



AOP 12.12 CREDIT AND GRADES

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Academic Operating Policy and Procedure (AOP) is to provide a further understanding of the policies and procedures dealing with credit and grades at Mississippi State University.

DEFINITIONS

Credit hour = “The amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement.”¹ All student work should align to intended student learning outcomes.

Contact hour = Time allotted for student engagement with course content and instruction

Clock time = Number of minutes or hours allotted for contact hours

Method of Instruction = format of instruction for the class (described in the *UCCC Guide & Format*)

POLICY/PROCEDURE

Section A Credits and Grades

All credits earned at Mississippi State University are in semester hours. Credit hours must be awarded in the semester during which they were earned. One semester hour is defined as requiring at least 50 contact minutes of direct instruction and 100 contact minutes of indirect instruction per week for 15 weeks (please refer to the section “Credit Hour” in the *UCCC Guide & Format* for additional guidance). All instruction should align to intended learning outcomes.

Courses offered in shortened formats must increase weekly instructional time to keep the same total number of contact hours as in the traditional 15-week term. Any department offering a shortened-format course for the first time must submit a course modification proposal through departmental and college/school course and curricula committees and the University Committee on Courses and Curricula (UCCC) for approval. The UCCC is responsible for the guidelines for approval of shortened-format courses.

Departments may elect to teach shortened-format courses. These can be part of a faculty member’s regular teaching assignment and will not be subject to additional compensation in this instance. In cases where the inclusion of a shortened-format course is above the normal

¹ SACSCOC policy based on the federal definitions: <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/Credit-Hours.pdf>

workload, the faculty member may be eligible for additional compensation. Appropriate faculty salary for teaching a shortened-format course is described in [AOP 13.12 Intersession Teaching](#).

Year or quarter hours transferred from another institution are converted into semester hours for purposes of uniformity in determining graduation requirements.

Transfer credits are readily accepted from institutions accredited by or in candidate status with a U.S. Department of Education recognized agency, such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. It is the responsibility of colleges (and schools) to set the standards for using “D” grades to meet program of study requirements.

Credit from non-U.S. institutions may be accepted once reviewed by the appropriate academic department, but is not articulated directly to MSU courses. Non-U.S. institution courses may be approved to substitute for degree requirements.

Credit by examination and evaluated military service credit are accepted for academic credit as defined in [AOP 12.11 Degree Requirements - Undergraduate](#).

The class work of the student will be evaluated according to the following:

Grade		Quality Points Per Credit Hour
A	Excellent	4
B	Good	3
C	Satisfactory	2
D	Poor	1
F	Failure	0
XF	Failure – Honor Code	0
GDP	Grade Determination Pending – Honor Code	--
I	Incomplete	--
S	Satisfactory	--
U	Unsatisfactory	--
NG	No Grade (assigned by Registrar)	--
W	Withdrawn without Penalty	--
WI	Permanent Incomplete	--

The quality-point average shall be determined on the basis of semester hours scheduled and rescheduled in which grades of “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” and “F” or the “XF” disciplinary sanction are recorded. However, a student may not earn credits or quality points for a non-repeatable course or its equivalent in which he or she has already earned a grade of “A.” Any “I,” “GDP,” and “NG” grades must be resolved before a student can be awarded an academic credential. Prime grades are assigned for basic and intermediate courses. Credits from these courses count toward the credit hours attempted, but the final grade is not calculated in a student’s grade point average. Undergraduate students may elect to have a limited number of course grades excluded from the calculation of their GPA (see AOP 12.20 Undergraduate Course Grade Forgiveness and Repeating a Course).

[AOP 13.14 Grade Appeals and Academic Review Board](#) contains the grade appeal procedure for

students.

A grade of “I” (Incomplete) may be submitted in lieu of a final grade when the student, because of illness, death in the immediate family, or similar circumstances beyond their control, is unable to complete the course requirements or to take final examinations. A grade of “I” will not be submitted for reasons other than previously described. Except for circumstances noted above, an “I” grade will not be given to extend the semester so that a student may complete a required assignment(s).

Undergraduate students who receive an “I” grade must complete all work within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the student’s next enrollment. A student who receives an “I” grade may make up only that part of course work not completed because of the emergency. If a grade of “I” is not resolved into a passing grade within the allotted time, the grade becomes an “F.” Once a grade of “I” has been converted to an “F” because of the student’s failure to complete the necessary course work or a lapse of the allowable time, no additional grade change will be allowed except under extreme circumstance(s) as recommended by the academic deans and approved by the Provost and Executive Vice President.

If an undergraduate student has not enrolled in the university within a year of receiving a grade of “I,” the “I” will be converted to a permanent grade of “WI” and the student will not have the opportunity to change that grade.

Graduate students who receive a grade of “I” must complete all work no later than the last day of class of the next semester (excluding summer) whether or not the student is enrolled. Failure of graduate students to remove an “I” grade during the specified time will result in an automatic grade of “F.” Once a grade of “I” has been converted to an “F” because of a student’s failure to complete the necessary course work or a lapse of the allowable time, no additional grade change will be allowed except under extreme circumstance(s) as recommended by the academic deans and approved by the Provost and Executive Vice President. “I” grades are not permitted for thesis and dissertation research credits.

Section B Minimum Course Competencies

A student may be required to master certain minimum competencies, referred to in some programs such as the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine as “threshold events” to allow a student to meet and pass course requirements. For a course that requires minimum competencies the following must be clearly articulated:

- i) The syllabus must clearly document the conditions for minimum competencies,
- ii) The instructor must explain the minimum competency requirements to the students on the first day the class meets,

- iii) Offer a second chance at any attempted failed competencies during the course. In the event that there is only a one-time assessment of a competency given at the end of a course, laboratory exercise or clinical rotation, the final grade may be withheld where the Registrar will assign a no grade (NG) until the next available opportunity to offer a repeat of the failed competency. The repeat opportunity must be provided, and a final grade entered prior to the next semester in which the student enrolls.
- iv) Provide catalog description to include appropriate language that minimum competencies must be met,
- v) Whenever possible, it is recommended to split apart the competency component into a standalone course,
- vi) Courses requiring a minimum competency to pass will be reviewed by the respective College Dean.

REVIEW

This AOP will be reviewed every four years (or whenever circumstances require an earlier review) by the University Registrar with recommendations for revision presented to the Provost and Executive Vice President.

REVIEWED BY:

/s/ Peter Ryan 06/26/2024
Executive Vice Provost Date

/s/ David Shaw 07/08/2024
Provost and Executive Vice President Date

/s/ Robert Banik 11/08/2024
President, Robert Holland Faculty Senate Date

/s/ Tracey N. Baham 12/06/2024
Associate Vice President, Institutional Strategy & Effectiveness Date

/s/ Joan Lucas 02/13/2025
General Counsel Date

APPROVED BY:

/s/ Mark E. Keenum 02/24/2025
President Date