

Title: Grading

Category: Academic Affairs

Responsible Cabinet Member: Provost

Policy Statement: The University maintains a standardized grading system to record and communicate student academic performance. The grading system ensures consistent evaluation of student achievement, supports the calculation of grade point averages (GPA) and provides an official record of academic progress.

The Office of the University Registrar maintains the official record of grades and is responsible for the administration of grading policies, grade reporting procedures and the maintenance of the student academic record.

Colleges, departments, schools and programs may adopt additional grading practices or requirements appropriate to their curricula. Any such variations must be consistent with University policy, approved through the University curricular approval process and documented in the applicable appendices or program materials.

Standard Grading System

The standard grading system used to record academic results in the Office of the University Registrar is as follows:

- A** Exceptionally high achievement as a result of aptitude, effort and intellectual initiative. It is valued at four (4) quality points for each credit hour.
- B** High achievement as a result of ability and effort. It is valued at three (3) quality points for each credit hour.
- C** Satisfactory achievement for undergraduates or unsatisfactory achievement for graduate students. It is the minimum passing grade for which credit is conferred. It is valued at two (2) quality points for each credit hour.
- D** Unsatisfactory achievement for undergraduates and is the minimum grade for which credit is conferred; the grade is not to be used for graduate students. It is valued at one (1) quality point for each credit hour.
- F** Unsatisfactory performance and failure in the course. It is valued at zero (0) quality points and zero (0) credit hours.
- E** Unsatisfactory performance and failure in the course. It is valued at zero (0) quality points and zero (0) credit hours. (E grades will no longer be issued as of Fall 2027, grade notation kept for historic purposes.)
- P** Passing grade in a course taken on a Pass/Fail basis. It may also be assigned by the Academic Appeals Panel (AAP). Credit hours successfully completed under this grade will count toward graduation but will not be used in calculating GPAs.
- AU** (Audit) Completion of a course attended on an audit basis. It is valued at zero (0) quality points and zero (0) credit hours.
- CR** (Credit) Designator for Credit for Prior Learning bypass work to reflect that credit is granted for a course.

I (Incomplete) — see *“Further explanation of Certain Grades”*

IP (In progress) Satisfactory work in progress in courses carrying no academic credit. It is valued at zero (0) quality points and zero (0) credit hours.

N (Never Attended) Temporary grade to be submitted for students who have been entered by the Office of the University Registrar into official class rolls but have never attended class and have not officially withdrawn. The Office of the University Registrar shall remove their names from the official class roll, and the student's enrollment in the class shall not be recorded in the student's official academic record. (As a temporary mark, "N" carries no credit hours or quality points.)

S (Satisfactory) Final grade in courses carrying no academic credit or in courses used for residency credit or dissertation/thesis credit. It is valued at zero (0) quality points and zero (0) credit hours.

SI (Satisfactory, interim) Interim grade given in credit-bearing seminars, independent work courses or research courses that extend beyond the normal limits of a semester or summer session. This grade indicates that a student's academic work, in terms of both quality and quantity, was satisfactory during the applicable term. All “SI” grades must be replaced by a regular final letter grade prior to the qualifying examination or final examination for doctoral students, or prior to graduation in all other cases. As a temporary mark, “SI” carries no credit hours or quality points. See *“Further explanation of Certain Grades”*

UI (Unsatisfactory, interim) Interim grade given in credit-bearing seminars, independent work courses or research courses that extend beyond the normal limits of a semester or Summer Session. This grade indicates that a student's academic work, in terms of quality, was unsatisfactory during the applicable term. All “UI” grades must be replaced by a regular final letter grade prior to the Qualifying Examination or Final Examination for doctoral students, or prior to graduation in all other cases. As a temporary mark, “UI” carries no credit hours or quality points. see *“Further explanation of Certain Grades”*

UN (Unsatisfactory) Final grade in courses carrying no academic credit or in courses used for residency credit or dissertation/thesis credit, for which a student has done unsatisfactory work or has failed to do a reasonable amount of work. It is valued at zero (0) quality points and zero (0) credit hours.

