

BOARD OF REGENTS  
BRIEFING PAPER  
*Handbook Revision: NSHE Grading Policy*

**BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:**

Financial aid officers at NSHE institutions are required to manually research every F grade to determine if the student earned an F or received an F because they stopped attending. Per Federal Regulations, a student who earns an F but attended the entire semester does not have to repay Title IV funds. If the student stopped attending and attended less than 60% they have to repay a portion of their financial aid. Likewise, an earned F and an F for non-attendance are treated differently for the purposes of Veterans Education Benefits. A student who receives an F for nonattendance is required to pay back benefits, whereas a student who attended to the end of the term is not required to do so. Using a grade of FN will enable instructors to denote an F grade due to non-attendance and would reduce likelihood of error that may result in noncompliance with federal regulations. Financial aid staff would only have to research the FN grades for less than 60% attendance, not all F grades. Staff recommends authorizing the institutions to utilize an FN grade to better assist financial aid staff in identifying students who have failed a course due to non-attendance.

**SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:**

Amend Title 4, Chapter 16, Section 37 to authorize that an F grade resulting from non-attendance be denoted with a grade of FN for the purpose of tracking students for financial aid purposes.

**IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):**

Increased federal reporting requirements and demand for financial aid, coupled with reduced staffing results in an increased workload for financial aid officers. Reducing the necessity to research all F grades to only those resulting from non-attendance would help to reduce the work required to comply with federal regulations. Financial Aid Officers requested this change.

**BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:**

Designating an F grade as FN for non-attendance will assist Financial Aid Officers in identifying students who fail because they stop attending classes and meeting federal regulatory requirements

**POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:**

None have been presented.

**ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:**

Maintain the current grading policy as written, which does not authorize the use of FN to designate an F grade for non-attendance.

**COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:**

Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter # \_\_\_\_\_ Section # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Amends Current Board Policy: *Title 4, Chapter 16, Section 37*  
 Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter # \_\_\_\_\_ Section # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fiscal Impact: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No   
Explain:

**POLICY PROPOSAL**  
**TITLE 4, CHAPTER 16, SECTION 37**  
NSHE Grading Policy

Additions appear in *boldface italics*

1. The "plus" and "minus" is a part of the grading scale of each institution. It is up to the individual faculty member to exercise this option.
  2. An F grade shall be a part of the grading scale for each institution. It is up to the individual faculty member to exercise this option. ***Institutions may utilize an FN grade to denote an F grade for non-attendance. An F grade will appear on the student's transcript.***
  3. Campuses may retain institutional practices related to forgiveness or academic renewal policies in which, under certain circumstances, students may repeat failed courses or disregard course work.
- [3] 4. All withdrawals indicate that the student did not complete the course. Each institution determines the timeline for assigning the W.
- [4] 5. The course syllabus shall contain a clear explanation of the grading scale to be used by the faculty member. Students may not appeal the format an instructor chooses.
- [5] 6. Courses that a student is currently enrolled in but have not completed will be denoted "in progress" or IP pending completion of the course or end of the term in the student information system.