

Carnegie Mellon University

Incomplete Grade Agreement

This document explains how Carnegie Mellon University advises instructors and students to work together to come to an agreement about Incomplete grades. Its purpose is to ensure consistency with university grading policy and provide guidance to students and instructors for when and how an Incomplete grade should be utilized. It includes text from the University Grading Policies. The last page also provides a template for writing an Incomplete grade agreement, which instructors must submit to the student's primary advisor and to the student's Associate Dean by the final grade deadline of the semester for which the Incomplete grade is being given.

University policy states the following about Incomplete grades:

Carnegie Mellon students are expected to complete a course during the academic semester in which the course was taken. However, if the instructor agrees, a grade of I (incomplete) may be given when a student, for reasons beyond their control, has been unable to complete the work of a course, but the work completed to date is of passing quality and the grade of incomplete provides no undue advantage to that student over other students.

In awarding an I grade, an instructor must specify the requirements for completing the work and designate a default letter grade where no further work is submitted. Students must complete the required course work no later than the end of the following academic semester, or sooner if required by prior agreement. The instructor must record the permanent grade by the last day of the examination period of the following semester, or Enrollment Services will administratively assign the default grade. (<https://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/grading.html>).

Requirements for Granting an Incomplete Grade

1. A sufficient amount of coursework should be completed for a student to be eligible to receive an Incomplete grade. The University recommends that the student already should have completed enough coursework that they have a reasonable chance of finishing the remainder of the coursework independently and successfully. If a student has completed less than 75% of the total coursework, an Incomplete grade should not be considered.
2. The student should be completing the same work that everyone else in the course completed. There should not be a different set of assignments for that student (except where different but equivalent assignments or examinations are necessary to discourage academic dishonesty).
3. Incomplete grades should be assigned because of unforeseen circumstances that have occurred in a student's life. Having trouble "keeping up" or maintaining balance with other coursework is insufficient justification for assigning an Incomplete grade.
4. There must be a written agreement (page 3) that outlines the specific work that needs to be completed and the deadline by which that work should be submitted in order for the instructor to have the time to assess it and change the grade before the system triggers the default grade (which typically occurs near the end of the following semester). A copy of this written agreement

should be provided to the student's primary academic advisor and the student's Associate/Assistant Dean (listed below). The written agreement will sit in the student's advising file. This serves two additional purposes:

- a. If a student is to receive an Incomplete grade due to unforeseen circumstances, the student may also receive additional Incomplete grades in other courses. So that the student does not become overwhelmed with coursework due to multiple Incomplete grades, the student's primary advisor being made aware of all Incomplete grades assigned is crucial.
- b. Instructors assigning an Incomplete grade to a graduating student will notify the student's Associate Dean through this process to help all parties understand the impact on graduation.

Associate/Assistant Deans (current as of 10/2022):

CFA: Kristen Letts Kovak, Senior Associate Dean for Academics (klkovak@cmu.edu)

CIT: Conrad Zapanta, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies (czapanta@andrew.cmu.edu)

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SCS: Tom Cortina, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs (tcortina@cs.cmu.edu)

TSB: Jeninifer Wegner, Assistant Dean (jwegner@andrew.cmu.edu)

CMU Incomplete Grade Agreement

STUDENT NAME	
ANDREW ID	
COURSE NUMBER, TITLE, AND SECTION	
COURSE INSTRUCTOR	
SEMESTER COURSE WAS TAKEN	
DATE INCOMPLETE IS BEING REQUESTED	

FOR INSTRUCTOR

What % of the student's final grade is outstanding? _____

Identification of the remaining coursework and proposed agreement for completion:

Date by which the student will submit remaining coursework to instructor: _____

Default grade if student does not submit work by above date (default grade cannot be an A): _____

FOR STUDENT

An incomplete grade can be requested in unforeseen circumstances that may arise in your life that prevent you from completing your coursework. Carnegie Mellon University wants to support you in all of your academic endeavors, and an Incomplete grade can be an important tool in the student success toolkit. Before requesting an "I" grade, please note the following:

1. The University strongly discourages you from requesting an Incomplete grade if you have more than 25% of the coursework remaining to complete.
2. The Incomplete Grade Agreement is independent of specific disability accommodations, which may be provided as specified throughout the semester but should not be provided retroactively at the end of the semester. (<https://www.cmu.edu/disability-resources/>)
3. Understand you might have to adjust your schedule next semester to accommodate finishing this semester's work in addition to next semester's course load.

My (student's) signature states that I understand and will adhere to the above agreement and that, should I not complete and submit my remaining coursework by the date indicated, I will receive the default grade indicated above.

Signature of Student	Date	
Signature of Instructor	Date	

- A copy of this form has been provided to the student's primary academic advisor
- A copy of this form has been provided to the student's Associate/Assistant Dean (see above)