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## Proposal to the Senate Educational Policy Committee

### **PROPOSAL TITLE: Revision to the Incomplete Grade Policy for Graduate Students**

**SPONSOR:** Allison McKinney, Senior Director Academic Affairs, Graduate College (agrindly@illinois.edu).

**COLLEGE CONTACT:** John C. Hart, Executive Associate Dean, Graduate College (jch@illinois.edu).

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION:** This proposal seeks to revise the policy for incomplete grades for graduate students and the timing for the “F by Rule” process.

**JUSTIFICATION:** Faculty in various departments have expressed that the incomplete grade definition, as it is currently written, grants the student the ability to receive a grade of incomplete if requested and automatically gives the student until Reading Day of the following registered semester as the deadline for completion. This revision seeks to clarify the following:

1. The course instructor determines if an incomplete grade is an appropriate grade assignment for a student in the course.
2. The instructor may set a timeline for the completion of remaining requirements of the course.

In addition to clarifying the language, this proposal seeks to simplify the F by Rule deadline. For Graduate students, currently, “I” grades assigned in the Fall roll to a “F” shortly after Reading Day in the Spring semester if the student is registered. “I” grades that are assigned in the Spring or Summer semester roll to “F” shortly after Reading Day in the Fall semester if the student is registered. If the student does not register, the “I” becomes an F by Rule after one calendar year from the term in which it is assigned.

The timing of this process has produced some challenges both on implementation of the F by Rule grade roll, as well as students addressing “I” grades in a timely manner. The Graduate College reviewed a report of missing grades in Fall 2018, and discovered 787 outstanding “I” grades for graduate students. The majority of that number are grades assigned in the past 5 years (665).

The “I” grade has no impact on a student’s GPA or academic standing. We find students who have outstanding “I” grades on their academic record that have not been rolled to an “F” by Rule typically after a graduation audit or review of academic standing. In some cases, it has been years after the student received the initial grade, which complicates the situation further for the student.

This proposal seeks revise the timing for the “F by Rule” grade roll. The proposed timeline would be:

“I” grades assigned in Fall will become an F by Rule after Reading Day in the Spring.

“I” grades assigned in Spring will become an F by Rule after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Instruction in the following Fall semester.

“I” grades assigned in the Summer will become an F by Rule after Reading Day in the Fall.

Students with extenuating circumstances may utilize the Graduate College petition process to seek extensions for “I” grades. This is a current practice already in place.

Our goal in simplifying the timeline for the F by Rule process is to prompt the student to address the incomplete coursework as close to the term in which they took the course as possible.

#### **BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS:**

##### 1) Resources

- a. How does the unit intend to financially support this proposal? N/A
- b. How will the unit create capacity or surplus to appropriately resource this program? If applicable, what functions or programs will the unit no longer support to create capacity?
- c. Will the unit need to seek campus or other external resources? If so, please provide a summary of the sources and an indication of the approved support.
- d. Please provide a letter of acknowledgment from the college that outlines the financial arrangements for the proposed program.

##### 2) Resource Implications

The only implication this change has on resources, will be to require the Office of the Registrar to run one additional “F by Rule” grade roll per calendar year.

**DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE:** Fall 2019

#### **STATEMENT FOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY CATALOG:**

**Policy revision will appear in both the Graduate College Handbook and the Student Code. See Appendix A.**

**CLEARANCES:** (Clearances should include signatures and dates of approval. **These signatures must appear on a separate sheet.** If multiple departments or colleges are sponsoring the proposal, please add the appropriate signature lines below.)

Signatures:

Alison McKinney  
Unit Representative:

2/8/19  
Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
College Representative:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

[Signature]

\_\_\_\_\_  
Graduate College Representative:

2/8/19  
Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Council on Teacher Education Representative:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

## Appendix A

### Student Code Revision

<https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article3/part1/3-104/>

Incomplete. Approved extension of time to complete the final examination or other requirements of the course. Applies to both undergraduate and graduate students. Students who are assigned incomplete grades will be allowed to finish remaining course requirements without any additional fees. The final grade will be reported via the Online Grade Change system.)

#### *Undergraduate Students*

Only the dean of the student's college 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 semester in which the student is enrolled on the Urbana-Champaign campus becomes the grade of F. The exact date can be found on the Office of the Registrar Academic Calendars (<http://registrar.illinois.edu/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 after one calendar year. With the approval of the dean of his or her college, the student who has not made up an "incomplete" examination may be withdrawn from the course retroactively, provided such withdrawal is completed before the grade of "incomplete" automatically becomes a grade of F. In exceptional cases, a student who, because of absence for active military service, physical disability, or other sufficient cause, is unable to comply with the rule by removing the I grade within the specified time may be granted a limited extension by the dean of his or her college. A student whose status cannot be determined because of "incomplete" grades may register again only with the approval of the dean of his or her college. (See §§ 3-313 and 3-201.)

#### *Graduate Students*

A grade of "incomplete" may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor of the course to allow an extension of time to satisfy final exam requirements or other final course requirements. The period of time allowed to finish remaining course requirements will be set by the instructor and communicated to the student upon assignment of the "I" grade. The instructor may authorize such extension of time for a graduate student regardless of the level of the course. If no final grade is assigned by the deadlines described below, the grade becomes an "F" or "U" by rule, depending on grading mode of the course. Reasonable extensions of time are granted by the Graduate College for justifiable reasons. A student will not be certified for a degree with an Incomplete grade in the academic record.

- "I" grades assigned in Fall will become an F by Rule after Reading Day in the Spring.
- "I" grades assigned in Spring will become an F by Rule after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Instruction in the following Fall semester.
- "I" grades assigned in the Summer will become an F by Rule after Reading Day in the Fall.

## **Graduate College Handbook Revision**

<https://grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/2/chapter3/grading-system>

Incomplete. A grade of “incomplete” may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor of the course to allow an extension of time to satisfy final exam requirements or other final course requirements. The period of time allowed to finish remaining course requirements will be set by the instructor and communicated to the student upon assignment of the “I” grade. The instructor may authorize such extension of time for a graduate student regardless of the level of the course. If no final grade is assigned by the deadlines described below the grade becomes an “F” or “U” by rule, depending on grading mode of the course. Reasonable extensions of time are granted by the Graduate College for justifiable reasons. A student will not be certified for a degree with an Incomplete grade in the academic record.

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