Guide to Web Grading on SSOL

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Introduction

This guide is not a prerequisite to using Web Grading. It is a great reference for understanding some of the common technical terms and policies you should be aware of while using Web resources at Columbia. If you’re new to Columbia, we hope the definitions provided here will make submitting your grades straightforward, quick and easy.

Web Grading also offers enhancements to the grading process with added features for security and convenience. For example:

- You can submit individual grades for graduating students, without having to finish grading the whole class
- You can assign a teaching assistant permission to act as a proxy and save grades for you
- After submission, you can view a set of statistics summarizing the total grades for your class
- You can submit grade change requests for certain students
- You can submit your grades from any location with internet access

You can explore these and other features by simply clicking around in the Web Grading site. This guide thoroughly documents the Web Grading features and describes how they can add value to your grading experience. This guide is also available to instructors and authorized users in a PDF format on the Web Grading site.

Getting Into Web Grading

Web Grading resides in Columbia’s Student Services Online (SSOL).

- Go to http://www.columbia.edu
- Click on the Faculty & Staff button
- Click on Student Services Online
- Log on with your University Network ID (see page 2)
- Choose Web Grading

Once you’ve entered the Web Grading site, you’ll see a list of the classes you’re teaching. From there, the application will guide you through the simple process of submitting your grades online. You can also link from CourseWorks or BOSS (The Business School course management system).

You must have an active University Network ID (UNI) and password to log onto Web Grading. Every instructor or faculty member at Columbia University has a UNI. If you use a Columbia email (abc123@columbia.edu) your UNI is probably the same as your email prefix (the first part of your email address before the "@" symbol). If you use another email address, or don’t know what your UNI is, you can find it on the Columbia University directory at www.columbia.edu/cu/search.html.
Description of University Grading System

The Office of the University Registrar does not in general permit the respective Faculties to record and submit either informal interim/temporary grades or grades that serve as placeholders. All grades must be official, final grades that conform to the grading schema in place at the various Schools. Exceptions to this policy should be secured in advance from the Office of the University Registrar. Approval will be granted only on a case-by-case basis taking into account unique circumstances that are germane to a particular faculty member or student.

The University uses school-specific grading scales. Most schools at Columbia University use the standard A-F grading scale. The American Language Program, the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, the School of the Arts, the Business School, the School of Journalism, the Medical School, and the Psychoanalytic Training Program use alternate scales. For complete information on your school's grading policies, please check your school bulletin. Officers should address any questions regarding the meaning and appropriate use of grades to the dean of the relevant school.

Students always receive traditional letter grades when taking a course outside of their school of enrollment, regardless of the grading system in use in either school.

A-F Grading Scales

- Columbia College
- Graduate School of Arts & Science
- Human Nutrition Program
- Mailman School of Public Health
- Occupational Therapy Program
- School of Professional Studies
- School of Engineering & Applied Science
- School of General Studies
- School of International & Public Affairs
- School of Nursing
- School of Physical Therapy
- School of Social Work
- Teachers College

Alternate Grading Scales

- American Language Program
- Business School (pending update from School)
- Medical School
- Psychoanalytic Training Program
- School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation
- School of Dental & Oral Surgery
- School of Journalism
- School of the Arts
Cross-Registrants

All cross registrants are graded on the A-F letter scale regardless of the grading system used by the department offering the class or the student’s home school. Acceptable grades in cases of cross registration are A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F, AR, IN, P, R, UW, W, and YC. Barnard students who cross register are graded with the Barnard grading scale. More information on the Columbia University Grading System can be found here.

Web Grading Features

Grade Roster vs. Class Roster

Grade Rosters are listed under Web Grading in Student Services Online. You will only see Grade Rosters for gradable classes; non-graded classes will not generate a grade roster. Class Rosters are also listed in Student Services Online under the Class List. You will see a Class Roster for every class you’re teaching, both graded and non-graded.

Saved, Submitted and Processed

The Saved, Submitted and Processed functions represent process milestones as grades move from the instructor to the student’s transcript.

Save - Grades may be unofficially saved on the Web Grading roster. The roster need not be fully completed to save grades. When grades are saved you may return to them later and add more grades and or change previously saved grades. Instructors and proxies have unlimited access to the saved roster.

Submit - When you click Submit (and affirm your choice on the confirmation page) you are officially turning your grade roster into the Registrar. After a successful submission, the grades cannot be changed on the Web. Any changes (except where noted below under Grade Changes) must be made via the paper change-of-grade process. The instructor can view submitted grade rosters at any time.

Process - After submitting, it usually takes an overnight process for the grades to be applied to the student transcript. When the submitted grade actually appears on the student transcript, the Processed column will change from No to Yes.

