

Clarification on the CUNY Uniform Grading Policy memo (May 2021), following Senate discussion on 11/3/2021

- 1) There was some concern about current policies where the CUNY guidelines don't match Lehman practices. To clarify, whenever the CUNY guidelines indicate that individual Colleges may add additional restrictions, Lehman has had the option to do so.
 - a. In particular, the CUNY rule says that an INC lapses into an FIN at the end of the semester following the semester in which the INC was given. Lehman College, specifically, has the added restriction that missing work that need be submitted to complete the course must be received within 10 weeks into the following semester. This was added at the College level to ensure that Professors had adequate time to grade and submit updates. (A suggestion was made, during the Senate discussion on 11/3/2021, that this 10 week deadline should be extended to the end of the semester instead. This could be approved at the December Senate meeting, in theory, and would not need Board of Trustees approval.)
 - b. Another rule that was discussed was the Pass/NC policy. The CUNY memo states that:

"The grade of "P" or "NC" may be given as part of a 'Pass/No Pass/No Credit' agreement between a student and instructor. To receive this grade, a student needs to continue participating in academically related activities, complete all assignments, and take the final exam. If a passing grade is earned (A+ through D-), the student will receive a grade of 'P' and credit for the course with no impact on GPA. If a failing grade is earned (F), the student will receive a grade of NC/NP which does not affect the GPA. **This option must be requested prior to the last day a student can withdraw and receive a grade of "W" via an agreement with the Office of the Registrar.** Students must remain in compliance with Federal and State Satisfactory Academic Progress guidelines. Colleges may place additional restrictions on the use of this option which must be clearly stated in their bulletin and on their website."

...and the Lehman website and bulletin adds restrictions, which are listed below:

Pass/Fail Option

Students may elect P/F grades for a maximum of 18 credits in their degree program under the following conditions:

- The course for P/F must be outside (a) the College degree requirements (b) the major, minor, or interdisciplinary program and the courses offered by Lehman's teacher education departments, except for those education courses that have Pass/Fail or Pass/No Credit grading basis.
- Only one P/F course may be elected in any semester, with the exception for those courses that have a P/F grading basis.
- The P/F choice may not be changed after the College late registration period has ended.
- The credits taken on a P/F grading basis may not be counted toward the major and minor.

- 2) The memo states the following:

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for change of grade and associated deadline and thereby facilitating timely progress to degree completion and compliance with financial aid requirements that all courses taken contribute to degree completion. This policy is intended to reflect the University's commitment to the student success goals and the requirements of New York State's Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

Application for a change of grade, assigned by a member of the faculty, may be made at any time **within one year from the end of the semester in which the course was taken**. Either the student or the instructor may make this request. The procedures outlined below applies to the change of passing **letter grades, PEN, F, FIN, WU**. **Grades cannot be changed once a student has graduated and their academic record is closed.**

Change of Final Grade

- Faculty members who initiate such a change must file a **Change of Grade Form** (paper or secure online form), including the reason for the change, follow campus changes of grade approval process, and forward the completed form to the Office of the Registrar, who will process the change and notify the student and faculty.
- **Undergraduate** grade change request **over one academic year** requires the approval of the Grade Appeals Committee (or campus equivalent.)
- **Graduate** change of grades **over one academic year** requires the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies (or campus equivalent.)

Change of INC to Administrative FIN

- Campus Registrar assigns the grade of FIN when an INC (Incomplete) remains unresolved at the **end of the semester following the semester in which the course was taken** (exclusive of Summer Term.)
- The student or the instructor may appeal this administrative action. Graduate Students who receive an Incomplete (INC grade) must fulfill their academic obligation **within one calendar year (or earlier campus deadline)** of the end of the semester in which the grade of Incomplete is given.
- Incompletes unresolved in the above-mentioned time-period will become FIN in students' records and may not be changed thereafter.

Change of PEN to Final Letter Grade

- The "PEN" grade is a temporary grade awarded when the disposition of the final grade requires further evaluation and when the absent or incomplete grades are inappropriate. 'PEN' is also used to facilitate the implementation of the *Procedures for Imposition of Sanctions* whereby colleges must hold a student's grade in abeyance pending the outcome of the academic review process. Final determination of a grade will depend on final evaluation by the instructor or the outcome of the college's academic review process. PEN grade must be resolved to letter grade by the **end of the semester following the semester in which the course was taken**.

