

# Grades and Grading

BL-ACA-H30

## About This Policy

### Effective Dates:

02-02-1954

### Last Updated:

12-04-2018

### Responsible University Office:

Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

## Scope

All students on the Bloomington campus.

## Policy Statement

### Academic Distinction

To graduate with academic distinction, baccalaureate and associate degree candidates must rank within the highest 10% of the graduating class of their respective degree-granting units. Additionally, baccalaureate degree candidates must have completed a minimum of 60 hours at Indiana University. Associate degree candidates must have completed at least half of the hours required for their degree at Indiana University.

The determination of students eligible for graduation with academic distinction will be done by degree-granting units so that students will be ranked with classmates who receive the same type of degrees.

Each degree-granting unit shall determine the appropriate GPA requirements for the three levels of recognition: distinction, high distinction, and highest distinction. In the application of this policy, questions about ties and fractions shall be decided by the degree-granting unit. To go beyond the 10% restriction in the event of a tie should not be construed as a violation of this policy.

The standards recommended here are minimum standards, and any degree-granting unit may adopt standards that are in excess of these.

(Approved: UFC 4/26/83, 11/27/84)

### Honors

Students admitted to an Honors Degree Program within an academic unit, who complete the honors degree curriculum, are awarded the degree with honors.

(Administrative Practice)

### Grading System/Pluses and Minuses

Instructors in undergraduate and graduate courses use a grading system which includes plus and minus grades as well as straight grades for all undergraduate and graduate course records. The registrar shall compute numerical grades for plus and minus grades when computing GPA's (A+ or 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).

(Approved: BFC 3/16/76; UFC 3/29/77)

### "S" Grade

The grade symbol "S" shall be added to the official grade code, this grade to mean "satisfactory," without further quality evaluation.

This grade shall be used only in certain special courses and only on permission of the Vice Chancellor/Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs or equivalent and the Dean of the School offering the course. This permission shall be obtained prior to the beginning of the course. In any course in which the grade "S" is used

the only other grade permitted will be "F." Hours of credit with the grade "S" will count toward graduation but the course will be ignored in computing credit points.

(Students in Special Evening Classes at Bloomington shall be permitted to elect, at the beginning of the course, but not later, whether to receive this special grade or the regular grade.)

(Approved: Faculty Council 2/2/54)

### **"Withdrawals" on Drop/Add Day**

Withdrawals made on Drop and Add Day will not be a matter of permanent record and transcript.

(Approved: BFC 12/4/73; UFC 10/15/74)

## **FN Policy – UFC**

### **1. Background**

A University-wide federal "A133" audit was conducted in 1996-97 which was a general audit of all University programs receiving federal funds, including Student Financial Assistance. The audit report was sent to the University on May 6, 1998, and contained a "finding" under the category of Student Financial Aid regarding a "Lack of an Acceptable Unofficial Withdrawal Policy for all Campuses."

The definition of an "unofficial withdrawal" is: A student who ceases to attend classes and fails to notify the school that he/she is officially withdrawing.

A. For a student to be receiving student aid the student must be in attendance.

B. If a student withdraws during the federally defined aid refund period (usually about 10 weeks of a full semester) during which unused portions of aid must be returned to providers for students who withdraw, the university must return the portion of unused aid as determined by the withdrawal date or last date of class attendance. The university has a responsibility under federal aid regulations to determine a withdrawal date for "unofficial withdrawals" so that an accurate return of unused aid can be made. Determining this date can be especially difficult if the university does not require class attendance, and therefore has no record of when the student stopped attending. When aid is returned due to withdrawal or non-attendance, the University can attempt to recover from the student the portion of the returned funds that is not forfeited from university fees.

The definition of the "withdrawal date" for an unofficial withdrawal is "the last recorded date of class attendance as documented by the school." In a practical sense, the last date of attendance can be based on instructor records of attendance, exams, or participation in class activities. In the absence of such documentation, the institution can also accept documentation of class participation provided by the student to determine the last date of attendance.

At the time the audit was done, the federal ruling required that if attendance could not be documented at all, then the university would be required to return the full amount of aid, and then could attempt to recover the cost of repayment from the student. Recently, a revision of this rule allows for a determination of withdrawal date at the midpoint of the refund period whenever attendance cannot be documented to a specific date. In either case the university incurs a significant financial liability for cases of "unofficial withdrawal."

Additionally, the process used by the federal auditors to identify "unofficial withdrawals" which might require return of aid funds was as follows: Looking at student final grades, the auditors decided that any student who fell to less than half-time enrollment (the minimum enrollment for aid qualification) due to a combination of "F" and "W" grades could be considered an "unofficial withdrawal" who would not be qualified for aid through the entire semester, and for whom an official withdrawal date would need to be determined for courses receiving "F" grade in order to determine the correct refund amount. The basis of the inclusion of "F" grades in the formula is that the official IU grading policy requires that faculty assign an "F" grade for "unofficial withdrawals." Therefore any "F" grade might (or might not) indicate an "unofficial withdrawal." Using this formula, potential financial loss for Bloomington campus was estimated at more than 1 1/2 million dollars per year.