Fall & Summer Grade Rosters

In the fall and summer terms, only a complete grade roster will be available. If grades are partially input they can be saved but not submitted until a value is entered for each student on the roster.

Spring Grade Rosters

In the spring term, graduating student grades can be submitted individually but non-graduating student grades can only be submitted after every student is graded. There are three roster views available in the spring term:
Graduating - This roster lists only graduating students in a given class. Grades can be entered and submitted for students who appear on the Graduating roster. This will expedite clearance for graduation in the tight turnaround time between the end of term and commencement.

Non-Graduating - This roster lists only students who are not graduating. Grades can be saved on this roster but not submitted.

Complete - This roster lists all students enrolled in the class, both graduating and non-graduating. Grades submitted or saved on the graduating roster will appear here. Grades saved on the non-graduating roster will also appear here. Grades must be entered for every student on this roster before it can be submitted.

Grade Changes
Due to an enhancement effective spring 2014, faculty can submit a request to change a grade for students in certain schools in SSOL. For all other schools, grade changes must be made through the paper change-of-grade process. Your department can assist you in submitting a change of grade for non-participating schools. The YC and CP grades can still be changed on the grade roster after grades have been submitted and processed. Questions regarding the appropriate use of these grades should be directed to the Student or Academic Affairs personnel at the student’s school.

More information on grade changes can be found here.

Write In
If you don’t see a particular student listed on the grade roster, Web Grading provides a space to Write-In the student’s name and grade. The Write-In portion of the Grade Roster is kept as an electronic record for the instructor, department and Registrar to view in the event that the student becomes properly registered. The Write-in grade does not automatically feed onto the student transcript, but must be manually entered by the Registrar once the student is registered.

Confirmation
After each action, such as save, submit, or assign/retract proxies (see description of proxy below), a confirmation page will appear to check whether to proceed with the action. When saving or submitting grades, the confirmation page may also carry a customized message for a particular grade.

Customized Grade Messages
Policies concerning the assignment of selected grades, such as the IN (incomplete) and UW (unofficial withdrawal) may vary across schools within the University. Certain schools have opted to display customized messages with instructions for assigning particular grades. These instructions will appear on the Web Grading confirmation page.

Grade Options
Pass/D/Fail or P/F (SEAS only)

Students in certain schools may register for the Pass/D/Fail (P/D/F) option during open registration in Student Services Online (link is external). After the Change of Program Period, students on the Morningside Campus can email a request to registrar@columbia.edu to adjust P/D/F selections prior to the deadlines established by schools. After the deadline, students need approval from their academic or student affairs dean, who can then transmit the request to the Registrar.
Students may not switch to P/D/F after the last day to select the P/D/F grading option for their school. The pass/fail deadlines for each school are listed in Registration Dates.

Students on the Morningside Campus may uncover a P/D/F course given in an academic term up until the end of the Change of Program Period of the following term. These requests should be sent to registrar@columbia.edu. Graduating students may have earlier deadlines according to school policy. Due to volume, processing times for electing and uncovering P/D/F selections may vary.

Please note:

- The per-term and aggregate number of P/D/F classes a student may take is determined by his/her school or department.
- Some classes are not available for P/D/F; other courses are only offered as P/D/F. Check your school’s bulletin and the Directory of Classes (link is external) for information on specific classes.
- Major or core requirements cannot be taken for P/D/F.

Students in the School of Engineering and Applied Science may elect to Pass/Fail certain courses, with proper approval.

Students on the Medical Center Campus should visit Registration and Financial Services at CUMC to adjust P/D/F selections after the Change of Program Period.

Medical Center

Registration & Financial Services at CUMC
630 W. 168th Street
Black Building, Room 141

Incompletes (IN)

Two notations are used for students who have not met all of the requirements of a course, depending on their school: ABS (absence) and INC (incomplete). In some schools, these may be given at the discretion of the faculty member; in others they can be granted only by the dean or they require the dean’s concurrence. The time limit allowed to make up incompletes varies according to the school of enrollment and the level of the course. Typically, it is one year, although it may be as little as one term or less, or, in the case of some graduate seminars, as long as the instructor chooses. For students who have cross-registered, the time limit is governed by the policies of the school offering the course rather than the school of enrollment. If a student fails to complete the required work within the prescribed time, the grade is automatically changed to F, F*, R, W, or UW, depending on the school. Each school’s policies on incompletes can be found in its bulletin. A faculty member in need of additional information should consult the appropriate dean’s office.

Administrative Referral (AR)

The grade of AR takes the place of the reportable grades of IN, CP, and YC for students in Columbia College and the School of General Studies. The grade of AR should be recorded for a student only as a temporary
grade when the student’s academic performance renders the instructor unable to assign a grade on the A-F scale. An AR grade will alert a student’s advising dean who will follow up with the instructor and Academic Affairs to determine what the permanent grade should be. Instructors in these schools can submit a change of grade request in SSOL to resolve grades of AR.