XF (Failure in a course due to an academic offense). It is valued at zero (0) quality points and zero (0) credit hours. The repeat option may not be exercised for any course in which the grade of “XF” was received. A grade of “XF” normally may not be changed to a “W” by retroactive withdrawal, except upon appeal to the Office of the Provost. This applies to Pass/Fail courses also.

XE (Failure in a course due to an academic offense). It is valued at zero (0) quality points and zero (0) credit hours. The repeat option may not be exercised for any course in which the grade of “XE” was received. A grade of “XE” normally may not be changed to a “W” by retroactive withdrawal, except upon appeal to the Office of the Provost. (XE grades will no longer be issued as of Fall 2027, grade notation kept for historic purposes.)

W (Withdrawal from class). It may also be assigned by the Office of the Provost in cases involving a violation of student academic rights. It is valued at zero (0) quality points and zero (0) credit hour.

Further Explanation of Certain Grades

GRADE “F”

The grade “F” indicates that the student must repeat the entire coursework in class to earn a credit. In rare cases when repeating the coursework in class would cause undue hardship, the dean of the student’s college (or designee) may approve repeating the work via means different from the original structure of the course, provided the same expectations and student learning outcomes are met.

GRADE “I”

The grade “I” (incomplete) indicates that a portion of the regularly assigned work of the course remains unfinished. It is only given when there is a reasonable chance that the student can complete the work and earn a passing grade within the allowed time frame for removal of an “I” grade. Except under exceptional circumstances, students must request the “I” grade themselves. If the reason for incomplete work is deemed unsatisfactory by the Instructor of Record, the “I” grade will not be granted.

A grade of “I” must be replaced by a regular final letter grade within 12 months from the end of the academic term in which the “I” grade was awarded or before the student's graduation, whichever occurs first. The Office of the University Registrar shall notify the Instructor of Record at least two (2) months before the deadline. The Instructor of Record can extend the deadline for an additional 12 months by completing a grade assignment form. If the Instructor of Record is not available, the department chair or dean of the college may request the extension.

If the “I” grade is not replaced by a regular final letter grade within the allowable period, the Office of the University Registrar shall change the “I” grade to a grade of “E” or “F” on the student's permanent academic record and adjust the student's GPA accordingly. In such cases, the Instructor of Record may submit a grade assignment form to replace the “F” grade within 12 months from the time the “F” was assigned.

GRADE “I” — Graduate Students

A grade of “I” may be awarded to a graduate student if a part of the work of a course remains undone and there is a reasonable possibility that a passing grade will result from completion of the work. All “I” grades must be replaced by a regular final letter grade within 12 months of the end of the academic term in which the “I” grade was awarded or prior to the student’s graduation, whichever occurs first. If an “I” grade has not been replaced within the allowable period, the Office of the University Registrar shall change the “I” grade to a grade of “F” on the student’s permanent academic record and adjust the student’s GPA accordingly, unless otherwise approved because of exceptional circumstances by the Provost on recommendation of the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) in the student’s program.

Instructors of Record who assign an “I” grade should file with the student’s DGS information including:

- The student’s name and student identification number.
- The course number, hours of credit and semester and year of enrollment.
- Specific information on the work to be completed before assignment of a final grade.
- The time frame for completing the specific requirements (not exceeding 12 months).

Graduate students are urged to consult with their DGS concerning procedures relative to the awarding of “I” grades and the conditions under which they may be removed or replaced in their respective program.

Interim Progress Grade “SI”/”UI” — Graduate Students

A grade of “SI” is an interim grade in credit-bearing seminars, independent work courses or research courses that extend beyond the normal limits of a semester or summer session. All “SI” grades must be replaced by a regular final letter grade prior to the qualifying examination (QE) or final examination for doctoral students, or prior to graduation in all other cases.

Interim grades (“SI”/“UI”) differ from “I” (Incomplete) grades in that they indicate ongoing work in courses designed to extend across multiple academic terms (e.g., research, thesis or dissertation credits). These grades do not represent unfinished coursework but rather an evaluation of progress within a continuing academic activity.

Therefore, the time limits applicable to “I” grades do not apply to interim progress grades. However, all interim grades must be resolved prior to major academic milestones, including QEs, final examinations or graduation.

