Guidelines for Requesting a Grade Change at Indiana University

This handout is designed to help students understand the policies regarding grade changes at Indiana University. The procedures and policies are intended to protect the integrity of all final course grades and the student’s academic record and to protect the rights of all students.

Requests to change a grade to a “W” should be rare and are only considered when there are truly compelling circumstances*.

A grade change for one course may not be approved when all other course grades are passing.

Although you may feel strongly that a failing grade should be changed due to reasons that may be very important to you, the criteria for changing grades are very strict. Grades cannot be changed to:

• Increase your GPA,
• Prevent the student from being dismissed,
• To help qualify for financial assistance, or
• To join a fraternity or sorority.

If you believe you have a compelling medical or personal reason that prevented you from finishing the course, you may appeal to the instructor to request that she/he change the grade to a “W.” The student advocate’s role is to assist in preparing the formal request.

These requests must be carefully and thoroughly documented.

Student Role and Responsibilities

Students are expected to take an active role in seeking the Grade Change, including prompt return of all documents to the Advocate, revision of the personal statement, and awareness of deadlines for submission.

1. You should contact the instructor(s) to let them know that a grade change appeal request is being prepared with the assistance of an advocate. Contact with course instructors is important. This step demonstrates the seriousness of the request and allows you to make your case in a personal way.

2. You should provide to the advocate assigned to your case:
   • A statement that outlines the specific reasons that you were not able to finish the course(s).
   • Medical or other official documentation.

Refer to the checklist in this packet for additional information.
Facts

- Only the instructor (or in the absence of the instructor, the department chair) has the authority to initiate a request for a grade change. If the instructor is unwilling to consider a request to change the grade, that decision is final.
- If the instructor reviews the request and agrees to initiate such a request, it will have to be approved by the department chair and then by the Dean of the school in which the course is offered.
- This process can take from 4 weeks to 6 months to process and be recorded by the Office of the Registrar.
- Students may need to follow-up with instructors or the Dean after the appeal is filed. Follow-up should be prompt and is the student’s responsibility.

*What do “compelling circumstances” look like?*

Think of compelling circumstances as an unexpected event, injury or illness that made it impossible for you to complete coursework for an extended period of time. This might be a death in the family, an illness or injury that impaired your ability to attend class or complete assignments for a prolonged period, or a traumatic event like surviving an assault or other crime.

**Special Considerations based on school**

The College of Arts and Sciences will ONLY consider requests for changes to W if you did not complete the final examination or assignment in the class. Requests are rarely approved if other grades earned during the semester were passing. A grade of “I” cannot be changed to a W. These considerations can also apply to other academic units.

International students must carry a full load of 12 hours or more for all semesters in residence unless International Services obtains a special waiver. Changes from “F” to “W” in a course would reduce the course load could impact your visa status. Please contact the Office of International Student Services at 812-855-9086; Poplars 221.

Financial Assistance and Academic Progress. If you received financial assistance during the semester of the grade change request, your academic progress may be affected whether the final grades are “F’s” or “W’s”. Please contact IU Student Central for more information about eligibility for future financial assistance at 812-855-6500.

**Deadlines**

The College of Arts and Sciences will consider grade change requests for a period of one year following the semester in which the original grade was assigned.

The Jacobs School of Music will consider grade change requests for a period of six months following the semester in.
All other schools have no preset deadlines. Requests for semesters more than one year old may not be able to be considered and are subject to departmental or school policies which may not be widely published. Do not presume that there is no deadline because there is no detailed information online.

**What do I do if the instructors do not respond?**

Although some do, instructors and deans are under no obligation to notify you about their decision regarding the request.

If you are on campus, it is a good idea to follow up in person.

It is not unusual for some grades to be changed more quickly than others. In addition, some grades from a request may be recommended and approved while others may not be recommended or approved. This all depends on the instructor and the school’s policies.

**The Advocate’s Role**

An advocate will review the personal statement and relevant documentation. When the request is complete it will be submitted to the Director of the Student Advocates Office for approval. Once it is approved, it will be transmitted to instructors and the appropriate school/college deans in a secure manner.

**Fee Appeal**

If all grades are changed to “W” then you may be eligible for a tuition & fee refund. For more information please go to https://studentcentral.indiana.edu/doc/pay-for-college/fee-appeal-form.pdf

If the Student Advocates Office determines that a student does not have a case for the grade change. The student is then free to pursue the grade change without further assistance from the Student Advocates Office.
Grade Change Request Preparation Checklist

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

☐ Request signed, dated medical documentation on letterhead from a health care provider. It should include the time period of the illness and treatment, a brief description of the problem and a statement that confirms that that illness or injury was serious enough to have prevented the student from completing coursework during that time.

☐ If the student was unable to complete coursework due to compelling personal reasons (divorce, death in your family), the student should provide official documentation related to this event (court documents, obituary, etc.).

PERSONAL STATEMENT INSTRUCTIONS

You will need to prepare a typed single-spaced statement (about 1 page) using the template below. The statement should be free of grammatical/spelling errors and should be concise and readable. You may seek advice from their advocate about content of the personal statement. You should view the appeal statement as your opportunity to present your case to the instructor and the dean for approval of the request. Attach the statement as a Word document (not Googledocs) to an email and send to the advocate to review. This appeal statement is not a letter.

Contact information in upper right or left hand corner.  
(Name, Student ID #, Contact information email and phone, Date)

First paragraph – State what you are asking for: Opening sentence: I’m working with the Student Advocates office to request that the Fs (or other low grades) be changed to Ws in the courses listed below;

List courses in the following format:

   Fall 20XX: Course Number – Class Number – Course Title – Instructor

Example:

   Fall 2018 – BUS-A 100 – 1152 – Basic Accounting Skills – Vivian Winston

Second (and third if necessary) paragraph- A brief explanation about what happened –why you performed so poorly (illness, divorce, death in the family). Include the approximate date that you stopped attending classes. This is especially important when requesting a change of grade in math courses. A timeline about the impact or consequences of the compelling circumstances related to the semester in question. Dates of medical treatment, hospitalization, and court hearings are relevant and should be included.

If you earned passing grades in other courses during the same semester, the statement must include an explanation of why you were able to do well in these courses, but poorly in the ones for which the grade change is requested. Note: requests are rarely approved if other grades are passing.

Final paragraph – a thank you for considering the appeal.

Return documentation and personal statement to your Advocate

IU Student Advocates Office | Eigenmann Hall 229, 1900 E. 10th Street, Bloomington, IN 47406 | (812) 855-0761
Fax: (812) 855-2259 | https://studentaffairs.indiana.edu/student-advocates/