



Supporting Students with Incomplete Grades

Context and Purpose

In the spring of 2020, due to the impact of COVID-19, ODE created several statewide policies to protect student educational progress, to prioritize connection and care, and to reinforce equitable instructional practices. This included a statewide pass/incomplete grading policy. With the subsequent release of Ready Schools Safe Learners (RSSL) in July 2020 for the 2020-21 school year and beyond, responsibility for equitable grading policies were intentionally shifted back to the school district level.

Now, in early 2022, districts are supporting and serving 11th and 12th grade students who may have “incomplete” grades from Spring of 2020 still appearing on their transcripts. As was true pre-COVID19, schools and districts have flexibility in setting grading policy and implementing flexible credit options. This document provides recommendations for districts in supporting students with incomplete marks on their transcripts.

Resolving the Incomplete

There are two main paths for students with grades of “incomplete” on their transcripts from the Spring of 2020, depending on their respective personalized learning plan and graduation pathway.

1. Assess mastery and replace incomplete with a grade.

The district can assess the student’s level of mastery, and provide support to help the student obtain mastery of the content and move the grade to “pass”

Districts have multiple options for assessing student mastery demonstrating learning and providing credit, pursuant to the [Credit Options](#) regulations, within [ODE’s Credit Options Guidance](#). The Credit Options Guidance is divided into three approaches, including

1. [Performance Assessments](#)
2. [Collections of Evidence](#) (portfolios)
3. [Applied Academic Credit](#)

2. Replace incomplete with “no grade,” if the course is not needed for graduation.

If the class is no longer required as a part of the student’s plan for graduation and beyond, the “incomplete” grade on the transcript should be changed to a “NG” or “no grade,” or another designation that does not impact GPA or class ranking

Considerations and Recommendations

Following are some recommendations intended to assist districts in their planning.

Demonstrating Learning: *Assess what students know and provide them with opportunities to master only the content not yet learned, rather than repeating an entire course.*

Some ways districts can allow students to demonstrate their prior learning, identify course standards not yet mastered, and work toward mastery include:

- Allow students with incompletes to take the summative assessment(s) for the course to demonstrate mastery or determine what content still needs to be mastered
- Contact students in 11th and 12th grade who will likely need additional credits for graduation and develop an individualized graduation and postsecondary transition plan with those students and families/guardians
- Consider [Oregon's Credit Options Guidance](#) in the design of multiple-targeted learning opportunities for students (e.g., ODE's performance-assessment-based Credit Options Guidance, coursework completion, project based learning, credit recovery programs, reverse transfer (high school credit for college or university courses), GED programs)

Some considerations for districts in implementing these practices follow:

- Involve the educators with subject matter expertise both in planning how to collect information about student learning, in supporting students in demonstrating, and in evaluating the evidence
- Provide supports for learning, which may include but are not limited to academic support courses, consolidated/combined content courses, personalized academic tutoring, expanded options, college or university courses, summer school, online course offerings, peer tutoring, zero period learning opportunities, and/or project-based learning opportunities
- Document student progress toward learning targets
- Include supportive communication with students and parents, including written confirmation to the student and their parents/guardians of graduation status and their plan to graduate

Center in Equity: *We urge districts to continue to prioritize equity in every decision, and to consider how decisions and actions attend to racial equity and social justice ([Oregon Education Equity Stance](#)).*

Some ways to center equity while doing this work include:

- Do not hold students with Incompletes to a higher standard to earn credit than those students who were awarded credit during the 2020 and 2021 school year
- Continue to recognize the disproportionate and severe impact of the pandemic on students and families, especially those from historically underserved groups

- Ensure that all students retain access to grade-level work, peers, and academic and social opportunities, even while they are working to move incomplete grades to passing ones

Implications for Transcripts: *Transcripts are intended to accurately communicate learning to employers and postsecondary institutions. Awarding of credit is a promise to the student and other audiences that they are ready for the next level of learning.*

Some ways to ensure the transcript is an accurate record of what the student knows and is able to do:

- Clearly explain the any codes used on the transcript. For example, the meaning of the term “pass,” (i.e. a C or above, a D or above, or whatever meaning it has in your system) should be included in a key or glossary
- In some cases, the district will need to decide whether to transcribe a class credit as resolving the incomplete into a “pass” or a “no grade.” This decision should be made locally and in cooperation with the student and their family so that the result addresses both graduation requirements and the student’s longer-term career and college goals

Other Helpful Links:

[Addressing Grades and Credit Options](#)

[Communicating Pass/Incomplete Grading for Higher Education and Careers Oregon’s Extended School Closure Guide \(Spring 2020\)](#)

For more information, please contact [Kristidel McGregor](#).