Interim Progress Grade “IP” — Graduate Students

The grade “IP” may be recorded for students in zero-credit hour courses of research, independent work or seminar-type if at the end of a semester the student, because of the nature or size of the project, has been unable to complete the course. The project must be substantially continuous in its progress. When the work is completed, a final grade will be substituted for the “IP.” This grade may not be conferred on a student who has done unsatisfactory work or has failed to do a reasonable amount of work.

Grade “W”

The grade “W” shall be conferred on students who officially withdraw from a class or classes. The AAP may also assign this grade.

Grade “Z”

The grade “Z” indicates that a student has made significant progress but needs and deserves more time to achieve a passing level. The student should re-enroll in the course to continue advancement to a level of competence set for the course. Re-enrollment grades may be assigned only for development courses numbered 000-099. (“Z” grades are no longer issued, definition retained for historical purpose.)

Courses Taken on a Pass/Fail Basis — Undergraduate

Undergraduate students above the first-year student level (more than 29 credit hours) and not on academic probation may select a maximum of four (4) elective courses, with certain restrictions, to be taken on a Pass/Fail basis. Students in the Honors curricular program above the first-year student level may, with advance written approval of the Office of the Dean of the Lewis Honors College, select additional elective courses to be taken on a Pass/Fail basis. Credit hours successfully completed under this option shall count toward graduation but shall not be used in calculating GPA.

Courses taken on a Pass/Fail basis (including transfer courses) shall be limited to those considered as elective in the student's program and such other courses or types of courses as might be specifically approved by the college or department. Prerequisites for such courses may be waived with the consent of the Instructor of Record. Students are expected to participate fully in these courses and take all examinations.

Any student may change their grading option (Pass/Fail to letter grade or letter grade to Pass/Fail; credit to audit or audit to credit) within three (3) weeks from the beginning of classes in the fall or spring semester (or a proportionate amount of time in the summer session or other courses of less than a full semester's duration). After such time, a student may not change their grading option without the express approval of the student's academic dean or the dean's designee. The waiver and the rationale for the waiver must be documented in the student's record in the college.

Courses offered only on Pass/Fail shall not be included in the maximum number of elective courses which a student may take under these provisions.

The Instructor of Record shall not be notified by the Office of the University Registrar or by any other office of the University of those students who are taking the course Pass/Fail. However, if an Instructor of Record is also the student's designated academic advisor, then the Instructor of Record shall have access to a student's Pass/Fail status in a course for the purpose of advising the student. The Instructor of Record shall submit a regular letter grade to the Office of the University Registrar, which will take the appropriate action to change the grade into Pass/Fail grading track for records. Neither a grade of "P" nor a grade of "F" shall be taken into consideration in calculating a student's GPA.

Giving a Pass/Fail credit for Advanced Placement (AP) tests and for CLEP tests does not mean that students may elect to take a required course for Pass/Fail. If the student elects to take the course, they must earn a letter grade to satisfy the general education requirements.

A student pursuing a second bachelor's degree is not entitled to take additional courses on a Pass/Fail basis except as the dean or dean's designee of the Lewis Honors College might permit.

Audit

Students who register for an audit do so for reasons other than fulfilling explicit requirements. They must come to individual agreements with the instructor as to what responsibilities they will be expected to perform. Normally, students who audit would be expected to do the readings and attend class; they may be required to enter more fully into the class work. In any case, they will receive no credit hours or grades.

Any change from audit to credit or credit to audit by a student regularly enrolled in a college must be accomplished within three (3) weeks from the beginning of classes in the fall or spring semester (or a proportionate amount of time in the summer session or other courses of less than a full semester's duration). No credit can be conferred for a class audited nor is a student permitted to take an examination for credit, except for the special examinations.

A student who initially enrolls in a class as an auditor must attend at least 80% of the classes in the course (excluding excused absences). If a student changes their enrollment from credit to audit, they must attend at least 80% of the remaining classes (excluding excused absences). If an auditor fails to attend the required number of classes, the Instructor of Record may request that the dean of the instructor's college award the grade of "W" for that course. The dean shall report the grade to the Office of the University Registrar. For situations in which both the course and Instructor of Record are housed outside of a college, the Provost will appoint an officer to act as the responsible dean of the course. No instructor is authorized to admit anyone as an auditor to any of their classes unless the auditor has registered as such.

