



Grading Policy

Riverland Policy #2.22

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and process for grading, grade appeals, and academic forgiveness.

APPLICABILITY:

Faculty members have the authority to establish course requirements and standards for expectations and the evaluation of student performance. Grades submitted by faculty to the Registrar's Office are presumed to be accurate. It should also be noted that in accordance with Minnesota State Policy and Minnesota State College Faculty Association Master Contract Language all faculty including full-time, part-time, adjunct, and concurrent enrollment faculty have the right to determine their own grading policy as stated in the syllabus for the course. Grades may reflect academic achievement, compliance with course expectations, and other standards, as determined solely by the faculty of record.

Grade Determination:

Evaluation of Performance

Evaluation of a student's performance is determined by the course faculty and cannot be appealed except as allowed in this policy.

Grading Criteria

The faculty shall establish the criteria used to evaluate a student's performance and communicate the criteria to the student in a written syllabus.

Amendments to Grading Criteria

The faculty has the right to alter the written grading criteria if the alteration:

1. is more generous,
2. does not disadvantage a student, and
3. is communicated in writing to all students.

Grade Submission

The faculty of a course shall submit a grade for each student who is not auditing or withdrawn from the course. Faculty have two business days following the last day of the course to submit grades. Final grade reporting is completed in Minnesota State eServices. The grades must be submitted by the deadline and in the manner designated by the Registrar's Office each semester.

Exception to Grade Deadline

The following circumstances allow assignment of grades prior to course completion:

Student or college-initiated withdrawal

After the drop period ends and prior to the withdrawal deadline (80% point of the course), a student may withdraw from a class. A final grade of W will be assigned. Administration could initiate a grade of W if deemed necessary during discipline procedures.

Last date of attendance reporting

Faculty are required to report students' non-attendance as soon as they are reasonably certain the student has not or will no longer attend. Grades of FN are assigned for students who have never attended/academically engaged (see definition below) and FW for students who attended/engaged at least one day. Students may still initiate a withdrawal in eServices to change their FN or FW grades to W through the end of the withdrawal period. The last date of attendance as reported by faculty will not change with the grade change.

Exceptions to Faculty Submitting Grades

Certain circumstances may permit the Registrar, a college administrator, or a designee to submit final grades. The Registrar shall assign final grades in the following circumstances:

- When faculty grade entry results in error or omission and the documentation in the Registrar's possession reflects a final grade.
- When approving a student's appeal for a late course withdrawal.
- In the absence of the faculty of record, a designee may be assigned to submit final grades to the Registrar's Office.

Grade Changes

Faculty may submit grade changes when a student's initial grade has changed. Grade changes are submitted through faculty eServices. A change of grade will be accepted by the Registrar's Office only if properly authorized by the faculty or at the discretion of the academic dean/designee if the faculty is not currently employed by the college. Grade changes will be accepted for up to two consecutive terms (not including summer). A grade change exceeding two consecutive terms requires academic dean approval but cannot exceed two calendar years from the original term of enrollment for the course. Changes will be accepted for I (incomplete), Z (grade unknown) and in the event of an error in the calculation of the original grade.

Letter Grades

The faculty of a student who is taking a course for a letter grade shall evaluate the student relative to the established expectations for the course using one of the following letter grades.

1. **Grade A.** A grade of "A" indicates that a student's performance was superior relative to the established expectations for the course.
2. **Grade B.** A grade of "B" indicates that a student's performance was above average relative to the established expectations for the course.
3. **Grade C.** A grade of "C" indicates that a student's performance was average relative to the established expectations for the course.
4. **Grade D.** A grade of "D" indicates that a student's performance was below average relative to the established expectations for the course.
5. **Grade F.** A grade of "F" indicates that a student's performance was inadequate relative to the established expectations for the course.

Pass or No Credit Grades

The faculty of a student who is taking a course for a pass or no credit grade shall submit one of the following grades for each student who has not withdrawn from the course.

1. **Grade P.** A grade of "P" or passing indicates that a student's performance was adequate relative to the established expectations for the course.
2. **Grade NC.** A grade of "NC" or no credit indicates that a student's performance was inadequate relative to the established expectations for the course.

