

# Policy on Academic Standards, Grading, and Assessment

**CATEGORY:** Student – Academic

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**APPROVED BY:** President

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## Policy Purpose

The College recognizes the importance of transparent, consistent and fair grading and assessment practices that support students' performance and academic achievement. The *Policy on Academic Standards, Grading and Assessment* outlines the regulations surrounding **academic standards, including prior learning and transfer credits, assessment practices, including due dates, and final examination deferrals.**

## Scope

This policy applies to enrolled students, all individuals employed by the College, and any other individuals acting as representatives or holding a titular position of the College.

## Policy

### 1. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

- 1.1. To be granted successful completion of a College Program, a student must:
  - 1.1.1. Achieve **at least** the **minimum standards** in all the Courses in the Program; and
  - 1.1.2. Obtain a minimum **passing grade of sixty-five percent (65%)**, unless otherwise indicated on the Program Outline.
- 1.2. Students who achieve a cumulative grade average of **ninety percent (90%) or greater** will be recognized with an Honours Diploma or Certificate.
- 1.3. All Courses and final grades obtained in a Program at the College will be officially recorded in the students' transcripts.
- 1.4. **Grading System:**
  - 1.4.1. The College uses the following grading system and symbols:

**Numeric and Letter Grades**

NUMERIC GRADE (%)	LETTER GRADE	DESCRIPTION
90-100	A+	EXCELLENT
85-89	A	
80-84	A-	
77-79	B+	ABOVE AVERAGE
73-76	B	
70-72	B-	
67-69	C+	AVERAGE
65-66	C	
0-64	F	FAIL

**Non-Grade Symbols**

SYMBOLS	DESCRIPTION
CR (PLA)	<b>Prior Learning Assessment:</b> Course requirements met through Prior Learning Assessment
CR (TR)	<b>Transfer Credit:</b> Course requirements met through transfer of credit from another academic institution
CR	<b>Course Credit:</b> Course requirements satisfied
I	<b>Incomplete:</b> Course requirements not satisfied
NG	<b>No Grade Reported:</b> No grade(s) submitted for student
AU	<b>Audited Course</b>
WD	<b>Withdrawal</b>

- 1.5. Students have the right to a formal appeal process for final grades.
- 1.6. Students admitted into Programs may gain academic credit through prior learning assessment and transfer credit.

**2. PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT**

- 2.1. The College will grant credit for a Course on the basis of the prior learning a student has acquired through formal studies or professional, work, or life experience.
- 2.2. The College relies on challenge examinations set by relevant Faculty Members to determine students' competency levels.

2.3. Students are responsible for paying a non-refundable Administrative Fee and the cost of the examination prior to writing the challenge examination.

2.4. The cost of the challenge examination is equal to the cost of the Course tuition.

### 2.5. Limitations

2.5.1. The College may assess prior learning as equivalent to no more than 50% of the hours of instruction of a Program unless:

2.5.1.1. It is related to a program leading to an occupation that is regulated and the regulator stipulates that prior learning may be assessed as equivalent to more than 50% of the hours of instruction, or

2.5.1.2. The College is appointed by the provincial Private Training Institution Branch to provide a comparable program for a student because another institution ceased to hold a certificate before a student could complete the approved program.

### 2.6. Restrictions

2.6.1. Students must be admitted by the College before they can apply for a Prior Learning Assessment challenge examination.

2.6.2. Students may challenge an examination only once.

2.6.3. Students may not challenge an examination for a Course that the student has taken and failed at the College.

2.6.4. Students must complete a minimum of 50% of the instructional hours of a Program in the College, unless they meet the requirements listed under Section 2.5.

## 3. TRANSFER CREDITS

3.1. A Transfer Credit Assessment is limited to only fifty percent (50%) of the Program.

3.2. Students may apply for transfer credits in recognition of Courses completed at other post-secondary institutions under the following conditions:

3.2.1. The Course has similar learning objectives that are comparable in breadth and depth to Course at the College.

3.2.2. The coursework is related to and aligns with the student's Program at the College.

3.2.3. The application is supported by official transcripts and Course Outlines.

3.3. Transfer Credit equivalency is **limited to fifty percent (50%)** of the instructional hours (Courses) of a Program.

