

Academic Governing Council
Decision Form
Withdrawal (W) Policy, part of 7.10 Grading Policy

This form is to be used when the Academic Governing Council makes a decision on an issue. This form is sent to the Provost.

Decision: Withdrawal (W) Policy, part of 7.10 Grading Policy

Proposed Policy:

Students may withdraw from a course and receive a W grade until the 70% date of course completion (as noted on the class roster) through the Online Center or at the Enrollment Center. After the 70% date, students may not initiate a course withdrawal or receive a W grade and the final course grade (A, B, C, D, or E) will be assigned based upon all graded and missed assignments. Instructors may not assign a W grade. However, during the last 30% of a course, students who have a documented extenuating circumstance such as an illness or injury, or the illness, injury or death of a significant other or family member can apply for a Hardship Withdrawal through the Office of the Associate Dean of Student Success and Retention. Students may apply to withdraw from a single course or multiple courses. There is no impact on the student's GPA for receiving a W grade in the Grand Rapids Community College grading system; however, other institutions may have different policies governing the impact of W grades on transfer student acceptance and/or their calculated GPA. In addition, W grades may have a negative impact on financial aid eligibility.

Rationale:

Purpose for Policy Review:

- During the February 2013 AGC meeting changes to the Grading Policy were approved, but not by an overwhelming majority. The WP and WF grades were eliminated, leaving faculty no options but to assign grades (A-E or I) to students after 70% of the course was complete. Several dissent forms were submitted concerning the lack of options for faculty to help students in extenuating circumstances and an unclear Incomplete grade policy. The Provost has asked that a team be called upon to review the "I" and "70% Withdrawal Date" and propose some clarification. The I Policy is addressed in a separate Decision Paper.

Outline of Proposed Changes:

- The current Medical Withdrawal process was expanded to include other circumstances and become a Hardship Withdrawal process.
- Students with a documented illness, injury or death involving themselves, a significant other or a family member can apply for a Hardship Withdrawal under the proposed policy and receive a W grade in a course or courses.
- Language regarding the potential impact of W grades on financial aid and at transfer schools was added.
- Language changes were made. For example, "Students may drop a class..." is now "Students may withdraw from a course ..."

Supporting Data:

- This policy was developed using a team approach, with input from the Schools of Arts and Sciences, Student Affairs, and Workforce Development, as well as comments from teaching and non-teaching faculty and a written table exercise at the December 2013 AGC membership meeting.
- The team benchmarked other Michigan community colleges as well as GRCC's major university transfer institutions

Implications for Action:

Possible Benefits:

- This policy would be aligned with many of GRCC's major transfer institutions.
- As students go through this process they must consider the consequences of a W grade and their financial aid situation.
- W grades would be more difficult to obtain, which could lead to more students completing classes that they would have otherwise dropped.
- This policy change would be easily implemented, as the process for a medical withdrawal is already established.

Possible Drawbacks:

- Students would have to go through a process that requires the completion of several steps before a W grade is granted.
- It is likely that more students will receive failing grades.
- Students who withdraw cannot continue to attend class.

Evaluation Plan:

This academic policy should be reviewed again in Winter, 2019

Date of Decision by AGC: February 11, 2014

Response from Provost:

The Provost endorses the Withdrawal Grading Policy as approved by the AGC effective July 1, 2014.

Pete Kupferman 6/18/14