

# Enhancing Student Support through Accurate Assessment

## Summary

- In our pursuit of educational equity, we would like to refine our assessment methods to accurately gauge student progress, recognizing the limitations of a simplistic "F" grade for students who disengage.
- Utilizing the "FW" grade, coupled with faculty and student insights, enables us to differentiate between students struggling with course content versus those who have disengaged for other reasons.
- This approach expands our ability to offer targeted interventions tailored to individual student needs, enhancing the likelihood of academic success.
- By adopting the "FW" grade, we are not only acknowledging students' challenges but also endeavoring to address underlying issues to support their educational journey effectively.

## Equity Focus

In our pursuit of equitable education, it is imperative that our interventions accurately support student success. Through collaboration with the Offices of Instruction, we are refining our assessment practices to ensure they reflect the diverse challenges students face. The conventional "F" grade, often assigned to students who cease attendance or become disengaged, fails to provide a nuanced understanding of their academic standing. This oversimplified approach overlooks the complex reasons behind student disengagement, hindering our ability to provide effective support.

Utilizing the "FW" in addition to an "F" grade allows us to differentiate between incomplete mastery and non-engagement, enabling us to identify and address specific barriers to student success. This refined approach not only ensures fairer assessment but also facilitates targeted interventions tailored to individual student needs.

## Emerging Need

In the commitment to equitable education, faculty have been actively exploring innovative teaching methods to address disparities in student outcomes. As we continue our commitment to equitable education, faculty have observed a significant trend: many students who receive failing grades are failing to complete the entire course. This observation underscores the need for accurate assessment of student engagement and progress.

Our experimentation with innovative teaching methods has revealed a promising correlation: students who consistently attend class are more likely to achieve passing grades with these methods. Recognizing this, we aim to implement the "FW" grade to refine our assessment practices and better gauge student participation. By accurately identifying

## **Proposal to include the “FW” as a grade option at San Bernardino Community College District**

topics and times where students disengage, we can provide targeted support to improve student outcomes and promote academic success for all.

### **Understanding the “FW” Grade**

The “FW” grade serves are outlined in Title 5 to differentiate between two critical scenarios:

- **Incomplete Mastery:** Students who fulfill course requirements and complete the final examination but do not fully master the course objectives.
- **Non-Engagement:** Students who fail to attend/participate in assignments neglect the final examination, and do not withdraw from the course.

Proposed grading standards at SBCCD would designate either an “F” or “FW” for students who do not meet course requirements.

#### **Clarification: Addressing the “F” vs. “FW” Grade:**

- An “F” grade indicates that a student attended, participated in, and completed the course but failed to master the curriculum.
- An “FW” grade signifies that a student ceased attending/participating in the course after the withdrawal deadline and subsequently did not fulfill any course requirements or participate in examinations. This may occur even after initially meeting attendance/participation criteria outlined in the syllabus, leading to failure due to incomplete coursework/assignments.

Both grades carry equivalent weight, with a value of zero grade points.

### **Implications and Benefits**

Should faculty choose to utilize the “FW” grade, it would be assigned to students who fail to take the final exam and neglect to withdraw from the course.

Both “F” and “FW” grades carry a grade point value of 0.

The introduction of the FW grade enables the District to conduct further research and identify areas for improvement. Additionally, from a student perspective, their transcript would reflect failure to complete the course due to non-attendance at the final exam, rather than an inability to master the course objectives.

#### **Sources**

Santa Monica College. Retrieved February 23, 2024, from <https://www.smc.edu/administration/governance/academic-senate/committees/documents/student-affairs/2022-2023/F-and-FW-Proposal.pdf>.

Title 5, Grading Policies (55021) and Pass-No Pass Options (55022), and Academic Record Symbols and GPA (55023). Retrieved February 23, 2024, from [https://www.boarddocs.com/ca/yccd/Board.nsf/files/B8QNT55EB66C/\\$file/Title%205%2C%20Grading%20Policies.pdf](https://www.boarddocs.com/ca/yccd/Board.nsf/files/B8QNT55EB66C/$file/Title%205%2C%20Grading%20Policies.pdf).