



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

Graduate School Incomplete Grades Policy

Policy Name: Graduate School Incomplete Grades

Policy Purpose

This policy specifies how faculty can assign incomplete grades in graduate courses and how incomplete grades are resolved; the policy also specifies the impact on graduate student GPA and enrollment.

Applicability

This policy is applicable to all graduate faculty teaching graduate courses and all graduate students admitted to the Graduate School and graduate faculty. This policy does not apply to students who are exclusively admitted to the Quillen College of Medicine in pursuit of their M.D. or the Gatton College of Pharmacy in pursuit of their Pharm.D.

Responsible Official, Office, and Interpretation

The Dean of the Graduate School and Graduate Council are responsible for the review and revision of this policy. For questions about this policy, please contact the Dean of the Graduate School. The Provost, in consultation with the Office of University Counsel, has the final authority to interpret this policy.

Defined Terms

A defined term has a specific meaning within the context of this policy.

N/A

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Policy

1. Reasons to Assign an Incomplete Grade.

An instructor may assign a grade of incomplete (“I” grade) only when a student has successfully completed seventy-five percent (75%) of the required work for a course, but due to circumstances beyond the student’s control, the student is unable to complete course requirement(s). The “I” grade also indicates that the student has received consent from the instructor to complete the course requirements. The “I” grade cannot be used to allow a student to do additional work to raise a deficient grade or to repeat a course.

2. Assignment of Incomplete Grade.

To assign an “I” grade, an instructor must complete a “[Report on Assignment of Incomplete Grade](#)” with the Registrar’s Office. The report details the requirements necessary for the student to satisfactorily complete the course and provides details necessary should the instructor of record become unavailable before the coursework is complete.

3. Student Restrictions.

A student cannot withdraw from or drop a course after a grade of “I” has been assigned, unless the student provides information that there is extraordinary circumstances (e.g., serious medical issue or the like) to the Dean of Graduate School and the Dean of Students. The Dean of the Graduate School and the Dean of Students may, in their discretion, grant an exception in such cases. A student must not register for the course in which an “I” has been assigned for a second time until the “I” grade has been resolved. After the “I” has been changed to another grade, the student can retake the course if needed.

4. Deadlines.

The student must complete all outstanding course requirements within one calendar year from the time the “I” grade is awarded (e.g., If an “I” grade is assigned for a Fall 2030 course, the requirements must be completed and the grade submitted when grades are due for the Fall 2031 semester). The instructor may set an earlier date for completion of the course requirements.

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Upon completion of the outstanding requirements, the faculty member (or department chair if the faculty member is no longer at ETSU) must contact the Registrar to request a grade change no later than the deadline stated above.

5. Conversion to Failing Grade.

If the student does not complete course requirements before the expiration of one calendar year, the “I” grade will convert to an “F.” If a student wishes to appeal the grade of “F,” all appeals are governed by the [Graduate Student Grade Appeal Policy](#).

6. Extension.

In certain circumstances, a student may not be able to complete the Incomplete in the time allotted. To request an extension of time for an Incomplete grade, the faculty member of record or program coordinator can submit the request in writing with a rationale for the extension to the Dean of the Graduate School or designee. The Dean of the Graduate School or Dean’s designee will review and determine if an extension is warranted, and if approved, the Dean or designee will contact the Registrar’s office to extend the Incomplete for a specified amount of time.

7. Impact on GPA.

An “I” grade has no impact on the GPA until a grade has been assigned by the faculty member or converted to an “F” after one year. Pursuant to the [Graduate School Degree and Certificate Graduation and Transcript Requirements Policy](#), a student may not graduate if they have any incompletes noted on their transcripts.

Once a grade has been assigned or converted to replace the “I” grade, the GPA is calculated and adjusted retroactively (Refer to the [Graduate School Determination of Graduate Grade Point Average Policy](#)). A grade of “F,” either assigned by the instructor or converted after the deadline, may impact the student’s GPA such that they could be dismissed without a probationary term at the discretion of the Dean or the Dean’s designee. Any impact on the GPA that might impact a student’s being placed on probation or dismissed are subject to the [Graduate School Retention Standards Policy](#).

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8. Financial Aid.

It is the student's responsibility to contact the Office of Financial Aid about the implication of an "I" grade on their financial aid package. The student should also inquire about the implications for the financial aid package if the "I" grade converts to an "F."

Procedures

A student, faculty member, or program coordinator will submit a written request (email) to the Dean of the Graduate School to request an extension. This request should include a rationale for the extension and anticipated time for completion.

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Applicable Forms and Websites

N/A

Authority and Revisions

Authority: TCA § 49-8-203, et seq.

Previous Policy: This policy was formerly part of the Graduate School Retention Standards Policy.

The ETSU Board of Trustees is charged with policy making pursuant to TCA § 49-8-203, et seq. On March 24, 2017, the Board delegated its authority to ETSU's President to establish certain policies and procedures for educational program and other operations of the University, including this policy. The delegation of authority and required process for revision to this policy can be found on the [Policy Development and Rule Making Policy webpage](#).

To suggest a revision to this policy, please contact the responsible official indicated in this policy. Before a substantive change to the policy section may take effect, the requested changes must be: (1) approved by the responsible office; (2) reviewed by the Office of University Counsel for legal sufficiency; (3) posted for public comment; (4) approved by either Academic Council or University Council; and (5) approved by ETSU's President.

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