

Revised Policy Approval Date: December 19, 2006**Revised Policy Effective Date: April 1, 2007****Revised Procedure Approval Date: July 8, 2020****Revised Procedure Effective Date: September 1, 2020**

POLICY STATEMENT

Grades are awarded for all courses taken at Capella University. As a competency-based educational institution, Capella University expects the grade to reflect the degree to which the student has demonstrated the specific competencies taught and assessed within a course. Matters that affect demonstration of course competencies can be factored into the grade only to the extent that they inhibit or interfere with demonstration of the published competencies.

RATIONALE

Capella University demonstrates its commitment to ethical, fair, and unbiased evaluation of learning by defining program learning in terms of course competencies and program learning outcomes.

Additionally, Capella University supports student success by providing feedback on competency demonstrations throughout courses and programs. As such, Capella University uses a criterion-referenced grading scheme in which all grading criteria are aligned to specific course competency demonstrations.

DEFINITIONS

Competency

A competency is the knowledge, skills, abilities, and professional attributes required to successfully perform a task in a given context. At Capella University, courses are designed based on the competencies necessary to demonstrate a program's learning outcomes.

Course Grade

In the context of this policy, "course grade" may encompass both traditional letter grades assigned in the GuidedPath format and course competency ratings assigned in the FlexPath format that appear on the student's transcript.

PROCEDURES

I. Matters Affecting Demonstration of Competencies for All Students

Capella University's grades and competency evaluations reflect the degree to which the student has demonstrated the specific published course competencies taught and assessed within a course. Matters that affect the demonstration of those competencies may also be factored into the student's grade or evaluation.

A. Students are expected to submit all assignments through the courseroom as instructed.

- B. Faculty are responsible for determining which matters affect demonstration of published competencies.
- C. Matters that affect demonstration of published competencies can be factored into the grade only to the extent that those matters inhibit or interfere with the demonstration of published competencies.
- D. Matters that affect demonstration of published competencies include but are not limited to the following:
 - 1. Deadlines
 - 2. Spelling
 - 3. Grammar
 - 4. Style
- E. Signature Assignments
Signature assignments, found in select doctoral courses, both fulfill competencies and affect the demonstration of other competencies specific to the completion of the doctoral capstone or dissertation. These assignments must be successfully completed for the student to successfully complete the course. Failure on a signature assignment will result in failure of the course.

II. Letter Grades for Courses in Programs in the GuidedPath Format

Letter grades are the default grading option for most courses. When stated in Capella's *University Catalog*, students may choose to be graded on a Satisfactory/Not Satisfactory ("S"/"NS") grading scale. Students who elect that option must request it within the first 12 calendar days of the course start. Once the 12th calendar day deadline has passed, the grading option cannot be changed. Grading scales for each course are predetermined by the school's administration.

- **A grade of "A"** is earned for coursework that demonstrates mastery of the published competencies at a "Distinguished" level of performance and exceeds course expectations as defined in the course syllabus or course learning plan. A grade of "A" earns four (4) quality points toward the student's grade point average (GPA).
- **A grade of "B"** is earned for coursework that demonstrates mastery of the published competencies at a "Proficient" level of performance and meets course expectations as defined in the course syllabus or course learning plan. A grade of "B" earns three (3) quality points toward the student's GPA.
- **A grade of "C"** is earned for coursework that demonstrates published competencies at a "Basic" level of performance and minimally meets course expectations as defined in the course syllabus or course learning plan. A grade of "C" earns two (2) quality points toward the student's GPA.
- **A grade of "D"** is earned for undergraduate coursework that demonstrates published competencies at a marginal level of performance as defined in the course syllabus or course learning plan. A grade of "D" earns one (1) quality point toward the student's GPA. A grade of "D" is for undergraduate courses only and may not be awarded for graduate coursework.
- **A grade of "F"** is earned for coursework that demonstrates published competencies at the "Non-Performance" level and does not meet course expectations as described in the course syllabus or course learning plan. It is also used for students who had been assigned a grade of "I" but did not meet all of the course requirements by the end of the

following quarter. Students who do not participate in their course(s) will receive a grade of “F.” A grade of “F” earns zero (0) quality points and affects the student’s GPA. It counts toward attempted credits but not earned credits.

