

Dean's Policy and Operating Memorandum 02-1*

OFFICE OF THE DEAN UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY WEST POINT, NEW YORK 10996-5000

MADN-ARS

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Memorandum No. 02-1

GRADEKEEPING

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1. Purpose. To establish policies for grading cadet academic work, and to provide procedures for the administration of academic gradekeeping.

2. Applicability. These policies and procedures apply to all courses in the USMA Academic Program.

3. General.

a. Grading philosophy. The foundation of our grading is a commitment to evaluate cadets based on their achievement of announced course objectives. An objective of all courses taught at the Military Academy is the requirement that cadets complete the course material in a manner consistent with the Academy's standards of ethical conduct. Satisfactory performance on graded course requirements must therefore reflect satisfactory progress toward meeting course objectives. Departments will establish and provide to cadets reasonable academic standards of achievement in advance of cadets taking a course and taking tests. The goal is not to rank order cadets against each other based on any preconceived concept of an appropriate grade distribution. Instead, instructors challenge cadets to meet announced standards of performance and assign grades based on their success in doing so. Once standards are established, the principal responsibility for academic performance rests with each individual cadet.

b. Instructors are responsible for establishing standards and objectives, providing sound instruction, measuring cadet attainment, and providing a reasonable amount of

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additional assistance. Instructors shall strive to motivate and inspire cadets to achieve their full academic potential. Beyond these obligations, the responsibility for academic success or failure rests with each cadet.

c. Letter grades ranging from A+ to F will be the normal means of communicating academic achievement. Numerical scores may be used to develop these letter grades.

d. Instructors will promptly provide cadets an evaluation of each graded course requirement. The evaluation will be a letter grade or a numerical score easy for cadets to convert to a letter grade.

4. Definitions.

a. Course objectives. The student learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) are the basis for course design and student evaluation. An objective of all courses taught at the Military Academy is the requirement that cadets complete the course material in a manner consistent with the Academy's standards of ethical conduct.

b. Curving. Sometimes known as norm-referenced grading in which student performance on an examination defines the relative meaning of grades rather than the attainment of pre-specified standards in achieving course objectives.

c. Gradekeeping. Is the procedure of assigning, recording, and reporting marks and letter grades.

d. Marks. Numeric points awarded for graded course work.

e. Letter grades. The letter grades A+ through C-, D, and F are used on grade reports and transcripts to convey a cadet's mastery of the body of knowledge covered by a course. These grades imply the following levels of academic achievement:

| | | |
|---|--------------|---|
| A | Excellent | Outstanding performance. Work exhibits academic excellence and is of significantly higher quality than that graded "B". |
| B | Good | Commendable performance. Work exceeds course standards for mastery and is of significantly higher quality than that graded "C". |
| C | Satisfactory | Satisfactory performance. Work clearly meets course standards for mastery. |
| D | Marginal | Marginal performance. Work marginally meets course standards for mastery and credit is given. |
| F | Failure | Unacceptable performance. Work fails to meet course standards for mastery and no credit is given. |

| | | |
|---|-----------------|--|
| P | Passing | Work meets minimum standards for acceptable performance in courses graded Pass/Fail. |
| T | Transfer Credit | Represents transfer credit for passing performance in a course at a host institution abroad. |

Note: The earned letter grades A+ through F for Military Development (MD) courses will be posted to the cadet's transcript beginning with the 2004 Fall Term. The letter grade will replace the P/F posting. The MD letter grade does not impact the Academic Program Score (APS) or the Quality Point Average (QPA) calculations.

f. Course Status. In lieu of a letter grade, the following status indicators may appear on grade reports:

| | | |
|----|-----------------|---|
| NC | No Credit | The cadet receives no credit for the course in the current term, usually because course requirements cannot be completed for some reason (e.g., medical excuse, hospitalization, emergency leave, special pass, etc.). If the cadet completes all requirements for the course, the department head notifies AA&RS to post the appropriate grade. "NC" status does not affect APS/QPA calculations. The subsequent award of a grade counts as the first award of a grade in the course. A grade of "NC" in PE courses for medical reasons does not preclude "Dean's List" or "Distinguished Cadet" status. |
| NG | No Grade | Temporary status used only on interim grade reports. It reflects that the course has no grade to report at the present time. This status is not used as a final grade and does not affect APS/QPA calculations. |
| T | Transfer Credit | Cadets receive "Transfer Credit" upon completion of courses at a host institution abroad. These T's will not be included in the academic APS/QPA calculations. |
| V | Validation | Represents course validations. |
| W | Withdrawal | Indicates cadet disenrolled prior to the start of term-end examinations. The date of the termination document (resignation, suspension, and separation) determines the effective date of withdrawal. Cadets commencing term-end examinations receive a grade in every course. The "W" status does not affect APS/QPA calculations. |

