

ACADEMIC PROGRESS AND GRADING SYSTEM

Academic Progress

- Students must maintain a 3.00 minimum cumulative grade point average for all courses applicable to the MIA or MPA degree. A student whose performance does not meet these standards may not be permitted to continue to enroll in the degree program, and the School will take appropriate action. If at the end of a semester, a graduate student fails to meet the GPA requirement, accumulates two or more Incomplete (IN) grades, or in other ways fails to meet the standards for progress, the student will receive a written warning concerning the lack of academic progress. The student must remedy the problem within one semester. Failure to re-establish satisfactory academic standing may result in dismissal from SIPA, subject to review by the Associate Dean of Student Affairs. A dismissed student must wait a minimum of one calendar year from the date of dismissal before applying for readmission to the graduate program.
- Full-time enrollment is defined as a minimum of 12 credits per semester. Satisfactory academic progress for a full-time student requires maintaining a minimum GPA of 3.00 and completing a minimum of 9 credits out of an attempted 12 credits per term toward the degree. Full-time students who do not earn this minimum number of credits will have a Dean's Hold placed on their registration.
- A Dean's Hold prevents a student from registering for classes and from receiving the degree. Students with two or more IN or UW or one or more grades of F will have their registration placed on Dean's Hold. In serious cases of unsatisfactory performance, a Dean's Hold may lead to dismissal from the School upon recommendation by the Committee of Deans. Students who are placed on Dean's Hold must be granted permission to register by the Associate Dean.
- Effective Fall 2011: Students are required to complete all of the MIA or MPA degree requirements within five years of the first semester of matriculation at SIPA.
- The total number of attempted credits toward the degree should not exceed 90 credits.
- Advanced Standing/Transfer credits do not impact the cumulative GPA but count as both attempted and completed credits.

*Note – students enrolled in the part-time Executive MPA Program (EMPA) are required to complete an average of 6 credits per term instead of the nine required for full-time students.

Grading Notations

The Professorial Faculty of the School of International and Public Affairs has adopted the following grading guidelines to ensure consistency and provide guidance to instructors at SIPA: Grades submitted for SIPA core courses must have an average GPA between 3.2 and 3.4, with the goal being 3.3. Courses with enrollments over 35 are also recommended to follow this rule. Workshop courses will be exceptions to this rule.

These guidelines do not need to be interpreted as a strict curve, and faculty are free to reach this goal in a variety of ways. When the faculty voted to adopt these guidelines, they intended to preserve faculty flexibility and discretion but also wanted to create structure and norms. SIPA uses a standard A-F grading scale.

Grade	GPA Equivalent
A+	4.33
A (Excellent)	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B (Good)	3.00 (*A cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required to remain in good academic standing and to graduate)
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C (Fair)	2.00
C-	1.67
D (Poor)	1.00
F (Failure)	0.00
P (Pass)	N/A
R (Audit)	N/A
UW (Unofficial Withdraw)	N/A

Pass/Fail

Core, concentration, and specialization courses cannot be taken pass/fail. Students can only opt to take elective courses on a pass/fail basis.* There is no limit to the number of elective courses that can be taken pass/fail. Please note the regulations below regarding taking a course pass/fail:

- The instructor's permission is not required to change the grading option to P/F (pass/fail). However, instructors can opt to have a course blocked from pass/fail registration.
- Students can change the grading option for an eligible full semester course at any time via SSOL up to the "last day to change grading option" noted on the Academic Calendar. Note: Short courses are not subject to the pass/fail deadline. Requests for grading option changes can be submitted for a short course anytime before the final course session. After the official pass/fail deadline, requests for short courses can be submitted via the [registration request form](#).
- A grade of Pass is not calculated into a student's grade point average. Certain courses, such as one-point short-courses or Professional Development, are offered only on a Pass/Fail basis.
- Students can reference the [SIPA academic calendar](#) for the pass/fail deadline date.

*For MPA-DP students, credits obtained from classes taken Pass/Fail, when a letter grade is an option, do not count towards the 54 needed to graduate.

Auditing/R credit (registered for the course; no qualitative grade assigned):

- Students who audit (receive R credit) a course must be registered in SSOL and appear on the grade roster. Students who are not officially registered will not have access to CourseWorks. Students who wish to receive R credit for a course must request permission from the instructor during course registration. Registration priority should be given to students taking a course for full credit over auditing. Instructors are not obligated to grant R credit; however, if permission is granted, the student must meet course requirements established at the instructor's discretion. Upon successfully completing the course, the instructor will submit the grade of 'R' for these students. Should students not meet course requirements or fail to attend class,

instructors can submit a grade of UW (Unofficial Withdraw) or F (Failure). Students approved for R-credit registration are only exempt from final examinations by University policy. NOTE: credits taken for R credit do not count toward the minimum 54-credit graduation requirement, but R credit does count toward the credit limit covered by the flat tuition rate in the fall and spring semesters.

