

# Grading, Grade Changes, and Grade Appeals

Academics & Research – Academics & Instruction

**Academic Policy 303-24**

**Effective: June 15, 2021**

**Authority: University President**

**Proponent: Academic Senate**

**Summary:** This policy provides information and standards relative to grading, grade changes, and grade appeals for students of Eastern Washington University.

**History:** This policy was amended and approved by the Academic Senate on May 24, 2021 and approved by the University President on June 15, 2021. This policy revises a previous version of the policy dated August 20, 2018.

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## CHAPTER 1 – GRADING SYSTEM

### 1-1. Letter Grades

Grading at Eastern utilizes a 12-point ordinal scale identified by the letter grade symbols (highest to lowest) A, A-, B+ . . . D-, F. The specific process by which each course is graded is defined in the course syllabus. Additional letter grade symbols in use are:

NC (No Credit)	no credit granted, no grade points assigned
NR	not recorded, for work in progress
P (Passing)	credit granted, but no grade point assigned (not used when computing GPA)
W (Withdrawal)	withdrawal from a course or the university (not used when computing GPA)
X (Incomplete)	temporary grade; special circumstances prevent the student from completing the course (not used when computing GPA)
XF (Violation)	Violation of academic integrity; grade point equivalent to an F assigned
Y	for thesis, research, practicum and other activities requiring more than one term for completion; grade assigned at completion

### 1-2. Department or Program Designated Pass/No Credit Grade Option

Departments or programs may choose to designate certain courses for P/NC (pass/no credit) grading. Regulations for pass/no credit grading are as follows:

- (1) the only courses which may be designated by the department as P/NC are non-college credit pre-university basic skills;
- (2) a performance equivalent to a “C” or better must be earned to receive a “P” grade;
- (3) the “P” or “NC” grade will be entered on the transcript. Students receiving the “P” grade will not receive credits toward graduation. Neither the “P” nor the “NC” grade will be included in computing grade averages.

### 1-3. Department or Program Designated Undergraduate Pass/Fail Grade Option

Departments or programs may choose to designate only certain types of courses for P/F (pass/fail). P/F grading is used for college credit-earning courses (P/NC grading is used for non-college university basic skills, see section 1.2). Regulations for P/F grading are as follows except as approved by the Undergraduate Affairs Council:

- (1) Courses required for the following categories may not be designated P/F:

Major and minor requirements
Professional education requirements
General education core requirements
Required supporting courses (courses required for the major or minor but not taught by the major or minor department)
Writing, quantitative and symbolic literacy requirements
University graduation requirements

- (2) The types of courses which may be designated as P/F are: Directed Studies, Seminars, Internships, Workshops, and Practica.
- (3) A performance equivalent to a “C” or better must be earned to receive a “P” grade.

- (4) The “P” or “F” grade will be entered on the transcript. Students receiving the “P” grade will receive credits toward graduation. Only an “F” (not a “P”) will be included in the GPA.

**1-4. Student Designated Undergraduate Pass/No Credit Grade Option**

Students may choose the pass/no credit (P/NC) grading option in certain courses during the registration process. Regulations for P/NC grading are as follows:

At the time of registration, students must designate the courses for which they wish to receive a P/NC grade. They may change the P/NC Credit designation by the regular change of registration procedure during the first three-fourths of the term.

- (1) Courses required for the following categories may not be taken as P/NC:

Major and minor requirements
Professional education requirements
General education core requirements
Required supporting courses (courses required for the major or minor but not taught by the major or minor department)
Writing, quantitative and symbolic literacy requirements
University graduation requirements

- (2) The minimum level of performance required to receive a grade of “P” is a C. Students should be aware that performance equal to a grade lower than a C will result in a NC grade.
- (3) The “P” or “NC” grade will be entered on the transcript. Students receiving the “P” grade will receive credits toward graduation. Neither the “P” nor the “NC” grade will be included in computing GPAs.

**1-5. Incomplete (X)**

An incomplete grade may be assigned, at the discretion of the instructor, to students who cannot complete the required coursework due to circumstances that are beyond the student’s control (e.g. severe illness, death of a family member, or military deployment).

For all terms, the student must have been attending class, receiving a passing grade, and completed all necessary work through at least three-fourths of the course duration.

**Procedure:**

To assign an "X" grade, the instructor prepares an Incomplete form detailing:

- (1) the specific work required of the student;
- (2) the extension deadline; and,
- (3) the conversion grade (may be a C) that will automatically be assigned if the student does not complete the work by the extension deadline. For a grade to be automatically converted during a specific term, the extension deadline must be prior to the last day of instruction for that term.

- (4) The instructor records the incomplete grade in the university grade system and provides the completed form to the student and a copy to the department chair.

Extension Periods: Instructors may specify any date for the extension deadline within one year from the end of the term in which the incomplete grade was recorded.

Military Service: Special rules regarding Incompletes for students who are ordered to military duty are contained in Academic Policy 303-30, Registration.

**1-6. Ongoing Thesis or Research Work (Y)**

Students engaged in lengthy research projects or other courses that are designed to extend for more than one term may be given a grade of “Y” until the project is complete and a final grade is assigned. Normally these courses are graduate research projects, theses, or internships.

**1-7. Numerical Grades and Cumulative GPA**

The chart below illustrates Numeric Grade-Letter Grade Equivalents.

Grade	Numerical Grade	Description
A	4.0	Excellent
A-	3.7	
B+	3.3	
B	3.0	Good
B-	2.7	
C+	2.3	
C	2.0	Satisfactory
C-	1.7	
D+	1.3	
D	1.0	
D-	0.7	
F	0.0	Failing

To compute cumulative GPA:

- (1) Multiply numerical grade point equivalent by the number of credits assigned for each course to determine the quality points for each course. Add the total number of quality points (QP). (P/NC grades are not computed in the GPA.)
- (2) Add the total number of numerically graded credits, for the total number of quality hours (QH).
- (3) Divide the total number of quality points by the total number of quality hours for the cumulative GPA.

