Grades and Policies

Grades inform students of the level of performance they have achieved in a course. Grades are means whereby students may come to know and appreciate their capacities and abilities. Instructors are responsible for specifying the performances required in their courses; students are responsible for meeting the requirements specified.

Grades earned by students at Canisius College reflect:

1. The extent to which the requirements specified in the course syllabus have been met.
2. The degree to which the requirements completed exhibit mastery of the subject or skills which are the object of the course.
3. Other criteria specified by the instructor at the beginning of the course, criteria such as, but not limited to, attendance at lectures or other course functions, projects voluntarily undertaken in excess of specified requirements, correct use of oral or written English and contribution to discussion or other course activities.

Grades earned by undergraduate students include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Superior performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Superior performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Good performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Adequate performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Adequate performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Adequate performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Poor, but passing, performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failing performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FX</td>
<td>Failure due to excessive absences or unauthorized absence from the final examination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P or U</td>
<td>P-Passing. U-Failing. The description of the Pass/Fail program is given later in this chapter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grades authorized by the deans include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Authorized Withdrawal from a course. The description of withdrawal procedures is in a preceding section of this chapter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Incomplete. A student who has failed to fulfill all requirements of a course may petition the instructor to request an incomplete grade. The request must be approved by the instructor and then the appropriate associate dean. An incomplete grade will be granted for only serious and well-defined reasons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG</td>
<td>No grade submitted by the course instructor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final grades are available on the college's online services page at the conclusion of each semester. If an official grade report is needed for any reason, contact the Student Records and Financial Services Center to request a grade report.

Final course grades cannot, in normal circumstances, be altered after they have been recorded on the student academic record. Should an exceptional reason occur that would justify a late grade change, the faculty member can submit to the appropriate associate dean a request to change a student's recorded grade within the following time frame:

- The end of the spring semester following a course taken in the fall
- The end of the fall semester following a course taken in the summer
- The end of the fall semester following a course taken in the spring

Any request for a grade change after these deadlines must be submitted to the dean of the appropriate college with documentation as to why the grade should be changed.

Students who are disputing a grade received in a course must do so under the guidelines and within the timeframes described under grade grievance procedures.

Students who are dissatisfied with their grade in a course may repeat the course once (exceptions may be approved by the appropriate associate dean in consultation with the department chair). In such cases both grades will be entered in the student’s record, but, for the purpose of computing grade point average, only the second grade will be used for the calculation.

Because retaking courses that have already been passed (any grade of D or above) affects a student’s financial aid, students should consult with the Student Records and Financial Services Center and their academic advisor before retaking any courses.

Incomplete Grade

A student who, for serious and well defined reasons, has failed to fulfill all requirements of a course or has failed to take the final exam may petition the course instructor to request from the appropriate associate dean, a grade of “I”, indicating “Incomplete Performance.”

Only the appropriate associate dean may grant an incomplete grade request. It will not be granted to a student whose only reason is excessive absence during the semester or failure to complete the work of the course before the close of the semester without an exceptionally good reason. Examples of such good reasons might be prolonged illness or hospitalization during the semester, serious illness at the time of the final examination, or other unusual circumstances.

An incomplete grade, when granted, is merely temporary and will automatically be changed to an “FX” grade if a final grade is not submitted by March 1 for the fall, August 1 for the spring and October 1 for the summer.

Pass-Fail Program

Seniors and juniors are eligible to elect one course each semester not to exceed four courses total for which they will receive a grade of either “Pass, P grade” or “Fail, U grade.” The purpose of this plan is to enable upperclassmen to take more difficult courses than they would normally take for fear of lowering their grade point average.

The program is as follows:

1. Juniors and seniors who have completed at least 30 hours at Canisius may elect one course each semester, not to exceed a total of four courses in their college careers, for which they will receive a recorded grade on their transcript of either “Pass” or “Fail.”
2. This course must be a free elective in the student's degree program.
3. Within one week after the semester begins, the student must file a request for "Pass-Fail" grading. Application forms may be found in the Student Records and Financial Services Center. If the registrar determines that the course meets the requirements to be taken pass-fail, grades will still be assigned for all work done during the course and on the final examination. A final grade will be entered for the student by the instructor. If this grade is "D" or above, the registrar will record a pass (P grade) for the course on the student's transcript; otherwise, he will record a failure (U grade).

4. Having received permission to take a course on the "Pass-Fail" option, a student may request, in the last week of classes and prior to exam week, that they be withdrawn from the pass-fail option and be assigned a conventional letter grade instead. This request is made at the Student Records and Financial Services Center. A student who withdraws from the "Pass-Fail" option receives the letter grade assigned by the instructor.

5. A student attaining a grade of Pass will receive full credit for this course.

6. If a student elects to receive pass or fail in a course, this course will not be counted in the grade point average. The student must carry at least four courses (12 credit hours) to be eligible for this program. Part-time students, however, are eligible with fewer than four courses.

