

GRADING POLICY AND SYSTEMS

Grading Policy

Policies concerning the evaluation of student work (grading) are under continuous review and subject to change. Department chairs are responsible for informing department members of basic faculty grading policy and 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.

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 (bulletin.sfsu.edu/graduate-education/academic-policies-procedures).

Basic Definitions

The following 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.
- 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. 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 unless the faculty member assigns a specific letter grade at the time the Incomplete

Authorized is assigned, which would replace the I in the student's record at the end of the calendar year deadline.

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 is counted as a failing grade for grade point average and progress point computation.

W: (Withdrawal) Indicates that the student was permitted to withdraw from the course after the 3rd 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-semester units of courses taken in matriculated status at SF State. Course withdrawals that result from a student petition to "withdraw from the University" do not count against the maximum number of withdrawal units provided in this section.

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. 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 culminating experience courses. RP grades are also used in Early Start courses to indicate that a student participated but did not make sufficient progress for improved math placement.

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.

Grading Systems

The basic grading system to be used at San Francisco State University is the A-F system (see definitions above).

An alternative Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) system may be used under the following conditions:

- A list of courses in which CR/NC grading is mandatory is maintained in each departmental office;

- In courses where the CR/NC option is permitted, but not mandatory, students must take appropriate action to change to CR/NC grading by the eighth week of class;
- No more than 30% of the units earned at this University, and applied toward an undergraduate degree, may be taken for CR grades;
- 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;
- Students who select CR/NC grading should be informed that CR grades may be interpreted as a C and NC grades may be changed to 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.

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 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 grade is assigned when the work agreed upon has been completed and evaluated.

An incomplete 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 IC symbol.

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

If a student has extenuating circumstances and an extension of the one year is necessary, the student should contact the instructor involved and obtain a designated extension of time to make up the incomplete. The form to be used for this extension is the Petition for Waiver of College Regulations. The petition must be approved by the instructor and the department chair and forwarded to the Registrar’s Office.

A grade of Incomplete (I) will not be changed after a degree or credential has been awarded even though it is made up within the time period.

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. The RP symbol shall be replaced with the appropriate final grade within one year of its assignment except for graduate culminating experience courses.

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). 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 evaluation, use of the WU symbol is inappropriate and NC shall be used instead.

Use of WM Grade

Beginning fall 2009, 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 CEL (College of Extended Learning).

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.

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.

Definition of Semester Unit

One semester unit corresponds to one hour per week for fifteen (15) weeks in a fall or spring semester. (At least two hours of study is expected in preparation for each hour of class.)

or

Three hours of laboratory work per week for fifteen (15) weeks,

or

Two hours of class work in activity-type courses in art, music, and speech per week for fifteen (15) weeks. (At least one hour of outside preparation is expected for each hour of laboratory or activity class work.)

Summer session and extension units are evaluated on the basis of hours to units equal to those above but adapted to the special schedules of these programs.

Credit Hour

As of July 1, 2011, federal law (600.2 and 600.4) requires all accredited institutions to comply with the federal definition of the credit hour. For all CSU degree programs and courses bearing academic credit, the “credit hour” is defined as “the amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:

1. One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one-quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.” A credit hour is assumed to be a 50 minute period. In courses, in which “seat time” does not apply, a credit hour may be measured by an equivalent amount of work, as demonstrated by student achievement.

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Definition of Continuing Education Unit (CEU)

CEUs are nationally recognized units of measurement for participation in professional development programs for which academic credit is not awarded. CEUs may neither be applied to nor substituted for graduation requirements. One CEU is earned for ten hours of instruction. San Francisco State University policy requires an evaluation of student learning for all courses which award CEUs.

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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Normally, grade appeals should be resolved informally between the student and faculty involved.
4. 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 college dean’s office.

Grade Changes

- Letter grades are not convertible to other letter grades and NC grades are not convertible to CR grades except in cases of instructor or administrative error. All grade changes are by petitions with a recommendation of a grade change by the instructor and the approval of the department chair and/or college dean. 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.
- Except in cases of instructor or administrative error, CR/NC grades are not convertible to letter grades or vice versa. All grade change requests involving the CR/NC option are by petition, with a recommendation by the instructor and the approval of the department chair and/or college dean. Requests for reasons other than clerical error are subject to review by the Board of Appeals and Review.
- Retroactive withdrawals from individual courses require instructor, department, and dean approval. Retroactive semester withdrawals are subject to review by the Board of Appeals and Review.
- 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 school grade appeal process when the request has been initiated by the student in the semester immediately following the award of the grade.

Grade Forgiveness Policy

In 2016-2017, Academic Senate passed a revision to the course repeat policy (F16-248 (<https://senate.sfsu.edu/policy/course-repeat-policy-0>)). 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.