

NUMBER: 600.615

SUBJECT: GRADES/RATINGS AND COURSES

APPROVAL DATE OF LAST REVISION: AUGUST 15, 2005, JANUARY 24, 2011; NOVEMBER 23, 2015; JUNE 19, 2017

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615.1 – GRADING

All training at the Utah System of Technical Colleges (USTC) is *competency-based*. Competency-based education is learner-centered, allowing students to progress as skills and competencies are mastered. Grades and/or ratings are assigned for each completed course to communicate a student's accomplishment to other institutions and employers. In the open-entry/open-exit format, the grading term starts on a student's first day of class and ends on the last day. Instructors monitor completion time and evaluate student competency in accordance with industry, employer, and certification standards. Student grades/ratings are calculated based on his or her work for an entire course. All students are expected to attain competency and maintain a satisfactory level of progress.

In competency-based education a combination of course grades and/or course ratings may be given. The establishment of a grading/rating policy, therefore, is the direct and sole responsibility of the program instructor within the following guidelines:

- all grades/ratings must be fairly given and must represent a student's actual accomplishments;
- grades/ratings may only reflect on a student's classroom performance and must be free of the instructor's biases or personal feelings about the student;
- students who exhibit similar performance in the classroom should receive like grades/ratings;
- grading/rating standards and criterion should be readily available to students; and
- grading/rating standards and practices should be consistent within any given program.

615.2 – CHANGE OF GRADE/RATING

In the event that a student feels a grade/rating is unfair, he or she has the right to request a change of grade/rating. Students are encouraged to begin by discussing the grade/rating with the instructor. Should that fail to yield a satisfactory result, the student may take the matter to the instructor's supervisor. In the event that an agreement cannot be reached at that level, the student may consult with the Vice President for Student Services or the appropriate Vice President for Instruction. If all efforts to resolve the situation at the local level have failed, the student is permitted to forward the matter to the USTC President's Office for consideration.

Changes in grades/rating shall be the sole responsibility of the instructor subject to the procedure outlined above. Necessary forms and other documentation may be obtained from the Student Services Office.

615.3 – INCOMPLETE GRADES

In a competency-based, open-entry/open-exit system, students are not assigned a grade/rating before successful completion of a course. However, a student may request an 'I' (incomplete) grade when, for reasons beyond his or her control, the coursework cannot be completed. A grade of 'I' (incomplete) may be recorded if the reasons for the incomplete grade request are acceptable to the instructor and the student is passing the course at the time of the request. In awarding an 'I' grade, an instructor must specify the requirements for completing the work, the date the work is to be completed, and a default letter grade should no further work be submitted.

615.4 – DROP AND WITHDRAWAL GRADES

An action taken by a student to discontinue enrollment in a course before the refund deadline (Policy 600.606) has expired is considered a 'drop.' When a course is dropped before the refund deadline, the course is stamped as a dropped course from the student record and does not appear on the academic transcript.

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An action taken by a student to discontinue enrollment in a course after the refund period has expired is considered a 'withdrawal' and may appear on the transcript with either a 'W' or 'F' grade.

615.4.1 – FULL-TIME PROGRAMS

Students who, in the opinion of the instructor, have completed a substantial portion of a course and failed to achieve the course objectives are awarded a grade of 'F.' Students who, in the opinion of the instructor, failed to provide sufficient evidence for evaluation of academic performance are awarded a grade of 'W.'

615.4.2 – SHORT-TERM COURSES

Students who wish to withdraw prior to 50 percent of the elapsed course time will be awarded a grade of 'W.' Students withdrawing after 50 percent of the elapsed course time will be awarded a grade of 'F.'

615.5 – REPEATING A COURSE

By virtue of the USTC's open-entry/open-exit, competency-based model, students are permitted to remain in a course until they attain the required level of competency, subject, of course, to the requirement of maintaining satisfactory progress. Students who do not maintain satisfactory progress levels or do not achieve minimum competency grades/ratings may be required to repeat a course. Students may repeat a course, but can only earn clock hours once for any given course (except in cases where the faculty designate a course as one that can earn clock hours more than once). When a student repeats a course, the lower grade/rating is excluded from the transcript calculations.