Student Appeal

- Students are strongly encouraged to first communicate with the professor of the course. If that conversation does not remedy the situation, or if students choose to not follow that route, then students who think that a final grade was issued erroneously may file a grade appeal. **Appeals must be filed within 30 calendar days of grade assignment in CUNYfirst.**

Faculty Appeal

- An appeal instituted by a member of the faculty to change an administrative FIN must indicate that the work required to resolve the INC grade was in the instructor's possession prior to the INC deadline date. **Appeals must be filed within 30 calendar days of FIN grade assignment in CUNYfirst.**

Grade Appeals Process

- Student or Faculty request shall be reviewed by the department grade appeals committee (or campus equivalent.) The departmental shall review the matter and make a recommendation to the faculty member within **30 calendar days**.

- If the departmental grade appeals fail to make a recommendation to the faculty member within **30 calendar days**, the grade appeal will be escalated to the college-wide grade appeals committee (or campus equivalent.)
- The college-wide grade appeals committee (or campus equivalent) shall have **30 calendar days** to make a recommendation to the department and faculty member.
- The faculty member, upon receipt of the department or college-wide committee's recommendation, must render a judgment within **15 calendar days** and communicate in writing/via online form to the Campus Registrar his or her decision to either sustain the grade or submit a grade change.

This Policy shall supersede and override all undergraduate and graduate program-level grading change policies currently in effect at CUNY colleges and schools Effective Fall 2021.

Based on the above memo, it was unclear which timeline applied to the FIN grade. Was it that any grade, including an FIN, can be changed within one year from the end of the semester in which the course was taken, as stated at the beginning of the policy, OR that, after the Campus Registrar assigns the grade of FIN when an INC (Incomplete) remains unresolved at the end of the semester following the semester in which the course was taken, either a student or an instructor can appeal the grade for only 30 days after it is conferred?

After conferring with the University Registrar, we have confirmation that the rule for FIN grades is the latter. The one-year rule is the default for changing grades, but then, for those particular grades/situations that are outlined below that first statement, the further restrictions override the general one-year rule.

Therefore, when a student receives an INC and this then lapses to an FIN at the end of the semester following the semester in which the INC was given, this grade is unchangeable after 30 days post-conferral.

3) Clarification on when to give INC:

INC: The grade of "INC" (Incomplete) should **only** be given by the instructor **in consultation with the student** with the following guidelines:

- When there is a **reasonable expectation** that a **student can successfully complete** the requirements of the course no later than the last day of the following semester, or its equivalent in calendar time, exclusive of Summer Session/Term. **Upon timely completion of said incomplete work, the student would earn passing grade.**

- Temporary grade awarded when the disposition of the final grade requires further evaluation for reasons **other than the Procedures for Imposition of Sanctions** related to the Board's Academic Integrity Policy Transcript comments for INC grades should be added to the student record indicating the nature of the incomplete

- The grade of "INC" lapses to an "FIN" grade no later than the last day of the following semester, or its equivalent in calendar time, exclusive of Summer Session/Term.

- Students who have officially withdrawn from a college and have these grades may be exempted from the limitations.

...and further guidance is provided on the Lehman website:

For an instructor to grant an INC, the student must have met the instructor's attendance requirements in the course and have a passing semester average. The INC grade covers any failure to complete all requirements for a course, such as submitting a paper or taking a final examination. The grade of INC is awarded only when the course requirement has not been completed for good and sufficient reasons and when there is a reasonable expectation that the student can successfully complete the requirements of the course. The student must complete the missing work within the **first ten weeks of the following term** and the instructor has to the end of the term to submit the eGrade Correction. However, if the student is eligible and has applied for graduation, the eGrade Correction must be submitted prior to the term conferral date. If the instructor is not available, the student must consult with the department chair. INC grades not completed by the deadline will become a grade of "FIN."

- 4) One question that arose was whether an INC could be changed to a D (based on partial work submitted) and then changed again within the one-year timeframe? This approach is problematic because a D grade does not denote that any work is still outstanding. It is a grade given when the course is completed and merits a D grade. Therefore, such an approach violates the CUNY uniform grading policy.

Similarly, the INC grade is not to be given in the event that a student is doing "poorly" in a class, in order to let them sit in on the class again the next semester and improve their grade. This is in violation of multiple policies.

- 5) The last point of confusion was whether the new rule that FIN grades cannot be changed following the 30-day appeal period would apply to INC grades received in previous semesters. When asked for clarification, the University Registrar confirmed that **"This Policy shall supersede and override all undergraduate and graduate program-level grading change policies currently in effect at CUNY colleges and schools Effective Fall 2021."**