Riverland Community College uses the following grading system and designated quality points for calculating a grade point average (GPA):

Letter Grade	Quality point(s)
A	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.00
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.00
D-	0.67
F	0.00

Letter Grade	Description
F	<u>Failure</u> - Awarded to students who complete the course but fail to achieve the course objectives or students who violate the college's academic integrity policy if the breach is deemed seriously enough to justify the sanction by the faculty and in accordance with the standards set forth in the syllabus. This grade counts in both credits attempted and earned and in the GPA.
FN	Failure for non-attendance - The student did not academically engage in a course (see definition below). The grade does count in credits attempted but not in the GPA. This grade is used to report attendance not to determine success.
FW	Failure to Withdraw - Student started academically engaging in a course, (see definition below) but then displayed an extended period (i.e. 3 weeks of a full-term course) of absence or lack of online course participation, without communication with the faculty. This grade counts in credits attempted but not in the GPA. This grade is used to report attendance not to determine success.
NC	No Credit - This grade counts in credits attempted and earned, but not in the GPA.
P	Pass - This grade counts in credits attempted and earned, but not in the GPA.
AU	Audit - Allows a student to register, pay and attend, but does not grant course credit. Audits are student initiated and must be declared within the first five days of the term. Audited courses do not count toward graduation and are not eligible for financial aid.
I	Incomplete - At the student's request and the faculty's discretion, students who have been unable to complete course requirements due to extenuating circumstances may receive an incomplete ("I"). No faculty member will assign a grade of "I" without a student first requesting the incomplete by providing documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Students must complete incomplete coursework within 20 business days of the following semester, not including summer session OR by the date stipulated by the granting faculty member (whichever date is earlier). If an incomplete is not resolved by the assigned deadline, a grade of F will be recorded on the student's transcript. Once the "F" grade is recorded, the course cannot be reopened, and the student must repeat the course. An incomplete received in a prerequisite subject must be satisfied before the student may take the advanced course unless permission is given by the faculty of the advanced course.
W	Withdrawal - Withdrawals are student initiated through Minnesota State eServices and if requested prior to the posted deadline per course will be granted except in cases where an "F" has already been posted as a result of an Academic Misconduct Violation. If a student wishes to withdraw after the deadline, the student can petition. This grade counts in credits attempted and earned, but not in the GPA.
Z	Grade for a class that is currently in progress.

Definition of Academic Engagement

The definition of "academic engagement" under 34 CFR 600.2 is as follows:

Active participation by a student in an instructional activity related to the student's course of study that **includes**, but not limited to:

- Attending asynchronous class, lecture, recitation, or field or laboratory activity, physically or online, where there is an opportunity for interaction between the faculty and students;
- Submitting an academic assignment;
- Taking an assessment or an exam;
- Participating in an interactive tutorial, webinar, or other interactive computer-assisted instruction;
- Participating in a study group, group project, or an online discussion that is assigned by the institution;
- Interacting with a faculty about academic matters.

The definition of academic engagement **does not** include activities where a student may be present, but not academically engaged, such as:

- Living in institutional housing or participating in a school meal plan;
- Logging into an online class or tutorial without any further participation;
- Participating in academic counseling or advising; or
- Participating in a student-organized study group.

FN/FW Grading - Timeframe for Usage:

FN – Failure to complete a course due to no attendance.

An "FN" grade is a transcribed grade on a student's transcript reflecting that they did not academically engage in a class as defined above.

- FN's are issued when the student has not attended any class sessions or has not academically engaged in their online course(s).
- FN's would not be issued during the drop/add period of any course during any semester or session.
- FN's would ONLY be issued the second (6th class day of the semester) and third weeks of the Fall and Spring semester, and the second week of a "late start", short term, or Summer Session class.
- FN's should be entered before 20% of the course has occurred; however, if a student has NEVER attended class, an FN grade MUST be assigned.
- FN's should be issued at the time the faculty makes the determination that the student has earned an FN grade.
- FN's do count in credits attempted but not in the GPA.

FW – Failure to complete a course due to an unofficial withdrawal.

An "FW" is a grade on a student's transcript reflecting attendance only. The student began to engage academically (defined above) but then displayed an extended period (i.e., 3 weeks of a full-term course) of absence or lack of online course participation, without communication with the faculty.

Recommendation: Prior to considering the issuing of an FW grade, make a referral to the Riverland Advising Department through the Early Alert System <https://www.riverland.edu/faculty-staff/>

- FW's would normally be issued starting the fourth week of the semester and the third week of "late start", short term, or Summer Session class. NOTE: if the course is shorter than three weeks, the faculty should use their discretion as to when to issue the FW grade.

- FW's should be taken into consideration if the student has missed three consecutive weeks of instruction or online course assignments.
- FW's should be issued at the time faculty makes the determination that the student has earned an FW grade.
- FW's should be entered by the last day to withdraw from the course. If a student stop engaging academically after that date, the student should earn the calculated letter grade.
- FW's do count in credits attempted but not in the GPA.

Assignment of an Incomplete:

At the faculty's discretion, students who have been unable to complete course requirements due to extenuating circumstances may receive an incomplete ("I"). No faculty member will assign a grade of "I" without a student first requesting the incomplete, assigning a required completion date (no later than 20 business days into the following term), and submitting documentation to the registration department.

The following criteria must apply before consent for an incomplete may be given.

1. The student must have completed enough of the course work to potentially earn a passing grade if an incomplete is granted.
2. The student must be able to complete the remaining requirements of the course without direct instruction or supervision.