5. Responsibilities.

a. Academic Affairs and Registrar Services (AA&RS). The Registrar is responsible to the Dean for developing and implementing policies and procedures related to gradekeeping. The Registrar is responsible for the Academy's transcripts and other

institutional records and reports associated with gradekeeping. The Registrar, or representative, will:

(1) Provide cadets with interim grades after major graded events and at six, ten, and fifteen weeks each semester and final grades after the conclusion of each semester. Reported grades are available on the Cadet Information System (CIS).

(2) We discontinued mailing final grade reports to parents or designated individuals after the conclusion of each semester. By doing so, we saved approximately \$4000 per year and many man-hours in labor. Navy and Air Force Academies discontinued many years ago. Cadets may share final grade reports if they choose with parents, or designated individuals.

(3) Ensure interim and final grades are electronically available to cadets, faculty, tactical officers, coaches, and staff on a continuous basis.

(4) Provide faculty members with a convenient method for maintaining and reporting grades in a common format.

(5) Provide means to generate reports to each course director following grade processing cycles.

(6) Coordinate all computer system change requests for gradekeeping programs with the Software Engineering Branch.

b. Academic departments. Departments assign all letter grades. Departments will:

(1) Assign interim and final letter grades as prescribed in this memorandum and post them to the Academy Management System (AMS) database.

(2) Reconcile all grade discrepancies indicated on error reports monitored by AA&RS.

(3) Resolve all interim status indicators as soon as possible.

(4) Secure cadet permission to write letters of congratulations for superior grade performance to parents or guardians.

6. Gradekeeping Procedures.

a. Interim letter grades.

(1) Grades are assigned and reported after major graded events and interim letter grades are assigned and reported three times during first and second terms of the academic year according to the following schedule: At six weeks, ten weeks, and fifteen weeks.

(2) AA&RS notifies departments at the beginning of each term of interim grade reporting deadlines. AA&RS monitors grades and verifies submissions after each processing cycle. Academic departments are encouraged to report grades as often as possible.

(3) Cadets can view interim grades at each reporting period and after major graded events on CIS.

(4) Courses may be exempt from interim letter grade reporting if the course is a colloquium or seminar and significant course work is not complete until the end of the term. In this case an interim status of NG (No Grade) will be reported.

b. Final letter grades.

(1) Final letter grades are due for all courses following term-end exams (normally 2-3 working days following the term end examination-a department may request an extension wherein extenuating circumstances would require additional time). The head of the department concerned must approve all final grades. During the middle of each term, detailed instructions for term-end processing are issued by AA&RS. These instructions include specific due dates for reporting final grades.

(2) Cadets can share grades with parents and designated individuals if they choose.

c. Grade resolutions. Cadets must resolve interim status grades of "NC" and "NG" as soon as possible. Interim status grades are resolved as follows:

NC - As soon as the cadet completes all requirements for the course, the department head notifies AA&RS to post the appropriate letter grade, A+ through F. If the cadet does the bulk of the course work in the earlier term and only adds finishing touches in the subsequent term, the reported letter grade replaces the earlier "NC." If the majority of the course work actually occurs in the subsequent semester, entries for the course and the letter grades are made in the latter term. This method is common in the case of physical education courses where a cadet becomes injured and unable to participate, so the cadet satisfies the course requirements in a subsequent semester. An unresolved "NC" will not normally appear on transcripts, except in the case of physical education courses (a cadet may graduate with an "NC" for an unresolved medical reason).

NG - This is an interim status and must be resolved with a final letter grade by term end.

d. Grade Cut Policy. An appropriate sanction would include approximately one full letter grade reduction for each 24 hours the assignment is late.

