



Guidelines for assigning a COVID-19 Extension

Given the unprecedented disruption caused by COVID-19 this spring semester, many faculty have asked when it is appropriate to assign a student an Incomplete. The Registrar has made available a special category of grade called the COVID-19 Extension for use in Spring 2020. The decision to assign grades, including incompletes or the COVID-19 Extension, belongs to the instructor of record. However, we ask that instructors follow these guidelines when considering the COVID-19 Extension.

- **New option: COVID-19 Extension.** Instructors can assign the COVID-19 Extension when students are unable to complete a course due to disruptions caused by the pandemic, including difficulty transitioning to an online environment.
- **Eligibility.** The student should have completed a reasonable portion (50% or more) of the work required in the course to be eligible for a Covid-19 Extension. The Extension is unlikely to be successful if the student has to make up most or all of a course.
- **Shorter deadline.** The deadline for completing the work with an extension is July 31, 2020, rather than the full year allowed for a regular Incomplete. Instructors can set a shorter deadline when appropriate. Completing the work before the beginning of Fall semester can prevent students from incurring Financial Aid penalties. Also, trying to finish past courses while tackling a full load of new ones can overwhelm any student.
- **Feasibility.** Instructors should only assign an extension when students can feasibly complete the work. Courses tied to specific events, placements, or collaborations that cannot be reproduced may not be good candidates for a COVID-19 Extension.
- **Specific Guidelines and Expectations.** A student is more likely to finish a course if the instructor provides and the student commits to a written pathway for completing the work. Assignment scaffolding, intermediate deadlines, regular check-ins, and tutoring (if the subject is supported by the ACT) can help students stay on track.
- **Default grade.** Instructors have the option to set a default grade other than F in case students do not complete the required work. The student may have already earned a passing grade before disengaging due to the pandemic. The default is set to F unless the instructor changes it to another grade.
- **Academic support.** The Academic Center for Tutoring can provide support for many specific courses. Even when it does not support a specific course, the ACT can provide help in general areas such as writing or transitioning to online learning.
- **Additional considerations.** The COVID-19 Extension is a variation on the Incomplete grade. Recent data shows that about half of Incomplete grades turn into Fs, as students find it difficult to make up work outside the structure of the course. Also, instructors who have given several extensions may find that the resulting workload is not inconsiderable. For these reasons, instructors should be judicious when assigning this extension or any incomplete grade.

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