

# SOUTHWESTERN

## LAW SCHOOL Los Angeles, CA

### Incomplete Grade Policy

#### Administrative policy.

**Revision history:** Formerly a part of the Grading Policies, Honors, and Specialized Courses policy (now called the Grading, Scholastic and Other Honors, and Specialized Courses Policy); established as a standalone policy in October 2023; revised May 2024 to address emergencies and the Online J.D. Program.

**Related policies:** Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy; Academic Policies and Procedures; SCALE Program Policies; Grading, Scholastic and Other Honors, and Specialized Courses Policy; Criteria for Final Course Grade Policy; Examination Administration Policy; Master of Laws Program Policies

**Scheduled Review Date:** August 2025 (Registrar's Office and Student Services Office)

#### A. Definition

An "Incomplete" or "INC" grade is a temporary, non-evaluative grade indicating the student has not yet completed assigned work in the course. The grade may be assigned only with approval from the Associate Dean for Student Services.

#### B. Appropriate Use

Except in extraordinary circumstances as determined by the Dean or Vice Dean(s), an Incomplete grade may be issued only when (1) the student has completed at least 80% of the class sessions or, for a mostly asynchronous course, the student has completed at least 80% of the required asynchronous coursework, (2) the student has submitted passing work on substantially all completed assignments, and (3) the student has complied with attendance requirements, but, (4) due to extraordinary circumstances, (a) in courses in which the final grade does not include a final examination, the student is unable to complete the remaining coursework within the required time frame; or (b) in courses in which the final grade includes a final examination, a student is unable to take a final examination before the end of the examination period.

**C. Requesting an Incomplete**

A student who has experienced extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control and wishes to be considered for an Incomplete in one or more courses must submit a written request to the Student Services Office before the end of the final examination period for the semester or term. The written request must explain why the student cannot complete the remaining coursework or take the final examination and include appropriate supporting documentation.

A student may receive an extension to submit a written request to be considered for an Incomplete only by submitting a written petition demonstrating extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control, such as hospitalization. The petition must be submitted to the Associate Dean for Student Services, who may grant the petition in whole or in part, deny the petition in whole or in part, request additional information, or consult with the Vice Dean(s) or other senior administrators.

An Incomplete grade is often a solution of last resort; the law school will work with the student to explore other solutions.

**D. Removing an Incomplete/Automatic Conversion to an Administrative Fail “\*F”**

To remove an Incomplete from their transcript, a student does not need to register for the course again but will be permitted to unofficially audit the course in which the student is making up an Incomplete. When the student completes the requirements to complete the course at issue, the credits and grade are assigned to that semester or term in which the student initially enrolled in the course. Incomplete grades must be changed to an evaluative grade as soon as possible, but by the end of one year from the issuance of the Incomplete or the next time the course is regularly offered, whichever occurs first. Except as described in Sections E and F, if the Incomplete has not been changed within this time frame, the student will receive a grade of Administrative Fail (\*F), which is not subject to change.

**E. Midterm Exams and Other Graded Assessments in Incomplete Courses**

Courses in which a student takes an Incomplete or makes up an Incomplete may have a midterm, other graded assessments, or required coursework as part of the final grade for the course. In this situation, the student must meet with an advisor in the Student Services Office before the start of the term in which they are making up the Incomplete to determine what midterm, assessment scores, or required coursework will be part of the final grade for the course. The Student Services Office will consult with the faculty member for the course in which the student is making up the Incomplete. If the student does not meet with an advisor in the Student Services Office, the default will be that the final exam for the course will comprise 100% of the final grade.

**F. Extending the Time Limit**

A student may receive an extension on time to complete an Incomplete grade only by submitting a written petition demonstrating extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control, such as continued illness. Absent extraordinary circumstances determined by the Associate Dean for Student Services, the student must submit the petition at least four weeks before the original deadline to make up the Incomplete. The student must present adequate and appropriate documentation to verify the extraordinary circumstances. The petition must be submitted to the Associate Dean for Student Services, who may grant the petition in whole or in part, deny the petition in whole or in part, request additional information, or consult with the Vice Dean(s) or other senior administrators. It will be rare for a petition that seeks to extend an Incomplete for more than one semester or year beyond the original deadline to be granted.

**G. Conversion to Withdrawal or Administrative Withdrawal**

An Incomplete grade may be changed to a "W" (official withdrawal) only in extraordinary circumstances where the student's situation has changed since the Incomplete grade was awarded. In these cases, the request for a change to a "W" must be made in writing, documented, and approved by the Associate Dean for Student Services. At the discretion of the Associate Dean for Student Services, an Administrative Withdrawal (WA) can be assigned for an outstanding Incomplete if a student withdraws from the school due to extraordinary circumstances. Students should understand that withdrawals could have a financial aid impact.

**H. Financial Aid Impact**

Under Southwestern's *Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy*, Incomplete grades will be counted toward enrollment and attempted hours. Students who end a semester with at least one Incomplete grade will be re-evaluated for financial aid eligibility at Southwestern's deadline for the Incomplete grade(s). If the Incomplete grade(s) is not completed by the deadline, the student will automatically be placed on the appropriate SAP status. The student is responsible for notifying the Financial Aid Office to have financial aid eligibility re-evaluated once the Incomplete grade(s) are updated. Students should meet with a counselor in the Financial Aid Office to review the financial aid implications of Incomplete grades.

**I. Graduation**

A student may not graduate with a grade of Incomplete on their transcript, and Southwestern will not issue a diploma if an Incomplete appears on a student's transcript.

**J. Class Rank**

When class ranks are calculated, students with an Incomplete on their transcript will not be included in class ranks. Except in extraordinary circumstances as determined by the Dean, when the student completes the course requirements to make up an Incomplete,

the student will not be issued a rank for the semesters or terms in which they took an Incomplete. The student will be included in the next calculation of class ranks, assuming they have no additional Incomplete grades on their transcript when class ranks are calculated.

**K. Policy Revisions**

Southwestern expressly reserves the right to change or modify any aspect of this policy at any time, with or without prior notice.