The mark of W (Withdrawal):

- Given to a student who drops a course between the end of add/drop and the fifth week of classes. Students cannot drop/withdraw from a course after the date noted on the [SIPA academic calendar](#).

The mark of UW (Unofficial Withdrawal):

- Given to a student who discontinues attendance in a course without submitting an official request to withdraw prior to the stated deadline on the SIPA Academic Calendar (fifth week of classes).
- A "UW" is a permanent grade and will remain on the transcript if the student repeats the course.

The mark of CP (Credit Pending):

- The mark of Credit Pending (CP) may be entered at the discretion of an instructor in two instances: (1) in courses that regularly involve research or projects extending beyond the end of the term; and (2) in highly exceptional cases where a short extension (generally less than two or three weeks) has been approved for student completion of selected course requirements. Once the work has been completed, the instructor immediately changes the CP to a letter grade using the web grading system. If an instructor does not replace a CP with a letter grade within 30 days, the CP reverts to an Unofficial Withdrawal (UW). A CP may also be entered by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs for exceptional administrative circumstances, such as leaves of absence and disciplinary matters.

The mark of IN (Incomplete):

Incompletes are granted or denied at the discretion of course instructors. Incompletes can be granted in cases of incapacitating illness, serious family emergency, or in circumstances of comparable gravity. Permission can also be granted in order to allow a student to consult research materials not obtainable in the course of the semester.

If an instructor grants an incomplete for a course, the instructor and student must agree on a date on which the coursework will be completed. This date must be **no later than the last day of the exam period of the following semester**. It is the student's responsibility to make sure a grade is submitted by the agreed-upon date. The instructor is not required to submit a grade for the course after the agreed-upon date. The mark of incomplete (IN) is not a final grade. Therefore, if a final grade is not submitted by this date, the mark of IN will revert to UW (Unofficial Withdrawal), and the credits in the course will be forfeited. Note that students cannot be certified for graduation with a notation of incomplete (IN) on their transcript. All grades must be final in order for a student to graduate.

SIPA policy states that if the outstanding coursework is not completed **by the last day of the exam period of the following term**, the grade will automatically revert to Unofficial Withdrawal (UW), defined as "student did not complete attendance and assignments, but failed to withdraw." The mark of UW is a final, permanent grade that cannot be changed. Students with two or more marks of incomplete (IN) will have a registration hold placed on their account **and may not register for classes in subsequent semesters (in exceptional circumstances, a student may submit a written appeal to the Committee of Deans for approval to**

continue, but the Committee of Deans may decline such requests, and there is no further appeal).

Any student who believes that their situation warrants the granting of "IN" must follow this process:

- Students will initiate the Incomplete process by speaking with the instructor and securing instructor approval.
- The student will complete the **Application for Incomplete** and upload the instructor's approval **by the last day of the final exam period**.
- The student will be contacted and counseled by their SIPA Advising Dean. The Advising Dean will approve and post the grading notation of Incomplete.
- After the Application for Incomplete is received by OSA, the student should meet with their Advising Dean or Program Director. OSA approves and posts the Incomplete grading notation after receiving the student's completed form.
- Once an Incomplete has been entered into the student's record, instructors can update that notation with a letter grade in SSOL once the student has completed all course requirements.

For questions on the incomplete process, instructors should contact Senior Assistant Dean Stefan Brown in the Office of Student Affairs at asb167@columbia.edu.

The mark of AB (Absent from the Final Examination):

- Granted by the instructor, not later than the day of the examination, to a student whose attendance and progress have been satisfactory and who cannot be present because of sickness or some other extreme emergency, which must be substantiated. The student must make arrangements with the instructor to remove the AB.

The mark of YC (Year Course):

- A temporary mark is given at the end of the first term of a course in which the entire year's work must be completed before a qualitative grade is assigned. The grade given at the end of the second term is the grade for the entire course.

Repeating Courses

- Students are allowed to repeat a course in which they received a failing grade (i.e., "F"). A failed course may be repeated only once. If repeated, both grades earned in the course will remain on the student's transcript, and both grades will be factored into the student's GPA.
- Students cannot repeat a course in which they have received a passing grade.
- Students cannot take courses of duplicative content. Example: students may not take SIPA U6300 - Microeconomics if they have received a passing grade in SIPA U6400 - Microeconomic Analysis.