## CHAPTER 2 – GRADE CORRECTIONS AND APPEALS

### 2-1. Grade Corrections

Except for “X” and “Y,” all grades are final and can be changed only in the case of university (instructor, clerical or administrative) error. Such corrections must be submitted by the instructor and approved by the department chair and college dean. Requests for grade corrections must be submitted to the Records and Registration Office within two terms (not including summer) of the initial grade assignment. Grades may not be changed after a degree has been awarded.

### 2-2. Grade Appeals

The purpose of the Grade Appeal Policy is to provide students with a safeguard against receiving an unfair final grade, while respecting the academic responsibility of the instructor. Every student has a right to receive a grade assigned upon a fair and unprejudiced evaluation based on a method that is neither arbitrary nor capricious. Instructors have the right to assign a grade based on any method that is professionally acceptable, submitted in writing to all students, and applied equally. A grade appeal shall be confined to charges of unfair action toward an individual student and may not involve a challenge of an instructor’s grading standard. A student has the right to expect thoughtful and clearly defined approaches to course grading, but it must be recognized that varied standard and individual approaches to grading are valid. It is incumbent on the student to substantiate the claim that his or her final grade represents unfair treatment, compared to the standard applied to other students.

The grade appeal procedure applies only when a student initiates a grade appeal. The procedure strives to resolve a disagreement between student and instructor concerning the assignment of a grade in a collegial manner.

In a grade appeal, only arbitrariness and/or prejudice will be considered as legitimate grounds for an appeal.

- **Arbitrariness:** The grade awarded represents such a substantial departure from accepted academic norms as to demonstrate that the instructor did not actually exercise professional judgment.
- **Prejudice:** The grade awarded was based on unequal application of grading standards or by applying grading criteria to one student or some students in a manner that treats them differently.
- Appeals must comply with the time limits specified below or the right to appeal is forfeited. Reasonable exceptions to the deadlines may be made by the chair or designee.

### 2-3. Grade Appeal Procedures

- (1) A student who wishes to question a grade must submit a written request for a meeting and a brief description of the issue to the instructor of record no later than 10 working days after the start of the next regular academic term after receiving the grade. The deadlines for spring and summer

terms are counted from the beginning of fall term (quarter or semester whichever applies to the student). If the instructor is no longer at the university or is on leave, the chair of the department or designee will act in place of the instructor of record.

- (2) If the student’s concern remains unresolved after the discussion with the instructor the student may submit a [“Notice of Intent to File a Grade Appeal” form \(available online\)](#) including a brief statement of problem to the chair of the department within five working days of speaking with the instructor.
- (3) The chair or designee shall review the student’s request, discuss the situation with the instructor whenever possible, and attempt to resolve the matter. The chair or designee shall provide a written explanation of his/her findings to the student and instructor within five working days of receiving the form.
- (4) If the student is not satisfied with the written explanation, the student may submit an [“Official Grade Appeal” form \(available online\)](#) within five working days to the chair or designee requesting a hearing with a Grade Appeals Board.

### 2-4. Grade Appeals Board

The grade appeal is heard by a grade appeals board which shall be convened no later than 20 working days after submission of the official grade appeal. (The date may be extended if mutually agreed upon by both parties.)

Members:

- (1) This board is chaired by the department chair or a designee who serves in a nonvoting capacity.
- (2) Selection of members is facilitated by the department chair or designee unless there is an obvious conflict of interest, in which case the dean or a designee shall do so. The dean shall determine whether a conflict of interest exists.
- (3) Three people will constitute the grade appeals board.
  - (i) The student petitioner shall first nominate a member and then the instructor shall nominate a member.
  - (ii) A third member mutually agreeable to both parties will then be selected.
  - (iii) At least one of the three members must be a student.

The grade appeal board will attempt to meet the following principles in evaluating the grade appeal:

- a. The appeal board must be held at a mutually agreeable time.
- b. **Good Faith:** Parties to the dispute must make a good faith effort to follow these steps or forfeit access to the appeal process.

- c. Process Concerns: If the student, instructor or chair has legitimate concerns about the appeal process, the dean of the college will work to alleviate or correct the problems.
- d. Subpoena: The appeal board does not have subpoena power.
- e. Evidence: Although the formal rules of evidence do not apply, every attempt will be made to be fair to both parties. The parties may offer exhibits and/or witnesses.
- f. Representation: The principals may not be represented by counsel or others.
- g. Burden of Proof: The student appellant has the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence (more probable than not), that such inappropriate grading procedures have occurred.

### **2-5. Grade Appeal Board Recommendations**

Within 15 working days of first convening, the appeal board, through its chair, will submit its recommendation in writing to the student, the instructor concerned, and the dean of the college.

Instructor Response: If the recommendation of the appeal board supports a change to the student's final grade, the instructor has five working days to notify the chair of the appeal board of his/her decision and action, with a copy to the dean of the college.

The final decision to change a grade lies with the instructor, except if:

- a. the instructor cannot or does not respond to the appeal board's recommendation within five working days
- b. or if the appeal board's findings determine prejudiced or other inappropriate grading practices by the instructor and the instructor declines to change the grade.

In these cases the final decision to change the grade lies with the dean. There is no further right of appeal.

Within 20 working days of the final decision involving an official grade appeal, the chair of the appeal board shall notify in writing the student, the instructor, the dean of the college, and the chair of the department concerned of the decision of the appeal board and the instructor's decision and action. When the final decision is made by the dean in the cases noted above, the dean shall implement the decision and shall make the proper written notification to the parties concerned.