Final Grades

- **Procedure For Reporting Final Grades**

The final grades shall be filed with the Office of the University Registrar within 72 hours after the final examination is administered but no later than the date announced in the official Academic Calendar. Grades and credit obtained by special examination shall be reported.

Temporary Notations

- **Course In Progress Notation: ---**

This grade appears in a grade report prepared during the academic term in which the student is enrolled in the course. It is to be replaced by a final grade. The Office of the University Registrar shall notify all unit or program heads at the end of each semester regarding “Course in Progress” notations (---) in all courses offered by that unit or program. The unit or program head shall have six (6) weeks from the date of notification by the Office of the University Registrar to assign a grade in the course. If no change is made by the unit or program head, the “Course in Progress” notation (---) will be replaced with a “Missing Grade” notation (***).

- **Missing Grade Notation: *****

This grade appears in a grade report when no grade has been reported to the Office of the University Registrar. The Office of the University Registrar shall notify all unit or program heads at the end of each semester regarding all “Missing Grade” notations (***) in all courses offered by that unit or program. If a “Missing Grade” notation can be replaced with a grade, it should be done as promptly as possible.

Procedures For Changing Temporary Notations

The unit or program head will consult, if possible, with the Instructor of Record for the course when assigning a grade under this rule. The Office of the University Registrar shall notify the student at the student’s address of record of any assignment of a grade under this rule. Appeals shall be taken to the Academic Ombud.

- **Changing Grades:** An Instructor of Record may change a mark once it has been reported to Office of the University Registrar only if (a) the change is made within one (1) year of the date of the original grade and (b) only in the case the original grade was in error. Reports of all such grade changes shall be sent to the Office of the University Registrar with a copy to the dean of the college in which the instructor is assigned. For situations in which both the course and Instructor of Record are housed outside of a college, the Provost will appoint an officer to act as the responsible dean of the course. The Instructor of Record may also recommend to their department chair the changing of a grade for any reason other than an error. The grade shall be changed if the department chair approves. In every such approval, a report of the grade change shall be sent to the Office of the University Registrar by the department chair with a copy to the Instructor of Record and dean of the college involved. There shall be only one (1) grade change per student per course pursuant to this rule. No grade may be changed after the student has graduated from the University, except in the case of the error provided for above.

* The Instructor of Record for the course is authorized to make the final decision to change a grade in cases of an error (e.g., miscalculation of the grade or entry of the wrong grade). In other cases, an Instructor of Record is authorized to initiate and make a grade change only if the department chair agrees to the change. (The department chair's role in this case is only to agree or disagree with the change, not to make the change independent of the Instructor of Record.)

* If a change is made to an originally submitted grade that is not a change, that action does not prevent the Instructor of Record from correcting that improperly changed grade to the originally submitted grade; this correction does not count as the one (1) permitted grade change. If, on the other hand, the Instructor of Record (and, if necessary, the department chair) changes the improperly changed grade to a grade other than the one originally submitted, then this change does count as the one (1) allowed grade change.

* When a grade change may be warranted but the Instructor of Record is no longer available, the Academic Appeals Panel (AAP) would ascertain whether the present grade ought to be changed and, if possible, determine and direct the appropriate specific grade.

However, in the case of a violation of student academic rights, the AAP may change a grade to “P” or “W” or, if such a determination can be made, to an appropriate letter grade.

Graduate and professional schools may have individual rules on this matter, so long as they are consistent with these rules.

* It is a violation for a department chair (or any other administrator) to change the Instructor of Record to a different person after the final course grades have been formally submitted to the Office of the University Registrar, for any reason, including so that the new Instructor of Record can change any of the final course grades. A department chair (or any other administrator) is authorized to change a final course grade without the concurrence of the Instructor of Record who entered that grade only when the chair is changing the temporary transcript notation of “Course in Progress” (---) or “Missing Grade” (***) to a final grade. If a student claims that a change of an already submitted final course grade is warranted, and the Instructor of Record who entered that grade is unwilling to change it, then the proper resolution is for the student to lodge a grade appeal with the AAP.

