



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR
Bloomington

Memorandum

To: Faculty and Associate Instructors

From: Roland A. Coté
Registrar

RE: "FN" Grade for Non-Attendance

Date: Jan. 12, 2009

Phone: 5-9841

On March 30, 1999, the "FN" grade was approved by the University Faculty Council and was implemented First Semester 1999-2000. The grade of "FN" provides a distinction between "F" grades awarded for poor performance in class and "F" grades awarded for students who fail to attend or stop attending given in compliance with the long-standing Faculty Council Policy that "(f)ailure to complete a course without an authorized withdrawal will result in the grade of F" (December 1, 1953). When "FN" is assigned, the grade recorded on the student's permanent record will remain a simple "F" in compliance with the earlier policy.

The Faculty Council "FN" grade policy also requires that an instructor must provide the last date of documented class attendance or participation when awarding the "FN" grade. Examples of documentation of class attendance include "records of a student's presence at class meetings, examinations, tutorials, computer-assisted instruction, advising or counseling sessions, or study groups." *Please note, as of May 2005, the value of "FNN" should be entered for students who have NEVER attended the class. No date should be provided.*

If you have further questions about submission of the grade, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

To the Faculty:

By action of the University Faculty Council (UFC), March 30, 1999, a course grade of "FN" has been established. Implemented First Semester 1999-2000, this grade is used to indicate failure due to student non-attendance in class, and provides a distinction between an "F" grade awarded for failing performance and an "F" grade assigned for non-attendance in compliance with the Faculty Council policy stating that "failure to complete a course without an authorized withdrawal will result in the grade of F" (December 1, 1953).

The March 30, 1999, University Faculty Council policy also requires that an instructor provide the last date of documented class attendance or participation whenever the "FN" grade is assigned. The date should be entered in the "Last Date Attended" column of the final grade roster screen. Please note, as of May 2005, the value of "FNN" should be entered for students who have NEVER attended the class. No date should be provided. Some examples of documentation of class attendance are records of a student's presence at class meetings, examinations, tutorials, computer-assisted instruction, advising or counseling sessions, or study groups.

The grade that will appear on the student grade report and academic record when an "FN" or "FNN" grade is assigned will be "F," which remains in compliance with the 1953 Faculty Council policy. The "N" portion of the "FN" grade and the last attendance date will be retained on the student's record as internal notations only that can subsequently be used to identify an unofficial withdrawal and to determine the appropriate return amount for any federally defined financial aid that has been awarded to the student.

The adoption of the "FN" grade is in response to a federal audit which, in its review of Indiana University's implementation of federal provisions for student financial assistance, cited the university for its "lack of an acceptable unofficial withdrawal policy for all campuses." According to the provisions of the Higher Education Act (1986), as amended, a student must be in attendance at an institution of post-secondary education to be receiving federal financial assistance. If the student withdraws during the federally defined student aid refund period, the university must return the portion of unused aid as determined by the student's withdrawal date or last date of class attendance. For a student who ceases to attend classes and fails to notify the school that he/she is officially withdrawing (an "unofficial withdrawal"), the university has the responsibility under the federal regulations to determine an accurate withdrawal date so that the required return of unused aid can be made. In the past, students at Indiana University who failed due to poor performance could not be distinguished from "unofficial withdrawals," since both cases were graded "F." The assignment of the "FN" grade, when appropriate, and collection of the last date of documented class attendance or participation will enable the university to identify those students who are "unofficial withdrawals" and to determine the amount of aid that must be returned.

A third provision of the new University Council policy requires that faculty participate in the Office of the Registrar's enrollment audit conducted in the fifth to seventh week of each regular semester. This audit assists the Registrar in establishing and maintaining accurate enrollment records and also provides an early indication of students who are non-attending for review and financial aid resolution. Since faculty have fully cooperated with this audit in the past, this should not be an additional burden to faculty. However, the establishment of this policy demonstrates to the federal auditors that the university takes its responsibilities under the Higher Education Act seriously.