

Incomplete, or X, Grades

Our perspective in the Dean's Office is that students sometimes pressure their instructors to assign them an X, the symbol for an incomplete grade. This results in the X symbol often being assigned improperly, as a means of allowing a student to avoid a poor grade. Here are considerations you should use in deciding whether to assign an incomplete:

- An X may properly be assigned for students who must miss the final due to illness or other imperative nonacademic reasons. You may require a medical excuse if the reason for the request for a postponed final is illness. If you would prefer to not deal with non-academic issues, you may refer the student to an academic advisor in the Dean's Office.
- An X may also be given when the student has not been able to complete all the required assignments for reasons other than lack of diligence *but only if the student has a passing grade on the work completed.*
- Finally, an X may be assigned if the student qualifies for a reexamination and the instructor chooses to give a reexamination. (See the 2008-2009 *General Information* excerpt below for details.)

In addition, an X should be assigned only if the student has been informed and the exact procedures by which the student will make up the work are agreed upon. The assignment of an X constitutes a contract between the student and the instructor. It is often helpful to have the arrangement in writing, specifying what the student is expected to do to complete the course, including due dates.

The instructor who assigned the X is responsible for evaluating the student's subsequent work. If another faculty member is to be involved, the procedures for this should be clearly understood by all parties in advance. If an instructor does not assign a grade or a symbol to a student on the grade sheet, the Registrar will automatically insert an X. This in no way obligates the instructor to allow the student to complete missing work. Students who have stopped attending class or who have never attended class should be assigned a grade of F.

Students have one long semester to make up an X and extensions are rare. After one long semester, the X converts to an F if no other grade is reported.

An X should not be assigned to allow the student an opportunity to repeat the entire course; the only assignments or exams that should be completed to resolve the X are those that were missed for legitimate reasons during the semester.

From the General Information Catalog, 2008-2009

Symbol X: Temporary Delay in Reporting the Final Course Grade

A student is expected to complete a course, including a self-paced course, in a single semester, summer term, or summer session. If the course is not completed

Incomplete, or X, Grades

as expected, the student normally will not be given additional time to complete it, or to do additional work to achieve a better grade. In rare instances, for nonacademic reasons and at the discretion of the instructor, a temporary delay of the final course grade, symbol X, may be recorded.

Improper uses of the symbol X. A student must not be assigned the symbol X to provide (1) the opportunity to raise a grade for any reason other than the approved reasons cited below; (2) time to prepare coursework in addition to that assigned the entire class; or (3) time to repeat the entire course.

Approved uses of the symbol X. The symbol X is not issued for student or faculty convenience; it may be issued for one of the following reasons only in the case of compelling, nonacademic circumstances beyond the student's control.

1. **Missing the final examination.** The student is unable to take a final examination because of illness or for another nonacademic reason. A physician's statement or other satisfactory verification is required.
2. **Incomplete classroom assignment.** The student has not been able to complete the required class or laboratory assignments for a reason other than lack of adequate effort. A request for temporary delay of the final course grade because of incomplete class or laboratory work can be made only if the student has a passing average on the classwork or laboratory work already completed and has taken and passed the final examination (unless a final examination is not given in the course or the student is unable to take the examination for reasons indicated in the previous paragraph).
3. **Reexamination petition.** Only a student who has a grade average of at least C on all classwork and laboratory work submitted before the final examination may request a temporary delay of the final course grade because he or she failed the final examination, which is the examination given during the final examination period as defined in the official examination schedule. If the instructor denies the student's reexamination petition, the student's final course grade remains as originally determined. If the instructor grants the petition, and the student earns a grade of at least C on the reexamination, then the instructor substitutes the reexamination grade for the original examination grade in determining the student's final course grade. If the instructor grants the petition, and the student earns a grade on the reexamination of less than C, then a final course grade of *F* must be recorded.

Replacement of the Symbol X with a Grade or the Symbol

Undergraduates. If an undergraduate student receives the symbol X in a course, the student must complete the requirements for the course and the instructor must report a final course grade by the last date for grade reporting in the next long-session semester, or an *F* will be recorded as the final grade in the course. The symbol X will also remain on the record. The period for completion of the

Incomplete, or X, Grades

coursework may be extended only for unusual circumstances beyond the student's control, as recommended by the instructor and approved by the student's academic dean. A student who has received an X in a course may not register for that course again until a final grade has been recorded, unless the course is one that may be repeated for credit.