Repeat Options

Undergraduate

- **General Rule on Course Repeats:** Students may repeat a non-repeatable course regardless of the grade previously earned, including to improve academic performance or meet a program-specific grade requirement (e.g., a minimum grade of C).

When a student exercises this option by consulting with their advisor and notifying the Registrar, all attempts remain on the transcript. However, only the highest grade earned among all completed attempts of the course will be used in calculating the cumulative GPA and satisfying applicable degree requirements. Courses designated as “repeatable for credit” (e.g., special topics) are excluded from the repeat option.

- The repeat option shall not be exercised for any course in which the grade of “XE” or “XF” was received.
- Notwithstanding the foregoing, an “E” or “XE” assigned for an academic integrity violation on a subsequent attempt does not prohibit application of the repeat option when a regular “E” was earned on the initial attempt.
- Any course taken by an undergraduate student prior to an awarded degree cannot be changed by the repeat option process after the award of the degree; however, that student may in a subsequent non-degree status use the repeat option on a course that was taken after the prior degree was awarded.
- The repeat option does not remove any course attempt or grade from the transcript; rather, grades other than the highest grade earned among completed attempts are excluded from the cumulative GPA calculation.
- When a student is concurrently enrolled in two (2) undergraduate degree programs and then graduates from one (1) of the programs, any course taken prior to that graduation cannot later have the repeat option applied to that course, even if that course was not applied to that first degree.
- If a student withdraws from a subsequent attempt, the withdrawal does not affect the grade-replacement calculation; the highest grade earned among completed attempts remains controlling.

- **Limits and Eligibility:** Undergraduate students may apply this grade replacement rule for up to four (4) distinct courses. The repeated course must be taken at the University of Kentucky, and all grades (original and repeated) will remain visible on the transcript. The chair of the department offering the course may refuse to allow a student to register in a non-repeatable course a third or subsequent time. If a student withdraws from the course for an urgent non-academic reason, that registration shall not count as a course registration for purposes of this provision.
- **Effect on Academic Standing and Financial Aid:** The most recent attempt that results in a higher grade will be used to determine:
 - GPA-based academic standing;
 - Eligibility for honors; and
 - Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) calculations for federal aid.

In accordance with Title IV regulations, students may only receive financial aid for one repeat of a previously passed course (defined as any grade of D or higher).

- **Failing Grades After Passing:** If a student earns a failing grade (F) after a previously passing attempt, the highest passing grade will count in the GPA. The failing grade(s) from subsequent attempts will not be included in GPA calculation once credit has been earned but will remain on the transcript.
- **Course Credit Rules:** A student may only earn credit once for a non-repeatable course. Once a course is passed, additional passing attempts will not earn new credit, though they may affect GPA under the guidelines above.
- **Appeals:** Students who wish to request exceptions to the grade replacement limit or have extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical, Title IX-related disruptions) may submit an appeal to the Director of Undergraduate Studies in their college or designee.

Graduate

- **Eligibility to Repeat a Course:** A graduate student may repeat a course only once. Any additional course repetition requires approval of the DGS and the Provost and is granted only under exceptional circumstances.

Each enrollment in a repeated course shall be recorded separately on the student's official academic transcript. All grades earned for the course, including the original and repeated attempt(s), shall remain permanently on the academic record.

The second grade earned in repeated graduate courses shall be included in the calculation of the cumulative graduate GPA. Repeating a course does not remove or expunge a prior grade from the academic record.

Credit for a repeated course may be applied toward degree requirements only once, unless the course is explicitly approved as repeatable for credit in the Graduate Catalog. Repeated enrollments beyond the first application of credit do not result in additional degree credit.

- **Program Requirements and Minimum Grades:** Programs may establish minimum grade requirements for required courses. If a course is repeated to meet a minimum grade requirement, the program may specify whether successful completion of the repeat satisfies the requirement for progression or degree eligibility; however, all grades earned remain part of the academic record and GPA.
- **Limitations:** Repeating a course may not be used to replace, nullify or otherwise remove an unsatisfactory grade from the transcript. Course repetition is intended to address deficiencies in preparation or mastery of material, not to permit grade improvement beyond program or Graduate School standards.