3.4. To satisfy the *Academic Residency Requirements*, students must satisfactorily complete a **minimum of fifty percent (50%)** of the total Program at the College, unless Sub-sections 2.5.11 or 2.5.12 are applicable.

### 3.5. Transfer Credit Application Procedure

3.5.1. Students must complete **all** of the following steps when applying for Transfer Credits:

3.5.1.1. Submit the Transfer Credit Request to Student Services prior to the commencement of the Course for which the Transfer Credit application is being made:

3.5.1.2. Pay the non-refundable Application Fee and non-refundable per-Course Transfer Credit Request Fee(s);

3.5.1.3. Ensure the application includes the following **required documents** from the other post-secondary institution(s):

- ❖ Official transcript(s); and

- ❖ Course Outline(s) with sufficient details (e.g., Course content, learning objectives, assessment methods, etc.) for the completed Course(s).

3.5.2. Upon receiving the student request and all documentations, the Senior Education Administrator will review the information with the respective Faculty Member, render a decision and notify the student within ten (10) business days.

#### 4. ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

##### 4.1. Course Outlines/Syllabus

4.1.1. To guide instruction and support student learning, the College develops Course Outlines or Syllabi of the expectations, and requirements of the Course, which include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Course content and learning objectives;
- ❖ Method of delivery;
- ❖ Assessment practices;
- ❖ Attendance requirements;
- ❖ Learning materials, and so forth.

4.1.2. Faculty Members are responsible for:

- 4.1.2.1. Adhering to the Course Outline and its contents; and
- 4.1.2.2. Explaining and ensuring students receive the Course Outline or Syllabi before or on the first day of class;
- 4.1.2.3. Ensuring the Course Outline includes participation and attendance requirements, and assessment methodologies, including grading weight (%), timelines, due dates, and the number and frequency of assignments/examinations.

##### 4.2. Assessment - Purpose and Methodologies

4.2.1. The College and Faculty Members use student evaluations and assessments as tools:

- ❖ For diagnostic purposes to assist in making decisions regarding the academic standing and academic progression of student who has been admitted to the College;
- ❖ For formative purposes to assess a student's current level of proficiency and to provide opportunity proactively for students to enhance their performance;
- ❖ For summative purposes to recognize a student's accomplishments and academic achievement; and to aid in decision-making regarding the student's advancement or Course completion.

4.2.2. Faculty Members assess student performance throughout the duration of Courses by using a variety of evaluation methodologies, which include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Assignments
- ❖ Quizzes or Tests
- ❖ Essays
- ❖ Field practice reports
- ❖ Practicum reports
- ❖ Course discussion groups, online journals or self-assessments

- ❖ Collaborative assignments, such as group projects, presentations, case studies/scenarios, essays, and blogs
- ❖ Observations (i.e., student participation in discussions, etc.)
- ❖ Final Examination

#### 4.3. **Assessment - Responsibilities and Expectations**

##### **The College**

- 4.3.1. The College fosters equitable, consistent, and fair grading and assessment practices to maintain a high quality of education and to support student learning and teaching effectiveness.
- 4.3.2. The College recognizes the importance of student feedback in the continuous improvement of its support services, facilities, and provision and delivery of Courses and Programs.

##### **Students**

- 4.3.3. Students are responsible for using the results of the assessments and Faculty Member feedback to reflect on their learning and, if needed, to access services and resources within the College for support and to improve their academic performance.
- 4.3.4. Students are responsible for actively participating to enhance their learning in their in-class and online Courses and Programs.

