

## 1. Purpose of policy

This policy sets out to:

- (a) provide a uniform grading scale and notations for the evaluation and assessment of all coursework courses throughout USC;
- (b) articulate the purposes for which a Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated at the USC and the principles to be employed in determining a GPA.

## 2. Policy scope and application

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff of USC and its decision-making and advisory bodies, and agents and partners of the University.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all coursework programs offered by the University.

## 3. Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures. Terms and definitions identified below are specific to this policy and are critical to the effectiveness of it:

**Academic career** means all academic work undertaken by a student that is grouped into a single student record. Academic Career groupings include undergraduate, postgraduate, non-award and research.

**Notation** means temporary or permanent annotation recorded against a course when a final grade is not appropriate. They will be either:

**Interim Notations** - the notations entered in place of a grade when either all necessary procedures for the final assessment of a course have not been completed by the student or by the Course Coordinator, or other requirements relating to the release of a final grade have not been met; or

**Final Notations** - notations which are assigned to indicate the standing of a student in a course, where such standing is not an assessment of performance in that course.

## 4. Grades and Notations

### 4.1 Grades

4.1.1 The award of grades should be a deliberative process which requires the exercise of professional judgement to avoid the possibility of random and systematic errors.

4.1.2 The performance descriptors associated with each grade are offered for guidance only. It is recognised that these generic descriptors, in whole or in part, will not have universal application.

### 4.1.3 Passing grades

Each passing grade incorporates the characteristics of all lower passing grades plus an additional level of achievement.

#### High Distinction (HD)

Where a student's assessment demonstrates evidence of key knowledge at an extended theoretical level, characterised by originality, application of learning in new domains and mastery of all course learning outcomes.

#### Distinction (DN)

Where a student's assessment demonstrates evidence of integration and evaluation of significant ideas, the application of knowledge in flexible combinations within the field and principles and theories in relation to course learning outcomes.

#### APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Academic Board

#### RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

#### DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, Student Services and Engagement

#### FIRST APPROVED

5 July 2017

#### LAST AMENDED

25 October 2018

#### EFFECTIVE START DATE

25 October 2018

#### REVIEW DATE

5 July 2022

#### STATUS

Active

#### RELATED DOCUMENTS

Admissions - Procedures

Admissions, Enrolments and Graduation - Academic Policy

Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs - Academic Policy

Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs - Procedures

Award of Chancellor's Medal - Procedures

Award of Commendations and Medals - Procedures

Credit Transfer - Academic Policy

Credit Transfer - Procedures

Deferred Examinations - Procedures

Enrolments and Graduation - Procedures

Monitoring Academic Progress and Exclusion - Academic Policy

Monitoring Academic Progress and Exclusion - Procedures

Review of Assessment and Final Grade - Procedures

Supplementary Assessment - Procedures

Workplace and Industry Placement - Procedures

#### Credit (CR)

Where a student's assessment demonstrates knowledge of important facts and ideas, awareness of their relevance, and applicability of key ideas in accepted ways within the field in relation to the course learning outcomes.

#### Pass (PS)

Where a student's assessment demonstrates knowledge of fundamental concepts and essential skills sufficient to meet the course learning outcomes.

#### Pass in a Limited Grade Course (PU)

A Pass Ungraded is used in an identified limited grade course where a student's assessment demonstrates a satisfactory level of achievement in all course learning outcomes but it is not possible, or not relevant, to distinguish between levels of performance. Refer to the Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs – Procedures for details on the courses eligible to use Limited Grades.

#### 4.1.4 Failing grades

##### Fail (FL)

Where a student's assessment demonstrates limited evidence of relevant learning in relation to course learning outcomes and they have not satisfied the minimum requirements of the course.

##### Fail in a Limited Grade Course (UF)

Where a student's assessment demonstrates limited evidence of relevant learning in relation to course learning outcomes and they have not satisfied the minimum requirements of a course that is classified as ungraded. Refer to the Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs – Procedures for details on the courses eligible to use Limited Grades.

##### Fail Absent (FA)

Where a student did not complete any of the required assessment tasks for the course that were due after the census date.

##### Withdrawn Fail (WF)

Where a student withdraws from the course after the final date for withdrawal without academic penalty and up to the last day of teaching, as determined in the Enrolments and Graduation - Procedures.

#### 4.1.5 Final notations

##### Exemption (EX)

Where a student's prior learning has been recognised and they are granted an exemption for the course on the basis of the prior learning or credit transfer and are allowed to substitute it with another course.

