

THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

September 8, 2008

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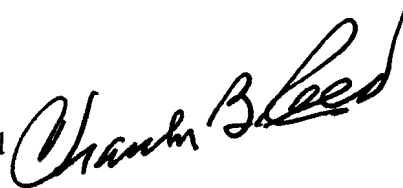
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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** CSU Presidents

**FROM:** Charles B. Reed  
Chancellor



**SUBJECT:** Grading Symbols, Minimum Standards  
Governing the Assignment of Grades,  
Policies on the Repetition of Courses,  
Policies on Academic Renewal, and  
Grade Appeals — Executive Order No. 1037

Attached is a copy of Executive Order No.1037 including policies on grading symbols, minimum standards governing the assignment of grades, academic renewal, and grade appeals; modifications to the policies on course withdrawals; and new policies on the repetition of courses.

Consolidating policies that were earlier detailed in three executive orders (792, 320, and 213), the new executive order is designed to facilitate a student's graduation through changes in policies on course withdrawals and course repeats.

In accordance with policy of the California State University, the campus president has the responsibility for implementing executive orders where applicable and for maintaining the campus repository and index for all executive orders.

If you have questions regarding this executive order, please call Dr. James Blackburn, Director of Enrollment Management Services at 562-951-4726, or Dr. Lorie Roth, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Academic Programs, at 562-951-4779.

CBR/nw

Attachment

cc: Executive Staff, Office of the Chancellor  
Provosts/Vice Presidents, Academic Affairs  
Vice Presidents, Student Affairs

**THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
Office of the Chancellor  
401 Golden Shore  
Long Beach, California 90802-4210  
(562) 951-4726**

**Executive Order:** 1037  
**Effective Date:** August 1, 2009  
**Supersedes:** Executive Order Nos. 792, 320, and 213  
**Title:** **Grading Symbols, Minimum Standards  
Governing the Assignment of Grades,  
Policies on the Repetition of Courses,  
Policies on Academic Renewal, and Grade Appeals**

This executive order is issued pursuant to Sections 40104 and 40104.1 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations and Chapter III, Sections 1 and 2 of the Standing Orders of the Board of Trustees of The California State University and is effective with the Fall 2009 academic term (semester or quarter).

This executive order establishes administrative grading symbols, minimum standards governing the assignment of grades, policies on the repetition of courses, policies on academic renewal, and provisions for appeal to ensure that the rights and responsibilities of faculty and students are properly recognized and protected.

***A. Administrative Grading Symbols***

The administrative grading symbols AU, I, IC, RD, RP, W, and WU along with the definitions, rules, and procedures governing their application shall be utilized as circumstances require on all California State University campuses. Use of the symbols AU and RD are optional with each campus, except that where utilized, the definition and circumstances of application shall be as provided herein. No other grading symbols except the traditional grades of A, B, C, D, or F; or the non-traditional grades of A, B, C, NC; or CR-NC (where specifically authorized) shall be employed without the express prior approval of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer. To the extent permitted by Section 40104.1 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, each campus may use plus and minus designations in combination with traditional letter grades of A, B, C, and D.

1. **AU (Audit).** The following catalog statement reflects the minimum requirements for enrollment as an auditor. Authority to permit enrollment in this status rests with each campus. When audit status is permitted, students may not change from credit to audit

later than the census date for the term for which the student is enrolled in the course for which such grades are to be awarded. If enrollment as an auditor is permitted, the following statement together with any further campus requirements shall appear in the campus catalog:

Enrollment as an auditor is subject to permission of the instructor provided that enrollment in a course as an auditor shall be permitted only after students otherwise eligible to enroll on a credit basis have had an opportunity to do so. Auditors are subject to the same fee structure as credit students and regular class attendance is expected. Once enrolled as an auditor, a student may not change to credit status unless such a change is requested no later than the last day to add classes in that term. A student who is enrolled for credit may not change to audit after the \_\_\_\_\_ week of instruction. (Insert appropriate number for campus.)

**2. I (Incomplete Authorized).** The “I” symbol shall be used only when the faculty member concludes that a clearly identifiable portion of course requirements cannot be met within the academic term for unforeseen reasons. An Incomplete shall not be assigned when it is necessary for the student to attend a major portion of the class when it is next offered. An Incomplete is also prohibited where the normal practice requires extension of course requirements beyond the close of a term, e.g., thesis or project type courses. In such cases, use of the “RP” symbol is required. The conditions for removal of the Incomplete shall be reduced to writing by the instructor and given to the student with a copy placed on file with the appropriate campus officer until the Incomplete is removed or the time limit for removal has passed.

