
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty Senate Executive Committee

FROM: Jonathan Cumming, Associate Provost for Graduate Academic Affairs



RE: Incomplete Grading Policy for Graduate Students

DATE: April 24, 2011

CC: Steve Robinson, Registrar

The following incomplete grading policy outlined in the West Virginia Graduate Catalog will be operationalized in the fall 2011 semester to reduce the prevalence of incomplete (“I”) grades on student transcripts. This new language was approved by Graduate Council on April 21, 2011.

It is the goal of the Offices of the Provost and Registrar to limit the use of the “I” grade at the graduate level to cases where coursework is unavoidably incomplete. The grade of “I” should not be used as a routine placeholder for grades for the graduate courses 697/797 (“Research”).

The language of the **existing policy**, below, has led to the long-term maintenance of “I” grades on transcripts:

“Incompletes

The grade of “I” is given when the instructor believes that the coursework is unavoidably incomplete or that a supplementary examination is justifiable. Before any graduate degree can be awarded, the grade of “I” must be removed either by finishing the incomplete sometime or by having it recorded as a permanent incomplete. Only the instructor who recorded the “I” or, if the instructor is no longer at WVU, the chairperson of the unit in which the course was given may initiate either of these actions. When a student receives a grade of incomplete and later removes that grade, the grade point average is recalculated on the basis of the new grade. If you do not remove the “I” grade within the next semester, the grade of “I” is treated as an “IF” (failure). The Academic Standards Committee of the appropriate college or school may allow you to postpone removal of the “I” grade if you can justify a delay.”

The language of the **new policy**, below, requires quicker resolution of “I” grades and emphasizes their use only in “unavoidably incomplete” coursework:

“Incompletes

The grade of “I” is given when the instructor believes that the coursework is unavoidably incomplete or that a supplementary examination is justifiable. Resolution of the grade of “I” will occur in the semester following its issuance and before any graduate degree can be awarded. If the “I” grade is not removed within the following semester, the grade of “I” is treated as an “IF”

Office of Graduate Education & Life

249 Mountainlair

PO Box 6897

Morgantown, WV 26506-6897

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution

Phone: 304-293-7173

Fax: 304-293-8657

(failure). Only the instructor who recorded the “I” or, if the instructor is no longer at WVU, the chairperson of the unit in which the course was given may initiate either of these actions. When an “I” grade is replaced, the grade point average is recalculated on the basis of the new grade. The Academic Standards Committee of the appropriate college or school may postpone the removal of the “I” grade given significant justification.”

Rationale:

This change in grading will commence with the fall 2011 semester.

Treatment of “I” Grades Currently on Transcripts

Long-standing “I” grades currently on transcripts will begin to be converted to permanent incompletes (“INC”) by course instructors (or chairs/deans where instructors are no longer at the institution). Beginning in the fall 2011 semester, all existing “I” grades older than the fall of 2009 will be converted to “INC.” In subsequent years, “I” grades that are two and one years old will be converted (see table below) to grades or to “INC” by course instructors until university records come into alignment with the enforcement of this existing policy.

No “I” grades should be issued for courses starting in the Fall 2011 semester except for reasons for which the “I” grade is intended where “coursework is unavoidably incomplete.”

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Semester in which “I” grades will convert to “INC”</i>
Fall 2011	All grades preceding fall 2009
Fall 2012	Fall 2009, spring 2010
Fall 2013	Fall 2010, spring 2011

The Office of the Registrar will produce “I Reports” that will be distributed to Academic Deans at the beginning of the grade conversion period. These reports will allow academic units to assess the standing “I” grades, generate grade modification forms where appropriate, or allow grades to lapse to “INC.”