### **2. Inadequacy of Past Procedure**

For many years the Bloomington Registrar has conducted a mid-semester enrollment audit with faculty assistance, concurrent with midterm grade processing, to identify students who are enrolled but not participating in class, or attending class but not enrolled. The historical purpose of the audit was to identify and correct enrollment problems so that class rosters would be correct at the time of final grades. However, the audit also serves to

provide some data for determining student participation in class. In the federal "A133" audit, these procedures of the Bloomington Campus were acknowledged by the auditors but found to be inadequate for the identification of unofficial withdrawals and for determination of a withdrawal date for these students. Three reasons were given: 1) faculty were not "required" to participate in the mid-semester enrollment audit, so data were incomplete; 2) although students were notified of identified enrollment problems and instructed to contact their instructors or the Registrar to resolve the problems, students were not "required" to respond; and 3) student attendance was not tracked after midterm.

### **3. Changes Implemented for 1998-99**

The Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) contacted Registrar administrative staff last summer to work with them on some potential solutions to reduce campus liability related to "unofficial withdrawals." The following changes were put into place:

A. This fall, we moved up the date of our enrollment audit to begin in the fifth week of classes in order to collect class participation information earlier in the semester. Enrollment verification rosters are now due from faculty at the beginning of the seventh week of classes, instead of the ninth week. The audit results served as the basis of a data report and analysis file provided to OSFA for further follow up with students. We report all students who would fall below half time enrollment if the courses in which they were indicated by faculty as not attending were counted as withdrawals, and who are also receiving federal student aid.

We also take into account later "IM" and "FM" grades awarded at midterm to University Division students, which also indicate non-attendance. (A report by school is also produced of the enrollment audit data to allow follow up by school advisors if the school wishes to do so.) For First Semester 1998-99, 112 students were reported to OSFA as potential "unofficial withdrawals."

B. OSFA uses the data produced for contacting the reported students to inform them that they have been identified as not attending class and to require them to show evidence of class participation. Further financial aid is in jeopardy unless the student provides an adequate response demonstrating class participation.

C. We continue to separately contact students enrolled in class but not attending to resolve their enrollment problems.

We encourage them to officially drop if they don't intend to finish the class so that a withdrawal date can be established and financial aid can be adjusted as appropriate.

### **4. Further Recommendations**

Discussions were undertaken with campus administration and the Vice Chancellor/Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs or equivalent, as well as with the registrars and financial aid directors on other campuses regarding further policy changes that might assist in reducing institutional liability. The following are our further recommendations:

A. ESTABLISH AN "FN" GRADE ("F" FOR "NON-ATTENDANCE"). This has been endorsed by the system-wide Academic Officers Committee. As proposed, the "N" part of the grade would not appear on the official academic record, but would appear on internal transcript formats and on registrar data files. This addition to grading policy would allow separation of "F" grades awarded for poor performance in class from "F" grades awarded for students who fail to attend or stop attending (the "unofficial withdrawals"). Since the "FN" grade would provide additional information regarding student performance (or, rather, lack of performance), it might also serve as an aid in advising.

B. WHEN "FN" GRADE IS ASSIGNED, REQUIRE THE INSTRUCTOR ALSO TO SUPPLY A LAST DATE OF CLASS ATTENDANCE (OR CLASS PARTICIPATION) ON THE GRADE ROSTER. This would provide a basis for establishing a "withdrawal date" for return of unearned financial aid.

C. REQUIRE FACULTY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE REGISTRAR'S ENROLLMENT AUDIT, NOW CONDUCTED IN THE FIFTH TO SEVENTH WEEK OF EACH REGULAR SEMESTER.

We already receive a 93-95% response rate, so we think this requirement will have little additional impact on faculty. However, it should, if complied with, provide more complete data and improve the credibility of our enrollment audit results with the federal auditors.

(Approved: UFC 3/30/99)

### **FX Policy-UFC**

Any undergraduate who has retaken a course previously failed shall have only the second grade in that course counted in the determination of his or her grade-point average. The student's transcript shall record both grades. Any grade-point average calculated in accord with this policy shall be marked with an asterisk denoting that an F grade has been replaced by the grade in the course when taken subsequently.

Implementation procedures for the FX policy:

1. The effective date is the commencement of the fall semester, 1984-85.
2. The provisions apply to undergraduate students only.
3. Beginning with the fall semester of 1988-89 the policy applies to all undergraduate students regardless of matriculation date.
4. A student may exercise the FX option for no more than three courses, totaling no more than 10 credits.
5. A student may exercise the FX option no more than once for a given course.
6. The FX Option applies to all undergraduate schools and divisions on all Indiana University campuses.
7. Enforcement of the FX policy shall be the responsibility of the school or division which certifies the student's fulfillment of degree requirements.
8. Problems relating to the policy shall be referred to the school dean or the administrator fulfilling the equivalent responsibility on the campus.
9. The Registrar shall record the appropriate grade as prescribed by the academic unit.