7. This plan is entirely optional. A student may or may not elect to take advantage of it.

Grade Grievance Procedure

Occasions may arise when a student does not agree with the grade he/she has received in a course. When this happens, the question of whether the grade should be reconsidered is addressed in two stages.

I. The initial stage in the grievance procedure is as follows:
   a. The student first contacts the course instructor to discuss the grade in question within four weeks of the start of the semester (regular academic session) immediately following that in which the grade was awarded. If the instructor agrees that the grade in question was inaccurate, a grade change is processed by the instructor.
   b. If the student and the instructor cannot agree on the appropriateness of the grade in question, the student may petition the chair of the instructor's department, in writing, within ten working days after the meeting with the instructor. If a mutually agreeable decision is made through mediation conducted by the chair, the instructor will submit the agreed-upon grade and the process is completed. If there is no outcome that is mutually acceptable to the student and the instructor, the process may continue. If the instructor is also the chair, then Step 2 is omitted and the process goes to Step 3.
   c. The student may appeal the decision to the appropriate associate dean's office within ten working days after the mediation process is complete. The associate dean shall collect written views and other pertinent material from the involved instructor, student and chair, as well as consult with any other individuals deemed necessary. The associate dean shall render the decision whether the grade should be reconsidered.
   d. The decision of the associate dean to reconsider or not to reconsider the grade in question is final. If the decision is to reconsider the grade, the procedure outlined in Part B below is followed. If the decision is not to reconsider the grade, the original grade cannot be changed. Cases which are referred to the procedure in Part B can be withdrawn only with the consent of the student, instructor, department chair, and associate dean after first informing all parties involved.
   e. If the vice president for academic affairs believes that the decision of the panel should be reviewed, a three-member appeal panel will be appointed from the pool of tenured faculty as described in Step B-1. The vice president, the faculty member and the student involved will each select one member. No member of the original panel may serve on the appeal panel. The appeal panel will follow the procedure in Step B-3, including completion of its task within thirty days of the formation of the panel. The decision of the appeal panel is final.

II. The final stage in the grievance procedure is as follows:
   a. If the associate dean feels that the reconsideration of the grade in question is appropriate, a panel of tenured faculty who have not been involved in the process described above is formed from the department in question. The panel must be formed within ten days of the associate dean’s decision. If the department does not have a minimum of four members, it will be expanded to include all the tenured members of the departments within the division (Natural Science, Social Science, Humanities, Education, or Business) of which the department in question is a member.
   b. A three-member panel will be selected as follows. The associate dean, faculty member and student involved will each select one member of the panel from the designated pool.
   c. The panel will review all appropriate material and make a determination about the grade change. This review must be completed within thirty days of the formation of the panel. The panel has the authority to assign a grade for the course in question. That grade may be the same grade as assigned by the instructor or a higher or a lower grade, according to the panel’s judgment. The student and the instructor will be informed of the panel’s decision and, when applicable, the authorized grade change will be submitted to the registrar.
   d. The decision of the panel may be appealed by the original instructor or the student to the vice president for academic affairs only in the following extraordinary circumstances:
      i. The grade grievance procedure was not followed.
      ii. Prejudice was manifested against either the student or the instructor.
      iii. New, relevant information was introduced.
         The appeal must be brought within thirty days of the panel’s decision. The burden of proof for the appeal rests with the individual bringing the appeal.

Courses at Other Colleges

Students matriculating at Canisius should plan to complete all their coursework at the college. The rationale for this policy rests in the mission and philosophy of the college and in its concern for the essential unity and integrity of all aspects of the curriculum: the college core, major requirements and free electives. Permission to take courses at other colleges during the regular and summer sessions is granted by the appropriate associate dean, who will consider all aspects of the student’s request, including the quality and level of the proposed course and its role in the student’s program. Courses intended to fulfill major requirements must also be approved by department chairperson. Permission to take courses at other colleges must be requested on the appropriate form and in advance of taking the course.

Generally, the following guidelines apply:
1. Students are ordinarily limited to one course at another institution for every ten courses taken at Canisius.

2. Junior and senior-level major course requirements are not transferred from community colleges.

3. Courses taken at a four-year college/university will be accepted only if they are offered at a comparable level at Canisius (i.e., freshman-sophomore level/junior-senior level).

4. Students who live outside the greater Buffalo area may receive more lenient consideration in taking a summer course at another college. However, the associate dean may recommend an online web-based course as a preferred option if he/she considers it more appropriate than the off-campus course.

5. Courses used to fulfill Core Curriculum requirements should be taken at Canisius College.

Study Abroad Course Grades
In keeping with the college's policy on “Courses at Other Colleges,” students who wish to study at the universities associated with Canisius must study through the Canisius programs. Grades earned in Canisius-affiliated study abroad programs will transfer back to the college and will be counted toward a student’s grade point average.

Students who wish to study at other foreign universities or in other countries than those associated with Canisius should confer with the Study Abroad Office. If one of these programs is approved for a student to use as credit toward a Canisius degree, the credit hours will transfer back to Canisius, but the grades will not count toward a student’s grade-point average.