

Proposal to the Senate Educational Policy Committee

Proposal: Update Incomplete Processing Timeline and Revise *Student Code* Section § 3-104

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Background

As indicated in the *Student Code*, a grade of Incomplete is an “approved extension of time to complete the final examination or other requirements of the course.” Currently Incompletes (I grades) are utilized when students have a small amount of work remaining in a course for a semester, typically a final exam or project that makes up 20% of their remaining work or less. Incompletes are approved by the student’s college/unit, typically in collaboration with instructors. Often students will only be granted an incomplete in one or two courses; if the request is for more coursework, the college/unit would discuss with the student other options or administrative accommodations that might be approved in extreme circumstances.

Through discussions with Policy and Issues Group members, each unit handles the approval of incomplete grades a bit differently as determined by their internal processes. Each college/unit provides a list of approved incomplete grades to the Office of the Registrar at the end of each semester prior to final grade entry.

The Student Success @ Illinois Policy and Issues Group (PIG) convened on this topic in Fall 2024. This group has representation from all undergraduate serving academic units and the Office of the Registrar. The Policy and Issues Group provided their recommendations to the Council of Undergraduate Deans (CoUD) at the end of Fall 2024. CoUD was supportive of this groups work and recommendations.

Recommendation

The Policy and Issues Group (PIG) reviewing the Incomplete process recommends amending the *Student Code* language regarding enforcement of a F (or U) by rule as follows (text to be removed is struck through; text to be added is underlined, text to be removed is ~~struck through~~):

§ 3-104 Other Grade Symbols in Use

Undergraduate Students

Only the dean of the student’s college, or, for nondegree students not admitted through a college, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost may authorize such extension of time in individual cases. A grade of “incomplete” that is not removed by the end of the first eight weeks of instruction in the next Fall or Spring semester ~~in which the student is enrolled on the Urbana-Champaign campus~~ becomes the grade of F (or U) by rule, depending on grading mode of the course. The exact date can be found on the Office of the Registrar Academic Calendars. ~~If the student receiving the incomplete grade does not reenroll on the Urbana-Champaign campus, the incomplete grade, if not removed, becomes an F (or U) by rule, after one calendar year.~~

Rationale/Reason for this change

The PIG discussed the changes to the *Code* to best support student success by limiting the length of time students have to submit remaining coursework in classes approved for an Incomplete (I grade) and for

faculty to enter grades for these courses. This update will ensure students complete the remaining work in a timely manner. Limiting the timeframe for completion of coursework will encourage better student outcomes rather than delaying completion of past coursework while also enrolled in new courses.

If a student takes time away from Illinois, this change will ensure there is administrative action that will not create a burden on the student, faculty, or administrative offices at the time of degree conferral, which is when many such cases are currently being caught. The change in this language also helps administratively to prevent I grades from remaining on a student record for longer than a semester, which creates challenges to grade entry. For example, the instructor of record is the only one who can easily update an incomplete grade, if that instructor leaves or is unavailable, it places the burden for reporting grades on the department who is unlikely to know the student's status in the course. This proposed revision does not prevent or exclude faculty from changing a grade for a student even after the I grade has been updated or administratively updated to F (or U) by rule. It also does not prevent colleges/units from approving extensions on an individual basis.

Administrative Action to Support

Pending approval of *Student Code* changes, the Office of the Registrar has also worked with the Policy and Issues Group to manage the I grade entry. An automated Banner process will run to change any outstanding I grades to F (or U) by rule that have not been updated as of the midpoint of the following semester. If a college/unit has approved of an extension beyond the midpoint of the course, they can supply the date and student information to the Office of the Registrar to avoid an F by rule from being entered before the approved date.