

# GRADING POLICIES

The Professorial Faculty of the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) has adopted the following grading guidelines to ensure consistency and provide guidance to instructors at SIPA. When adopting these norms, the faculty intended to preserve academic freedom and discretion while also creating a structured approach to grading across core and large courses:

- **GPA Target of 3.33 (B+):** For SIPA core courses, the average GPA should ideally fall between 3.2 and 3.4, with a target of 3.3. This guideline also applies to courses with enrollments over 35 students. Workshop courses are exceptions to this rule.
- **Faculty Discretion:** These norms are not intended to be a strict curve. Faculty members may exercise their discretion in achieving these GPA targets. SIPA does not employ a standardized conversion from numerical or percentage-based grading scale to letter grades. For example, a numerical score or percentage, such as an exam grade of 88%, does not automatically correspond to a specific letter grade like B+. Instead, faculty are encouraged to establish a normative grade of B+ based on course performance.

Grade	GPA Equivalent
A+	4.33 - Exceptional. Rarely awarded, reflecting outstanding achievement and understanding well beyond expectations.
A	4.00 - Excellent
A-	3.67 - Very Good
B+	3.33 - Good. Normative grade awarded in SIPA core and lecture courses.
B	3.00 - Satisfactory (High). A cumulative GPA of 3.00 is required to remain in good academic standing and to graduate.
B-	2.67 - Satisfactory (Low). May affect good academic standing if not balanced by higher grades.
C+	2.33 - Fair
C	2.00 - Fair (Low)
C-	1.67 - Poor (High)
D	1.00 - Poor (Still passing)
F	0.00 - Failure
P	N/A - Pass (Not calculated into GPA)
R	N/A - Auditing/R-Credit (No qualitative grade assigned)
UW	N/A - Unofficial Withdrawal (Permanent on Transcript)

## Pass/Fail Policy:

- **Required Courses:** Courses counting toward the completion of degree core, concentration, and specialization requirements cannot be taken pass/fail.

- **Elective Courses:** Students may opt to take elective courses on a pass/fail basis, and the number of elective courses that can be taken pass/fail is not limited.
- **Instructor Permission:** Instructor permission is not required to change the grading option to pass/fail. However, instructors may opt to block a course from pass/fail registration.
- **Changing Grading Option:** Students can change the grading option for eligible full-semester courses up to the "last day to change grading option," as noted on the SIPA academic calendar. For short courses, changes can be made anytime before the final course session.
- **Pass Grade Impact:** A grade of Pass is not calculated into a student's GPA. Certain courses, such as one-point short courses or Professional Development, may be offered only on a pass/fail basis.
- **MPA-DP Students:** Credits obtained from classes taken pass/fail, where a letter grade is an option, do not count toward the 54 credits required to graduate.

## Auditing/R-Credit (R) Guidelines:

- **Registration Requirement for Auditing (R Credit):**  
To audit a course and receive R credit, you must officially register through SSOL. You will need to appear on the grade roster to gain access to CourseWorks and be eligible for R credit. Please note that sitting in on courses without official registration is not permitted.
- **Instructor Permission:**  
You must request permission from the instructor during course registration if you want to receive R credit. Keep in mind that instructors are not required to grant this request, and it is at their discretion.
- **Course Requirements for R Credit:**  
If your request is approved, you must meet any course requirements set by the instructor. If you fail to meet these requirements, the instructor may assign a grade of UW (Unofficial Withdrawal) or F (Failure).
- **R Credit and Graduation:**  
R credits do not count toward SIPA's 54-credit graduation requirement. However, they do count toward the total credits covered by the flat tuition rate for the fall and spring semesters, meaning they are part of the maximum number of courses you can take in a given term.

## Withdrawal Policies

- **Withdrawal (W):** The mark of W is given to a student who drops a course between the end of add/drop and the fifth week of classes. Students cannot withdraw from a course after the date noted on the SIPA academic calendar.
- **Unofficial Withdrawal (UW):** The mark of UW is given to a student who discontinues attendance without officially withdrawing before the deadline. A UW is a permanent grade and will remain on the transcript if the course is repeated.

## Credit Pending (CP)

- **Granting CP:** The mark of CP may be entered for courses that involve research or projects extending beyond the term or in exceptional cases where a short extension is approved. The CP must be replaced with a letter grade within 30 days, or it will revert to a UW.

## Incomplete (IN) Policy

- **Granting Incompletes:** Incompletes are granted at the discretion of the instructor for cases such as incapacitating illness, serious family emergencies, or comparable circumstances. Permission may also be granted for consulting research materials not obtainable during the semester.

### Process:

- **Student Responsibility:** It is the student's responsibility to initiate the incomplete process by securing instructor approval and agreeing on a deadline for coursework completion, no later than the last day of the exam period of the following semester. The student will complete the **Application for Incomplete** and upload the instructor's approval **by the last day of the final exam period**.
- **Submission of Grades:** Instructors are responsible for submitting the final grade by the agreed-upon date. If a final grade is not submitted, the IN will revert to a UW.
- **Graduation Impact:** Students cannot graduate with an IN on their transcript. All grades must be final for graduation certification.

## The mark of AB (Absent from the Final Examination):

- Granted by the instructor, not later than the day of the examination, to a student whose attendance and progress have been satisfactory and who cannot be present because of sickness or some other extreme emergency, which must be substantiated. The student must make arrangements with the instructor to remove the AB.

## The mark of YC (Year Course):

- A temporary mark is given at the end of the first term of a course in which the entire year's work must be completed before a qualitative grade is assigned. The grade given at the end of the second term is the grade for the entire course.

## Repeating Courses

- Students are allowed to repeat a course in which they received a failing grade (i.e., "F"). A failed course may be repeated only once. If repeated, both grades earned in the course will remain on the student's transcript, and both grades will be factored into the student's GPA.
- Students cannot repeat a course in which they have received a passing grade.
- Students cannot take courses of duplicative content. Example: students may not take SIPA U6300 - Microeconomics if they have received a passing grade in SIPA U6400 - Microeconomic Analysis.