no more than 30% of the units used on the Advancement to Candidacy, including transfer work, may be taken for CR grades. Some graduate programs may have more stringent standards.

Students must elect to change their grading option by the Grading Option deadline each semester, which is one week before the last day of instruction.

Extensions to the grading option deadline may be considered in cases of extenuating circumstances. That decision will be made in consultation with Senate Executive Committee.

### IV. Additional guidance and details on the use of specialized grading symbols: I, RP, WU, and WM

#### A. Use of Incomplete Authorized (I) Grade

The symbol I (Incomplete Authorized) indicates that a portion of required coursework has not been completed and evaluated in the prescribed time period due to unforeseen, but fully justified reasons; that the student is doing passing work in the course, and that there is still a possibility of earning credit if the course requirements are completed within the time allowed. The symbol I indicates that the student has completed a substantial part (normally greater than 75%) of the coursework and that a "W" grade is not a viable alternative. 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 grade is assigned when the work agreed upon has been completed and evaluated. If the instructor of record is not available, the department chair or designee will review the work and submit the grade change.

An incomplete must normally be made up within one calendar year immediately following the end of the term during which it was assigned, however upon consultation with the student, the course instructor does have the discretion to shorten this period of time to less than one calendar year. 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 "IC" symbol.

A student may not re-enroll in a course for which they have received an incomplete until a grade has been assigned.

#### B. Use of Report in Progress (RP) Grade

The RP symbol is used in connection with theses, projects, and similar courses in which assigned work frequently extends beyond a single academic term. When used in this connection, it indicates that work is in progress and has been evaluated and found to be satisfactory to date, but that assignment of a precise grade must await completion of additional work. Cumulative enrollment in units attempted may not exceed the total number applicable to the student's educational objective. Graduate students who do not complete the course by the end of the semester of registration will receive a grade of RP and should not register for the course again. The RP symbol shall be replaced with the appropriate final grade within one year of its assignment except for approved graduate degree culminating experience requirements, which must be changed to a CR or letter grade upon completion.

#### C. Use of Withdrawal Unauthorized (WU) Grade

The symbol WU shall be used where a student, who is enrolled on the census date, does not officially withdraw from a course but fails to complete it. Its most common use is in those instances where a student has not completed sufficient course assignments or participated in sufficient course activity to make it possible, in the opinion of the instructor, to report satisfactory or unsatisfactory completion of the class by use of the letter grade (A–F). When assigning the "WU", the instructor shall report the last known date of attendance by the student. The WU symbol shall be identified as a failing grade in the transcript legend, and shall be counted as units attempted but not passed in computing the grade point average. In courses that are graded CR/NC or in cases where the student has elected CR/NC grading, use of the WU symbol is inappropriate and NC shall be used instead.

#### D. Use of WM Grade

An undergraduate student may withdraw from no more than 18 units of coursework. This does not include total semester withdrawals of all courses or classes taken in CPaGE (College of Professional and Global Education). However, from the thirteenth week through the last week of instruction, students may only request to withdraw in cases, such as accident or serious illness, where the cause of withdrawal is due to circumstances clearly beyond the student's control and the assignment of an Incomplete is not practicable. Such requests require documentation, as well as approval from the instructor, the chairperson of the department offering the class, and the President's designee. Requests to withdraw approved under this criterion during the final 3 weeks of the term will not count against the undergraduate withdrawal limit of 18 semester units. If approved, a symbol of WM will be assigned. WM grades are not included in the student's GPA and will not count toward

the undergraduate repeat limit. Transcripts will reflect a W, as the WM is for internal purposes only.

## V. Grade Point Average

Grade point averages are determined by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of units attempted in courses in which A–F grades are assigned. This formula can be modified by the Course Repeat Policy, #S21-248.

## VI. Grade Points

The following grade points are assigned per unit of coursework:

Grade	Points
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D	1.0
D-	0.7
F	0.0
IC	0.0
WU	0.0

No other grading symbol, including W, I, AU, RP, RD, CR, and NC, carries grade point credit.

## VII. Grade and Grading Option Changes

A grade change is possible only in the case of a declared administrative error. The definition of administrative error is an error made by the instructor or assistant in grade determination or posting. A grade change may not be made as a result of additional work completed after the end of the course, except for completion of work when an Incomplete Authorized (“I”) grade was issued.

- In the absence of compelling reasons, such as instructor or clerical error, the grade assigned by the instructor of record is to be considered final. All grade changes are by petition with a recommendation of a grade change by the instructor and the approval of the department chair or equivalent. A student wishing to request a retroactive grade change must initiate the request during the semester in attendance immediately following the semester when the original grade was assigned or the course in question was offered, whether or not they are in attendance the following semester.
- Letter grades are not convertible to CR/NC and CR/NC grades are not convertible to letter grades.
- Requests to withdraw must be submitted by the deadline established for the term in which the course is offered. An appeal of the deadline to submit a request for withdrawal is only granted with documentation of a serious and compelling reason. In these cases, students are normally withdrawn from all courses in the affected semester. Students should follow the procedure outlined in the Appeals section of the Registrar’s Withdrawal website.
- Grade changes are not permitted after the award of a degree or credential, unless the change is for a course not used for the degree

(in the case of a graduate student continuing after the award of a degree or readmitted second baccalaureate student) or in the case of a formal grade appeal process when the request has been initiated by the student in the semester immediately following the award of the grade.

- Because grade changes are not permitted after the award of a degree or credential (except in the cases outlined in the previous paragraph), a degree or credential cannot be awarded until a final grade has been assigned in all classes that the student took while pursuing said degree or credential. All temporary grades, including those of I (Incomplete Authorized), RD (Report Delayed), and RP (Report in Progress), and including coursework transferred from other institutions, must all be changed to appropriate final grades, and all degree requirements must be confirmed to be met after the grades have been changed, in order for a degree to be awarded.

## Student Appeal for Grade Change

San Francisco State University policy, consistent with California State University policy, guarantees the student a right to appeal a final course grade when the student believes that the assigned grade does not reflect what the student has earned according to the criteria for grading as outlined by the instructor of the course. SF State policy states that:

- It is the responsibility of the instructor of each course to define their grading policy and criteria as early in the semester and as explicitly as possible while conforming to accepted University practices. If there is any deviation from this original statement of course policy, all affected students should be informed.
- It shall be assumed that the grade assigned is correct and that the student appealing the grade must justify the need for a change of the grade assigned.
- Normally, grade appeals should be resolved informally between the student and faculty involved.
- A student who believes they have been assigned an improper grade should meet with the instructor of record and together review the grading procedures used to determine the grade assigned on the student’s transcript.

If, after careful review of the grading procedures, the student is still dissatisfied, or if the instructor of record refuses to take part in the informal process, the student may initiate the formal grade appeal procedure through the department chair.

## Grade Forgiveness Policy

In 2016-2017, Academic Senate passed a revision to the course repeat policy (F16-248). The policy was written to better align grade forgiveness procedures with CSU Executive Order 1037, providing greater opportunity for students to improve their academic record and grade point average (GPA).

## Summary of the Grade Forgiveness Policy

- Beginning fall 2017, undergraduate students may repeat a maximum of 16 units of coursework taken at San Francisco State University for the purpose of excluding the original grade from grade point determination.
- The grade forgiveness policy went into effect at the end of fall 2017, and it is being applied to coursework repeated in fall 2017 and future semesters. If a student repeats a course in fall 2017 or after, forgiveness will apply to the most recent prior course attempt.

However, this is not a retroactive policy, so it will not apply when the repeated coursework was completed prior to fall 2017.

- When a course is repeated, up to the 16 unit limit, the lower of the two grades is “forgiven” from the GPA calculation.
- After the repeat limit of 16 units has been reached, all units attempted and all grade points earned will be included in the student’s cumulative totals. At this point, if a student chooses to repeat a course in which the grade was passing (D- or higher), all units attempted and all grade points earned will be used in the calculation of the student’s grade point average.
- Grade forgiveness shall not be applicable to courses for which the original grade was the result of a finding of academic dishonesty.
- Grade forgiveness is applied automatically at the end of each term. Questions regarding the application of grade forgiveness can be directed to the Registrar (<http://registrar.sfsu.edu/>)’s Office, which handles the process of applying forgiveness to students’ records.