Students must complete incomplete coursework within 20 business days of the following semester, not including summer session OR by the date stipulated by the granting faculty member (whichever date is earlier). Faculty submit documentation to the Registrar's Office as defined in the Incomplete Grading Procedure 2.22.1. If an incomplete is not resolved, a grade of F will be recorded on the student's transcript. Once the "F" grade is recorded, the course cannot be reopened, and the student must repeat the course. An incomplete received in a prerequisite subject must be satisfied before the student may take the advanced course unless permission is given by the faculty of the advanced course.

Communicating Grades:

Posting Grades

Faculty may post grades provided a code is used that is identifiable only to the student and faculty. Posted grades may not contain the student's name, ID number, or social security number.

Access to Grades

Students access their official grades via eServices under the Academic Records tab.

Academic Honors:

Dean's List

A student who completes 6 or more credits with a semester GPA of 3.25-3.74 will be included on the Dean's List. An email of acknowledgement will be sent to each student on the list.

President's List

A student who completes 6 or more credits with a semester GPA of 3.75 or higher, will be included on the President's List. An email of acknowledgement will be sent to each student on the list.

Excluded Credits

The following credits will not be included to determine eligibility for academic honors:

1. Credits taken for audit;
2. Credits from which the student withdrew; and
3. Credits that are currently in incomplete status.

Appealing Grades:

Grounds for a Course Final Grade Appeal

Students are responsible for accessing their final grades using eServices on the Riverland web site. No grade appeal may be made until the official course final grade is posted on the student's record.

Students must contact the instructor about the grade award before an appeal can be filed and provide documentation of confirmation or meeting with the instructor resulted in a refusal by the instructor to change the grade.

Documentation must also include one or more of the following:

- Evidence is provided of an error in grade calculation.
- The criteria or methodology for grade determination has not been provided to students either in the syllabus or by the time a final grade is assigned.
- The standard for evaluation of student academic performance has not been applied in accordance with the syllabus.

If the student believes that a grade received is based upon discrimination, or sexual harassment, as defined in the student handbook/college policy, the student should complete the report complaint form immediately (<https://www.riverland.edu/about-riverland/reporting-misconduct/report-complaint/>).

The Appeal Process

If students believe that they have grounds for appealing a grade issued by an instructor, then the following procedures must be followed:

Step One

A student, who has questions about a grade received in a course, should seek to resolve the issue by first consulting with the instructor within ten (10) business days of the posting of the grade on the official student record. The student must notify the instructor about their grade concerns, and such notification must be dated no later than ten business days of the posting of the grade on the official student record. Instructors have ten business days to respond. If no response, the appeal moves to Step Three.

Step Two

If the issue has not been resolved after consultation with the instructor, then the student may appeal the decision to the faculty member's dean. The student must:

- Submit a written grade appeal form (<https://www.riverland.edu/about-riverland/reporting-misconduct/report-complaint/>) to the appropriate dean within ten (10) business days following his/her consultation with the instructor.
- Provide clear documentation that demonstrates grounds for the appeal. Documentation may be in the form of e-mail correspondence, graded assignments, proof of timely submission, the course syllabus, etc.
- Provide evidence that his/her level of achievement is not supported by the grade awarded.

If the evidence appears compelling, the dean will forward the student's written statement to the instructor for a response. The instructor will either provide a written response within ten (10) business days to the dean supporting or denying the appeal or request to meet with the dean and the student.

If the evidence is not compelling, the dean will provide a written response to the student within ten (10) business days and will also notify the instructor that the student's appeal was received and denied.

The dean may request an appeal meeting that includes the student and the instructor, but the instructor is not obligated to participate in such a meeting. The instructor is entitled to union representation or a witness during such a meeting. In the event that a meeting is requested by either the instructor or dean and is scheduled, the student may invite an advocate to participate. The dean will render a decision to the student and faculty in writing within ten (10) business days of the appeal meeting with the student and instructor.

Step Three

Following the outcome of a grade appeal with the dean, a student may request an appeal review before the Vice President of Academics & Innovation. The request for an appeal must be submitted in writing to the Vice President of Academics & Innovation within ten (10) business days of the date of notification of the appeal decision by the dean of the instructor in Step Two. Failure to file an appeal or request an extension in a timely manner constitutes a waiver of the right to an appeal.

The Vice President of Academics & Innovation will review the request for an appeal review and will determine if the appeal has merit. The Vice President of Academics & Innovation may schedule an appeal review meeting between the student, the instructor, the dean, but the instructor is not obligated to participate in such a meeting. The instructor is entitled to union representation or a witness during such a meeting. A student's advisor or advocate may participate in the meeting. The Vice President of Academics & Innovation will render a decision to the student and faculty in writing within ten (10) business days of the appeal review meeting. The Vice President's decision is final.