##### Withdrawn without penalty (WN)

Where a student has withdrawn from the course after the census date and up to the final date for withdrawal without academic penalty as specified in the Enrolments and Graduation - Procedures.

##### Withdrawn retrospectively (WR)

Where the student has been granted retrospective withdrawal from a course due to extenuating circumstances.

##### Withdrawn by the University (WX)

Where the University determines that a student has been withdrawn from a course, for example due to misconduct.

#### 4.1.6 Interim notations

##### Alternative Examination (AE)

Where, in exceptional circumstances, a student is granted an examination that is scheduled outside the centrally scheduled examination period.

##### Alternative Assessment (AO)

Where, in exceptional circumstances, a student is granted permission to undertake an alternative assessment item, other than a centrally scheduled examination.

##### Deferred Examination (DE)

Where, in exceptional circumstances, a student has been granted approval to delay sitting a central examination until the designated deferred examination period.

##### Grade Pending (GP)

Where it is not possible for a grade to be given to a student as a result of exceptional administrative circumstances on the part of the University.

#### Incomplete (IN)

Where a student has been given an extension of time to complete on compassionate or academic grounds by the relevant Course Coordinator.

#### Not Examined (NE)

Where the course extends over more than one teaching session and no grade has been assigned to the student.

#### Result Withheld (RW)

Where the student has outstanding fees or charges administered by the University, or is subject to disciplinary proceedings, the results achieved by the student are withheld pending resolution.

### 4.2 Supplementary assessment

A student who has been offered and attempts Supplementary Assessment can be awarded a grade of Pass (PS) or Fail (FL) only. A student who has been offered but does not undertake Supplementary Assessment will receive a grade of Fail (FL) and the original final mark reinstated.

#### Supplementary examination (SU)

Where the supplementary assessment is in the form of a central examination; or

#### Supplementary assessment – Other (SO)

Where the supplementary assessment's form is different to a central examination.

The subsequent grade awarded after completion of a supplementary assessment cannot be greater than a Pass (PS).

Refer to the Supplementary Assessment – Procedures for details on supplementary assessment.

### 4.3 Conversion of interim notations to grades or final notations

All interim notations relating to unfinalised results must be converted to final grade or final notations no later than six weeks after the deadline for submission of results.

### 4.4 Grade parameters

4.4.1 The percentages below constitute standard final grade parameters.

Fail	0%–49%
Pass	50%–64%
Credit	65%–74%
Distinction	75%–84%
High Distinction	85%–100%

GRADE STANDARD FINAL MARK PARAMETERS

---

4.4.2 The University requires the use of these percentages to determine the grade. The Official Statement of Academic Record will include both the grade and final mark (percentage) for each student.

4.4.3 Final marks (percentage) are to be presented as a whole number (0.5 and above being rounded up).

4.4.4 When a student is awarded a final grade after undertaking a supplementary assessment no percentage is recorded. A 'SP' will be used as the mark notation after a Pass Grade has been awarded and a 'SF' after a Fail Grade has been awarded.

4.4.5 For any exceptions to the standard grade parameters, a case must be made to Academic Board when the course is initially submitted for approval.

### 4.5 Amending a final grade or mark

A final mark/grade may only be amended in the following circumstances:

(a) an administrative error;

(b) a computational error; or

(c) a successful review or appeal by the student based on the criteria identified in the Review of Assessment and Final Grades – Procedures. See also the Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs – Procedures.

## 4.6 Responsibility

4.6.1 The Head of School has the responsibility to approve the final marks/grades in courses offered in their School.

4.6.2 The Head of School may, with approval from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), delegate to another person or body the authority to approve final marks/grades. This delegation is normally to the Deputy Head of School.

4.6.3 Student Services and Engagement releases final marks/grades to each student in a form, and at a time, determined by the Director, Student Services and Engagement.

4.6.4 Following the release of final marks/grades, the Head of School is responsible for advising Student Services and Engagement of any amendments to grades previously submitted.