##### **Faculty Members**

- 4.3.5. Faculty Members must ensure that assessments of academic progress are fair, valid and reliable, and based on the learning objectives of the Course or Program.
- 4.3.6. Faculty Members must provide students written evaluations (e.g., quizzes, assignments, essays, etc.) regularly and at least once before thirty percent (30%) of the instructional hours have been delivered in Programs with forty (40) hours or more of instructional time.
- 4.3.7. Faculty Members must develop their own assessment activities and instruments including Final Examinations in cases where they do not have access to a test bank provider.
- 4.3.8. Faculty Members must provide clear and transparent assessment criteria to students throughout the Course.
- 4.3.9. Faculty Members must provide a description and grading criteria for all evaluative tasks and activities, except for Final Examinations, before or at the time they are assigned and provide reasons for each grade given to students.

#### 4.4. **Assessing Student Participation**

- 4.4.1. Faculty Members must not grade or use student attendance as an assessment methodology.
- 4.4.2. Faculty Members may use student participation as an assessment methodology in the following circumstances:
  - 4.4.2.1. As evidence that students are actively engaged in their learning.
  - 4.4.2.2. As a grade that is earned accumulatively by the student throughout the duration of a Course.
  - 4.4.2.3. That is awarded at the end of the Course.

#### 4.5. **Online & In-Class Observations**

- 4.5.1. To support and enhance teaching effectiveness, the Senior Education Administrator (SEA) or Designate may observe Faculty Members during their online or in-class Courses. During the performance observation, the SEA or Designate will use a Performance Observation/Monitoring Checklist to assess the Faculty Member's:

- ❖ Mastery over the Course content;
- ❖ Adherence to the Course Outline;
- ❖ Use of instructional and assessment activities; and
- ❖ Interaction with the students.

#### 4.6. End-of-Course evaluations

4.6.1. Student feedback from End-of-Course evaluations is valued and used for the following purposes:

- ❖ To maintain a high standard of education;
- ❖ To assess and continually improve support services;
- ❖ To assess and continually improve teaching effectiveness; and
- ❖ To assess and improve the provision and delivery of future Courses.

4.6.2. All student feedback, including written comments, in the End-of-Course evaluations:

- 4.6.2.1. Will be anonymous and aggregated as Course Evaluation Results; and
- 4.6.2.2. Is confidential and to be shared only with the respective Faculty Member and College Administration.

### 5. ASSESSMENT DUE DATES AND EXPECTATIONS

#### 5.1. Due Dates - Expectations

- 5.1.1. On the first day of the Course, Faculty Members must provide the due dates for all graded assessments to the enrolled students.
- 5.1.2. Students must submit all graded assessments by the stipulated due date to avoid receiving any potential mark deduction penalties and to receive complete feedback on their submission.
- 5.1.3. Students may submit an assessment up to one (1) week after the deadline without receiving additional mark deduction penalties; however, they will not receive feedback on their assessment.
- 5.1.4. Students who submit an assignment more than one (1) week after the due date will receive a five percent (5%) grade deduction per business day of lateness and will not receive feedback on their assessment.
- 5.1.5. All coursework must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (PST) on the last day of the Course.
- 5.1.6. No assessments will be accepted after the Course end date.

#### 5.2. Due Date - Extensions

- 5.2.1. Special consideration may be granted for students requiring an extension on a deadline due to extenuating circumstance(s).
- 5.2.2. Students who want assessment extensions, except for Final Examinations and assessments made in lieu of Final Examinations, must make their requests directly to their Faculty Members only.
- 5.2.3. Students who request an extension on an assessment due to extenuating circumstance(s) or emergency must submit their request in writing via e-mail directly to their Faculty Member at least two (2) business days before the due date of the assessment.
- 5.2.4. A Faculty Member may issue a grade penalty to students in the following circumstances:
  - 5.2.4.1. Under the conditions stated in Section 5.1 of this policy; or
  - 5.2.4.2. If a student requests a due date extension on or after the due date of the assessment.

5.2.4.3. Extension requests will not be considered on or after the last day of the Course.

## 6. FINAL EXAMINATIONS

### 6.1. Examination Schedule

- 6.1.1. The College posts an examination schedule at the commencement of a Program or Course to provide sufficient time for the College, Faculty Members and students to prepare for upcoming examinations.
- 6.1.2. Students must adhere to Program and Course timelines and complete their examinations as scheduled.

