

# GRADES

All grades are based solely on work completed during the term a course is offered, except in the case of a grade issued to replace an incomplete, as authorized by the General Studies Committee on Academic Standing or the Postbac Premedical Committee.

## Letter Grades

The letter grading system within Columbia's undergraduate colleges is as follows: A, excellent; B, good; C, fair; D, poor but passing; F, failure (a final grade, not subject to reexamination). Plus and minus grades are also used, except with grades of D or F. No work with a grade of D will be credited toward the major unless otherwise noted by a department in its official policies. For Postbac Premed students and undergraduate prehealth students, grades in required preprofessional courses below C do not satisfy those requirements.

## Grade Point Average (GPA)

The Registrar calculates semester as well as cumulative grade point averages based on the number of points per class. The GPA is used to assess a student's academic progress as well as to determine a student's eligibility for certain honors such as the Dean's List or the Honor Society. The GPA is printed on all official Columbia transcripts. GPAs are computed on the following scale:

A+ = 4.33	B+ = 3.33	C+ = 2.33	D = 1.00
A = 4.00	B = 3.00	C = 2.00	F = 0.00
A- = 3.67	B- = 2.67	C- = 1.67	

When the Registrar calculates the GPA, courses are weighted by the number of points they carry. Courses that cannot be credited toward the degree are not included in the GPA. For repeated courses, only the grade earned for the first attempt will be calculated into the grade point average. In cases where the first attempt was an F, both grades will be factored into the grade point average.

**Note for Postbac Premed students:** Where a Postbac has repeated a required course, the Postbac Premed Program averages in both attempts when it conducts its academic review. Courses outside math and science are excluded from consideration for the purpose of academic review. Postbacs should consult the bulletin sections on [Academic Review](#) for a statement about GPA requirements for continued enrollment in the Postbac Program. Similarly, the sections on the requirements for the [Certificate in the Premedical Sciences](#) and eligibility requirements for linkage all include statements concerning the GPA.

## Grade Appeals and Grade Changes

Assessment of a student's performance in a course is solely at the instructor's discretion. When a student feels a grade appeal is warranted, the student should first speak with the instructor of the course in order to understand how the evaluation was derived or to clarify other specific concerns. If dissatisfied with the explanation or uncomfortable broaching this matter with the instructor, the student should speak with the director of undergraduate studies or, if appropriate, the chair of the relevant department.

Deans and GS advisors can counsel a student on whether and how to approach an instructor about a grade appeal; however, they do not arbitrate grade disputes. Students should keep their GS advisors informed of any pending grade disputes or appeals, as the Office of the

Dean of Students can help to expedite a response from a faculty member or department.

If the student is unable to resolve the matter to his or her satisfaction and believes that a procedural issue is involved, the student should bring the matter to the attention of the GS Dean of Academic Affairs who will work with the student and the faculty member to determine whether there has been a procedural breach and, if so, take immediate steps to remedy the matter. If relevant faculty other than the instructor, in consultation with GS Academic Affairs, decide that the grade or other academic evaluation was appropriate, given class assignments and circumstances, the student will be informed and the decision will be final.

The statute of limitations on final grade appeals is three months from the end of the semester in which the course was taken.

## Pass/D/Fail Option

The purpose of the Pass/D/Fail (P/D/F) option is to encourage undergraduate students to take courses outside their fields of specialization without concern for the grade. Beginning with the Spring 2008 term, undergraduate students may choose the P/D/F option for only one course per term, including the summer term. Courses given only on a P/F basis will not count toward the six-course limit. Apart from those courses offered only on a P/F basis, Postbac Premed students cannot choose the P/D/F option for math and science courses with the sole exception of Math W1003 (College Algebra & Analytic Geometry).

## Electing a Course for Pass/D/Fail

- Undergraduates within the School of General Studies may elect the Pass/D/Fail (P/D/F) option for up to six courses, for a total of 18 points, but no more than one course per semester may be selected for this option.
- The grading option for students who register for a course P/D/F when they have exceeded the number of allowable P/D/F will revert to the letter-grade option.
- When the P/D/F option is elected for a particular course, grades of C- or above are converted to a Pass.

The P/D/F option cannot be elected for the following specific courses, and/or courses administered by the Committee on the Core, whether or not they are taken to fulfill GS core requirements:

- Art Humanities: UN1121
- Contemporary Civilization: CC/GS1101-CC/GS1102
- Foreign language courses (rare exceptions may apply; consult with your advisor)
- Foundations of Science: UN1212
- Frontiers of Science: CC1000
- Literature Humanities: CC/GS1001-CC/GS1002
- Music Humanities: UN1123
- University Writing: ENGL GS1010 or ENGL GS1014

When considering the P/D/F option, students should be aware that courses with the mark of P

- cannot be used to satisfy a GS Core requirement;
- cannot be used to satisfy a major or concentration requirement, including related courses, unless otherwise noted by the department in its written policies;
- cannot be used to satisfy science or math courses in fulfillment of premedical requirements;

- are not taken into account when calculating a student's GPA; the grades of D and F will be so used.