**R Credit**

R is a non-evaluative grade, not a change in course grading option, that confers credit for registration without designating an A-F letter grade. Enrolling in a class for R credit is not the same as taking a class on a Pass/Fail basis or as an auditor. Students who have received R credit for a course can view the R grade in the grade screen in SSOL.

**Registering for R Credit**

**Graduate School of Arts and Sciences**

- The mark of R is awarded in place of a letter grade. A student who elects to take a course for R credit must meet all course requirements other than the final examination, unless the instructor states otherwise in writing, preferably in the form of an email to the student.
- Before electing to take a course for R credit, students should first consult the DGS or program director to ascertain that the course will count toward their degree requirements. They should also confer with the instructor of the course to obtain permission to take the course for R credit.
- Students may elect to take a course for R credit through SSOL (link is external) during the Change of Program Period in the first two weeks of the semester. Selection of R credit will write to the Student Information System (SIS) on the third Friday of the fall and spring semesters. After the Change of Program period, GSAS students must discuss the R credit option with the course instructor. If approved, the R grade will be assigned by the instructor at the end of the semester. If the instructor does not approve the request for R credit, the R grade will be changed to a letter grade by the instructor at the end of the semester in SSOL. The Office of the University Registrar does not record or remove R credit on behalf of students or instructors. The deadline to request R credit is the same date as the deadline to request to take a course Pass/Fail (see the Academic Calendar (link is external) for fall- and spring-term deadlines; see the School of Professional Studies website (link is external) for summer-term deadlines).
- A course that has been taken for R credit may not be repeated for a letter grade.
- When a student chooses to take a course for R credit, but does not satisfactorily fulfill the conditions for receiving R credit, the instructor may award the mark of IN, UW, or F, depending on what he or she deems appropriate, using the Change of Grade tool in SSOL.
- If a student receives an Incomplete for a class taken for R credit and does not submit the work by the GSAS deadline, the mark of IN will be changed to an UW, which will not be subject to change at a later date.
- Courses taken for R credit are applied toward the calculation of Residence Units for billing purposes in the same way as courses taken for a letter grade. The number of points of R credit acceptable for a degree, however, is set by each program in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.
Students in other schools that offer R credit must discuss this option with the instructor and the academic advisor early in the semester. If approved, the R grade can be assigned by the instructor at the end of the semester. Columbia College and the School of General Studies do not allow R credit grading through SSOL web grading. In these cases, the approved R credit grade is recorded manually by the Office of the University Registrar upon approval by the school.

**Requirements for Enrolling in a Class for R Credit**

Students enrolling in a class for R credit are not required to take the final examination. All other requirements are established at the time the professor grants permission to enroll in the class. If the student performs in accordance with the agreement, the instructor will award an R grade.

**Please Note:**

- The student must register and pay for R credit classes.
- Many courses that require full participation, performance, and interaction are not available for R credit.
- Most students do not receive academic credit for R grades, with the exception of some GSAS Ph.D. students who may be allowed, in certain circumstances, to receive academic R credit.
- A student cannot take major or core requirements for R credit.
- The per-semester and aggregate number of R credits a student is allowed to take are determined by his or her school or department.
- Classes taken for R credit will appear on the student's transcript.

**AB**

Excused absence from final examination.

**Credit Pending (CP)**

Assigned in courses which regularly involve research or projects extending beyond the end of the term. Until such time as a passing or failing grade is submitted, satisfactory progress is implied.

**Make-Up (MU)**

Engineering only. Student has the privilege of taking a second final examination. Refer to appropriate bulletin for rules governing use of this grade.

**Unofficial Withdrawal (UW)**

Assigned to students in Law, Public Health, SIPA, Special Programs, Social Work, and Summer School whose names appear on the grade sheet but who have never attended or have discontinued attendance prior to the due date of substantive work.
**Year Course (YC)**

Assigned at the end of the first term of a year-long course. A single grade for the entire course is to be given upon completion of the second term.

**Auditing**

There is no formal audit procedure at Columbia. The only exception is a program within the [School of Professional Studies](#) which requires a separate application to that program and permits registration only in certain designated sections or classes. More commonly, students seem to use the term audit to refer to taking a class on an R credit basis. R is a non-evaluative grade which not all schools permit at all levels. Most will not give degree credit for an R grade.

**Proxy**

A proxy may be a co-instructor, teaching assistant or departmental administrator that the primary instructor has assigned to assist in entering grades. The instructor must know the proxy’s UNI in order to assign him or her to a class (the proxy cannot be enrolled in the class). Proxies can only save grades; they cannot submit and they cannot override a grade already saved by the instructor. Instructors can always override a grade saved by a proxy. Instructors are responsible for submission of the final grades.