### 6.2. Final Examination - Deferrals

- 6.2.1. Deferred examinations may be granted when an examination has been missed due to extenuating circumstances that include, but are not limited to:
  - ❖ Illness (doctor's note required);
  - ❖ Death of a family member (proof required);
  - ❖ Injury or accident (police report or proof of medical attention required).
- 6.2.2. Extenuating circumstances do not include personal or professional scheduling conflicts such as vacations or business trips.

### 6.3. Final Examination - Deferral Procedure

- 6.3.1. Should an extenuating circumstance occur, as outlined in sub-section 6.2.1, the student must notify Student Services in writing no more than seven (7) calendar days before the scheduled examination date.
- 6.3.2. If the extenuating circumstances occurs immediately prior to the scheduled examination, the student must notify Student Services in writing no more than seventy-two (72) hours following the scheduled examination time.
- 6.3.3. All notifications must be in writing and accompanied by documentation, as listed in Section 6.2.1).
- 6.3.4. Student Services will review the student's request and accompanying documentation on a case-by-case basis to determine the student's eligibility and, if confirmed, the length of the examination deferral.
- 6.3.5. Student Services will notify the student of the decision by email within seven (7) calendar days of having received the student's notification and all required supporting documentation.

### 6.4. Appeal Process

- 6.4.1. If dissatisfied with the decision regarding an examination deferral, the student may submit a formal appeal in writing to the Registrar within seven (7) calendar days of the decision of Student Services.
- 6.4.2. Upon receiving the appeal and all supporting documentation, the Registrar will:
  - 6.4.2.1. Consider all the evidence;
  - 6.4.2.2. Confirm, dismiss or modify the decision of Student Services; and
  - 6.4.2.3. Notify the student in writing of the final decision within 14 calendar days of the date on the student's written appeal.
- 6.4.3. The decision of the Registrar is final and binding, which does not detract from the student's right to pursue the matter through other appropriate legal means.

## 7. COURSE FAILURE

### 7.1. Course Failure and Repeated Attempt

- 7.1.1. If a student achieves a final grade of less than sixty-five percent (65%) or less than the minimum standard indicated on the Course Outline, the student must retake the Course and obtain a passing grade.
- 7.1.2. To satisfy the requirements of certain Programs, students may be required to successfully complete pre-requisite Courses, where specified, before they can commence and successfully complete any subsequent Courses prior to the official Program end date. As an example,
- ❖ If a student is in a Program where Courses 1-9 are prerequisites for Course 10, then the student must successfully complete Courses 1-9 before commencing Course 10.
- 7.1.3. In limited circumstances, where specified, students may have a maximum of one (1) calendar year after the official Program end date to retake a failed Course. If the required Course is not offered by the College within the one (1) calendar year timeframe, the student must enroll in the next available offering of the Course.
- 7.1.4. A student who is retaking a Course will be required to pay full Course fees.
- 7.1.5. If a student must retake a Course which has since undergone a change in title, the student may take an equivalent Course to fulfill their Program requirements.
- 7.1.6. A student may repeat the same Course a maximum of two (2) times. Withdrawing from a Course is considered a failed attempt.
- 7.1.7. A student cannot replace a grade by repeating the same Course. A failed Course attempt remains on the student record even if the student has received a passing grade for the repeated Course.
- 7.1.8. A student who fails a Course after a third attempt will be required to withdraw from the College.
- 7.1.9. A student who wants to enroll in the same Program must reapply for admission and follow the Admissions process.

## Policy Notes

This policy consolidates the measures included in, and replaces, the following archived policies of the College:

- Policy #1004 – Academic Achievement Policy
- Policy #1031 – Assessment Practices Policy
- Policy #1026 – Late Assignment Policy
- Policy #1014 – Examination Deferral Policy

**ACCOMPANYING POLICIES:** This policy is a part of a suite of academic oriented policies under the Student Policies category. As such, accompanying policies that may be applied or referenced along with this policy include **Policy # ST-002 – Policy on Attendance and Lateness** and **Policy # ST-003 – Policy on Grade Appeals**.