

Committee on Scholastic Standards and Petitions, Annual Report 2023 – 2024

Committee members:

William Knapp (knappw@mailbox.sc.edu), Chair (term ends 2025)

Robert Kopack (rkopack@mailbox.sc.edu), (2024)

Brett Altschul (altschul@mailbox.sc.edu), (2026)

Allison Sweeney (sweeneam@mailbox.sc.edu), (2025)

Jennifer Mcardle (bosio@mailbox.sc.edu), (2026)

Richard Verzyl (verzyl@email.sc.edu), ex officio, Enrollment Management

Aaron Marterer (acmarte@mailbox.sc.edu) ex officio, Enrollment Management, Registrar

Emmie Thompson (ett@email.sc.edu), Undergraduate Representative

SSP Committee annual report 2023 – 2024

Business of 2023 -2024 included:

- A proposal for course grade forgiveness was introduced to include all students enrolled as undergraduates at the University of South Carolina will have access to grade forgiveness. The reason for the proposal was intended to help those students who were not yet fully identified as fully admitted but were taking courses beforehand. The proposal was unanimously approved by the SSP committee and approved by faculty senate in Fall 2023. The full proposal can be found in Appendix A
- There were two points of concern brought by the Undergraduate Student Government to the Committee on Scholastic Standards and Petitions. The first was an inconsistency in grading scales across the University of South Carolina Columbia Campus. The second was a lack of timely grade posting for student assessments. The committee did not recommend any formal policy changes requiring a faculty vote and a list of recommendations was forwarded to the Office of the Provost. These recommendations can be found in Appendix B.

Respectfully submitted,

William Knapp

Appendix A

Course Grade Forgiveness (Current)	Course Grade Forgiveness (Proposed)
<p>It is the policy of the University of South Carolina that every currently enrolled, fully admitted, degree-seeking undergraduate earning a D+, D, F, or WF in a University course may take up to two undergraduate courses for a second time for the purpose of grade forgiveness.</p>	<p>It is the policy of the University of South Carolina (Columbia and Palmetto College Campuses: Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, Union) that every currently enrolled, fully admitted, degree-seeking undergraduate student earning a D+, D, F, or WF in a University course may take up to two undergraduate courses for a second time for the purpose of grade forgiveness.</p>
<p>Both the first and second grades shall appear on the University permanent record, but only the second grade will be used in computing the University of South Carolina cumulative grade point average. An explanatory notice will appear on the record. Once grade forgiveness is applied to a repeated course, the action may not be revoked.</p>	<p>Courses eligible for course grade forgiveness must be identical in subject code and number or cross-listed in the University of South Carolina Columbia academic bulletin.</p> <p>Both the first and second grades shall appear on the University permanent record, but only the second grade will be used in computing the University of South Carolina cumulative grade point average. An explanatory notice will appear on the record. Once grade forgiveness is applied to a repeated course, the action may not be revoked.</p>
<p>An eligible student wishing to apply the course grade forgiveness policy to a course enrollment may do so at any time during his/her undergraduate enrollment, but no applications will be honored after the degree is awarded.</p>	<p>An eligible student wishing to apply the course grade forgiveness policy to a course enrollment may do so at any time during their undergraduate enrollment. No applications will be honored after the first University of South Carolina baccalaureate degree is awarded from any USC campus.</p>
<p>Grade forgiveness can only be applied once per course for a maximum of two courses (not to exceed 8 credits) on a student's undergraduate academic record, without regard to the number of degrees sought.</p>	<p>Grade forgiveness may only be applied once per course for a maximum of two courses (not to exceed 8 credits) on a student's undergraduate academic record (includes all USC system campuses), without regard to the number of degrees sought.</p>
<p>Under the grade forgiveness policy, the forgiven and repeated class must be taken at the University of South Carolina-Columbia campus or a Regional</p>	<p>Under the grade forgiveness policy, the forgiven and repeated class must be taken at the University of South Carolina-Columbia campus or a Palmetto</p>