Note on Co-Teaching: Only the primary instructor has default access to the grade roster. To gain access to the grade roster, the secondary instructor must be assigned as a proxy by the primary instructor. Acting as proxy, the secondary instructor will only be able to save grades. The primary instructor will have to submit the grades.

**To Assign a Proxy**

- Click on Assign Proxy next to the appropriate class.
- Enter the Proxy’s UNI in the appropriate field.
- Indicate whether you would like to be emailed when a proxy saves grades, and confirm your email address.
- Assign the proxy to students
- Click “Chk” to assign all students in the class to a proxy (this option is only available if the browser is JavaScript enabled).
- Check boxes next to student names to assign individual students to a proxy.
- To assign another proxy, go back to the Assign Proxy page and repeat the process outlined above.

**To Retract a Proxy**

- Click on Retract Proxy next to the appropriate class. You may retract a proxy anytime before submitting grades.
- Determine type of proxy retraction
  - Click on Select All Proxy Authorizations to retract all students from a given proxy (this option is only available if the browser is JavaScript enabled).
  - Check box next to the proxy to retract individually.
- The proxy will be notified by email that the grading privilege has been retracted.

**How the Proxy accesses Web Grading**

- The Proxies should go to Student Services Online and log on under their own UNIs and passwords.
- Instructors should never share their password with a proxy.
- Proxies will only see the students who they have been assigned to grade.
Discussion Group Breakdown for Proxy Assignment

To assist in assigning proxies to large classes with non-graded discussion groups, instructors will be able to view the class divided by discussion sections and to assign a proxy to all students in a given section. Instructors always have the choice to view the class as a whole and to assign any proxy to any student, regardless of the discussion section.

Show & Sort

Show - Show allows the grader to view certain students as a stand-alone group by filtering for particular characteristics (by graduating, non-graduating, student standing, school and proxy).

Sort - Sort allows the grader to sort students within a page or in the entire roster, grouping them based on certain criteria (name, school, grade, graduating, PID, and standing).

History of Last Action - Web Grading records the last action taken for any student by displaying the date and time of the action as well as the UNI of the person who generated the action. When using the proxy option this feature will keep a record of which grades were entered by the proxy rather than the instructor. For security and auditing purposes, all transactions are also recorded in a backend database.

Email Notification

- There are several email notifications that are automatically generated in Web Grading. They are:
- Confirmation sent to the instructor when grades have been submitted.
- Notification to the student when his or her grade has been processed and appears on the academic transcript.
- Notification informing a proxy that he or she has been assigned.
- Notification informing a proxy that his or her assignment has been retracted.
- Notification sent to the instructor when a proxy has saved a grade. This email does not state the actual grade(s).

Print or Download the Grade Roster

The Web Grade Roster can be downloaded into Excel at any time in the grading process by simply clicking the option available on the lower left corner of Grade Roster. The Grade Roster may also be printed.

Statistics

After submitting the grade roster, a set of statistics summarizing the distribution of grades among students will appear on the bottom left hand corner of the roster.

Electronic Record of Grades

A record of all grades will remain in Web Grading. Instructors will be able to view their own graded rosters starting from fall 2002 forward. Authorized users will have access to graded rosters for their school or department.

Authorized User Access

Authorized users such as Deans and Departmental Administrators can view individual grade rosters available to them based on school or departmental affiliation. To apply for Authorized User Access go to:
- www.columbia.edu/cu/sis
- Click ID Request
- Complete Request Form
You must include your supervisor information and your FAS department number when applying. Authorized user access is narrowly proscribed and limited to the departmental duties of the user.

Security

Security is the most important feature of Web Grading. Although no system can claim to be perfect, Web Grading has several layers of security:

- All Web Grading information sent to users through their browser is encrypted.
- Only instructors can submit grades, and they must do so by logging onto Web Grading with a UNI and secure password.
- A record of the last action taken is shown on each Web Grading Roster and behind the scenes, detailed electronic records are kept on all Web Grading activity.
- If an instructor forgets to log off and leaves an open session, Web Grading will send a prompt after 5 minutes of non-activity requesting that the user enter his or her password again. Once the instructor is logged back in, the session will resume where it left off.

After rigorous testing, we are confident that we have improved upon and exceeded the security available with the old system of paper grade sheets.

Important Note on Privacy

Please don’t share your password. The UNI is used throughout the University by many offices, from Human Resources to the Libraries. Your UNI allows you to access secure information and to initiate personal transactions. Protect yourself and your students by keeping your password private.

Columbia University Registrar Morningside Campus: registrar@columbia.edu
212-854-4330 (9am – 5pm)
917-881-4861 (anytime)

Health Sciences Campus: sashs@columbia.edu
212-305-3992 (9am – 5pm)
917-881-4861 (anytime)