

RUST COLLEGE POLICY

Institutional Grade Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and consistent grading system that supports academic integrity, faculty judgment, student fairness, transcript accuracy, and compliance with institutional, state, and federal requirements, including financial aid requirements related to Satisfactory Academic Progress and Return of Title IV Funds.

Policy Statement

Rust College is committed to maintaining the integrity, consistency, and accuracy of student academic records through the application of standardized grading practices. The Institutional Grade Policy establishes approved final grade assignments, defines the conditions under which each grade may be awarded, and outlines faculty responsibilities for documenting academic performance and student engagement.

This policy ensures equitable treatment of students, supports academic standards, promotes compliance with federal and state regulations, and provides accurate academic information necessary for enrollment management, financial aid administration, academic progress monitoring, graduation certification, accreditation reporting, and institutional effectiveness.

The College recognizes the faculty's primary responsibility for evaluating student academic performance while ensuring that grading practices are applied consistently across all instructional modalities, including face-to-face, hybrid, online, and distance education courses.

Approved Final Grade Assignments

Rust College authorizes the following final grade assignments:

A, B, C, D, F, I, W, WD, and WF.

Faculty are authorized to assign A, B, C, D, F, I, WD, and WF when submitting final grades. Grades of W may be assigned through the official withdrawal process by the Registrar or other designated institutional office.

Standard Letter Grades

A grade of A indicates excellent academic performance.

A grade of B indicates good academic performance.

A grade of C indicates satisfactory academic performance.

A grade of D indicates passing but below-average academic performance.

A grade of F indicates earned academic failure. An F may be assigned when a student completed the course or completed enough academic work for the faculty member to determine that the student failed to meet the academic standards of the course. An F carries zero quality points and is calculated in the grade point average.

I: Incomplete

A grade of I may be assigned when a student has completed a substantial portion of the course, is passing or has the reasonable possibility of passing, and is unable to complete remaining course requirements because of documented circumstances beyond the student's control.

An I should not be used when a student has stopped attending, stopped participating, failed to submit most required work, or cannot reasonably complete the remaining course requirements within the institution's established incomplete-grade timeline.

The instructor assigning an I must identify the remaining work to be completed, the deadline for completion, and the default grade that will be assigned if the work is not completed by the deadline.

A grade of I is not calculated in the grade point average unless or until it is converted to a final letter grade under institutional policy.

W: Official Withdrawal

A grade of W is assigned when a student officially withdraws from a course after the add/drop period and on or before the published withdrawal deadline.

A W is non-punitive and is not calculated in the grade point average. However, for financial aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress purposes, a W may count as attempted but not completed credit hours if the student remained enrolled beyond the institutional census or add/drop date.

WD: Withdrawal/Drop/Non-Completion Without Academic Penalty

A grade of WD may be assigned when a student attended or had documented enrollment or academic activity in a course but completed little or no assessable coursework, such that the instructor does not have enough academic evidence to calculate a meaningful earned letter grade.

A WD may also be used when a student is administratively withdrawn or removed from a course for institutional, enrollment, emergency, medical, student affairs, or other approved reasons that should not be treated as an earned academic failure.

A WD is non-punitive and is not calculated in the grade point average. However, a WD may count as attempted but not completed credit hours for Satisfactory Academic Progress purposes when the student remained enrolled beyond the institutional census or add/drop date.

Faculty may assign WD when the student's participation record does not support an earned A, B, C, D, F, or I grade. When assigning WD, faculty must report the student's last date of attendance or academically related activity, if known.

WF: Withdrawal Failing

A grade of WF may be assigned when a student completed enough coursework, assessments, assignments, labs, examinations, academic participation, or other academically related activity for the instructor to determine that the student was failing at the time the student stopped attending, stopped participating, or withdrew from the course.

A WF may also be assigned when a student withdraws after the published withdrawal deadline while failing the course.

A WF is punitive and is calculated the same as an F in the grade point average. A WF carries zero quality points and counts as attempted but not completed credit hours for Satisfactory Academic Progress purposes.

When assigning WF, faculty must report the student's last date of attendance or academically related activity, if known.

Faculty Grade Assignment Authority

Faculty have primary authority to evaluate student academic performance and may assign A, B, C, D, F, I, WD, or WF based on the student's academic record, course participation, completed work, and institutional grading policy.

Faculty are not responsible for determining a student's federal financial aid eligibility. However, faculty are responsible for providing accurate academic information needed by the Registrar, Academic Affairs, and Financial Aid Office, including the final grade, last date of attendance or academic engagement when applicable, whether the student completed the course, and whether the grade represents earned failure or non-completion.