- **A grade of “I” (Incomplete)** may be granted by the course faculty. Final work must be completed by the end of the following quarter or earlier, if so directed by the course faculty. A grade of “I” does not earn quality points and is not included in the student’s GPA. It counts toward attempted credits but not earned credits. When the student completes the final necessary coursework prior to the stated deadline, the student will receive the appropriate grade and will earn the corresponding quality points. If the final coursework is not completed prior to the stated deadline, the student will receive a failing grade for the course. A grade of “I” may also be granted in cases of military leave of absence and national emergency leave of absence.
- **A grade of “S” (Satisfactory)** is earned for coursework that demonstrates mastery of the published competencies in a manner that meets course expectations as defined in the course syllabus or course learning plan for those courses in which the student has received approval to be graded on the “S”/“NS” scale. A grade of “S” is equivalent to a grade of “B” or better at the graduate level and “C” or better at the undergraduate level. It does not earn quality points and is not included in the student’s GPA. It counts toward attempted credits and earned credits.
- **A grade of “NS” (Not Satisfactory)** is earned for coursework that does not demonstrate mastery of the published competencies or does not meet course expectations as defined in the course syllabus or course learning plan for those courses in which the student has received approval to be graded on the “S”/“NS” scale. It is also used for students who have received a grade of “IS” but did not meet all of the course requirements by the end of the following quarter. A grade of “NS” does not earn quality points and is not included in the student’s GPA. It counts toward attempted credits but not earned credits.
- **A grade of “IS” (Incomplete—“S”/“NS” scale)** may be granted for those courses in which the student has received approval to be graded on the “S”/“NS” scale. Final work must be completed by the end of the following quarter or earlier if so directed by the course faculty. A grade of “IS” does not earn quality points and is not included in the student’s GPA. It counts toward attempted credits but not earned credits. When the student satisfactorily completes the final necessary coursework by the stated deadline, the student will receive a final grade of “S.” If the final coursework is not completed by the stated deadline, the student will receive a final grade of “NS.” A grade of “IS” may also be granted in cases of military leave of absence and national emergency leave of absence.
- **A grade of “IP” (In Progress)** is assigned for select courses in which a student is currently registered and actively participating. A grade of “IP” does not earn quality points and is not included in the student’s GPA. It counts toward attempted credits but not earned credits. When a student completes, or fails to complete, all course requirements, the student will receive a final grade of “S,” “NS,” or the appropriate grade.
- **A grade of “R” (Required)** indicates that a course is required. A grade of “R” does not earn quality points and is not included in the student’s GPA. It counts toward attempted credits and earned credits.
- **A grade of “NG” (No Grade)** is assigned for select internship and practicum courses for all continuing course registrations (subsequent to the initial course registration) or to

course registrations for which the Admissions & Records Operations department has determined that, due to university curricular changes, “NG” is the appropriate final grade. A grade of “NG” does not earn quality points and is not included in the student’s GPA. It counts toward attempted credits but not earned credits.

- **A grade of “W” (Withdrawal)** is assigned when a student drops a course prior to the final date students may drop courses without academic consequences as defined in university policy 2.02.02 *Course Registration*. A grade of “W” does not earn quality points and is not included in the student’s GPA. It counts toward attempted credits but not earned credits.
- **A grade of “MW” (Military Withdrawal)** is assigned when a military student drops a course after census but prior to the final date students may drop courses without academic consequences. A grade of “MW” does not earn quality points and is not included in the student’s GPA. It does not count toward attempted credits or earned credits.
- **A grade of “PC” (Petition for Credit)** is assigned when a student earns credit for prior learning assessment for competencies gained through previous work or educational experience. A grade of “PC” does not earn quality points and is not included in the student’s GPA. It counts toward attempted credits and earned credits.
- **A grade of “CC” (Credential Credit)** is assigned for credit for prior learning awarded for select, externally recognized credentials as assessed by faculty. An externally recognized credential reflects learning and competencies gained by previous work or educational experience that has been evaluated by a Capella faculty subject matter expert. A grade of “CC” does not earn quality points and is not included in the student’s GPA. It counts toward attempted and earned credits.
- **A grade of “T” (Transfer)** is assigned for courses that are taken at another institution and are accepted for credit at Capella University. A grade of “T” does not earn quality points and is not included in the student’s GPA. It does not count toward attempted credits or earned credits and only affects the earned credits on the transcript.
- **A grade of “NR” (No Grade Report Received)** is assigned for courses for which Capella University has not received a grade report from the course faculty. A grade of “NR” does not earn quality points and is not included in the student’s GPA. It counts toward attempted credits but not earned credits.

Retired grades: The grades “NC” (No Credit) and “NP” (Non-Participation) were assigned to courses prior to April 1, 2003. “NC” and “NP” grades do not earn quality points and are not included in the student’s GPA. They count toward attempted credits but not earned credits. The grade “VR” was assigned to residency courses for which students met attendance requirements prior to October 1, 2006. A “VR” grade does not earn quality points and is not included in the student’s GPA. It does not count toward attempted credits or earned credits. The grades “HM” and “HD” were assigned to courses prior to January 1, 2008. “HM” and “HD” grades do not earn quality points and are not included in the student’s GPA. They do not count toward attempted credits or earned credits.

