

2017 Proposed Changes to COCC's Grading Policy, and Grading Scale-and-GPA

Respectfully submitted by Eddie Johnson, Professor of Human Biology

I am proposing that COCC establish a college-wide enforced grading policy and scale, with academic-program exceptions, as mandated by Oregon state policies, or accreditation policies in particular programs. This proposal is being made so that all faculty, students, and staff in the Admissions & Records Office understand that we have a standard institutional policy. I believe this consistency benefits our students, and even faculty, particularly Part-time and newly-hired faculty.

Below is a modification of Vickery's original document on our November, 2016, discussion on the grading policy ("institutionally established") and grading scale (not institutionally established), with **my additional suggestions in red**. **At the end of this document is my grading scale proposal**.

1. **CURRENT G-30-12 Grades** (as published at <https://www.cocc.edu/general-policy-manual/academic/grades/> on 11/28/16)

Only the grades in the following table may be assigned. All courses graded with an A-F, P, NP, W, or I will apply to percentage of completion. P, NP, W, X, I, and IP do not apply to GPA.

- A** outstanding performance
- A-** superior
- B+** excellent
- B** very good
- B-** good
- C+** better than satisfactory
- C** satisfactory

- D** passing (Note: Courses in which "D" grades are earned may not be used in the AAOT or to fulfill foundational requirements in other certificate or degree programs and may have limitations in specific certificate or degree programs. "D" grades are not considered passing for pre-requisite courses).

- F** not passing, counts as a non-completed course
- X** Audit
- P** Pass; may be awarded only in authorized classes
- NP** No Pass; may be awarded only in authorized classes
- W** Withdrawn; must be assigned by Records Office

- I** Incomplete; not computed in GPA, will convert to "F" if requirements of the Incomplete Grade Contract are not met by the end of the following term.

- IP** Course in Progress (**restricted to particular programs, where the course extends beyond a single term**)

Definitions in the manual on grades other than A-F:

- **Auditing a course.** Students who want the experience of taking a particular class but do not want to receive college credit may register as an audit student in any of the College's courses. Audit students are not required to meet specific course requirements but should participate fully in class activities. If students wish to audit a class, they must indicate so at the time of registration and note the following:
 - ✓ "X" appears on the transcript
 - ✓ "X" is not figured into a student's GPA
 - ✓ Tuition is the same as classes taken for credit
 - ✓ Audited courses do not meet graduation or transfer requirements and are not eligible for financial aid
 - ✓ A student may convert "audit" status to "regular" status, and vice versa, before the end of the seventh week of the term for full-term classes.
- **Incomplete (I) grade.** An Incomplete/I grade is assigned when a student successfully completes approximately 75 percent of course requirements, but for reasons acceptable to the instructor, the student is not able to complete remaining requirements during the given term, but there is a reasonable expectation that the student will pass the course if the agreed-upon conditions are met before the end of the following term. ~~An "I" grade is not a substitution for a failing.~~
- The instructor and the student agree upon the expectations for successfully completing the subject matter of the course, and both sign and date the "Incomplete contract". The student, the instructor and the department Chair all are given a copy.
- Students must complete the remaining requirements within one quarter after the end of the original course (summer term excluded; if the "I" is given in the Spring term, the deadline for completion is the end of the following Fall term) - unless the instructor designates a later completion date for unusual circumstances.
- An incomplete grade will not count towards academic warning (i.e., there is no GPA assigned during the time the "I" is in place), but it may affect Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress, so the student should check on these.
- Once the requirements are completed before the deadline, the instructor will submit the earned grade and notify the department Chair, so the Chair can close his/her file on the matter.
- If the student does not complete the requirements by the deadline, the Admissions & Records Office will automatically assign a grade of "F" for the course. If the student submitted the work before the deadline, but the instructor failed to submit a grade change, the student must contact the instructor (or department Chair – see below) immediately, and work with the instructor or Chair to change the grade.
- Part-time, Adjunct, or Full-time Temporary instructor assigning an "I". It must be noted that if a Part-time instructor agrees on an "I" for a student, there is no guarantee that the instructor will still be teaching for COCC the following term (the same may happen for an Adjunct or FT-Temporary instructor, particularly if the "I" is assigned in the Spring term, and the instructor's contract is not renewed). To "protect" the student, the department Chair must be involved in any Incomplete contract between a student and instructor. In the event that the instructor is no longer employed by COCC, the Chair must take the responsibility of assigning and submitting the student's grade, if the student met the requirements by the deadline.
- **Pass (P)/No Pass (NP) grade.** "Pass" is interpreted as a "C" or better. The P/NP option is used for certain courses where it is deemed inappropriate to utilize the regular grading system. All such courses utilizing the P/NP format must first be approved through the normal committee structure of the College. Such courses set P/NP standards in their original submission for course approval. Every course completed with a P/NP option will be entered into the student's transcript.