Last Date of Attendance or Academic Engagement

For grades of F, I, WD, and WF, faculty are required to report the student's last date of attendance or last academically related activity.

Academically related activity may include attending class, submitting an assignment, taking a quiz or exam, participating in an academic discussion, completing a lab or clinical activity, meeting with the instructor about course content, or participating in another documented instructional activity.

Merely logging into an online course, receiving course materials, or communicating without academic engagement may not be sufficient by itself unless institutional policy defines and documents it as academically related activity.

Registrar and Financial Aid Review

The Registrar, Academic Affairs, and Financial Aid Office may review grades of F, WD, WF, I, W, and all non-passing grade patterns to determine whether additional institutional, Satisfactory Academic Progress, or Return of Title IV Funds review is required.

If a grade is inconsistent with institutional policy or federal reporting requirements, the Registrar may consult with the faculty member and appropriate academic officer to resolve the discrepancy.

General Rule for Faculty

Faculty should use the following guide:

Assign A, B, C, D, or F when there is enough completed academic work to calculate an earned course grade.

Assign I only when the student has substantially completed the course and has an approved reason for needing limited additional time.

Assign WD when the student had attendance or enrollment activity but completed little or no assessable work, making a fair academic grade impossible.

Assign WF when the student completed enough academic work to determine that the student was failing and then stopped attending, stopped participating, or withdrew after the penalty deadline.

Institutional Grade Policy Application to Online, Hybrid, and Distance Education Courses

This grading policy applies to face-to-face, online, hybrid, and distance education courses.

For online, hybrid, and distance education courses, academic engagement must be documented through academically related activity. Merely logging into the learning management system, opening the course shell, viewing course materials, or receiving course announcements does not by itself establish sufficient academic engagement for grading or federal financial aid purposes.

Examples of academically related activity in an online course may include, but are not limited to:

1. submitting an assignment, project, paper, quiz, examination, lab, or other required academic work;
2. participating in an assigned online discussion related to course content;
3. completing an interactive tutorial, simulation, lab, or learning activity required for the course;
4. attending a required synchronous class session or virtual lab;
5. communicating with the instructor about course content or required academic work;
6. completing documented instructional activities that are part of the course requirements.

Faculty may assign WD in an online, hybrid, or distance education course when the student had enrollment activity, limited attendance, or limited online presence but completed little or no assessable academic work, making it impossible to calculate a fair earned letter grade.

Faculty may assign WF in an online, hybrid, or distance education course when the student completed enough academic work or academically related activity for the instructor to determine that the student was failing, and the student then stopped participating, stopped submitting work, or failed to complete the course.

When assigning F, WD, or WF in an online, hybrid, or distance education course, faculty must report the student's last documented date of academic engagement, if known. If no academic engagement occurred, the faculty member should report that the student never engaged academically in the course.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All undergraduate, graduate, non-credit, hybrid, online, and distance education courses offered by Rust College.
- All faculty members, including full-time, part-time, adjunct, visiting, and dual-enrollment instructors responsible for assigning grades.
- The Office of the Registrar.
- Academic Affairs.
- Enrollment Management.
- The Office of Financial Aid.
- Student Success and Academic Support personnel involved in academic progress monitoring.
- Any institutional office responsible for maintaining, reporting, or auditing student academic records.

This policy governs the assignment, reporting, review, maintenance, and correction of final grades recorded on a student's official academic record.

Resources

The following resources support implementation and compliance with this policy:

Federal Regulations

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Title IV Federal Student Aid Regulations
- Return of Title IV Funds (R2T4) Regulations
- Federal Student Aid Handbook
- U.S. Department of Education Distance Education Regulations

Accreditation Standards

- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Principles of Accreditation
- SACSCOC Requirements for Academic and Student Records

Institutional Resources

- Rust College Academic Catalog
- Rust College Faculty Handbook
- Rust College Student Handbook
- Rust College Attendance Policy
- Rust College Academic Standing and Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy
- Rust College Withdrawal and Administrative Withdrawal Policy
- Rust College Distance Education Policy
- Rust College Records Retention Policy

Technology Systems

- Ellucian Colleague Student Information System
- Learning Management System (LMS)
- Institutional Reporting and Data Management Systems

For Policies and Procedures Committee Use: *(Initial and Date When Completed)*:

Added to Policy and Procedures Manual: _____

Send to VP for Academic affairs for inclusion in the faculty handbook (if applicable) _____

Send to VP for Student Engagement for inclusion in the student handbook (if applicable): _____

Sent to Website Manager for inclusion on website (if applicable): _____

Added to PN Policies and Procedures Page: _____

Communicated to Faculty & Staff: _____

Document Owner/Title:				
Document History				
Rev. #	Name	Date	Description	Signature