III. Course Values Summary for Programs in the GuidedPath Format

Grade	Quality Points	Attempted Credits	Earned Credits	GPA	Defaults To
A	4	Y	Y	Y	
B	3	Y	Y	Y	
C	2	Y	Y	Y	
D	1	Y	Y	Y	
F	0	Y	N	Y	
I		Y	N	N	F
S		Y	Y	N	
NS		Y	N	N	
IS		Y	N	N	NS
IP		Y	N	N	
R		Y	Y	N	
NG		Y	N	N	
W		Y	N	N	
MW		N	N	N	
PC		Y	Y	N	
CC		Y	Y	N	
T		N	N	N	
NR		Y	N	N	

IV. Requesting Satisfactory/Not Satisfactory (“S”/“NS”) Grading for Courses in Programs in a Credit-Based (GuidedPath) Format

- A. In order to be graded on the “S”/“NS” scale for a course in which such grading is permitted, students must request that option by selecting “Edit a Course” in the Student Center on Campus.
- B. The “S”/“NS” grading scale must be requested no later than the 12th calendar day of the course. After the 12th calendar day has passed, the grading scale cannot be modified.

V. Final Grade Submission for Programs in the GuidedPath Format

- A. Grades are submitted by the faculty within nine calendar days after the final day of the course.
- B. Grades are scheduled for posting to Campus 10 calendar days after the final day of the course.
- C. Students access their grades through the Student Center on Campus.
- D. Inquiries about grades that have not been posted to Campus within the 10-calendar-day time frame should be directed to the course faculty.
- E. Students may only appeal a grade through university policy *3.04.09 Appealing a Grade*.
- F. All grades are final after two calendar years.

VI. Course Evaluation for Programs in the FlexPath Format

- A. Students enrolled in programs in the FlexPath format receive competency evaluations in lieu of traditional letter grades. Competency evaluation performance is reflected on the student’s official transcript.
- B. FlexPath students may request a transcript which translates their evaluation into traditional letter grades and quarter credits.
- C. FlexPath Course Evaluation Process
 - 1. To complete a course prior to the course end date, all assessments must be completed and evaluated by the faculty.
 - 2. After all assessments are evaluated, the student must check the box stating they have completed all assessments and click the “Complete this Course” button in order to receive a final course evaluation.
 - 3. When the course end date has been reached, all assessments will be evaluated and calculated into the final evaluation of the course as of 11:59 p.m. Central Time. Final evaluations are posted within five business days after completion of the course.
 - 4. Final course evaluations may not be revised after the course is closed
- D. Course Evaluations and Change of Program Requests

Students requesting a change to their academic program must complete any active course(s) by clicking the “Complete this Course” button before the change is processed to ensure the course(s) is completed and evaluated before moving into the new program. The change process is described in university policy *2.02.07 Changing Academic Program*.
- E. All course evaluations are final after two calendar years.

VII. Course Values Summary for Programs in the FlexPath Format

Competency Evaluation	Attempted	Earned	Defaults To
Distinguished	Y	Y	
Proficient	Y	Y	
Basic	Y	Y	
Non-Performance	Y	N	
Incomplete	Y	N	Non-Performance
MW	N	N	
W	Y	N	

POLICY OWNERS

Academic Owner: Deans

Operations Owner: Admissions & Records Operations

RELATED DOCUMENTS

University policy 3.01.01 Academic Integrity and Honesty

University policy 3.01.04 Academic Standing

University policy 3.01.05 Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress

University policy 3.04.01 Academic Readiness

University policy 3.04.06 Access to Learning Resources

University policy 3.04.08 Incomplete Grades

University policy 3.04.09 Appealing a Grade

University policy 3.04.11 Transfer Credit and Credit for Prior Learning

University policy 4.02.01 Student Disability Accommodations

University policy 4.02.04 Discrimination, Harassment, and Assault

REVISION HISTORY

Original Policy Approval Date: March 15, 2004

Revision Dates: 5-24-05; 9-11-07; 7-9-08; 6-21-12; 10-8-12; 11-8-12; 6-6-13; 10-31-13; 3-23-14; 8-11-16; 10-31-17; 10-15-18; 8-30-19; 7-8-20

Administrative edits as result of ongoing review: 5-1-09; 7-11-09; 4-20-10; 4-17-12; 11-22-13; 4-1-18; 3-26-21; 2-14-22; 7-1-23; 7-1-24; 1-1-25; 4-1-25