- **Withdrawal (W) from a course.** During the term, students have two options for withdrawing from a course, usually to avoid an undesired final grade, although there are other circumstances that lead to this decision.
 1. A student can decide to drop a course by the end of week seven (short-term courses have different deadlines; the student should check the course syllabus or the short term refund and drop deadlines form on the COCC website). This requires only that the student notify the Admissions & Records Office before that deadline, and the course is removed from the student's transcript, with no evidence that the student was in the course.
 2. A student can decide to drop a course between the eighth week of the term and the Wednesday before finals week (the last Wednesday of classes that term). This requires only that the student notify the instructor, and if the instructor agrees, the instructor will sign the "blue form" or notify the Admissions & Records Office via email that s/he agrees to the withdrawal. In this case, a "W" will be assigned by the Admissions and Records Office and the course with the "W" will be on the student's official and permanent transcript. For any course shorter than one quarter, proportional times will be used; the student must contact the Admissions & Records Office for specific details.
- **Changing grading status to/from audit and adding a new course.** A student can decide to change the grading status for a course from a letter grade to an audit until the end of week seven (short-term courses have different deadlines; the student should check the course syllabus or the short term refund and drop deadlines form on the COCC website). The deadline for adding a new course, if permitted by the instructor, also is the end of week seven.

Mid-term Grades:

Midway through each term, instructors are notified of the deadline for submitting mid-term grades to the Admissions & Records Office, and then an email with the grade is sent to the student at his/her college email address. In order to help a student decide whether to get assistance with the course (ex: tutoring) or drop the course, **instructors must submit any mid-term grade of "D" and "F" or "NP"** for those students whose performance indicates it, including those who are not regularly attending class. Students must take responsibility for withdrawing if they do not wish to continue in a class. ~~It is entirely the instructor's discretion to submit or not submit a midterm grade report.~~

Final Exams and Final Grades:

The Final Exam schedule is set by the Office of the VPI. Final grades must be submitted to the Admissions & Records Office by the established deadline (currently 8am on the Wednesday following Finals Week). End-of-term grades are available via the student's Bobcat Web Account by the Thursday following the term only and will not be mailed or given out over the phone. Instructors also can post final grades on Blackboard.

- **Course in Progress (IP).** When a course has an ending date past the regular term's grading period, the Records Office will assign an IP grade. IP will stand until the instructor submits a regular grade at the end of a course.

Grade Changes:

The responsibility to award and change grades at COCC is entirely the instructor's (please note the Incomplete grade policy exception). A student who disputes the final grade (A-F, P, NP) in a course must follow the Grade Appeal Procedure.

1. The student first must meet with the instructor (or department Chair, if the instructor is not available) to review the grade.
2. If the student does not agree that the assigned grade is fair, the student will meet with the department Chair, who can further review the grade with the instructor.
3. If the instructor does not change the grade to the satisfaction of the student, the student has until the end of the third week of the following term (or the third week of the Fall term if the dispute is over a course taken in the preceding Spring term) to make a formal written request to the Grade Appeal Committee. The student should refer to COCC's Grade Appeal Procedure for more details.
 - Exceptions to the grading policy should be requested by a student petition submitted to the Registrar.
4. Issues concerning the change of grade to or from I-W-X should go through the petition process that starts in the Admissions and Records office.
 - Instructors have within one year of an original grade being awarded to submit a grade change based on a calculation error, or to change an Incomplete to a letter grade.

2. Institutional Grading Scale

The current G-30-12 Grades policy in the General Procedures Manual has institutionally established grades, but no associated grading scale. The syllabus template provides a suggested scale (below). Advantages to having an institutionally defined scale include providing consistency to students, and preventing very unique grading approaches. Considerations include independent faculty decision-making, and the need to accommodate specialized accreditation requirements.

Grading Scale from COCC's Syllabus Template, updated by Academic Affairs during the 2015-16 academic year:

<u>Percentage scale</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Assessment/Meaning of grade</u>	<u>Grade-point equivalent on a 4.0 scale</u>
94-100%	A	Exceptional performance	4.0
90-93%	A-	Superior performance	3.7
87-89%	B+	Excellent performance	3.3
83-86%	B	Very good performance	3.0
80-82%	B-	Worthy performance	2.7
77-79%	C+	Competent performance	2.3
70-76%	C	Satisfactory performance	2.0
65-69%	D	Marginal performance	1.0
(Note: Courses in which "D" grades are earned may be limited or not used in specific certificate or degree programs)			
0-64%	F	Inadequate performance/Failing	0.0

* If re-instituting the grade of C- is considered:

73-76%	C	Satisfactory performance	2.0
70-72%	C-	Below satisfactory performance	1.7
65-69%	D	Marginal performance	1.0
0-64%	F	Inadequate performance/Failing	0.0

* If adding an "A+" grade to the scale is considered:

97-100%	A+	Exceptional performance	4.2
94-6%	A	Outstanding performance	4.0

Exceptions to the standard grading scale: Programs in Nursing and Natural Industrial Resources, and other Allied Health certificate programs

- The Chair of the Nursing Department should fill in the grading scale requirements for a certificate and/or degree in Nursing
- The Chair of the Natural Industrial Resources Department should fill in the grading scale for any certificate or degree that has different requirements than listed for the standard scale
- The Chair of the Allied Health Department should fill in the grading scale for any certificate that has different criteria/requirements than listed for the standard scale