

## GRADING POLICY

**Grades, Grade Reporting-** Underlying any grading system is the premise that students earn grades while instructors assign grades. The grade assigned to each student in a course directly reflects the student's achievement of a specific set of objectives. A student entering a course assumes the responsibility to master the objectives of the course to the best of his or her ability. The degree to which the student fulfills the responsibility is reflected in the final grade assigned by the instructor. It is the purpose of the following grade policy to assist the instructor in assigning grades which accurately reflect student learning.

**Purpose of Grades-** Since improved teaching, learning, and evaluation are most likely to occur when students know clearly at the outset the achievement levels expected of them for different grades, the instructor should discuss with students and distribute to them at the beginning of a semester a syllabus of the objectives of the course, the methods of evaluation to be employed, and the standard by which each student will be judged and grades determined. The students, being explicitly informed of the standards and objectives of a course, will be in a better position to know the basis on which they will be graded. Students should be evaluated and graded only on those objectives which they are expected to master. In addition, a copy of the syllabus is to be filed with the cognizant Instructional Administrator.

Because grades are assigned in each course, recorded on a student's permanent record and, therefore, profoundly affect the student's future, it is important that careful consideration be given to the grades assigned by instructors, and that each instructor clearly understand the general purpose of the grading system.

In the most general terms, course grades are used by an instructor to make a concise statement about student learning. More specifically, grades are used for the purpose of symbolically representing to what degree a student receiving the grade has achieved the course objectives or met the performance standards of the course for which he/she is being evaluated. Once awarded, the grade becomes a communicative device to the student, other instructors, counselors, transfer institutions, and potential employers.

For each of these users of grades, the grade may serve a variety of purposes. They may be used to counsel and guide students in their continued education, provide instructors one means to assess the effectiveness of instructional programs and strategies, and allow transfer institutions and potential employers to make judgements about students. Since in most instances course grades are the institution's sole means of communication about students, each instructor should conscientiously attempt to make the most precise possible statement when awarding grades within a class.

**Grading Systems and Special Notations-** The two types of grading systems are the grading scale and the Credit/No Credit evaluation. The grading scale consists of the letters A, B, C, D, and F. In specific courses indicated in the College Catalog, students may elect to be graded on a Credit/No Credit basis.

1. **Grade of 'A' – Excellent-** Exceptional achievement of all course objectives. The student has shown initiative, imagination, and self-direction well beyond that required by the instructor.
2. **Grade of 'B'-Good-** High level achievement of all course objectives. The student's performance has been above average, and the student has demonstrated considerable mastery of the course materials.
3. **Grade of 'C'-Satisfactory-** Acceptable level of achievement of all course objectives. The student has completed the required objectives in a satisfactory manner.
4. **Grade of 'D'-Passing, Less than Satisfactory-** Minimum level of achievement of most of the course objectives. The student's success in advanced work is doubtful.
5. **Grade of 'F'-Failing-** The student did not accomplish the minimum requirements of the course.
6. **Grade of 'CR'- Satisfactory or Above-** Excluded from grade average. Achievement of course objectives at the acceptable level or above (grade 'C' or above).
7. **Grade of 'NC' – Less than Satisfactory-** Excluded from grade point average. The student did not accomplish the minimum requirement of the course.
8. **Non- Evaluative Symbols- 'I', 'W', and 'RD'-** There are three notations not included in the grading scale of credit/no credit evaluation that may be used under special circumstances. The 'I' can only be assigned at the end of the semester and the 'W' may only be assigned from the beginning of the fifth week through the twelfth week of the semester.

**I:** Incomplete- No penalty; excluded from the grade point average  
**W:** Withdrawal- No penalty; excluded from grade point average  
**RD:** Report Delayed- No penalty; excluded from grade point average

The 'I' (Incomplete) is used in some special circumstances to indicate that the student did not complete certain essential requirements due to unforeseeable circumstances or emergency and justifiable reasons over which the student

has no control, generally of such nature that they student was unable to attend class to perform class assignments during the last two weeks of the school semester or was unable to take the final examination. A student may not repeat a class to remove the 'I' grade.