Thus, if the cadet earned a letter grade of B+ then the application of the sanction would result in a letter grade of C+ being awarded for the assignment. Reference: General Committee discussion, 28 February 1996.

e. Grade Changes. The department head, or designated representative, must approve all final grade changes and submit grade change requests in writing to AA&RS. Grade change requests must include, at a minimum: cadet name, USMA I.D. Number (C#), permanent company, class, course name, old letter grade, maximum points, earned points, new letter grade, and academic year and term in which change occurs. AA&RS will post the change and notify the department when grade change has been posted to the database. AA&RS will also inform the cadet concerned of the grade change. The cadet can view the resulting new APS/QPA via CIS. The department head's request for grade change is then filed in the cadet's permanent academic record.

f. Grade Appeals. All cadet grade appeals must be submitted to the respective department immediately (within two weeks) following the receipt of the final grade for the course. In situations involving emergency or medical leave and other similar

extenuating circumstances, the grade appeal will be submitted no later than the end of the following full (Fall or Spring) term. Any change in a cadet's grade will follow the guidance presented in paragraph 6e.

g. Destruction of Graded Material. The department is responsible for establishing its own policy concerning the retention and destruction of graded material. The Academic Affairs and Registrar Services division recommends that the destruction of graded material be no sooner than the end of the following full term and generally no longer than the two full years from the end of the term in which the grade was reported. This destruction period would cover those situations presented in paragraph 6f as well as longer situations where a cadet is on leave from the Academy for an extended period of time.

7. Academic Quality Point Average and Academic Program Score Average Computations.

a. The Academic Quality Point Average (QPA) is calculated as follows:

$$\text{QPA} = \frac{\square\square\square \text{ (credit hours x quality points per credit hour including Military Science and Physical Education core courses)}}{\square \text{ (credit hours)}}$$

b. The Academic Program Score (APS) is calculated as follows:

$$\text{APS Average} = \frac{\square\square\square \text{ (credit hours x quality points per credit hour excluding Military Science and Physical Education core courses)}}{\square \text{ (respective credit hours)}}$$

Grades are assigned quality points per credit hour as follows:

| <u>Grade</u> | <u>Quality Points</u> | <u>Grade</u> | <u>Quality Points</u> |
|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| A+ | 4.33 | C+ | 2.33 |
| A | 4.00 | C | 2.00 |
| A- | 3.67 | C- | 1.67 |
| B+ | 3.33 | D | 1.00 |
| B | 3.00 | F | 0.00 |
| B- | 2.67 | | |

c. Course repeats.

(1) The Academic Board will consider the cases of all cadets who are recommended by a department head as deficient in a course. If the Academic Board confirms the cadet is deficient, a grade of "F" will be awarded.

(2) If the failed course is required by the cadet's academic program, the course must be repeated in order to receive credit. Cadets who repeat a course will normally incur an obligation to attend the academic portions of the Summer Term Academic Program (STAP).

(3) Cadets may elect to repeat a course (s) in which a grade of "D" was earned if their Academic Program Score Cumulative (APSC) or Cumulative Quality Point Average (CQPA) is less than 2.00. Departments may make a request for an exception to the APSC/CQPA criteria as long as the request is coordinated with AA&RS and is approved by the department providing the repeated course. Cadets will normally be scheduled to repeat the course in STAP. As an exception, a cadet who is making satisfactory academic progress (i.e., has successfully completed the total required number of courses at the end of the prior regular term) may request to take the course as a 6th course in a Fall or Spring Term.

(4) When cadets repeat a course, the original course with the grade earned **will always remain on the transcript in the semester taken**, as this was the historical record of events. A second entry is made for the same course in the term in which it is repeated and the appropriate grade shown. The grade in the course taken earlier must be a "D" or "F," and the APSC/CQPA for the term in which the course is repeated is adjusted to remove the original grade and replace it with the subsequent grade earned. The APSC/CQPA in subsequent terms is also adjusted to remove the original grade and replace it with the subsequent grade earned.

8. Proponent. The proponent for this Dean's Policy and Operating Memorandum is the Academic Affairs and Registrar Services, Office of the Dean (MADN-ARS), x2050.

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