Students may elect the P/D/F option during registration. Students may change a P/D/F course to a letter-graded course or a letter-graded course to a P/D/F course by clicking the relevant link in SSOL by the eleventh week of the term.

The P/D/F option, including the opportunity to uncover a Pass, is only available to undergraduate students in the School of General Studies and not to students in the Postbaccalaureate Premedical Program.

## Uncovering the Mark of Pass

Beginning with courses taken in the Fall 2007 semester, students are allowed to uncover a grade of Pass within two weeks of the start of the semester immediately following the term in which the grade of Pass was received. Students have until the end of the change of program period of the following term to uncover the grade of Pass in SSOL. In all cases, GS students must finalize such requests by the time they apply for graduation. GS Seniors graduating in May who wish to uncover the mark of Pass for their spring-term courses must do so by the Friday of Commencement week.

An uncovered grade may be used to satisfy a core requirement with the exception of courses administered by the Committee on the Core, and/or other restricted courses.

In consultation with the major department, an uncovered grade may be used to satisfy a major requirement.

**Note:** Whether or not a student uncovers the P, the P/D/F option may only be chosen six times.

**Note:** Once a student has chosen to uncover a grade, the Pass cannot be reinstated.

## Withdrawals and Administrative Referral

### Unofficial Withdrawal (UW)

As of Spring 2014, this grading option is no longer available for School of General Studies students.

### Withdrawal (W)

Students are not permitted to have a course deleted from their academic record after the drop deadline (the fifth week of classes). If a student withdraws from a course after the drop deadline, and no later than the Monday prior to the last day of classes each semester, the transcript will show a mark of W for that course. This is a permanent mark and will remain on the transcript even if the student repeats the course. Students may not drop or withdraw from any course after this deadline.

### Administrative Referral (AR)

The mark of AR (Administrative Referral) is a temporary grade awarded by a faculty member when a final letter grade cannot be assigned. Following the designation of the AR mark, the student's academic advisor will follow up with the instructor to outline the requisite steps to determine an appropriate final grade. AR is not a permanent grade.

In the event that the student has been approved through petition to the General Studies Committee on Academic Standing or (for postbacs) to the Premedical Committee to receive an Incomplete in a course, the mark of "IN" will then be submitted by the academic advisor. Please note that ultimately the assignment of the final letter grade is at the instructor's

discretion. **Note:** Postbac Premed students and undergraduate prehealth students are ineligible for committee support at least until final letter grades are submitted to replace any IN marks in required preprofessional courses.

## Incomplete (IN)

### Written Work and Exams

Students must complete all coursework by the last day of exams in a given semester. For students who cannot complete their coursework or are unable to take a final examination, an incomplete for a course in progress may be granted by the General Studies Committee on Academic Standing (CAS) or the Premedical Committee. Faculty members, while consulted for approval of specific extensions, are not authorized to grant incompletes beyond the end of term. Students should contact their advisors first when an exam or deadline is missed. Petitions for official incompletes at the end of term should be based on unexpected circumstances that arise only within the last two weeks of the course which may prevent a student from the timely completion of the final coursework or exam.

The only reasons for which an IN will be granted are incapacitating illness, as certified by the University Health Services or a personal physician, serious family emergency, or circumstances of comparable gravity. Students who wish to receive the mark of IN must, in consultation with their GS or Postbac advisor, petition the CAS or the Premedical Committee in writing. To be granted an IN, it is expected that students will have completed all work in the class with the exception of the final paper or final exam. Students who are granted an IN are assigned a deadline for completion of the overdue written work or a date by which a deferred examination must be taken. Those who fail to meet the assigned deadline or miss the deferred examination will receive the contingency grade provided by the instructor.

Students with more than two incompletes usually cannot enroll in the following semester without the explicit permission of the CAS or the Premedical Committee. When allowed to enroll, students with more than two incompletes will usually be advised to enroll part-time. Undergraduate students with one or more incompletes in the spring term are typically not allowed to enroll in the summer term or to study abroad.

### Incomplete Written Work

Students must submit a formal petition for an incomplete on written work, typically the final paper, by the last day of classes. The petition must be accompanied by the syllabus and/or appropriate confirmation of the due date for the assignment. The deadline for written work is typically due during the last week of classes. If a deadline for written work other than a final exam is set for later than reading week, the student has one day from the missed deadline to submit a petition for an incomplete. Students are advised to submit a draft of their written assignment to the faculty member while the petition for an incomplete is being considered by the CAS or the Premedical Committee.

### Incomplete Exams

Typically, unless there are serious documented circumstances, students may not request an incomplete for a final exam in advance of the final examination period. In situations in which an incapacitating illness prevents a student from sitting for a final exam, the student should contact his or her advisor *immediately* and must provide—within seventy-two hours of the missed exam—certification of illness by University Health Services, a personal physician, or an emergency room. If circumstances warrant a make-up exam, the student will be permitted to

sit for the exam on one of the official deferred exam dates published in the GS Academic Calendar. Students cannot pick the date; they will be notified of the date, time, and place of the exam.