A student may not re-enroll in a course for which he or she has received an “I” until that “I” has been converted to a grade other than “I”; e.g., A-F, IC.

An Incomplete shall be converted to the appropriate grade or symbol within one year following the end of the term during which it was assigned provided, however, an extension of the one-year time limit may be granted by petition for contingencies such as intervening military service and serious health or personal problems. Where campus policy requires assignment of final grades on the basis of numerous demonstrations of competency by the student, it may be appropriate for a faculty member to submit a letter grade to be assigned in the event the Incomplete is not made up within one year. If the Incomplete is not converted to a credit-bearing grade within the prescribed time limit, or any extension thereof, it shall be counted as a failing grade in calculating grade point average and progress points unless the faculty member has assigned another grade in accordance with campus policy.

The following statement shall appear in the campus catalog:

The symbol “I” (Incomplete Authorized) indicates that a portion of required course work has not been completed and evaluated in the prescribed time period due to unforeseen, but fully justified, reasons and that there is still a possibility of

earning credit. It is the responsibility of the student to bring pertinent information to the attention of the instructor and to determine from the instructor the remaining course requirements which must be satisfied to remove the Incomplete. A final grade is assigned when the work agreed upon has been completed and evaluated.

An "I" must normally be made up within one calendar year immediately following the end of the term during which it was assigned.

This limitation prevails whether or not the student maintains continuous enrollment. Failure to complete the assigned work will result in an "I" being converted to an "IC" symbol, unless the faculty member assigns a specific letter grade at the time the Incomplete is assigned, which would replace the "I" in the student's record after the calendar year deadline.

**3. IC (Incomplete Charged).** The "IC" symbol may be used when a student who received an authorized incomplete "I" has not completed the required course work within the allowed time limit. The "IC" replaces the "I" and is counted as a failing grade for grade point average and progress point computation.

**4. RD (Report Delayed).** The "RD" symbol may be used where a delay in the reporting of a grade is due to circumstances beyond the control of the student. The symbol may be assigned by the registrar only and, if assigned, shall be replaced by a substantive grading symbol as soon as possible. An "RD" shall not be used in calculating grade point average or progress points. Although no catalog statement is required, whenever the symbol is employed, an explanatory note shall be included in the transcript legend. The registrar shall notify both the instructor of record and the department chair within two weeks of the assignment of RD grades.

**5. RP (Report in Progress).** The "RP" symbol shall be used in connection with thesis, project, and similar courses in which assigned work frequently extends beyond a single academic term and may include enrollment in more than one term. The "RP" symbol shall be replaced with the appropriate final grade within one year of its assignment except for master's thesis enrollment, in which case the time limit shall be established by the appropriate campus authority. The president or designee may authorize extension of established time limits.

The following statement shall appear in the campus catalog:

The "RP" symbol is used in connection with courses that extend beyond one academic term. It indicates that work is in progress but that assignment of a final grade must await completion of additional work. Work is to be completed within one year except for graduate degree theses. (Insert campus statement describing the time limit for theses.)

**6. W (Withdrawal).** Withdrawal from a course (or courses) may be permitted, without restriction or penalty, during a time period established by the campus. However, this time period shall not extend beyond the census date. No symbol need be recorded in such instances. In connection with all other approved withdrawals, the “W” symbol shall be used.

**6.a.** Undergraduate students may withdraw from no more than 18 semester-units (27 quarter-units).

**6.b.** Campuses may elect to be more restrictive on withdrawals than the maxima listed above.

**6.c.** The limits apply only to units attempted at the campus.

**6.d.** Withdrawals after the census date and prior to the last twenty percent of instruction may be assigned only for serious and compelling reasons. Permission to withdraw during this time shall be granted only with the approval of the instructor and the department chair and/or dean as described by campus policy. All requests to withdraw under these circumstances and all approvals shall be documented as prescribed by the campus. The requests and approvals shall state the reasons for the withdrawal. Records of such approvals shall be maintained in accordance with the campus record retention policy.

