

Spring 1, 2019, grades due soon! Guidance on Incomplete grades

Incompletes are tricky business. Webster has several resources available to help faculty determine when/if an Incomplete grade is appropriate. And, if faculty prefer to ask someone for assistance and/or clarification, the teams in the Academic Advising Center and the Academic Resource Center are happy to help!

Some common questions people ask are below:

- 1) I have a student who has not attended class or completed any work for several weeks? Is an Incomplete appropriate?
- 2) I have a student who is missing most of the required work? Is an Incomplete appropriate?
- 3) I have a student who plagiarized a major paper. Is an Incomplete appropriate?
- 4) I have a student who will need to take the class again in the Fall in order to complete all of the content due to extenuating circumstances. Should I file an Incomplete for this semester?

In all of these cases, the answer is **no, an Incomplete is not appropriate**. Do not submit an Incomplete as the students' grades or leave the students' grade as In Progress in these situations. Instead, submit the appropriate earned grade for the students. If the students then contact you to discuss the grade after it is posted and you want to offer opportunities for the students to successfully complete the course, you still have options!

Feel free to reach out to the teams in the Academic Advising Center or the Academic Resource Center for assistance and to discuss those options.

Some faculty question why it matters whether Incomplete grades are applied or that In Progress grades are left in these situations. In short, these approaches can harm a student's academic progress, course sequencing, persistence, and graduation. Therefore, the following reminders are important:

- 1) **Do not leave In Progress (IP) grades in the system.** All graduate and undergraduate Spring 1, 2019, courses grades are due by Friday, March 15.
- 2) Incomplete grades should be used sparingly and *only* when a student has completed a majority of the coursework and has agreed to the remaining requirements and timeline.
- 3) **An electronic Incomplete Grade Form must be submitted when an Incomplete grade is posted.** This form has been updated to provide more clarity for faculty and the Registrar's Office regarding dates. To learn how to access the electronic Incomplete Grade Form, [access these directions](#).

The Registrar's Office needs these forms to process grade changes as determined by the faculty of record, and other offices use the information on the forms to ensure that students have the necessary information and reminders. The Registrar's Office is posting the forms in the students' Student Success Portal, powered by Starfish, folders so that faculty and staff members can access the information and appropriately assist students.

- 4) Review the [guidance](#) regarding Incompletes to ensure that Incompletes are only being used in appropriate situations. The best practices for using the electronic Incomplete Grade Form are below:

Requirements	Best Practice
Student biographical information	Electronic form will autofill this information

Student's remaining requirements	No more than one or two remaining assignments with their due dates, deadlines, grading criteria, and course grading scale
Deadline for submission of assignments to faculty member	Remaining coursework completion within one term or semester
Date Registrar's Office will change grade to alternate grade	Date in advance of which faculty member will have student work graded and new grade submitted, if applicable; otherwise, the alternate grade will be applied * If an extension is offered to the student, make a Note in the Student Success Portal so that the Registrar's Office knows to defer the grade change until the extension passes.
Alternate grade	Grade student will have earned without the completion of the remaining requirements

When issuing an Incomplete grade, the faculty member must explicitly state the commitment of the student and the faculty member. The faculty of record is expected to grade submitted work and post a final grade, using a Change of Grade Form, in a timely manner.

Students should not be awarded Incompletes in lieu of earning failing grades. If the student stops attending but fails to withdraw properly, the faculty of record should assign a student's earned grade and/or a WF, not an Incomplete. Incompletes should also not be awarded when faculty members have recommended students to the Plagiarism Prevention Program (PPP).

Please also note that, if a faculty member needs the student to have continued access to WorldClassRoom in order to complete the course and resolve the Incomplete, the faculty member must forward the confirmation email received after completing the electronic Incomplete Grade Form to askfdc@webster.edu to request that access.

Student Success Portal, powered by Starfish, features

In order to improve tracking and successful resolution of Incomplete grades, we are leveraging features available in the [Student Success Portal](#), powered by Starfish, including the following:

- 1) Submitted electronic Incomplete Grade Forms are being uploaded into the Student Success Portal so that faculty and staff members may access the forms and the information they contain.
- 2) Notes regarding changes to the original agreement for Incomplete grades (i.e., extended deadlines) and/or administrative changes (i.e., the grade being updated) are being tracked in the Student Success Portal. Faculty members are encouraged to make notes regarding students' progress with their Incompletes and any changes to the original agreement.
- 3) A Concerning Grades: Incomplete (I) system flag is raised when an Incomplete is posted, automatically sending a message to each student who has one or more Incomplete grade posted. This flag remains active until the student's Incomplete grade(s) change to an earned or administrative grade.

By more closely monitoring Incompletes and their resolutions and ensuring that all grades are posted in a timely manner, Webster can help keep students on track to meet their academic goals.