Treatment of Grades in Assessing Satisfactory Academic Progress:

Audited Courses: Audited courses (AU) are not funded by financial aid and are not included in any financial aid satisfactory academic progress measurements.

Completed Credits: Credits that include A, B, C, D, and P as well as shaded grading. They do not include F (fail), FN (failure for non-attendance), FW (failure to withdraw), I (incomplete), W (withdraw), AU (audit), NC (no credit), Z (grade not yet entered), or drops (classes dropped during the drop/add period). Completed credits may qualify for retroactive payment of financial aid.

Consortium Credits: Credits for which a student is registered at another college which are accepted by Riverland for the purposes of processing financial aid are to be included for purposes of calculating satisfactory academic progress (cumulative GPA, completion percentage, and maximum time-frame calculations).

Credits Attempted but Not Successfully Completed: Credits for which a student receives a letter grade of I, NC, W, FN, FW, F, and Z shall be treated as credits attempted but not successfully completed. Audited courses (AU) are not counted as credits attempted.

Earned Credits: Successfully completed credits that count toward the required percentage of completion. Earned credits include only A, B, C, D, and P (pass) as well as shaded grading.

Academic Forgiveness: Credits for which students have been granted academic forgiveness shall be recorded and retained in the Student Data System in such a way that they will be included in both the qualitative and/or quantitative measurements of financial aid satisfactory academic progress. Academic Forgiveness will not remove the letter grade from the student's transcript, but the grade will no longer be calculated in the GPA.

Grade Point Average (GPA): GPA is the quotient of the student's grade point total divided by the grade point credits. "P" does not carry a grade point value and as such is not calculated in the GPA. A "P" will neither raise nor lower a student's GPA. However, "P" counts toward registered and completed credits.

Grade Points: A letter grade is assigned at the end of the semester for each course in which the student is enrolled. A grade point value for each credit in the course is assigned to each letter grade. Only grades of A, B, C, D, and F (and shaded grading) carry grade point value and shall be included in the GPA calculation.

Grade Point Total: The sum of grade points earned as determined by multiplying the grade point value of the grade by the number of course credits.

Incompletes: Grades of "I" do not contribute to the GPA calculation but do contribute to the completion percentage calculation.

Remedial/Developmental Courses: Credits awarded for remedial or developmental course work (below 100 level) shall be included in the qualitative and quantitative percentage measurement of satisfactory academic progress. Students may receive financial aid for these credits up to a maximum of 30 semester credit hours. Up to 30 remedial and developmental credits shall be excluded from maximum time frame calculation.

Repeated Courses: In order to successfully complete a course as defined by program requirements, a student may repeat a course. Repeating a course will not remove previous attempts or grades from the student's transcript. The best grade will be the grade used in calculating the GPA. All repeated credits are included in the completion percentage calculation for satisfactory academic progress and are taken into consideration when calculating maximum time frame. A student shall not be permitted to receive financial aid for more than one repetition of a previously passed course. In order for repeated courses to be calculated into a student's GPA, a passing grade must be earned. Repeating a course will not remove previously posted Satisfactory Academic Progress notations on the student's transcript.

Successfully Completed Credits: Credits for which a student receives a letter grade of A, B, C, D, and P are included in the calculation of cumulative completion percentage of credits successfully completed.

Transfer Credits: Transfer credits are credits earned at another college which are accepted by Riverland. Transfer credits accepted by Riverland and applied to the student's program requirements shall be counted as credits attempted and completed for calculation of cumulative completion percentage. Grades associated with these credits shall not be used in calculating cumulative GPA. Transfer credits will be counted when calculating the 150% timeframe if the credits apply towards the student's current degree, diploma, or certificate.

Credit for Prior Learning: Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) offers students a way to earn credit for verifiable college-level learning acquired through life or work experience. Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is the process by which a student's learning from experience is assessed and evaluated for purposes of granting credit certification, or advanced standing toward further education or training. More details and information on CPL is available online at <https://www.riverland.edu/academics/credit-for-prior-learning/>. The detailed procedure is located: <https://www.riverland.edu/about-riverland/policies-and-procedures/credit-for-prior-learning-procedure/>

Withdrawals: Credits for which a grade of "W" is received are considered attempted credits but not successfully completed credits for the purpose of monitoring satisfactory academic progress. A "W" does not impact GPA but does negatively impact the cumulative completion percentage.

SCOPE: Faculty, students.

DEFINITIONS: *See above.*

DOES THIS POLICY HAVE A PROCEDURE? Yes

Date of Implementation: November 8, 2018

Date of Adoption: November 8, 2018

Responsible Division / Author: Student Affairs/ Dean of Students/Vice President of Strategic Enrollment and Equity

Date & Subject of Revisions: February 2021; April 2024