**6.e.** Withdrawals shall not be permitted during the final twenty percent of instruction except in cases, such as accident or serious illness, where the cause of withdrawal is due to circumstances clearly beyond the student’s control and the assignment of an Incomplete is not practicable. Withdrawals of this sort may involve total withdrawal from the campus or may involve only one course, except that course grade and credit or an Incomplete may be assigned for courses in which sufficient work has been completed to permit an evaluation to be made. Requests for permission to withdraw under these circumstances shall be handled and filed as indicated in the preceding paragraph, except that such requests must also be approved by the academic administrator appointed by the president to act in such matters. Such withdrawals will not count against maximums provided for in 6.a.

A “W” shall not be used in calculating grade point average or progress points.

The following statement shall appear in the campus catalog:

The symbol “W” indicates that the student was permitted to withdraw from the course after the \_\_\_\_\_ (day/week) of instruction with the approval of the instructor and appropriate campus officials. It carries no connotation of quality of student performance and is not used in calculating grade point average or progress points.

In addition to this statement, the campus catalog shall include a description of the procedures to be followed in withdrawing from a class or from the campus. Such procedures shall be consistent with all applicable provisions of this executive order.

**6.f. WU (Withdrawal Unauthorized).** The symbol “WU” shall be used where a student, who is enrolled on the census date, does not officially withdraw from a course but fails to complete it. Its most common use is in those instances where a student has not completed sufficient course assignments or participated in sufficient course activity to make it possible, in the opinion of the instructor, to report satisfactory or unsatisfactory completion of the class by use of the letter grade (A-F). The instructor shall report the last known date of attendance by the student. The symbol “WU” shall be identified as a failing grade in the transcript legend and shall be counted as units attempted but not passed in computing the grade point average. In courses which are graded Credit/No Credit or in cases where the student has elected Credit/No Credit evaluation, use of the symbol “WU” is inappropriate and “NC” shall be used instead. The following statement shall appear in the campus catalog:

The symbol “WU” indicates that an enrolled student did not withdraw from the course and also failed to complete course requirements. It is used when, in the opinion of the instructor, completed assignments or course activities or both were insufficient to make normal evaluation of academic performance possible. For purposes of grade point average and progress point computation this symbol is equivalent to an “F.”

If local campus policy prescribes other instances where this symbol may be used, the foregoing statement shall be extended to cover such instances.

***B. Repetition of Courses***

- 1.** Undergraduate students may repeat courses only if they earned grades lower than a C.
- 2.** Course Repeats with “Grade Forgiveness” (Grade forgiveness is the circumstance in which the new grade replaces the former grade in terms of the calculation of GPA, etc.):
  - 2.a.** Undergraduate students may repeat up to 16 semester-units (24 quarter-units) with grade forgiveness.
  - 2.b.** Undergraduate students may repeat an individual course for grade forgiveness no more than two times.

2.c. Grade forgiveness shall not be applicable to courses for which the original grade was the result of a finding of academic dishonesty.

3. Course Repeats with “Grades Averaged”:

Campuses may permit undergraduate students to repeat an additional 12 semester-units (18 quarter-units), i.e., units in addition to the 16 semester-units (24 quarter-units) for which grade “replacement” is permitted. In such instances the repeat grade shall not replace the original grade; instead both grades shall be calculated into the student’s overall grade-point average.

4. Campuses may elect to be more restrictive on course repeats than the maxima listed above.

5. The limits apply only to units completed at the campus.

**C. Academic Renewal**

1. Under certain circumstances, a campus of the university may disregard up to two semester or three quarters of previous undergraduate coursework taken at any institution from all considerations associated with the requirements for a baccalaureate degree.

These circumstances are:

1.a. The student has formally requested such action and presented evidence that substantiates that the work in question is substandard and not representative of her/his current scholastic ability and/or performance level, and

1.b. The previous level of performance was due to extenuating circumstances, and

1.c. All degree requirements except the earning of at least a “C” (2.0) grade point average have or will soon have been met.

University policy regarding academic renewal is not intended to permit the improvement of a student’s grade point average beyond what is required for graduation.

2. Final determination, that one or more terms shall be disregarded, shall be based on careful review of evidence by a committee appointed by the president, which shall include the designee of the chief academic officer and consist of at least three members.

