



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
DEAN OF THE FACULTY
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY**

21 April 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR USAFA ACADEMY BOARD

FROM: HQ USAFA/DF

SUBJECT: Proposed Grading Policy for the Classes of 2021-2023 (Spring semester 2020)

1. **CCP Number:** 38-20
2. **Short CCP Title:** Grading Policy for the Classes of 2021-2023
3. **Cadet Class Years Affected:** Classes of 2021-2023
4. **Effective Date:** Spring Semester 2020
5. **Purpose and Need for Change:**

a. There have been multiple disruptions to this semester for the lower three classes. Because of health concerns related to the coronavirus pandemic, the Classes of 2021-2023 were allowed to depart USAFA and return home on 13 March 2020. Courses for the vast majority of cadets were suspended while our in-person curriculum was moved online. Courses resumed in an online format on 25 March 2020, but courses for the lower three classes were paused again on 31 March when the Superintendent announced that the Class of 2020 would be graduating earlier than originally scheduled. Courses for the Classes of 2021-2023 resumed again on 13 April, and remote teaching will continue through the end of the semester.

b. Given the extraordinary circumstances that have led to unexpected changes in our academic program, our Curriculum Line of Effort committee considered alternative grading approaches taken by other institutions of higher learning, examined the unique circumstances facing the Classes of 2021-2023, and developed guiding principles for USAFA to consider. Department Heads provided additional input and refinement to the proposed policy as well.

c. Because grades serve so many useful purposes at USAFA, we wish to continue to use our traditional grading system to the maximum extent possible. However, in recognition of the extraordinary challenges that some of our cadets are likely facing, we also wanted to provide Department Heads with an additional tool to use in assigning grades this semester.

6. Description of Change:

a. For cadets in the Classes of 2021-2023, Department Heads will assign grades for all courses using the normal grading scale: A/A-/B+/B/B-/C+/C/C-/D/F. To account for any

extraordinary circumstances faced by cadets this semester (e.g., mental or physical health problems, excessive financial burdens, etc.), Department Heads are authorized to award grades of “P” instead of a letter grade with approval from the Vice Dean for Curriculum and Instruction. However, we anticipate that this option will be used infrequently.

b. Submission of a “P” grade will require the course instructor to submit a comment card indicating the grade the cadet would have earned and providing relevant information about the quality of the cadet’s performance in the class. As appropriate, the Vice Dean for Curriculum and Instruction will alert the relevant Academic Review Committee Chair and the Faculty Athletic Representative to ensure they have visibility into the cadet’s academic progress.

c. Per existing academic policy, cadets must complete all required assignments to earn a passing grade (to include a “P”) in the course. If a cadet fails to complete all required assignments, Department Heads may assign an IU, IC or an F, depending on the individual cadets’ circumstances. Given the extraordinary events of this semester, Department Heads may wish to assign more IUs than they may under normal circumstances. As a reminder, however, assigning an IU means that the cadet will need to complete additional work after the semester is over in order to complete the course. Assigning an IC will also require the cadet to complete additional work, and the cadet will be placed on academic probation.

d. While we do not expect that it will occur frequently, Department Heads may petition the Vice Dean for Curriculum and Instruction to assign IUs to an entire course for unique or extraordinary circumstances. For instance, if the learning normally achieved in a particular lab course cannot be reasonably accomplished in a remote learning environment, a Department Head may request to assign IUs to all cadets in the course. The incomplete grade would then be resolved after the semester, when cadets have the opportunity to make up the missed work.

7. Course / Program / Experience: The changes proposed in this CCP apply to all DF departments and courses.

8. Additional Information: The changes proposed in this CCP apply only to the Spring Semester of 2020 and only to the Classes of 2021-2023. No changes to the Curriculum Handbook or to future graduation requirements will be made as a result of approving this CCP.

9. The Curriculum Committee voted 28-2 IN FAVOR. Members of the Curriculum Committee also provided the following comment: "I am very pleased with the wording in this CCP. The P/F was retained for the most extreme cases, but the CCP makes it very clear that this should only be used in justifiable hardship situations."

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LINELL A. LETENDRE
Brigadier General USAF
Dean of the Faculty