

Policy and Procedures for the Incomplete (INC) Grade

The purpose of this memo is to outline the conditions and procedures concerning the incomplete grade (INC) for undergraduate and graduate courses.

The university's policy on the granting of the incomplete grade states

The grade incomplete (INC) is reported only where a portion of the assigned or required class work, or the final examination, has not been completed because of serious illness, extreme personal circumstances, or scholarly reasons at the request of the instructor. If your record is such that you would fail the course regardless of your missing work, you will fail.

Permission of the instructor must be obtained and the Incomplete Grade Contract must be completed.

*If you are receiving the grade of incomplete (INC), you are allowed **up to** one year in which to complete the course. The new grade must be submitted to the Registrar by the grading deadline for that semester, i.e., by the end of the **next fall** for the fall semester incompletes. The grade for any course not completed by this deadline will be converted to the grade of 'IF'.*

Please consider the following:

Signed incomplete contracts should be submitted to the Office of the Registrar **before** the end of the semester, i.e. before grades are posted. *A copy of the incomplete contract is attached to this email or you may obtain a copy from your department administrator or chair.*

As you consider giving a grade of INC, please keep the following in mind:

- INC grades can only be awarded **after the pass/fail/withdrawal deadline**. If a student requests an Incomplete before that deadline, please recommend that the student withdraw from the course.
- INC grades can only be awarded if the student was up-to-date with all required work and had **passing grades** in the course at the time he or she requested the incomplete.
- There was an identifiable unforeseen extenuating circumstance that interfered with a timely completion of the course.
- You cannot submit a grade of INC without the student agreeing to the terms of the contract.

It is your responsibility as an instructor to adhere to this policy and to follow the process. Please take the following steps before giving a student the grade of INC:

- Consult with the student. This is best done in person; however, phone or email consultation may also take place. Make sure you explain clearly what the student's current grade is, what work needs to be completed, and the time frame for completion of the work.
- Fill out the "Incomplete Grade Contract Form" and have this signed by the student, instructor, and the department chair in which the course is being taught. Give the student a copy, keep a copy for yourself and give a copy to your departmental administrator. If possible, have the original signed copy delivered to the Office of the Registrar **before** grades are due for the semester. The Office of the Registrar will record the grade.
- If the student cannot physically sign the contract or you are not on campus, utilize electronic communication with **UMass Boston email** to obtain student and department chair approval of the contract. Provide copies of the electronic communication with the contract submission **to the Registrar**.
- The university allows for a maximum of one year to complete the course work, but it is appropriate to impose a shorter time period. This should be clearly communicated to the student in writing.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: A student stopped attending my course at some point in the semester and has not communicated with me at all. Should I give this student an INC grade?

A: *No. At the end of add/drop you received a request from the Registrar's Office to notify that office of any student who was not attending. If you followed through with this notification, the Registrar would have posted a grade of NA (not attending) to the student's record. If the student stopped attending after the add/drop deadline, you should evaluate the student's work and give a grade accordingly (even if this means giving an F). If extenuating circumstances have prevented the student from attending the course or have prevented communication with the instructor, the instructor should notify the Dean of Students so that appropriate outreach can be made on behalf of the student regarding their entire academic standing.*

Q: Should I take the financial struggles of paying for an education into consideration?

A: *Financial struggles should only be considered when they have impacted a student's ability to complete the course after the deadline for withdrawal has passed and only if the student is passing the course.*

Q: A student would like to sit in on the course next semester in order to complete the coursework. Is that an appropriate way of making up the INC?

A: *Allowing a student to sit in on a course in the following semester is not an appropriate way for a student to complete the coursework. If sitting in on a course is required, then an incomplete grade should not be considered. The student may repeat the course in an official capacity at a later date, and the grade they receive will replace their initial grade in the calculation of their cumulative GPA.*

Q: I could not get in touch with the student. Can I enter a letter grade for the student and offer to change the grade at a later date?

A: *No. Changing a grade when a student completes work after grades are posted is allowed only if the student has received an INC grade. If the student cannot be reached, but you are aware of extenuating circumstances that may have impacted their ability to complete the course, then **you may request that the grade be changed to an INC after the close of the semester.** This will ensure that there is a clear arrangement for the student to complete the course work at a later date. The conversation with the student about expectations and timelines is a necessary part of giving an INC grade.*

Q: A student has missed a number of classes and is asking for an incomplete to have more time to finish the coursework. How should I evaluate this request?

A: *Evaluate this request with the guidelines in mind. If there is no serious illness or extreme personal situation that prevented the student from attending class, you should deny the request. Keep in mind that there are other options for students. For example, a student who cannot complete his or her classes in the semester can request a withdrawal from the University up to the last day of classes. Another option is to recommend that a student repeat the course. Our course re-take policy is liberal. This policy is posted on the Registrar's website.*

Q: Where do I get an incomplete contract?

A: *The incomplete contract forms have been distributed to each faculty member and to each department office. You may also contact your Dean's Office or the Office of Undergraduate Studies for copies of these forms.*

Q: A student has made up the INC work. What do I do now?

A: *If the student completed the work within one year, you will need to fill out a change of grade form (available from your department) and have it signed by your department chair. It should then be delivered to the Registrar's Office. (Note: the student cannot deliver the form.)*

Q: A student completed the work within one year but I missed the deadline for turning in the form. What do I do?

A: *If you are in CAPS, CEHD, CLA, CPCS, or CSM, bring the signed change-of-grade form to the Office of Undergraduate Studies with a letter explaining the situation. Faculty in CM should contact the Undergraduate Program Office; faculty in CNHS should contact the Associate Dean. Requests for changing grades of graduate courses should be directed to the Office of Graduate Studies.*

Q: I gave a student an incomplete but the student missed the one-year deadline to make up the work. Now the student has requested that I extend the deadline. Can I do this?

A: *In rare and exceptional circumstances, it is possible to waive the one-year deadline with permission from the appropriate office (see below). No instructor is obliged to pursue an extension. Permission for an extension should be obtained prior to allowing the student to complete the work. Extensions will not be approved if more than three years have passed since the date the INC grade was issued. For graduate courses, talk with the Office of Graduate Studies; undergraduate courses in CAPS, CEHD, CLA, CPCS and CSM, talk with the Office of Undergraduate Studies; CM faculty should contact the Undergraduate Program Office; CNHS faculty and staff should contact their Associate Dean.*

Q: I know a student is experiencing hardship for which an INC grade is permissible, but the student has not contacted me and I cannot reach them to agree to a contract for completion of the course. What grade should I post for this student so that the other grades of students in the class are processed?

A: *You should evaluate the student's work and give a grade accordingly (even if this means giving an F). After grades are posted, the student may work with the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the instructor to develop an appropriate plan that takes into consideration the circumstances endured by the student. If an incomplete is appropriate, then it is possible that the letter grade may be changed to an INC. Instructors should not make arrangements to change a letter grade at a later date on the basis of work completed after the close of the semester as a work around to posting an INC grade.*