## 5. Grade Point Average (GPA)

### 5.1 Purposes for calculating a Grade Point Average (GPA)

5.1.1 A GPA is calculated for the following reasons:

- to provide students with an indicator of their academic progress
- to provide the University with an indicator to assist in determining academic merit of individual students at USC
- to provide other institutions, professional bodies or prospective employers with an indicator of a student's academic performance

5.1.2 Internally, a GPA can also be used as a measure of academic merit to assist with other activities including:

- assessing the eligibility of an applicant for admission to a University program
- awarding of a scholarship
- determining the grade of honours
- awarding of a prize or other merit award such as a Chancellor's medal
- continuation in merit programs such as Deans Scholars Programs and
- assessing the eligibility of a student to continue in an embedded honours pathway

5.1.3 For each student enrolled in a coursework program, the University will calculate the following GPAs:

**Study Period GPA** - This will be calculated at the end of each study period and will be based upon all courses completed at USC in that study period. This GPA is used to monitor a student's academic progress in accordance with the Monitoring Academic Progress and Exclusion – Academic Policy.

**Cumulative GPA** – This will be calculated at the end of each study period and will be based upon all courses completed at USC as part of the student's Academic Career, including courses completed in any other program within that career.

**Program enrolment GPA** – This will be calculated when a student graduates and will be based on all courses studied during the student's enrolment in the program(s) in which they are being graduated.

5.1.4 Both the Cumulative and Program GPAs will be shown on the student's final transcript.

5.1.5 In exceptional circumstances, where a student can prove that they require a GPA calculation to be based on only those courses undertaken at USC as part of a specific award or program, the Director, Student Services and Engagement may approve the manual determination of a Special GPA. Such circumstances include:

- the need to differentiate courses within a combined degree where the student requires a GPA for one program only e.g., for admission to an honours degree or
- where an external prize is to be determined or
- where another University or professional body requires such a calculation

5.1.6 Where it is not possible to determine which courses might be assigned to any individual program, such as where additional elective courses are available for the calculation, then those courses which most advantage the student will be included in the GPA calculation.

### 5.2 Double degree programs

5.2.1 A student enrolled within a sequential model double degree program, e.g., the Deans Scholars Program, will have both the Cumulative and Program GPAs calculated on the basis of two individual programs as determined in 5.1.3.

5.2.2 A student enrolled within a concurrent model double degree program will have their Cumulative and GPA calculated as determined in 5.1.3.

### 5.3 Nested programs within the same academic career

5.3.1 A student who enrolls in consecutive levels of an approved nested suite, such as a Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and Master, will receive Program GPAs at the completion of each of the nested components.

5.3.2 A student enrolled in a higher level of an approved nested suite, will receive one Program GPA on completion of the higher level qualification (e.g., Master).

## 5.4 Calculation of the Grade Point Average (GPA)

5.4.1 The following are included in the calculation of a GPA:

(a) all courses where the following University grades and grade notations have been awarded:

Fail Absent (FA)

Withdrawn Fail (WF) 1.5

Fail (FL) 1.5

Pass (PS)

Credit (CR)

Distinction (D)

High Distinction (HD)

GRADE	GRADE VALUE
-------	-------------

(b) all grades for completed courses. This includes fail grades for courses that have subsequently been undertaken at a later date, and for which passing grades have been awarded.

5.4.2 The grade value achieved for each course is multiplied by the unit value for that course. These grade values are totalled and then divided by the total course unit value for the courses undertaken within the period as specified for the relevant GPA being calculated. GPAs will be calculated to the second decimal place.

Example

Calculation: - The total course grade value will be divided by the total course unit value.

144 divided by 30 = GPA 4.80

Total	30	144		
Course 3	12	PS	48	
Course 2	DN	36		
Course 1	12	CR	60	
CALCULATION PERIOD	COURSE UNIT VALUE	GRADE	GRADE VALUE	COURSE GRADE VALUE

## 5.5 Exclusion of grades and courses in the calculation of the GPA

5.5.1 The following grades and courses are not included in the calculation of a GPA:

(a) The following grades and grading notations are not included in the calculations:

Alternative Examination (AE)

Alternative Assessment (AO)

Deferred Examination (DE)

Exemption (EX)

Grade Pending (GP)

Incomplete (IN)

Not Examined (NE)

Pass in a limited grade course (PU)

Fail in a limited grade course (UF)

Result Withheld (RW)

Supplementary Assessment (Examination) (SU)

Supplementary Assessment (Other) (SO)

Withdrawn Retrospectively (WR)

Withdraw Without Penalty (WN)

[usc.edu.au/policy](http://usc.edu.au/policy)

Withdrawn by the University (WX)

(b) courses completed as a cross-institutional enrolment or as part of the Study Overseas Program (formerly Global Opportunities Program (GO)), unless forming part of a recognised agreement as determined by the University

(c) courses for which credit transfer has been approved.

END