Instructors are required to complete an Incomplete Grade Notice, stating the requirements from removing the 'I' and the criteria for determining a new final grade. The Incomplete Grade Notice forms are to be turned into the Office of Instruction for distribution. If a written test is required, a copy of the test and scoring key must be filed with the form.

The condition for removal of the 'I' shall be stated by the instructor in a written record. This record shall contain the conditions for removal of the 'I', and the evaluative grade to be assigned if the 'I' is not removed. This record will be given to the student with a copy on file in the Admissions Center. The final grade shall be given when the stipulated has been completed and evaluated, or when the time limit for completing the work has passed.

The 'I' may be made up no later than one year following the end of the term in which it was assigned. Units for which the 'I' symbol is received shall not be used in calculating grade point averages. A student may petition for a time extension by submitting a petition to the instructor of record. A petition may be granted if, in the judgment of the instructor, an extension was warranted because of extenuating circumstances of verified cases of accident, illness or other circumstances beyond the control of the student.

In addition to the school policy, issuing an "I" grade requires that an incomplete Grade Form be completed and must have prior approval of the Dean.

An "I" can only be issued to student who was:

- Unable to attend class during the last two weeks of the semester
- Unable to take the final exam
- Reported an unplanned emergency

9. The 'W' is used to indicate that any student who withdraws or who is withdrawn from a class from the beginning of the fifth week through the twelfth week of the semester will be assigned a 'W'. This information will not appear on the permanent record card if a student withdraws or is dropped from a course during the first four weeks of the semester.

10. The 'RD' is used to indicate that the grade(s) was/were not turned in. The 'RD' is a temporary notation, which is removed when the grade is reported.

**Grade Analysis-** The individual instructor who assigns the grades is in the best position to analyze his/her adherence to the grading policies and practices of the

College. The Education Code vests in the instructor the final authority to assign grades. It is recognized that all instructors will not have a similar pattern of assigning grades. For a variety of reasons, student enrollment patterns and instructor teaching schedule patterns tend to form groupings of students for any one instructor which will ensure that the grades assigned will not adhere to any computed average. The grading scale presupposes that each instructor has clearly-defined measurable objectives for each course and an effective system of monitoring student achievement of these objectives.

One of the major problems encountered in grading is the necessity to transform the information about student achievement into one of the letters on the grading scale. The purpose of providing the instructor with information about grades awarded are to assist the instructor in analyzing his or her grading patterns and to develop among the staff a common understanding of a level of achievement required for each grade. The information is not provided in an attempt to regulate the quantity of any grades awarded.

To assist the instructor in analyzing his/her grade distribution, each instructor will be provided with the following information:

1. The percentage of each grade awarded the grading scale.
2. The G.P.A for the total number of grades awarded by the instructor.
3. The completion percentage rate for each instructor, i.e., the percentage of students enrolled at the first census week who receives one of the following grades: A, B, C, D, F, CR, NC, W, or I.
4. The percentage of each grade awarded under the grading scale, the G.P.A. and the completion percentage for the discipline and division, of which the instructor is a member, and the College as a whole, day and evening.

Copies of individual instructor, discipline, division and college-wide grade distribution patterns will be provided to the Instructional Administrator. The Instructional Administrator will review each pattern.

**Graduation with Honors-** Students who achieve a grade point average of 3.5 or higher will be graduating with honors. This status as an honor grade will be noted on both the degree and the Permanent Record Card (transcript for all such students).

**Changes of Grade-** An instructor who discovers that a mistake has been made in reporting a grade should report the error, using a Record Change form, available in the Admissions Center. When grades are given for any course of instruction taught in the public schools, the grade given to each pupil shall be the grade determined by the teacher of the course, and the determination of the

student's grade by the teacher, in the absence of mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetence, shall be final (10753).

**'WF' Grades**- Questions concerning removal of 'WF' grades assigned at Southwestern College previous to 1969 should be referred to the Admissions Center.

**Student Privacy**- In order to protect students' right to privacy, instructors should exercise caution when posting grade results. Grades should not be posted in a manner in which the identity of the student can be determined.

Source: SWC Policy Manual, Policy #6025, 7/90

For further information, please contact the Office of Instruction and Academic Affairs, Room 213.