Such final determination shall be made only when:

**2.a.** Five years have elapsed since the most recent work to be disregarded was completed, and

**2.b.** The student has earned in residence at the campus since the most recent work being considered was completed:

**2.b.i.** 15 semester (22 quarter) units with at least a 3.0 GPA or

**2.b.ii** 30 semester (45 quarter) units with at least a 2.5 GPA or

**2.b.iii** 45 semester (67 quarter) units with at least a 2.0 GPA

When such action is taken, the student's record shall be annotated so that it is readily evident to users of the record, that NO work taken during the disregarded term(s), even if satisfactory, has been applied towards the meeting of degree requirements. However, all work must remain legible on the record.

If another institution has acted to remove coursework from consideration, such action shall be honored in terms of that institution's policy. But, elimination of any coursework's consideration shall reduce by one term the two semester/three quarter maximum on the application of academic renewal to an individual CSU student's record. Campuses may adopt more stringent policies with regard to academic renewal, but no more lenient policy maybe used regarding the removal of coursework being considered for the meeting of baccalaureate degree requirements.

#### ***D. Assignment of Grades and Grade Appeals***

The following principles support the minimum standards governing the assignment of grades and provisions for appeals:

1. Faculty have the sole right and responsibility to provide careful evaluation and timely assignment of appropriate grades. (Administrative grading symbols may be assigned only in accordance with the provisions of this executive order.)
2. There is a presumption that grades assigned are correct. It is the responsibility of anyone appealing an assigned grade to demonstrate otherwise.
3. In the absence of compelling reasons, such as instructor or clerical error, prejudice or capriciousness, the grade assigned by the instructor of record is to be considered final.
4. Students who believe that an appropriate grade has not been assigned should first seek to resolve the matter informally with the instructor of record. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the student may present his/her case to

the appropriate campus entity, have it reviewed and, where justified, receive a grade correction.

5. If the instructor of record does not assign a grade, or if he/she does not change an assigned grade when the necessity to do so has been established by appropriate campus procedures, it is the responsibility of other qualified faculty to do so.
6. "Qualified faculty" means one or more persons with academic training comparable to the instructor of record who are presently on the faculty at that campus.
7. Each campus faculty senate has authority and responsibility for providing policy and procedures for the proper implementation of the foregoing principles.
8. Each campus president is responsible for ensuring that the policies and procedures developed by the faculty senate are in conformance with the principles and provisions of this executive order and for ensuring that such established policies and procedures are carried out.

Each campus shall implement policy and procedures covering the assignment of grades and grade appeals which include *at least* the following provisions:

1. The time and manner of reporting course grades including provisions for assuring that such grades have been assigned by the instructor of record.
2. Circumstances under which the instructor of record may change a grade once assigned, and procedures for making such changes.
3. A means for preliminary review of potential appeals that may resolve differences before initiation of formal proceedings.
4. Grounds for which a grade appeal is permitted.
5. One or more committees for hearing grade appeals which shall provide safeguards to assure due process for both student and instructor. Such committees shall include student membership. Student members shall not participate in assignment of grades.
6. Procedures whereby grades are assigned by other qualified faculty in circumstances where the instructor of record does not do so, including those instances where a grade change is recommended by a grade appeals committee and the instructor of record does not carry out that recommendation.

7. Specification of time limits for completion of various steps in the appeal process and of the time period during which an appeal may be brought.
8. Description of the extent of the authority of appeal committee(s), including provisions which clearly limit grade changes to instances where there is a finding that the grade was improperly assigned.
9. Limitation of committee authority to actions which are consistent with other campus and system policy.
10. A statement that there is a presumption that grades assigned are correct. Thus, the burden of proof rests with the individual who is appealing.
11. Procedures for dealing with allegations of improper procedure.
12. Assignment of authority to revise policies and procedures for grade appeals to the campus faculty senate. The campus president is responsible for ensuring that such revisions conform to the principles and provisions of this executive order.
13. Provision for annual reporting to the campus president and campus faculty senate on the number and disposition of cases heard.

These policies and related procedures shall be published in a manner that ensures that all faculty and students have an opportunity to be aware of them (in class schedules, faculty manuals, student handbooks, etc.). While it is not necessary that policy and procedures be published in their entirety in generally circulated documents, such publications shall ensure that the students are aware that policy and procedures exist and where they may be obtained.

  
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Charles B. Reed, Chancellor

Dated: