

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: GRADING AND AWARDING CREDIT

SECTION ONE: PURPOSE AND ALIGNMENT

1.01 Purpose: The final course grade should reflect an accurate evaluation of the student's understanding of course material, cumulative performance on required tasks and assignments, and achievement of intended learning outcomes. The college encourages instructors to provide graded feedback to students throughout each semester so that students can gauge their academic performance and their understanding of course content.

1.02 Alignment: The grading policy is designed to align with the institution's mission to aid students and the community in reaching their full potential. By providing clear, consistent, and equitable evaluation criteria as well as a process to appeal a final grade, this regulation supports the strategic goals of promoting high academic standards and ensuring transparency in assessment.

1.03 System for Grading

At the conclusion of each term, instructors calculate a final grade for each student, enter the final grade in the College's online system, and record the final grade for each student in a grade book for each section they teach in the term. Instructors are required to enter final grades in the college's online system by the deadline for each term published in the College's academic calendar. Students may view the final grade they earned in each course section by logging into the college's online system after the grade posting deadline. The college does not issue grade reports to students. Instructors submit all grade books and attendance to the dean to whom the instructor reports. The grades are then forwarded to the Office of the Registrar. The Registrar is responsible for posting each grade to each student's college transcript.

1.04 Description of Grades

The following grades may be assigned by instructors:

- A Excellent
- B Good
- C Average
- D Minimum passing
- F Failure
- I Incomplete college-level course (see process below)
- IP In Progress developmental course
- P/F Pass or Fail
- W Withdraw
- AU Audit

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In the course syllabus, each instructor will document the methodology used to determine the final grade and the score or points the student must earn to achieve each letter grade. The instructors and/or the schools establish the numerical ranges for final grades.

The college designates a limited number of courses, typically developmental support courses, as “pass/fail” courses. The college will not calculate a “P/F” or “I” grade as hours attempted when calculating the grade point average.

1.05 Withdrawal

In order to withdraw from a course and receive a “W” grade, a student must contact the Office of Academic Success. When a student withdraws from a class after the census date but before the last day to withdraw as indicated on the College’s academic calendar, the Registrar will enter a “W” grade on the student’s transcript.

Instructors may administratively withdraw a student from a class section if the student fails to participate and/or to attend the course by submitting the online drop form. The instructor must complete all necessary documentation, which includes recording the student’s last date of attendance in the class section by the last day to withdraw as indicated on the College’s academic calendar.

Withdrawal from a course after the posted deadline must be approved by the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

SECTION TWO: INCOMPLETE AND IN-PROGRESS GRADES

2.01 Incomplete Grade

For college-level courses, the incomplete (“I”) grade indicates that extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the student have prevented the student from completing the required coursework during the term and that the student has completed at least 75 percent of the required coursework with a passing grade as defined in the course syllabus.

When the college authorizes the instructor to assign an “I” grade, the student must complete the coursework by the end of the next long term, or within a timeframe prescribed by the instructor and approved by the school’s dean. Failure to complete the coursework during the prescribed timeframe will result in a failing grade for the course. The College will not calculate the “I” grade as hours attempted in computing the student’s grade point average.

2.02 Incomplete Grade Process

The following steps are necessary when an incomplete (“I”) grade is warranted.

- i. The student informs the instructor of extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control that prevent the student from completing the course with a passing grade.
- ii. The instructor determines if the circumstances described by the student are significant enough to prevent the student from completing the course and are beyond the control of the student.
- iii. If the instructor determines the circumstances meet the significance threshold and are beyond the control of the student, the instructor calculates (a) the percentage of the total coursework required in the course that the student has completed, (b) the cumulative grade the student has earned on completed coursework to date, and (c) the reasonable timeframe the student will have to complete the remaining coursework.
- iv. After completing steps 2 and 3, and in keeping with the guidelines in 2.01, if the instructor determines the student may be eligible to receive an "I" grade, the instructor will submit a written request to his/her dean for authorization to award the "I" grade. The request should include a description of steps 2 and 3, as well as a detailed description of the coursework the student will need to complete for the course.
- v. After reviewing the instructor's request, the dean may approve or deny assigning the "I" grade in writing to the instructor, the student, and the Registrar.
- vi. It is the responsibility of the student to complete the course work within the required timeframe allowing for adequate time for the instructor to grade the assignments.
- vii. The instructor shall submit the student's final grade within the timeframe required by this regulation.

2.03 "In Progress" Grade

An "In Progress" or "IP" grade indicates the student has earned less than a "C" grade in a developmental course but has demonstrated a good faith effort in terms of course meeting attendance, assignment completion, and engagement in classroom activities. To continue in a program that requires the student to demonstrate college readiness in reading, writing, and math, the student must repeat the developmental course in which the instructor assigns an "IP" grade and earn a passing grade in the course or otherwise demonstrate college readiness. to progress to college-level courses or the next developmental course. At any time, the student may also progress by re-taking the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) examination and earning a passing score.

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SECTION THREE: INCOMPLETE GRADE DURING A PROLONGED CRISIS OR EMERGENCY SITUATION

3.01 General Principles

- During normal operating circumstances of the college, the standards and procedures established in EGA Regulation § 2.01-.02 should be used when assigning an incomplete (“I”) grade.
- When the College President determines a crisis or emergency situation will significantly disrupt the normal operating circumstances of the college--especially affecting instructional and other academic activities--for a prolonged period of time, the Vice President of Academic Affairs may implement the standards and procedures described in this Section for instructors to assign “I” grades to impacted students.
- Generally, when operating pursuant to this Section, instructors should assign incomplete grades to all students enrolled in an affected course section because such circumstances affect the instructional and other academic activities for all students equally. The Vice President of Academic Affairs may make exceptions to this general principle if the exception is in the best interest of the student and is safe and prudent.

3.02 Incomplete Grade during Prolonged Crisis or Emergency Situations

For college-level courses, assigning an incomplete (“I”) grade during a prolonged crisis or emergency situation indicates that circumstances made it inadvisable for the college to allow a student to complete the required course assignments during the term. When the Vice President of Academic Affairs implements this Section, an instructor may assign an “I” grade to a student regardless of the percentage of the required coursework the student has completed and of the grade earned by the student at that point in the term. When an instructor assigns an “I” grade during a crisis or emergency situation, the student must complete all coursework by the end of the next long term, or within the time frame prescribed by the instructor and approved by the dean and the Vice President of Academic Affairs. If the student does not complete the coursework by the end of the next long term or during the prescribed time frame, the instructor will assign a failing grade for the course. The College will not calculate the “I” grade as hours attempted in computing the student’s grade point average.

3.03 Process for Assigning an Incomplete Grade During Prolonged Crisis or Emergency Situation

The following is the required process to assign an incomplete (“I”) grade under this Section:

1. The College President declares a crisis or emergency situation is currently or will disrupt normal operating circumstances of the college for a prolonged period of time.

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2. The Vice President of Academic Affairs notified in writing academic deans and instructors that he/she has implemented this Section.
3. An instructor, in consultation with the supervising dean, believes the crisis or emergency situation makes it inadvisable to allow students to complete the required coursework during the current term.
4. The instructor shall discuss with each student the option of assigning an “I” grade.
5. If the student agrees to accept an incomplete grade instead of taking a different action, such as dropping the course, the instructor will submit an Incomplete Grade - Crisis or Emergency Situation form to her/his dean for authorization to award the “I” grade. Using the form, the instructor should (a) provide a detailed description of the remaining coursework and (b) prescribe the date by which the student must complete the remaining coursework.
6. After reviewing a completed Incomplete Grade - Crisis or Emergency Situation form, the supervising dean may approve or deny assigning an “I” grade in writing to the instructor, student, and Vice President of Academic Affairs.
7. Upon receipt of the completed form and approval of the dean (email approvals may be submitted), the Vice President will forward the documentation to the Registrar.
8. It is the responsibility of the student to complete the coursework within the prescribed time frame. If necessary to the learning process, the college will allow the student reasonable access to laboratories, shops, and other relevant academic resources to complete the coursework once the resolution of the crisis or emergency situation makes such accommodations safe and prudent.
9. Final grades for incomplete coursework must be submitted either by the end of the following term or within five days of the designated completion period, whichever comes first.

SECTION FOUR: GRADE POINT AVERAGE

4.01 Grade Point Average

The student’s grade point average (GPA) is significant in determining eligibility for continued financial aid, for the continuance of enrollment, for acceptance at a transfer institution, for graduation, and eventually for employment. Grade points are granted for all courses, with the exception of developmental courses, on the basis of the value in semester credit hours for the course and the grade earned as follows:

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- A 4 grade points per semester hour
- B 3 grade points per semester hour
- C 2 grade points per semester hour
- D 1 grade points per semester hour
- F, I, P/F 0 grade points

4.02 Special Circumstances

When a student repeats a course, the college will use the most recent grade earned to calculate the student's grade point average. All developmental courses posted to a student's permanent record will be designated by brackets in the credit earned and grade point columns. While a grade will be shown for each developmental course taken, the grade will not be included in the cumulative grade point average calculation. Developmental courses may not be used to satisfy degree requirements.

4.03 Grade Appeal

The College recognizes a student's right to consistent and relevant forms of assessment and grading. A grade appeal is a written request submitted by a student to change a course grade (not an assignment grade) for a legitimate reason. Students have four (4) calendar months from the date the course grade was posted by the instructor to submit a grade appeal.

Typically, a course grade may only be changed by the instructor of record. Should the employment of an instructor of record end or that instructor become incapacitated or unavailable to consider a grade appeal, the dean responsible for the school offering the course or the Vice President of Academic Affairs have the authority to change a course grade if appropriate. For the purposes of this Section, "incapacity" means the physical or mental inability to enter grades.

Academic complaints involving assignment grading should be discussed with the course instructor as soon as possible after the instructor communicates the assignment grade to the student. However, if a student believes an instructor assigned an assignment grade through or because of illegal discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, the college encourages the student to file a complaint as described in Regulation FLD.

4.04 Basis for Grade Appeal

The college will not consider a grade appeal merely because a student is dissatisfied with a grade or disagrees with the instructor's professional judgment of the quality of the student's work or performance. When filing a grade appeal, the student must document credible evidence of one of the following three conditions:

- a mathematical error in the course grade's calculation,
- a deviation—by the instructor—from the course syllabus or the College's policy manual, or

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- the instructor's decision when assigning the course grade was arbitrary, capricious or prejudicial. For the purposes of this Section, "arbitrary" means the instructor had no reasonable factual basis for reaching the conclusion or assigning the grade; "capricious" means the instructor was unpredictable or subject to whim in assigning the grade; and "prejudicial" means the instructor exhibited an irrational attitude of hostility toward the student, which does not include hostility on the basis of any legally protected status.

Any basis for grade appeal outside of the three conditions listed in Section 4.03.1 or of illegal discrimination, harassment, or retaliation will not be considered, and the College will inform the student of this policy and refuse to grant the requested relief.

If a student believes an instructor assigned a course grade through or because of illegal discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, the college encourages the student to file a complaint as described in Regulation FFD.

4.05 Grade Appeal Process

When a student has credible evidence that one of the conditions described in Section 4.03 influenced an assigned course grade, the student should initiate the following procedure within four months after the course grade was posted.

1. Level One: The student will submit an official appeal using the college's Student Complaint and Appeal Form found in the student portal (see FLD Exhibit in this manual. The student should provide the course ID in which they were enrolled and credible evidence establishing that one of the three conditions described in Section 4.03 exists. The instructor of record shall respond to the student in writing within five (10) days of receiving the completed form. If an investigation of academic dishonesty under FLBF was previously conducted for the student in the same course, the final course grade appeal will automatically begin with Level 3 in the process defined in EGA.
2. Level Two: If the instructor of record denies the student's Level One appeal, the student may use the Student Complaint and Appeal Form to appeal file a Level Two complaint to the dean of the school offering the course. The student should provide credible evidence establishing that one of the three conditions described in Section 4.03 exists.
3. Level Three: If the dean denies the student's appeal, the student may use the Student Complaint and Appeal Form to file a Level Three appeal to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The student should provide credible evidence establishing that one of the three conditions described in Section 4.03 exists. The decision of the Vice President of Academic Affairs is final.

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4.06 Alignment with Regulation FLD. Unless provided in this regulation, the definitions, requirements, and principles (e.g., timing, scheduling, costs, representatives, etc.) of Regulation FLD also apply to this regulation.

The Vice President of Academic Affairs is responsible for reviewing and updating this regulation. Policy reviews are made in accordance with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness Policy Tracking document.