<p>campus. Courses transferred from other institutions are excluded from this policy.</p>	<p>College campus. Courses transferred in from other institutions as well as courses taken at USC Aiken, Beaufort, and Upstate are excluded from this policy.</p>
<p>This policy does not preclude students from repeating classes multiple times, in accordance with program requirements, but only the second attempt at the class may forgive the original grade of D+, D, F, or WF. Only a regular letter grade can replace a forgiven grade. Grades of W, I, S, U, or AUDIT may not replace previous grades. Grades carrying an honor code violation sanction of X are not eligible for grade forgiveness.</p>	<p>This policy does not preclude students from repeating classes multiple times, in accordance with program requirements, but only the second attempt at the class may forgive the original grade of D+, D, F, or WF. Only a regular letter grade can replace a forgiven grade. Grades of W, I, S, U, or AUDIT may not replace previous grades. Grades carrying an honor code violation sanction of X are not eligible for grade forgiveness.</p>
<p>Established requirements for repeating classes, admission to, or progression in, specific academic programs of the University take precedence over the grade forgiveness policy. Program or progression grade point averages are not affected by this policy. Refer to the guidelines for each program for specific requirements. Courses intended to be repeated for additional credit, such as research or applied music, are not eligible for grade forgiveness. Semester honors (dean's or president's honor list), or academic standing (scholastic deficiency, probation, suspension), or previous grade point totals will not change retroactively as a result of applying this policy.</p>	<p>Established requirements for repeating classes, admission to, or progression in, specific academic programs of the University take precedence over the grade forgiveness policy. Program or progression grade point averages are not affected by this policy. Refer to the guidelines for each program for specific requirements. Courses intended to be repeated for additional credit, such as research or applied music, are not eligible for grade forgiveness. Semester honors (dean's or president's honor list), or academic standing (scholastic deficiency, probation, suspension), or previous grade point totals will not change retroactively as a result of applying this policy.</p>
<p>Students who have been granted academic forgiveness to reset the grade point average after readmission are not eligible for course grade forgiveness. Please refer to the bulletin entry titled Academic Forgiveness for Former USC Students with Less Than a 2.00 Cumulative GPA.</p>	<p>Students who have been granted academic forgiveness to reset the grade point average after readmission are not eligible for course grade forgiveness. Please refer to the bulletin entry titled Academic Forgiveness for Former USC Students with Less Than a 2.00 Cumulative GPA.</p>
<p>An eligible student wishing to apply the grade forgiveness policy may begin the process by reading the criteria which must be met and completing the necessary documentation in order to apply grade forgiveness. The criteria and documentation can be found here.</p>	<p>An eligible student wishing to apply the grade forgiveness policy may begin the process by reading the criteria which must be met and completing the necessary documentation in order to apply grade forgiveness. The criteria and documentation can be found here.</p>
<p>Note that Academic Forgiveness is not the same as Grade Forgiveness. Please refer to the bulletin entry titled Academic Forgiveness for Former USC Students with Less Than a 2.00 Cumulative GPA.</p>	<p>Note that Academic Forgiveness is not the same as Grade Forgiveness. Please refer to the bulletin</p>

	entry titled Academic Forgiveness for Former USC Students with Less Than a 2.00 Cumulative GPA.
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Appendix B

Suggestions to Universal Grading Scale and Grade Posting Requirements

Grading Scale

The Committee does understand the confusion having various grading scales in place for different departments / schools. However, the need for differing grading scales can be attributed to numerous variables. These include (but may not be limited to) accreditation requirements, controlling enrollment numbers, professional certifications, or national and worldwide rankings. It was also noted that some lower-level courses in disciplines such as physics use sliding-scale grading to acknowledge that class means are well below the common grading scale. These grading curves are used to improve student and overall class scores. A universal grade scale could interfere with these mechanisms which are intended to help our student scores.

The committee would make the following suggestions for the Office of the Provost to emphasize with department heads / chairpersons and discussed at the start of the semester with their faculty:

1. Each department / school should have a discussion within their faculty to consider adopting a universal grading scale unique to their program. A universal grading scale within a department would help alleviate any confusion as students move between courses of the same discipline.
2. Each department / school should consider having identical grading scales for all sections of the same course. This provides a consistent standard for a course regardless of the instructor or section number. Additionally, the course grading scale should be presented within the syllabus and explained early in the course.

Grade Posting Requirements

The Committee justifies student need for timely assessment grading and feedback. Without this, students are unable to determine how they are doing in a class which can affect many decisions. A lack of timely feedback does not allow students to adjust the work they submit or their time allocation to the course. It also influences whether they should drop a class. Some assessments have instant feedback (i.e. online testing and quizzes) while others require longer time leads such as projects or essays.

The original concern brought by Student Government was to have all semester work graded and posted before the start of finals week. Although the Committee does not find this to be an egregious request, a hard grading date such as this would be problematic for a few reasons. Depending on the discipline, some of the semester grades are ongoing throughout the semester, such as clinicals or internships. These may not be able to be fully graded before the end of the semester. Additionally, some course grading is very back ended which would not allow for earlier grades to be truly indicative of the final grade.

However, the Committee does fully understand the concerns of students and would make the following suggestions for the Office of the Provost to emphasize with department heads / chairpersons and discussed at the start of the semester with their faculty:

1. Grades should be posted in a timely fashion; optimally no more than two weeks after the due date of an assessment.
2. Special consideration should be given to the last day to drop a class without penalty and the final day of the semester. As much as possible, faculty should have assessments graded and posted by these dates.
3. Instructors should consider breaking longer projects into smaller graded components or to set project milestones that are linked to instructor feedback so that students have a more timely evaluation of their class performance.