(Approved: UFC 12/9/75; 3/13/79; Administrative Practice)

### **Extended-X Policy-Bloomington**

The Extended-X policy (which is also referred to as "Course Retake" and "GPA exclusion") was re-examined in Fall 2011. Upon recommendation of the Educational Policies Committee, the Bloomington Faculty Council changed the deadline by which a student must indicate an intention to apply the Extended-X policy – the new deadline is "prior to graduation."

(Approved: BFC 5/3/94; amended 12/6/11)

### **Extended-X Policy**

Any undergraduate student may retake a course for which he/she received a grade below an A. A student may exercise this option for no more than three courses, totaling no more than 10 credits. A student may use this option only once for a given course.

The student's transcript shall record both grades. For the course retaken, only the second grade shall be counted in the determination of the student's University grade-point average (GPA). Any grade which has been so excluded will show an X next to it.

### **Extended-X Implementation Policies**

1. Only courses attempted during or after the Fall 2001 term will be eligible for replacement under the new policy.
2. The following grades cannot be replaced under the Extended-X policy; S, P, W, I, R, NC.
3. GPA credit hours for the replaced course will be removed at the point at which the course is replaced.
4. Courses repeatable with different content are not eligible for replacement under this policy unless an academic unit responsible for the course, typically a dean, chooses to permit this by means of a specific authorization procedure.

5. A student may take an equivalent graduate or Honors section of the original course to replace the original grade provided that the retaken course is proven to contain the same academic content with, at the minimum, the same or higher level of academic rigor and expectations of learning outcomes.
6. A student may not request reversal after asking for and applying the GPA exclusion.
7. A student may not replace a grade with a second grade of W, I, R or NC.
8. Students who re-enroll in a course must indicate to the school of their major or to University Division, as appropriate, their intent to apply the Extended#X policy to a specific course prior to graduation.
9. The Extended-X policy will adhere to FX policy (UFC documents 1975, 1976, 1979, 1984, 1987), administrative practice, and guidelines regarding exceptional cases, where these are not in conflict with the provisions of the Extended-X policy nor with these Implementation Policies. A statement of the applicable practices has been compiled and is on file with the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and with the Office of the Registrar.
10. In implementation of the Extended-X policy, as under the FX policy, Bloomington joins all other campuses in honoring the principle that the grade forgiveness/course retake policy on the degree granting campus is applicable for each student. Hence, if an IUB student transfers to another campus with more liberal grade replacement policies, IUB will honor requests from that campus, on behalf of the student, to replace an IUB grade that may not be replaceable under IUB policy. Were the student to return to IUB for graduation, however, that course exclusion would not apply.

BFC Action (Circular B37-2001 [3/6/01 and 3/20/01]; 12/6/11)

### **Grade Indexing**

Grade indexing shall appear on undergraduate transcripts at least for internal purposes.

(Approved: BFC 4/5/94)

### **Deferred Grades**

#### **Definition**

The grade "R" (deferred grade) used on the final grade report indicates that the nature of the course is such that the work of the student can be evaluated only after two or more terms. The grade "R" is appropriate in thesis and research courses in which the student's work is evaluated when the thesis or research is completed. It may also be used at the end of the first term of a two-term course or a course that overlaps two terms if the course is announced as a "deferred grade" course in the Schedule of Classes. The grade "R" is appropriate only so long as there is work in progress. This procedure will assure the approval of the department and the willingness of the students to take both semesters of the course before getting a grade.

(Approved: BFC 3/16/76; UFC 2/8/77)

#### **Removal of a Deferred Grade**

At the end of the second term of a "deferred grade" course or when a thesis or research is completed, the instructor shall submit the student's grade for the last term on the grade sheet for that term and/or send a Removal-of-Deferred-Grade card through the dean of the student's school to the Office of Records and Admissions (now Office of the Registrar). The card will contain the following information:

1. the student's name and number;
2. the course number and hours of credit each semester;
3. the semesters and years of enrollment;
4. the grade(s) which should replace the "R";
5. the instructor's signature.

If the work is interrupted due to extenuating circumstances, a special arrangement between the student and instructor must be made on a term-to-term basis. If a student drops out of the course before the work is complete, the instructor must assign a regular grade ("A", "B", "C", "W", etc.) for the course.

### **History**

Last amended 12/4/2018

Previous Versions:

[12/06/2011 - 12/4/2018](#)

## Related Information

[ACA-66 Grading System and Implementation Procedures](#)  
[USSS-10 Unofficial Withdrawal Policy](#)